

The Impact of Drama Education on Creativity Development at Preschool Children

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Abstract—This paper points out at the importance of creativity development in children of preschool age and analyses certain conditions and pedagogical principles which should be respected during the development of creativity in kindergartens. Research survey focuses on the development of creativity reflection at children in kindergartens at preschool age and based on a test of creativity it compares creativity of children in experimental and control groups. The goal is to find out if there are any differences among children in experimental and control classrooms in kindergartens; wherein experimental groups, there is preschool education with the use of drama education while in control groups there is not. On the basis of certain aspects, the gained data is compared through descriptive methods and correlations. Research results refer to reserves in creativity development in modern pre-primary education in the context of implemented and expected changes in didactic approach in the education of kindergartens.

Keywords—Preschool child, drama in education, research, test of creativity.

I. INTRODUCTION

CHILDREN at preschool age are curious, spontaneous, playful. They have a rich imagination and completely natural conditions for the development of creativity. In a modern concept of pre-primary education in kindergartens, an educator has a lot of opportunities for creative methods application, which could be implemented into his/her pedagogical activity—into his/her behavior, decision making, style of teaching and education. To look for inspiration for facilitation of divergent thinking is needed. The important fact is that kindergarten teachers should be aware of children's creative potential already at preschool age and therefore should try to develop it in everyday activities. Creative drama is one option that could be used by an educator in order to strengthen creativity and to fulfill accented attributes of modern education.

II. THEORETICAL BASIS—STARTING SITUATION

The research survey was focused on whether the potential of drama education that is applied in education contributed to creativity development of preschool aged children.

As far as pedagogical intentions are concerned, drama education is understood as a system of active, social art learning with basic principles use and drama and theater procedures to meet educational objectives. Drama teaching

corresponds with preschool educational specifications, develops the child in many areas, respects personal attitude towards a child, strengthens children's self-confidence, the ability to self-expression, develops communication skills and especially it can very intensively support children's creative development.

Educators psychologists and other professionals deal with drama education and agree that it can raise a person who is creative, sensitive, empathetic, able to a contact, with excellent communication skills. And at the same time, a person, who is able to orientate in common and even less common life situations and interpersonal relationships, can make decisions and act freely and responsibly. The convincing fact is that the kindergarten teachers could support creative skills as far as creative drama is concerned. There is a great variety of new possibilities and methods in preschool education how to lead children in order they perceive things in a new, original way.

Creativity is one of professional assumptions of “a good” teacher and at the same time, it is one of tools for children's personality development. Therefore, a teacher's important task is to develop creativity during creative learning. The teacher can continually improve his/her creative approach through creative drama, where methods of drama learning are derived.

Lokša and Lokšová present methods promoting development of creativity:

- Issue methods—allowing several approaches to issue solving. Teacher presents a problem and leads children to solve the situation in a creative way.
- Heuristic methods—a Greek word “I discovered”. The essence of the method is that children themselves discover unknown facts, which come from real life situations familiar to children at a certain age group.
- Inspirational methods – focused on biographies of well-known people, scientists, artists, etc.
- Relaxation
- Activision methods – dramatization, simulation method, situation method, production [4].

Creativity – is a capability, an ability to create new, unusual and original. It is energy that can be identified as the inner power which drives a man to do things differently, newly and better. A creative person is not satisfied with conventional solutions. Creative activity is the result of creative thinking. Průcha, Walterová, Mareš define the term creativity as: “*Creativity is a mental ability that comes from cognitive and motivational processes, where inspiration, phantasy, and intuition play a very important role. It is manifested by looking*

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for such solutions which are not only correct but also new, unusual and unexpected" [7, p. 318].

Creativity/creative thinking:

- Presents the most effective, the most natural way of teaching and education,
- Increases interest in learning,
- Significantly influences growth of comprehension and motivation to explore,
- Forms emotional qualities, relation to oneself and to the world,
- Moves man towards higher values (makes him better),
- Increases sociability, willingness to cooperate,
- Gives meaning to human life,
- Opens way to healthy lifestyle and mental health,
- Cures diseases emerging in modern society,
- Helps with eliminating fear, worries, fearfulness and anxiety,
- Has positive effect on increasing self-confidence and assertiveness,
- Support efforts to develop its own personality,
- Manifested by self-restraint, self-control and also in creation of interpersonal relationships,
- Supports creative lifestyle.

Key characteristics of creative thinking factors of creativity development:

- **Fluency**, fluent thinking—many thoughts, ideas at any stimulus, issue, comes promptly, maintains their flow
- **Flexibility**, flexible thinking—diversity of ideas, diverse thoughts, their direction is flexibly changed,
- **Originality**, original thinking—ideas uniqueness, solutions, thoughts, discover extraordinary, unconventional answers, unconventional products,
- **Willingness to take risks**—courage—offering unusual solutions, other views than others, to be different, exposure of possibility of failure, error, criticism, making estimations, to have high expectations and conditions without border lines,
- **Curiosity**—to have interest in discovering new things, explore, research, play with ideas, to be open to new things, ask, observe, strive for new views, a change of point of view, monitor and adopt what happens if, ...
- **Imagination**—is closely linked to the imagination, intuitive feeling, with imagination, phantasy (phantasy is a grate for creativity) [3].

Creativity is a certain process, phenomenon, activity, that brings new solutions, new views, new products which are valuable for the creators and also for society. Creativity is the quality of all mentally healthy and thinking individuals. It can be developed and trained, whereas the activity does not always have to results in a specific product, which can also have imaginary form.

The importance of creativity can be defined and characterized as Creativity gives a human a sense of life, helps him to cope with obstacles better, represents prerequisites for creation in different areas and also the creation of cultural values. Last but not least also represents "a pillar of fun and

humour, full relaxation and renewal of mental strength" [6, p. 18].

If a teacher should develop children's creativity, then s/he should be a creative person, look for creative approaches, methods, organizational forms, which would lead for effective results [5].

III. CREATIVE PROCESS AT SCHOOL

Emphasis on development of creative thinking for example in project teaching with creative drama methods and techniques use is a prerequisite for creative education in kindergarten. Projects in teaching are "creative workroom of humanity and knowledge". They represent potential; that should **move a traditional – transmissive school**, where the only teacher has his/her own truth and passes completed knowledge on, whereas **in a school with a constructivist approach**, where an educator creates conditions for the development of creativity aspects, for search, discovering and children's self-learning. Projects implementation in kindergartens and schools with above-mentioned applications and methods brings active learning and experience. In other words, children learn to live their life by a playful, creative activity in terms of drama education "like," "in rough outline."

Aspects of creativity, where a teacher supports development of creativity:

- *Association* – ideas linking, pooling concepts,
- *Anticipation* – anticipation, demonstration,
- *Emotional experience* – child becomes more sensitive to others, perceives gracefulness, music helps to support emotional perception,
- *Free decision-making* – independent child's choice.
"Creative teaching mainly develops the ability of creative thinking, the motivation for creative activity and to learning, imagination, and phantasy, interests and creative activities, creative skills, provides pupils possibility to perceive feelings of self-satisfaction, self-realization and social appreciation of creative production" [4, p.9].

A. Conditions for Creativity Development at School

There are conditions for support and development of creative activities of children in kindergarten classrooms which should be secured inevitably:

- Creative and pleasant atmosphere,
- Joyful social climate,
- Respect for each individual,
- Openness in education
- Motivating experience of education
- Support and encourage children of willingness to express their own opinion, idea
- Appreciation of creative thinking, praise for effort,
- Encouraging independence,
- Ability to surrender and take responsibility,
- Freedom of speech,
- Appropriate communication, discussion,
- A fair assessment,
- Emphasis on self-esteem.

- Tolerance,
- Good relationship between an educator and children,
- Friendly interpersonal relationships.

We can say that in the humankind history, intelligence has been considered as the most valuable ability, thus ability to learn and use known ones. Currently, it is shown that creativity represents a higher value for us, thus ability to create new knowledge. Development of creativity is as same as lifelong learning.

An educator is considered to be one of the barriers to creativity who does not want or does not know how to support and develop creativity. Nowadays educator should not lack certain characteristics, both appropriate professional and pedagogical knowledge, mental balance, the ability of positive communication and interaction, pedagogical diplomacy, and last but not least creative approach.

Within preschool education of contemporary educational system, there are preschools and faculties of education which prepare future kindergarten teachers who deal with the continuous innovation of methods, approaches, implementation of procedures how to educate children in connection with creative development. Basic features should be defined as interactive demands, governed by a teacher, a trainer while teacher training, educational project, a lecturer—a trainer and participants. Zelinová appeals to the fact that, “*Social–Psychological training such as a significant part of creative-humanistic education should become a part of teaching and education..., should also become an organic part of teachers’ lifelong learning*” [8, p.112]. Therefore, it largely requires a focus on pregradual preparation of future teachers for *creative development* and emotionality.

B. Methods and Principles of Creative Education

Creative proves influences all levels of creative approach at school. In education is important to know and follow below mentioned *principles and methods for development of creativity*:

- Create safe environment and empathy,
- Voluntariness,
- Freedom,
- Effective evaluation,
- Not to have inappropriate criticism,
- Apply games and let enjoyment of the game,
- Promote humor,
- Use associations,
- Develop mindfulness and multi-sensory perception,
- Perception of disorder,
- Apply praise and awards.

C. Creativity in Innovative Project Teaching

Teacher’s and child’s creativity is a prerequisite for projecting. Project method assumes creative approach of the teacher, who induces creativity and originality in children. Every man is creative. Therefore, the teacher’s task to develop the child’s creative side. A creative child is able to solve a new task, that corresponds to the stage of his personality development, by the unique way and at the same time s/he can

apply similar types of tasks. Teacher’s tasks are to understand the child or to try it at least.

“Project prerequisites in kindergarten are represented by creativity and development of creative thinking both during training and during the project – thematic unit. Project in teaching represent “creative workroom of humanity and knowledge” and they present potential in kindergarten, that should move traditional – transmissive school towards a constructivist approach, where an educator creates conditions for the development of creative aspects and for children’s own exploration and cognition” [3, p. 19].

The traditional way of teaching does not develop the creativity of children because a teacher only teaches and children listen to interpretation. It is learning without experience, without creativity, without teacher’s and children’s innovation and activity in education. Project teaching directly encourages creativity, both at teachers and children.

Nowadays there is a whole range of possible creativity elements, represented by a programme where creative solutions, principles, exercises and methods exist. The exercises are focused on phantasy development, creative problem-solving procedures, and tasks, etc. [4].

IV. TESTS OF CREATIVITY

There are a number of psychometric approaches that focus on children creativity. Just for an overview there are the most basic tests:

1. **Torrence tests of creative thinking** lead to determining the level of figural creativity. The test consists of three parts. The first part is *Picture creation* that consists of a task to complete a glued piece of color paper in a shape of a bean into an original picture. The second part of Torrence test are *Incomplete figures* those are two pages divided into ten sections. Each section contains incomplete figures that are completed by pupils according to their phantasy. The children task is to name the picture. The third part *Circles* consists of 36 circles, which should be completed by pupils and to be changed into pictures with names. The test considers fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration.
2. **Guilford test of creativity**, where Terennce test of creative thinking is based from, is focused on the creativity of common population with the using a large number of different tasks. For example, in one of them, a monitored person should think as many ways of a common object use [2].
3. **Urban model of creativity** solves personal and cognitive component of personality. The investigated task is to complete draft drawing that will reveal different sides of creative potential.
4. **Kreatos** is a test by Miroslav Schürer; that is based on Torrence test. The basis of the test is filling with unstructured lines and adding a title [1].

We used *urban test of creative thinking* for a given issue of drama education and its influence on creativity development, where we search for an answer within presented research.

“Research results verifying validity and effectivity of programs for creativity development showed, that through practice and exercises we can reach a significant increase in pupils’ creativity, especially the level of creative thinking and ability to problems solving” [4, p.141].

The interesting point was to look at the development of children’s creativity in contemporary kindergartens and whether any difference occurs influenced by education in terms of creative drama.

V. SPECIFIC RESEARCH

The project aim of the specific research was to reveal whether teaching activities of a teacher who are educated in drama teaching have more influence on the development of creativity in kindergarten children. Based on research survey we were interested in responses to questions: Do kindergarten teachers create enough space in terms of drama education for the development of children creativity? Does education influence, which applies drama education for children creativity development in kindergartens?

For research survey, we have set the following research goal: To find the impact on drama education of creativity development of children at preschool age.

Goals specifications: To find the level of development of creativity development at preschool-aged children in kindergartens, where teachers apply drama teaching in education and to compare it with children in a classroom where drama teaching is not applied.

Goals justification: The issue of creativity development through drama teaching is not appreciated, and therefore deserves attention through research survey, that would support foundation and sense to apply drama teaching in kindergarten education.

Process solution: Based on available domestic and foreign materials dedicated to development issue and creativity measurement a test selection was decided. In the pilot stage, two kindergarten classrooms have been addressed where methods and techniques of drama education are used and two kindergarten classrooms with the common educational program. For methodical procedure and its specification, there was a technique of data acquisition used, in other words, application of the creative test in children at selected and addressed classrooms. An experienced psychologist had been designated for tests evaluation, who evaluated obtained data. In the conclusion, the initial results are presented for a discussion.

A. Research Questions

1. Is there an influence of drama education application in preschool education on creativity development of children at preschool age?
2. Do kindergarten teachers, who apply in their teaching methods and technique of drama education, lead children

more to the development of creativity than teachers who do not apply drama teaching?

B. Research Sample

The research sample consisted of kindergarten children, where drama teaching is applied – an experimental group and children, where drama teaching in education is not applied – a control group. A number of respondents: 34 children.

C. Methods and Technique Used

Experiment and Urban’s figural test of creative thinking were used. There was creativity test made in kindergarten classes, where we found that teachers used drama teaching in education in comparison with classes of children where drama education is not used.

D. Research Results: Interpretation and Discussion

There are selected results from a pilot project of the research on the influence of drama teaching in education on creativity development of kindergarten children, which lead to a profession discussion.

TABLE I
RESULTS OF CREATIVITY TESTS – EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Experimental group	Number of points per group	Average for a group
Test A	299	15,7
Test B	296	15,6
Total	795	31,3

Based on Table I, it is seen that children from experimental group, where drama teaching in education is applied, have 15,7 points from the Test A and from the Test B they gained 15,6 points. Respondents together in the creativity test A and B proved 31, 3 points on average.

TABLE II
RESULTS OF CREATIVITY TESTS – CONTROL GROUP

Control group	Number of points per group	Average for a group
Test A	178	11,8
Test B	203	13,5
Total	381	25,3

Results of creativity tests are presented in Table II. The control group gained 11,8 points on average in test A, and test B showed 13,5 points on average per group. In total, the control group gained 25,3 points, that represents 6 points less on average than the experimental group.

There are two examples of a completed test in A and B option in order to imagine given tests of creative thinking for a preschool aged child.

-Research survey has brought a remarkable result. It shows an increase of creative thinking about 6 points on average in the experimental group in comparison with the control group.

At the same time, we should bear in mind that creativity development is supported by other factors and conditions above-mentioned in the paper. However, the presented results are interesting and bring us topics for thought and challenge to make a comparison among more groups of respondents.

In continue research will be compared results of pilot and with new results of the complete research with statistical

