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THE IMPACT OF CREATIVE DRAMATICS ON CHILDREN CREATIVITY DEVELOPMENT IN NURSERY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The paper focuses on creative dramatics in pre-school education as an important means of the children creativity development. The research deals with a qualitative research through a case study as the detailed education research in a selected nursery school. The aim of the research is to identify and describe children creativity development thinking and the impact of applying creative dramatics in education on the development of children creativity in pre-school age. The case study provides us with a detailed record from an interview with a teacher who demonstrates her interest and expertise in applying elements of creative dramatics in education of pre-school children. During research investigation, the deeper analysis focused on pre-school education through case study in nursery school, which used methods and techniques of creative dramatics. The realization of Torrance's Creative Thinking Test for Children brings the interesting results in the development of children's creativity. The results mainly refer to a significant increase in originality and elaboration of children, which is an inspiring impulse for pre-school education. The research study demonstrates significant results of the development of children's creativity through observation, interview, and test-thinking. The research contributes to appreciation of creative dramatics as an effective method in the children creativity development.

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1. Introduction

Creative dramatic is considered to be an alternative education system based on a constructive pedagogical approach. The emphasis is laid on the development of an activity and children's creativity not only in nursery schools. Creative dramatic can be considered as a system of aesthetical-educational education as well as the means of pre-school education, which positively, naturally and comprehensively influences the universal development of a child. Dramatic is targeted to the personal and social development. It represents a holistic teaching and its core is a game. Preschoolers learn best through play, and in the case of creative dramatics, they can use the dramatic games which offer them interaction, active resolution and contact with their surroundings. Creative dramatics can influence the physical, psychological and social level of a child in the sense of developing individual abilities; while at the same time trying to support the educational influence for self-thinking and decision making personalities, human beings.

2. The Usage of Creative Dramatics in Pre-school Education

Pre-school education in nursery schools expects to apply new initiatives, incentives and non-traditional impulses to support the development of creativity. If we incline to the idea that every human being is capable of creativity and it can be developed, then it is worthwhile to explore deeper the level of creativity development at nursery schools. The leading creative drama experts report that the major scope is to develop individual creativity, sensitivity, perception, and empathy of every single human being. They emphasize personality, which will be able to make a decision and act freely and responsibly.

At a nursery school, creative dramatics can be applied to all activities; it can pervade the events of the whole day. Which elements, methods and techniques of creative dramatics in direct work with children will be chosen depends on a teacher. Whether it is in the morning or the afternoon activities or more in the controlled activities; and to what extent he/she creates a congenial nursery school environment and opportunities for creative dramatics. Based on the idea that only a creative teacher can have creative children, then it is the most important for teachers at nursery schools to use the methods, the elements and the techniques of creative dramatics in pre-school education.

2.1. Nursery School Classroom Space for Creative Dramatics

Nursery school classroom space for the dramatics should allow the children to sit in a circle and the overall classroom environment need to be structured by, for instance, a screen or the other suitable forms. If space for the activities is too large, it will be defined. Children concentrate and understand better when an activity is taking place within a defined space. Adhering to simple rules give children a sense of security while learning, respect the authority and needs of the others. Children need initiative and ideas for enthusiastic cooperation. The teacher provides them with many properties, costumes, rhythmic instruments, cloths, hats and a variety of materials in the classroom, which can support children's creativity.

2.2. Structured Drama in Pre-school Education as an Inspiration

In a nursery school, where creative dramatics in education is applied, is inspiring and beneficial to use the breakdown of drama (exposure, collision, crisis, peripeteia, and catastrophe) which is the most

typical for dramatic play and improvisation. Their realization provides space for the usage of the creative dramatic methods and the techniques and help children with solving problems and developing associations. At the beginning, we introduce children into the plot and prepare them for action while using, for example, brainstorming or an association circle. After a successful entry into the topic, there is an exposure, whose aim is to inspire children and to focus more on the activity and deal with it. Blahova (1996) highlights: "This means that the elements of drama must be encoded –i.e. contradiction or conflict and the consequent beginning of dramatic tension – "but only to the certain extent that we have enough space for children to uncover, seek and solve" (p. 56). Collision comes for performing dramatic tension. It is necessary to place a conflict thanks to which we create for children space and necessity to solve the conflict. Children can play different scenes with a suggested solution, or a discussion can arise, or a puppet, properties, or teacher herself/himself can also be used. This is followed by crisis or dramatic climax. The crisis consists of dramatic contradiction which should not be further developed because children would no longer obligate to keep their attention. Another part of the drama is peripeteia. Children should express their attitude or opinion about solving the problem from the previous section of the crisis. In nursery school, it is best to use a range of opinion technique or attitude axis for this section, giving children the opportunity to express their opinion. The last part of the drama is catastrophe which is about clarifying the final resolution and conclusion of the activity. Together we review what we have experienced and what our findings are. It is also about releasing tension and overall calming. This is reflection which should take part in every dramatic activity in a nursery school. Through reflection, we can easily recognise if children understand a situation and the problems and their solution. "Reflections have an important role in order to obtain experiences and knowledge, which they acquired, named and sorted" (Ulrychova, Gregorova, & Svejdova, 2000, p. 108).

2.3. The Creative Drama Elements – Properties

Real properties - it is the use of a real object in dramatic activity; i.e. the objects have their real function. For children is important to touch and observe a new real object. Many interesting objects which can be used as properties offer a nursery school. We can use various toys and building kits, we can also create a scene from the kits. The various properties, sceneries or costumes can be created by children themselves, with the assistance of a teacher; children can also bring the different unused objects, which will be able to use valuably during the dramatics, from their homes.

Displacement properties – nursery school children do not need the real properties, the puppets, the scenes or the costumes. Let's compare it to the similar "play on something" game. Children are able to turn into a princess or an animal and only some element of the character is enough to imagine this. Nevertheless, they often dispense with any costume. Their imagination and fantasy will complete these objects and provide them with necessary characteristics. Svobodová and Švejdová (2011) also noticed: "Accepting a representing object as a sign of a reality or a human being is not a problem for a preschool child, but it is the natural ability of this age" (p. 88).

Imaginary properties - properties can also be imaginary, which is mainly the task for children's imagination. The benefit of the imaginary properties is that it imposes the same conditions for all children. For instance; every child can have an imaginary ball, which he / she can complete according to his / her

imagination. A big advantage is that things that aren't commonly available can be used. We are able to create an imaginary ship in the classroom and sail with it on the imaginary sea, watching the waves and looking for dolphins. These properties provide us with unlimited possibilities and it would be a shame not to use these opportunities for children. The imaginary properties are suitable for all kinds of pantomime, role play, improvisation and the other dramatic activities.

3. Problem Statement

Currently, creative dramatics at nursery schools is not applied as its supporters would have expected, so we decided, through the case study, to approach the application of creative dramatics in education. For the initial research, a nursery school class, where the teachers implement the elements, the methods and the techniques of creative dramatics in education, was chosen. In the particular example, we attempt to describe the possibilities of the educational approach of the teacher who works on the development of creative thinking and analyzes the effect of applying creative dramatics in education on the children's creativity development through the case study determine and compare development of creative thinking among the children.

4. Research Questions

What is the level of children's creativity in the selected nursery schools? Does the use of creative dramatics in pre-school education affect the development of children's creativity?

5. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the research is to identify and describe children creativity development thinking in the selected nursery school through the case study and to analyze the impact of applying creative dramatics in education on the development of children creativity in pre-school age.

6. Research Methods

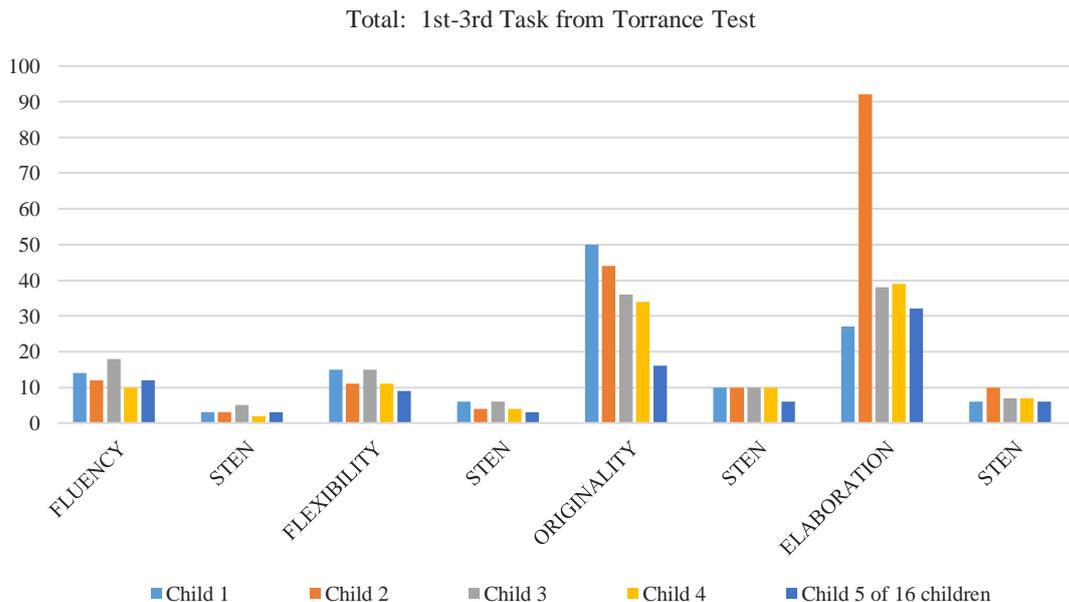
The research deals with the qualitative research and depicts the case study as the detailed examination of education in the selected nursery school. Focusing on research methods; observation, an interview with the teacher and the standard "*Torrance test of creative thinking*" for pre-school children at classes, where creative dramatics is applied, was used. To evaluate the creativity values test, we analyzed these factors: fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. The creative thinking tests were analyzed according to the methodological manual. The research has shown the first results from the pilot study, so far has been observed on a small sample of respondents - one teacher and five children from the selected nursery school class, and get closer to the examples of the detailed examination.

7. Findings

During the research investigation, the deeper analysis focused on pre-school education through the case study in nursery school, which uses the methods and the techniques of creative dramatics. Based on

Torrance test, the research study demonstrates significant results of the development of children's creativity.

The research presents the initial results of the case study. The children, whose creativity factors are flexibility, fluency, originality and elaboration, have significantly higher results in originality, which is the excellent finding. In addition, the children gained higher results in elaboration, which is the ability to elaborate details or formulate ideas precisely. Compared to other factors of creativity, it is the significant result. The figure 1 shows the significant increase in the score just in originality and elaboration.



Comment: The graph No. 1 shows that originality and elaboration of children working in the nursery school classroom with creative dramatics is significantly developed. This finding is inspirational for further investigation and possible comparison of results in several case studies. The graph also shows the results of fluency and flexibility and the resulting sums (STEN) of the individual factors.

Figure 01. The Children Creativity Factor Results in the Case Study

The subsequent research method is an interview with a teacher who uses the elements, the methods and the techniques of creative dramatics in her class. A sample of the interview in the table 01 demonstrates the detailed research.

Table 01. Sample Interview

The Question	The Teacher's Answer
Where and when do you use creative dramatics the most?	<i>The most during the controlled activities. In that cases, I concentrate on the specific techniques, nevertheless I feel that the elements of creative dramatics should permeate throughout a day in nursery schools. Children are better motivated, get better with the theme, and learn better a new theme and they are overall more enthusiastic. They bring, for instance, their books from home because they are dedicated to that theme. When we are accompanied by elements of creative dramatics all day long, it is more effective. And children enter roles just at the moment of the limited activity. Namely in controlled or main activities. In my opinion, that is good for feeling safe. Especially when children are little, they need a limited activity. We are dedicated to the theme the whole week but we enter the roles only in these controlled activities. We are sure and safe because the beginning and the end is always the same.</i>

What methods and techniques do you use the most frequently and children are good at?	<i>Children in my class like to enter roles the most and improvisation. They laugh so much in improvisation. We definitely use brainstorming in stress situations.</i>
How often do you, as a teacher, enter the different roles?	<i>I would say that during every activity. I keep returning to the limited activities and feeling safe. Children perceive me when I am a teacher or another character, for instance, as an Indian grandmother or an African shaman. With real seriousness, we enter into the roles in a controlled activity. We came to practice and experience that some children are more sensitive and fearful about what is real or unreal. Therefore, we strictly separate. When entering the roles I use the costume to children know when I am or I am not a teacher. It helps me to have a clear structure of a day.</i>
Do you use properties? If yes, which one the most frequently?	<i>Yes, we do. As I mentioned, mainly during the moments of the controlled activities. Even myself, as a teacher, I wear a costume or have some object by me. I think that I use not only cloths but also everything what comes under my hand. Everything can be properties as for example natural products, toys, picture, crumpled paper etc. I am personally dedicated to the theme I am preparing for the children. For the usage of creative dramatics, the objects themselves come to my mind. I sometimes choose them deliberately or unintentionally.</i>
Do you involve the children into reflection at the end of an activity?	<i>Yes, definitely. A reflection is at the end. A reflection should take place after every method of creative dramatics; nevertheless due to the limited time capacity I am not able to manage it. My "children" are used to discuss a lot and they need time for it. Therefore, at the end of all activities we do reflection, either expressed or in the form of a "thermometer". As well during the walk, we do the reflection of the whole day. I ask questions about what I liked or didn't, whether the activity was pleasant or unpleasant or in the form of voting.</i>

Comment: *I easily recognized from the interview with the teacher that creative dramatics can be fully and valuably applied in practice. She describes that she uses dramatics the most frequently during the controlled activities; enters the role play and uses any properties. She mentioned the role play and improvisation as the most frequently applied methods. Both these methods support children development of creativity. The teacher realizes that the most important for children is to border the roles and feeling safe. A reflection, which should never be missed, takes place at the end of an activity. Based on the answers, it is obvious that the teacher dedicates herself to creative dramatics and is able to provide children with this extraordinary experience and impulses to develop their creativity.*

A teacher, who applies the selected methods and the techniques of creative dramatics in pre-school education, is able to use the criteria for reflexion and self-reflexion of his/her work based on the observation. Table 2 shows the criteria evaluation of the application level of creative drama methods and techniques. This reflective activity helps the educator to realize their meaning and meaningfulness in education. At the same time, it leads to further thoughtful implementation of the methods and the techniques that have not been implemented to children yet.

Table 02. The Criteria for Reflection of the Methods and the Techniques of Creative Dramatics

Children perform methods and techniques	Excellent level (4)	Good level (3)	Sufficient level (2)	Insufficient level (1)
Role Play Children are able to enter the role and play the roles.	Yes, Varvara and her mum			
Improvisation Children are able to improvise and they improvise	Yes, What do the children see in the ocean?			
Interpretation Children are able to interpret a text according to the template		Yes, It was a whisker		

Pantomime Children are able to mime and act it themselves		Yes, What do the children see in the ocean?		
Narrative pantomime Children show off by movements, represent what the teacher narrates	Yes, The killer whale attack			
Live images Children are able to create a live image (s) as a part of the plot/ the situation	x	x	x	x
Corridor – Avenue Children are able to create a corridor under the guidance of a teacher	x	x	x	x
Scale of opinions / Thermometer Children are able to react to their activity, situation, role play	Yes, Who was scared?			

Comment: As the table No. 2 demonstrates, the teacher exploits the methods and the techniques of creative dramatics at the excellent and good level. She mainly applies the method of a role play, improvisation and interpretation. She further significantly uses pantomime, narrative pantomime and the scale of option method. The table proves an excellent result and is inspiring for further case studies.

8. Conclusion

The case study used as the detailed research method demonstrates that the use of creative dramatics has the significant effect on the children's creativity development. The research identified higher results in creativity of children with creative dramatics used on every day basis. The study penetrated deeper into pre-school education and gained the reflective view of the application of creative dramatics in the nursery school. The research study contributes to the appreciation of creative dramatics as the effective method and positively affects the quality of pre-school education in nursery schools.

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