

Original Paper

Promoting Children's Creativity through Drama in Education

Jia Dai^{1*}

¹ School of Foreign Languages, English, Chengdu Normal University, Sichuan Chengdu, 611130 China

* Jia Dai, School of Foreign Languages, English, Chengdu Normal University, Sichuan Chengdu, 611130 China

Received: April 30, 2020

Accepted: May 9, 2020

Online Published: May 14, 2020

doi:10.22158/selt.v8n2p68

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/selt.v8n2p68>

Abstract

Under the background of economic globalization, human creativity and imagination are key resources in a world dominated by technological innovations. Creative talents have become the pressing needs of the country. Promoting children's creativity has also been one of the research interests in school education.

This thesis aims to research the relationship between Drama in Education and the cultivation of children's creativity and explore the feasibility of promoting children's creativity through DIE in English teaching. The study employs a qualitative method utilizing classroom observation method and interview method to examine the effectiveness of children's creativity promotion in the practical English DIE class. The findings show that the main elements of drama in education are consistent with theories proposed by some of today's best-known scholars in the area of creativity studies and the use of DIE for English teaching has helped stimulate children's creativity.

It is hoped that the findings of this thesis will have a significance in promoting children's creativity through DIE and provide some inspiration for teachers and researchers.

Keywords

Drama in Education, Children's creativity, English teaching

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

In a world dominated by technological innovations, creativity is a critical component. Human skills and people's powers of creativity and imagination are key resources in a knowledge-driven economy. In fact, since the late 90's promoting creativity has become a global-wide interest reflecting the intense social, economic and technological changes and the need to raise competitiveness in globalization activities (Shaheen, 2010).

Creativity is reckoned as a basic capacity for survival as well as for future success. How to foster and nurture children's creativity has become a pressing problem. Curriculum reform has been carried out and creativity has been included in education policy in western developed countries such as the US, UK, Germany, France, Sweden and Australia (Feldman & Benjamin, 2006). Many Asian countries have also responded to this trend. In Hong Kong, creativity is recognized as one of the three generic skills to be developed in education, and several general principles for developing creativity are suggested in curriculum documents (Cheng, 2010). Other places, like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, have also implemented curriculum reforms with an emphasis on creativity development (Choe, 2006; Shaheen, 2010). Currently, educational reform is also urged to develop children's creative potential in China, since the phenomenon of students' high achievement in math in international tests yet low ranking in imagination and creativity was noticed. For English teaching, *The English Curriculum Standard* (2017) also points out that one of the key competencies of English is thinking quality which covers the logical, critical and creative thinking abilities.

Creativity is a complicated and multi-dimensional phenomenon. It's one of the most difficult psychological concepts and notoriously hard to define. We have chosen Craft's (2001, p. 45) concept of "little c creativity", LCC, as our main concept to define children's creativity. Craft (2001, 2005) separates ordinary creativity from "big C creativity", BCC, which has wider influence in society and usually refers to the actions and productions of creative geniuses. Instead of highlighting remarkable achievements, little c creativity (LCC) focuses on the agency of ordinary people and recognizes everyone's potential to be creative in innovation and problem-solving.

In addition, researchers usually approach the field of creativity from one of the four generally acknowledged foundations, known as 4P's: a creative person, product, process, place or environment (Mooney, 1975). We can understand creativity from the 4P's. It's a theory that explores the underlying structure of how creativity is operationalized. In this thesis, we choose the concept of creative environment to approach the field of creativity. Place or environment refers to the milieu which are facilitative to creative ideas and thinking to take place.

We found that it seem to be the creative environment which DIE can offer. DIE means the use of forms of participatory drama for educational purposes. It is a children-oriented teaching method, which provides children space, time and a degree of freedom for performing, imaging and expressing. It is considered an effective way to promote children's language, perspective-taking, creative and imaginative abilities.

1.2 Research Questions and Research Method

To study the relationship between DIE and cultivation of creativity in this thesis, the following questions are primarily to be addressed:

- (1) What are the conditions for promoting children's creativity in schools?
- (2) In what ways does DIE help promote children's creativity?

The research is theory-based, exploratory and interpretive combined with the theories of creativity and

DIE. It uses a case study, which will yield qualitative results and the analysis is a descriptive one.

1.3 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter One briefly introduces the research background, research questions and method. Chapter Two is an account of previous scholarship on relevant topics and issues. Chapter Three carries out the current study of promoting children's creativity which provides a theoretical foundation to support the feasibility of promoting creativity through DIE. Chapter Four is a case study in practical DIE teaching. The conclusion is drawn in the last chapter.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Researches Abroad

Many scholars state the principles and approaches of fostering creativity. Anna Craft published *Creativity Across the Primary Curriculum: Framing and Developing Practice* in 2000. She explores core principles and the different subjects and considers ways in which teachers can develop a more "creative mindset" towards the curriculum and pedagogy. *Hope and Education: The Role of the Utopian Imagination* published by Halpin (2003) shows that establishing an environment of security where no child feels "a loser" is central to promoting creativity. Some scholars found that it is seem the environment which Drama in Education can offer.

Few scholars began to investigate some connections between the cultivation of creativity and Drama in Education. Drama educators Cremin and McDonald's *Creativity in the primary curriculum* in 2013 generally interpret that creativity can be fostered and nurtured through drama education. *Promoting creativity in teaching drama* has reflected on how it is possible to increase and support creativity in drama class and approached creativity from three viewpoints: improvisation, presence and students' perspectives. It focuses on improving the practice of creative teaching in drama. However, it lacks strong theoretical support and inclined to practice aspect. Combined with English teaching in primary school, my focus is to find the evidence to support the claim that drama participation promotes children's creative abilities by clarifying their associations. By using authentic materials, teaching design cases will be provided as examples to illustrate the ways and methods of promoting creativity through DIE.

2.2 Researches at Home

Yu-sien Lin, a scholar from Taiwan, published the academic monograph *Fostering Creativity through Education—A Conceptual Framework of Creative Pedagogy* in 2011. She describes creative teaching from three different perspectives: creative teaching, teaching for creativity and creative learning, referring to them as creative pedagogy. She offers a more holistic view of enhancing creativity through teaching and to provide a different explanation to some arguments about teaching creativity, which provides a conceptual framework for fostering and nurturing children's creativity through DIE at school. Her thesis also gave me inspiration to come out the topic of this thesis.

Hui and her colleagues in two field experimental studies manifested that drama activities and strategies

are integrated into the curriculum for enhancing children's creativity in *Drama education: a touch of the creative mind and communicative-expressive ability of elementary school children in Hong Kong* (2006) and *How effective is a drama-enhanced curriculum doing to increase the creativity of preschool children and their teachers?* (2011). Both of them use quantitative analysis to support the claims that that drama participation promotes creative activity.

Po-Chi Tam from the Hong Kong Institute of Education, published *Children's creative understanding of drama education: A Bakhtinian perspective* in 2016. This paper investigated children's creative learning of drama education in a group of preschoolers aged 4-5 in a Hong Kong kindergarten. The research was designed originally to offer a case study to identify the emergence of creative learning during and after drama lessons, while my thesis focuses on the use of Drama in Education as a teaching tool to promote children's creativity in English teaching. These studies provide persistent and strong evidence about the effectiveness of drama education towards creativity.

Compared with researches in Hong Kong and Taiwan, the research about the cultivation of children's creativity through DIE is not mature enough in Mainland, and the research literature is relatively few. Cai Xueying's master's thesis *A study on the strategies of cultivating middle school students' creativity based on Drama Teaching*, based on the statistics of Chinese drama teaching in middle school, is to probe into the strategies of drama teaching to promote students' creativity. But she focuses on the Chinese drama applied to Chinese teaching while my thesis aims to use DIE as a teaching tool to promote students' creativity in English teaching.

3. The Theoretical Discussion of Promoting Children's Creativity through DIE

3.1 Drama in Education

Drama in education (DIE) and drama education are two different concepts. The objective of DIE is to use drama as a tool to educate in which education is the goal, whereas drama education towards professional training for actors, playwrights, directors in which the goal is drama.

Within drama in education all students work as a group using drama strategies (freeze-frames, teacher-in-role, etc.), to devise short pieces of fiction. Fictional roles, time and space help the children to communicate their understanding in an aesthetic way to themselves and their fellow participants. Drama incorporates elements of theatre to facilitate the student's cognitive, physical, social and emotional development and learning. Classroom drama is a multisensory mode of teaching and learning (Bolton, 1998, pp. 198-200). Drama activities include a broad area of techniques incorporating physical movement, vocal action, and mental concentration, which traditional classrooms have lacked in quantity and quality in the past.

In DIE, we don't "rehearse", we use role play and drama games and we learn by doing it. It orientates children's competence, quality and personality but not specific skills. Learning through drama does not only provide children with chances for imaginative engagement, it also provides practical experiences since it is process-oriented. DIE does not require children to perform on the stage. It requires them to

“Be”, the emphasis is on experiencing. When children are in make-believe, playing on their own, they are, for the most part, in this particular, “living-through” mode. They are the agents as well as the recipients of the experience. They can say “we are making it happen, so that it can happen to us”.

Role playing teaches people skills for participating in the creation of their own unfolding identities. And throughout role playing, one grows certain habits in his personality, such as communication skills, problem solving skills, empathy, collaboration, etc. All of which will benefit children in promoting their creativity through its experiential, social and emotional nature, they will be more creative and look into the problem from multiple dimensions when facing difficulties, they will be more motivated to solve problems, and they will be more used to create.

3.2 Current studies of Promoting Children's Creativity

Creativity can be developed and everyone has the potential to be creative. Based on some prior theories of creativity offered by a number of prominent researchers, this section is to determine the key elements of a learning environment supporting children's creativity.

3.2.1 Creative Pedagogy

Lin (2011) describes creativity education from three different perspectives: creative teaching, teaching for creativity and creative learning, referring to them as creative pedagogy. It is argued that the framework of creative pedagogy, a model consisting of three interrelated elements in nurturing creativity, is able to offer a more holistic view of fostering creativity through education.

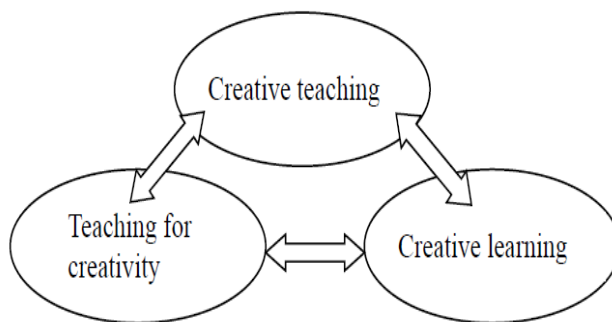


Figure 1. Creative Pedagogy

According to Lin (2011), the first perspective, creative learning is an essential part of creative pedagogy since its focus is on children's action. Creative learning embraces children's intrinsic curiosity in tuition (Lin, 2011). Children learn by means such as questioning, inquiring, searching, manipulating, experimenting, and even aimless play. Children explore out of their curiosity, which is natural to human beings.

The second perspective, creative teaching, focuses on teaching and teacher's actions (Lin, 2011). Lin (2011) refers to creative teaching as a creative, innovative and imaginative approach to teaching (Craft, 2005). By using their own creativity at work, teachers create opportunities for children to develop and improve their creative learning. Teacher's creative action can also act as a model encouraging children

to act creatively themselves (Jeffrey, 2006). Creative teachers tend to place the learners above the curriculum and combine a positive disposition towards creativity and person-centred teaching which actively motivates children to learn and think by themselves. Creative teaching is an improvisational performance where there is tension between structure (goals, content knowledge, emotional support, classroom management) and freedom (ability to react to student group reactions) (Sawyer, 2011).

The third and last perspective, teaching for creativity, considers the importance of a creativity-supporting environment (Lin, 2011). The environment denotes both the external and social context that supports and stimulates learners' motivation or enthusiasm and creative behavior. A key element for both perspectives is the open-minded atmosphere towards creativity created by the teacher. This is the teacher's open-mindedness towards creative ideas and behavior, pupil-centricity, flexibility, and the appreciation of independent thinking. Teaching for creativity is a child-centred approach emphasizing learners' responsibility for and control of their own learning. Teaching for creativity encourages children to ask questions, argue, discuss their thoughts and actively engage in their own learning (Craft, 2005).

3.2.2 Creative Environment

Creativity does not occur in isolation. It is clear that creativity always depends upon the surrounding environment and the beliefs and ideologies held by the people within it, especially support, inspiration and encouragement from their parents and teachers. Creativity always depends on a climate of open, trust, respect and support, an environment in which individual agency and self determination are fostered, and ideas and interests are valued, discussed and celebrated, whereas compulsion and discipline decrease creativity. Standard results evaluation and measures put in the way of risk and exploration are perpetual barriers to creative development, and the motivation to engage in creative behavior is easily extinguished. An open and safe learning environment help children enjoy school time and get better learning achievement. Children's affect and feelings play a central role in learning in such contexts.

According to a study by Toivanen, Salomaa and Halkilahti (2016) a creative learning environment for drama consists of the following six different elements: 1) teacher as a role model, 2) learning climate, 3) collaborative learning, 4) student-centered learning, 5) flexible use of time, 6) playful action in drama.

3.2.3 Creative Thinking

Although creative thinking includes both cognitive and affective thinking features, creative thinking is always studied as a cognitive process. Creative thinking is often linked with original and unique ideas. According to Mumford et al. (2012), they consider problem solving as an example of a creative thinking process. If children are given real situations to experience, real challenges to meet, and relevant contexts to work within they will operate in 'problem-solving' mode and generate new creative understanding in the process (Perkins, 2000).

3.2.4 Group Creativity

According to Sawyer (2012a), creativity researchers can be divided into two groups based on the

research approach. The individual approach studies creative people and their creative ideas and processes, whereas the socio-cultural approach relies on the idea of people as an inseparable part of the surrounding environment. According to creativity researchers, creativity is not necessarily a property of an individual; it can also be a property of a group. Children's creative development should also be considered on two levels: the individual creativity of each children and the group creativity of the whole class. The group creativity is simply defined as a creative process or product created by a group, organization or another ensemble (Sawyer, 2003). Research results indicate that group creativity has much potential due to its collective nature in inventing ideas. New inventions are more likely to occur in a group, when a group member's observation can lead to another member's idea.

3.3 A Theoretical Discussion of DIE and the Cultivation of Creativity

Typically, drama activities offer immediate experiences to the participants. Learning is approached through observation and exploration which are, according to Craft (2005, p. 43), essential for creative learning. According to a cognitive psychology perspective, learning would be most effective if students were constructors of their own knowledge. This is also the main premise of constructivism, in which the learner constructs their knowledge by integrating the new experience into his/her past experience. In this model, teachers have the role to help students in processes of constructing and developing their existing knowledge. DIE provides students with chances to construct their own knowledge as dramatic play is closely related to children's mental activity. Learning through drama does not only provide students with chances for imaginative engagement, it also provides practical experiences since it is process-oriented. Creativity, according to cognitive theorists of learning, is also a constructivist process. That means that individuals construct their knowledge base as they think, and that we are constantly creating in our brains, which constructs our memory.

In the drama class, teacher uses improvisational elements by living in the moment and acting spontaneously. Teachers are not restricted by the strict teaching plan. They are offered space, time and a degree of freedom of teaching by DIE. Teachers are encouraged to maintain an open attitude towards creative ideas or behaviors, being flexible, and valuing independence thinking in the drama class. Moreover, teachers' creative action can as a model encouraging children to performance creativity and fully engaged in the class. The teacher may have planned a drama lesson one way, but a creative teacher has the courage to take the ideas that have been put forward from the children and change the lesson to finish it in another way (Sawyer, 2004, 2006).

The drama teachers aim to give and create space and time for children's ideas and creative solutions in drama teaching, they need to have a capacity for rapid decision-making, group management skills, a tolerance of incompleteness and the ability to create a positive learning atmosphere. Well-executed drama tuition should offer an opportunity for interactive and social learning situations, where creative teaching, teaching for creativity and creative learning are in close relation to each other.

In the context of DIE, a nearly perfect creative environment is offered. DIE provide playful, non-threatening environments where children are encouraged to actively engage in the action while

practicing and honing their language, perspective-taking, and creative skills. Children work in a permissive, comfortable and playful atmosphere. Drama activities offer opportunities for children to express their ideas. Due to the positive atmosphere offered by DIE, children do not need to be afraid of failure or performance-focused evaluations that inhibit creativity. The purpose of drama is to create an interactive and positive learning environment in which the participants' construction of knowledge and learning takes place through creative and interactive social relationships. By alternately working in a role and as themselves, the learners acquire operating experiences and new knowledge. Drama offers opportunities for learners to create their own drama representations. In drama, the learners can express their own creative thinking and reflect on it with other group members. A long-term goal in drama education is to help learners understand themselves, others and the world in which they live (Bowell & Heap, 2001).

Creative thinking that occurs during drama processes is problem solving as determined by Mumford et al. (2012). Acting in drama processes requires plenty of immediate subconscious thinking. There is lots of improvisation in drama performance to interact with classmates. When the children offered solutions to a problem, they had the opportunity to see their solutions implemented. Based on their observations of the efficacy of their suggested solution, they were then able to modify their suggestions (Wendy, 2018). It is, therefore, possible that participation in this type of interactive drama could facilitate children's theory of mind and creativity development. In the context of the classroom, creating opportunities for children to "possibility think" is critical. This will involve teachers in immersing the class in a question or subject and helping the children ask questions, take risks, be imaginative and playfully explore solutions. In the context of DIE, teachers use open questions encouraging deeper understanding and lateral thinking. Children need to be involved in this process of imaginative thinking, encompassing the generation of challenging and unusual questions.

In the context of DIE, creativity is not defined as a characteristic of an individual but of a whole group. In addition, group creativity refers to drama learning as a collective action. Drama gives children opportunities to develop both individual and group creativity in the school learning environment. Drama enables group creativity through its social interaction between children (co-actors). Group creativity and interaction skills progress in group activities when children learn to co-operate with different people. Drama offers individuals not only space but also a way to develop social skills and enjoy the support of a group. In drama activities, children's capacity to cooperate, to empathy and experience both leadership and followership can be developed.

4. Promoting Children's Creativity through DIE: A Case Study

4.1 Research Questions and Research Method

To be specific, the research addresses the following questions: (1) Does DIE meet the needs of the cultivation of creativity in real English class? (2) What is the problem with DIE as a tool to promote children's creativity?

Classroom observation method and interview method were used in the research. We focus on children's creative learning, creative thinking and group creativity, teacher's creative teaching and teaching for creativity, and the creativity environment setting in the drama class.

4.2 Research Procedures

This qualitative study was conducted at Electronic Science and Technology University affiliated experimental primary school. In the context of the study, the participants were grade 5 students. A total of 30 students participated in the project. The participants were put into drama groups of 5 in a group. All the participants were required to take active part in the drama; meaning all of them was required to speak as part of their assessment. We audio-taped and transcribed teacher and children's words in the drama process for analyzing.

Po-Chi Tam's (2016) findings suggest that children's creative understanding in and through drama are largely grounded in story re-imagination and retelling in complex, idiosyncratic and parodic ways. Therefore, we arranged a 10 min talking activity after a 45 minute-drama lesson for probing into their thoughts and feelings.

4.3 Findings and Discussions

4.3.1 DIE and Creative Pedagogy

1 In the role playing part, three children of each group can play any animals they want. Some characters they played are creative and interesting. We interviewed two children after the drama class.

S1's talking

T: Can you tell me why you act a pangolin?

S1: Because I'm good at digging the hole. The rabbit can get out of the hole.

T: You are such a kind pangolin. You helped the rabbit!

S2's talking

T: You acted an elephant, right? Why?

S2: Because I'm strong. I can use my long nose to drag the rabbit's foot.

T: You want to help the rabbit, but the rabbit did the wrong thing, what do you want to say to him?

S2: Don't eat other's food.

The drama activities designed by the teacher emphasized on children's imagination and participation which accords with the theory of Lin (2011)'s creative learning. It focuses on children's mental activity and imaginative engagement. Children could transgress the boundary of self and everyday life to think, act and feel differently in role. In the interview, we talked about the characterization of children who acts the any other animal. Characterization is also a process of creativity and personalization (Po-Chi, 2016). They were not invited to imagine what animal they wanted to be, which is a critical element of creative learning. Drama enables them to mediate between the real and the imaginative world; to think, act and feel differently. Every animal they recreated have acquired a new character, a distinctive image and a specific role compared to those in the drama.

2 In the teacher-in-role part, the teacher acted as the rabbit and told his experiences in the garden. We

recorded the teacher's lines and actions.

T: I'm so sad today. I was hungry so I ate the carrots, lettuce and cabbage in the garden. But the owner of the garden found me. He run after me. I want to hide in the hole but I got stuck. Because my belly is too big. (touch the big belly) Who can help me? (cry)

In this class, the teacher try to use a creative, innovative and imaginative approach to teaching, the most obvious in the teacher's instruction and teacher-in-role. Teacher submerged into the role of the rabbit and sadly told everyone what he experienced in the garden. Teacher put a ball in the belly to show the rabbit's big belly in a playful way, changing the role to a playmate and dissipating the seriousness of a teacher. Teacher's creative action can also act as a model encouraging children to act creatively themselves. As Dunn (2011) highlights, the decrowning and engagement of the teachers in role vigorously allow shared play opportunities for everybody and succeeds in stimulating children's creativity.

3 A children said some bloody and violent ways to punish the rabbit. The teacher and the children had the following conversation after class.

T: Why do you want to kill the rabbit, even boil and eat him?

S3: The rabbit is bad. He ate my food.

T: If one day, a poor and hungry man took a hamburger from KFC, do you think we should kill him?

S3: No.

T: Every creature in the world is equal to human, right? Why we don't give him a chance to realize his faults? Or you can just punish him.

S3: Yes...It's right.

In the drama, some "owner" was kind. They overcame evil with goodness, helping pull the rabbit out of the hole. However, some "creativity" emerged in the drama maybe need teacher to seize the moment and guide children to feel the good and the beautiful. Lead them feel more with putting on other's shoes and feel more of what others feel.

4.3.2 DIE and Creative Environment

Part of the title, an adjective word to describe the rabbit, was covered at the beginning. Children can freely act the rabbit in their heart. In the end of the class, many answers were constantly emerging...There's no wrong or right. Every children can say their creative ideas.

T: Our performance is ending, now can you give a complete title of this picture book? (the teacher pointed to the covered word on the blackboard)

S: Hungry rabbit...interesting rabbit...bad rabbit...careless rabbit...lazy rabbit...lucky rabbit...

The class made attempts to build a creativity-supporting environment in the classroom to teach for creativity. Children was encouraged to ask questions, argue, discuss their thoughts and actively engage in their own learning. The teacher used open-mindedness towards creative ideas and behavior, children-centricity, flexibility, and the appreciation of independent thinking. The title was covered at

the beginning to help children establish a visual description of the character. In the end of the class, the teacher accepted all the reasonable title given by the children.

In this class, a creative learning environment is produced. There is no evaluation and measures of performance or perfect answers. In the whole class, children work in a comfortable and playful atmosphere. They can freely express their ideas. They can have multi-perspective views to understand the story and experience the dramatic conflict.

4.3.3 DIE and Creative Thinking

After the rabbit's confession, he seems to be in trouble...

T: ...Who can help me? My belly is too big. (wriggle) I can't breath...

Problem solving is considered as an example of a creative thinking process in the drama class. Therefore, the teacher abandoned the original story plots and left children an open ending to develop their original and unique thinking in drama processes. When they face the situation that the rabbit got stuck in the hole, what reaction would they do? They need plenty of rapid subconscious thinking to solve the problem.

4.3.4 DIE and Group Creativity

Children was allocating roles and preparing for the performance in the group...Here's a conversation of a group of children.

S4(The man): Why you steal my carrot?

S5(The rabbit): I'm so sorry. But I'm hungry for 3 days. My mom and dad died because human killed and ate them...And human destroyed the forest and cut down trees...My friends and I lost our home. I can't find food to eat.

S6(Listener): Why you say that?

S5: I want the owner of the garden to forgive me. Because I'm poor because of human's destruction. We all know people always hurt the animals and destroy the forest...They cut down trees to make much paper.

S6: Hahahaha...You are so imaginative!

In order to support children's creativity, this class gives them opportunities to develop both individual and group creativity. They can put forwards personal opinions and perform in a group. In Bakhtin (1981)'s understanding these features are traces of children's re-imagination and retelling of the given drama lesson and their drama experiences in terms of their own feelings, experiences and cultures. The role becomes creative when it is hybridized by a particular context and sub-planted into the drama. The miserable story retold by S4 is obviously derived from what she learned about from the life. She's creative understanding can lead to another member's idea through its social interaction between children.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary

In this thesis, we tried to verify the feasibility of promoting children's creativity through Drama in Education. Some current studies of promoting children's creativity have been highlighted as the evidences to prove that drama in education can be an effective way to teach children and foster children's creativity. Moreover, we found DIE can offer a creative environment to nurture children's creativity in a real English class and saw the emergence of children's creativity during drama lessons. The results show that children's creativity significantly benefits from the DIE curriculum.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

Based on the above findings, it is suggested that English teacher should be aware of the fact that Drama in Education is a good choice for children to promoting creativity, since such a teaching method provides a shortcut and a model for creating classrooms where students feel seen, heard, respected, and trusted enough to get creative and allows more children to feel safe enough to take risks. Once the classroom environment feels more trusting, students can decrease their internal focus, thereby increasing their creative potential.

As creative teaching in drama is improvisatory, drama teachers have to be ready to throw themselves into creative processes where the results are unpredictable. It is important to reinforce students having unusual ideas, and to accept and adapt students' ideas in the classroom whenever possible. It is important to allow enough time for students to think, so that they would be able to develop their creative ideas, as creativity does not always occur immediately.

5.3 Limitations and Suggestions

The study still has some limitations, which the future studies should take into consideration. Because of the time limitation, the drama only takes short period and little teaching time allocated, so future studies taking a long and continuous drama class and targeting a larger number of samples are still needed. Quantitative analysis which needs large data is more intuitive to show the creativity's promotion by analyzing the pre-and post-test, such as Wallach-Kogan or TCT-DP creativity tests. In the future, the theoretically feasibility of creative drama learning should be examined in more real teaching practices.

References

- Bolton, G. (1998). *Acting in classroom drama: a critical analysis*. London: Trentham Books.
- Craft, A. (2000). *Creativity Across the Primary Curriculum: Framing and Developing Practice*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Craft, A. (2005). *Creativity in schools: Tensions and dilemmas*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Duatepe-Paksu, A., & Ubuz, B. (2009). Effects of drama-based geometry instruction on student achievement, attitudes, and thinking levels. *Journal of Educational Research*, 102(4), 272-286. <https://doi.org/10.3200/JOER.102.4.272-286>

- Gardner, H. (1993). *Creating minds*. NY: Basic Books.
- Hackbert, P. H. (2010). Using improvisational exercises in general education to advance creativity, inventiveness and innovation. *US-China Education Review*, 10-21.
- Hui, A. N. N., & Lau, S. (2006). *Drama education: A touch of the creative mind and communicative-expressive ability of elementary school children in Hong Kong*. Thinking Skills and Creativity.
- James Arthur, Teresa Grainger, & David Wray. (2006). *Learning to Teach in the Primary School*.
- Perkins, D. (2000). *The Eureka Effect: The Arts and Logic of Breakthrough Thinking*. New York: Norton
- Rogers, C. R. (1983). *Freedom to learn for the 80's*. Columbus. OH: Merrill.
- Sawyer, R. K. (2014). *Group creativity: Music, theater, collaboration*. Psychology Press.
- Toivanen, T. & Salomaa, R. & Halkilahti, L. (2016). Does classroom drama support creative learning? - Viewpoints on the relationship between drama teaching and group creativity. *The Journal for Drama in Education*.
- Toivanen, T., Halkilahti, L. & Ruismäki, H. (2013). Creative pedagogy - Supporting children's creativity through drama. *The European Journal of Social & Behavioural Sciences*.
- Urban, K. K., & Jellen, H. G. (1996). *Test for creative thinking—Drawing production (TCT-DP): Manual*. Frankfurt: Swets Test Services.
- Wendy, K. Mages. (2018). *Does theatre-in-education promote early childhood development? The effect of drama on language, perspective-taking, and imagination*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2017.12.006>
- Yu-Sien, Lin. (2011). *Fostering Creativity through Education—A Conceptual Framework of Creative Pedagogy*.

Appendix

Appendix A. A Teaching Plan for *Greedy Rabbit*

This story, *Greedy Rabbit*, is chosen from Level 4 of *Multidimensional Reading*. It mainly tells a greedy rabbit who stole the vegetables in a garden. During the garden owner catching the rabbit, the rabbit got stuck in a hole due to his big belly. After two days of starving, he was out. The purpose of this class is to help students actively construct knowledge and develop their thinking qualities. Some difficult language structures are given to match their thinking ability. The teaching process is promoted by drama strategies, which offers them a creative environment in which to learn.

Materials

Self-designed props: rabbit, owl, garden's owner, tree, hole, a ball.

Getting started

- 1 Guessing game: teacher imitates the movements of a rabbit. Ss guess what animal is it.
- 2 Introduce the topic by talking about rabbits: what do you know about rabbits?

Drama activity

3 Use “Role on the wall”, teacher stick the title of the picture book on the blackboard, but “greedy” was covered, then draw a rabbit sketch. Let Ss describe the rabbit in their mind. Answers are encouraged to put forward as much as possible and all are acceptable (Figure 2).

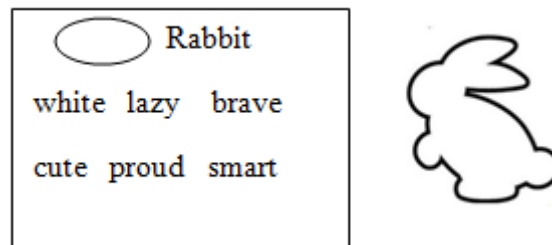


Figure 2. Describe the Rabbit

4 Use “teacher in role”: teacher acts as the rabbit by telling his experiences in the garden which is the first half of the story. The garden owner saw the rabbit eating carrots and shouted to him. The rabbit went under the fence and run down the road. Then he saw a hole and got stuck.

5 Divide the class into groups of six. The children allocate roles within the group. Children takes role in groups as a rabbit, the garden’s owner or any other animal.

6 Use “Freeze frame / Still image” to capture the role-playing.

7 Drama starts from the climax of the full story when the rabbit got stuck. When everyone is ready, each group performs the play for the rest of the class.

Follow-up activity

8 After drama performance, everyone vote for Best Group and Best Actor.

9 In the end, complete the missing word of the title.