

THEATRE IN EDUCATION – OPINION OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS ON EFFECTIVENESS OF THEATRE ACTIVITIES IN CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

The current education system not doing anything for understanding students or helping them in problem solving skills. It provides nothing but only a usual information package to those who pass through the gateways. It is better to diversifying the teaching strategies rather than changing the curriculum for solving this issue. The Theatre Activities which can be used in classrooms are extremely useful in this matter. The theatre has accepted a new approach for creating a bond between classroom learning and drama instruments. The major goal of this attempt is to modify the knowledge, attitude and behaviour of students. The People who have acquired sufficient training are considered as prospective teachers hence, they must be familiar with teaching strategies like Theatre Activities. It is a study conducted among prospective teachers for their opinion about the effectiveness of Theatre Activities. It includes the opinion of prospective teachers about the effectiveness and possibilities of Theatre Activities. The findings of the study reveals that most of the prospective teachers have good awareness about the learning strategies using Theatre Activities. This study reveals that it is very effective to use of Theatre Activities in the classroom for developing good relationship, leadership qualities and multiple intelligence among the students and usage of Theatre Activities are very effective for diversity in classroom and to sustain the learning interest among students.

Keywords: Theatre in Education, Prospective Teachers, Theatre Activities, Teaching Methods



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Introduction

Theatre in education refers to the use of Theatre for purposes other than entertaining the audience. It is a method of presenting experiments in schools by a professional team of trained teachers who prepare relevant materials and projects using theatre activities. These

programs are usually designed and researched by teachers and are for small groups of one or two classes of a particular age group. The aim of the programmes is educational, and uses techniques for educational purposes. This work provides an educational aid, resource, and stimulus for both teachers and students, but to do so it may vary from place to place. The use of theatre in education places an emphasis on learning through the interaction of real world and made up situations. According to Dewey (1909), teaching is more effective when it uses real events to address the problems of real people in their relationships with the world. The vast majority of students show enjoyment and enthusiasm while engaging with theatre activities. Through the provision of chances for individual role discovery, emotional release, and interactive interaction with the educational material, theatre activities are purposefully designed to support intellectual and socio-psychological growth.

Dramatic playing, according to Bolton (1999), is distinguished by a high degree of spontaneity as teacher and students strive to construct a fictional world in which they assume roles to explore issues that are relevant to them.. Most scholars in the area of Theatre in Education agree that drama is the act of participant joining in an imagined world and taking roles of the others. Classroom theatre is a creative learning style. The child assimilate and incorporate 'life' in their scheme and the scheme is reconstructed. Theatre is a tool for critique and evaluation of life. In addition, the educational theatre is an excellent teaching-learning strategy in a socially creative model.

In general, the terms *drama* and *theatre* relate to the creation and process, respectively. Drama is merely one aspect of theatre and is a catch all term for everything performed on stage. In contrast to drama, theatre requires three fundamental elements: a performance space, actors, and an audience. Theatre activities gives a learning scenario reality and concreteness. It also offers chances for individual expression. It breathes new life into the dry facts in textbooks. Theatre activities facilitates easy memorization of learning materials and the development of interests, attitudes, and values since it involves students' active participation. Theatre, in the opinion of Wren (1989), is a collective art. Actors, writers, designers, technicians, and other people are all needed for theatre productions. These individuals must collaborate while going through a period of rehearsal and engaging in creative exploration. No matter the advantages participants may have, a theatre performance is judged on how well it connects with its audience.

The process of education is triangular. It involves the interaction of societal factors, educators, and learners. In light of the demands of the student and the society to which he or

she belongs, the educator seeks to change the child's personality. Today's challenges in schools include rising rates of bullying, violence, dropouts, gang membership, and, in the worst cases, teen suicide and homicide. For students to succeed once they leave the educational system, they must develop confidence. Schools now have the additional duty of providing a safe environment for kids to develop emotionally, socially, and mentally, achieve their own potential, and develop social skills that will help them once they leave the classroom. Theatre in the classroom is the educational strategy best adapted to fulfill these diverse roles. Students can learn new behaviours for addressing previously challenging situations through theatre, enhance their problem-solving abilities, and cultivate social skills. They can also raise their capacity to perceive their own and other people's feelings. To succeed in life, one needs to have strong social skills. These abilities provide kids the ability to communicate effectively, make wise decisions, and behave appropriately in a variety of settings. Academic skill development need to happen before social skill development because as students get better at learning from one another, accomplishment will rise.

Theatre practices create the environment for teachers and students to engage in active, critical, and reflective thought and knowledge creation (Nadarajan, 2020). This interactive teaching method can give students the chance to engage in cognitive activity, consider important moral dilemmas, and look for answers to issues.

The National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF) serves as a reminder that the school curriculum needs to incorporate different subjects so that the 'curricular' includes everything and is not distinct from co-curricular or extracurricular activities. This has important ramifications for how art, music, and theatre are used in schools to foster students' creativity and aesthetic sense. There is mutual relationship between a teacher and students in a classroom and thus arts is in one way important in the development a teacher's performance in a classroom. Barry (2006) throws light on this important point. In recent years the arts have been introduced into many pre-service and in-service professional development programs for general education teachers.

Calicut University (2017) itself recommends a workshop titled Dramas and Art in education in light of this circumstance. The relevance of including the theatre workshop in the curriculum is discussed in the syllabus. "Learning is enhanced through Drama in Education which helps learners to extend their awareness, through multiple perspectives, to look at reality through fantasy, and to predict everyday situations in order to cope with unpredictable unsettling experiences. Drama in Education transcends the here and now, to

travel through time -to the past, to the future, while it also allows us to freeze time. Thus we can live or relive moments and evoke or even recreate situations that can help us accept them better. Drama in Education is not merely doing theatrics or ‘acting’ in a superficial manner, but is for creating that ‘dramatic pressure’ or tension, where the student would arrive at a problem or an understanding in a new way” (p. 159)

Understanding the best medium in order to transpose learners into a different time and space and shape their consciousness via introspection and imagined communal experience is a significant task for prospective teachers. Children today must develop a stronger sense of group since they are raised in highly segregated surroundings that are divided based on caste, class, religion, or gender. The best form of media for that is drama. Who is the other? Why? How is the process of ‘othering’ happening in different lives? Simple moral lectures won't help kids develop morality. Wilhelm and Edmiston (1998) suggested that every teacher, regardless of their experience, and in every subject area, should think about including drama in their teaching repertoire. Drama, which has a strong foundation in education, is particularly good in helping students comprehend social justice issues because it uses enactment, dialogue, and exploration to help students understand ideas and cultures on a deeper level. Thus it is necessary for all prospective teachers need to explore several theatre activities for classrooms.

In accordance with the curriculum, a five day workshop is scheduled to introduce Theatre Activities to prospective teachers. A presentation that incorporates Theatre Activities from a lesson from their own subject is used to organise the workshop. This study is an opinion survey of the student teachers who participated this workshop. The aim of this study is to understand about prospective teachers' perceptions of the probability of theatre in the classroom, problems associated with the integration of Theatre Activities in classrooms, and the effectiveness of Theatre Activities in classrooms.

Procedure of the study

The study adopted survey method. The population for the study consists of prospective teachers studying in various teacher training colleges affiliated to University of Calicut. Sample for the study consisted of 80 prospective teachers in Kozhikode district of Kerala state. “Opinionnaire on effectiveness of Theatre Activities in classrooms” prepared by the investigator are used as the tool for collecting the data. Percentage analysis was used to analyze the opinion of prospective teachers on effectiveness of Theatre Activities in classrooms.

Results and Discussion

The collected data were analyzed by using percentage analysis to understand to opinion of prospective teachers on effectiveness of Theatre Activities in classrooms. The prospective teachers who participated in the survey belonged to four main subjects namely Language, Science, Social Science and Mathematics. The number of participants from these categories were almost equal.

The Opinion of Prospective Teachers on Effectiveness of Theatre Activities in Classrooms.

To gather opinions, eight questions from various aspects were included. 80 prospective teachers studying in various subjects were participated in the survey. The results of percentage analysis are given in Table 1

Table 1: Percentage Of Prospective Teachers Agreed With Aspects Effectiveness Of Theatre Activities In Classrooms For Total Sample.

Sl No	Items	Number of respondent (Agreed) N = 80	% of agreed	Number of respondent (Disagreed) N = 80	% of disagreed
1	Effectiveness of Theatre Activities	65	81.3	15	18.7
2	Possibilities of using Theatre Activities in Different Subjects	49	61.3	31	38.7
3	Effect of Theatrical Knowledge level of Teachers in using Theatre Activities	52	65	28	35
4	Influence of Theatre Activities integrated learning in building positive relationships among students	65	81.3	15	18.7
5	Influence of Theatre Activities integrated learning in building confidence among students	69	86.3	11	13.7
6	Influence of Theatre Activities integrated learning in developing leadership qualities among students	60	75	20	25
7	Influence of Theatre Activities integrated learning in developing multiple intelligence among students	70	87.5	10	12.5
8	Influence of Theatre Activities integrated learning in developing interest in learning among students	74	92.5	6	7.5

The Analysis shows that the majority of the respondents have the opinion that the Theatre Activities approach would be effective for teaching. Majority of the prospective teachers disagreed with the opinion that only those with good knowledge of theatre can incorporate theatre techniques in classrooms. And it can be concluded that having prior theatrical knowledge or acting capacity is not a prerequisite for incorporating Theatre Activities in classrooms. The study reveals that integrating Theatre Activities into teaching

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and learning processes can develop good relationships among students, develop self-confidence in students, develop leadership qualities and develop multiple intelligence among students. And it is very useful to develop students' interest in learning. Figure 1 is a graphical representation that will help in providing a clear picture of the percentage of prospective teachers who agreed with different aspects of the effectiveness of theatre activities in classrooms.

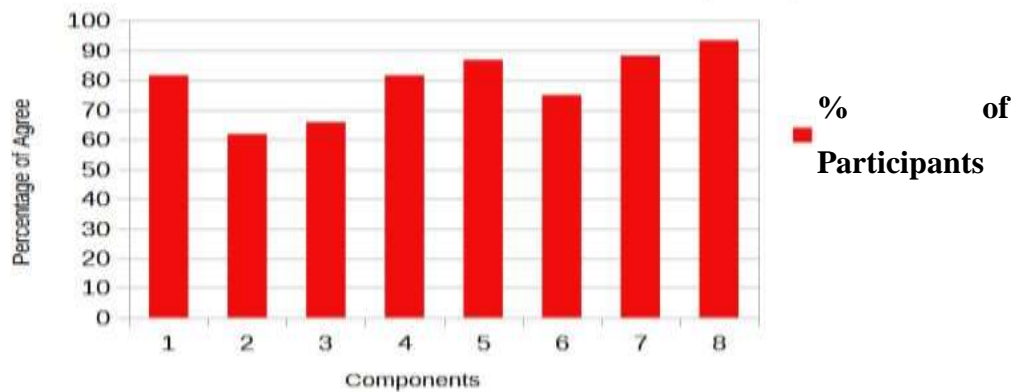


Figure 1: Bar Diagram Representing Percentage of Prospective Teachers Agreed With Aspects Effectiveness of Theatre Activities in Classrooms for Total Sample

The bar diagram shows opinion of prospective teachers about effectiveness of Theatre Activities in classrooms. And it is clear that all the prospective teachers who participated in the study were of the opinion that using Theatre Activities in the classrooms would be highly effective

The Opinion of Prospective Teachers on Effectiveness of Theatre Activities in Classrooms Based on Their Subject Area Viz., Language, Mathematics, Science and Social Science.

The study also included an analysis of prospective teachers' perceptions on effectiveness of theatre activities in classrooms for the subjects of Language, Mathematics, Science, and Social science. The results of percentage analysis are given in Table 2

Table 2: Percentage Of Prospective Teachers Agreed With Aspects Effectiveness Of Theatre Activities In Classrooms For Total Sample Based On Subject Area.

Sl No.	Items	Number of respondent (Language) N = 23	% of Agreed - Language 73.9	Number of respondent (Mathematics) N = 17	% of Agreed - Mathematics 70.6	Number of respondent (Science) N = 21	% of Agreed - Science 80.9	Number of respondent (Social Science) N = 19	% of Agreed - Social Science 89.5
1	Effectiveness of Theatre Activities	17	73.9	12	70.6	17	80.9	17	89.5
2	Possibilities of using Theatre Activities in Different Subjects	20	86.9	6	35.3	10	47.6	13	68.4
3	Effect of Theatrical Knowledge level of Teachers in using Theatre Activities	14	60.9	9	52.9	14	66.7	13	68.4
4	Influence of Theatre Activities integrated learning in building positive relationships among students	18	78.3	15	88.2	16	76.2	18	94.7
5	Influence of Theatre Activities integrated learning in building confidence among students	20	86.9	16	94.1	19	90.5	16	84.2
6	Influence of Theatre Activities integrated learning in developing leadership qualities among students	16	69.6	14	82.3	16	76.1	15	78.9
7	Influence of Theatre Activities integrated learning in developing multiple intelligence among students	20	86.9	16	94.1	18	85.7	16	84.2
8	Influence of Theatre Activities integrated learning in developing interest in learning among students	22	95.7	16	94.1	18	85.7	15	78.9

Almost all of the prospective teachers from different subjects believes that Theatre Activities in classrooms to be highly effective. It is also interesting to notice that among the group, Social Science prospective teachers are the most favoured. Majority of the prospective teachers in the area of Language, all lessons can be taught utilising Theatre Activities. But most of the prospective Mathematics teachers are of the opinion that they cannot teach their subjects using theatre activities. Majority of prospective teachers were of the opinion that they do not need a good knowledge of theatre to incorporate Theatre Activities in their classrooms.

The study reveals that most of prospective teachers are in various subjects are the opinion that Theatre Activities have a significant influence on creating positive relationships among students. And the study also acknowledge that the majority of prospective teachers in different subjects were believe Theatre Activities have a substantial impact on boosting

students' self-confidence. Majority of the prospective teachers from different subjects agree that Theatre Activities have a significant impact on developing leadership qualities in students. Also, most of these prospective teachers believe that Theatre Activities have a significant impact on developing multiple intelligence among students. And the study found that majority of the prospective teachers in different subjects are of the opinion that Theatre Activities are effective in developing interest in learning.

A graphical representation given as Figure 2 will help give a clear picture of the percentage of prospective teachers who agree with the aspects of effectiveness of theatre activities in classrooms based on subject area.

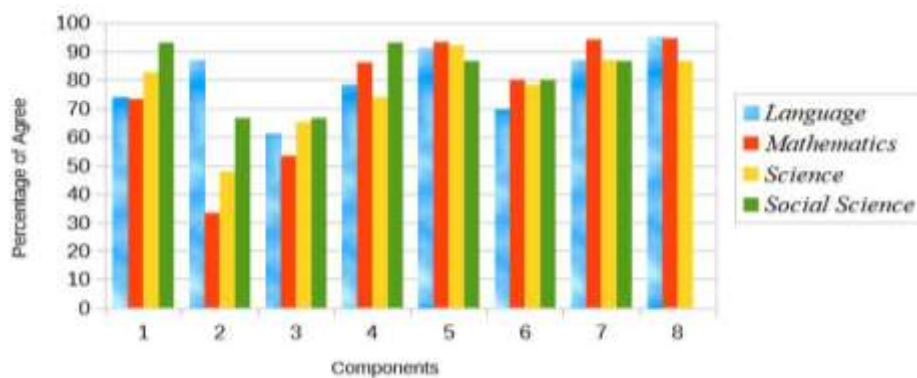


Figure 2: Bar Diagram Representing O Percentage Of Prospective Teachers Agreed With Aspects Effectiveness Of Theatre Activities In Classrooms Based On Subject Of Participants.

The bar diagram shows opinion of prospective teachers about effectiveness of Theatre Activities in classrooms based on subject area. And it is clear that most of the teachers who participated in the study were of the opinion that using Theatre Activities in the classrooms would be highly effective in all subjects. The majority of prospective teachers, apart from Mathematics, believe that Theatre Activities can be used in classrooms for all topics in their subject area.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that most of the prospective teachers have a good awareness of the learning method using theatre activities. This study included all relevant subjects. Most of the teachers who participated in the study were of the opinion that using theatre techniques in the classrooms would be highly effective in all subjects. The majority of prospective teachers, apart from Mathematics subject, believe that Theatre Activities can be used in classrooms for all topics in their subject area.

The study have shown that using theatre techniques in classrooms is very effective in developing positive relationships, developing leadership qualities and developing multiple intelligence among students. Using theatre techniques is very effective in bringing variety to classrooms and keeping children interested in learning. Although Theatre Activities do not have to be used in every lessons, they can give students rewarding experiences on occasion that use this method can provide students with enjoyable experiences. It might be advantageous to practice more creative techniques including theatre techniques during training period. Further research can be conducted to identify why it is opined that theatre activities cannot be used to teach Mathematics.

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