



Drama and possibility thinking – Taiwanese pupils' perspectives regarding creative pedagogy in drama

Yu-sien Lin*

179, Heping E. Road, Sec. 1, 106, Taipei, Taiwan, ROC

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 11 May 2010

Received in revised form 31 July 2010

Accepted 29 September 2010

Keywords:

Drama

Possibility thinking

Creative pedagogy

Contextualization

Third space

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to examine how drama fosters children's everyday creativity, its relationship with creative pedagogy, and what teachers can provide for children's development in creativity in an Asian context. A series of drama lessons were designed and taught to two six-grade (11–12 years old) classes by involving pedagogical strategies that foster qualities of possibility thinking. The pupils' accounts concerning the drama lessons and the pedagogy used in drama were collected through diaries, response sheets, and group interviews.

The findings show that the pupils considered drama useful in developing certain creative abilities and qualities, such as imagination, independent thinking, and risk-taking. The pupils indicated the strategies used in drama which made the development possible, including task-oriented, collaborative learning, and the teacher's guidance and ethos. The pupils also identified five features regarding creative teaching in drama, namely playfulness, innovation, flexibility, space, and in-depth learning. Although most of the pupils conveyed their enjoyment of the lessons, many of them found the way of learning through drama difficult, and commented that the strategies used and the ethos behind drama may result in the teacher losing authority, which they depend on to a large extent. Based on these findings, the possible tensions of fostering possibility thinking is discussed, and implications are proposed for Taiwanese as well as other Asian teachers for promoting creativity through creative pedagogy.

© 2010 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Cultivating children's creativity is often referred to as one of the educational objectives of drama (Cockett, 1999; Dickinson & Neelands, 2006; Gallagher, 2007; Grainger, 2003, 2005; Heinig, 1993; Mages, 2006; McCaslin, 1984; McGregor, Tate, & Robinson, 1977; Nagy, Laskey & Allison, 1993; Siks, 1977), and behind this objective is the assumption that creativity can be developed. There is little doubt that drama is powerful in fostering creativity, although the relationship between drama and creativity has only recently been made explicit in studies of the impact of drama on creative performance, such as development in creative thinking and problem-solving skills (Hui & Lau, 2006; Karakelle, 2009; Lam, 2005), social skills (Hui & Lau, 2006), and language development (Fleming, Merrell, & Tymms, 2004; Mages, 2006). In these studies a causal link between drama programmes and learners' creative outcomes is established through the use of standardized tests and

* Tel.: +886 2 958551050.

E-mail addresses: yl249@ex.ac.uk, ylin@mail.nict.gov.tw

experimental design. This study, on the other hand, intended to explore the relationship with a different focus: rather than measuring *what* is achieved, it looked at *how* creativity is developed through the drama process, *what kind* of creativity is developed, and *how* the participants respond.

Gallagher (2007: 1235) found in her studies that “rich discussion about creativity emerged with students by chance”, and “it is in this rather more serendipitous way . . . that the notions of creativity frequently emerge in studies of drama classrooms”. Yet perhaps more than a “serendipitous relationship”, it is argued in this paper that drama has a strong relationship with creativity, especially little c creativity and possibility thinking (Craft, 2000, 2001), due to its approaches and context. In this section, the links between drama, possibility thinking, and creative pedagogy – a pedagogical framework of fostering possibility thinking – will be looked at.

1.1. Little c creativity and possibility thinking

Researchers have made a distinction between “big C” and “little c” creativity (Craft, 2000, 2001; Gardner, 2004) with the former having a wider influence in society and the latter being relevant to everyday creativity. Big C or high creativity (Craft, 2001; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) delineates extraordinary creativity or genius that results in remarkable achievements and paradigm-shifting impact. By contrast, little c creativity (LCC) or ordinary creativity, as proposed by Craft (2000, 2001), focuses on the agency of ordinary people and recognizes everyone’s potential to be creative in terms of everyday problem-solving. Because of its premise and concerns, LCC is considered more relevant to education (Craft, 2000, 2001). Although the outcomes of LCC may be of less influence and significance, it is considered a necessary ability for coping with the intense changes in varied aspects of our life experienced in the twenty-first century (Craft, 2005; Thornburg, 2002).

At the heart of LCC is the notion of “possibility thinking” (Craft, 2000, 2001, 2007), which involves nine qualities that describe the essence of LCC, namely *self-determination, innovation, action, development, depth, risk, being imaginative, posing questions, and play* (Craft, 2001). These qualities manifest the aspiration of asking the “*what if*” question to explore new possibilities when facing blockages. In this study, it is argued that these features of possibility thinking are nurtured through the unique approaches and context of drama.

1.2. Drama and possibility thinking

1.2.1. The approaches of drama

Drama has been valued as a learning medium since the 1930s with its emphasis on development and learning (McCaslin, 1984; McGregor et al., 1977; Siks, 1977; Wagner, 1999). Although lacking a unified pedagogical model, drama practices generally comprise movement exercises such as theatre games and pantomime, and theatre conventions such as hot-seating¹ and teacher-in-role, which involve purposeful engagement and higher-level thinking (Clements, 1996; Somer, 1994). There are two essential approaches – *story* and *role-play* – which encompass the various practices in drama. It is believed that *story*, at the heart of every drama, is the imaginative resource that gives delight and stretches one’s imagination (Dickinson & Neelands, 2006). No matter in which form, whether a fairy tale, a historical event, or an unfinished story that needs to be developed, there is always a tension which enables drama teachers to trigger children’s curiosity to explore the problems and solutions with imagination. If ‘*story*’ is the means to arouse spontaneous inquiry, then ‘*role play*’ is the vehicle through which children experience or develop the dramatic context. By taking different roles, children are offered the opportunity not only to confront the problems, but also to make sense of meaning by making and doing, and “examining issues that might otherwise remain abstract and inaccessible” (Neelands, 1984: 25).

Thus, through *story*, children’s curiosity and their active engagement are aroused. As they experience delight in learning a new *story*, they are also offered the opportunity to experience the tension themselves, to solve the problem, or explore the gap by being in roles imaginatively. Children not only live through their knowledge by acting in a different role, but also learn to pose questions, find out more possibilities, take risks, and be playful in inventing new ideas. In addition to the approaches, the learning context of drama also contributes to the nourishment of possibility thinking.

1.2.2. The context of drama

Drama offers a dynamic and safe learning context that nurtures possibility thinking qualities such as *innovation, play, depth, development, and self-determination*. The learning process in drama is dynamic in three ways: *physically, consciously, and interpersonally*. In contrast to the traditional ways of learning, involving sitting, listening, and copying for example, the drama process requires frequent body movement. With the drama teacher’s guidance, children “explore, develop, express and communicate ideas, concepts and feelings through dramatic enactment” (Heinig, 1993: 5). Their own inventions of acting/expressions are often encouraged. Secondly, the learning in drama is consciously dynamic. While in roles, participants move in and out between the real and the imagined world of drama, engaging in the situations in others’ shoes or being out of the role to observe/reflect critically. This dynamic shift, referred to by Augusto Boal (in Somer, 1994: 11) as “*metaxis*”, holds the two forms in mind at the same time, and requires participants’ playfulness as well as concentration. Insights

¹ For explanations of dramatic techniques, please refer to Appendix A.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/375772>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/375772>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)