

The Comprehensive Influence of Drama Education on Students and Autistic Children

Haoyun Ren*

Music & Film College, Tianjin Normal University, Tianjin, 300387, China

Abstract. With the progress of society, a large number of talents with high comprehensive quality, high communication ability and high cooperation ability are needed. Ordinary exam-oriented education can no longer meet the needs of society. Attention has been paid to the introduction and promotion of drama education. As early as in Europe and America, drama education has been widely used. This paper summarizes and analyses how drama education improves students' ability. This article reviewed and summarized several literatures, combined the benefits of drama education on students' learning and personality, and added the positive impact of drama education on autistic children. Current research has found that drama education can improve students' critical thinking, interpersonal communication, cooperative communication and other skills, while also connecting comprehensive subject knowledge. At the same time, the positive impact of drama education on autistic children is also one of the focuses of this paper. Combined with the literature and experiments, this paper also clearly states the healing and functional development of drama education for autistic children. The results suggest that drama education can improve creativity, communication and expression skills in children with autism. Drama education has a multidimensional positive impact on both autistic children and normal children.

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the concept of drama education

1.1.1 What is drama education.

Drama education is a whole-person education that integrates drama with education and teaching to cultivate students' all-round quality and ability. It is a kind of "interactive experiential learning" with education as its purpose and drama as its medium and tool.

1.1.2 Historical development of drama education

The earliest years of theatrical education in the twenty-first century. Numerous educational improvements were anticipated during the Second Constitutional Period, which began in 1908 [1]. Ismayil Hakki Baltacioglu, a distinguished educator who served as the minister for educational initiatives in 1908, penned more than 40 books about education, the arts, arts education, philosophy, philosophy of art, and other topics during his lifetime.

He understood that theatre work had a place in educational institutions. A school newsletter was published in 1925 by the Ministry of Education. He acknowledged in this piece that the school play should be seen as a teaching tool. The bulletin had embraced Baltacioglu's concept. School plays were seen as valuable and significant.

However, they were hardly noticeable in the first half of the century [2].

"Drama education" originated in France in the 18th century, The earliest origin of educational drama is that the integration of drama into teaching originates from two educational ideas of French thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau, which are "learning in practice" and "learning in drama practice". Later, the American educational thinker John Dewey, Dewey's "progressive teaching" of practical learning theory and the creative teaching theory of Hertz-Maine's had a profound influence in Europe and the United States.

In the UK, educational drama covers the entire field of education, including adult education and special education, from primary school to upper secondary school.

In Germany, drama is an elective course in primary and junior high school, and a compulsory course in senior high school.

Drama classes are the most popular in the globe in the United States. Drama classes have entered the compulsory teaching system through legislation. At present, 70% of primary and secondary schools have offered drama courses, and more than 1,000 universities have offered drama majors, accounting for 1/3 of the total number of universities in the United States.

In China, Hong Kong started first and has developed for nearly 30 years. 60% of teachers have applied drama to classroom teaching, 80% of schools have drama clubs, and high school students have drama elective courses in their Chinese and English courses.

* Corresponding author: 201010130425@stu.swmu.edu.cn

Different from the traditional drama, drama education is not aimed at teaching professional knowledge of drama, training performance quality, and cultivating professionals engaged in drama work. It is not aimed at showing performance, seeking a performance result, and taking drama as a medium for people to learn .

1.2 The general influence of the dramatic education.

Drama education is a whole-person education that integrates drama with education and teaching to cultivate students' all-round quality and ability. It is a kind of "interactive experiential learning" with education as its purpose and drama as its medium and tool. In developed countries such as Europe, the United States and Australia, drama has been incorporated into the basic education system from kindergarten to university, as the core foundation of Western education [3].

Educational drama highlights and strengthens the function of drama education. It emphasizes using theater as a teaching tool and a way to make the essential points of education clear through drama.

Centring on a certain theme and under a specific background and situation, students can be inspired by vivid dramatic situation activities. In the process of whole-body participation and experience of drama activities, they can gain the perception from body experience to soul.

In conclusion, drama education may develop students self-presentation, self-inspiration, self-change and harvest growth [1].

1.3 Typical teaching methods , process; requirements for teachers, venues and students

Compared with traditional disciplines.

1. Classroom mode: In the early stage (script reading stage), students do not write down on the platform, and teachers teach on the platform. It is a round table discussion, flexible movement, exchange of scripts.

In the middle and later stages (rehearsal stage), students arrange themselves in small groups in large classrooms, with large venues and convenient activities.

In the round table, students will discuss the social issues behind the play, exchange ideas and show themselves.

In the Final stage: Students' learning outcomes are no longer measured solely by paper grades. It is judged by observing the improvement of students' thinking ability, communication ability and teamwork ability

Teaching conditions: Prepare for the process of drama arrangement and performance in class, including the selection of scripts by teachers, the determination of themes, the preparation of props and the stage design.

The selection of classic plays should be excerpted and adapted from the original works, such as the selection of chapters, the selection of characters, the allocation of roles, the preparation of props and the stage setting [1].

Teacher's requirement: Teachers should apply more well-known methods and techniques of drama education and

can adequately use their application. They should be sufficiently oriented in the theoretical foundation of theatre teaching and have some reserves in penetration into the deeper depth of methodologies and techniques of drama education. Needs high percentage of application for example dramatization as a traditional means of drama education

1. As a guide: be familiar with the script, understand the background of the script, and understand the character characteristics of the script. Explain to students and popularize.

2. As an organizer: organize students to participate in the drama arrangement and encourage every student to dare to perform and bring into the drama. Organize students to make props for their own plays

3.As an observer: observe the changes (whether in knowledge, thinking or psychology) that students acquire in drama education.

4.As a topic leader, focus on the social issues behind the script and guide students to think

The teacher should assign tasks and introduce the play to the students. In the teaching practice, according to the specific course hours, teaching units, class sizes and other reasonable arrangement of drama performance process. The theme of the script should be positive and relevant to students' level of knowledge. The plot of the drama should be full of drama, ups and downs, suitable for performance.

Discuss the script with students, understand the theme background of the script, character characteristics, causes and results of events, encourage students to think positively, bring in situational roles, and improve students' critical thinking ability.

Student requirements:

1. Participants: Actively participate in drama education, after understanding each role, choose the role suitable for them, insert themselves into the role, and understand the behavioural motivation and personality characteristics of the role. Create props for the show in group.

2. Thinker: Understand the social topics behind the play, think and reflect, and draw conclusions through the drama arrangement [4].

3. Coordinator: Whether as group leader, central role or supporting role, students actively communicate with members

4. Learners: Learn the history, English or culture behind the script to improve their knowledge accumulation and literary literacy [4].

2 The definition of autistic children

Three fundamental traits of autism, a widespread developmental condition, are behavioural abnormalities, difficulties verbally expressing oneself, and social isolation. Currently, pharmacological therapy, behaviours modification and training, early education and training, and early intervention are the primary approaches of autism intervention [5].

Before the age of three, abnormal or impaired development is visible in at least one of the following areas: The formation of selected social attachments or reciprocal social engagement, receptive or expressive language utilized

in social communication, functional or symbolic play, and language as a tool for self-expression are the first three.

(1) Failure to effectively manage social connection through eye-to-eye gaze, facial expression, bodily postures, and gestures is a qualitative social interaction deficiency.

(2) The failure to establish peer relationships that entail a mutual sharing of interests, activities, and feelings (in a way appropriate to mental age, and despite adequate opportunity);

(3) Absence of a natural desire to connect with others and share experiences, interests, or accomplishments absence of bringing, displaying, or pointing out to others any objects that the person finds interesting.

Irregularities in quality at least one of the following areas, where communication is apparent:

When they are young, they may experience a delay or absence of spoken language development that is not followed by an effort to make up for it by using gestures or mime as a substitute form of communication.

(a) A general inability to start or maintain a dialogue in which both parties respond to each other's communications of others.

(b) Stereotyped and repetitive language use or peculiar word or phrase usage and the absence of diversified spontaneous pretend play or (when young) social imitative play.

Restricted, monotonous, and stereotypical patterns of behaviours, interests, and pursuits can be seen in at least one of the following:

(a) An overarching preoccupation with one or more stereotyped and circumscribed patterns of interest that are abnormal in content or focus; or one or more interests that are abnormal in their intensity and circumscribed nature but not in their content or focus; (b) An apparent compulsive adherence to, non-functional routines or rituals.

(c) Stereotypical and repetitive motor mannerisms involving flapping, twisting, or complex whole-body movements with the hands or fingers; (d) Obsessions with inert parts of playthings or non-functional aspects of them (such as their smell, the feel of their surface, or the sound or vibration they produce) [6].

3 Benefit of drama education

3.1. Impact of drama education on students' communication and expression ability.

The mode of drama education is mostly carried out in a group mode of 4-5 people, and students can improve their communication and expression skills when discussing the content of the script with teachers and group members and organizing and coordinating scenes.

Between 1978 and January 2003, there were 2,030 articles using role-playing as a descriptor.

The study examined several facets of role-playing and personal growth, and it largely recognized this activity as a particular kind of behavioural intervention. These interventions frequently focus on problems like lowering violent conduct in unruly third graders. (1982; Bleck & Bleck) and help shy, solitary kids develop their social skills.

We can know from the experiment in reference [7].

The results of the current study on how the theatre education project affected children's creativity and communication-expressive capacity were consistent and intriguing. First, students in the experimental group were shown to be more fluent in their creative responses following participation in the project on the Wallach-Kogan creativity tests (WKCT) and the test of creative thinking-drawing production (TCT-DP), two measures of creativity. The students' drawings tended to be more elaborate, such as having more novel features, being more unusual and boundary-breaking, despite being less prominent on the TCT-DP measure. In line with this, it was discovered that these pupils produced more imaginative and captivating stories on the story-telling test (STT). The story-telling test was used to gauge their communication and expressive capacity, which led to the second important finding.

After participating in the experiment, it was discovered that they were more expressive and detailed while narrating stories.

The drama project had demonstrated a substantial improvement in story-telling and creative thinking. The current research did in fact show that students who had taken part in the program had improved in their capacity for communication and expression. The results offer empirical evidence for the advantages of theater instruction.

3.2 Teamwork compromise authentic listening skills can be improved in the drama class

Role-playing in the ESL/EFL classroom is a useful technique. It promotes knowledge sharing among the students and teaches them how to cooperate, have empathy for others, and make decisions. Roleplaying is advantageous because the students are learning from one another just from these factors. However, the role-playing has a lot of other advantages. In addition to the obvious improvement of communication skills, it promotes leadership, teamwork compromise, real-world savours-faire practice, and compromise on actual listening abilities. But it goes further than that [3]. It fosters empathy and collaboration and improves listening abilities [8].

3.3 Ability to think critically.

Through the process of drama education, the results of questionnaires and participatory observation, students begin to develop critical thinking.

The strengthening of dimensional ability, especially inductive thinking. This means that by looking at specific details or facts, people can draw more general conclusions. In this study, the author through the sessions, students were found to be experimenting with the problems faced by heroes in dramatic stories through role play. Students start paying attention, generalizing conclusions, and generating solutions based on their own reality. The conclusion shows that students pass by summarizing the conclusions drawn from their predicament, they gradually acquire the skill of inductive thinking.

In literature, students engage in a key challenge involving character play --Role Drama, role drama is a crucial difficulty here [9]. In this activity, students take on

several roles that are relevant to the given situation and seek to reach a consensus on a contentious issue. Students would act out various scenarios while playing different characters that have an interest in or are impacted by the subject. This would culminate in the presentation of various viewpoints or strategies, based on which pupils would make a choice regarding the subject. (Roles could include politicians, environmentalists, locals, and loggers.

Students would need to rely on a wide range of intellectual resources to meet this challenge. Background information on the subject would be essential. When presenting the many viewpoints and coming to a conclusion, students would need to use solid reasoning concepts. For this problem, attitudes like openness, fairness, a desire to ask questions, and a willingness to listen to and consider the opinions of others would be especially crucial.

In such role drama challenges, students naturally improve their critical thinking skills and knowledge [7].

4 Discussion

At present, there are research on drama education, mainly in Greece, Europe and America. In China, experiments and research are mainly conducted in Shanghai and Hong Kong, and most of them are conducted in class units. The focus is on normal children's communication skills, critical thinking skills and creativity.

Therefore, the limitations of the current research field are as follows:

1. Drama education in China need further development and need to be extended to the whole country. So far, drama education only exists in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and other economically developed areas of Hong Kong and Macao.

2. There are few studies on drama education for autistic children, and most of the current studies focus on drama healing

3. Conduct research on a class basis. At present, the field of drama education is mostly carried out in school classes, and there is less community and public welfare education. Personalized, small classes, less one-on-one study.

4. Educators should pay more focus on the comprehensive quality of children and adolescents

Future outlook and practice

The hope is that drama education can be extended to schools, communities across the country. So that more students can get comprehensive ability in drama education, as well as the improvement of discipline quality.

It is hoped that drama education can be more popular, not only play a role in drama healing, but also improve the ability of life, learning and interpersonal communication of autistic groups through drama education, and overcome obstacles.

Practice: The drama education in the community need to carry out public service, for a wider group of audiences.

In April 2022, drama will be included in the curriculum standards of primary and secondary schools, and drama education will be popularized and promoted in China with bright prospects for development.

In the current environment around the world, the teaching system of drama education is not perfect, the

teaching materials are not systematic, and the teachers are relatively short. While popularizing drama education, it is still necessary to cultivate the drama literacy of teachers, form a systematic drama education team, and accurately find for students the scripts and topics that are suitable for them, personalized, in line with facts and mainstream values. Combined with the knowledge they have learned at the present stage, the textbooks of basic subjects such as language, mathematics and English can be used flexibly and fit drama education into educational policy. Moreover, more educational practice should be conducted to benefit more individuals [10].

5 Conclusion

This paper divides the two objects of drama education into normal children and autistic children. Through the research, it is found that for normal children, drama education can improve their critical thinking ability and help them understand more historical background, character roles, comprehensive knowledge and literary literacy in certain special situations during role playing. In rehearsals and discussion of scripts, students can improve their communication skills, interpersonal skills, organizational leadership, teamwork and so on. For autistic children, drama education can bring their special creativity into play by letting autistic children make props. In group cooperation, children with autism can also exercise their expression skills and interpersonal skills, which can also play a role in dramatic healing to a certain extent.

At present, most of the studies focus on the improvement or influence of drama education on children's ability, and there is rarely a complete article on comprehensive ability. This paper summarizes and states the various abilities of drama education for normal children, and also summarizes the positive influence of drama education for autistic children. At present, there are few studies in the field of autistic children, and the curriculum design and teacher requirements for drama education are not perfect. In the future, these fields can be further refined, researched and improved, so as to facilitate the influence and promotion of drama education, a special education in the field of education. As a result, more primary and secondary school students and autistic children around the world can break the bondage of exam-oriented education, learn easily, and improve their abilities.

References

1. V. Hornackova, J. Kottasova, Z. Vanova, A. Jungrova, *Int J Educ Pedag Sci* **10**(8), 2988 - 2993. (2016).
2. San, I. *Ride-J Appl Theatre*, **3**(1), 96-99. (1998).
3. Joronen, K., Rankin, S. H., & Astedt-Kurki, P. *J Adv Nurs* **63**(2), 116-131. (2008).
4. M. van de Water & M. McAvoy & H. K. Hunt. *Performance Methodologies for teaching and learning*. Oxfordshire: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

5. F. R. Volkmar, R. Paul, A. Klin, & D. Cohen, Handbook of Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders. New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
6. J.W. Varni, O. Lovaas, I, R.L. Koegel & N.L. Everett, J Abnorm Child Psych 7. (1979)
7. A. Hui& S. Lau, Think Skills Creat, **1**(1), 34-40. (2006).
8. P. Ramamoorthi & A. Nelson, Drama education for individuals on the autism spectrum. In the key concepts of drama/drama education Leiden: Brill
9. Sharon Bailin (2006) Critical Thinking and Drama Education Available online at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1356978980030202>
10. D. Loyd, Brit J Learn Disabil **43**(1),8-15 (2015)