

Multiple Intelligence and Creative Drama Practices with Disadvantaged Groups

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Abstract— This study investigates the effectiveness of multiple intelligence activities and creative drama sessions in a disadvantaged school from the perspectives of teachers and students.

The data were collected in 2013-2014 academic year by using questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The participants of this study were 80 3rd grade students, 30 teachers from a public school and 40 parents in Ankara, Turkey. The students were assigned control and experiment groups. In the control groups teachers use traditional instructional methods, while in experiment group teacher used multiple intelligence and creative drama activities. At the end of the semester the students recall levels of the lesson objectives were compared.

Findings revealed that the majority of classroom teachers have negative perceptions about the use of the multiple intelligence activities and creative drama sessions in the lessons. According to the teachers crowded classrooms, having many mainstream students, the necessities to complete curricula, lack of educational materials, economic deficiencies, and lack of appropriate place for the activities hinder the use of multiple intelligence and creative drama activities in education. On the other hand, it was seen that students' recall levels of the lesson objectives in the control groups were significantly lower than the experiment group. That is, utilization of multiple intelligence and creative drama activities has an impact on student achievement.

Keywords— Disadvantaged groups, teacher perceptions, instructional methods, multiple intelligence, creative drama.

I. Introduction

Generally the term “disadvantaged” refers both groups and individuals. The people, who are deprived of basic economic, cultural, and social resources of society, are called “disadvantaged groups” [1]. Mayer (2003) called the people with physical or mental handicaps, who experience social discrimination, and/or economic deficiencies, people have limited access to natural resources and economic

opportunities, groups that have a risk of poverty and social discrimination, ethnic minorities, immigrants, homeless people, addicted people, lonely elders, and orphans as disadvantaged groups [2].

Although there is no agreement on the definition of disadvantages groups, the schools with limited educational opportunities, crowded classrooms, many mainstreaming students, low socio economic level students, and frequent student exchange are stated as disadvantaged schools in this study.

In order to live in harmony with a society the individuals need to aware of and accept existing rules, limitations, rights, freedoms and differences. Moreover, the individuals should behave in accordance with these social rules.

Economic growth and social development depends on success of schools. Decreasing school failure is vital for the development of both society and individuals. Since well-educated societies are more democratic and their economies are sustainable, nobody can be left aside because of their own individual and socio-economic conditions. Disadvantages such as gender, ethnic origin or family background are not impediments to attaining educational potential. Thus, all students should be given equal chance to reach high level skills, not considering their own personal and socio-economic conditions [3].

In this respect during this research the teachers and the school administrator started a project that founded by Ministry of Education. The teachers tried new teaching methods in order to increase the success level of their students. The following question was guided the data collection and data analysis process in this study: Whether multiple intelligence activities and creative drama sessions have an effect on the students' recall levels of desired objectives of primary school curricula?

II. Literature Review

A. Creative Drama and Education

Creative drama is an instructional technique that carries the arts into students' regular learning, concentrate mainly on to classroom management, tap into students' inherent enthusiasm, and use the arts to discover and assess student learning [4]. When a teacher use creative drama sessions during the lesson s/he expects the students to act, imagine, and reflect on individual experiences [5]. That is, drama session require intellectually, emotionally, physically, verbally, and socially full participation of individuals [6]. For the duration of the creative drama activities the students feel relaxed and freely express themselves.

Although creative drama sessions principally based on plays, there are several activities that help children to share their experiences and perceptions. Role play, puppetry, drawing, animation, improvisation, exhibition, dance, and act are some activities of creative drama sessions that inspire creativity of individuals. Throughout creative drama activities students have a chance to scrutinize reality and remove from their worries [6]. Teaching academic content by way of drama is genuinely filling for educators and their students [4].

Drama activities not only help to transfer a body of knowledge, but they also help children to understand the world in which they live. In addition, the activities both engage and motivate students to learn, particularly in the early years [7]. Therefore, it is crucial to put into practice creative drama activities especially at the primary education level.

B. Implementing Multiple Intelligence Theory in the Classroom

Getting high test scores alone do not an indicator of the intelligence of individuals. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences helps educators to consider intelligence and IQ in a different way. As a result when teachers adopt this theory they will change their instructional methods [8].

Team teaching, student projects, interdisciplinary approaches, authentic assessment, and apprenticeship are ways that allows the teachers to use all or several of the intelligences of their students in their lessons [9].

When teachers aware of the individual differences of their students, they can change their teaching approaches in order or provide equal opportunities for the students. Therefore, the implementation of multiple intelligence theory in the classroom enhances the quality of education, and increase the success of students in disadvantaged schools.

III. Method

A. Research Design

Both action research and experimental research methodologies were used in this study in order to collect detailed information about the real situation of the classroom. The teachers in a public school recognize some instructional deficiencies and decided to improve the quality of education in their school. Therefore, the teachers and school administrator generate a research team and begin to collect data. Through the teacher meeting they diagnosed that their school has some disadvantages such as crowded classrooms, special need students, immigration, teacher circulation, and economic, cultural, and social deficiencies. It was concluded that lack of social activities with the drawbacks of the school cause disappointment, failure, and unproductive education. As a result the aim of this study is to ensure that the students like and enjoy the learning environment by engaging in activities and working collaboratively. Consequently, the primary question of this research study was "whether multiple intelligence activities and creative drama sessions help to increase the quality of education in this disadvantaged school?"

With the purpose of answering the research question the researchers developed two questionnaires one is for teacher and the other is for parents. Researchers also planned several actions (i.e. multiple intelligence activities and creative drama sessions) for the experiment group as interventions, and implement. The productions of the multiple intelligence activities and creative drama sessions such as poems, letters, and drawings were gathered and analyzed. Then, the outputs of the control and experiment group were compared. Finally, the action research process and the results were reported.

B. The Participants

The participants of this study were 80 3rd grade students, 30 teachers from a public school and 40 parents in Ankara, Turkey.

The teachers who participated in this research were given training on creative drama. In addition, the teacher of experiment group is a certified creative drama instructor.

General characteristics of the students are as follows: 80 percent of the students come from families with two or more children. There are 5 students have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in control group. Besides, one of the students is hearing impaired, and one is mainstreamed student (with intellectual disabilities). The teachers' circulation is so often at the school. That is, 24 students have experienced the teacher change twice in three years. 22 students have 3 or more teacher change in three years. It is also often the student transfers from schools. In the 2013-14 academic year, 9 new students came to the classroom and 10 students went to another school.

The participant parents' characteristics are as follows: 65 percent of the parents have an education at the primary level. While none of the mothers complete higher education, only one percent of the fathers completed it.

C. Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected in 2013-2014 academic year. In order to provide long-lasting learning and to enhance students' creativity, during the study, one of the teacher of experiment group used art activities such as art, music, physical education, improvisation, and dance in the core courses. The teacher of control group use traditional instructional methods.

Data were collected through document analysis, and questionnaire. In order to determine the general characteristics of school the teacher committee meetings were reviewed and analyzed. The teacher questionnaire consists of an 8 item, and the parent questionnaire consists of a 6 item five point Likert type questions. The students both control and experiment group were asked to answer an open-ended question two times; first, at the beginning of the academic year, before the intervention (pre-test), and second, at the end of the semester, after the intervention (post-test). The question assesses the students' recall levels of the lesson objectives.

The teachers were assigned control group and experiment group. All teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire. The teachers of the control group used traditional instructional methods, while in experiment group the teacher used multiple intelligence activities and creative drama sessions.

In order to summarize collected data were descriptive statistics were used. At the end of the semester pre-test and post-test results of control and experiment groups were compared.

IV. Results

This aim of this study was to examine the usefulness of multiple intelligence activities and creative drama sessions in a disadvantaged school from the perspectives of teachers and students. The teachers used some activities that were all linked to the planned curriculum; they were also encouraging students to work together effectively, to discuss feelings and ideas with each other.

The findings of the research indicated that the students in the experiment group recall more objectives than the control group students. It was seen that there is no connection between the success level and engagement level of students. That is, both students with high-grades and with low-grades engaged in the activities, shared their ideas, joined group activities and remember the lesson objectives. There are some differences between the control and experiment group students' level of recalls. To be precise, although the experiment group students remember 92 percent of lesson objectives, the control group students remember only 12 percent.

According to the findings research, the teacher of control group stated that there are some problems that hinder the implementation of the creative drama and multi-intelligence activities in the classroom such as lack of space of the school, lack of materials, crowded classroom, and economic difficulties. On the other hand, the teacher of experiment group claimed that although there are lots of disadvantages

students in her classroom, such as with hearing impairment and with ADHD, the motivation and attention of students increased as well as success level.

V. Discussion and Conclusion

This study revealed the effects of creative drama and multiple intelligence activities on the student achievement. Like multiple intelligence, creative drama is sometimes underestimated as a vital learning medium. Multiple intelligence activities and creative drama sessions are not only engage students but they are also vital to motivate them. For that reason, teachers should be supported in using creative drama in their lessons.

Perhaps the most important strength of this study is that it helps teachers, school administrators, and parents to better understand the learners in their individual differences. Recognizing individual differences allow teachers to find different ways of teaching, and provide students to learn in many ways, and help students to direct their own learning.

In order to increase living conditions in a society, equal education opportunities should be given all children. In this respect, school administrators and teachers in their disadvantaged school under review carried out some projects, in order to increase the quality of education. Some of the teachers revised their instructional methods, so as to improve the achievement level of their students. Educators come to an agreement that utilizing different kind of instructional methods might increase student motivation and success.

The findings of this research will change the perspectives of teachers about effectiveness of different instructional methods on student achievement. It is expected that the findings of this paper would find out data that are not currently available to education stakeholders and policy makers.

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