

1. What is Creative Drama

Creative drama is an improvisation-based learning activity that utilizes drama as a tool for education and personal growth (Zhang, 2022, pp. 42-44). Unlike traditional school drama, which focuses on script-based rehearsals and performances, creative drama emphasizes the learning process over the final performance (Parnes, 1992). It involves activities such as storytelling, role-play, improvisation, and group collaboration, typically conducted in classrooms or activity rooms (Chan & Chan, 2011, pp. 126-129).

Pioneered by U.S. drama educator Ward in the 1930s, creative drama was originally used to train professional actors but was later adapted for educational purposes due to its effectiveness (Ward, 1930, pp. 3-10). It follows three main steps: creating imaginative scenarios to immerse students, allowing them to understand storylines by exploring related materials, and eventually guiding them to develop performances that integrate their ideas (Pang, 2001, pp. 27-28). Teachers play a key role in guiding these activities, helping students reflect on their experiences and develop skills like communication, creativity, and problem-solving (Cropley, 1992).

While often applied in drama classes, creative drama is also used in other subjects such as language, history, and social studies to deepen students' understanding of various topics (Lin, 2005, pp. 5-7). Focused on collaboration and exploration of ideas, creative drama fosters creativity, emotional growth, and a better understanding of human experiences, making it a highly effective teaching method across multiple disciplines (Shallcross, 1981).

2. LETCA rubric for assessing creative drama

2.1 Domain L: Literature

Indicator 1: Word choice

Words are well-chosen, accurate, fit the character's personality, and are free from typos or spelling errors.

- **Level 1 – Inadequate**
Words are simple, limited, and occasionally inaccurate. The word choice demonstrates minimal effort in reflecting the character’s personality or the context of the scene. Spelling, grammar, and typographical errors are present, which may distract the audience. Lines lack creative phrasing or emotional depth, making it difficult to engage meaningfully with the narrative.
- **Level 2 – Acceptable**
Words are somewhat accurate and fit the character’s personality to some extent. While basic context is considered, vocabulary remains limited, and there is little variety in tone or rhythm. Occasional errors in phrasing, spelling, or grammar might still appear, but they do not significantly impede understanding. The dialogue begins to show attempts at creativity but lacks consistent emotional impact or thematic alignment.
- **Level 3 – Satisfactory**
Word choice is accurate, appropriate for the character, and free of spelling and grammatical errors. Words effectively reflect the character’s emotions, intentions, and relationships while aligning with the scene’s context. There is noticeable creativity and variation in tone and rhythm, enhancing the narrative. The dialogue contributes to the story’s clarity and emotional engagement, supporting character expression.
- **Level 4 – Proficient**
Words are highly precise, authentic, and masterfully crafted to fit the character’s personality, emotions, and context. The language is rich, varied, and creative, with effective use of tone, rhythm, and emotional nuance. There are no errors, and the word choice skillfully enhances dramatic tension and deepens thematic resonance. Dialogue captivates the audience, elevating the performance to a professional level.

Indicator 2: Play structure

The play includes a beginning that takes up no more than 20% of the play, a substantial middle building towards the climax comprising over 70%, and a resolution within the final 10%.

- **Level 1 – Inadequate**
The play lacks a clear, balanced structure. The beginning may be too short or

overly long, leaving insufficient time to develop the central conflict. The middle section is underdeveloped, failing to build momentum or lead meaningfully toward a climax. The resolution, if present, appears rushed or disconnected, resulting in an incomplete narrative that struggles to engage the audience effectively.

- **Level 2 – Acceptable**

The play demonstrates some understanding of structure, with discernible sections for the beginning, middle, and resolution. The introduction provides necessary context, though it may occupy too much or too little of the play, limiting the middle's ability to build prolonged tension. The middle addresses plot development and offers moments of intrigue but inconsistently escalates toward a strong climax. The resolution ties the story together, though it feels abrupt or lacks emotional impact.

- **Level 3 – Satisfactory**

The play adheres to a well-defined structure. The beginning effectively establishes the context, remaining concise at around 20% of the total runtime. The middle spans over 70%, successfully building tension, deepening character motivations, and leading to a climactic moment. The resolution, taking up roughly 10%, provides a satisfying conclusion that resolves conflicts while reinforcing the theme. Overall, the play's progression feels cohesive and engaging.

- **Level 4 – Proficient**

The play demonstrates exemplary structure, seamlessly integrating the beginning, middle, and resolution into a coherent and impactful narrative. The introduction is captivating and concise, effectively setting the stage within 20% of the runtime. The middle dominates with over 70%, showcasing intricate character development, escalating conflicts, and brilliantly paced momentum toward a powerful climax. The final 10% delivers a resolution that feels purposeful, emotionally resonant, and thematically profound. Every structural element contributes harmoniously to the storytelling, captivating the audience throughout.

2.2 Domain E: Effective lines

Indicator 3: Exposition

Lines naturally reveal the fundamental context, including Who (names/relationships), Where (locations), When (timeframes).

- **Level 1 – Inadequate**
Lines provide minimal context about the fundamental elements of the narrative, making it difficult for the audience to understand the story. Names, relationships, locations, or timeframes are either omitted or delivered unnaturally. The dialogue feels forced and lacks clarity, leaving the audience confused about the setting and relationships between characters.
- **Level 2 – Acceptable**
Lines begin to reveal key contextual details such as names, relationships, locations, and timeframes, but the delivery is inconsistent or somewhat unnatural. Expository information may be included, but it appears rushed or overly direct, breaking the flow of the narrative. Basic context is conveyed, but it does not fully immerse the audience or create a seamless narrative.
- **Level 3 – Satisfactory**
Lines naturally and clearly establish the fundamental context, including who the characters are (names and relationships), where the story takes place, and when it occurs. Context is provided seamlessly within the dialogue, supporting the narrative flow without sounding forced. The information effectively deepens the audience's understanding of the setting and enhances their connection to the story.
- **Level 4 – Proficient**
Exposition is masterfully integrated into the lines, delivering essential context (names, relationships, locations, timeframes) with fluidity and authenticity. Every detail feels purposeful, enhancing the narrative while maintaining natural delivery. Subtle hints and layered dialogue enrich the storytelling, fully immersing the audience in the world of the drama. The exposition feels effortless and deeply engaging, elevating the story's overall impact.

Indicator 4: Revealing character's objectives

Lines reveal character personalities, traits, and objectives driving actions.

- **Level 1 – Inadequate**
Lines give vague or inconsistent hints about the character's objectives. The

dialogue lacks depth and fails to communicate clear motivations, making it difficult for the audience to understand the driving forces behind a character's actions. Traits and personalities are minimally portrayed, leaving characters flat and unengaging. Objectives, if present, are stated explicitly rather than naturally integrated into the flow of conversation.

- Level 2 – Acceptable

Lines begin to reveal aspects of the character's objectives, but these revelations may lack clarity, depth, or consistency. Character traits are communicated but in a simplistic or overly direct manner, missing opportunities for nuance.

Motivations are occasionally evident, but they may feel underdeveloped or disconnected from the character's dialogue. While some personality traits emerge, the character's objectives do not strongly influence their actions or drive the narrative forward effectively.

- Level 3 – Satisfactory

Lines effectively reveal a character's objectives, showcasing their personality, emotions, and motivations. Dialogue supports the narrative, providing clear context for why the character behaves a certain way. Objectives are naturally integrated into the lines, shaping their interactions and relationships with others. Nuances in the dialogue allow for a deeper understanding of the character's personality, keeping the audience engaged and invested in their journey.

- Level 4 – Proficient

Lines masterfully reveal the character's objectives with subtlety and depth, using natural and emotionally charged dialogue to convey their motivations, ambitions, and struggles. Every word is purposeful, aligning with the character's actions and traits, and driving the narrative forward. Complex personalities are brought to life through nuanced wording, subtext, and layered meaning, offering the audience a profound emotional connection. Objectives are seamlessly woven into the dialogue, highlighting tension, conflict, and growth in ways that feel authentic and impactful.

Indicator 5: Distinct role

Characters are distinct and serve different functions, each fulfilling a unique role reflected through lines and actions.

- **Level 1 – Inadequate**
Characters lack distinctiveness, with lines that fail to distinguish their roles, personalities, or functions within the narrative. Dialogue feels interchangeable, making it challenging to differentiate one character from another. Roles and functions are either unclear or absent, and the characters' verbal contributions do not meaningfully advance the action or reveal individuality.
- **Level 2 – Acceptable**
Characters show some distinction through their lines, but their roles and functions in the story remain underdeveloped. Key traits and functions are suggested but inconsistently expressed, leading to moments where characters seem too similar or redundant. Dialogue reflects some attempts to differentiate characters, but the individuality of voices and purposes is not fully achieved. Characters' roles start to have a minor influence on the narrative direction.
- **Level 3 – Satisfactory**
Characters are distinct, with clear roles that are consistently reflected in their lines and actions. Dialogue captures their personalities and unique functions within the story, allowing the audience to understand their individual purposes. Each character's lines align with their defined roles, creating a dynamic interaction that enhances the narrative. Verbal exchanges advance the storyline and underline the characters' unique contributions.
- **Level 4 – Proficient**
Characters are vividly distinct, with dialogue that masterfully reflects their unique roles, personalities, and intentions. Each line is purposeful, revealing individual traits while clearly serving the character's function in the story. The interplay between characters enhances the richness of the narrative, showcasing a seamless integration of distinct voices and actions. Every character's role is fully realized, contributing to a multidimensional performance that captivates the audience.

Indicator 6: Key lines

Central lines delivered by different characters effectively highlight and underscore the prevailing theme.

- **Level 1 – Inadequate**
Key lines fail to highlight or support the prevailing theme. Dialogue lacks depth,

with central lines either absent or too general to emphasize the story's core ideas. Characters deliver lines inconsistently, and there is little to no connection between their lines and the overarching theme. As a result, the audience may struggle to grasp the primary message of the drama.

- Level 2 – Acceptable

Key lines begin to underscore the theme, but their delivery is uneven or lacks impact. Characters occasionally contribute central lines, but these may feel forced, overly explicit, or disconnected from the emotional tone of the scene. While some lines touch upon the theme, they fail to resonate strongly or stand out as pivotal moments in the story. Efforts to use dialogue to emphasize the theme are present but inconsistent.

- Level 3 – Satisfactory

Key lines effectively highlight the prevailing theme, with characters delivering purposeful dialogue that supports the story's central ideas. These lines are well-crafted and seamlessly integrated into the narrative, making them impactful and memorable. Each character's contributions align with their role and bring focus to the theme. The audience gains a clear understanding of the story's message through emotionally resonant and thematically cohesive lines.

- Level 4 – Proficient

Key lines are masterfully crafted and strategically delivered by multiple characters to deeply underscore the prevailing theme. Dialogue is layered with rich meaning, blending emotional resonance and intellectual significance. Each central line is purposeful, memorable, and integral to both the narrative and the audience's understanding of the theme. The lines amplify tension, emotion, and thematic depth, keeping the audience fully immersed in the dramatic experience. Every line that supports the theme enhances the storytelling, leaving a lasting impression.

2.3 Domain T: Tension

Indicator 7: Conflict development

A central conflict exists between a protagonist and an antagonist with clear disagreements of interest, developing and rising until a climax.

- **Level 1 – Inadequate**
Conflict is present but lacks a clear protagonist and antagonist. The disagreement of interests is vague or underdeveloped, making it difficult to identify the central tension. The conflict does not progress noticeably and shows minimal attempts to build toward a climax. The storyline may feel static, and the tension fails to engage the audience effectively.
- **Level 2 – Acceptable**
A central conflict exists with a defined protagonist and antagonist, but their disagreements are simplistic or inconsistent. The tension partially develops but may fluctuate without sustainable growth. Although some effort has been made to escalate the conflict, it lacks complexity and richness. The climax, if present, is predictable and has a limited emotional impact on the audience.
- **Level 3 – Satisfactory**
The conflict is clear and central to the story, featuring well-defined interests of a protagonist and antagonist. Their disagreements escalate meaningfully, showing a structured and dynamic progression toward a climax. The development exhibits complexity, with interactions that deepen character motivation and maintain audience engagement. The climax effectively resolves the tension, leaving a notable emotional and narrative impact.
- **Level 4 – Proficient**
The conflict is richly crafted, deeply engaging, and central to the narrative. The protagonist and antagonist have clear, opposing interests that evolve with nuance and complexity. The disagreement escalates steadily, showing deliberate pacing and dramatic progression toward an intense, memorable climax. Every stage of development heightens audience anticipation, emotionally immersing them into the tension. The climax delivers a profound resolution with lasting significance.

2.4 Domain C : Creativity

Indicator 8: Life sensitivity

The theme demonstrates sensitivity to human nature; drawing material from keen observations of everyday life.

- **Level 1 – Inadequate**
The theme shows minimal sensitivity to the nuances of human nature and lacks

depth in capturing everyday experiences. The material draws from generic or superficial observations, resulting in a narrative that feels detached from real-life complexities. Connections to human emotions, behaviors, or social contexts are limited, leaving the drama lacking authenticity and relatability.

- Level 2 – Acceptable

The theme demonstrates a growing awareness of human nature, incorporating some observations from everyday life. Material reflects a basic understanding of common experiences and emotions but stops short of exploring their deeper layers or complexities. While there are moments that attempt to resonate with real-life situations, the approach lacks consistency or refinement, leading to a narrative that feels sincere but not fully engaging.

- Level 3 – Satisfactory

The theme reflects a strong sensitivity to human nature, supported by keen and thoughtful observations of everyday life. Material draws on authentic interactions, emotions, and experiences, showcasing an ability to relate the drama to universal human themes. The narrative reflects depth, balancing relatability and creativity effectively. Audiences can connect with the material, as it compellingly portrays the complexities of real-life situations.

- Level 4 – Proficient

The theme is masterfully crafted to convey profound sensitivity to human nature, rooted in acute and nuanced observations of everyday life. Material captures intricate details of human behavior, emotions, and relationships, presenting a narrative that feels both relatable and thought-provoking. The drama seamlessly intertwines creativity with authenticity, offering insights into universal human experiences. Every moment resonates deeply with the audience, leaving a lasting, emotional impact that reflects the richness of life itself.

Indicator 9: Flexibility

The play encompasses diverse character types and differing viewpoints, displaying plot originality.

- Level 1 – Inadequate

The play shows little to no flexibility, with limited character types and perspectives portrayed. Most characters lack diversity, and their viewpoints and behaviors are often oversimplified or repetitive. The plot heavily relies on

predictable or conventional elements, lacking originality and adaptability to explore differing ideas or scenarios.

- Level 2 – Acceptable

The play begins to demonstrate flexibility by incorporating some variety in character traits and perspectives. While differing viewpoints are explored, they may not feel fully developed, and certain character types remain stereotypical or underutilized. The plot includes moments of originality but still relies on familiar narrative structures. Flexibility exists but does not consistently broaden the audience's understanding of diverse ideas or situations.

- Level 3 – Satisfactory

The play effectively showcases flexibility by presenting a diverse range of character types, each with distinct perspectives and roles. Differing viewpoints are thoughtfully explored and meaningfully connected to the narrative. The plot exhibits originality, bringing fresh ideas to the audience while avoiding reliance on clichés. Characters and perspectives interact dynamically, enriching the story and engaging the audience with varied themes and insights.

- Level 4 – Proficient

The play demonstrates exceptional flexibility, offering a rich tapestry of character types with nuanced and compelling perspectives. Differing viewpoints are seamlessly intertwined, deepening the narrative while encouraging empathy and understanding of complex issues. The plot brims with originality, showcasing innovative ideas and imaginative twists that keep the audience captivated. Every character and narrative element contributes dynamically to a multi-dimensional, thought-provoking drama that celebrates creativity and adaptability.

2.5 Domain A: Applicability

Indicator 10: Stage applicability

The play considers spatial usage and suitable scene changes, making it practical for stage production.

- Level 1 – Inadequate

The play demonstrates minimal consideration of stage practicality. Spatial usage is unclear or inefficient, with scenes feeling crowded or disconnected.

Transitions between scenes are abrupt or unplanned, disrupting the flow of the performance. The use of the stage and props shows little attention to whether the play is feasible to execute in a real-world production setting.

- **Level 2 – Acceptable**

The play shows some awareness of stage space and scene transitions. Basic spatial arrangements are functional, but certain areas of the stage may feel underused or overcomplicated. Scene changes are present but not seamlessly executed, occasionally causing disruptions to the performance's rhythm. While some thought has been given to stage production practicalities, improvements are needed for smooth execution and better audience experience.

- **Level 3 – Satisfactory**

The play effectively considers stage applicability, with thoughtful spatial usage and practical scene transitions. Performers utilize the stage dynamically and efficiently, while scene changes are clear and well-paced, supporting the narrative flow. Stage elements such as props and settings are realistically integrated, enhancing the feasibility of the performance. The play reflects a good understanding of the constraints and opportunities of live stage production.

- **Level 4 – Proficient**

The play is masterfully designed for stage applicability, showcasing innovative yet practical spatial arrangements. The stage is used to its fullest potential, with performers interacting dynamically across various areas to enhance engagement. Scene transitions are seamless, creative, and contribute to the storyline without disrupting momentum. Every element—from spatial usage to the economy of props and scenery—is thoughtfully designed to ensure smooth stage production. The performance exemplifies a high level of professional stagecraft.

3. The Transformative Power of the LETCA Rubric in Creative Drama

Creative drama is a transformative educational tool that fosters creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking in students through improvisation-based activities. The LETCA Rubric provides a comprehensive framework to assess the essential elements of creative drama, including Literature, Effective Lines, Tension, Creativity, and Stage Applicability. By focusing on nuanced indicators such as play structure, word choice, conflict development, and stage practicality, the rubric promotes a balanced and detailed evaluation process, ensuring that the educational objectives of

creative drama are met.

This framework encourages students to explore diverse perspectives, develop emotionally resonant narratives, and engage their audience through thoughtful character development and dynamic storytelling techniques. The stages of creative drama—contextual exploration, character-driven conflict, and structured resolution—offer students an opportunity to internalize real-world complexities while stretching the boundaries of their imagination. It also highlights the importance of collaboration, respect for differing viewpoints, and the ability to adapt and innovate.

Ultimately, the LETCA Rubric not only measures artistic expression but also reflects the potential of creative drama to cultivate essential 21st-century skills in learners. Its emphasis on emotional depth, technical skill, and thematic richness elevates creative drama into an impactful medium of personal growth and academic excellence, serving as a vital resource for educators across disciplines.

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