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Reality or Fantasy? Dramatization in Teaching and Learning

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REALITY OR FANTASY?
Dramatization in Teaching and Learning

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TEACHING AS PERFORMANCE ART?

No professor should be blind to the intelligence and knowledge that goes into an effective teaching performance . . . To develop a speaking voice that has range, force, and direction; a presence that uses the dynamics of physical movement to lend conviction to inner strengths of mind and imagination; and the dramatic abilities that can fashion scenes, build climaxes, manage stage props . . . I have never encountered any evidence that a dull and stodgy presentation carries with it an extra measure of virtue . . . The teacher’s performance remains essential to most teaching and learning.

(Eble, 1988, p. 12-13)
GLOQUEX?
OR THE CASE OF COOTER’S DISSERTATION DEFENSE

- Elaboration
  - Creating a story, role, or problem.
- Putting yourself in the shoes of a child.
- Sense of disequilibrium.
- Constructing understanding of assimilation/accommodation.
- From abstract to experiential.

How to use drama on/for/with learners in teacher preparation or university level settings.

Teachers must be able to slip into a range of roles or characters.
- Devil’s Advocate
- Inspirational
- Literary
- Historical
- Role Play

Involve the audience as a fellow player; together hand in hand. (V. Spolin)
**Pop Quiz!**

- **Stress:** Dramatic Tension
- Visceral
- Multi-sensory
- Integrates affective, psychomotor, cognitive modalities
- Links with learners’ experiences
- Motivate learners to process and share
**PERSPECTIVE TRANSFORMATION**

- Putting yourself in other people’s shoes allows you to understand their point of view, so that the experience helps construct understanding and transforms perspective.

- No longer an abstract concept, but a personally constructed experience from which to scaffold future learning.
CONSTRUCTING A SCENARIO
FINDING A VOICE

- Using own emotions/situations/experiences
- “Emotional Truth”
- Reading aloud (slower than you think)
- The Dramatic Pause
- Notations (script development)
- Practice, practice, practice

“It told it in a level voice, in a colorless and monotonous way, without emphasizing any word in it and succeeded in making it dreary and stupid to the limit. Then I paused and looked very much pleased with myself and as if I expected a burst of laughter.”

Mark Twain in Neider, 1959, pp. 144
Brain Based Teaching: The Neuron Snap

1. **Pre-Test:** How confident are you to describe brain based learning including the process of myelination on cognitive development?
2. **Teach anatomy of neuron, neurotransmitters, and process of myelination traditional lecture.**
3. **Add diagram. Point/trace important points:** Nucleus, dendrites, axon, synapse.
4. **Question for mastery:** Fist to Five.
5. **Circle up for the Neuron Snap**
6. **Fist to Five**
“Using drama and movement facilitates the brain to learn and to retain information since it is dynamically involved in exploring things, inquiring others and analyzing information.”

MICROTACHING

Plan a 10 minute lesson, aligned to state standards and using the lesson plan template, complete with learning objectives, procedures, and assessment. This lesson will be videotaped. Tell us who we will be during the lesson (i.e. 5 year olds in Kindergarten or 14 year olds in Algebra 1) and who you are (Ms. Sunderland—Kindergarten teacher).
PROCESS DRAMA & LIFE

“Complex dramatic encounter . . . Bounded in space and time, a world that depends on the consensus of all those present for its existence. Process drama proceeds without a script, its outcome unpredictable, it lacks a separate audience, and the experience is impossible to replicate exactly.”

(O’Neil, C., 1995, p.xiii)
REAL LIFE DRAMA AND TEACHER PREPARATION

- Act of teaching and interacting with students who have real life dramas.

- Intrapersonal and interpersonal growth.

- Process drama “rewrite, rework, reconsider, and otherwise reflect upon more ideal resolutions to these dramatic conflicts that the undesirable ones which sometimes result.” (Griggs, p. 33)
My student teachers and I sometimes did our own pretending after school. We reenacted the altercations that had taken place and tried to imagine multiple ways of responding. Which comments of ours supported the play and extended the conversation? Which of our interventions dampened the spirit and spoiled the drama? What could we learn about fantasy play that had been unknown to us before?

MICROTEACHING & THE BIG PRESENTATION (OR THE LESSON IN SELF-EFFICACY)

- Role playing “practice teaching” & students pretend to be young children
  - Tying shoes
- Designed to let students “experience” self-efficacy.
- Four areas of efficacy information: physiological effects.
  - Are you setting us up? Are you playing us?

“Always throw them off balance.” – V. Spolin
Learning is Doing

- Learning . . . Occurs when there is a qualitative change in a person’s understanding of experience in a two-fold way: first through apprehension—an innate or tacit grasping; and second through comprehension, which is a cognitive understanding . . . [I]t is grounded by transformation, identification, and impersonation.

(Courtney, 1988, p.27 as cited in T. Griggs, 2001)
OTHER IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Paley’s story dictation and dramatization (ECE):
  - Reader Theater
- Polites’ Berlin Wall and Suffragette March
- Tower Building exercise for seminars and leadership workshops
- Improvisation of moral, value, or cultural issues (Bullying: Dateline News Special)
- Process drama of case study: act and re-enact
- Empathy building and cooperative learning communities through feeling reflection exercises
- Role play practice for peer mediation
- Student/Teacher Role Reversal
REFLECTIONS AND UNDERSTANDING

- **Teaching**
  - Reflection and content

- **Learning**
  - Content, perspective, and understanding

- **Context**
  - Influential classroom experiences

"we can identify and provide more meaningful, worthwhile, and socially productive educational experiences directly for teachers and indirectly for their learners in our schools."

(Griggs, 2001, p. 34)
Course evaluations:

- The most effective things [the professor did] . . . The Test Punishment scheme!!!
- The Pop Quiz! VERY EFFECTIVE
- When you did the Glox presentation and made us take the pop quiz, it really made me think of how the students feel when teachers do stuff like that.
- Dr. Bolton used interesting teaching methods.
- Helpful simulated experiences (grox [sic] box, bobo)
- Using the Gloquex Box was a wonderful idea. I also liked how you gave the “pop quiz” for not reading the chapter.
- She modeled what she was trying to teach. This helped me a lot because not only did I hear it I also saw it and experienced it.
- Micro-teaching was an awesome experience!
- Bringing it to life. Now I can “see” by remembering, and “use” the concepts by realizing the students’ perspective.
Effects from Professors

Feedback:

- What is this Gloquex thing?? I asked my students for an example on how they could help children construct knowledge by supporting accommodation . . . And they all looked at each other and cried, “GLOQUEX!”
- What are you doing in class today? Can I come?
- Ideas?? Do you have any ideas how I can use drama in methods?
- Invited to teach workshops for faculty at two universities, and the NC Center for the Advancement of Teaching
- You’ll never guess what I saw an intern do today. During our reflection of her 1st grade reading lesson [silent “e”], she said, “I guess it’s just a gloquex to them.” GREAT Strategies . . .
- Interns seem to have a different perspective on assessment. The “catch ‘em” is being replaced by “what do I need to reteach?”
YOU’RE HAUNTING ME . . .

- A former student from 1996:
  - I was a bit disappointed in my students’ work ethic this week, and a bit run down and overworked myself. I thought, “I’ll just give them a pop quiz to drive home the point of the importance of homework.” I swear, I heard your voice in my head that said you would haunt us if we ever used assessment as punishment. It’s true. You’re haunting me.
  - Barbara W.
    3rd grade teacher
REFERENCES


