

Performing arts impact on childrens social development education essay



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Social and emotional development according to Cohen and other experts as (cited in Social Emotional Development domain Child Development , 2009) includes the ability of a child to express and manage his emotions as well as his ability to build positive relationships with others. They shared the same view as Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence on intrapersonal and interpersonal processes and presented a strong relationship between knowing of one's feelings and the feelings of others. Gardner believed that if both these abilities are well developed in young children, it will strengthen their sense of self and the relationship with others. (cited in Dowling , 2005 p. 61). On the other hand, Nowicki & Duke, 1989 (cited in Dowling, 2005) supported Gardner , as they found that children who are sensitive to others and aware of their own feelings appeared to achieve better in school than those with similar intellectual ability but less emotional ability.

Social Competence

Social cognition refers to " self - reflection or thinking about one's self ", Berk (2000 p. 440). As stated in Jean Piaget's theory, social development takes place through interaction between the child and the environment and that the developing child constructs his own knowledge. On the other hand, Vygotsky viewed socialisation as two fold - firstly, cognition as related to social engagement and secondly language as a tool for communication within the social context . (cited in Berk, 2000) . As such , social skills play a vital role in helping children cope with the many complexities and demands of the world .

Definition of social skills

Social skills can be defined as the “ ability to implement developmentally appropriate social behaviours that enhanced ones interpersonal relationship without causing harm to anyone”

(Schneider, 1993 p. 19).

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According to Jalongo (2006) , social competence is defined as a set of abilities , behaviours and responses directed towards other individuals that serve to foster positive human relationships. Katz and McClellan (1997 , p. 9) suggested that components of social skills include social understanding and interaction skills. It was stated that children equipped with a basic knowledge of language, norm and customs of others are more capable of engaging skilfully in their peers activities. They further discussed that communicating , discussing, negotiating, turn- taking, cooperating , articulating preferences, accepting compromises and empathizing with others constitute part of social interaction.

Prosocial behaviours consists of three distinct categories and they are sharing , helping and cooperation according to Marion , 2003 (cited in Preusse , 2008). It was also stated that development of cognitive and emotional competencies is essential for a child’s development of prosocial behaviour. On the other hand, Vygotsky, in Berk & Winsler, 1995 (cited in Preusse , 2008) viewed socialisation as two fold, cognition in relation to social engagement and language as a tool for social communication. He

further emphasized the importance of sociodramatic play by which cognitive development occurs in children through social interaction.

Definitions for sharing and turn – taking

Turn -taking

Turn - taking is part of prosocial skills that children need to develop. Katz and McClellan (1997, p. 46) commented that a large part of social interaction involves turn - taking. It was noted that turn - taking involves being able to identify cues in the partner's behaviour indicating that the other is about to bring his or her turn to an end , discerning what moment will be best to bring forth one's turn.

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Sharing

Sharing is a common type of occurrence in preschool contexts and it is vital for children to learn this skill so as to interact positively with others.

According to Adams & Baronberg (2005, p. 68) sharing means " two people using the same thing at the same time".

Definition of Performing Arts

According to the Collin's dictionary, arts such as dance, music and drama that are performed live in front of an audience is referred to as performing arts. Performing as mentioned by Wright (2003) includes the physical or bodily competence and interpretation providing a foundation for children ' s learning using a range of movement techniques. Performing will involve the

participant being observed by caregivers, peers and teachers in the classroom context.

Theories of Musical Development and how does it stimulate children's development

According to Jerome Bruner, (cited in Isenberg & Jalongo , 1997 p. 129) children proceed through three cognitive stages : 1) enactive , 2) iconic and 3) symbolic and each of these stages suggests developmentally appropriate music experience for children. Bruner's enactive stage relates to Piaget's (1952) sensorimotor stage and Erikson ' s (1950) trust - building stage where physical activity and music are intertwined . Thus musical activities stimulate children's senses , cognitive development and also builds social relationships.

Role of Music and Movement in the development of social emotional skills

Music , according to Gardner , 1973 (cited in Isenberg & Jalongo, 1997 p. 129) contributes to the child's physical, intellectual, emotional, social , cultural and aesthetics development. As stated by McAllester , 1991 (cited in Isenberg & Jalongo , 1997 p. 131) music encourages participation, sharing and cooperation. Through musical activities such as singing and games , “ children learn to subordinate their individual wishes to the goals of the group which is the essence of cooperation.”

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To enhance children's social skills, music is an effective program for children to adapt to social skills in a fun and enjoyable way. Leonhard, 1983 (cited in

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Lau , n. d.) regards music as a social art that has the capacity to unite social groups and enable each individual to feel as part of the group. While Spodek, Saracho and Lee , 1983 (cited in Lau , n. d.) further emphasized that music has the ability to draw the shy and withdrawn child to come closer with their peers and supports social relationships.

Catron & Allen , (2003 p. 213) further supported that young children must learn to cooperate with peers and act in a socially responsible manner so that they would develop a cooperation spirit through participating in a variety of small group activities.

Music is part of the curriculum and it is indeed a great way to expose children through musical activities that include songs , musical games and rhythmic activities as the teaching tool to enhance children's social skills.. Singing simple songs enable children to absorb social values better than when they are being taught . If songs touch on values and principles, children will begin to incorporate them into their social development.

Music activities also allows children to sing, dance and use certain gestures for certain parts of the song and these also allows them to release social and emotional problems. Children are constantly experiencing new emotions and situations as they grow and each new experience contributes to their social development. As stated by (Forsyth , 1977 ; Madsen & Alley, 1979 ; Sim, 1986 ; Standley & Hughes, 1996). Researchers have documented the effective use of music to enhance children's social skills especially when interventions and instructions involve the use of participatory activities.

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Definition of Dance

Dance , according to Schiller & Meiners (cited in Wright , 2003 p. 91) is a " means of expressing inner feelings, experiences and cultural identity and recognised as a vital and dynamic performing art with movement as the medium of expression and the body as its instrument ." On the other hand, Russell - Bowie (2009 p. 189) defines dance as a " means of passing knowledge , skills and attitudes from one person to another from one generation to the next . It is a celebration of life , a ritual and a way of expressing grief , happiness , surprise , sorrow, joy and achievement. It is a powerful vehicle for non - verbal communication, self - expression and creativity ."

Theories of Dance and how does it stimulate children's development

Rudolph Laban (1963) , the father of movement education (cited in Isbell & Raines, 2007 p. 226) recommended that through movement children developed body awareness , space awareness and understood the different variations of movement. . He created a system of analysing movement through the elements of " time , space , weight and flow" which educators use as benchmarks to enhance both motor skill development and creativity when children move. Also relating to physical movement and the development of creative thinking skills is Howard Gardner, (1983) theories of multiple intelligences as he describes bodily kinaesthetic intelligence as the " ability to unite the body and mind in physical performance, beginning with control of automatic and voluntary movement , kinaesthetic intelligence

progresses to using the body in highly differentiated and skilled way.”(cited in Isbell & Raines , 2007 p. 226)

Role of Dance in the development of social emotional skills

Murray, 1975 (cited in Wright , 1991 p. 116) stated that dance is a medium for expressing the total self. In creative dance , “ subjective feelings about the world are transformed into objective form” and physical , intellectual , social and emotional responses are integrated during movement activities and hence dance is a valuable and natural way for children to express their ideas and feelings .

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Cecil - Fizdale , 1982 (cited in Wright , 1991 p. 116) mentioned that movement and dance offers opportunities for children to identify and solve problems , enhances their ability to respond, engage in social interaction and appreciation of others which is a vital part of children’s early learning and socialisation. Cornett (1999) further suggests eleven good reasons for teachers to use dance in the classroom one of which is “ Dance can increase sensitivity, respect and cooperation” as children problem solve through movement in a group , they are able to realise how each one has a different way of using the situation as well as to use numerous ways of expressing thoughts and feelings . They become aware that working in groups is better than working alone and these will enable them to be motivated to learn.

Definition of Drama

Drama as defined by Ewing & Simons, 2004 (cited in Russell - Bowie , 2009 p. 225) as ' using the body in time and space to explore issues, questions, perspectives or ideas.' While Russell-Bowie , (2009 p. 226) verifies that drama as " a way of making meaning of the world around us and allows children to live in another person's world and to explore that person's way of thinking, feeling, acting , expressing and being. Effective drama is an integration of thought , action and emotion."

Theories of Drama and how does it stimulate children's development

Cognitive development theorists acknowledge that children learn through play and experiences they gain within their environment as Piaget , 1963 (cited in Isbell & Raines , 2007 p. 245)) explained that " gesture and mime are language in motion" and that this is the social language of children which is the connection between movement and language that creative drama provides . Drama provides children with many opportunities for meaningful communication and social interaction. These interactions is what Vygotsky (1978) mentioned was necessary for the " internalization of new knowledge." (cited in Isbell & Raines , 2007 p. 245)

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In addition , Bandura , 1977 (cited in Freeman , Sullivan & Fulton , 2003 p. 133) stresses that processes of drama is " consistent with the theory of behavioural change on the basis of self - efficacy and that one benefit of

drama is the building of personal confidence gained through work in a non-threatening environment.”

Role of Drama in the development of social emotional skills

Pinciotti (1993 p. 27) mentioned that through creative drama ,” children move from personal experience into a shared group image and that this group nature of creative drama immense participants in a cognitive, social and emotional experience.” Cornett (1999) further supports the need for teachers to integrate creative drama in the classroom as she states firstly, “ drama is part of real life and prepares children to deal with life problems” while participating in the drama children are able to look at problems from an alternative point of view , respect diverse thinking and realise that there are many solutions for any one problem. Secondly, ” drama can enhance children’s psychological well - being allows children to express feelings and emotions.” Personal development takes place as children control their body and words as they express ideas and feelings during the drama activities. Positive self - image and self -confidence also emerge through the problem solving situations. Children also become aware that people feel a range of emotions and that feelings can be dealt in a positive way. Through drama, children develop tolerance and acceptance. Thirdly, “” Drama builds cooperation and develops social skills” as children work in groups to plan and engage in drama, they develop the ability to give and take , cooperation and listening is enhanced and allows children to find appropriate roles and develop social awareness .

Social skills can be developed in drama as children working in a group

overcome difficulties through problem solving . They experience working
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with peers as they negotiate plans to stage the drama. During these interactions , children begin to work cooperatively and “ these collaborative efforts are effective in fostering a community of learners in which there is mutual respect for diverse ideas and approaches”. Isbell & Raines (2007 p. 246)

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Teacher’s role in enhancing social skills development

According to Raikes, 1996 (cited in Preusse, 2010)secure attachment bonds between the child and caregiver creates a sense of trust that supports the child for exploration of the world and builds a strong base for future development . As such , it is rather important for teachers to build strong relationship with children under their care. On the other hand , Berk, 2002 (cited in Preusse , 2010) mentioned that preschool children become independent, cooperative as they gain their language skills , self awareness and to think in another person’s point of view. All these will enable children to have better social interaction with their peers . Thus, it is the teachers’ role to facilitate and provide the opportunities and activities to enhance children’s social skills.

Teacher – parent partnership is another important factor in enhancing children’s social skills as stated by Webster- Stratton (2006 p. 6) ” family involvement has positive effects on children’s academic achievement, social competence and school quality.”

On the other hand , Brand & Fernie , 1983 (cited in Isenberg & Jalongo 1997 , p. 145) stated that
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“ teachers fulfil their musical roles and responsibilities when they function as motivators , planners, co - participants and observers”. As such, it is the teacher’s attitude and belief that plays an important role in providing these opportunities for children to enhance their social emotional skills. Further, teachers also need to be trained in order to carry out the various arts activities. They must have the knowledge to observe children and to identify and plan according to children’s needs in order to enhance their social emotional development.

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Conclusion

Prosocial behaviour is part and parcel of happening in an individual’s life context. Building a strong foundation in social skills during the early childhood years is crucial to a child’s social behaviour in later life. As the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2005) Education For All Monitoring report indicates that in order for educators to achieve and create a cohesive, peaceful and prosperous society , our education systems need to instil a sense of community , appreciation for cultural diversity , confidence and self - esteem in our children. The value of arts and culture in quality education was also mentioned and it was stated that all efforts are being made worldwide to incorporate arts and culture in the education systems. Thus, children’s participation in performing arts is one of the many strategies that can be employed to enhance their social emotional skills . However further observations and study is needed to conclude the impact of these arts activities on the social and emotional development of preschoolers.

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