
Using Drama In Classroom To Enhance Language Learning

As noted by Dunn, J., & Stinson, M. (2011) that “for more than 30 years drama has been promoted as a valuable teaching tool for language learning.” As a graduating teacher who is specialising in educating EALD students it is important to develop creativity and teacher artistry that is beneficial in enhancing language learning for students who need additional support. Learning from personal experiences, students who migrate from foreign countries find it hard to integrate in the classroom as there are main barriers to disadvantage students to developing further learning. Furthermore, language barriers cause students to lose motivation and decreases engagement in learning as students struggles to find their own identities in schools. Through my teacher education and artistry development I found that motivation is a big factor for students or even adults to strive and achieve a certain goal or dream as it is the driving force that helps push them in working hard and better. Student at a young age are developing their own motivations and values of education. When students believe that educations are unimportant and worth their time, students will be disengaged and unwilling to participate in their own learning. Thus, through my developing understanding of teaching, I believe that the 21st century classroom needs to provide engaging and motivating lessons that further enhances student’s language learning. This is further emphasised through Ewing et al. (2008) as he highlighted that drama strategies further support students writing and has a positive effect student engagement and motivation while enhancing language and literacy development in creative and imaginative ways. Through this, critical analysis of creativity and teacher artistry, I would be exploring ways in which teachers’ artistry and use of various creative pedagogies such as drama be an essential skill to help enhance and engage students in language learning.

The use of drama in the classroom is explored to have positive effect on teaching and learning outcomes specially to enhance language learning. As shown through Dunn, J., & Stinson, M. (2011) research they have discovered from both their own studies and from other researchers that the use of “a series of drama lessons were found to have a positive impact on oral language acquisition and development.” (p. 622). There studies have shown that the use of drama, students has significant improvement of student learning. Furthermore, the teacher’s artistry effects the learning outcomes of EALD learners. Cremin, Gooch, Blakemore, Good and Macdonald (2006) further emphasizes that “primary-aged learners who engage in drama prior to writing write more effectively and at greater length, using a richer vocabulary that contains more emotive and expressive insights” (2006, p. 274). Thus, through drama lessons it is important to incorporate various of drama strategies to help enrich and support student writing. One example of a drama strategies that I have used to enhance students learning is the use of ‘Conscious Alley’. This activity is supported by Ewing, Millar and Saxton (2008), as they mention how students are able gain understanding of multiple perspectives a certain problem while allowing them to critically reflect on the difficult decisions. Furthermore, this activity allows students to explore evaluative languages and emotive languages that help convince the walker on the best decision. The example highlights the use of drama that enhance student’s language learning as it allows additional language learners to practice and develop their speaking ability. This is supported by Gill. C (2013) as he states the benefits of using drama as he cited from Davies (1990) that “Drama activities facilitate the type of language behaviour that should lead to fluency, and if it is accepted that the learners want to learn a language in order to make themselves understood in the target language, then drama does indeed further this end.”

(as cited in Gill. C, 2013, p. 30.).

Furthermore, Ewing. R and Simons. J (2014) underlines how drama allow students 'opportunities to practice the higher-order language functions and structures so necessary for academic achievement.' (p. 95). Developing teacher's artistry in drama, is beneficial for both teacher and student as it provides various of new strategies that will allow teachers to effectively teacher and improve student's language outcomes. Ewing. R, Hristofski. H. Gibson. R, Campbell. C, and Roberston. A portrays through their research that not only has student' literacy development has improved but the teachers who participated in the research enhance their own professional learning. This is exemplifying that drama is beneficial for more reasons than enhance student's language outcomes but allows teacher to develop creative artistry for better teacher and learning lessons.

Motivating and engaging your students in learning is a one of the top priorities a teacher has as students need to be motivated in their own learning if they aim to academically achieve. As part of the curriculum, it is important to engage students in their own learning and by having students engage students can actively learning and easier for students to take in knowledge. As mentioned by Cicerchia (2016) that "motivation to learn correlates with success at school". This is the bases of all research projects as researchers all believe that to academically excel students need to be motivated to learn and therefore strive to achieve their goals. In the 21st century classroom, a critical issue that arise is motivating the unmotivated learners which often links to students who are disadvantage in the classroom including EALD students. Due to the language barriers, additional language learners find it difficult to understand teachers and therefore disengage in the learning before it begins. Hidi. S and Harackiewicz. J.M explores this issue in which they address that to motivate students 2 main variables are essential in students' academic performances which are interest and goals.

Providing students with motivation to learn can be explored and utilised through creative pedagogies such as applying drama into the classroom. By applying macro-planning as mentioned in Dunn, J., & Stinson, M. (2011), students and teachers are able to develop rich experiences through drama that can be motivating and engage students in their own learn. Furthermore, through their research they have "suggested that pretext materials must provide a 'hook' for the learner - enticing them to learn by engaging with their interests and needs." (p. 626). Bournot-Trites. M, Belliveau. G, Spiliotopoulos. V, Séror. J research explores the use of drama to engage students in their own learning as it has shown in various other studies that drama can assists in "enhance literacy, motivation, and help the development of intercultural sensitivity in second language classes" (p.3). As a result of their research, a strong link is between motivation and drama was emphasised as teachers were able to see students more interested in writing and engage in their own learning.

As teachers, we need to be able to create and develop a safe and comfortable learning environment for all students especially with new arrivals as a new environment is always daunting for a new student in a foreign school. Drama is an excellent strategy in welcoming and creating a safe and comfortable learning environment as students are able to place them in a different role. Furthermore, through drama students are able to delve into other people's shoes and learn different perspectives which allows them to understand their peers and become more emotionally engage in the lesson. Heyward. P investigates the how emotional engagement through drama enhance students learning. Through his research, his outlines that those who partake in drama activity are able to engage on emotional level known as the 'existential mode'

which is where students “ are more likely to engage emotionally with their role and the roles played by others, as they are spontaneously living through the experience in real-time” (p. 199). By using drama, students can develop empathy skills in which can be used to learn difficult topics that require careful teaching. In addition to this, Dunn, J., & Stinson, M. (2011) emphasises that “Being able to change direction suddenly, to move with the group, to be responsive to their needs, to reinstate a lost mood or to rebuild lost tension, are important skills and are only able to be learned through experience.” (p. 628). This skill is important to have as students should learn to improvise and adapt to real life situations and drama is an excellent tool in allowing students to hone in these skills and utilising in other areas of learning. Being flexible and adaptive links and promotes creativity as students will develop skills to think outside of the box. Moreover, students are able to freely express their thoughts and feelings, and critically reflect on their peers’ and their idea as they develop social skills through their interactions with their peers. Pang. W (2015) emphasises this point through her article as she states that “Allowing students to explain their ideas also helps them develop their intrapersonal evaluation skills, as well as metacognitive monitoring.” (p. 125).

From personal experiences as a student, learning has always been a series of repetition, memorisation and rote learning where creativity was rarely explored. This is highlighted by Lin, Y.S research as she investigates into creative learning where she contrasts learning creatively and learning by authority. As she discusses that learning creatively allows students to explore and learn in a creative manner while learning through authority is learning that is instructed to learn and be accepted. However, in the 21st century, learning through authority cause students to disengage and discourage students willingness to participate in their own learning. While allowing students a creative learning environment such as exploring through the use of drama grasps student’s attention and interest to engage in the learning outcomes.

By creating a safe learning environment, students are encouraged to share and reflect on difficult concepts, learnings and communicate with peers. Thus, creating a safe space for students to explore through drama, students to be able to learn through creativity while develop essentials skills.

Through Dunn, J., & Stinson, M. (2011) research it has exemplified that to enhance learning the use of drama and teacher’s artistry can be used as a new strategy that will both engage and encourage student to partake in their learning experiences. Furthermore, motivation throughout my teacher education has been a strong focus as it is the driving force that push teachers and students to achieve the teacher and learning outcomes. Therefore, as a graduating 21st century teacher, I need to utilise various creative strategies to help motivate and engage my students to learn as it will benefit my students to reach their academic goals. It is important for teachers to understand creative strategies that can cater and enhance additional language learners as well as other students. Furthermore, drama allows students to not only enhance their learning but allows students to become more motivated and engaged in their learning which is a key issue that has been discussed throughout the 21st century. An important understand to gain from Dunn, J., & Stinson, M. (2011) is that “The teacher/artist requires flexibility, ingenuity, personal creativity and the ability to exploit opportunities as they occur.” (as cited in Dunn, J., & Stinson, M., 2011, p. 628). This statement is important as not only is it important for students to develop this skill, the teacher must be able to use demonstrate them as they are to explicitly teach and model for students. Thus, through the use of creative learning strategies such as drama, the teachers are able to gain professional learning while enhancing students learning outcomes.

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