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PROCESS DRAMA FOR CREATIVE TEACHING TO FOSTER CREATIVE COMPETENCES AND A HOLISTIC LEARNING OUTCOME

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In this article I analyze a process drama, conducted as part of an action based research project in grade four, with 9 years old students, to sort out what creative teaching and creative learning is about, when drama is the learning form. The analyzes are based on a model for creative competences, named Wheel of Creative Competences for Drama in Education, developed from literature studies and my earlier arts in education research projects. The result show how creative competences can be included to foster a holistic learning process through drama in education. The main message of the article is that process drama can foster creativity in education and the students mastering of the subject matter content in a personal academic, social and emotional learning process.

Keywords: Process drama, creative competences, holistic learning, creative teaching, creative learning.

Fostering and developing creativity in students

Educational documents argue that creative competences need to be included in all educational subjects to give the young ones the possibility to master life now and in the future [28]. Despite this, curricula around the world may or may more or less include creative education. In some countries the arts are viewed as double useful because of their role in conduits for culture. In England they stated nearly 20 years ago that that no education system can be world-class without valuing and integrating creativity in teaching and learning, and that “Practicing and understanding the arts in all their forms are essential elements of creative and cultural education” [10, p. 41]. Lauren Stevenson has on behalf of Arts Education Partnership made a research brief that shows how arts in education prepare for students success in school, work and life [1]. Moreover the report *Arts for Art’s sake? The impact of arts education* concludes saying that “..., the main justification for arts education is clearly the acquisition of an artistic habits of mind – the current priority objective of arts education in the curricula of OECD countries” (T. Goldstein, S. Vincent-Lancrin, E. Winner) [30, p. 19].

The report explain that *an artistic habits of mind* not only refer to the mastery of craft and techniques, but to skills as close observation, envisioning, exploration, persistence, expression, collaboration, and reflection – the skills in thinking and creativity and the social and behavioral skills that are developed in the arts. Moreover, in Europe, the skills and competences needed to foster creative and innovative in education are constantly strengthened [14].

Research on drama as a learning form

In different research projects on creativity, democracy and aesthetic learning processes that I have conducted (2001 – 2014), I found a whole range of positive results for primary and lower secondary students learning outcome when the drama teaching was done in line with a socio-constructivistic perspective on teaching and learning (A. Sæbø) [19; 20; 21; 25; 26]. The essence of the socio-constructivistic perspective is that knowledge is created and dependent on the social and cultural world we live in (L. Vygotskij) [29]. This means that knowledge in drama is created or constructed by the learner in an intersubjective interplay with the environment and dependent on the learning environment that is created between teacher and student and between students, i.e. the learning community (A. Sæbø) [22]. I found that *nearly all* students were motivated to engage in their own learning process when joining the democratic and creative learning community that the process drama created. Moreover the majority of the students said they enjoyed learning and worked harder since they loved the variation that drama gave and the possibility to use their phantasy and creativity in the learning process (A. Sæbø) [21; 23; 25]. But still it is a big challenge is to encourage teachers to include drama as a learning form. That is why it is needed to develop more practical knowledge about how drama in education can foster creativity and holistic learning processes.

My research question and methods

The research question for this article is: *How is creativity integrated in a process drama to develop the students’ creative competences and foster a holistic learning process?* To answer this I use the above mentioned model for creativity in drama education to analyze the process drama “Anna is babysitting”, an intervention done in grade four, as part of my latest research project on *Drama for rich literacy and engaged democracy* (2011-2014). In a process drama students work through role and fiction to explore, reflect on and express meaning about content and problems in a given topic or text.

The teacher often joins in as teacher in role. The two teachers I cooperated with wanted to learn how to engage *all* students in the teaching process to motivate for reading and a holistic learning process and outcome. The project included action based interventions (several process drama), observations during the process drama, reflective dialogs with teachers during and after the project and students' pre and post reading tests. I use data from all these methods in the analyzing process, even though observations together with my own phenomenological in depth study (J. Rendtorff) [17] of the happenings in the interventions dominate.

Creative competence in drama education

Regarding the creative competences that may be included in drama in education I developed a model named "Wheal of creative competences for drama in education" (A. Sæbø) [24]. This was a result of my classroom research on drama in education, together with reviews and research on creativity in arts education projects (L. O'Farrell, B. Heap, L. McCammon, A. Sæbø) [7; 8; 9; 27].

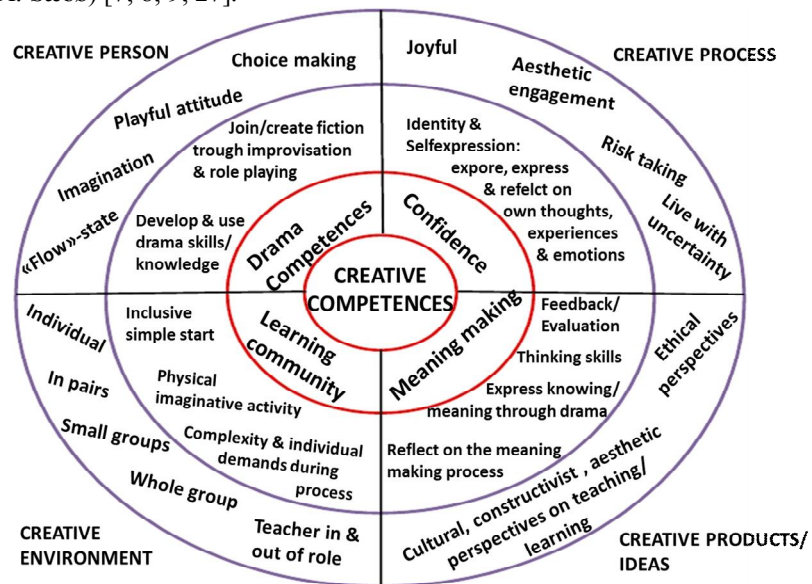


Fig. 1. WHEEL OF CREATIVE COMPETENCE for Drama in Education (A. Sæbø) [23; 24]

The concept of creativity has been studied from different perspectives through history (A. Craft, B. Jeffrey, & M. Leibling; R. Pope) [5; 16] which can roughly be divided into the four well known areas, which I included in my model: the creative person/self, the creative process, the creative environment and the creative product/idea. In the center of the model is *the creative competence*, per se. Since creativity, like all brain based functions, is ethereal and elusive and consequently difficult to define, it is difficult to find a theory covering the complexity of the concept, and there is no widely accepted definition(s) of creativity (R. Pope) [16]. B. Brecht once said "A person with one theory is lost. We need several of them – or lots. We should stuff them in our pockets like newspaper" (R. Pope) [16, p. 90]. Inspired by this I created my model for creative competences to study how a whole variety of them may come to expression in a process drama. In this article I use this model to analyse the process drama "Anna is babysitting" and present the findings for my research question.

The story "Anna is babysitting"

The story about Anna was told during the process drama, step by step, by the teacher, and for each told section of the story the students did different drama activity to recreate and explore the actual text. Anna is babysitting is a story about a 9-10 years old girl babysitting for her 3 years old stepsister Mia, while Annika, who is the new wife of Anna's father, need to work extra at the hospital. Since Mia loves bathing, Anna taps the water and Mia get into the basin. But unfortunately when Anna goes for lemonade in the kitchen, she discovers the ill smelling garbage, and she decides to go out with it. The result is that Anna is locked out of the house while Mia is still in the basin. Here ends the story and the problem for the students to solve in the end is: What can Anna do to get in to Mia again? The following analyzes present the content and the outcome of the different drama activity in the process drama in line with the different creative competences in the model.

Creative confidence

Teachers and students need (self) confidence to be creative. The social and emotional confidence is the key to both creative and academic competence. That is why researchers and educational document today stresses the importance of the social and emotional learning environment for the students learning outcome, together with the fact that creativity can be learnt [11; 14; 18]. Teachers' and students' creative confidence seems to be developed when they are encouraged to believe in their creative potential, to take risk, to live with uncertainty and to use their cognitive, social and

bodily/emotional competences in the teaching and learning process (A. Sæbø, L. McCammon, & L. O'Farrell) [27]. And above all – this aesthetic engagement the students call joyful learning (A. Sæbø) [23].

The process drama *Anna is babysitting*, starts with all students talking in chorus in dialog with the teacher to recreate the dialog in the very beginning of the text, when Annika is leaving the house. This is done to encourage all students to join in and use their voice aloud in the classroom, which some had not done at all on their own up to now this semester. After this they meet teacher-in-role as Anna telling how much she loves to do babysitting and at the same time revealing the complex family situations. Then, in groups, students did role-modelling and picturing to create a family photo to explore the complex family situation of Anna. Both her parents are remarried and she has got new half siblings.

Next the students in smaller groups improvise Anna playing different games with Mia. The fact that all groups succeeded in this improvised play, even though no games were named in the text and they had done little drama ahead, tells that the teacher build the competence in the students through the first activities in a way that gave them the courage to improvise freely in the situation (take risk and live with uncertainty). They were asked to use, and they did use, their imagination to discuss, create and improvise different solution for how Anna could get into the house again. Moreover a drama improvisation can only succeed when the students use their cognitive competences (planning on the feet what to do and say), their social and emotional competences (interacting successfully) and bodily competence (express oneself through drama). The groups were improvising and playing all over in the classroom, obviously enjoying the joyful aesthetic engagement. They were building their confidence to explore, express and reflect on own experiences, thoughts and emotions, and thus developed own identity and self-reflection.

The most touching moment for teachers and researcher in this whole project, was when a girl, with very low performance in reading, who in the beginning just started crying and did not want to do anything, read aloud in front of her classmates in the end. She demonstrated for all that her confidence on all level had developed and increased, and later on the teacher told she still performed and read aloud in front of the class.

The creative learning community

As told above the process drama had a simple individual start to ensure that all students had success in the first learning activity and by this were motivated to join the class learning community further on in the process.

This is a hallmark of all the process drama I have created and one of my most important demands to a successful process drama. In the first drama activity, creating the family photo through role-modelling and freeze frames, each group got all the names of the family written on small yellow paper sticks to ensure that everyone in the group could join at some level. Some just took or got a role and let other decide the arrangement, while others took action and responsibility for the arrangement for the photo. This happened rather naturally, without any fuss, and was dependent on each student's total competences, since all group also included students with diagnoses and special educational demands. Moreover the teacher needs to plan for complexity and real problem solving and build this into the drama process to challenge the students. So when all students really know the facts of the story, an important prerequisite for being creative at all, then they were confronted with teacher in role as Anna in the end of the story who needed their help. And the students came up with a whole range of solutions, like asking the neighbor, find a ladder and crash the window, borrow a phone and call the fire station and so on.

It was trilling for the teachers and the researchers to observe how some students that in the beginning of the project had a lot of difficult to join the creative learning community and made a lot of noise and disturbance in the group work and change over situations, after a while mastered this with no problem and enjoyed the creative learning community. In fact all students developed and practiced in the end a positive classroom behavior; moving silently around, listening to each other when needed and cooperated constructively in the drama activities.

Creative drama competence

When drama is the art subject the teacher need to plan the teaching so that the students develop drama skills and techniques while using them to explore the meaning of the subject matter content, here a (told) text. In this process drama this was done in an aesthetical practical way. The students learnt (more) about role modelling, improvisation, role playing and teacher in role by doing and exploring these activities when joining the fiction and recreating the story told about Anna. And later on they create solutions within the frames of the story to help Anna solve her problem.

The students mastering in this both develops and demands a playful attitude (being willing to play a role), flow (interact freely within the given frames of the story), imaginations (to create drama actions) and choice making (to arrange drama and solve problems) which the students

demonstrated by playing around with ideas and actions, and the results they presented during the process and in the end.

What impressed the class teachers the most, they told, was that drama as a learning form could engage *all* students in the same learning program when the text was told as part of the teaching process. Those with high reading competence as well as those who strived with reading got motivated to work hard in the drama process and later read back home.

Creative meaning making

The main and overruled objective of a process drama is to help students create their understanding and knowing of a subject matter content through an aesthetic teaching and learning process based on a socio-constructivist perspective of knowledge and learning (G. Bolton, P. Howell, J. Dunn, B. Heap, J. O'Toole) [3; 4; 12; 13]. These four grade students explored and created meaning through all the different drama activities about Anna, constantly varying between individual work (to engage each student), working in pairs or small groups (to communicate experiences and meaning) and in whole group discussions (being challenged by the teacher). And the biggest challenge was when they were to discuss and act how Anna could be helped. Teacher in role as Anna firstly was very positive to each student's or students group proposal, but soon started to problematize their solutions. This could be ethical consideration like "But can I (Anna) just take the ladder without asking, even if I need it to climb up to the window?", or "Is it not dangerous to smash the window with a stone, what if I get hurt when I climbs into the room?" and so on. The students had a whole variety of proposals and the groups discussed them and were asked to tell which one they found the best through a role play. This was again questioned, now by the teacher in dialog with the student audience, evaluating the factual and ethical quality of the solution. This really demanded and developed critical thinking from the students – and the teacher.

The classroom teachers were academically impressed by the fact that the students manage to get hold of and understand a lot of details in the texts, and some who usually never read at home told they had freely and with joy read the texts for their parents and impressed them. This was reflected in the reading tests as well; the students scored higher for the texts that was explored through drama, than those explored without drama. This is also in line with a research meta analyze on the effect of drama in education, that showed significant improvement in reading and oral skills when classroom drama was included (A. Podlozny) [15].

The four areas of creativity

The students involved in the process drama *Anna is babysitting* did role modelling, picturing, improvisations and roleplaying to explore the facts in the story, like the complexity of the families, games that Mia likes, the problem with a smelling garbage bag and finally Anna being locked out. While doing this each student entered all four areas of creativity. As examples, I observed that they used their creative self when they imagined and created the complex family picture taken at the photographer, and when they fantasized about what Mia would like to play. Nothing of this was in the text. While doing this I observed each student joining the creative group process. Moreover when they did problem solving for Anna through interacting with teacher in role, discussed and presented solution through acting, all actively joined the creative group processes. The fact that *all* students did join in and actively engaged in Anna's situation resulted in a creative learning environment, showed through the students' cooperation and communication to solve the problem, and where all groups had several creative ideas on how Anna could get in to the house again.

As shown, all the four areas of creativity seem to be included and stimulated in this process drama. But research shows this is dependent on *if* the teacher works in relation to a socio-constructivist perspective on teaching and learning (A. Sæbø) [21]. And moreover, the teacher also needs these creative skills and competences to develop this variety in students.

Conclusion

The research shows that arts integration, in this case drama as a learning form, can take care of a creative education and foster a holistic learning outcome by combining creative teaching and creative learning in the same learning unit/program. Another drama in education research across European countries found a lot of positive educational and life style results for young ones as well [6]. But still the challenge is, that the arts play a relatively minor role in most schools around the world today as worded by Ann Bamford "There is a gulf between the "lip service" given to arts in education and the provisions provided in schools" (A. Bamford) [2, p. 11]. Even if arts in educational documents and research are strongly related to creativity and personal development, and a report stated some years ago that "Practicing and understanding the arts in all their forms are essential elements of creative and cultural education" [10, p. 41], the opportunity to learn and understand from the arts, and not at least drama, has been grossly neglected around the world, and not at least in my own country, Norway.

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ПРОЦЕСУАЛЬНА ДРАМАТИЗАЦІЯ ЯК ФОРМА ТВОРЧОГО ВИКЛАДАННЯ, СПРЯМОВАНА НА ВИХОВАННЯ ТВОРЧИХ КОМПЕТЕНЦІЙ ТА ДОСЯГНЕННЯ РЕЗУЛЬТАТІВ ЦІЛІСНОГО НАВЧАННЯ

Ауд Бергграф Себо

У статті проаналізована сутність процесуальної драматизації як частини дій, що лягли в основу процесу реалізації науково-дослідного проекту. У названому проекті прийняли участь дев'ятирічні учні четвертого класу. Проект був спрямований на дослідження сутності творчого викладання і творчого навчання при використанні процесуальної драматизації у якості форми навчання. Аналіз сутності означеного поняття проводився на основі авторської моделі творчих компетенцій під назвою «Колесо творчих компетенцій для драматизації в освітньому процесі», розроблена на основі вивчення наукової літератури та попереднього досвіду роботи автора над науково-дослідними проектами у сфері художньої освіти. Отримані результати дослідження показують як включення творчих компетенцій може стимулювати досягнення цілісності процесу навчання завдяки використанню драматизації в освітньому процесі. Основна ідея статті полягає в тому, що процесуальна драматизація може стимулювати розвиток творчості в освіті і засвоєння учнями змісту предметів у процесі особистісного, соціального та емоційного розвитку в ході навчання.

Ключові слова: процесуальна драматизація, творчі компетенції, цілісне навчання, творче викладання, творче навчання.

ПРОЦЕСУАЛЬНАЯ ДРАМАТИЗАЦИЯ КАК ФОРМА ТВОРЧЕСКОГО ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ, НАПРАВЛЕННАЯ НА ВОСПИТАНИЕ ТВОРЧЕСКИХ КОМПЕТЕНЦИЙ И ДОСТИЖЕНИЕ РЕЗУЛЬТАТОВ ЦЕЛОСТНОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ

Ауд Бергграф Себо

В статье проанализирована сущность процессуальной драматизации, как части действий, которые легли в основу процесса реализации научно-исследовательского проекта. В названном проекте приняли участие девятилетние ученики четвертого класса. Проект был направлен на исследование сущности творческого преподавания и творческого обучения при использовании процессуальной драматизации в качестве формы обучения. Анализ сущности названного понятия проводился на основе авторской модели творческих компетенций под названием «Колесо творческих компетенций для драматизации в образовательном процессе», разработанная на основе изучения научной литературы и предыдущего опыта работы автора над научно-исследовательскими проектами в сфере художественного образования.

Полученные результаты исследования показывают, как включение творческих компетенций может стимулировать достижение целостности процесса обучения благодаря использованию драматизации в образовательном процессе. Основная идея статьи заключается в том, что процессуальная драматизация может стимулировать развитие творчества в образовании и усвоение учащимися содержания предметов в процессе личностного, социального и эмоционального развития в ходе обучения.

Ключевые слова: процессуальная драматизация, творческие компетенции, целостное обучение, творческое преподавание, творческое обучение.

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