

Drama and Art in 2 years B.Ed course: The challenge for Prospective Teachers

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Abstract:

Transformational education involves reflection, introspection and action, with deep relationship between the head, heart and hand. Learning is enhanced through Drama in education which helps learners to extend their awareness, through multiple perspectives, to look at reality through fantasy, and to predict everyday situations in order to cope with unpredictable unsettling experiences. Drama and Art is not incorporated in the B.Ed programme to make the student actors, painters or artist but to make them realize that they are equally creative and smart. It is taught to boost their skills of creativity, self-confidence, critical thinking and presentation to help them teach their respective subject interestingly in the class. The activities, exercise designed in the facilitation allows the participants to engage them democratically and creatively. Drama and Art in education comes under the EPC II(Enhancing professional competencies). As the name of the course itself suggest, it basically used as a teaching medium to make teaching learning meaningful and critical. The subject is executed very differently from the other normal classes. It is implemented in the form of workshop sessions and lectures as it demands practical activity. Drama and art class are process oriented and students go through a process of unlearning to understand the application of drama and art in education. The outcome is that it allows re-imagining education from a new perspective; Education is not anymore a linear way of memorizing and reproducing in the exam. Introducing drama and art in the B.Ed programme is a brilliant move because it is the key to re-understand the idea of education in the 21st century.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Learning is enhanced through Drama in Education (John. Yofin and Chawla, 2007) which helps learners to extend their awareness, through multiple perspectives to look at reality through fantasy, and to predict everyday situations in order to cope with unpredictable unsettling experiences. Drama in education is not merely doing theatrics or 'acting' in a superficial manner, but is for creating that 'dramatic pressure' or 'tension', where the student would arrive at a problem or an understanding in a new way. (Heathcote and Bolton, 1994). The challenge is for prospective teachers to understand the medium, in order to transpose learners into a different time and space, to shape their consciousness through introspection and imagined collective experiences. For instance, activities such as 'hot seating' can be used to raise critical questions addressed to characters from the textbook or those in history, to think about significant developments within diverse social context. This also helps to stretch the learner into areas of 'discomfort' and 'confusion', to then seek solution, clarity and understanding. Drama as 'critical pedagogy' can move beyond the classroom, to evoke the collective consciousness and involve the community to participate in educational and social change. Teachers will need to experience different genres of street theatre that continue to engage with life, through folk and contemporary traditions, improvising and critiquing, while mobilizing for transformative action.

The course on Drama and Art in Education also helps in understanding the self and as a form of self-expression for enhancing creativity. The components of fine arts aim to

develop aesthetic sensibilities in student-teachers and learn the use of art in teaching learning. (Prasad, 1998) Student teachers will visit places of art, exhibitions and cultural festivals. Encouragement needs to be given to understand local culture and art forms and interpret art works, movies and other media. Likewise other activities can be used to build trust and cooperation, the sense of responsibility, pursuing tasks collectively and exploring varied perspectives.

Why 'Drama and Art' in College of Teacher Education?

When we talk about academic excellence, today the language of teaching-learning is completely changed and Arts education is highly recognized as the new package of delivering curriculum effectively. To bring quality in teaching, learning and evaluation, importance should be given to Drama and Art in Education.

Through different methodologies of facilitation Drama and Art aims to nurture the best version of the student teacher so that when they go back to teaching they teach with commitment and humility. Drama and Art is not incorporated in the B. Ed program to make the students actors, painters or artist but they make them realize that they are equally creative and smart. It is taught to boost their skills of creativity, self-confidence, critical thinking and presentation to help them teach their respective subjects interestingly in the class. It makes education relevant to the world context and socially engaged.

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What are the significance of Drama and Art in Education?

Drama and art can be also called the practical tool of constructivism. It is considered as a radical tool to make the students as an agent of change and challenge the traditional education.

The activities, exercise designed in the facilitation allows the participants to engage them democratically and creatively. Arts education transforms the classroom into a different active space and focuses on the personal growth of the students to make them a versatile teacher. Monitored playing and fun are the tools of learning which allows them to participate with all faculties of learning and foster a holistic development of the trainees.

How it is implemented in the B. Ed program?

Drama and Art in Education comes under the EPC (Enhancing Professional Competency). As the course of the name itself suggest, it basically used as teaching medium to make teaching learning meaningful and critical.

The subject is executed very differently from the other normal classes. It is implemented in the form of workshop sessions and lectures as it demands practical activities and small performance. Drama and art classed are process oriented and students go through a process of unlearning to understand the application of drama and art in education. Workshops are facilitated to develop skills of teaching and explores different forms of drama and art to use in their lesson teaching.

During the drama and art class, the student teachers were engaged in icebreakers and warm up games which helped them to open up and interact more comfortably. The whole course was a great experience everyone was seen actively involved in the teaching-learning process and the whole class became friends. They were given a chance to know about each other's strengths, weaknesses and how to work together despite the individual differences.

II. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

ACTIVITY-1

Process Drama

Process drama is a method of teaching and learning drama where both the student and teacher are working in and out of role. Process drama in a school setting usually involves the whole class working with the teacher in role in a made-up scenario. When they are working in process drama, the students and teacher work together to create an imaginary dramatic world within which issues are considered and problems can be solved. In this world they work together to solve problems and issues of theme such as environment sustainability, betrayal and other ethical and moral issues.

Class Activity

During the activity, a residential school layout was first drawn. The drawing consists of the school building (which include the principal office, classrooms, teacher's room, library, and laboratory), canteen, playground, and an auditorium, hostel for both boys and girls.

The entire class was divided into groups according to the

different role in the school chosen. For example, some choose to play the role of teacher, some nurse, some hostel Warden, and the Principal and so on.

The setting of the process drama was based on the scenario of a faculty meeting where the teaching staff and the nonteaching staff participated and lead by the Principal. During the role play each group presented problems and grievances faced in their jobs to the Principal. The principal listen to each complains and problems, and gave possible solution to each problems at the end of the meeting. These gave an opportunity to closely look into the working of other professions and the problems they faced each day.

Reflection

Process drama is an effective tool for learning and also entertainment. It encourages the students to imagine scenes as they analyze different life situation. It gives an opportunity to discover and explore their imaginative side at the same time gain insight into the different scenarios and themes they play out. By playing a role and giving it life, the student is able to experience a tiny part of life in someone else's shoe. It develops sense of appreciation for other and for the role they play in our everyday life. For example, suppose the process drama theme is 'abusive parents'. Playing the role of the abusive parents or the victim the student can learn the negative impact and the result of such action. In the process they may recognize certain signs and action in their immediate environment that may lead to them seeking help or providing help and understanding.

Playing the role of a parent, a doctor, teacher or a grocery shop owner, they can experience and learn some of the responsibilities, problems and joy feel by the roles and thus understand the value and work done by the figure in real life.

ACTIVITY-2

Teaching aids, creative technique

Teaching aids are an integral component in any classroom. The many benefit of teaching aids include helping learners improve reading comprehension skills, illustration or reinforcing a skill or concept, differentiating instruction and relieving anxiety.

Drama and art provide a wide range of tools that can be used as aids in teaching. Pantomime, sense memory improvisation, emotion, innovative art, mask, puppet, painting are some example of the different forms of drama and art that is effectively used for teaching purposes. These tools help develop the creative potential in the participant and help to develop critical thinking skills. Drama can be successfully used in the following applications: role play situations to observe new skills or behaviors, develop scenarios to introduce new concept, dramatize characters of historical figures and reenact real events, dramatize a scene that might have happened in a story, and improvise a scene that expresses the topic or theme.

Class activity

Eight groups were formed among the student teachers. Each group was given a form of drama. The eight forms of drama are:

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| 1. Pantomime | 5. Mask |
| 2. Sense memory improvisation | 6. Puppet |
| 3. Emotion | 7. Painting |
| 4. Any innovative art | 8. Characterization |

The groups were required to come up with activities based on their assigned form of drama to help teach topics and concepts in the pedagogy subjects (social sciences, English, science and mathematics).

Two to four activities were presented by each group. The activities were all distinct and innovative in their own way. For example, for mask, activity like role play of prominent historical figures, storytelling through puppets, displaying environmental problems through painting and so on.

Reflection

Drama and art is an outlet for self-expression and a way of learning. Introducing different form of drama and art in teaching opens up ways to involve the student intellectually, emotionally, physically and socially. The time spent planning, creating and discussing different scenes, plot and problems develops their imagination and creativity, foster critical thinking and problem solving skills. It also enhances their communication skills and learn to empathize with other people feelings. This form of teaching methods are beneficial for teachers as it can not only teach the values and importance of different topics but at same time entertain the student and hold their interest in the subject matter for a longer period of time

III. EXPERIENCES SHARED BY STUDENT TEACHERS

Title- 'FROM RELUCTANT TO GRATEFUL'

"Since my schooling days, I had a dislike for Drama related activities. Drama in my mind was loud or boring with forced laughter and excessive acting. My attitude was shaped by my experiences at school and at church where performances in the form of skits were a regular feature at most programs.

Hence when we were introduced to EPC II Drama and Art in education, I was initially reluctant and had resolved to only be a non-participating observer. As classes progressed, I realized that my opinion was clouded by misconceptions about drama as an art form. It was eye-opening to learn that art of drama in itself have nothing to do with performance. Drama in its various forms is a means of connecting with others thoughts, beliefs, and ideas: it is about building a connection with oneself and with others in its expression.

Art does not demand perfection nor can it be measured by set standards because each art is an expression of unique minds. There is every one to explore and express. Drama and Art as I have experienced through EPC II is about acceptance of ourselves, others and life with all the imperfections. This experience is the reason that sparked the change in my outlook.

The method of conducting our Drama and art in education classes also helped in causing motivation. Carefully planned out by our Facilitator, we had an hour of theory classes on Mondays followed by a whole day Practical activity on Tuesdays.

Some forms of drama that we have learned through participation and observation which I can utilize to facilitate my students are-

1. Role Play-Most of us being new at acting, needed time and encouragement from our facilitator as well as our fellow classmates to adjust into the mindset of the character and the mood of the story. Amidst the fun and laughter, we did learn that Role Play is an essential tool that we teachers can use to garner interest from our students, contextualize feelings and situations, provide simulation of experiences and for some students, the platform to know their natural talents and build confidence. Role play is a form of drama and art in education that involves students in exploring realistic situations through group interactions. Role play revolves around tackling everyday situations and scenarios, social concerns, political issues, current events, etc. that demands students to take up various realistic roles and positions and enact them. Role play can be a very productive tool in teaching and learning because it develops real communication skills in leadership, interviewing and social interactions.

2. STILL IMAGE-Drama in the form of still image is a powerful medium. It requires careful thought, proper positioning and co-ordination among the actors and also requires the audience to observe keenly. This form of drama can give opportunity to shy students to participate and through this form, students can learn to be team player.

3. MIMING- Miming is another medium through which actors present a scenario/story only through movements and expressions. With proper guidance and encouragement from the teacher, students will enjoy learning through this form of art as it promotes creativity through fun.

4. PUPPETRY- It is a form of drama through which students can enact scenes or dialogues from stories through the use of puppets. It will give them the platform to practice their speaking and reading skills as the audience will only see the puppets while listening to their voices. This will be fun for the students as it allows them to play with their sounds and voices. Through puppetry, teachers can teach a variety of lessons to the students using different ideas and concepts. Engaging students in puppetry helps them in learning about sequencing, organizing, sorting information, and verbalizing. It also aids in learning to communicate with each other, enjoying companionship, understanding concept, participating in craft work and developing motor skills. Puppetry can be a productive tool in education as it is low cost, student-friendly, and altogether a very fun way of learning.

Warm up sessions-Before beginning any class or activity, warm up sessions help to create a positive and cheerful atmosphere. It helped batch mates to bond and be more comfortable amongst ourselves, it also prepared us physically and intellectually for new activities and learning.

I will be utilizing this technique when return to my school as it will benefit both me and my students in improving relationships and activating the body and mind for learning."

IV. CONCLUSION

The outcome is that it allows re-imagining education from a new perspective. Education is not anymore a linear way of

memorizing and reproducing in the exam. It strives to make connection to the community and surroundings with the lessons they are learning.

Introducing Drama and Art in B. Ed program is a brilliant move because it is the key to understand the idea of education in the 21st century. Moreover, B. Ed institution is like the seed bank where students are trained to become professional teachers and if the student teachers seriously adapt the approaches of art pedagogy in their teaching, I think we will be raising a generation of school children that will transform a community.

Many student teachers were benefitted, at the beginning their first impression about "Drama and Art" was all about acting and performance, and the first thing that came to their mind was "Actor". But gradually their perspective changed.

The Drama and Art class taught them to be more creative, develop their personality. They have realized that applying Drama and art in a classroom doesn't only mean enacting a role but it has more to do with dramatizing and making the teaching learning process fun, joyful and activity based. Such classes have taught them to effectively use the skill of stimulus variation, gesture and body language during classroom transaction.

Being from mathematics background, one teacher shared that she had to memorize the formulae, theorems, principles, facts and terminologies. And considering the present scenario in Nagaland, many might be of the view that mathematics is a boring subject and difficult to understand. But during Drama and Art class the teacher realized that if only the teachers make some effort in making learning of mathematics joyful and fun, many students change their outlook towards mathematics.

There were many forms of drama and art but out of those Puppetry and visual art were the most effectively used for teaching mathematics. Puppetry can be used for lower classes. Instead of just lecturing about shapes, the teacher can make use of puppets to make teaching more fun and exciting.

Role play can be used to teach the children about profit and loss. The teacher can divide the students into shopkeepers and customers and ask their roles using fake money. In the end, the teacher can ask the students to calculate the profit, loss, selling price and cost price.

The core benefits of using drama and art in education as the tools of education can be summed up in the following points-

1. Drama and Art has greatly improved their sense of creativity and innovation. It made them realize how they as a teacher can make teaching learning process interesting and interactive. It help to boost creativity level, critical thinking, communication skills and collaboration with their group members.
2. It helps them to understand and utilize different drama and art technique in a classroom in order to bring holistic development in a child.
3. Drama and Art in education can be of great influence in understanding and practice of teaching in today's education system. In a world of technology every information is just a finger click away, but without proper dissemination and the right way of imparting knowledge, students will not have a productive learning experience. It helps to stimulate my interest, gain comprehension, and use imagination for a given topic.
4. Helps them to realize the social reality or social issues while studying and performing various situations and scenarios.
5. Develop self-confidence and also encouraged to come out of the shell and present themselves the way they are.

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