

**EDUCATIONAL
DRAMATICS. THE
EDUCATIONAL
PLAYERS PUBLICATIONS**

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Educational Dramatics. The Educational Players Publications by Emma Sheridan Fry

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The Educational Players Publications

EDUCATIONAL DRAMATICS

BY

EMMA SHERIDAN FRY

THE FOUNDER OF THE SCIENCE OF
EDUCATIONAL DRAMATICS

REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION

NEW YORK

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1917

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1785

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

Emma Sheridan Fry is the founder of the Science of Educational Dramatics. She first formulated laws whereby the spontaneous functioning of the Dramatic Instinct may be regulated to Educational purpose. She first tried out and established The Educational Player Method whereby amateur theatricals become Educational Dramatics, and the "coach" is transformed into the enlightened co-operator with a primary educational force.

There is not room here to name the many teachers who are doing creative work by this method,—developing their own powers and those of their educational players.

Mrs. Fry founded the work of the Children's Educational Theatre and of the Educational Dramatic League.

INTRODUCTION

These pages are intended to meet the immediate need of those actually doing dramatic work,—as Teachers, Club Leaders, or Amateur Players,—who wish to measure their results to an improved educational and dramatic standard.

It is recognized that many here addressed are urged chiefly by a desire to “get the play on,” or to “do their part,” at a higher entertainment value than they now reach.

Practical methods are therefore here set forth, rather than philosophy. Underlying principles are here simplified to the immediate purpose of accomplishing satisfactory entertainment results. At the same time, the Teacher is guarded from the use of injurious methods that at once destroy or lessen the dramatic values of the entertainment and obstruct the Player.

Entertainment value at a high dramatic standard is incidental to, and assured by, right method of preparation. This was amply tested and proved in the performances at the original “Children’s Educational Theatre,” (Educational Alliance Building, 1903-1909.) All the productions there were in my charge in every stage of preparation,—from the arranging of the plays for educational use through all the processes of class and rehearsal work.

The educational significance of those productions was brought under the personal inspection of authorities throughout the country by the able business policy of my valued associate there, Miss A. Minnie Herts, now Mrs. Heniger, the general business manager of the enterprise.

The methods whereby results were there accomplished are here for the first time outlined. Many of the "Children's Educational Theatre" productions are here quoted and analyzed.

Life is Activity.—The significance of the Dramatic Instinct to the educator is that it exists in everyone and stimulates the Being to activity in every department. Operating spontaneously, the Dramatic Instinct induces those real life processes whereby the Being makes contact with Environment, and responds with various reactions. The educator inducing the Dramatic Instinct thus comes into control of natural activities, and may select, develop, and regulate them to accomplish his educational intent.

The educator does not train dramatic talent for the stage, or coach "amateur actors" for a "show." He does not invite or use talent at all. He co-operates with a universal instinct to develop the whole human being towards life and citizenship.

Educational Dramatic work first profits the Player. To supply entertainment for an audience is not a primary intent. Indeed, many forms of educational dramatic work do not include a performance or tend towards any kind of exhibition. A production more or less elaborate may be a step in an orderly process of the Player's development, and each reiteration of

the production is an added step; entertainment value to the audience is merely a guarantee of right educational method of preparation.

Complete consideration of the use of the Dramatic Instinct includes:

I. Study of the laws governing real-life processes of contact with environment, and response in expression.

II. Presentation of the laws governing spontaneous dramatic expression.

III. Establishment and application of the laws governing dramatic expression induced for educational purpose.

The present hand-book deals briefly with parts I and II of the subject, and only so far as to make clear the practical applications which follow, for those who must at once deal with some form of entertainment.

The subject is fully covered in a text book now in preparation, "The Educational Use of the Dramatic Instinct."

EMMA SHERIDAN FRY.