The Views Held by Prospective Classroom Teachers Regarding Creative Drama Method

Ayşegül Oğuz

Department of Classroom Teaching, Faculty of Education, Rize University, Türkiye

Abstract: The aim of this study is to determine views of prospective classroom teachers regarding creative drama method. The study group is comprised of 7 prospective classroom teachers studying in Rize University Faculty of Education. The research was carried out via an interview form containing open-ended questions. Study data was collected by means of content analysis. According to the findings obtained, prospective teachers stated that creative drama is effective in teaching, they plan to use it in their professional life and many objectives can be obtained regarding lessons, social skills and creativity thanks to the method. They emphasized that employing this method in lessons might lead to a learning environment where there is more fun and effective learning by doing and living. Departing from the study findings, it can be suggested that more importance be attached onto drama lessons in education faculties and elective courses be opened regarding using of it as an alternative method.

Key words: Creative drama · Prospective teachers · Method

INTRODUCTION

"Main aim of creative drama is to bring up individuals who, in all fields, are creative and self-contained, self-aware, are able to communicate with others and even improve, have boosted strength and manner of expression, are able to think imaginatively and have aesthetical concern, democratic attitude and behaviours developed, by making it possible for children, teens and young adults to switch between the real world and fictional world by means of animation, *within a process of awareness raising and acculturation,*" [1]. It can be said that mentioned objectives can be achieved mostly through using of creative drama in education. "Initial benefit of using drama in education is the fact that it allows individuals to work together and share responsibilities for realizing themselves, which is among objectives of education. If an individual has been able to realize her/himself, s/he can be creative, honest, open for communication and independent" [2]. In this way, it can be probable to raise a society comprised of individuals that are in compliance with requirements of modern era, have got increased self-confidence and well-developed communication skills.

For realization of educational activities in a satisfactory way, it is important that individuals be in communication and interaction. Creative drama activities allow individuals to effectively remain in communication and interaction and help individuals are more sociable. It is important that such activities be used particularly for teacher training.

Creative drama is an art which, among others, surrounds the participant at highest level from intellectual, emotional, physical, verbal and social aspects [3]. Creative drama is an activity developed with games in the process of education, which makes it a crucial part of education [2].

Corresponding Author: Ayşegül Oğuz, Department of Classroom Teaching, Faculty of Education,
Rize University, Türkiye. E-mail: aysegul.oguz@rize.edu.tr.

Educational Creative Drama can be described as interpretation and animation by individuals of a certain experience, an event, an abstract concept or behaviour in some times, in a group work by applying to acting or drama techniques such as improvisation, role playing etc, by way of restoring previous cognitive patterns and in game-like processes where observation, experience and emotions are revised [4].

"Unique moments or states that cannot be repeated in life time are recreated with participation of the whole group following a series of certain warming up, concentration and relaxing techniques in the creative drama workshop. Discussion and assessment is made on the situation recreated and it can be performed again if wanted. In such an environment, not only cognitive but also affective and kinaesthetic aspects of learning become effective. Individuals enjoy expressing themselves by working in groups and representing distinct individuals in a group, acting as others and pretending to be like others" [5].

Creative drama processes help improve communication skills as they allow individuals to use all of the sensory organs. It makes easy for the individual to express her/himself. "It can be said that drama encompasses interaction by its nature. Interaction predominantly arises once human beings meet" [6]. Many studies can be carried out for expressing of feelings and thoughts in creative drama processes. Interaction has a dominant place in all these studies. In creative drama, interaction boosts social relationships. According to Üstündağ [7], one of the aims of creative drama is "to acquire self-confidence and decision making skills". Self-confidence can be acquired through creative drama processes. Examples of improvisation can be given as good examples; because improvisation is improvisation without any right or wrong. This, in turn, can relieve individuals from fear of doing wrong. "Lack of such fear encourages individuals to put forth and further develop their creativity" [8]. Contemporary education-instruction approach includes outcomes for unearthing individuals' creativity. Upon arising of constructivist approach, having concrete experiences by doing and living gained importance. One of the most effective ways of gaining such experience is to use creative drama as an instruction method in lessons. In this context, the purpose of this study is to obtain opinion of prospective classroom teachers regarding creative drama.

Review of literature contains similar studies with similar findings. Ormancı and Ören [9] in their study "Views of Prospective Classroom Teachers regarding Usability of Drama in Elementary Education", identified views of prospective classroom teachers wgo took drama lesson. Conclusions of the study reveal that drama lesson may contribute to the future teachers' professional life and it leads lesson with fun.

In her study "Efficiencies of Drama Teacher", Okvuran [10] investigates skills that drama teachers should have. In that study, importance is attached onto features of a drama teacher such as background of literature and drama history, experience in drama, knowledge of literature, ability to form a positive atmosphere and to manipulate improvisation.

Maden [11] in study titled "Self-Sufficiency of Turkish Language Teachers for Using Drama Method" revealed that Turkish language teachers have self-sufficiency regarding use of drama at "I agree" level.

Aykaç [12] in his study "Evaluating Creative Drama Method from the Student Satisfaction Aspect in Elementary Art Activities Lesson" found out that creative drama has a positive effect on student satisfaction.

Gürol [13] in her study titled "The Level of Qualifications of the Pre-School Teachers and Pre-School Candidates in the use of Educational Drama", lists recommendations towards developing curriculum following assessment based on teachers and candidate teachers' opinion regarding drama and identifying their level of qualifications in knowing, applying and requiring educational drama.

Kara and Çam [14] in their study titled "Effect of Creative Drama Method on the Reception of Some Social Skills" examine effect of creative drama on reception of social skills in development and learning lesson. Creative drama is acquiring of social skills.

In their study "The Attitudes and Opinions of Prospective Teachers Related to Drama Course: The Case of Atatürk University" Başçı and Gündoğdu [15] concluded that the method, if used efficiently, leads permanent learning, increases communication skills and promotes learning with fun.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this section, components of the study such as model of the research, study group and collection and analysis of data are detailed.

Research Pattern: Present study is carried out in order to find out candidate classroom teachers' opinions related to creative drama method. It is a qualitative study. "A qualitative study can be described as a type of research in which qualitative data collection methods like observation, interview and document analysis are applied and a qualitative process is followed in order to put forward perceptions and events in a realistic and integrative way in the natural setting" [16]. Since this study aims at identifying view points and opinions of candidate classroom teachers regarding creative drama, qualitative research is preferred.

Study Group: The study is carried out with senior year students from Rize University Education Faculty Classroom Teaching Department during the fall term in 2011 academic year. Participant students took Drama in Elementary Education lesson and applied creative drama on a weekly basis in Effective Communication lesson throughout one semester. The interview form comprised of open-ended questions was developed after asking for expert opinion; it was revised in the light of feedback, lastly given to 7 candidate classroom teachers. Those in the study group were selected randomly among candidate classroom teachers who had already took the lesson of Drama in Elementary Education. The participants for interview were again randomly selected on voluntary basis.

Collection of Data: An interview form was developed and applied for collecting data in this study. As for data collecting instrument, interviews were used. "Qualitative research mainly uses data collection methods: interview (including focus group interview), observation and document analysis" [16]. In this study, an interview form was developed for collecting data. Interview is one of the most frequently used data collection instrument in qualitative projects. "The reason is that this instrument is quite efficient in disclosing individuals' data, opinions, experience and feelings, also it is based on speaking, which is the most common way of communication" [16]. In parallel with this, an interview form was prepared by the researcher, then it was revised according to specialists' comments, interviews were arranged and finally realized. The research is addressed in three sections. These are qualification, application and education. Under these 3 sub-problems, 11 interview questions were prepared.

Interviews were separately done with each of the participants and recorded via tape recorder. Each interview lasted 15-20 minutes on average. Tape records were transcribed and examined by the researcher.

Analysis of Data: Regarding analysis of data on qualitative research, content analysis is used for describing data obtained from qualitative research. "Main purpose of content analysis is to reach concepts and relationships to explain collected data. Data, after summarized and interpreted in descriptive analysis, is processed further in content analysis. Concepts and themes that cannot be figured with descriptive approach can be discovered in this way" [16]. Data collected as a result of interviews were analyzed and decoded by the researcher. After, frequency and percentage of the expressions were calculated and put into tables. For the sake of reliability and validity, related literature was reviewed to support study findings, interview questions were revised in the light of specialists' comments and both interview questions and interview duration was explicitly mentioned in the study.

FINDINGS

In this chapter, data obtained following interviews held with prospective classroom teachers. Results are summarized in tables and both frequencies and percentages were calculated.

Interviewees' responses for the warming up question "What does creative drama call?" are given in Table 1.

As they were asked "What does creative drama call?", respondents gave answers such as learning with fun, fun, independent thinking, imagination, the life itself, creative thinking, improvisation and diversity.

Sub Problem 1: What are the levels of qualifications of prospective teachers in applying creative drama?.

As for question "Do you think you get enough of drama education? Why?", responses are given in Table 2. 6 of the respondents find creative drama education insufficient, while 1 person think opposite. Those with a negative view regarding the education explain it with small number of lessons. Also crowded classrooms and unsuitable places for the lesson are other reasons.

The participants were asked "Do you think you are equipped with necessary knowledge and experience for putting creative drama method into practice?" and responses are given in Table 3.

4 of the respondents think they have knowledge and experience necessary for putting creative drama into practice, while 3 do not agree.

Sub Problem 2: What are opinions of prospective teachers regarding using creative drama as a method at elementary level?.

The participants were asked "Are you going to implement creative drama method in elementary education when you become a teacher? Why?" and relevant responses are given in Tables 4 and 5.

All of the interviewees pointed that they are planning to use creative drama in elementary education.

Under justifications for planning to use creative drama at elementary level, respondents reported that the method has certain advantages such as expressing oneself comfortably, providing fun, interaction with peers, evoking interest in the lesson, strengthening social affairs, help to adopt to school and allow learning by doing and living.

Again, the participants were asked "What lessons are you going to implement creative drama in? Why?" Responses are given in Tables 6 and 7.

Of respondents, while four said that creative drama can be applied in all lessons, 3 said it can be applied in science of life, 7 in maths, 1 in music, 3 in social sciences, 1 in science and technology and 2 said it can be applied in Turkish lesson.

Prospective teachers, if creative drama is employed as a method in lessons, think as follows regarding potential benefits to be gained by learners: 6 of the prospective teachers replied as improving social skills, 4 as better understanding of lesson, 3 as developing creativity, 3 as developing the ability to express oneself, 3 as recognizing oneself and others, 5 as developing communication skills, 4 as enriching experience, 4 as retentive learning, 5 as gaining self-confidence, 1 as feeling empathy and 3 as developing skills of talking before others.

As participants were asked "What problems do you expect to encounter in creative drama practices and what recommendations would you make?" and responses are listed in Table 8.

Prospective teachers stated their opinions regarding probable challenges they might face while implementing creative drama method. As a result; 3 respondents reported reluctance to join activities, 4 as classroom management, 5 as crowded groups, 3 as unsuitable places and 3 as lack of enough time. As a solution, recommendations were made such as dividing groups into two in the case of crowded classrooms, saving room by pulling desks aside in the event of unsuitable place and applying more warming up practices in the event of reluctance to join activities.

Study participants were asked "Do you think creative drama is used satisfactorily in elementary schools? Why?" and responses are given in Table 9.

All of the participants interviewed think that creative drama is not used satisfactorily in elementary classes. As they were asked the reason, they replied as follows: there is an established order, shortage of time, concern of catching up the curriculum, teachers' holding a traditional approach, teachers' lacking background of knowledge and experience of drama, crowded classrooms, repetition of lessons for the SBS (Placement Test for Secondary Education), availability of lesson plans in internet and teachers' preferring to use them.

Table 1: What does creative drama mean for prospective teachers?

Meaning of creative drama	F	%
Independent thinking	1	14,28
Imagination	1	14,28
Life itself	1	14,28
Learning with fun	2	28,57
Creative thinking	1	14,28
Improvisation	1	14,28
Diversity	1	14,28
Fun	2	28,57

Table 2: Prospective teachers' perceived level of qualification regarding creative drama education

	Sufficient		Not sufficient	
Perceived sufficiency of drama education	F	%	F	%
	1	14,28	6	85,71

Table 3: Perceived level of qualifications of prospective teachers related to practices of the creative drama method

	Satisfactory		Partially satisfactory	
Qualification level regarding practices of creative drama method	F	%	F	%
	4	57,14	3	42,85

Table 4: Opinions of prospective teachers related to using creative drama method in elementary education

Views regarding implementation of creative drama method in elementary schools	I am going to use	I am not going to use
	7	-

Table 5: Prospective teachers' justifications for planning to use creative drama in elementary schools

Justification for the use of creative drama in elementary schools	F	%
It allows one to express her/himself comfortably	3	42,85
It provides a funny atmosphere	5	71,42
It creates interaction with peers	4	57,14
It provides diverse learning environments	4	57,14
It raises interest in lesson	4	57,14
It strengthens social affairs	5	71,42
It helps orientation at school	5	71,42
It ensures learning by living	5	71,42

Table 6: Lessons that prospective teachers are going to apply creative drama to

Lessons to use creative drama in	F	%
Science of Life	3	42,85
Maths	7	100
Music	1	14,28
Social Sciences	3	42,85
Science and Technology	1	14,28
Turkish	2	28,57
All	4	57,14

Table 7: Opinions of prospective teachers regarding potential benefits to be introduced by creative drama to learners

Views regarding potential benefits of creative drama for students	F	%
Improving social skills	6	85,71
Better understanding of the lesson	4	57,14
Developing creativity	3	42,85
Developing the ability to express oneself	3	42,85
Recognizing oneself and others	3	42,85
Developing communication skills	5	71,42
Enriching experience	4	57,14
Retentive learning	4	57,14
Gaining self-confidence	5	71,42
Show empathy	1	14,28
Developing skills of talking before others	3	42,85

Table 8: Prospective teachers' views regarding probable challenges to arise in implementation of creative drama

Views regarding probable challenges to arise in implementation of creative drama	F	%
Reluctance to participate in activities	3	42,85
Classroom management	4	57,14
Crowded groups	5	71,42
Unsuitable places	3	42,85
Lack of sufficient time	3	42,85

Table 9: Views of prospective teachers regarding use of creative drama method in elementary schools

Views regarding use of creative drama method in elementary education	F	%
Satisfactory	-	-
Not satisfactory	7	100

Table 10: Prospective teachers' views regarding features of an idealized creative drama environment

Views regarding an idealized environment for creative drama	F	%
Wide and comfortable	7	100
Small number of participants	6	85,71
Coated floor	4	57,14
Mattress	3	42,85
Overhead projector	1	14,28
Costumes	1	14,28
Place in light color	1	14,28
Audio system	3	42,85

Table 11: Participants' views regarding what creative drama, drama room, leader and participants are like

Creative drama is like	Creative drama room is like	Creative drama leader is like	Creative drama participants are like
Life	Sky	Scriptwriter	Actors
Moment of surprise	Casual places	Television	Audience
Creating	A place for finding resolution	Motive for creative thinking	Football team
World	Stage	The sun	Stars
Life	Amusement Park	Director	Actors
Animating a dream	Stage	Someone to adore	A group of ants
Chameleon	Home	The sun	Stars

Sub Problem 3: What are views of prospective teachers regarding lessons they receive regarding creative drama?.

For questions 8 and 9, participants were asked "Where did you study creative drama?" and "Can you describe the classroom environment where you were educated on drama?" Since they registered in the lesson in the same place during the same term, the data is not put into a table.

Prospective teachers were asked "What kind of a place do you think drama should be implemented? Can you describe it?" and their responses are given in Table 10.

Prospective teachers were asked about their opinions regarding an idealized creative drama environment and responses are summarized in a table. According to Table 10, 7 respondents indicated a wide and comfortable classroom environment, 6 respondents indicated small number of participants, 4 people coated floor, 3 people availability of mattresses, 1 person overhead projector, 1 person costumes, 1 person light color and 3 people indicated necessity for audio system.

Again, study participants were asked "What would creative drama resemble like? What would creative drama room resemble like? What would creative drama leader/trainer resemble like? What would creative drama participants resemble like?" and responses are given in Table 11.

Lastly, participants were asked their opinions about what they think creative drama resembles like. As a response, they listed life, the moment of surprise, creating, world, life, animating a dream and chameleon. As for their ideas regarding what creative drama room looks like, they replied as sky, casual places, a place for finding new resolution, stage, amusement park, stage and home. As they were asked what creative drama leader resembles like, they gave responses such as a scriptwriter, television, a motive for creative thinking, the sun, director and someone to adore. As to creative drama participants, they responded as actors, audience, football team, stars and a group of ants.

CONCLUSION

Findings obtained from the research were interpreted to draw conclusions. It was found out that prospective classroom teachers have positive attitude towards creative drama. It is understood that candidate teachers associate the concept of creative drama with learning with fun, amusement, independent thinking, imagination, the life itself, creative thinking, improvisation and diversity. Again, participants have positive ideas regarding what creative drama resembles like. As to justifications for planning to use creative drama in elementary education, participants explained that the method provides some advantages such as allowing to express oneself comfortably, providing fun, interaction with peers, providing a different learning environment, arising interest for the lesson, strengthening social affairs, helping to adopt to school and helps to learn by doing and living.

Also prospective teachers pointed out that they are going to use creative drama in elementary schools. If this method is used, they expect students to develop their social skills, to understand the lesson better, to improve creativity, to develop capability to express themselves, to recognize oneself and others, improve communication skills, enriching experience, retentive learning, gaining self-confidence, feeling empathy and expressing oneself before others.

In relation with probable challenges that might arise in applying creative drama, recommendations were offered as dividing classes into two groups in case of crowded groups, saving room by pulling desks in case of unsuitable place and making more warming up activities in case of reluctance of students to join activities.

All of the participants interviewed think that creative drama is not used satisfactorily in elementary education. As to their opinion regarding its reason, they gave responses such as presence of an established order, shortage of time, concern of catching up the curriculum, teachers' holding a traditional approach, teachers' lacking background of knowledge and experience of drama, crowded classrooms, repetition of lessons for the SBS (Placement Test for Secondary Education), availability of lesson plans in internet and teachers' preferring to use them.

As a summary, prospective classroom teachers are aware of presence of the creative drama method, but they do not have enough knowledge and experience regarding how to use it. Classroom teachers that will implement creative drama should be trained to this end. Besides the lesson of Drama in Elementary Education at undergraduate level, elective courses can be offered in order to help them acquire deeper knowledge and experience of the method.

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