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## The Effectiveness of Drama Techniques on Interpersonal Skills and Achievement in English Language among High School Students

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### ABSTRACT

Education is often a quest to find the meaning of man. It is the only scientific study which helps us to trust our physical and mental problems and the modification of behaviour and personality. It includes all and it is the only trusted medicine, tool and soul, medicine, guide and friend for a genuine human being. The brain and mind should go hand in hand not only for outward personality, but for the acquisition of language also. Neuroscience shows activity in the brain is intimately intertwined with behaviour and mental process. Mind refers to the aspect of intellect and consciousness manifested as combinations of thought, perception, memory, emotion, will and imagination, including the brain's conscious and unconscious cognitive processes and interpersonal skills. As educational psychology deals with how people learn and literature is a record of human consciousness, human language acquisition capacity can be developed and through literary activities based on human experience also. Drama techniques can be effectively used for moulding interpersonal relationship and acquiring language skills in a most effective way.

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### Introduction

The blend of Drama, Art, and Education has been there since the time Plato started his Academy. He believed that informing a student just about the concept is not enough, a good teacher has to induce the ability of critical thinking and importance of value education in a student. Drama and Theatre both



are pivotal outlets for self-expression and using drama as a teaching tool, students are involved in every way, be it intellectually, physically, socially or emotionally. The use of drama and art in education leads to holistic learning, accelerate personality development and imparts students with crucial life skills, problem-solving skills, leadership, cooperation and collaboration.

Communication is the essence of interpersonal connections. But human mind is often used to refer especially to the thought processes of reason. Neurons in the human brain receive electrical signals from thousands of other cells, and long neural extensions called dendrites play a critical role in incorporating all of that information. So the cells can respond appropriately which is the uniqueness of human brain. In addition to this having more neurons in the association cortex, brain imaging studies comparing the brains of humans to other primates' show that humans have a greater number of fibers connecting the brain

regions involved in such human specialized functions as language, tool making, reasoning, and social cognition. Drama techniques strengthen the bond between thought and expression in language provides practice of supra-segmental and para-language, and offers good listening practice. If drama is considered as a teaching method in the sense of being part of the eclectic approach to language teaching, then it can become a main aid in the acquisition of communicative competence.

The element of Drama can be implemented in the process of imparting education may varies as per the needs. The common form of Drama implemented in the process of imparting education is a 'Role Play'. To help the students immerse in the scene and to understand its essence, use of costumes and sets is made. The activity not only helps them become better thinkers and storytellers in the future but it also develops in them the confidence to engage with others in healthy interactions. .Other than role play for utilizing drama, the teacher can also explore the following types of co-curricular activities to engage children and carving out a better learning experience:

- \*Mime Exercises [Using drama to act out different concepts]
- \*Create literary sketches
- \*Writing a story from their favourite drama's characters
- \*One-word story
- \*Break the fourth wall and help the characters (to facilitate critical thinking)



Language forms in mind first. So, the learning environment plays an effective role in language learning. The teacher and the learner play a crucial role in the class room to develop interpersonal skills. To build interpersonal skill developing atmosphere in the class room there should be educational environment to cultivate positive outlook, control emotions, acknowledge others' expertise, show a real interest in peer group activities, find good trait in every student, practice active listening, be assertive, practice empathy through various activities. The learners have their own set of cultural experience and teachers, in fact, share their own culture in the classroom. In this classroom interaction and transaction, a knowledge sharing session takes place, based on the distinct roles played by the teachers and learners. Such classroom atmospheres contribute in improving the language proficiency of the learner. The prime elements in learning a second language are the cultural and contextual backgrounds. While learning a second language, the influence of the culture of that language is inevitable. The other fact is that the learner of second language

is shaped by her/his first language culture. If there is no association made between the first language and second language, the learning will not be effective.

The students are not meant to become animals by education. If they are taught to acquire animal mind-setting and the wild behaviour pattern for social creation, the result will be horrible. As psychology is actually related to psychoanalysis in literature, in addition to the characters, the author and the writing process are also subjected to psychoanalytical approaches. Moreover, art or literature can not only reproduce life, but also shapes it. People may model their lives upon the patterns of fictional heroes and heroines. The young are more directly and powerfully influenced by their reading than the old. The reader is an active marker of meaning. It means that the reader interprets the author's work to get the message.

The inexperienced readers may take literature more naively as transcript rather than interpretation of life. The painful fact about the curriculum of English language and literature specially the present-day module of English enriching programs like Hello English and Sradha are mainly centered on animal related stories, games and even theatre techniques also are meant to recreate animal kingdom in students' mind. They are prone to learn how animals behave, or make sound or how children react if they are animals. The same mistake done by psychologists who try to understand the brain development of children through the study of animals' reaction to food and other things are meant for physical needs. In medias also, almost all cartoons are either super- human or animal.



The psychology of children and literature and are correlated as psychology deals with the study of observable patterns of human's behavior. Literature exhibits how human beings behave in dealing with their problems and environment. Both of them deal with human beings and their reactions, perceptions of the world, miseries, wishes, desires, fears, conflicts and reconciliations; individual and social concerns, by means of varied concepts, methods, and approaches. Human centered dramatic activities such as the problems faced by the society can be presented rather than dramas of animal kingdom. So the theme or the settings and the characters should deal entirely on how human think and act under different social contact. Dramatic techniques can do a lot here.

The prime elements in learning a second language are the cultural and contextual backgrounds. It is really difficult to design a quality language programme without the inputs of quality literature. It is also important that literature must be taught in a way in which a

student can get the opportunity to relate with the characters, feel about the situations and reflect on the context. Literature teaching can become meaningful only when the students get the space to express and discuss. Provision of expression is the utmost requirement of meaningful teaching of literature. It is extremely important for the teacher to create a non threatening environment for the students. The use of dramatic techniques is also recommended by the National Focus Group on Teaching of English (2006). The document suggests that the teachers can use 'action rhymes, simple plays, or skits, theatre as a genuine class activity' (pp 7). These activities will provide scope for students' engagement and involvement with the language.

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. The students may do drama activities on their own or with one or more fellow students; they may act either in controlled way in accordance with organizational and linguistic guidelines established by the teacher, or they may be left fairly free to work matters out

It's all in the mind! – Every teacher knows that one can have the best resources in the world, but if the learner is not in the right frame of mind to engage with the new language and use the opportunities before them, then they are unlikely to do so. There are all kinds of reasons why a learner may put obstacles in their own way or simply avoid engaging, but many of these reasons often lie in how learners view themselves, their competences, and their relationship to the language, classroom, peers, and the teacher. Moreover the psychology of characters is the study of psychological types and laws present within works of literature.



Thus, the psychology of readers will be the study of the effects of literature upon its readers, when it reaches the classroom it directly goes as the psychology of educating the students. What they heard, learned, seen and experienced has become the product of their mindset. If their mind is filled with animals and their behaviour, the result will be unimaginable.

### Drama and Communication

The primary goal of language teaching is communication – written as well as spoken. Communication strategy is one of the components of communicative competence. There are four different components that make up the construct of communicative competence. The first two components reflect the use of linguistic system itself and the other two define the functional aspect of communication. They refer to communication strategies as ‘strategic competence’. Grammatical competence refers to the knowledge of language code (this includes lexical items, rules of morphology, syntax, semantics etc, discourse competence pertains to the ability to combine sentences in discourse to form different types of cohesive texts (political speech, poetry etc, sociolinguistics competence means mastery of the sociocultural code of language use (including appropriate use of vocabulary, register, politeness and style in a given situation, strategic competence refers to the knowledge and understanding of the social context in which language is used. It is the ability to use verbal and non-verbal communication strategies. This knowledge enhances the efficiency of communication to overcome the difficulties of communication breakdown (use of mime, circumlocution, approximation, avoidance, self-monitoring and interaction etc.). It helps to develop the ability to manipulate language to meet the communicative goals. It is said that an efficient and eloquent speaker possesses strategic competence.

Art or literature can reproduce life and shape it. As Noam Chomsky said, “We will always learn more about human life and personality from novels than from scientific psychology” (Lodge, 2002: 10). If the student can’t find a single human character in the stories or learning activities, not only the human quality will be gone forever , but also the language acquisition will be wasted as they do not have any human touch. Literature and literary activities can be one of the significant means to obtain knowledge about the interpersonal skill concerning man and his life, his unique experiences and the idiosyncratic values. Drama techniques like discourses exhibit how human beings behave in dealing with their problems and environment because they deal with human beings and their reactions, perceptions of the world, miseries, wishes, desires, fears, conflicts and reconciliations- individual and social concerns.



Dramatic techniques encompass both literary devices and staging elements and, more often than not, are implemented by playwrights, directors, and stage managers. According to David Farmer of Drama Resource, a playwright, for example, uses dramatic techniques to enhance the emotional, aural, and visual experience of the audience — and to underline a work’s meaning. Moreover, knowing the dramatic style of a given work helps guide the on-stage performance.

Joseph Conrad in the preface of *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, comments on the significance of the writers and the written texts in human life: “My task which I am trying to achieve is by the power of written word to make you hear, to make you feel- it is before all, to make you see. That and no more, and that are everything.” Language is the device of communication and literature is a means for cultural and social value transmission and expression. English being a second language and Kerala curriculum framework introduces English from the first standard also. Kerala follows discourse-oriented language, not the traditional methods. Discourses like drama provide chances of interpersonal relationships and language generating processes. Not only writing and reading skills could be developed, but also listening and speaking skills would be developed through this technique. What they heard, learned, seen and experienced have become the products of their mindset and it can be expressed easily.

Drama gives educators the opportunity to teach their students in a way, which would create a love for learning. It provides valuable problem solving, social, and creative skills. Drama embraces the child’s imagination and emotions, which in many classrooms are shunned. One of the easiest ways to incorporate drama in the classroom is to have students act out the dialogue from their textbooks. Simply pair them up, have them choose roles, then work together to act out the dialogue, figuring out for themselves the “blocking,” or stage movements. Dramatic techniques can be a valuable teaching tool. It gets students up and moving around and interacting with each other. It’s particularly appealing to energetic learners but can be used successfully for all learners. It also contextualizes language, making real and three-dimensional that which is on the printed page. Students will improve the speaking and listening skills in performing scenes and also their writing skills through such activities as dialogue writing. Drama also teaches the “*pragmatics*” of language, how we appropriately use language to get something done, like make a request. Finally, drama promotes class bonding: in drama classes, there is usually a great deal of comradely.

Learning language in interactive way is important because it helps not only in developing language skills but also in developing aesthetic stance and creative thinking. If interactive way of teaching has such great potential, then it is extremely important to select such pedagogy practices which can do justice with



the essence of language learning. Fantasy and mystery play an important role in child development also. Interactive techniques will encourage students to think and imagine. In this ground the investigator gets motivate to develop a strategy based on sociological and linguistic elements for the effectiveness of drama techniques on interpersonal skills and achievement in English language among High school students.

It can be applied to individuals or groups and can provide sufficient opportunities for all participants in classroom irrespective of their intellect level. All-inclusiveness is possible in the classroom as the right to education can't be a drama, but a reality. Children can monitor their own behavior and performance by the interference of peer group. Thus, remedial measure and tutoring techniques can improve academic achievement. As these class room techniques found its footing, a more cohesive conceptualization of the field emerged. Dramatic technique is an effective tool that can be used to promote interaction and language skills in the ESL classroom as well as create a class bonding experience

#### Drama Technique Depends on Multi-focused Humanistic Approach

The effectiveness of language acquisition programs like drama technique depends on multi-focused humanistic approach. The emotional well-being of the students who are unique in each and everything should be maintained. It is because in language acquisition also, the human psyche is an aspect of life that receives much attention. When the teacher can record the consciousness of the mind of students and his /her mindful existence in the class can be a resource of inspiration for them. When they are prompted to express ideas through dramatic situations, their linguistic skill and interpersonal skills will be improved. They can monitor their own behaviour and performance by the interference of peer groups. The remedial measures and tutoring techniques of the teacher can improve their academic achievement.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

The important terms are defined below under different subheads:

#### **Effectiveness:**

Effectiveness is the capability of producing a desired result or the ability to produce desired output. "The extent to which an intervention when used under ordinary circumstances brings about a desired effect." ( Cooper 2008) In this study effectiveness means the degree to which the social, emotional and linguistic development of students using drama therapy technique.



## **Drama techniques:**

Drama techniques are all the devices' playwrights use to represent their ideas. (<http://slideplayer.com>). Dramatic techniques/dramatic conventions are techniques employed regularly in the drama so that the audience come to attach specific meaning to it. (bbc.co.uk)

Here in this study, dramatic techniques mean students' representation of characters and events on stage. He/ she must demonstrate the meaning and action of the play through words. For that they use the dramatic conventions like slow motion, soliloquy, adding narration, etc. Thus, dramatic techniques can be vocal dynamics, body language and mannerisms, use and awareness of space and improvisational techniques. The usual dramatic techniques are:

### **1) Act out the Dialogue**

One of the easiest ways to incorporate drama in the classroom is to have students act out the dialogue from their textbooks. Simply pair them up, have them choose roles, then work together to act out the dialogue, figuring out for themselves the “blocking,” or stage movements. This is effective for a beginning activity of incorporating drama in the classroom.

### **2) Perform Reader's Theater**

Hand out copies of a short or one-act play, have students choose roles, and then read the play from their seats without acting it out. However, do encourage them to read *dramatically*, modeling as necessary.

### **3) Act out the Story**

If students are reading a short story, have students act out the story or part of the story, working in groups and assigning roles and determining the blocking. This is particularly effective with “short-shorts”: brief, one-scene stories with limited characters.

### **4) Write the Dialogue for a Scene**

Watch a brief clip of a movie without the sound on. Have students write the dialogue for it and act it out.

## **More Advanced Activities of Dramatic Techniques**

Once students have had some experience with the basics of character, dialogue, and stage movement, they can move on to some more advanced dramatics, involving more of students' own



creativity and critical thinking skills such as act out and put words to an emotion, create a character, write a monologue, mime, Dubbing and Improvise **Interpersonal skills:**

The ability to communicate or interact well with other people. (Definition from Oxford Languages) Interpersonal skills are the behavior and tactics a person uses to interact with others effectively ( investopedia.com)

In this study interpersonal skills mean the verbal and nonverbal communication. Acting gives children opportunities to develop various communication skills, such as storytelling, direction giving, negotiation, emotional expression and the explanation of abstract concepts, interact and communicate with others. In other words, they are the behaviour traits and tactics a person uses to interact with others effectively.

### **Achievement:**

Something very good and difficult that you have succeeded in doing ( Cambridge dictionary). Something accomplished, especially by superior ability, special effort, great courage etc; a great or heroic deed ( dictionary.com)

'Achievement' here means the academic achievement or academic performance. It is the extent to which a student has attained his or her short term educational goal in English language.

### **Hypotheses**

The drama technique is effective for interpersonal skills and achievement in English among high school students.

There exists a significant difference between pre-test means score of the experimental group and control group in general and the components interpersonal skills and achievement in English.

There exists a significant difference between post test means score of the experimental group and control group in general and the components interpersonal skills and achievement in English.

There exists a significant difference between the gain score of the experimental group and control group in general and the components interpersonal skills and achievement in English.

There exists a significant difference between the adjusted post- test mean score of the experimental group and control group in general and the components interpersonal skills and achievement in English



## **Objectives**

\*To find out the effectiveness of drama techniques on interpersonal skills and achievement in English among high school students.

\*To find out the significant difference between the posttest means score of the experimental group and control group in general and in the component's interpersonal skills and achievement in English

\*To find out the significant difference between the gain score of the experimental group and control group in general and in the component's interpersonal skills and achievement in English

\*To find out the difference between the adjusted post-test mean score of the experimental and control group in general and in the component's interpersonal skills and achievement in English.

## **Method and Design adopted for the Study**

### **Experimental Design:**

In the present study, the investigator has adopted an experimental method. Pre-test - post nonequivalent group design is used. It may be a strenuous task for the investigator to arrange an equivalent group by matching the students because matched pairs may be seated in different divisions. Bringing them together for the purpose of the research is very difficult in the present scenario. Thus, the investigator selected a non-equivalent group to compensate for the lack of equivalence among the group. The investigator applied the statistical techniques of analysis of covariance.

### **Variables**

Independent Variable: Drama techniques

Dependent variables: Interpersonal skills and achievement in English

### **Population**

The students of High schools

### **Sample of the study**

In the present study, the investigator selected the sample by conducting interpersonal skills and achievement in English through linguistic assessment. After the evaluation of the answer sheets the



investigator selects 60 students as samples. Among them, 30 selected students comprised the experimental group.

### **Procedure of the study**

In the present study the investigator selects the sample by conducting interpersonal skills and linguistic tests. The test is to be conducted among 150 students from which 60 are to be selected. 30 students comprise the experiment group and the remaining 30 as the control group. Then the dramatic techniques package is to be implemented among the experimental group. After the experiment the investigator conducts a post test on interpersonal skills and achievement in English.

### **Tools and techniques adopted in the present study Tools:**

\*The questionnaire includes the sections covering the areas like Listening Skills, Verbal Communication, Working in Groups and Teams can be used.

\*Reports based on observation also can be used.

Technique: The combination of Stanislavski method and method acting technique.

### **Statistical Techniques**

\*Descriptive Statistics: Mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness

\*Inferential Statistics

\*Ancova

### **Scope of the study**

With globalization and technical innovations, there is an increased awareness of the importance of English in each and every field. Until the beginning of this century, English had been viewed as a language to gain knowledge in science and technology in higher education. In the present day it is not enough to acquire knowledge but it is essential to be able to use it efficiently in professional fields. The skills in communication through English have assumed greater importance. Teaching of communicative strategies has now become an integral part of all programme. Drama techniques are effective learning tool for this because they involve the student intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally. Language has been claimed as the 'cornerstone' of drama. When used in a language class, oral dramatic activities can take several forms which include: miming, simulation, role-plays, improvisation, and



dialogues. Language and drama have many factors in common. Both are influenced by context, they are of a socially constructed nature, and both require active participation. In fact, it is language that is present to the audience, and drama is valuable to language as it provides context where language is used, extended and protected.

Embedded in context, the language brought about is fluent, purposeful and generative. Dramatic techniques can improve interpersonal and achievement in English in terms of values, attitudes and understanding. Drama encourages adaptability, fluency, and communicative competence. It puts language into context, and by giving learners experience of success in real-life situations it should arm them with confidence for tackling the world outside the classroom. It empowers students to understand and influence their world through exploring role and situations and develops students' non-verbal and verbal, individual and group communication skills. Language learning through drama is effective and powerful.

The influence of stories or myths started rule over educational psychology. For example Oedipus complex (Electra complex also) has wide range of influence while dealing with the children. According to this complex, the kids have sexual feelings and based on that a daughter is attached to her father or son has the tendency to show attachment with his mother based on sexual desire. For Sigmund Freud even kid's tendency to suck the breast from

mother is the symptom of sexual desire! Based on the assumptions injected to the human blood by this myth oriented and animal related or hysteric child related incidents or stories started rule the entire psychology of education. Thus, the children are thrown out from their natural grace and instinct. They are facing everywhere psychological shock treatment and soon they start to become the slaves of those stories. It is because whatever they show, their environment includes their family or school may acknowledge it based on the psychological stories they have read from Freud or Carl Jung. Moreover, the danger behind the educational research which is based on a few incidents or a few people will be treated as common or natural phenomena. When the reputed psychologists declare anything, there will be wide acceptance and those theories may have gone a lot to destroy literature, culture and even education.

Major scope of the study is that it may change the attitude of language learning process. From childhood onwards students are prone to learn the mindset of animals for their brain development. Instead of becoming a mild animal in mind through the recent educational process, the study of developing human emotional and linguistic skills can help them to get better achievement in



education and yield respect from others. It can be used to create human behaviour pattern who display unfavorable behaviour.

Presently myths and literary characters in Freudian psychology rule the mind set of teachers while dealing with secondary school students as it is their adolescent stage. Because of that mental struggle of the students, there arises rivalry between teachers and students. Teachers are the slaves of myth related psychology and the students may become the victims of myths or fictitious characters. The attempt to implant all western ideas and principles may harm the cultural heritage of our education. Psychology based on human brain and mind has to be developed.

Interpersonal skills help one interact with others effectively wherever he is and in the larger world. Some people are born with such skills but everyone can improve them with practice. Expressing appreciation, resolving disputes, and listening well are all interpersonal skills worth practicing. Drama techniques provide opportunity for the students to acquire that throughout their life. Interpersonal skills are needed for leading our three subsystems in an optimal manner: emotions, thoughts, and awareness. To create a meaningful life, enhance productivity and nurture happiness, these three subsystems need to work in seamless cooperation together along with the physical body. So drama techniques can be used as a teaching and learning tool to help students make meaning of a number of skills they need to be a well-rounded individual. It further allows them to experience and explore the world around them through different characters and roles, further building on their relationship with others and things.

One of the best merits of drama and other such interactive techniques are that they are of a social nature. In dramatic activities, students work together, exchange ideas, and improvise collectively. Through talking, thoughts and emotions crystallize. "How can I know what I think until I hear what I say?"- a saying. When students get involved in a dramatic activity, and the spirit of collective work spreads in the classroom, they become encouraged to "find their own voices, lose their inhibitions, contribute and speak out in class." (Winston, 2012, p.5). Also, students learn and gain support from their peers for the benefit of the whole. This intimate and playful atmosphere encourages students to "articulate their thoughts and take risks." (Chang, 2012, p.7).

### **Limitation of the study**

Lack of time for the preparation of the instructional package and the experiment is limited to high school students only. Limited time is to be utilized for the preparation of the tools.



### Delimitation of the study

Selection of samples is from only one school having more than 150 students. Tool selected for the study is questionnaire and observation reports of the performance. Samples include all inclusiveness, i.e. differently able student also will be selected for performance.

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