

# The Use of Methods and Techniques of Drama Education with Kindergarten Teachers

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## II. THEORETICAL BASIS

**Abstract**—Present study deals with drama education in preschool education. The research made in this field brings a qualitative comparative survey with the aim to find out the use of methods and techniques of drama education in preschool education at university or secondary school graduate preschool teachers. The research uses a content analysis and an unstandardized questionnaire for preschool teachers and obtained data are processed with the help of descriptive methods and correlations. The results allow a comparison of aspects applied through drama in preschool education. The research brings impulses for education improvement in kindergartens and inspiration for university study programs of drama education in the professional training of preschool teachers.

**Keywords**—Drama education, preschool education, preschool teacher, research.

## I. INTRODUCTION

MODERN concept of 21st-century education puts across children active learning with direct experience and sharing in education. Space for personality-oriented preschool pedagogy has been opened which counts with the active involvement of a child in education activities, enabling learning based on its own search, discovery, and gaining experience. And just this way of education very intensively corresponds with a system of drama education.

Drama education is rather a young scientific discipline, and its philosophy has brought attention to respect personality, possibility of more independence, openness and emphasis on the development of creativity. The drama, here, is obviously not understood in the sense of tragedy, but only as a certain gradation of emerging tension that a person perceives in situations where a person faces decisions, how a person will deal, act, solve a conflict, what attitude a person chooses and how a person behaves [2].

Švejdová characterizes drama education as a specific educational process which mainly uses elements of drama and theater, thereby it differs significantly from other types of education. It is actually a creative way of gaining experience, knowledge, and skills based on own perception and own active experience in dealing based on a game principle [4].

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Drama education offers huge potential for preschool education in kindergartens that can become an important part of a whole educational system. Goals of framework education program for preschool education correspond with drama education and are focused on:

- Personality development enables self-discovery, teaches self-control, increases self-esteem, strengthens confidence and ability of critical thinking, develops emotional experience
- Social development enables to get to know others and teaches to respect and cooperate with them, puts morality foundations, ethics and philosophical ability to view the world
- Artistic development cultivates behavior and teaches to perceive art with its characteristics and symbols, develops imagination, fantasy, creativity
- Knowledge and skill development—based on curriculum content, topic and activity [2].

Drama education gives children space for tolerance; empathy encourages them to cooperate and active dealing. During the drama, the child learns new knowledge, skills, and habits; cultivates its personality. Drama education by Valenta is a system of personal and social learning lead by artistic means—dramatic and theatrical [5]. Marušák classifies drama education among modern teaching methods [3]. Eva Machková, states:

*“Drama education is a learning experience, i.e. dealing, personal, unmediated exploration of social relations and events, exceeding current real practice of a participating individual. It is based on exploring, cognition and understanding of interpersonal relationships, situations and inner life of contemporary people and people from the past, real people and even created by fantasy. Such exploration and learning happen in imaginary situation via a role play, drama in a situation. It is a process which may or may not result in a product (performance). Targets of drama education are pedagogical with drama means. Drama education represents a school subject or a leisure activity, and its procedures may also be used as a method of teaching other subjects. The way it differs from the subjects of aesthetic education is that its priority is social cognition that is superior to aesthetic-educational and artistic-educational goals” [2, p. 32].*

Blahová characterizes drama education as a field dealing with personal and social learning that uses simulative, and role

plays for active exploration of the world, man, society, and oneself [1].

Drama education represents an irreplaceable place in preschool education and offers activating and interesting methods and techniques, which just focus on child's personality development, communication, takes a position towards an issue, social and artistic development, creativity, etc. It concerns intensive and at the same time very natural learning throughout direct perception.

### III. METHODS AND TECHNIQUES OF DRAMA EDUCATION

Appropriate selection of a method is the most important factor in the educational process for a kindergarten teacher. Valenta takes a closer look at basic naming and method characterization and technique in a publication dedicated to drama education [5].

The method is a way that leads to a goal; it represents a didactic tool chosen by a pedagogue in the pedagogical activity. This is teacher's deliberate and offered activity to children, which should help them to explore, clarify and explain some facts, in order to move beyond learning and in their own development. The technique can be understood as a certain course of action that submits to a method. In pedagogical context, it concerns a way of mastering the curriculum in a narrower and more specific way.

Drama education interconnects methods and techniques, and all of these represent specific procedure. There could be many techniques that are found in a method, but only the method itself can have its own importance.

Methods of drama education are divided in basic context into: drama role play, improvisation, interpretation, situation role play, a role play and characterization.

*Drama play* has features as a game itself, which is child's basic activity of preschool age. The word drama causes that the play contains tension which graduates up to a crisis – conflict. Dramatic play usually consists of well know five stage drama structure takes place in fictitious situations and leads to the denouement, resolution, and catharsis. Actors perceive deep enjoyment, knowledge, and new experience. Drama education is a complex method because it can contain and integrate other methods and techniques of drama education according to actors concerns and interests.

*Improvisation* represents one of the keys and basic methods of drama education. Concerning a show which is not prepared before, is spontaneous, and is not enforced and voluntary. Actor acts, deals and decides without any preparation, just now, spontaneously and according to the imagination and abilities. The child is enriched by new perception and experience and gains new views at a certain situation, no matter that he might be punished for his actions, decisions, and unusual attitudes. At the same time, improvisation is a basic principle and procedure in drama education directed to gain educational goals and essentially puts the emphasis on direct personal and social development of the individual.

*Interpretation* is known not only as a method of drama education but also as a presentation of a piece of work or its part. In practice, we meet with the fact that interpretation is

confused with reproduction that should be understood as a mechanical reproduction of a piece of work, without any interest and inner passion. Unlike the interpretation which emphasis on presentation templates, whether it is a literary work, work of art or music, which essence is just the creative way in passing from an interpreter to audience or listeners.

*Role play* is the most frequently used method in drama education. The role itself is not in any case considered to be a theater role play, but it represents a social role entry. Childs plays to be "somebody", "something", acts and behaves as "like", with a possibility to search and verify new solutions. During this method, the child plays a role of someone, and its charm lies in the fact that each actor has their own different view of concrete social role.

*Playing at situation* allows the actors to enter into a certain situation and in drama education traditionally used imaginary situations, where the actor has a chance to act in a role, but internally for themselves. The play in the situation is known as simulation so exactly means '*transformation of oneself into a certain imaginary situation.*' Thanks to this method the actor can try how a person would act in such situation or how the character would act, or a role, where a person is.

*Characterization* represents the last from basic methods of drama education. Already the title suggests that this method relies on characteristic features in all details. Children at preschool age cannot internally accurately identify with role assignment which is also not desirable in terms of education.

Techniques of drama education have been selected only regarding children at pre-school age and their experience with methods and techniques of drama education.

*Life pictures* in other names also *photography*, *sculptures*, *freezing* represent a stopped movement, body configuration with stable facial expressions. Individuals or groups create from their own bodies a motionless image that presents a certain moment, idea or topic.

*Pantomime* is acting in a role, demanding in terms of mastering movement without a word, but also in terms of ability to hold a key moment in a situation or an issue adequately.

*Narrative pantomime* is based on spontaneous children play and therefore is suitable for kindergarten use. The principle is based on a teacher's narrative short story or its parts, and the actor's task is to pantomime the narrated plot.

*A narrow street* allows the actor in a key role to walk through a narrow street, made of co-players/actors, who stand in two lines opposite to each other and say out loud their opinions and thoughts to the key person who is walking through. Usually, the narrow street is framed that on one hand, there are team-mates, who think about the player in the key role positively and on the other hand, there are players who think about the key figure rather in a negative way. This technique is enhanced when the key figure walks through the narrow street with eyes closed.

*The hot seat* is one of the listed verbal techniques where a player is on an imaginary seat or in another position and others ask the player questions that are formed to respond just "yes," "no", and to find out as much information as possible. They

find out characteristics, behavior, acting, motivation and based on these findings they make a judgment about the character.

*Spectrum of opinions or "body expression"* allows the group to express their relationship, attitude towards the key figure and to the figure's action, in the way that on an imaginary line segment, where there is the key figure in the middle, one end is considered to be as positive and the second end as a negative attitude to the figure. The actors express their relationship towards the figure in a role play or for themselves. This technique can help us at first sight to know the position of the figure among other actors/players in a group.

*Life stories, one day in life* can replay the life of the key figure the best during improvisation or at least over the last twenty-four hours before the event that we solve right now or play. Based on this technique we can easily understand why the person behaved in a certain situation. This technique can find out possible solutions and denouement of the issue event and to realize the nature of the character and possible causes of behavior.

*Telephone interviews, radio news, overheard part of dialogues* allow to lead a dialogue with players/actors or one player with a teacher in a role, that is based on responses of both actors or just one monolog of one speaker just with the help of imaginary radio or a telephone. Such communication should be appropriate, short and clear. It should clearly explain the situation verbally and views of all parties in the given conflict without any further non-verbal means.

*Conversation in pairs, interview* is based on two main roles, an interviewer, and an interviewee. We presume that an interviewer had been informed about a theme, a topic or about a situation and through questions, a person asks the interviewee and finds out new information and details on the field. This technique shows a certain interest of parties, the interviewer as well as the interviewee, to think about the issue actively and imagine other possible solutions.

*Subtitle* is an appropriate name for a technique, where player/actors make "subtitles" in improvisation or in life pictures, which are described by one best word and concisely capture the essence of activity.

*Gathering and meetings* represent a classical group technique, where each participant has a chance to express his/her own opinion and view on the subject or topic. The technique is again mostly associated with a method of a role play, where all participants have an attitude to an issue, and they continue to gather information and then have some suggestions for solutions.

*Change of roles:* Teacher can use options to replace actors of individual roles (e.g. when situations are out of rules' control, does not direct to appropriate goals). One of the variants is a role exchange between existing actors (e.g. a victim and a criminal), a second option is to replace the observers for actors. In both cases participants should respect existing simulation development.

*Fast solution:* Teacher within "freezing" situation announces, that the situation has to end within a certain time, recommendation: after completion the situation try to find a

logical reason resulting in the situation (e.g. agreement must occur as soon as possible, because the character we know is walking through a garden gate of that house)

*Stepping out a role:* Teacher stops the situation and invites the character (characters), to change their inner voice or a commentary, thoughts in the situation. The actor steps out of the role and has one minute for the speech. Other actors are "frozen".

*Second Self:* Two actors/players are involved in order to make one character. Usually, the one represents the character – acts, speaks. Significant (others) show inner feelings, speaks out loud what the character thinks e.g. somebody from observers or a teacher.

Through *methods and techniques of drama education* which lead to empathy into a certain role and therefore children make up their own attitudes and values in a safe environment, where there is no lack of trust and responsiveness. Above mentioned means of drama education should be chosen purposefully and thoughtfully, what it pursues and what the teacher wants to achieve in children.

Some of the methods and techniques have been chosen for a specific research questionnaire, which is introduced in the third chapter. We have been interested if kindergarten teachers are aware of and can apply these methods and techniques of drama education in education. According to Švejdová, teachers' inexperience and their education in the field of drama education represents one of the biggest pitfalls during use of drama in education [4].

The research is based on: Did they meet with the most frequent methods and techniques enough? Therefore we searched answers in a presented specific research.

#### IV. SPECIFIC RESEARCH FOCUSED ON DRAMA EDUCATION

For the research, we set following goal: To see if kindergarten teachers apply methods and techniques of drama education in their practice.

##### A. Research Questions

1. Do kindergarten teachers use drama education in practice?
2. Did they understand the application of drama education methods and techniques in education well?
3. Do kindergarten teachers with university education apply methods and techniques of drama education more than teachers with secondary education?

##### B. Solution Process

Firstly, together with students, we began to study available domestic or foreign material focused on this issue of drama education and its form as a method in education. We have formulated partial research tasks and compiled a non-standardized questionnaire. We have clarified methodological procedures and a technique for obtaining data. Finally, we set ourselves a task to make a presentation of research results that would be beneficial to publish in a professional journal and to represent it at the international scientific conference.

### C. Search Sample

Search sample is the kindergarten teachers from the Czech Republic. The number of respondents is 260.

### D. Methods and Techniques Used

The questionnaire, that investigated the application of methods and techniques of drama education in kindergarten teachers. The obtained data were processed using descriptive methods and correlations in NCSS10.

### E. Research Results: Interpretation and Discussion

We state selected results from implemented research, which leads to a discussion.

#### 1.Question 1: What Is Your Highest Level of Pedagogical Education?

Education	Number	Percentage
Secondary	128	49,2%
Higher professional	26	10%
Secondary studying	4	1,5%
University	101	38,8
Other	1	0,4%

Table I shows education of teaching staff, a half of respondents 49,2% with secondary education and with that 10% higher professional education, 1,5% of training teachers at university and more than a third of respondents 38,8% with university education. A higher number of university-educated teachers is gratifying and can positively influence the orientation in methods and techniques of drama education.

#### 2.Question 2: What Is the Length of Your Teaching Practice?

Fig. 1 and Table II shows the pedagogical practice, 66,5% of respondents significantly exceeds "21 years and over" and 5% in practice is a "16-20" years". It has been proven that almost two-thirds of respondents have a perennial practice. On the contrary, in 11,2% the practice is shorter "less than 5 years" and 10,4% represent practice in the range of "6-10 years". Only 6,9% have practice in the range of 11-15 years.



Fig. 1 Teaching practice 11,2% blue, 10,4% orange, 6,9% yellow, 5% green, 66,5% purple

#### 3.Question 3: Where Did You Come Across/Learn about Drama Education the Most?

From Table III, it is clear that the most information about drama education was found at 54, 6% respondents gained at secondary and university studies. And 33,8% respondents got

to know about drama education from seminars and courses, 7,7% gained information from read journals and only 3% from the internet.

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Less than 5 years	29	11,2% blue
6 – 10 years	27	10,4% orange
11–15 years	18	6,9% yellow
16-20 years	13	5 % green
21 and more years	173	66,5 % purple

Response	Number	Percentage
Study course	142	54,6%
Internet	3	1,2%
Reading	20	7,7%
Seminars/courses	88	33,8%
Others	7	2,7%

#### 4.Question 4: Do You Apply Method-Drama Play in Teaching?

Answer	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	139	53,5%
Rather yes	93	35,8%
Rather no	21	8,1%
NO	6	2,3%
I cannot say	1	0,4%

From the Table IV is clear that teachers do apply the method of "drama play/game" in kindergartens. Specifically, in 53,5% the respondents responded "yes," in 35,8% responded, "rather yes." Only 8,1% respondent "rather no" and complete "no" was found in 2,3% of respondents. Only 0,4 % of respondents "couldn't say" anything to this question. Results confirm that the method of drama play/game is widely applied in kindergartens in more than 90% of interviewed, and this represents an encouraging result. We are aware of the fact that this method is the oldest one and most frequent one which had been already used in the past.

#### 5.Question No. 5: Do You Apply Dramatization–Element of Drama Education?

Answer	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	172	66,2%
Rather yes	67	25,8%
Rather no	16	6,2%
No	4	1,5%
I cannot say	1	0,4%

Results of Table V, clearly show that dramatization is used according to "yes" in 66,2% respondents and "rather yes" in 25,8%. It is signalized by the fact that 92% of preschool teachers apply dramatization as the oldest method, which still persists in the Czech education system. We believe that dramatization is still being used in kindergartens without any deeper understanding and innovation. Only 6,2% respondents

responded “rather no” and 1,5% stated “no”, which means that they do not use dramatization. We dare to respond to just these 7,7% of teachers who do not apply dramatization, because they can be the ones who deal with drama education in depth and are aware that dramatization is not the best suitable method for children at preschool age, as is traditionally considered by the teaching public, because it tends more to repeated training and a drill than to creativity and free expression of children.

6.Question No. 6: Do You Apply Pantomime-Drama Education Technique?

TABLE VI  
PANTOMIME

Answer	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	154	59,2%
Rather yes	76	29,2%
Rather no	18	6,9%
No	8	3,1%
I cannot say	4	1,5%

From the Table VI, results that pantomime-technique of drama education is used a lot by teachers. Response “yes” is recorded in 59,2% and “rather yes” in 29,2%. Again, we can document the fact that the well-known pantomime technique is used by kindergarten teachers in 88,2%, which represents a positive finding. Only 3,1% do not apply, and 1,5% could not say anything about the realization of this technique.

7.Question No. 7: Do You Apply Narrative Pantomime-Drama Education Technique?

TABLE VII  
NARRATIVE PANTOMIME

Answer	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	40	15,4 %
Rather yes	58	22,3 %
Rather no	56	21,5 %
No	6	16,9 %
I cannot say	1	23,8 %

The Table VII, show, that pantomime narrative technique of drama teaching is used by teachers less than the pantomime in previous table and chart. Response “yes” was found at only 15,4% respondents and “rather yes” only by 22,5%. Results indicate that respondents do not have enough professional information about drama education and do not know this technique’s title. At the same time based on practice we know, that they apply it the most with kindergarten children. Very remarkable is that the response “rather no” stated 21,5%, “no” 16,9% of respondents, “cannot say” surprisingly stated 23,8%. According to results, we conclude, that almost one-third of respondents are not aware of the fact that they apply narrative pantomime because they do not know this title and never dealt with drama teaching issue into greater depth.

8.Question No. 8: Do You Apply a Narrow Street/Alley-Drama Education Technique?

Based on results from the Table VIII we can think again, why only 6,5% respondents responded “yes”, that they apply the technique of a little street and 14,6% “rather yes”.

Response “rather no” was responded by 8,1% and a very striking fact is that answer “no” was stated by 27,3% and “cannot say” said 23,8 % respondents. Based on that finding we can see again, that only around 21% respondents apply the technique and a half of respondents do not apply it. That represents a notable starting result which leads us to contemplation whether the teachers know this technique well enough and if they have understood it well enough. And the question remains if respondents sufficiently penetrated into the depth of drama teaching or act more intuitively.

TABLE VIII  
ALLEY /STREET

Answer	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	17	6,5 %
Rather yes	38	14,6 %
Rather no	20	8,1 %
No	71	27,3 %
I cannot say	62	23,8 %

F. Correlation: Relation of Selected Items

In the specific research, we made a statistical evaluation of respondents’ answers relations which showed an interesting finding of correlations. As an example, we list two correlations or relations that occurred at item *practice* versus *thematic units* and *practice* and *drama education*. In two tables we show correlations of stated aspects where there is important Chi value (Chi-Square 17,461776) and Probability Level (0,133037), where a level of significance alpha is lower than 0,05 in given examples:

TABLE IX  
PRACTICE VERSUS THEMATIC UNITS

Chi-Square Statistics Section		
Chi-Square	32,269708	
Degrees of Freedom	16	Reject H0
Probability Level	0,009221	

Warning: At least one cell had an expected value less than 5.

Table IX shows resulting correlation: there is relation between questions and aspects of practice and thematic units, which indicates and responds to the fact that teachers are significantly interested in creation of educational offer in thematic section, because they work with children in stories and for such given ability to work in stories practices with several year experience helps.

TABLE X  
PRACTICE VERSUS DRAMA EDUCATION AWARENESS

Chi-Square Statistics Section		
Chi-Square	46,298332	
Degrees of Freedom	16	Reject H0
Probability Level	0,000088	

Warning: At least one cell had an expected value less than 5.

Table X shows the correlation that there is a certain relation between questions of practice and drama education, which confirms the fact that they got to know about drama education according to greater possibility of information during a long-time practice or according to longer respondents’ practice in

kindergartens.

Research survey results have brought a very interesting comparison of findings in specific aspects applied in drama education in preschool education. A positive finding is that pedagogues apply these methods and techniques in preschool education. A question remains, at what level is their application of these methods and technique professionally substantial and meaningfully thoughtful or remains only intuitive. We presume that it represents a signal for specific and deeper research survey.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The research has opened the chance to gain reflective view at the application of methods and techniques of drama education in kindergartens. We have found out that pedagogues apply more well-known methods and techniques of drama education and can adequately use their application. At the same time, it showed that teachers have certain reserves in penetration into the deeper depth of methods and technique of drama education, and yet not everyone has enough orientation in theoretical base of drama teaching. They lack specific knowledge about of less frequent methods and techniques precisely in preschool education. The results confirm the relatively high percentage of application for example dramatization as a traditional means of drama education, which is encouraging on one hand, but on the other hand, there are occurring questions about what is the cause of such preference.

We failed to find if teachers with university degree apply more of these drama education methods and technique than teachers with secondary education. Furthermore, we are going to work and compare the results from another point of view. However, what is now shown as a disputable fact that almost a half of interviewed respondents operate with knowledge and experience of drama education in traditional concept. Above mentioned information lead us to believe, that drama education in preschool education deserves more attention just through research, which can support its justification and sense of application in kindergarten education. In any case, this research has brought new impulses for improvement of education in kindergartens and for further education of preschool teachers concerning the issue of drama in education.

At the same time, the research results have brought support for continuance sense of drama education in the professional training of future kindergarten teachers and inspiration for a study program extension of university Kindergarten Teacher Training Program at Faculty of Education UHK.

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