



DRAMA IN EDUCATION- MANAGING LEARNING THROUGH DRAMA

Dr. Radhika Inamdar

& Prof. Rajshree Rathod (Page 25-31)

Tilak College of Education, Pune

SRJIS IMPACT FACTOR SJIF 2015: 5.401

Date of Issue Release: 04/03/2017,

Volume: SRJIS, Jan-Feb, 2017, 4/30

ABSTRACT

Drama in education reflects a shift from over emphasis on informational content to a more balanced inclusion of attention to the processing of ideas. Every teaching and learning experience is about trying to define a context. This is what makes educational drama such an effective tool for the teaching of history. Drama can provide the teacher with situations that help to promote discussion and to clarify ideas and points of view. It also enables teachers to lead children towards a position where they can take on the role of a historian as a commentator on, and critic of, evidence and interpretations. It is also clear to us that drama can help in the development of children's writing, 'whole-class teaching, small group work, and educational drama, can be used to promote children's analytical and empathetic writing, rather than just oral fluency and confidence'. The present paper explains drama as an important tool to learning effectively for students especially the special students.

Key- Words: Drama, Education, Learning, Special Needs



Scholarly Research Journal's is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com

INTRODUCTION

Burton asserts that "Drama is a way of exploring and understanding the world. In common with language arts, it teaches communication skills and the use of language and the imagination. Like physical education, it involves physical development and co-ordination, and it shares with art an interest in creativity and self-expression". It is about exploring – discovering and creating – and about performing. Principally, especially in the primary years it is about creating models – models of behavior and action that can be practiced and performed safely. There are many reasons for children to participate in drama in the early years of their education. Because young children explore their world and new concepts through play, then they need to be given opportunities in a relatively controlled environment to do so. The naturalness, delight and ingenuousness of young children's play can be transferred into the formal learning environment of the classroom through drama. Drama is a natural extension of the play of small children. Through play, young children explore their world, allay fears, come to define their relationships with people, try out emerging abilities, and become aware of themselves through comparison with others. As drama, and related

activities are usually based on life situations, including stories, myths and legends, historical events, relationships and social issues, then children need occasions to explore their existence through drama. It is a performance art using movement and speech. They (children) use voice and movement, sometimes simultaneously, or separately as in mime or spoken dialogue. Through the key processes of role, pretense and imaginary projection, they gain insight into the way that other people think, feel and behave. They may also speculate on their own responses and behavior in a variety of situations. Drama is the enactment of real and imagined events through roles and situations. It enables both individuals and groups, to explore, shape and symbolically represent ideas and feelings and their consequences. Drama is the exploration of ideas and feelings through improvisation and acting, involves the enactment of real or imagined events and experiences. It is a collaborative art form through which students use their imagination and creativity to explore, respond to and learn about the world. Learning in drama is often understood to develop such qualities as empathy, self-confidence, self-control, respect and tolerance for others, the ability to concentrate, to listen and to work constructively in groups. It should be noted that role play is not the only activity in which children participate in drama. Drama in schools covers a broad range of activities including improvisation, role-play, text interpretation, theatrical performances and stagecraft. It draws on elements of dramatic play such as spontaneity, imagination, role-playing, exploration and free association of ideas and action. It should be remembered when planning the drama component of the Performing Arts program that all facts of drama need to involve students in both creative and practical problem-solving processes as they develop and use physical, cognitive and technical skills. In essence, it unites the affective and concrete realms. For these reasons alone, the implementation of arts in the early years of a child's education should be recommended if not mandated. This is why teachers should be able to create activities within units of work, that link the three disciplines together.

LEARNING FROM WITHIN THE DRAMA

The process of learning through being involved in dramatic contexts may be greatly enhanced by the teacher entering into the improvisations, interacting with the young people involved, in order to stir up disturbed expectations or state views or pinpoint aspects of the situation which the students yet may not have considered. This involves teaching as the part of the context; in other words the teacher works in role inside the context using his or her own communications in the symbolic dimensions of the drama in order to assist teaching which will enter into the real dimension of children's learning about the content.

In drama the teacher is also offering the protection that comes from the activity not real, hence, mistakes may be made and challenges may be given without real consequences as would happen in life. The make believe of fiction form provides some distance for the students from their own, possibly, painful immediate experience and identity. Language development through improvisation definitely takes place in drama activity and language development does influence and is also influenced by all other areas of development i.e. social, emotional, cultural, intellectual, etc.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

By carefully constructing the context of an improvisation, the teacher is able to manage by working in the role for helping students to reflect on the experience so that there is a movement from action and talk embedded in a specific context. Thus the teacher is able to-

1. Define the space
2. Make different uses of register, tone, vocabulary and thus encourage the language development
3. Respond authentically to student behavior
4. Refer to significant aspects of the context in a reflective way
5. Challenge stereotypical expectations of the context
6. Encourage and support participation in the improvisation technique.

HOW TO USE DRAMA IN THE CLASSROOM

Putting on plays for an audience is not what is meant by using drama in the classroom. The goal is not to teach acting and performance skills. The goal is to teach the core curricular areas using drama. BettyJane Wagner, an internationally recognized authority on composition instruction and the educational uses of drama, states of the purpose of role play, "The role playing is improvisational, not scripted and memorized to present a performance for an audience. The emphasis is on drama as an intentional teaching strategy to enhance learning in a particular curricular area". There are many ways in which drama can be integrated into the elementary classroom. Drama can be a way to teach all subject areas. Language arts, social studies, and science are subject areas, which are very successful in using drama. Role-play can be a very powerful teaching tool. This and different aspects of drama can be used to teach all the curriculum areas. Holly Giffin writes, "In the field of education there is tension between the growing concern that children meet external, culturally-approved standards and the growing body of research and theory suggesting that learning is far more complex and

individualized than the standard-makers ever thought".Educators must take this into consideration when teaching children.

WHY TO TEACH DRAMA?

Drama can be used in practically any key learning area.

1. Children learn through play,from the moment they are born. Drama is a natural extension of such play, but in acontrolled situation.
2. Drama provides children, with an alternative means tomake decisions, test their theories through words and actions and then evaluate whatthey have done.
3. Educationalists throughout the world recognize the importance of creative play in theway children learn and therefore the classroom teacher is encouraged to direct children's organized play into problem-solving and social situations.
4. Drama supports children in becoming self-active learners, improvising, using their imagination and inventing and discovering ways to cope with problems.
5. Drama supports the all-round growth of children, especially in the matter of sensitivity towards and understanding of others.
6. Drama can be used as a practical method of teaching, at times serving many purposes; to convey and consolidate factual knowledge, create an awareness of cultures and customs, and enhance an interest in literature. Drama stimulates and raises the language acquisition of children and promotes learning across all key learning areas as children endeavor to explore and understand their world.
7. Drama aids in the teaching of communication skills, it develops the fundamental human capacities of identification and empathy and emphasizes a co-operative approach to learning.
8. It supports children in their understanding of the world around them, particularly their relationships with other people and the implications of their actions on them.
9. Drama assists children to appreciate the significance of thefacts they have been taught by allowing them to participate through role play, events that have happened in the past.
10. Drama encourages children in their natural desire to move and explore their space and to travel freely through this space without colliding with others.Drama activities develop an awareness of the different levels – high, low, middle, aswell as a sense of rhythm, moving in time with a beat.

11. Through Drama children develop the skills of: trust, working in small groups, exploring and experimenting with different roles, imitating movements of others, and using imagination in response to music, voice, sounds and story.

DRAMA AND SPECIAL NEEDS

a) Ways to use drama:

1. Tell the stories of those whose stories have been systematically suppressed.
2. Ensure those stories are told and shared initially by and within the culture.
3. Respect those stories so they don't become the playthings of entertainment or exhibition but belong to the cultures from which they spring.
4. Provide a language or system of signs by which sense and meaning can be made out of a world that is often meaning less.

b) Principles underlying drama and special needs:

1. Partnership
2. Protection
3. Participation

These principles (based on the United Nations charter for children's rights) apply to all those who have been marginalized through definitions of disability or special needs.

c) Considerations for teaching drama in special needs classrooms

1. Focus on the areas of the students' strengths, senses, and language.
2. Plan for growth in the areas of need.
3. Plan for an incremental or layering of process.
4. Include within the drama, the art of constraint.
5. Work within the range of experience of the group.

d) Teacher in role – works inside the dramatic frame:

1. Relying more on what you are than what you know.
2. Create clear and unambiguous signing in role.
3. Work both in and out of role to layer and structure.
4. Use repetition of significant moments and cross check for understanding.
5. Have a clear context for the fiction: make it spatial.
6. Make time to enrole, derole and reflect.
7. Use containing strategies in role.
8. Use visual hooks and simple props to support the fictional context.
9. Use inherently directive strategies.

10. Give the students caregiving roles (they are "expert" in being cared for).
11. Create roles that allow students to come and go in and out of role: notional.

e) Common issues

1. Extreme range of abilities and needs
2. Establishing the fiction, the make believe
3. Limited life experience to draw upon
4. Teaching to the most able
5. Time to commit to the process
6. Working with staff support

CONCLUSION

Research indicates that drama is effective in teaching the elementary curriculum. It can easily be adapted and integrated to teach all subject areas. It is proven to be successful through personal experiences, recent brain research, and a study of widely accepted learning theories. Today's education system often put children through unnecessary stress. This stress translates to a negative attitude towards school and learning. It burns out our natural instinct to want to learn. Learning cannot take place unless the child has a motivation and is stimulated through engaging activities. Drama gives educators the opportunity to teach their students in a way, which would create a love for learning. It provides valuable problem solving, social, and creative skills. Drama embraces the child's imagination and emotions, which in many classrooms are shunned. Perhaps the most important point of all is that participants of drama are being involved in the learning. They are engaging in activities and immersed in the roles, which they assume. We are naturally equipped with the ability to use drama in our lives. We use drama from birth to death to overcome difficult situations, prepare ourselves, or learn something new. It can be said that drama is a way of life.

REFERENCES

- Blatner, Adam. (1995). Drama in education as mental hygiene: A child psychiatrist's perspective. Youth Theatre Journal, 9, 9296.*
- Bruner, J.S. (1966) Studies in Cognitive Growth. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.*
- Dorothy Heathcote (1984). Collected writings on education and drama. London: Hutchinson.*
- Holden, Susan (1981): Drama in Language Teaching. Essex: Longman*
- Maley, Alan and Alan Duff. Drama techniques in Language Learning. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1982.*
- McCaslin, Nellie (1996). Creative Drama in the Classroom and Beyond. London, Longman Publishers*
- Rao, U. (2005). Drama in Education. Himalaya Publishing House, Mumbai.*

WEBSITES

www.dramaineducation.com

www.dramaeducation.com

http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/beautifulminds/201203/theneedpretendplayinchilddevelopment