

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

---

General University of Maine Publications

University of Maine Publications

---

6-12-1998

## New Book Promotes Democracy, Power of Drama in Teaching

Kay Hyatt

*College of Education & Human Development, University of Maine*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/univ\\_publications](https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/univ_publications)



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [History Commons](#)

---

### Repository Citation

Hyatt, Kay, "New Book Promotes Democracy, Power of Drama in Teaching" (1998). *General University of Maine Publications*. 1846.

[https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/univ\\_publications/1846](https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/univ_publications/1846)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in General University of Maine Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact [um.library.technical.services@maine.edu](mailto:um.library.technical.services@maine.edu).

# COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

## *Selected News Releases*

### **New Book Promotes Democracy, Power of Drama in Teaching**

ORONO, Maine -- Drama brings democracy to learning, yet it's an under-used technique

in American classrooms, says an author of a new book that presents drama as a powerful and inclusive way of teaching abstract concepts, supporting reading and writing, and understanding different perspectives of life.

"Drama is not theater, and it's not about performance. It's exploration," says Jeffrey Wilhelm, assistant professor of literacy education at the University of Maine, who with colleague Brian Edmiston of Ohio State University wrote "Imagining To Learn: Inquiry, Ethics, and Integration Through Drama" (Heinemann 1998).

Drama is a widely accepted way of teaching in other countries, but in the United States, it is too often considered just fun and games, according to Wilhelm. The key isn't the drama itself, he explains, but what students learn through it. "Drama is a natural way of bringing up and dealing with issues and doing meaningful work together," he says.

"Imagining to Learn" moves drama into the mainstream of elementary and middle school teaching, learning and curriculum. It is filled with examples of how teachers and students can create circumstance and conditions that draw out abilities and questions.

The authors also present drama as a method of performance-based assessment and a way to engage students in research. Through drama, they say, students see what they are reading and learning, create mental models, and play out possibilities and consequences in a safe environment.

Students agree. Jessica Dvorak, now a high school sophomore from Old Town, Maine, who participated in a drama-in-education workshop with Wilhelm and Edmiston two years ago, wrote a forward to the book, as did National-Louis University professor of interdisciplinary studies James A. Beane. "Drama is a great way to learn," Jessica writes. "It's like reliving history. You remember what you learn much better -- as something you did rather than as something you heard in school."

And that, according to the authors, is why drama works.

**Released:** June 12, 1998

**Contact:** Kay Hyatt, (207) 581-2761

[Return to Selected News Releases](#)



This is an official publication of the University of Maine. If you have questions or comments, please contact the [Web Master](#). - Updated: 02/22/99