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To cite this article:

Lähdesmäki, S. (2023). Exploring the contribution of the Steps of Progress (SPM) and Arc of Drama (ADM) models in developing student teachers' adoption of drama education. *International Journal on Social and Education Sciences (IJonSES)*, 5(3), 475-492. <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijonSES.521>

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Exploring the Contribution of the Steps of Progress (SPM) and Arc of Drama (ADM) Models in Developing Student Teachers' Adoption of Drama Education

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Article Info

Article History

Received:

20 December 2022

Accepted:

11 April 2023

Keywords

Steps of Progress Model (SPM)

Arc of Drama Model (ADM)

Drama education

Abstract

Teacher training should promote the professional competence of student teachers to plan drama education. This study focuses on how designing a drama course based on the Steps of Progress (SPM) and Arc of Drama (ADM) models can promote the adoption of drama education as described by student teachers. Research data was collected from the synthesis of student teachers (N=39) who participated in the 2019 drama education course in adult teacher education. The research method is qualitative content analysis. The research question is, how does SPM- and ADM-based drama education contribute to student teachers' understanding of drama education practices? The results suggest that drama teaching based on the SPM and ADM design principles promotes the adoption of drama teaching by student teachers and that the models also develop an understanding of drama teaching design. The results support the view that SPM and ADM work in designing drama education by enabling group bonding, cohesion, and the adoption of the drama methods themselves. Furthermore, the role of the teacher as a designer and sensitive facilitator of drama education is essential because of the importance of maintaining the power of interaction and presence.

Introduction

Drama education as a social and interactive art form can strengthen the cultural and community experience of participants. Well-designed drama education can be used to deeply integrate learning objectives and develop emotional and cultural participation skills. According to *Bowell and Heap (2005)*, drama education is cultural participation, providing the participants with ways to understand themselves and connect with others. In this study, drama education is as goal-oriented drama activities in a variety of educational, cultural, and social contexts (*Viirret, 2020*). *Heikkinen (2017)* defines it as verbal, embodied, visual, and spatial storytelling, supplemented by *Wohlwend's (2013, p. 3)* observation that bodies, during improvisational moments, serve as the actions of texts. Drama immersed in roles and diverse perspectives aims to increase understanding and knowledge of individuals, societies, and communities by drawing on the domains of emotional, cognitive, and social experience (*Viirret, 2020*). Drama encourages serious playfulness as a social and aesthetic activity (*Østern, 2011*) and provides a platform to explore situational phenomena through imagination and personal emotional involvement (*Heikkinen*

2002, 2017).

In Finland, a master's in education is of high quality and aims to provide long-term professional preparation for a career as a teacher (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016). As Finnish teachers have considerable professional autonomy, this also implies a high level of responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating high-quality teaching (Välijärvi, 2017). Professional growth requires first-hand experiences of drama education and drama methods, as well as critical reflection on these experiences and methods. According to Vanhalakka-Ruoho and Kauppila (2012), growth towards autonomy challenges us to understand how people experience growth interdependently with each other, which requires understanding the many ways we are connected to each other. The student teacher's understanding of drama education and the conditions for its design and implementation is thus built through a dialogue between experiential and theoretical knowledge. The Integrative Pedagogy (IP) model developed by Tynjälä et al. (2014) provides a theoretical rationale for this perspective. According to the IP model, professional identity develops simultaneously with theory, practical experience, self-regulation, and socio-cultural dialogue.

Drama education is an active and value-based form of education. According to Østern's (1994, 1997, 2001) perspective, it stems from a positive view of the human being, which emphasizes the importance of active learning and meaningful knowledge acquisition for individuals. This is based on Dewey's pragmatic pedagogy (Dewey, 1912). Additionally, Østern (2011) views drama education as an aesthetic and interactive process. This study investigates drama education using the holistic drama paradigm inspired by Heikkinen (2017). According to Sinivuori and Sinivuori (2007), the learning process is influenced by the participants' free will to act and by opportunities within the learning situation for drama to emerge and take shape.

For teacher education, developing the skills of student teachers to design drama-based learning environments aligned with curriculum objectives is crucial for student growth. Recent research by Van Berkel and Bosman (2023) demonstrates the positive impact of creative drama on social and cognitive skill development. Similarly, Yildirim's (2022) research findings highlight the positive effects of the drama method on various domains, such as achievement, attitude, social skills, psychomotor skills, cognitive skills, affective domains, learning environments, and course delivery.

Østern (2001) stressed that student teachers need specific instruction in designing drama education lessons to equip them with the skills necessary to create classroom spaces that foster holistic, meaningful artistic experiences. Østern (2001) sees that this has a positive impact on the atmosphere in which students form groups, communicate, and collaborate. This study presents the SPM and ADM designed by the author of the study for the design of drama education. The research question is:

How does SPM- and ADM-based drama education contribute to student teachers' understanding of drama education practices?

The research data was collected from the synthesis of student teachers who participated in a drama education course in Finnish teacher education program during the spring of 2019, and the method of analysis is qualitative content analysis. The aim of the study is to contribute to the understanding of the implementation and design of

meaningful drama education and thereby to improve teacher education practice.

Drama Education and Imagination

Early in the history of Finnish education, Hollo (1918) recognized the importance of emotions and imagination for learning and igniting the will. Hollo (1918) discussed imagination and how to nurture it in his doctoral thesis, and his work has influenced the domestic foundations of academia's growing recognition of the importance of drama education. He emphasized that imagination occurs at all stages of emotional development and clarifies that there is a strong link between imagination and emotional life. According to Hollo (1918), emotion is the necessary basis of imagination, its cause, and its explanation. Imagination is the production of new combinations; it is a mental activity based on emotion. Productivity, spontaneity, and intrinsic value, as Hollo defines them, derive solely from emotional life. Hollo further explains that imagination gives content to repressed emotions, which in turn influence imagination, even to the extent that the development of emotions occurs in parallel with the development of imagination. Thus, at its strongest, spontaneity is inspiration. This state of inspiration and spontaneity is achieved in drama education by arousing emotions. These insights are still relevant today and can be seen as a noteworthy basis for Finnish drama education. Drama enables the enrichment of emotional and thinking abilities and imagination. As Olkkonen (2013) states, the value of artistic learning is that knowledge, emotional experiences, participation and doing are equal factors in learning.

Drama empowers individuals to act in two worlds simultaneously: the fictional world created together, and the real world as participants in the drama (Østern, 2003). This is called aesthetic doubling (Szatkowski, 1985, p.144), where each member of the group is involved in social play and shares the here-and-now-energy. Szatkowski (1985) defines aesthetic doubling as the participants' simultaneous experience of being in the fiction and having an experience of the fiction, a sense of their role and a sense of being the one who creates the character. This requires the full presence of individuals, concentration on the situation and awareness of the group present. Aesthetic doubling, together with sharing the energy of the here and now, are powerful experiences that foster group bonding and solidarity. The conventions of drama, imagination and shared reality create a parallel reality in which imaginary worlds and events can be created. The participants' previous experiences and improvisation are also essential and can be defined as the core of the drama process. As McLaughlin (2021) states, improvisation comes before plans and is a creative combination of cultural conventions (Lehtonen et al., 2016). Spolin (1963, p. 4) has crystallized this by saying that improvisation allows us to respond immediately and intuitively in the moment, freeing us from restrictive frameworks and stifling knowledge. Spontaneity opens a moment of personal freedom, in which we encounter the existing reality where we can explore and act. Improvisation is where imagination is born and embodied. Improvisation includes concepts such as imagination, creativity, spontaneity, and pretense. Research by Lehtonen et al. (2020) showed that drama is a powerful tool for creating experiences, because while participants improvise based on their previous experiences, drama can also influence participants' behavior and attitudes afterwards. Reflection after a drama course is therefore essential to the process. According to Viirret's (2020) study, intersubjectivity is a key phenomenon in drama education, as it explains the common experience generated by participants in verbal, nonverbal, and bodily dialogue. According to Heikkinen (2002), in Creative Drama, based on Reform Pedagogy, play is based on action and dialogue, and often has no plot. In

drama education, the teacher's role is to help the child discover dramatic character through play, building mutual trust and allowing the child to take ownership of their learning. (Österlind, 2010; Toivanen et al., 2009; Lehtonen et al., 2016). The student teacher should therefore have the knowledge and skills to design a goal-oriented drama education.

Design of the Drama Education

An important generic skill for student teachers is designing teaching and learning (Lähdesmäki, 2021). The design of the drama course considered in this study is based on Phenomenon-Driven Learning (PDL) perspectives, which emphasize holistic learning, the learning process, goal-orientation, active participation, and authenticity (Lähdesmäki, 2021). The phenomenon is not new, as Heathcote used drama as early as the 1970s as a tool to promote holistic learning (Heston, 2015; Heathcote & Herbert, 1985). Østern (2001) defined drama as inclusive, transformative, and dialogical, emphasizing artistic learning with the goal of meaningful learning. Østern also emphasized that when the conventions of drama are used in the teaching of other subjects, its art form must be preserved. PDL shares some of the characteristics of drama education, such as collaborative learning; personal experience; an authentic learning environment (Herrington et al., 2010; Toivanen et al., 2013); different perspectives; and the learner's own free will, motivation, and personal interest (Bowell & Heap, 2005; Lonka, 2018; Silander, 2015). When designing drama education, special attention must be paid to the role and presence of the teacher as a facilitator of learning (Olkkonen, 2013). More than 40 years ago, Heathcote and Bolton (1994) created the Mantle of Expert method, in which students take on the role of expert in a drama situation based on real-life roles and contexts that are important to the students (Heathcote & Herbert, 1985). The drama teacher cooperates with the students, and the role reversal between them is an important part of the effectiveness of the drama. Students can explore different roles through fictional experiences, but they do so with an awareness of themselves and their role in the drama (Dinham & Chalk, 2018).

PDL values students as experts and owners of their learning, not just recipients of pre-packaged information (Lonka, 2018; Silander, 2015). Lähdesmäki (2021) argues that teachers should design a framework for learning that can stimulate students' interests and learning needs while considering the aspirations of the group for whom PDL is being developed. The starting point for design is authentic learning environments that are appropriate to the learning task and objective (Herrington & al., 2010; Toivanen et al., 2013). Heathcote (Wagner, 1976, p. 110) puts it this way: instead of planning what the group will do, the teacher directs the group to act and observe what the group has done.

Drama education is a natural way to create a story and a dramatic framework for PDL. Process drama is particularly well suited as a method for implementing PDL. Lehtonen et al. (2020) suggest that process drama can be designed to work particularly well in addressing values, conflicting perspectives, and emotional and interactional skills. Process drama is a participatory drama education method that is built around a framework story, but the dramatic story is created together with the participants (Bowell & Heap, 2005a). Drama education can stimulate emotions and increase imagination, as Hollo (1918) noted, and in a shared drama situation, students can develop a genuine interest in the subject being taught. As Lerkkanen (2018) points out, autonomy, motivation,

interest, activity, and student participation are important factors in promoting learning. Dewey (1938) stressed that active agency and real-life situations create interest in the phenomenon being learned and stimulate students' own learning needs. Thus, knowledge of both facts and phenomena develops and expands through experience. Toivanen (2007) agrees, stating that the aim of drama education is to help learners understand themselves and the world better.

SPM and ADM

A drama course based on the SPM guides participants to understand the structure of safe and supportive drama education based on their own experiences. Each three-to-four-hour session is designed according to the ADM. The SPM provides a perspective for long-term planning of drama education, while the ADM guides the design of a specific drama lesson (Lähdesmäki, 2016). Toivanen et al. (2015) identified the teacher and classroom atmosphere as the most important factors for successful drama education. The teacher creates an accepting, safe and positive atmosphere (Toivanen, 2007; Talvio & Klemola, 2017), where students dare to participate by revealing their true selves (Rasku-Puttonen et al., 2010). The SPM guides the planning of a learning entity using the drama method, while the ADM model guides the planning of individual lessons in more detail (see Figure 1).

SPM is a long-term unit plan defined as a four-step process. It is based on the idea that drama education promotes self-expression, creativity, and a safe learning environment for all. It is a step-by-step process, which the teacher implements in a sensitive way, progressing according to the needs of the group. In this research context, drama education consists of 21 hours, and the SPM process is taught in 4- to 5-hour periods. The first step focuses on grouping, becoming acquainted with one another and building a sense of security as part of a large group. There is no pressure to perform, and participants are helped to forget the tension of expression. The second step makes more use of physical exercises to encourage self-expression and collaborative group work. This encourages participants to come together as a group to express themselves creatively and discover the power of imagination. In the third step, participants work in small groups and make use of a variety of drama exercises that incorporate elements of improvisation. For example, through games and play, where the participants' engagement with fictional and real reality is emphasized over imagination and creativity (Spolin, 1963, p. 55). An example is the exercise *Creating a Common Space* (cf. Spolin, 1963, p. 104), in which participants take turns creating a common space by entering it, delimiting it with their gestures and actions, creating space through improvisation, and using drama techniques. Each in turn reacts to the space that is created together. The groups work in parallel, and the atmosphere is supportive and encouraging. The fourth step emphasizes pair and individual exercises, which include performing as a pair for other pairs, experimenting with a variety of improvisational techniques either alone or with another person, and the opportunity to perform and improvise for the whole group alone.

The teacher carefully selects the drama exercises for each step to support the needs and objectives of the group and the individual. For example, a concentration exercise in which participants stand in a contact circle with their eyes closed and list the numbers 1-10 without predetermined turns promotes presence. Additional possibilities for step one could involve moving around the space as a whole group in different ways, such as different landscapes or weather conditions, encountering others in different emotional states, or in other easily recognizable roles.

Group exercises such as imaginary fencing, tapping imaginary balls of different sizes, a follow the movement group dance or an imaginary tennis game are suitable for the first step. In step two, participants will be introduced to techniques such as statue and still image methods for capturing emotions and experiences and will use imaginative exercises and storytelling together. Storytelling exercises involve moving through space together while experiencing the events of the story as each person takes a turn to continue the story about a collectively named character. Finally, the story is retold, performed in groups, and/or drawn as key scenes.

In steps three and four, the focus is on working with small groups and pairs at the same time. For example, using a process drama, such as in the process of creating a fairy tale character, groups are guided through a story framework to plan an expedition, develop a name and slogan, inventory the necessary equipment, and then invite an unprecedented fairy tale character into the world. The Fairytale character is created through the group's collective imagination and multi-method artwork. Guided by a frame story, the group illustrates, performs, and names the fairy tale character. The group creates an identity card and a story about the character. The main goal is not to develop a performance but to design a collective process together.

The ADM guides student teachers in planning drama lessons by providing a practical illustration of the structure necessary for meaningful and creative learning (Toivanen et al., 2013). As Owens and Barber (2010) have pointed out, there is no single way to design drama lessons; the best approach is one that suits both the teacher and the group. The ADM focuses the intensity of the activity and the participants' attention on the energy of the here and now, creating a need and interest in learning. The design steps are as follows:

- **Discovery of cohesion and presence:** This involves bringing participants into the here and now through concentration exercises that bind them together and guide them towards the goal of the drama. The drama contract creates a common understanding of the working methods (Heikkinen, 2010), which means that all ideas are accepted, and participation is voluntary.
- **Theme preparation:** This involves boosting energy through physical activity such as group exercises like improvisational dance, raising energy levels and promoting spontaneous immersion in the drama.
- **Action through intensive drama work:** This involves working on the theme in an activity-based way using drama methods appropriate to the theme, allowing for creative imagination and aesthetic doubling. The teacher must be sensitive and engaged in the classroom situation (Toivanen et al., 2015; Lehtonen et al., 2016) and act as a facilitator who activates and inspires the students (Lehtonen et al., 2016).
- **Conclusion by descending from drama work:** The co-created world of drama is ended in a meaningful way, and the shared experience is unpacked through discussion, drawing, or other creative activities. In simple terms, the narrative structure of a drama lesson is as follows: discovery, theme, action, conclusion.

To illustrate, the design of this exercise involves several steps. A. Firstly, participants are guided to explore the space using all their senses. The teacher then leads them into a frame story, during which they experience the growth of a seed into a beautiful flower while music plays in the background. Participants describe their image of the plant using words, and then engage in a contact circle exercise (a common way to start a joint exercise in drama teaching is to form a circle where everyone can face each other and make eye contact) where the focus is on movement. One person initiates a movement that is then imitated by all others. Afterwards, participants write

a compliment about themselves on a post-it note, attach it to their forehead, and move freely around the room, warmly praising the subject of the post-it note. B. The next step involves getting the heart rate up through a variety of movements, such as walking through concrete, sea, snowy slopes, headwinds, and heavy grass, leading to a playing field where participants engage in an imaginary sword fight to prepare for their adventure. C. From this atmosphere, the teacher initiates the process of creating a fairy tale character, which involves unravelling the individual's preferred experiences, feelings, hopes, and expressions of gratitude. D. Finally, the exercise is concluded by having participants answer questions of their choice, which are read out loud with background music playing in the background.

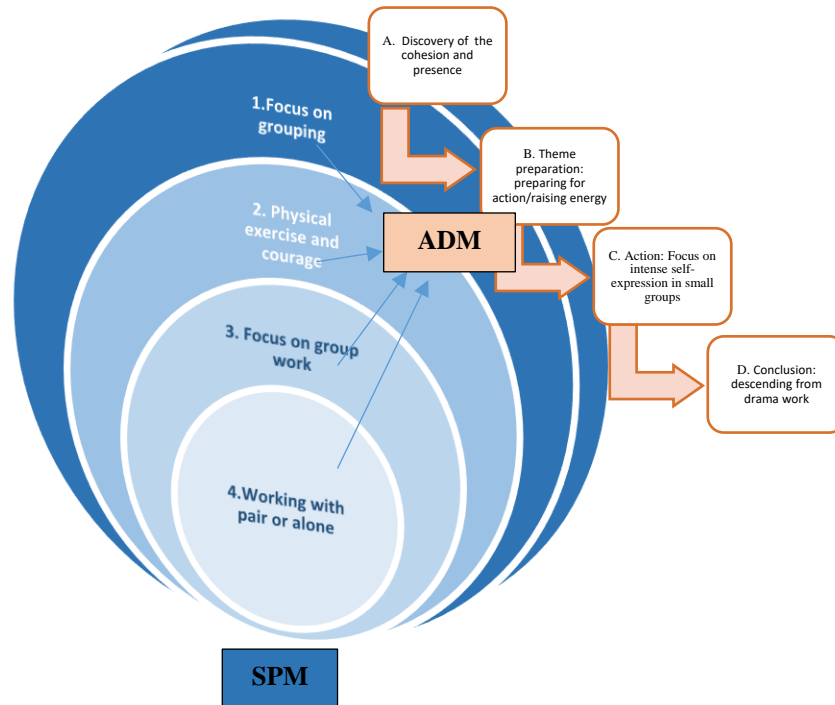


Figure 1. SPM Framing the Design of Drama Education and ADM the Lesson Plans

Method

This study examines how does SPM- and ADM-based drama education contribute to student teachers' understanding of drama education practices. The drama education course has been implemented at a Finnish university in adult education for classroom teachers. It has been implemented at the beginning of the studies as part of Finnish language and literature pedagogy studies. It aims to deepen students' own expressive skills, to promote their ability to use the method in their work as teachers, and to foster students' teamwork and self-awareness (Luokanopettajan aikuiskoulutuksen maisteriohjelman, 2020-2023).

The author of this study is the designer of the models, the implementer of the training and the analyzer of the data. The development of the models is based on the broader research on teaching and guidance methods (Lähdesmäki 2016; 2021). By studying the phenomenon, the researcher sought to understand students' experiences (Dilthey, 1979) of models in drama education teaching (Patton, 2002). The data were collected during a drama course in

early spring 2019, analyzed in summer 2019 and again in winter 2021-22. The data were generated through action, as is typical of the hermeneutic tradition (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). The research material was limited to one group of students, but the group was a heterogeneous group of adult students, most of whom had little or no previous experience of drama education studies. Thus, their progress was a good reflection of the relevance of the teaching. The temporal distance from the data is appropriate and supports the researcher's impartiality towards the data, but it is important to maintain objectivity in the analysis of the data. In terms of generalizability (Patton, 2002), the results of a study can be used to justify a particular way of delivering teaching using models. Thus, the fact that the researcher knew the context of the study reinforces reliability.

The data consists of personal written synthesis of participants (N=39). Writing was guided by open-ended questions which asked students to reflect upon personal experiences, the growth process, and the importance of the course structure and design process. The learning task of the course was to design and implement a group drama workshop for third-grade students. To support the design, an ADM was presented, and the student teachers were guided to use and adapt the exercises they had learned in the drama course to suit the workshop. The student teachers were made aware that the material would be used anonymously for research purposes. The first set of data consisted of synthesis written in e-book format using the Book Creator application, approximately 12 pages per synthesis or 444 pages of data.

The method of analysis is qualitative content analysis, which is a textual analysis method that seeks to create categories from textual data by coding it into subcategories (Mayring, 2014). By conducting a content analysis, the researcher does not take a position on the author's choices but seeks to classify and find common factors. This research technique aims to establish reproducible and valid connections between the text and the context in which it is used (Krippendorff, 2014). The basic data was produced by synthesizing descriptions of personal learning experiences, SPM and ADM, and professional learning experiences related to drama. At this stage, the data were pseudonymized, the descriptions collected from the synthesis data were numbered sequentially and the quotes further extracted from the descriptions were coded with the same number in the research data. The analysis of the primary data focused on the classification of the data, guided by the research question.

Table 1 shows an example of the content analysis process. First, guided by the research question, the data were extracted for categories of similar content and the first ten categories were created (examples in Table 1). These were coded as a type of category describing common characteristics. And further, a second category was formed from these. At this stage, the data was divided into the following subcategories: professional understanding, drama education structure, drama lesson planning, personal growth, teacher role. At this stage, the data was summarized and delimited under these subcategories for further analysis (contained 16 pages). Table 1 shows a sample of the category professional understanding. From these, the final two main categories and their subcategories were formed. Only a few categories are typified in the example.

Finally, the SPM- and ADM- related perceptions formed the main categories. The analysis resulted in two main categories and three subcategories (see Figure 2). A verbal summarized description of the phenomenon under study was created to structure the fragmented data into clear information (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). In presenting

the results, direct quotations from the data are used to support the findings presented (Patton, 2002). The numbers after the quotes refer to the codes used to anonymize the responses. At the same time, the numbers after the quotes also illustrate the presence of multiple respondents in the analysis.

Table 1. Example of Content Analysis and Categorization

first category	the citations from the data	coding quotations for typification	second category	final main or subcategory
received tools for teaching	"Through our own new creative experience, we adults are also inspired to develop our own skills and encouraged to make expressive education a natural part of our own teaching" 4 "The drama education classes have given me a lot of practical drama exercises and the courage and enthusiasm to start using drama in my teaching. I have realized that drama can be used in a variety of ways in teaching." 15	First-hand experience contributed to the understanding of drama education and the use of drama as part of the teaching	professional understanding of drama as a method	main SPM supports the adaptation and structure of drama education
SPM	"Here you note the importance of the order of progress first had to be able to get used to the situation, exercises and new people and only then was ready to try." (24) "The first step is to work as part of a big group. Being in a big group and throwing myself into it relaxed my mind." 19	SPM made the structure of drama education concrete and facilitated participation		sub The Experience of Grouping and the Development of Self-dare

Results of the Implementation of Drama Education

For the research question, how does SPM and ADM-based drama education contribute to student teachers' understanding of drama education practices, the analysis identified two main categories and three subcategories,

which are presented in Figure 2. The overall experience was that student teachers found the structure of drama lessons very instructive and a significant personal learning experience. All summaries mentioned that the drama course provided at least tools and exercises for implementing their own teaching.

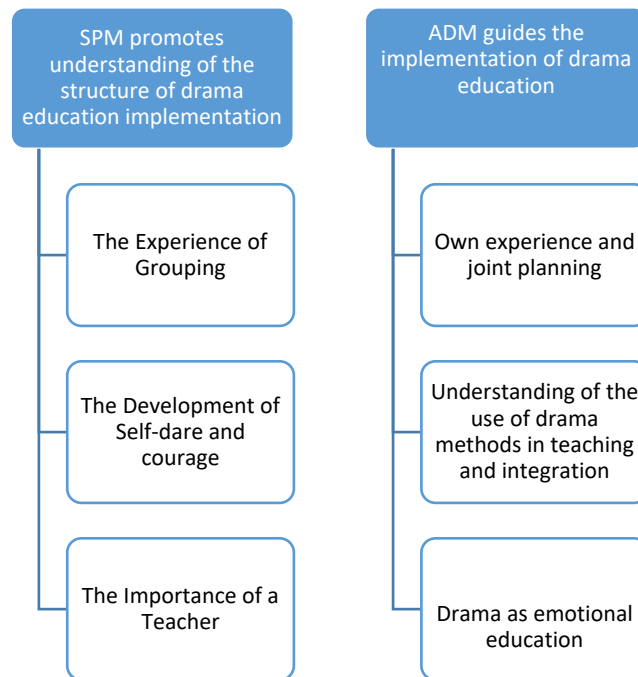


Figure 2. SPM and ADM Promoting the Adaption of Drama Education in Teacher Education

SPM Promotes Understanding of the Structure of Drama Education Implementation

Awareness of SPM helped them to perceive the course, especially when they were able to experience it first-hand. The students understood the importance of SPM, and the experience of progressing in a group towards more individual expression proved to be important: "The first step is to work as part of a large group. Being in a big group and throwing myself into it relaxed my mind" (22). The results confirmed the importance of steps 1 and 2, as student teachers stressed the importance of group exercises to encourage and warm up creativity together before focusing on individual performance. "This is where you see the importance of the steps of progress. First you had to be able to get used to the situation, the exercises, and the new people, and only then were you ready to try" (24). Several students realized through their own experience the importance of working first as part of a large group and then safely moving on to work with a small group or pair: "First in a group, then according to each individual's own courage" (21). Each session emphasized the group to individual structure and this, according to several student teachers, increased their confidence in working in a group, as "the exercises were low-threshold familiarization exercises" and "you could take your time to get used to new people" (28).

The Experience of Grouping. According to the results, the student teachers stated that the drama course design based on SPM contributed to the experience of group bonding and increased their courage. One student teacher noted that the group grew closer through their collective experience of acting together (30), while another emphasized the importance of recalling and reliving familiar experiences and feelings as an adult stating that

“what I experienced first-hand was very important” (17). The experience of grouping and getting to know other people through working together was considered important. Aesthetic duplication and the safe sharing of here-and-now energy contributed to a sense of group cohesion. The results confirmed the importance of step three, as working together in drama was seen as a liberating experience, and the responses highlighted the relaxed and liberated atmosphere of the group experience. Some noted that revealing one's true self to others in drama rehearsals had been a powerful experience. This contributed to their interaction effectively as one student described: "our group really welded together effectively from the start, and we laughed and joked and saw each other's creativity and skills" (21).

The Development of Self-dare and courage. The increase in personal courage and the discovery of the joy of performing even emerged from the material as a surprising and gratifying experience. "I was still amazed at myself, I didn't feel any anxiety during the lessons, even though I had to perform. I had to be happy about this change" (8). Developing the courage to perform and work together was perceived as empowering and many felt encouraged to be more fun and relaxed than usual. These things were perceived to have eased previous performance-related anxiety, as one student put it, "these things have further eased my performance anxiety" (13). Several also mentioned the dispelling of prejudices and fears in a safe atmosphere, even though they had no previous experience of drama work: 'I found myself laughing several times in class with water in my eyes. I felt somehow liberated, and this surprised me in a way. These classes have worked wonders" (33). Many of the students described how the group exercises, concentration and working together at the beginning of the lessons led to relaxation and encouragement in the drama exercises.

The Importance of a Teacher. The importance of the teacher as a designer and provider of a successful drama experience emerged from the research data, as "the teacher really plays a big role in how drama can be done" (27). The role of the teacher as a facilitator and creator of an accepting, safe and positive atmosphere was seen as important for the progression of the work. Personal experiences such as "the atmosphere stroked the soul" (1) helped student teachers to understand the importance of SPM in creating a safe learning environment. This was described by one student: 'In a positive and accepting atmosphere, people start to create and use their creativity. Something unprecedented is created and a connection is made between oneself and others. In this way, through drama, you influence the world of experience and harness new activities through good experiences.'"(6). The description also highlights the importance of group bonding, emphasizing the special connection that occurs in a safe atmosphere.

Through the SPM structure were working in a large group safely at the beginning is important, student teachers understood through personal experience that the teacher must create and maintain an atmosphere in which it is safe for everyone to proceed according to their own courage. "The class had a very pleasant and comfortable atmosphere - I started to look forward to the next lessons" (15). At the same time, an accepting atmosphere built the possibility for authentic experience and growth. The teacher's commitment to drama was also highlighted as a positive learning experience. As a result, many felt more confident to be a drama teacher: "I dare to be a more self-indulgent teacher, from which students can model activities for themselves and progress to expressions that look like their own" (21).

The ADM Guides the Ways of Implementing Drama Education

The results highlighted the importance of developing design skills, particularly through workshop design. The planning task of the small group workshop was perceived as very important. The ADM was also highlighted on several occasions and was seen as an important tool for designing and understanding how drama education relates to curriculum objectives.

Own experience and joint planning. It was also evident that personal involvement in drama activities, experiences, shared responsibility, authentic design tasks and engagement in the planning of drama workshops formed an important part of the integrated learning process. Student teachers emphasized the importance of the small group as a learning experience. “It was good that the workshop was done in a small group and the support of the group members was always available. This certainly gave me the courage to try out drama methods for my own future work” (13). The importance of planning and implementing drama teaching together was highlighted in the data. The student teachers felt that they had acquired good knowledge, skills, and methods for conducting the workshop. The course was perceived to have provided real tools for implementing drama education. The opportunity to practice drama lesson planning skills with a group of student teachers was seen as important, as joint dialogue was seen as important for learning. The careful planning of drama education was understood and the ADM to guide it was seen as useful. “Being aware of the ADM helped me to see the bigger picture. The experience showed me that drama should be used in teaching and in dealing with different topics” (18).

Understanding of the use of drama methods in teaching and integration. In general, data showed that personal experience provided knowledge and ideas about drama education and the integration of subjects through drama. Many respondents mentioned that they were encouraged to use drama in their own work to enhance pupils' learning and were reassured that they would use drama in their future work. This is well illustrated by the comment: “This course has given me a lot of tools for my own pedagogical toolbox. The biggest one is the realization of drama as a working method for teaching other things” (10).

Imaginative drama methods, storytelling and related creativity exercises were found to be particularly useful. The way in which the use of stories and imagination shaped the drama processes was, according to the student teachers, impressive. Recognizing pupils' needs and aspirations was seen as an important part of drama teaching: “we need to keep our eyes and hearts open to see and hear children's ideas” (6). The student teachers described that creating a fairy tale character had given them experiences that helped them understand how drama stimulates the imagination and helps the child to produce a story. Understanding of the importance of co-creation developed: “through the storytelling exercises, I realized the power and ability to create something amazing together that cannot be done alone” (18). The personal experiences were perceived as meaningful and contributed to the understanding of the methods. Student teachers saw how drama education is a method that supports curriculum integration as one student teacher stated that, “drama education can be integrated into every subject using different methods” (12). Understanding this was perceived as a facilitating insight for implementing drama education.

Drama as emotional education. The exercises to develop emotional and interpersonal skills also became important

for student teachers' professional development. They had powerful experiences and conveyed an understanding of drama as an emotional tool. The link between imagination and emotional life was reinforced in the experiences of the student teachers. The student teachers described having realized through the exercises that difficult issues and emotions can also be dealt with through drama. "Exercises have a meaning and can increase presence and bring about real emotions - they become real situations and bring about real feelings and changes in the body and thoughts" (21). The understanding of drama as a pedagogical method deepened. "At this step, my brightest personal insight into drama pedagogy is that it is not just play and games. I must plan my lessons well so that drama serves pedagogically" (1). The student teacher's perception of drama education as a serious pedagogical and interdisciplinary method was reinforced. There was an insight into the integration of subjects through drama. The student teachers realized that drama is a playful method, but not a light snack or an activity without a goal. The planned process of working through experiences together, descending from the drama in the ADM sense, also helped to understand this educational significance of drama. As the course progressed from making together to making in small groups, students were encouraged to use their imagination and work creatively together. Several described how each lesson allowed them to safely move from stimulating collaborative exercises to more challenging exercises using the ADM model.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to take a position on the implementation of drama education in teacher education. This study demonstrated that the course structure designed using SPM supports the development of student teachers' growing understanding of drama education. Similarly, the authentic experience strengthens their experience of drama both as an art and as a teaching method (Bowell & Heap, 2005; Østern, 2011). The study found that student teachers' understanding of the drama method from a pedagogical and design perspective was strengthened through participation in a socio-cultural reality. This finding is in line with the fact that drama education is collaborative (Bowell & Heap, 2005a) and interactive (Østern, 2011) and relies on cultural conventions (Lehtonen et al., 2016). The results suggest an increased understanding of how drama can be used to integrate art and aesthetics in a holistic way in curriculum objectives and subject integration (Lähdesmäki, 2021). Another important finding is that designing a drama course based on SPM provides student teachers with first-hand experience of how, in a safe atmosphere, their own expression can be freed and their sense of belonging to a group increase (Heikkinen, 2017; Lehtonen et al., 2016; Toivanen, 2007). The research confirms the notion that student teachers need a concrete model for designing and implementing drama education, but also a personal and authentic experience of drama education (Bowell & Heap, 2005; Lonka, 2018). The results also indicate that ADM provides student teachers with an experiential model for designing curriculum-based drama lessons and combining theory and practice and reflection is important for a student teacher in adopting the drama method (Tynjälä et al., 2014).

This study suggests that the SPM can serve as a broader framework for implementing drama education, while the ADM provides a useful framework for designing and integrating drama education into different curricular objectives. Student teachers learn to reflect on the effectiveness of different practices through curricular objectives and are provided with a model for designing drama education teaching and learning (Lähdesmäki, 2021), which in turn activates the need to transfer what they have learned into professional practice (Tynjälä et al., 2014). Based

on this research, a professional understanding of drama education helps student teachers to use drama education in a pedagogically meaningful way (Sinivuori & Sinivuori, 2007). Overall, the university drama courses designed with SPM and ADM can provide student teachers, through first-hand experience, with a model of how to design and implement drama education pedagogically.

One crucial finding is that effective drama education relies on a teacher's ability to create a safe and supportive classroom environment, coupled with their empathy and enthusiasm. This echoes the research by Van Berkel and Bosma (2023) that highlights the potential of drama education in developing social skills. Additionally, Yildirim's (2022) research results indicate that the drama method can have a positive impact on students' attitudes. These elements are essential to the creation of a positive learning experience (Toivanen, 2007; Heikkinen, 2017).

Student teachers transfer positive learning experiences into their own toolbox and refine the methods to make them suitable for teaching. It is noteworthy that the drama lesson should end in a way that allows participants to draw together the experiences evoked by the drama and guides student teachers to find connections between their own feelings and actions (Wagner, 1976). This can contribute to the student teacher's understanding of the role of drama in learning, as recognizing the emotions felt through one's own experiences and understanding the impact of drama experiences can build a pedagogical understanding of the drama method. This self-awareness and understanding is the pedagogical significance of the drama method (Heathcote & Herbert, 1985; Dinham & Chalk, 2018).

The results show that authentic and personal participation in drama activities as a member of a group contributes to the professional growth of student teachers by enabling them to understand the impact of drama forms on their emotions, use of imagination and, among other things, the development of their own confidence in the group. Imagination is like painting a story by acting with a group. Imagination is a powerful force that helps creativity to flourish (Hollo, 1918), and the importance of drama education in teacher education is highlighted because it offers student teachers a genuine opportunity to deepen their understanding of emotional and interpersonal skills. In the digital age, drama education also reinforces the importance of presence, encounter, and interaction. ADM Phases 1 and 2 focus on cohesion, presence, and a common theme. SPM guides the planning of work in advance so that through group work, participants are given the space and sense of safety to express themselves and learn drama methods, and even take the courage to perform with a pair or together (Olkkonen, 2013; Talvio & Klemola, 2017). ADM guides each drama lesson in intensive drama work, which at its best helps participants to indulge in the energy of the here and now (Szatkowski, 1985), but also guides the teacher to end the drama lesson in a planned way.

In addition, the student teacher's personal growth as a person is strengthened and tensions, fears and insecurities are reduced. Courage as a performer is strengthened, which is important in the teaching profession. They also learn practices and methods, and their pedagogical skills grow and develop. SPM guides the planning of work in advance so that through group work, participants are given the space and sense of safety to express themselves and learn drama methods, and even take the courage to perform with a pair or together. ADM guides each drama lesson in intensive drama work, which at its best helps participants to indulge in the energy of the here and now,

but also guides the teacher to end the drama lesson in a planned way.

One of the limitations of this study is that the data is small and concerns only one drama course. The small sample size did not allow for comparisons between different course implementations. Therefore, the results are not generalizable, but they do provide insights into how drama instruction design using SPD and ADM contributes to student teachers' understanding of drama education implementation. The development of the models is the result of a long process (Lähdesmäki, 2016). For further research, it would be interesting to better understand the similarities between PDL and drama pedagogy, especially regarding process drama.

Conclusion

The research highlights ways to support student teachers' ability to function as independent teachers in a changing society and to support students' interprofessional skills as educators. In teacher education, drama education offers at its best a safe space for individual growth, interpersonal skills, community experience and professional growth. Student teachers recognized the social and interactive power of drama. The need for individuals to learn together and from each other is important to maintain in teacher education. Another important conclusion of the study is that in an era of digitalization of education, it is also important to preserve authentic encounter, interaction, and the miraculous power of presence. The purposefulness of drama education in teacher education can be strengthened by using the principles of SPM and ADM.

Drama education offers a wide range of opportunities for subject area, self-concept enhancement, group building, subject integration and emotional education and it would be useful for every teacher to be familiar with drama education methods. The research shows that it is important to offer drama education to student teachers in teacher education courses in a way that is pedagogically well thought out in the course structure. SPM and ADM provide useful tools for this.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Joel Olson, Teacher of Academic Writing and Research at Bethel University, Associate of Arts (A.A.) College of Adult and Professional Studies, and Ilona Lähdesmäki (Tufts University, Boston, college student), who made significant contributions to this paper by proofreading it at various stages and providing valuable feedback.

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