The Views of the Pre-service Teachers about the Creative Drama as a Method Used in Primary Schools[i]

Ozge Aydin Sengul

Department of Elementary Science Education, Education Faculty, Dumlupinar University, Turkey

Abstract Purpose of the study is to investigate views of pre-service teachers about creative drama used as a method in elementary education. In line with this purpose, researchers examine the pre-service teachers' views about the importance of creative drama used as a method in course and kinds of activities that can be used in these courses. This study is consistent of qualitative research techniques. This research was used in form of written interview as a data collection tool. This form consists of 3 semi-structured, open ended question designs to obtain response regarding the research questions. 20 pre-service teachers from the primary education department of education faculty participated in the research in 2014-2015 education period. A content analysis was used for analyzing the data obtained from each form of major categories. By identifying the major categories, sub-categories were created within the major categories for further interpretation. Besides, frequency values relating to stated categories were included. At the results of data analysis, the subcategories/codes of "usability of creative drama in courses" and "development of course outlines in creative drama" themes were demonstrated with their examples. Regarding the themes of "developing course outlines in creative drama", the participants indicated four categories: "preparation of the outline" (f=14), "techniques used" (f=5), "concepts used" (f=11) and "materials used" (f=6). Regarding the themes of "developing course outlines in creative drama" the participants indicated four categories: "preparation of the outline" (f=14), "techniques used" (f=5), "concepts used" (f=11) and "materials used" (f=6).

Keywords Primary Education, Pre-service Teachers, Creative Drama, Drama Activities

1. Introduction

In parallel to widespread use of constructivism as basis for curriculum development and implementation, the significance of creative drama as a teaching method in courses has increased. In the constructivist learning approach, learning is considered to be the process of knowledge construction. This approach supports for learners to transfer their learning, instead of route memorization, reinterpretation of the existing knowledge and construction of new information [1]. Constructivist teaching activities require learners to actively construct and develop knowledge through making sense of their current knowledge and experience [2]. Creative drama activities in education are based on constructive approach and refer to active student participation and teachers' role as guides in the learning process.

San [3] argues that learning in creative drama is in a sense reconstruction and is the reevaluation of students' knowledge from a new perspective. It also refers to analysis of the concepts acquired and to giving new senses to these concepts. In this process, students review their experiences and it requires natural learning. On the other hand, in order for students to be active participants in the learning process, they should employ feelings, imagination, imaginative thinking skills and even dreams. Creative drama activities make it possible to use all these skills and values in the learning processes [3].

Creative drama activities support for learning by doing instead of memorizing and are not playing a theatre piece using memorized scenario, although all theoretical equipment and methods are used in the process. Creative drama techniques differ from traditional teaching methods in many aspects, one of which is that this technique allows for individuals to act freely and feel enthusiasm. When creative activities are sincerely carried out, children may recognize their potential. On the other hand, it also makes it possible to control emotions. Those students who take part in plays which involve such negative feelings such as anger, fear, jealousy may learn where and how these emotions should be correctly expressed [4].

Research provides various definitions of drama in general and creative drama in educational settings. Creative drama is a group study in which certain drama techniques including improvisation and role play are employed to make it possible for individuals to make sense and review their observations, experience and emotions about an event, a view or an abstract concept through restructuring of cognitive patterns [5]. Ustundag [6] argued that creative drama is a teaching method which improves cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills and that it focuses on description, explanation and control of experiences. Adiguzel [7] described creative drama as a way to animate a goal or a view

based experiences using improvisation and role play. Animation process is implemented under the guidance of an experienced leader/trainer and is based on the principle of now and here, spontaneity and general rules of plays.

Creative drama has been included in educational programs as either an optional or obligatory course focusing on personality development and aesthetic education and at the same time, it can be used as teaching-learning method. Method is a particular procedure for accomplishing or approaching something, especially a systematic or established one. It is a device used to achieve the aforementioned goal. Therefore, creative drama has a methodological function and it can be used to effectively achieve the goals of some courses [7].

In order to use creative drama as a teaching method, several conditions such as a student-oriented learning environment should be established. This method makes it possible to have long-lasting learning which is related to daily experience. It also makes it possible for students to think in a critical way, to express their feeling in a healthy way, to think freely and to improve their creativity and verbal/non-verbal communication skills. Creative drama as a teaching method has also other goals such as making it easy for learners to concentrate in a short way, improve their interest, empathy and communication skills and imaginative thinking skills, mobilize their feelings and views [7]. It also tries to make learning environment more pleasant. One of the major goals in using drama in educational context is to make people to understand others' feelings and perspectives to understand and be familiar with others and environment. In other words, it targets development of empathy in learners [4].

The answers to the questions such as what, why, when, how, where, who and whom are the steps to be followed in the process of creative drama. The method of creative drama includes three major steps as follows [7]:

- *Preparation-warming up activities:* At this step, body warms up through several activities such activities that are based on sports, dance and movement.
- *Animation*: At this step, a topic is shaped and detailed and it is showed to the other participants. In the process, improvisation and role play are employed and the process is guided by an experienced leader.
- *Evaluation-discussion*: Following animation, the outcomes of it are discussed. Participants discuss several points including the essence of the process, significance, and they share their feelings and views about them. Such discussions may be carried out in form of exchange of views or in form of role or in form of written communication such as letters, journals.

Justifications for the steps to be followed in constructing creative drama should be understandable, simple and consistent with the steps. On the other hand, activities should be interrelated and support one another. An educational plan for drama is consistent of topic, themes, gains, durations, groups, equipment, techniques and process. As stated earlier, the process is consistent of the steps of preparation-warming up activities, animation and evaluation-discussion [7].

Research suggests that creative drama method is efficient in student achievement [8-12], in students' positive attitudes towards courses [11,12] and in conceptual development [14,15, 16]. In addition, Ulubey and Toraman [17] reviewed the studies dealing with effects of creative drama on student achievement and concluded that creative drama explicitly improves academic achievement. Besides Ustundag [18] stated that drama is an important tool for educational experience which should be available to all students in elementary schools. From this point of view, it is thought that it is important for teacher candidates as teachers of the future to adopt drama implementations and to determine their views on this subject so that they can be associated with courses effectively when considering effectiveness of constructivist approach on education programs, compliance of creative drama with the constructivist approach, importance of its use in schools as a method and its contribution for the students. Sungurtekin, Onur Sezen, Bagceli Kahraman and Sadioglu [19] stated in their researches they made with teacher candidates that teacher candidates expressed that drama is necessary in primary schools. Basci and Gundogdu [20] evaluated views of teacher candidates related to drama course in terms of purposes of drama course and of expectations from the drama course. It is thought that this research makes contribution to area at dimension of emphasizing importance of creative drama being used in primary school courses and structuring of creative drama courses with evaluation of teacher candidates. Therefore, aim of this study is to uncover the views of the pre-service teachers about use of creative drama as a teaching method in several courses.

2. Methods

The study was designed as a case study which is part of qualitative research approach. In qualitative research, the data are collected using several techniques such as observation, interviews and document analysis and the ultimate goal is to reveal individuals' perceptions about events in natural environment [21].

The data of study were collected using structured written view form in which three major items and sub items which is developed by the author. The items were developed based on relevant literature. Determined questions were re-formed in parallel with views of two people expert on creative drama and primary education. Questions included in written view form are as follows:

(1) What do you think about usability of the creative drama in primary school courses?
   - In which lessons do you use it? Can you explain reasons of selecting these courses?
   - Do you think which skills of students creative drama activities develop in primary education?
   - What are reasons for you to use creative drama

activities in the lessons?

- • Do you think that you will have difficulty in using creative drama activities in your lessons?
- (2) What do you pay attention while preparing a course plan relating to creative drama?
- (3) Do you prepare a creative drama activity sample that you can use at primary education level?
  - • Course you selected
  - • Subject you selected
  - • Your purpose to prepare activity
  - • Skills you aim to develop
  - • Efficiency process

The participants of study were twenty pre-service basic education teachers who took the course of drama. The criterion in choosing the participants was that they should have taken the drama course, being informed about the significance of creative drama, its use in courses in basic education level. Eight of the participants were male and twelve were female. Instead of their names, codes such as T1,T2,T3… T20 were used to describe the participants.

The data collected were examined by using content analysis. In content analysis, the similar data are grouped under concepts and themes and are interpreted [21]. Therefore, in the study, written texts were read several times

and codes were identified. Finally, the data were grouped into these codes. The data were systematically described based on codes and themes and tables were developed according to them. In discussion of the findings, direct quotations were used. Besides, frequency values relating to stated categories were included by looking at views of the teacher candidates. Concerning the reliability and internal validity of the study, the data were read by the authors independently. Creswell [22] argues that, in qualitative studies, themes and codes should be reviewed by different researchers to make contribution on reliability and validity.

3. Results

In this section, data, which obtained in parallel with questions in the form prepared to determine views of the teacher candidates on use of creative drama in education and courses, are included. Based on codes and themes, the views of the participants were presented through tables. The views of the student teachers are grouped into two themes as follows: *"usability of creative drama in courses"* (structured written view form, question 1) and *"development of course outlines in creative drama"* (structured written view form, question 2 and 3).

Table 1.   Categories and sub-categories list of the usability of creative drama in courses

Theme	Categories	Sub-categories
the usability of creative drama in courses	necessary skills (f=20)	skill of expressing thoughts and feelings skill of respect towards others communication skills skill of working in a group empathy skills skill of gaining self esteem reasoning skills problem solving ability verbal-linguistic skills psychomotor skills creative ability thinking skills decision making skills commenting skills skill of having responsibility non-verbal communication skills
	advantages of the use of creative drama (f=18)	facilitating the acquirement of gains the comprehension of the topic at hand and long-lasting learning addressing more than one sense making the concepts concrete developing positive attitudes towards the course improving the students' motivation providing opportunities for learning by doing and reinforcing learning
	eligible courses for creative drama (f=16)	Physical Training Life Science Turkish Language Music Art Math Social Studies Sciences
	limitations of the use of creative drama (f=13)	crowded classes problems related to classroom management potential misconceptions constructing course outline inconsistency between tools and learning environment

Of these themes "usability of creative drama in courses" has four categories: "necessary skills" (f=20), "advantages use of creative drama" (f=18), "eligible courses for creative drama" (f=16) and limitations of the use of creative drama" (f=13). It is observed, when examining distribution of views of the student candidates on the theme, that 20 people mentioned about developed skills, 18 people mentioned the advantages of the creative drama, 16 people mentioned the courses in which creative drama is used, and 13 people mentioned the limitations of the creative drama. Regarding the first category, the participants stated that creative drama can be used in many courses including life science, Turkish language, music, art, mathematics, social studies, science and physical training. They also reported that use of creative drama in courses may improve students' cognitive skills, affective skills and psychomotor skills. The advantages of use of creative drama in courses stated by the participants are as follows: facilitating the acquirement of gains, improving the student motivation, the comprehension of the topic at hand, long-lasting learning, addressing more than one sense, and making the concepts concrete, developing positive attitudes towards the course, providing opportunities for learning by doing, and reinforcing learning. However, they also stated that there are some limitations on use of creative drama in courses due to crowded classes, problems related to classroom management, potential misconceptions, and inconsistency between tools and learning environment. The following quotations are examples from views of the participants about the categories given above.

"At first I thought that using creative drama would be hard for me. I think that if students learn their responsibilities I may do joyful activities" (T2).

"Given that creative drama concretizes the concepts,

students may acquire these concepts easily and in a short period of time" (T5).

"For me, if it is used properly it may be employed in almost all courses. If it is employed in difficult courses such as mathematics, science and social studies the student attitude towards these courses will be improved" (T8).

"I may use creative drama in all courses. For instance it can be used in Turkish language course to improve the students' speaking and interpretation skills, in mathematics to improve the comprehension of quantitative concepts, in life sciences to make comparisons with social life and in science to make connections with natural life" (T11).

"I think that creative drama improves the students psychomotor, interpretation and team work skills" (T13).

"There may occur problems related to classroom management in the crowded class during the use of creative drama activities" (T1).

"In creative drama, students learn through experience and students are given an opportunity to cooperate with their peers and to improve their self-confidence so that their learning is long-lasting. I will frequently use it in my courses" (T9).

"I may have difficulty in creating group cohesion, interaction and cooperation while using creative drama. There may also be problems in terms of making team work effective" (T7).

"I may use creative drama mostly in the courses of life sciences and social studies. In these courses creative drama activities are used to improve the comprehension of the topics and to facilitate learning" (T12).

Table 2. Categories and sub-categories list of the development of course outlines in creative drama

Theme	Categories	Sub-categories	
Development of course outlines in creative drama	preparation of the outline (f=14)	courses gains topics goals target skills materials to be used	including connections with daily life time management individual differences level of students learning environment readiness
	concepts used (f=11)	teaching of words etiquette colors proverbs punctuation our five sense organs	the hazards of alcohol and cigarettes tales and stories four math operations animals natural disasters vitamins sentence constituents
	materials used (f=6)	stories songs pictures tales costumes	
	techniques used (f=5)	multiple-intelligence theory animation improvisation discussions cooperative based learning role-playing playing	

Regarding the themes of "development of course outlines in creative drama", the participants indicated four categories: "preparation of the outline" (f=14), "concepts used" (f=11), "materials used" (f=6) and "techniques used"(f=5). It is observed, when examining distribution of views of the student candidates on the theme, that 14 people mentioned preparation of course plan of creative drama, 11 people mentioned concepts used in plan, 6 people mentioned used materials and 5 people mentioned used techniques. They stated that, in the category of the preparation of the outline courses, gains, topics, goals, target skills and materials to be used should be carefully identified and that several points including connections with daily life, time management, individual differences, level of students, learning environment and readiness should be taken into consideration during preparation. The proposed teaching techniques for course outlines by the participants include multiple-intelligence theory, cooperation-based learning, role-playing, animations, discussions and improvisation. They also stated that these courses may address the teaching of words, etiquette, colors, proverbs, punctuation, our five sense organs, the hazards of alcohol and cigarette, four math operations, animals, natural disasters, vitamins and sentence constituents. The teaching materials which were regarded as proper for these courses are stories, pictures, songs, and costumes. The views of the participants for these categories are as follows:

"While developing course outlines with creative drama, the significant points to be taken into consideration are gains, skills and daily use of them" (T1).

"While developing course outlines with creative drama, the goal, methods to be used, its conformity with the topic and the gains should be taken into consideration" (T15).

"Given that creative drama addresses various intelligence domains of children, we may relate creative drama activities with multiple-intelligence theory" (T19).

"While teaching colors, cards with name of colors may be distributed to students and students may be asked to sing songs about them" (T5).

"In creative drama activities, games may be used and each student may be given a role in games. Therefore, role-playing technique is used in the activity." (T7).

"For instance, in teaching of sensory organs in the course of science and technology, students may be asked to show their eyes, ear, nose, tongue and to develop improvisations to tell the functions of these senses. After this, their work may be discussed in class" (T8).

"For example, I may ask one student to read the story of rabbit and tortoise. Students may be grouped with pairs and the roles of rabbit and tortoise may be assigned to them. Finally, groups may be asked to animate these roles" (T12).

"Songs can be used as an introduction to the activity in

topics such as nests of animals, how they feed and how they sound. Then students may be asked to imitate sounds of these animals" (T14).

"For teaching vitamins, cards with the features of each vitamin may be distributed to students. Then they may be asked to develop and sing songs about them." (T20).

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

The aim of the current study is to determine views of student teachers about the use of creative drama in different courses. The views of the student teachers are grouped into three themes as follows: "*usability of creative drama in courses*" and "*development of course outlines in creative drama*".

Of these themes "usability of creative drama in courses" have four categories: "eligible courses for creative drama", "necessary skills", "advantages of the use of creative drama" and limitations of the use of creative drama". Regarding the first category, the participants stated that creative drama can be used in many courses including life science, Turkish language, music, art, mathematics, social studies, science and physical training. Ormanci and Sasmaz Oren [23] concluded that pre-service teachers planned to use drama in courses such as life science, Turkish language, social sciences as well as science and technology and mathematics. Previous studies indicate that use of drama method leads to positive student gains in some courses such as life science [24], social studies [25-29], science [30-34], mathematics [35-39] and music lesson [40,41].

They also reported that the use of creative drama in courses may improve students' cognitive skills, affective skills and psychomotor skills. Ormanci and Sasmaz Oren [23] found that pre-service teachers considered the use of drama in basic education as significant for improving the student gains such as empathy, creative and critical thinking, socialization, communication, entrepreneurship, self-expression and sense of self-confidence. Paylan [42] concluded that drama activities in primary school have positive effects on students' self-confidence. Akoguz [43] argued that creative drama led to significant changes in communicative skills. Taskin-Can [12] indicated that creative drama-based instruction has positive effects on fifth graders' scientific process skills.

Jensen, Rechis and Luna [44] were created "Learning through Drama" program which focused each week on one concept or skill that was part of the one grade's curriculum. The children, the classroom teacher, and a faculty member then explored the concept or skill through movement and drama. The children had similar experiences with many other activities such as translating physical movement, songs, and games into more complex learning at this research. At the end of this research, teachers regarded the program as a tremendous success, both as an effective learning opportunity and as a community building experience.

The advantages of use of creative drama in courses were stated by the participants as follows: facilitating the acquirement of gains, improving motivation of students, comprehension of the topic at hand and long-lasting learning, addressing more than one sense, making the concepts concrete, developing positive attitudes towards the course, providing opportunities for learning by doing, and reinforcing learning. Research suggests that use of drama-based instructional activities may improve student attitudes towards the courses such as life science and science [13]. Ormanci and Sasmaz Oren [23] stated that use of drama may increase students' interest and attitudes towards courses and that student achievement also increases on the ground that drama activities produce long-lasting learning which is based on learning through doing. Aldag [45] also argued that creative drama improves students' motivation and their skills of speaking.

However, they also stated that there are some limitations in regard to use of creative drama in courses due to crowded classes, problems related to classroom management, potential misconceptions, and inconsistency between tools and learning environment. Yildiz [46] concluded that use of creative drama in mathematics courses as a teaching method may lead to such problems as time-related difficulties, inconsistency between learning environment and drama activities and insufficient number of gains achieved through these activities. Ormanci and Sasmaz Oren [23] mentioned the potential problems related to the use of drama activities based on the views of pre-service teachers as follows: unwillingness of students or teachers to involve in these activities due to insufficient information about creative drama method, insufficient teaching tools and materials, problems related to discipline and classroom-management, problems related to physical conditions of classroom, and problems related to time constraints that emerges during group formation process and crowded classes.

Regarding the themes of *"development of course outlines in creative drama"*, the participants indicated four categories: *"preparation of the outline"*, *"techniques used"*, *"concepts used"* and *"materials used"*. They stated that, in the category of the preparation of the outline courses, gains, topics, goals, target skills and materials to be used should be carefully identified and that several points including connections with daily life, time management, individual differences, level of students, learning environment and readiness should be taken into consideration during the preparation. The teaching techniques to be used for course outlines, proposed by the participants, include multiple-intelligence theory, cooperation-based learning, role-playing, animations, discussions and improvisation.

They also stated that these courses may address teaching of words, etiquette, colors, proverbs, punctuation, our five sense organs, the hazards of alcohol and cigarette, four math operations, animals, natural disasters, vitamins and sentence constituents. Adiguzel [7] argued that there are numerous techniques, which may be employed during creative drama activities, including improvisation, role playing, role changes, dramatization, interviews-conversations-questioning, hot seat, awareness corridor, dull image, gossip ring, writing in role, inner voice, meetings, pantomime, role cards, private property-unfinished material, rituals-ceremonies, phone calls, the actual moment-accuracy memories, sculptures, role corridor. On the other hand, findings of the present study show that the participants did not provide such a wide range of drama techniques. Instead, the teaching materials which were regarded by participants as proper for these activities are stories, pictures, songs, and costumes. Ustundag [6] listed the more frequently employed tools in creative drama activities as follows: tape, audio tape or pictures, as well as other tools which transmit music, photographs, posters, texts and visual tools such as display board, cardboard, art paper, puppets, crayons, paint, real artefacts such as toys, books, magazines, newspapers, posters, brochures, news cut from newspapers and magazines, writings, printed materials such as an announcement or photographs, slides or overhead projector. Given that there are many materials which may be used in creative drama activities, it can be argued that the participants of the present study did not provide enough examples for those materials.

Well-planned outlines for the courses where drama activities can be used are very important for having positive gains. The findings of the current study in regard to the views of the participants about the development of these course outlines indicate that they are aware of the significance of this process, but they seem not to have enough information about techniques and materials which may be employed in creative drama activities.

The findings of the study showed that the pre-service teachers considered use of creative drama in educational context from two different perspectives as use of these activities in courses and development of course outlines for them. They emphasized the contributions on use of creative drama in different courses at the levels of primary school and secondary school. However, their views about which techniques and materials can be used in drama activities were not comprehensive enough. Therefore, drama courses in teacher training programs should emphasize these dimensions. For instance, student teachers may be asked to develop course outlines which involve drama activities.

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