

Effectiveness of Creative Dramatics Method on Academic Achievement, Learning Joyfulness and Creative Sense of Learners

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Abstract

This paper examines the effectiveness of creative dramatics method on the achievement in social science, joyfulness in learning and creative sense. Observations cum opinion schedule for teachers, joyfulness inventory and achievement test in social Science for students were used as the tools. The study revealed that the creative dramatic method is effective to develop— (i) the achievement in social science, and (ii) learning joyfulness and creative sense among secondary level school students.

INTRODUCTION

“The school of the future will, perhaps, not be a School as we understand— with benches, blackboards and a teacher’s platform—it may be a Theatre, a Library, a Museum or a Conversation”, as observed by Leo Tolstoy. Tolstoy’s prediction was a

century old, but now we find both openness and active involvement of different resources in the education of children and young people (Cohen, 1981). One of such active resources identified recently is Creative Dramatics. The use of drama as a tool for teaching is not new, both

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creative drama and theatre have long been recognised as potent means of education and indoctrination (Caslin, 1996).

In the Indian school of situations, the social science teachers use traditional lectures, demonstrations, a few experiments, group work, dyadic grouping, paper and pencil assignments and tests in classrooms. These are not satisfactorily appealing to many students (Vasudevan, 2003). In most of the cases, the constructivist approach soon becomes replication, dull and also coil to mere group learning activities. Teachers must use effective methods to have an active participation of learners in the teaching sessions. The significance of one of the new approaches, like Creative Dramatics is mentioned below.

Creative Dramatics

Creative dramatics is a multi-dimensional and improvisational form of art, designed especially for educational purposes. It emphasises the thinking and creative processes rather than the products (Bailey, 1993 and Wastson, 1998). Creative dramatics combines all the arts, such as drama, music, dance, movements, rhythm, communication, puppets, masks, drawings, role-plays, mono-acts, miming, mimicry and simulation for the purpose of teaching-learning process (Paleeri, 2017). Creative dramatics is a compendium of activities, simulations, mock-ups, games, oral performances, percussion

concerts, videos, interactive videos and presentations. Creative dramatics is a form of imaginative play, facilitated by a leader or a teacher, and is an improvisational group of processes, which is not scripted, pre-planned or memorised but is created on the spot in most of the cases pre-planned (Bailey, 1993 and Wastson, 1998). The strategy from this compendium can be used alone or together for transacting the content. Such a method is highly viable and promotes the exact aim of teaching social sciences.

Creative Dramatics based Instruction

The difference between creative drama and other forms of drama lies in its main goal, which is, to 'Promote growth and educational development of the players, not to entertain an audience or to train actors' (Heathcote, 1998). Audience and production are crucial elements of theatre. But, creative drama deals with learning and self-discovery of an individual in a process (Annarella, 1999). Creative drama proceeds without depending on written text or school textbook. In theatre, players usually with a given text while playing their roles. Participants in creative dramatics can set out their actions from their own experiences with their own creative findings, ideas and knowledge (Chester and Fax, 1996). The participants are learners, not artists.

Creative drama requires participation from all learners of the

a class. The learners have to create ideas, share, interrogate, criticise and judge. Learners gain permanent behaviours as a consequence of determining and studying the content actively (Ward, 1993). It develops the students' attention with an exciting, motivating and interesting learning environment. It increases creativity, sensitivity, flexibility, emotional stability, cooperation and cognitive abilities and divergent thinking and communicational skills (Anderson, 2008). Creative dramatics is not a common strategy in the Indian classrooms and further, researches will enrich its scope for effective implementation.

Review of Studies

Nicholson (2019) observed that education and theatre are closely related, particularly on active learning tasks. Theatre elements support the learner participation, both, in classroom learning tasks and in the school environment. The site-specific performances of learners through theatre elements contribute to the social and political learning tasks.

Theatre elements are already used by teachers knowingly or unknowingly. Kraemer (2012) explained that

- (i) 80% of teachers use creative dramatics in the teaching process.
- (ii) using creative dramatics in the classroom is difficult for 14% of the teachers.
- (iii) creative dramatics supports better comprehension of ideas

and active involvement of the learners during learning activities.

- (iv) 84% of the teachers assume that creative dramatics can be used without specific training and 65% of the teachers are sure that additional time is not needed for utilising it.

Samuel and Chukwu (2011) developed a theoretical framework after observing the participation of learners in learning activities through creative dramatics. This study was conducted among the model school students of Azikiwe University, Nigeria. The researchers observed that creative dramatics can be highly instrumental to the development of children's awareness and sensitivity. Children gain insight and experiences and master realities around them while they expand the dramatic activities. (In mastering these realities, their sensitivities are sharpened together with them.)

Researches in the area of education, theatre or creative dramatics are scarce. Arieli (2007) studied about the integration of drama method in science teaching. The study proved that the approach is effective in teaching science at different levels of schooling. Vasudevan (2003) researched among primary children and reached on a conclusion that primary school children are highly enthusiastic and happy at school if the classroom atmosphere is in drama approach. Kamen (1991) studied the effect of

creative drama on elementary school students' understanding of science concepts. The study proved that creative drama method is effective in the enhancement of children's understanding of science concepts. The study revealed that students express much interest in laboratories if they are conveyed the science concepts through creative dramatics. Violin (1986) studied on using theatre games in classrooms and proved that theatre games enhance different qualities of children, like communication, empathy, attitude and consideration.

Statement of the Problem

To assure knowledge and skill development of students, the teaching method must be creative. It should develop creative sense and other related qualities. This study aimed to realise the effectiveness of creative dramatics, which was conducted among secondary school students, enrolled under Kerala State School Syllabus. In this context, the study is titled "Effectiveness of Creative Dramatics Method on Academic Achievement, Learning, Joyfulness and Creative Sense of Learners."

Definition of Key Terms

The major terms in the title are defined below:

Creative Dramatics

Wessels (1987) stated that 'Creative dramatics is something we all engage in daily for learning'. 'Creative

drama is improvisational activities that emphasis self-expression with the choice of characters or flow of events with or without a teacher direction' is the definition by Catterall (2002). Caslin (1996) defined creative dramatics as 'a way of learning, a means of self-expression, a therapeutic technique and a social activity rather than an art form'.

Creative Sense

Individuals tend to be creative in every activity. Here, 'creative sense' means the sagacity of individuals to interpret creatively in different situations.

Joyfulness of Learning

The phrase 'joyfulness of learning' indicates student's happiness and interest in learning social science.

Research Questions

Creative dramatics is relatively a new phenomenon to the present days' pedagogy. This paper discusses the scope of creative dramatics as an effective pedagogical approach. it is assumed that it has a vital role and is helpful in infusing the world of the child to understand and assist him to master the realities of his surroundings. On these observations, this research is prepared on the basis of following questions:

- (i) To what extent can creative dramatics be configured as a method of teaching to teach social sciences at the secondary level?

- (ii) Will the creative dramatics based method of teaching be effective on achievement in social science?
- (iii) Can creative dramatics be an effective method to develop creative sense and joyfulness of learning?

Objectives of the Study

1. To find the effectiveness of creative dramatics method on academic achievement in social science among the secondary level school students
2. To find the effectiveness of creative dramatic method on developing learning joyfulness and creative sense.

Design

The study is quasi-experimental. Pre-test and post-test experimental design is employed to get the quantitative data. The same test has been administered at pre and post-test levels. The data are collected and analysed quantitatively and qualitatively.

Sample

The study was conducted in a randomly constituted homogenous sample of 80 students of Class IX. The Control Group and Experimental Group included 40 students in each, from Ezhur Government, Higher Secondary School, Tirur Education District, Kerala, India.

Regular teachers of the division who were selected as part of the

experimental group were also a sample group. Five teachers were chosen for this purpose. The selected teachers taught different subjects in the class. They were directed to note their observations at three different occasions during the intervention.

Tools used for the Study

The following tools used were properly constructed by completing all the steps of standardisation—

- Lesson transcripts in social science for Class IX for selected content areas based on creative dramatics method and constructive approach.
- Achievement test in social science for class IX of kerala school syllabus— the test was for 25 marks. The test was constructed as per the designed blueprint after giving proper weightage to process dimensions, knowledge dimensions and difficulty levels. The achievement test was standardised as per norms.
- Observation cum opinion schedule for teachers to remark on the creative sense of students. The face validity and construct validity of the observation cum opinion schedule is established.
- Joyfulness of learning inventory of students for approximation of their perceived joyfulness— the inventory was standardised properly. The *t*-value of each item was found out and only items with significant values at 0.05 levels were considered. The reliability

was proved with the value of Cronbach Alpha coefficient of correlation, 0.83.

The Experiment

The constructivist method of teaching was followed in the control group. The constructivist method is different from the creative dramatic approach. The constructivist approach need not use the elements of creative dramatics during the classes. The experimental group is intervened with the creative dramatics method. The experimental session prolonged for 19 working days and data collection from teachers extended for another five days.

The lesson plans are prepared for 45 minutes sessions. The units 'Towards Freedom' and 'Kerala History' were selected for this purpose. The handbook suggests total 19 sessions of 45 minutes each for these units. In the improvisation phase of lesson plans, students were required to use events and objects symbolically in a make-believe environment. Conceptual understanding on content and activities were constructed

in this phase. Some techniques, such as role playing, simulation, oral presentation, etc., were used according to objectives.

The teaching content is combined with a bundle of activities. The whole class is engaged with creative activities that are closely associated with the content to be learnt. The entire class was simulated to an informal theatre temperament.

Analysis of Data

Creative dramatic method of teaching is effective in enhancing achievement in social science among secondary level school students.

Data were collected from 40 students of the experimental group and 40 students of the control group. Achievement test in social sciences was conducted in both groups before and after the intervention. The intervention or experiment was with constructivist method in the control group and creative dramatics in the experimental group. Results of these pre- and post-tests were used for comparison. Table 1 displays the results.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics for pre-test and post-test scores of academic achievements in Social Science among class IX students

Group	Variable	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
Control	Pre-test	40	7.63	8.00	8.00	1.69
	Post-test	40	13.54	13.50	12.00	2.11
Experimental	Pre-test	40	9.01	9.00	9.00	2.01
	Post-test	40	18.06	18.00	21.00	2.25

The measures of central tendency viz. Mean, Median, Mode and Standard Deviation of pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups are almost equal. The distribution of the pre-test scores of experimental and control groups shows that they do not depart significantly from normality.

Comparison of Mean Pre-test Scores of Experimental Group and Control Group

The comparison of difference in the mean pre-test scores of control and experimental group was done by using independent sample *t*-test and the results are given in Table 2.

Table 2
Data and results of test of significance of mean pre-test scores of achievements in social science among Class IX students

Group	No. of Pupils	Mean	SD	Critical Ratio	Remarks
Experimental	40	9.01	2.01	1.54	Not Significant
Control	40	7.63	1.69		

The critical ratio (1.54) computed for comparing pre-test scores of experimental and control groups was found to be not significant at 0.01 level. This shows that there exists no significant difference in the pre-test scores of experimental and control groups.

Comparison of Mean Post-test Scores of Experimental Group and Control Groups

The mean post-test scores of control and experimental groups were compared by using independent sample *t*-test and the result are given in Table 3.

The *t*-value (7.63) is greater than the table value 2.58 at 0.01 level of significance. The mean score of the experimental group (18.06) is significantly higher than that of the control group (13.54). It indicates that there is a significant difference in the post-test scores between control and experimental groups.

Comparison of the Mean Pre-test and Post-test Scores of Experimental Groups

The effectiveness of the creative dramatics on achievement in social science was tested and compared by using the paired *t*-test. The results are given in Table 4.

Table 3
Data and results of test of significance of difference in the mean post-test scores on achievement in social science among Class IX students

Group	No. of Pupils	Mean	SD	Critical Ratio	Remarks
Experimental	40	18.06	2.25	7.63	Significant at 0.01 level
Control	40	13.54	2.11		

Table 4
Significance of difference in the mean scores of pre-test
and post-test of experimental group

Group	No. of Pupils	Mean	SD	Critical Ratio	Level of Significance
Experimental Pre-test	40	9.01	2.01	18.02	Significant at 0.01 level
Experimental Post-test	40	18.06	2.25		

The obtained critical ratio (18.02) is significant at 0.01 level, which indicates that there is a significant difference between the mean pre-test scores and post-test scores of the experimental group. The result explains that there is an effective development in achievement among students after the intervention. This indicates that the creative drama-based instruction is an effective method of teaching.

Comparison of the Mean Pre-test and Post-test Scores of Control Group

The difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of control group was estimated by employing paired sample *t*-test. The results of the test are given in Table 5.

table value at level 0.01. The result indicates that there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of control group also; who were instructed by the presently pursuing constructivist method. But, the gain in achievement is comparatively lesser than that of the experimental group.

Comparison of the Mean Gain Scores of Experimental Group and Control Group

Gains scores in terms of academic achievements were computed by taking the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. To test the significant difference the mean,

Table 5
Difference in the mean scores of pre-test and
post-test of control group

Group	No. of Pupils	Mean	SD	Critical Ratio	Level of Significance
Control Pre-test	40	7.63	1.69	9.98	Significant at 0.01 level
Control Post-test	40	13.54	2.11		

Table 5 reveals that the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group differ significantly. The critical ratio (9.98) is greater than the

of gained scores of the experimental group and control group was done by independent sample *t*-test and the results are given in Table 6.

Table 6
Difference in Mean Gain Scores of Experimental Group and Control Group

Group	No. of Pupils	Mean	SD	Critical Ratio	Remarks
Experimental	40	7.97	2.31	4.57	Significant at 0.01 level
Control	40	4.77	4.48		

The results indicate that achievement in social science is higher for experimental group than that of the control group. The exact mean value of the experimental group post-test is 18.06 and that of control group is 13.54. The critical ratio obtained by comparison of gain scores of the groups and higher mean value of the experimental group post-test show that creative drama-based instruction is more effective.

Impact of Creative Dramatics Teaching Method on Developing Creative Sense of Students

Creativity is the result of creative sense. The creative sense that students acquire from the classroom is a depending factor of the teaching method. The students' initiation to organise classroom activities, participation in the activities, like role-play or group works, active participation in the teaching-learning processes and performing with socialised simulation skills and some other items were considered as the factors that determine creative sense.

The development of creative sense was estimated from the teachers' evaluation of students. Five teachers who taught in the class which was

selected as experimental group were given an Observation cum Opinion Schedule to mark their students' performance for a week. Teachers who teach (i) Social sciences, (ii) English Language, (iii) Malayalam Language, (iv) Chemistry and (v) Biology were selected for this purpose. The following directions were given to the teachers:

- (a) Provide different activities to the students during the lesson.
- (b) Intensively observe their participation and trends
- (c) Record the students' performances in the observation cum opinion schedule after the class.

The teachers intentionally observed the students' tendencies for five working days in their classes and other occasions. The record they maintained is considered to estimate the students' creative sense. The observation schedule has a column to mark the teachers' opinion on students' creative sense. The observation was not made on each student, but on the whole classroom group. The results are concluded in Table 7.

Dramatics method includes participation in different types of activities by the students. The activities are not mechanical but active to gather student attention on the

Table 7
Teachers' remarks on students creative sense after the intervention

S. No.	Criteria of Creative Sense	Teacher Remarks	No. of teachers remarked thus (out of 5)	Status after intervention
1.	Students' initiation to organise classroom activities	High and enthusiastic	5	Highly increased
2.	Participation in the activities, like role-play	High and enthusiastic	4	Highly increased
3.	Active participation in the teaching learning processes	High and enthusiastic	5	Increased
4.	Performing with socialised simulation skills	High	4	Increased
5.	Passive listening	Low	5	Decreased
6.	Communication with teachers	High	5	Highly increased
7.	Shyness and withdrawal	Low	4	Highly decreased
8.	Response towards classroom tasks	High and enthusiastic	3	Increased
9.	Interest in taking responsible roles	High and enthusiastic	4	Increased
10.	Response towards different types of learning situations	High and enthusiastic	5	Increased

tasks and encourage their voluntary participation. This might be the reason that influenced the development of students' creative sense.

Finding 4

The creative dramatics method effectively develops students' joyfulness of learning.

To find out the students' joyfulness of learning, a qualitative method of interpretation was adopted with score-based analysis. The joyfulness of learning inventory was distributed to all the students in both sample groups—control and experimental. The tool includes five dimensions with five statements in each. The inventory was prepared in Malayalam Language for better understanding of the students. Students were addressed by the researcher to respond to each of the statements in all the five dimensions. They were directed to select any of the scores from the given three scores for each statement according to their favourableness on the statement. The scores were 0, 1 and 2. If they marked 2 for all the statements in a dimension, the total score would be 10 for that dimension. Table 8 provides details of the dimensions.

Students of the experimental and control groups were informed that the total scores will indicate their verdict on the dimension regarding the joyfulness of the classes taken by them in the subject social science.

If the total score comes to 39 or above out of 50, it indicates that classroom teaching was highly joyful, the score in between 29 to 38 indicates the classroom teaching was partially joyful, and the score between 19 to 28 indicates mildly joyful, and the below 19 indicates that the class was 'not joyous.

The score-based analysis comes to the finding that the experimental group highly enjoyed the classroom atmosphere based on creative dramatics. The control group also had joyfulness of learning and the score indicates it was partial joyfulness. Details of score-based analyses are given in Table 9.

Table 8
Dimensions selected to be assessed

Dimensions	Maximum Scores
Interest in Classroom Tasks	10
Interest in the Drama Activities/Group Activities	10
Interest to be in the Social Science Class	10
Atmosphere of the Social Science Class	10
Supportability to learn Social Science Subject	10
Total	50

Table 9
Students' scores on their experiences in creative dramatic method social science class-experimental group (N: 40) (Score:10 to each dimension)

Dimensions	Scores of each dimension for total sample group (N — 40 × score 10 = 400)	
	Experimental group	Control group
(Individual Score 10)		
Interest in classroom tasks	368	213
Interest in the drama activities	400	213

Interest to be in the social science class	362	344
Atmosphere of the social science class	368	316
Supportability to learn social science subject	382	342
Overall score (50) (N 40) =2000	1880*	1447**

Note: *Score indicates high acceptance and **Score indicates partial acceptance

Result and Discussion

The scores by the students clearly indicate their perception of joyfulness of learning as it is estimated on each of the dimensions by the Inventory. The experimental group scored highly in all the dimensions. The control group too possesses high scores in dimensions, except in the case of interest in classroom tasks and interest in drama or group activities. It is a fact that the group activities in constructivist approach and cooperative learning soon become mechanical in operation. Students feel passive in such group activities. This might be the reason for very low score in the second dimension (Interest in Drama Activities/Group Activities) by the control group. Students get a variety of activities in creative dramatics and it never feels that they are imposed to learn the content. This spontaneity of activities might be the reason for high score on the dimension by the experimental group.

The students are getting into the activities with own interest. The atmosphere of the class itself will be actively oriented for participation by the students. This might be the reason for high score by the experimental

group in the first dimension, that is, interest in Classroom Tasks.

The thematic part of the study zeroed in on the development of a framework of creative dramatics as a method of teaching the subject social science at secondary level. It is successfully intervened at the secondary level Class IX in the subject social science.

The study revealed other findings and they are:

- The creative dramatics method is an effective teaching method and that significantly developed academic achievement of learners. The intervention with the creative dramatic method proved that it is effective in enhancing achievement in social science among secondary level school students.
- The creative dramatics is an effective method to develop the learning joyfulness of students. The intervention proved with the remarkable hike of joyfulness among students by using the creative dramatic method for teaching them.
- The creative dramatics method is highly effective in developing the creative sense of learners.

Reflections, Generalisations and Educational Implications

The existing teaching method followed by the state syllabus schools in Kerala has many advantages; but it is not free from mechanical ways of teaching. Many students fail to follow this method meaningfully and effectively. The secondary level social science textbooks contain so many concepts, which are presented in a comprehensive manner and that are to be transacted through student-centred activities. So creative drama-based instruction helped these students to attain better results in learning, developing their creative sense and joyfulness of learning. A common complaint from teachers of social science is that students are less interested in learning the subject. The students feel the subject as dull and they are not interested in it. These problems can be refurbished by using the creative dramatic method. The method is very hopeful on certain topics of social science textbooks, particularly on Kingdoms, Freedom Movement, and National Integration and so on.

The following suggestions are possible on the basis of conclusions:

- The creative dramatic method instruction should be encouraged among teachers of secondary level since it has proved much effective.
- The existing method or methods need not be avoided, and sticking on a particular method is unnecessary. Teachers should have options to select a teaching method according to the content and its scope. Since the creative drama based instruction has been found more effective, it can be incorporated with other instructional designs so that they are mutually benefitted.
- Creative dramatics must be a choice for certain topics that intends to promote emotional sensitivity of students.
- Creative dramatics method should be introduced to in-service teachers.
- Teaching through creative dramatics method provides considerable creative sense development and joyfulness of learning. Hence, it should be promoted and integrated with all the other subjects.

Based on the findings of this study and the magnitudes of creative dramatics method, it can be suggested that the teachers should provide a meaningful learning environment for their students in which they would provide connections between sociological, geographical, economic and historical concepts and everyday context. The teachers should emphasise every student's participation in dramatic activities.

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