I LIKE TO BE ME:
A BOOK FOR SMALL CHILDREN--
THE PROCESS AND PRODUCT

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Master of Science in Counseling

By
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TABLE OF CONTENTS
Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter I: Introduction</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter II: Related Literature</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General References</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Movement Materials</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Records</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Books</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Films</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter III: Methodology</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Process</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing and Conceptualization</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revision and Finalization</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter IV: Results</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Like To Be Me</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References

vi
Chapter I

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this thesis was to write a children's book about body and self image development through movement and to become involved in a heuristic method of design in order to experience and record the ongoing creative process.

I Like to Be Me (Singer, 1972), the children's book, is Chapter IV of this thesis. The description of the heuristic process is reported in Chapters I, II, and III. Chapter I focuses upon the background and significance of body and self image development on the psychological and sociological levels. Chapter II reports the literature and materials utilized throughout the process. Finally, Chapter III relates the procedures involved in writing and revising the book.

Background

Body Movement in Elementary Schools

Body movement and awareness is natural and vital but it is consistently neglected and overlooked in counseling and education. A growing child learns about himself and his world through his senses, and through
experiencing himself in the world as a total moving being. Movement is universal and is primary to the experience of growth. In the first days of life the infant must move to survive. For example, he must open and close his mouth in the sucking reflex. As he grows this movement progresses into push and pull, into expansion and contraction, and into give and take. He learns his capabilities as he stands and walks. As he bumps into table legs he begins to learn that objects cannot take up the same space in the same moment. The child learns his limitations through contact with external stimuli as he moves through space.

The child also expresses needs, feelings, and thoughts through movement. Mouth, tongue, larynx, etc. are involved in verbal speech. Nonverbal expression involves the whole body. An excited child must shake, wiggle, push, and pull about. It is impossible for an excited child to be still. Excitement is both a psychological and physical phenomenon, manifested through movement which expresses how and who a child is at a given moment.

The goal of this thesis is to find a way to help children keep in touch with their natural movement and to help them develop a positive sense of body/self image. The means toward this goal is the formulation of a book which could serve as a teaching and counseling tool for
the early elementary school teacher. This book will help the teacher focus upon the body/self concept with small children.

Most teachers do not have training or personal experience in body awareness and movement. Nor do they have training in the psychological concept of self. Training programs and public schools divide the development of body/self into cognitive skills and physical skills. Thus in the classroom the child is taught to read and write and in the school yard he is taught physical skills as particular activities which are done within certain game structures. The physical skills such as kicking and throwing balls, jumping in, out, and over objects are taught with the attitude that they are acquisitions or achievements separate from the development of the child as an integrated body/self individual. The emphasis is upon the skill as something to do in order to succeed in games and to play with other children. It is not taught as something fun to do because it feels good and provides pleasure. The child takes pleasure in the interaction of kicking the ball to a friend. He also experiences the impact and reactions of his foot making contact with the ball. The child feels his foot kick the ball, he watches it fly, and enjoys the feel of his arms, legs, and torso following through after the contact with
the ball. As a skill it is something he has learned to do. As a self-experience it provides the child with stimulation, pleasure, and information about how he is put together, i.e. his leg moves forward to kick. But he can find out more about himself by experimenting with other ways to work with the ball. The child may experience something like this:

It is also fun to kick the ball into the air, or to lie on my back and use my legs to toss and manipulate the ball. I feel wobbly crossing my legs around the ball and walking. I learn that I can't run with my legs around the ball because I fall down and the ball slips away. I discover many things about myself in relation to the ball.

It is through this kind of body/self exploration that the child learns about his own natural movement as basic to an integrated body/self individual.

However, body awareness experiences are not readily available in most public elementary schools. Creative dance is not offered in many schools. Teachers interested in body/self awareness have little training in this field primarily because curriculum for elementary education does not include such courses. A few teachers sporadically use games such as mirroring and isolation when the children are restless or tired. Mirroring is simply the game of one child pretending to be a mirror copying the motions of the child looking into the mirror. Isolation is similar but focuses on body parts. Children
copy the actions of another person, teacher or child, as he isolates and moves one part of his body at a time. Mirroring and isolation are useful tools but are not sufficient. As imitative devices they require continual projection and second-guessing by the participants. They also do not encourage integration of body parts into a whole. "I." It is interesting that most school children can quote geographical locations of all the states in the United States but few can locate where his leg bone fits into his hip socket or where his own head sits on his spine. The child can produce a map of places he has never visited but he is not aware of his own self-geography and topography. It seems evident that most public schools are poorly equipped to aid the young child in forming positive body/self image.

Mind-Body Dichotomy

The technological age has accepted a dichotomy between Man's Mind and Man's Body. Academic study has been classified accordingly. There are the physical/natural sciences and the social/behavioral sciences. Consequently scientists and professionals perceive human beings as accumulations of physical and mental parts. For each known part there is a corresponding professional who is considered to be its expert. Physicians are experts on physical ailments; psychologists' expertise is with the human mind. Classroom teachers know how to
teach intellectual skills. Physical education teachers know how to teach physical skills. The dichotomy permeates our whole system manifesting itself in the perceptions of the individual. A person not in touch with internal signs clings to the expert's opinion about how and who he is; a mind or a body. Patients see themselves as physical or mental patients. Students see themselves either as intellectual brains or athletic bodies. Few people integrate the two classifications.

Body awareness attempts a resolution of the mind/body dichotomy by helping the individual focus upon body/self signals which tell him he is tired, excited, angry, bored, tense, satisfied, content, etc. Each person has internal signals which involve structural, visceral, and labyrinthine systems. All these systems function as indicators of a person's present state of being. As indicators they are the internal signals for the individual. The example of an excited child is still appropriate. The term excitement is ambiguous to the child, but in it he is in touch with his internal signals, knows he simply cannot sit still, and that there is too much internal energy bubbling. His internal signals relay excitement, mental and physical; there is no distinction. His excitement is total.

However, it seems that teachers who provide external orders for the child to make a mind-body distinction. For
example, the child's classroom teacher perceives him as Mind and continually tells the child to THINK. His physical education teacher perceives him as Body and instructs him to run, to DO. The external signals do not tell him to "think" and "do" his excitement as a total state of being. The discrepancy between the child's own internal signals and the external messages from his teacher is a contradiction which causes the child confusion about who, what, and how he is. For one teacher he is requested to be a Mind, for the other teacher he is requested to be a Body. He is not expected, nor allowed to manifest both at one time. The paradox is that no person is one or the other; he is both and more, mixed together and integrated into one whole body/self (Perls, 1969).

Body/self awareness, the identification of oneself as an integrated body and self, focuses on the internal signals which tell a person where, how, and who he is at any given moment within himself and in relation to the outside world. Basic to body/self awareness is movement. Movement and motion are universal laws (Whitehouse, 1962). Everything from stars to molecules is in constant and perpetual motion. Life is movement. Human beings breathe in, out, rest; in, out, rest. Even during the resting phase of breathing a more internal breathing process occurs. As social beings our communication and sensory organs are always moving. The sense organs which pick up
and relay environment stimuli (eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and skin) move to carry out the functions of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling. Life means movement. To know ourselves as alive, vital creatures, it is necessary to be in touch with ourselves as moving beings.

An individual knows his motion, weight and position in space through the proprioceptive system. Mabel Todd (1959) in *The Thinking Body* provides an excellent description of the system:

> Altogether, the proprioceptive system, acting in conjunction with all the outer senses, serves to guide our total reaction to the outside world in terms of motion toward or away from particular objects, and to give us our ideas of space and time. More than any other factor the proprioceptive system is responsible for the appearance of the individual as an organized unit when he is moving about (p. 27).

The proprioceptive sensations are classified into three general groups. Movement feeling, called kinesthesia occurs through skeletal and muscular structures. Sensations recording the position of body/self in relation to earth and the direction of movement in space are recorded through the labyrinthine system. The third grouping of the proprioceptive system processes miscellaneous impressions from the internal organs and is called the visceral system. It is the proprioceptive system which tells us when, where, and who each individual is in his environment. This system is the first to respond to gut-level stimulation with energy in the form of an impulse to act.
Cultural and social mores either permit or block the initial impulse. If the impulse is permitted the energy is released and the system is clear for fresh energy impulses. If blocked the energy is locked into the individual as tension or fatigue. Some theorists such as Alexander Lowen (1967) and Fritz Perls (1969) suggest that continuous free-flowing energy is possible in individuals. If psychic and physical energy is thought of as being the same thing, the following example might illustrate the energy concept.

I have an impulse to hug my husband. I reach out, hug him until the hugging energy is released and let go. If my hug is not accepted or if I block the impulse, I am frustrated.

The continual blockage of regular impulses builds fatigue and tension which most people do not know how to alleviate. They are aware of being tense, restless, or tired but cannot identify the feeling of restlessness nor the source of the blocked energy.

Many adults lose touch with their need for "physical stroking." They do not know that their fatigue and tension comes from blocked impulses, that these impulses are forms of self-stimulation. For example, the business executive loses touch with his legs: he no longer walks or runs. He loses touch with his upper arms and shoulders: he forgets how to react and hug. Soon he is only in touch with his hungry stomach. His hunger is the only actual reminder that he is alive. He has atrophied. No longer
does he perceive himself to be a vital, active, alive human being. He is a manipulated computer. Inaccessible to him are his sensory and reality-testing abilities of feeling and circulation which register his here and now existence.

**Significance**

**Developmental Considerations**

As a baby grows from infancy to childhood and into adolescence he separates himself from external objects, mother, father, and siblings to define himself as a unique self. Jung (1968) refers to this phenomenon as the "process of individuation." As the child separates to develop self, he also learns his own body limits, his form, shape, and movement; he forms a body image which is basic to his self-image. His body/self image develops as he moves through the world, problem-solving, defining objects such as chairs and steps, and working relationships with people. As he finds out about himself in his environment, he feels himself—in the world—as a separate being in space. This conception is necessary for the development of his confidence and ability to take pleasure and joy in his being and life (Lowen, 1970).

**Environmental Considerations**

Body awareness and movement are constricted by physical and environmental limits and by social mores.
Physically, restrictions in everyday urban life cause movement to become more and more limited. An individual is limited to sitting in a chair or to walking to the car in which he might drive to the recreation area for 15 minutes of jogging or ball-playing. It is a general observation that housing and apartment spaces are small and usually do not allow for running, leaping, or rolling.

**Social Considerations**

Human movement is also constricted by social mores, primarily sexual. Women and men have socially accepted ways of sitting. For example, women may cross their legs at the ankles or at the knees, if they keep their legs together. Men have more freedom to sit with their legs apart, crossed, stretched out or upon a chair or desk. Other sexual and social mores constricting movement lie around physical contact with other persons. When one person bumps into another, he extends an apology for the intrusion. That is, physical contact is often thought of as an intrusion. Hall (1969) in *The Hidden Dimension* explains the concept of personal and public space and how individual’s private space is to be protected and can only be entered with specific permission.

Many social critics talk about lonely, faceless people living in an age of anxiety and fear. This fear is reflected in our inability to give and accept physical stroking. These effects are described by Jourard (1968)
in *Disclosing Man To Himself*. He describes acceptable male and female zones for physical contact. It is interesting to trace the gradual increase in restricted zones of contact as an infant develops into adulthood. It is evident that infants and babies are given a great amount of physical stroking. As they become small children and preadolescents physical contact as a form of stroking is replaced by verbal and material reinforcements. A child loses the physical stroking as an aid to developing a conception of his body limits and zones. He also forgets the pleasure of feeling and the knowledge that he is the source of his pleasurable sensations. The implications are obvious. The limiting of physical contact leads into a description and explanation of our current affectional system which is not the purpose of this thesis.

The purpose of this thesis is to write a children's book and to experience and report the creative process of accomplishing that goal. This chapter has been one part of the recording process in that it has discussed the intellectual ideas and observations which contributed to the decision to design the children's book as a tool to encourage body and self image development.
CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE
Chapter II

Related Literature

Because the thesis problem was to write a children's book about body and self-image development through movement and to report the heuristic process of design it was decided to report the literature and materials used to accomplish this goal by an annotated bibliography.

General References


This is a short article pointing to the importance of movement as a form of nonverbal communication. Campbell says that heart palpitating, blushing, are gestures and signals and are representations of unconscious images.


Dr. Cheney tells of her experience as a "therapee" in Whitehouse's movement therapy, "movement in depth," and how it has carried over into her personal and teaching life.

Foster, Walter T. Anatomy, Anatomy For Students and Teachers. Tustin, Calif.: Foster Art Service, Inc.

This anatomy book for artists has excellent skeletal and muscular illustrations and can be used as supplement material to body image work with adults and small children.

This book is a layman's guide to sensory awareness. Photographs illustrate many sensory, relaxation, and body movement exercises described by Gunther.


Hall introduces the study of proxemics and develops ideas about public and private space, their uses and relationships, and the implications for communication and movement to individuals and groups.


Hall examines communication variables such as time and space which change from culture to culture.


This is a readable source book written for laymen on child development.


This book is an attempt by Jung and his associates to explain Jungian psychology to the general public.


As a study based on an existential-phenomenological tradition, this book is an attempt to describe and explain the world of the schizophrenic. The schizoid perception is explained in terms of disembodiment and a false-self system.

In this book Lowen begins formulating ideas and techniques of bio-energetic therapy.


Lowen presents basic bio-energetic concepts, discusses ego image and body image in schizoid and schizophrenic individuals. Lowen's premise is that body is sensation and must feel alive for an individual to function pleasurably.


Neisser provides theoretical analysis of ideas dealing with auditory perception, visual perception, and information processing as he develops his own theory.


As an autobiography, Perls presents a fascinating display of his own self-awareness. The book also becomes an illustration of gestalt principles.


The first chapters provide a very clear account of gestalt therapy and its philosophical history. The rest of the book reports sessions of Perls working with individuals in dreamwork seminars.


As a cooperative endeavor, the authors provide gestalt philosophy, information, and experiential exercises which form a theory and method of psychotherapy.

This research paper discusses methods of reducing neuromuscular tension through relaxation techniques and records tests of a relaxation method developed by Schade to be used in physical education and therapeutic situations.


This is an excellent and readable explanation of kinesthesia, balance, mechanical and skeletal forces of the body.


This article records the philosophical and existential development of Mary Whitehouse as a performing dancer to Mary Whitehouse as a movement therapist.

Whitehouse, Mary. Creative expression in physical movement is language without words. Paper read before the special course in Creativity for Teachers, University of California, Riverside, March, 1966.

In this lecture, Whitehouse illustrates some methods for self-awareness. The Whitehouse method does not focus upon changing oneself but focuses upon awareness of oneself in the moment.


Whitehouse describes various movement experiences "as points of revelation in a process of developing awareness." The related experiences illustrate how closure, decisions, and unconscious material becomes apparent through movement.

Whitehouse, Mary. The tao of the body. Paper read before the Analytical Psychology Club of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, 1962.
This is the first of the above three lectures in which Whitehouse begins articulating her philosophical approach to "movement in depth," a movement therapy.

Body Movement Materials


This is an excellent source for ways to begin movement with children.


Capon suggests a developmental program emphasizing kinesthetic development. He focuses on learning skills with the use of inexpensive equipment such as balls, tires, and bars.


This is a good source book for teaching movement to boys. It is particularly applicable to boys during latency.


As a source book for teachers and students, Modern Dance provides many suggestions for exploring five basic movement concepts.

Records


Written for early elementary school age children, this record of music emphasizes songs about movement and development.

This is a record for elementary school children emphasizing movement and body parts.


This children's record provides various songs and rhythms which children enjoy.

Children's Books


This is an excellent book for small children. Illustrated with photographs, it focuses upon basic human feelings in childhood situations with which elementary school age children easily identify.


This is a beautifully illustrated small children's book about a young colt who overcame his fear of cows.


This is an excellent book for small children about a retarded girl who is accepted by family, teachers, and finally by herself.


This is a story about a lion who decides to be his happy, jovial self rather than a fancy, dandy lion.

This is a children's book about pretending to be animals in movement. This is the only small children's book I've seen which focuses in any way upon body movement.


Incidents and objects which are often frightening to a small child are described and delightfully illustrated in this book.


As a reading readiness tool, this book requires adult and child actions to complete the stories. This book was useful when I was exploring ways of presenting ideas of motion.


As an illustrated book for older children describing habitat and movement of various animals it was useful for illustration ideas.


This is an illustrated small children's book identifying words and objects which was also useful for illustration ideas.


For sixth to eighth grades, this book is a detailed and sophisticated presentation of physiological functioning. It contains diagrams and illustrations.

Written for third through sixth grades, this book is another example of ways to present concepts to children.


This book is written for early elementary school children and is another example of presenting scientific ideas to children.


Sendak has provided a beautifully illustrated children's book pointing out that fears of monsters, goblins, and "wild things" are in our imagination.

Singer, Ilana. *I Like To Be Me.* Berkeley, Calif.: Singer and Hodges, 1972.

The development of this book is the subject of this thesis.

**Films**


This is a documentary film of Janet Adler's use of dance therapy to treat handicapped and emotionally disturbed children.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY
Chapter III

Methodology

My thesis problem was to write a children's book about body/self image and to experience an ongoing creative process. Since I had never written a book for children or adults I had no specific ideas of how to structure my project. It was difficult to clarify what I wanted to say to children. However, experiential learning and problem solving has always provided me with information and ideas with which I am able to formulate concepts and procedures. Consequently, my data collection became a free-flowing spontaneous action which did not require preset methodology.

The Process

The first step in writing the book was to decide for whom it would be written: junior high, high school, pre-school or elementary school age children. I decided upon early elementary school age primarily because positive body and self image development is most crucial during the younger ages and because I am familiar with that age.

The next decision I had to make was to whom the text was to be directed. The three alternatives were:
(a) a guidebook on how to teach body/self image development, or (b) a story which children would be able to read, or (c) a bedtime story to be read by parents. This was a difficult decision. As the book developed and the form of verse evolved, its purpose and direction became more apparent. Verses can be read by sophisticated first graders, can be understood by pre-schoolers, and can be used as a tool by teachers, parents, librarians, and counselors. Thus the text of the book is directed to the understanding and enjoyment of early elementary children. However, the adaptability and activity function of the book is directed toward the adult others in a child's life.

Once the decision to write for elementary school age was made, I began working with kindergarten and first graders. I anticipated leading children into a free-flowing experience with adult straight forward messages such as, "our heads move round and round, our eyes blink, and our toes wiggle." These suggestions worked to stimulate the children into independent movement activity around the room so that children were jumping from chairs, crawling in, out, and under desks. The children enjoyed it greatly, but their teachers only looked on with disapproval.

The teachers' primary concern was that the activity lend itself to the classroom structure allowing teacher
control. It was at this time that I began understanding and recognizing reasons for pretend games and images. Games which are used as teaching tools provide an educational framework to guide and direct individual energy. It helps a child zero in or focus upon the task at hand.

With this thought beginning to crystalize, I started working with a group of 10 first graders. We met twice a week for 45 minutes each session. Our purpose was to explore body and self-image through movement. One of my goals was to explore ways to provide a framework for movement in classrooms and counseling groups. I found the children to be stimulated by images of moving things: animals, vehicles, pretend and fantasy characters. They loved pretending to be all kinds of different things. They were eager to demonstrate and verbalize the images. But they were self-conscious and too inhibited to demonstrate or verbalize their own movement or selves. When I presented images first and then led the children into self-disclosure, movements, and feelings, the children showed great receptivity to showing and being themselves in the moment. I found that by beginning with the external world and leading to the internal, children were more receptive to self-exploration. Consequently the book took the form of two sequences: first, the pretend images, and second, the self-images. The first
sequence is intended to give the child an opportunity to focus upon the external world. The second sequence directs the child toward his own movement and awareness.

**Writing and Conceptualization**

The actual writing of the book occurred over a 5-month period. I began by writing in the first person, examining from a child's viewpoint different approaches to self and body. One approach was to watch my neighbor's baby and to verbalize my projections of her actions.

For example:

My hands bang the floor when I lie on my tummy. My feet like to pound the floor too. The floor feels cool. I like it. I like to pound my hands on the cool floor.

Another example of my verbalizing the baby's actions follows:

My hands have five fingers. They taste good. I like to suck them. Sometimes I like to bite them. My fingers feel my soft cuddly blanket.

Another approach was to remember intriguing phrases my children had said during their early childhood such as, "I want to show everybody me." Working from this phrase, I began developing body image concepts such as:

Here I am.

This is my head. It gets lots of ideas. It is connected to my neck.

This is my neck. It is connected to my chest.
Here is my chest.

These are my shoulders. My arms are attached to my shoulders.

This is my middle. It's especially happy when it's full of chocolate milk.

These are my hips; they like to wiggle. My legs come out of my hips.

And here are my feet. They're particularly important 'cause I stand on them. They help me balance.

I am this tall and this wide.

I am me and I want to show you me.

With the help of my adviser and movement teacher, I began defining categories of movement according to how children think of movement. Touching and exploring as the baby did is one classification. In place movement such as stamping, wiggling, and blinking is another. Still another is locomotor movements, going from here to there. There are many ways to go: crawling, scooting, walking, running, sliding, jumping, etc.

From Here to There

I want to go from here to there.

How shall I go?

Shall I crawl? or scoot and slide?

Shall I walk? fast or slow?

    high or low?

Shall I run? straight and tall?

    or hunched and low?
The several concepts: body image, locomotor movement, and function of pretend images started fitting together into short phrases such as:

I'd like to be a wheel, rolling down the hill.
I'd like to be a ball, bouncing up and down.
I'd like to be a fish, swimming across the sea.
I'd like to be a lion, lying in the sun.
I'd like to be a leopard, leaping up into the air.
I'd like to be a snake, slinking through the grass.
But most of all I like to be me.
... jumping down the stairs.
... wiggling in the chair.
... riding on daddy's back.
... snuggled in mommy's lap.
I like to be me.

The above phrases have been the basic foundation of the book. They grew and expanded into the verses presently used.

Revision and Finalization

Once the original images shaped into verses, I wanted feedback from children. I asked two other people
to use the book with children. The first usage was made
by a neighboring family. The father read the book in
loose-leaf non-illustrated form to his two sons, ages five
and seven. After reading, the father asked the boys, "Do
you like that story?" The boys said, "Yes."

Father: "What would you like to be?"
Eric: "A ball."
Darian: "A lion."

This incident occurred in the late afternoon. That evening
the mother wrote down the following responses of her sons:

Eric talked about being a scary
monster. Then he tried being a horse and
then he was a cat. He said that he wouldn't
like to roll in the mud. He loved butting
like a ram. He experimented with being
an alligator and a snake, wondered how
tiger stripes would feel. Eric says clowns
have "flumpy" pants. He walked around in
them to show me what flumpy meant. His
superman cape became eagle wings and by
swishing it over high things he could fly
over them.

The mother said that the reported discussion came about
spontaneously, i.e. the boys began talking about the
images on their own. Her opinion was that the evening
conversation and activity was stimulated by the book.

The book was used as a tool by a body movement
teacher who led a group of eight girls and one boy once
weekly. She read the verses to the children and observed
their reactions. All the children liked the seal, bird,
monkey, leaf, inchwork, jackrabbit, clown, and monster.

Special reactions the teacher reported follow:

**Seal:** One girl really got into that, clapping, arfing and sliding.

**Rag Mop:** The children mainly laughed.

**Clown:** The kids giggled and laughed. It seemed that they picked up on the last words of the verse.

**Scary Monster:** All the children loved pretending to be the monster.

**Bouncing Ball:** The children got small and stretched tall but soon started jumping in order to be a ball.

**But most of all I like to be me:** The children walked around, each doing something different.

One phrase was included in the image sequence which has since been changed. It follows:

My legs behind me  
My arms stretched in front  
Rocking back and forth  
I am a horse of course.

The children had a difficult time with this verse. The teacher reported that "they got down on their hands and knees and tried to rock but quickly became galloping horses romping around the room."

The movement teacher also used a sequence different from the current "I Like To Be Me" sequence. Certain problems became evident which I will discuss below. The original sequence follows:
I like to be me climbing up a tree
... running along the sea.
I like to be me jumping down the stairs
... blowing bubbles in the air.
I like to be me feeling sand on my feet.
I like to be me wrestling with my brother
on the grass.
I like to be me stamping in rain puddles
to make a big splash.
I like to be me with a wrinkled nose
and medium size toes.
I like to be me riding on daddy's back.
I like to be me snuggled in mommy's lap.
I just like to be
Me.

The movement teacher reported that the bubbles phrase was good because the kids could do many things with the idea. One eight-year-old child responded to "snuggled in mommy's lap" by saying, "I'm too old for that." However, some of the verses the teacher did not read to the children because she anticipated bedlam. For instance, running along the sea, jumping down stairs, and wrestling would provide permission for wild behavior. Essentially this is the same problem of control about which the kindergarden and first grade teachers were concerned.

With the movement teacher's observations in mind I took the same verse sequence in loose-leaf nonillustrated form to a first grade class and gathered together the whole
class, about 25 children. I read each verse to the whole group and asked for a volunteer "to do what the verse makes you want to do." There were volunteers for each verse. The most popular verses were the monster, clown, bird, monkey, and jackrabbit. The children were also eager to portray the verses of the "I Like To Be Me" sequence. It was difficult for the children to portray movement with objects in the verses of: "climbing a tree, feeling sand on my feet, riding on daddy's back, snuggled in mommy's lap." I also did not read, "I like to be me wrestling with my brother on the grass" because I feared the possibility of wrestling in the classroom.

I asked the children what they thought about the book. They liked it. I asked specifically what they liked and what they didn't like. One girl, Margaret, didn't like the inchworm. She also commented that, "it's a quiet book, one I'd like to read by myself or with a friend to do the things." Another girl said, "I'd like to read the whole thing by myself and do everything." One boy thanked me for coming and said on behalf of everyone, "We like your book."

Two teachers observed the activity. One said, "The children's statements are valid about what they liked and didn't like." Some of the less mature children were restless. The teacher thought that if the book had been in illustrated form, it would have held their interest
more. The other teacher said, "The kids liked it, those who were listening were really into it . . . even my own older daughters would like some of those verses." The head teacher and I discussed the idea of making the verses simpler. Her opinion was that older first and second graders might be bored by a simpler version, "because that age works with adjectives and descriptions."

Another viewpoint came from a children's librarian. She thought this book would be useful during children's story hour for dispelling restless energy and encouraging active participation. The librarian's observations focused upon length and complexity of the verses. For the pre-school audience to whom she acts as a story teller, she would shorten the verses. Her opinion was that the young listener flashes upon simpler images. For example, when a small child hears the word monkey he instantly visualizes his own version of monkey and doesn't wait for further description. She also suggested that illustrations were crucial because this book would be shelved with picture books. She emphasized their importance. Her opinion was that large, clear, soft illustrations were most appealing to the picture book population. The illustrator, Phil Singer, agreed with the librarian's opinion and drew the pictures in a clear, soft way.

As an outcome of the two experiments and the
librarian's desire to utilize the activity of the book, I changed the "I like to be me" sequence completely. However, the original pretend image sequence remains. The changes are to suggest movements which can be done easily in a classroom or library setting without props.

Conclusion

Freedom and guidance were necessary components of the creative process design of this thesis. These components provided a framework in which I could comfortably explore and experiment with my intellectual and artistic impulses. The result of this process, I Like To Be Me, (Singer, 1972) is one children respond to and one of which I am proud. The process and product has helped me to develop my writing abilities and to develop my own problem-solving methods. Working within an open-ended process structure has been exciting and rewarding. I recommend it as a means to academic and personal growth.
CHAPTER IV

I LIKE TO BE ME
Chapter IV

I Like To Be Me

This chapter consists of the book, *I Like To Be Me*, (Singer, 1972).
I like to be me
I like to be me

by
Ilana Singer
illustrated by
Philip Singer
Note to Teachers, Librarians, and Counselors:

As an activity book, I Like To Be Me, is intended to be a teaching and counseling book for body and self image development in primary school age children. One way of presenting the material is the listen and do method. After reading a verse to the children, ask for volunteers to act out their impressions of the verse. As the children work with the images they explore many possibilities for movement. Through activity and discussion, each child strengthens his self and body image.

This book is particularly appropriate in classroom and group counseling situations. It may also be offered during Story Hour by children's librarians who wish to provide young readers with a variety of book and library experiences.

To Lisa and Julianne
and
Mrs. Hawkins’ First Grade Class
Sometimes I pretend to be...
I pretend to be a soaring bird.
I puff out my chest
Flap my wings
And glide high up in the sky.
I'd like to be a jackrabbit
I would flop my ears, wiggle my nose
and hop, hop, hop
        with my great big toes.
I pretend I am a leaf
blowing in the wind.
I swirl and twirl and
float down to the ground.
I want to be a ball
Bouncing up and down,
So I make myself round and small.
Then I get very tall.
I pretend I am a bouncing ball.
A monkey I pretend to be
Playing happily in a tree.
My strong arms and legs
Push off to swing from
This branch to another.
Sometimes I pretend to be a scary Monster.
As I come near
I lurch and stagger
Growl and sneer.
I'd like to be a galloping pony
Neighing and tossing my head
in the wind.
When I pretend to be an inchworm
I bend up small and tight
Then stretch out very long
And inch along the ground.
Sometimes I pretend to be a rag mop.
I flop and drop onto the ground
Then I shake and wriggle and roll around.
I'd like to be a lion lying in the sun.
So I stretch my legs, fingers, and toes
Then I rub my back, and wiggle my nose.
I pretend I am a lolling lion.
I'd like to be a seal
Slipping into the sea.
My flippers and tail
Push the water away
So that I can roll and play.
Sometimes I like to be a clown
With big floppy feet.
I run and skip and fall on my seat.

(I make my friends giggle and laugh.)
I'd like to be a pussycat.
Arching my back and rubbing against a tree
I purr and curl up in the sun to sleep.
But most of all

. . . . I like to be ME!
I like to be me
  crawling along the ground.

... jumping up and down.
I like to be me
hopping from here to there.

... leaping high into the air.
I like to be me
skipping down the street.

... stamping my feet.
I like to be me stretching very tall.

I like to be me making myself very small.
I like to push and pull with my arms and legs.
I like to open and close my hands.
I like to be me moving very fast.
I like to be me
not moving at all.
I just like to be ... Me.
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