

*I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were
either one or the other!
So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—
I am about to spit you out of my mouth.
Revelation 3:15-16*

DRAMA EDUCATION FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION: APPROACHES AND CHALLENGES

Baiba Moļņika

University of Latvia

ABSTRACT

Violence in schools is a socially and culturally complex phenomenon that affects not only the victim and the abuser but everyone, including eyewitnesses, parents, and educators. Drama education provides a unique experience in reducing violence because it involves both the mind and the emotions. The adolescent is the age stage that is influenced by many external and individual factors, such as those related to the change in the training system, age development, change of interests and change of class dynamics, etc. All of these factors can lead to an increase in the risk of stress background and violence situations. The study explores violence prevention through the lens of drama. The review reveals several approaches for drama education with connection to personal development and violence prevention, including, "Forum Theatre" and "Process drama". The study provides recommendations to emphasize the role of drama education in reducing violence in schools.

Keywords: *drama education, personal development, violence prevention, forum theatre, process drama*

Introduction

To explore the pedagogical potential of drama for violence prevention among adolescents it is necessary to understand the theoretical framework and historical development of the concept of drama education and how it has been transformed through the years. Even the effect of using drama on the audience was noted by Aristotle (Rasmussen, 2010). The pedagogical use of drama has increased rapidly in parallel with the rise of progressive

and liberal education. As noted by several authors (Bolton, 2011, Way, 2009), the emphasis on education has changed, stressing the child's personal and social development. The drama became essential because the role-play looked relatively close to children's games, the drama was more child-centered than subject-oriented, more process-oriented than outcome-oriented, and more active and expressive than passive. Drama education (O'Connor Aitken, 2014, Eriksson, 2009, Jarrah, 2019) promotes the exchange of experiences and the reduction of myths and creates an open discussion in which one situation can be viewed from several points of view. Its central elements are play and the personal experience of each learner. In addition, as Umerkajeff (2012) emphasizes, it is very important to understand that the process is as important as the outcome and that the teacher involved in the learning process becomes one of the participants in the play. Drama engages children physically and in a way that breaks daily routines and leads to new knowledge (Morris, 2005, Nelson et al., 2001, O'Toole, 2003, Perry&Rogers, 2011). Drama education provides a unique experience in reducing violence because it involves both the mind and the emotions (Mavraudis & Bournelli, 2016). The role-play, and getting into "other shoes" provides an opportunity to explore oneself and the world in a way that protects from the consequences of one or another situation that teenagers face daily (Johnson, Liu, Goble, 2015, Carter, Prendergast, Belliveau, 2015, Lofgren, Malm, 2005). As suggested by various authors (Nelson, Colby, McIlrath, 2001, Morris, 2005, Lofgren, Malm, 2005), drama plays a key role in educating young people to become important and interested members of the society able to address current environmental, economic, and societal challenges. It allows young people to explore the complexities of life, giving them the tools and guidelines in order to deal with situations that require an immediate and unusual response. The literature review analyzes the approaches used by drama educators – Forum Theatre; Process Drama and others – to reveal the importance of drama in personal development and socialization.

To achieve the research aim, the research question was raised: How does the pedagogical potential of drama reveal through different approaches with the linkage to personal development and violence prevention,

Methodology

The literature review describes the main approaches of how educators have attempted to link drama education with personal development and collaboration among learners. It notes trends and challenges presented in the literature and makes recommendations for using drama's pedagogical potential for violence prevention among adolescents. In order to reveal this

potential serious research has been carried out using the latest scientific literature found in Web of Science, Taylor and Francis, and Primo that are published in English in the time period 2000 – 2020. Following the method given by Xu Xiao and Maria Watson (Xiao, Watson 2019) the systematic review was realised in five phases. In the first phase, initial keywords were identified having considered the researcher's knowledge of the field and the research question: drama education; personal development. After reviewing databases 37 potentially relevant articles were found and identified for further research.

In the second phase based on the review of abstracts, specific searches were conducted and criteria for inclusion and exclusion were defined. (see Table 1).

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Studies in the English	Studies in other languages.
Studies from the school education field.	Studies from other fields.
Scientific articles, reviews or books, monographs.	Conference review
Relation to personal development or schools violence	Drama as the performing art

After reviewing of articles 13 articles were excluded based on chosen criteria. To obtain more articles the key words: drama education – was combined with the term – as these terms represent borders of this research. As result 3 more articles were added to the selected list.

Results

In the third phase in accordance with the screening results, full texts of studies (9 scientific monographs, 2 literature reviews, and 17 empirical studies) were reviewed in order to realize quality assessment and to work out data extraction and analysis (Xiao, Watson, 2019). The time period analyzed in the review was 2000–2020 covering the following countries: Sweden, Australia, Canada, and Malaysia. During the fourth phase, the characterization of the studies (Xiao, Watson, 2019) was realized. Following the inductive method information from each study was extracted and divided into research areas. After reviewing of the studies the following thematic categories were constructed: Theoretical background of drama in education, Drama education in relation to school violence, Qualities of drama education in forming personality and human empowerment.

Table 2. Thematic categories of systematic review

Thematic category	Authors
Theoretical background of drama in education	Bolton, 2011; Howell, Heap, 2010; Fleming, 2010; Rasmussen, 2010; Umerkajeff, 2012; Dunn, 2017; O'Neill, 2014; Way, 2009.
Qualities of drama education in forming personality and human empowerment	Selderslaghs, 2020; Shira, Belliveau, 2012; Jarrah, 2019; Kipling, 2017; Etherton, Prentki, 2006; O'Connor Aitken, 2014; Eriksson, 2009; Johnson, Liu, Goble, 2015; Carter, Prendergast, Belliveau, 2015; Katsaridou, Gotzon, Vio, 2015; Morris, 2005; O'Toole, 2003
Drama education in relation to school violence	Mavroudis, Bournelli, 2016; Lofgren, Malm, 2005; Shiakou, Piki, 2020; Falconi, 2011; Catterall, 2007; Burton, O'Toole, 2005; Joronen, Rankin, & Åstedt-Kurki, 2008

Discussion

The fifth phase reveals the usage of the Thematic inductive analysis to explore and analyse the content of the studies in accordance of categories (see Table Nr. 2). Thematic analyses allow operating with the wide range of theoretical studies and could respond to the study questions and could assist in forming the research design.

Theoretical background of drama in education

In order to define drama in education, several definitions were selected and common features were recognized (Bolton, 2011; Howell, Heap, 2010, Fleming, 2010, Rasmussen, 2010, Umerkajeff, 2012) – it is stressed that drama affects both the mind and emotions at the same time, helps to communicate with others, as well as to find self-esteem. A drama can be defined as a specific sequence of events that reveals problem situations or conflicts. The drama involves several people working in a fictional context. When these fictional events are shown to an audience, drama becomes theatre (Burton, O'Toole, 2015).

Drama is an art form that most accurately explains conflicts between people. Conflict is part of the core of drama that exists to portray and explore human personalities. In the drama, people reveal themselves in dialogue. During the drama, tension accumulates, followed by a climax and solution. Dialogues, negotiations, and argumentation from all parties involved serve to resolve tensions (Howell, Heap, 2010). Drama in education promotes the quality of education, it can be both a method and a part of

the curriculum that integrates feelings, thoughts, and actions, strengthening a holistic view (Etherton, Prentki, 2006, O'Connor Aitken, 2014, Eriksson, 2009, Johnson, Liu, Goble, 2015).

The central role of the drama in resolving key conflicts is empathy (the ability to identify not only cognitively but also emotionally with others), to some extent “get into the shoes of others” and to see the world from another view for a short time. Drama triggers both empathy and distance at the same time. Thus, the view of things can be changed (Bolton, 2011, Bowell, Heap, 2010, Fleming, 2010, Rasmussen, 2010).

Drama as a tool for better understanding the world and oneself and for solving the problem situations, which every child and the young person faces daily was taken as a basis for the creation “Creative Dramatics” movement in the United States and “Drama in Education” movement in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Both movements emphasize the active learning power of doing drama and considered the improvisational methods of drama by allowing children to try different roles not only as actors but also as playwrights and directors (Bolton, 2011). The theatre playing, as it was regularly used in schools in a view of different authors (Bolton, 2011, Fleming, 2010, Hatton, 2015) was often associated with mechanical teaching, repeating a text that did not co-relate to the children’s interests and needs. The axis of “Creative Dramatics” was exercises and training programs tailored to children’s needs, with a special focus on games and self-expression.

The seminal author, who gave a new impulse to the traditional teaching of drama (concentration on speech and text/content) was a British theatre practitioner Brian Way. In his work, Brian Way focused on developing students’ sensitivity and imagination by creating a special exercise system (Way, 2009). He put forward life skills training to acting skills training and thus motivating teachers to concentrate more on developing children’s creativity and self-expression.

Bolton (2011) argues that this position diminishes the real power of drama because drama is an art of symbols and should reveal universality rather than individual revelations. In addition, Bolton (2011) emphasizes that progressive educators do not affirm the value of drama as symbolic art, but level it to use in teaching children life skills, concentration, and developing children’s sensitivity.

Although the techniques that drama specialists use could differ, some elements are in common in all practices. To define, what are the necessary elements which should be considered by teachers and drama practitioners Bowel and Heap (2010) give the following keys:

- The willing suspension of disbelief
- The fictional circumstances of the drama

- The taking of a role
- The introduction of productive tension into the drama and therefore into the classroom
- Skilful signing through voice, gesture, and the use of objects, sounds, and artifacts to establish a clear focus, a point of view, and a sense of place
- Process of artistic co-creation between teacher and learners is born of the collective processes of acting, directing, and playwriting.

By summarising different methods used in the Drama in education Lofgren and Malm (2005) suggest, that there are four perspectives in which Drama pedagogy and training programs could be developed:

- Artistically oriented perspective – focuses on the creativity of children and young people and their ability to express themselves, as well as to collaborate among themselves. The main idea is to give the story scenic form. The drama work can be seen in an artistically oriented perspective as a preparation for a theatre performance based on texts created by different authors.
- Personal development perspective – Thematically, this perspective is similar to an artistically oriented perspective – there may be the same tasks and improvisations that are used in working with students. However, the main focus differs; it is not an aesthetic form, but a reflection on feelings and relationships. The focus is on general human relationships, values and group dynamics. Conflicts are studied in terms of their impact on personal growth. This perspective makes drama a valuable tool used to prevent violence in schools.
- Critically liberating perspective – the Forum theatre and other methods represent this perspective aiming to train the oppressed to break oppression. Mostly the focus is on relations between individuals and society. Conflicts are studied from a power perspective.
- Holistic learning perspective – within this perspective the teacher in role is in the center of the story, fairy tale, or historical events. The focus is on universal values.

Roleplay could be the starting point for a deeper analysis of problems related to environment and the society, it can bridge challenges that occur in daily life with a possible solution, gives a new insight into a human relationship as well as self-perception.

As it is suggested by different authors (Dunn, 2017, Fleming, 2010, O'Neill, 2014) drama has an essential role to play in educating young people to become the vital and interested players in meeting and solving current challenges in the environment, economics, and society. It allows children to explore the complexity of life, gives them the necessary instruments and guidelines for action in situations where an immediate and non-ordinary

reaction is needed. This is a proper stimulus to continue work on finding out the drama's potential to prevent violence among adolescents in schools.

Qualities of drama education in forming personality and human empowerment

The literature review revealed several approaches for using drama education in schools that could be related to violence prevention. These approaches describe various ways, what are the main features of drama which particularly focus on personal development and linkage between rising of empathy and keeping of distance.

1. Putting the child in the center of learning – “Mantle of Expert”.

The pioneer who gave the new impulse to drama in education was a drama teacher and researcher Dorothy Heathcote. She created the method “The Mantle of the Expert”, which is closely related to the change of approach to the curricula. According to O'Neill (2014), this method puts children at the center of learning. The teacher's task is to create conditions in which a mantle of leadership, knowledge, competence, and understanding grows around the child. In the Mantle of Expert approach, as it is recognized by Aitken (2014) the following principles are used: exploratory learning; focusing more on the process or process drama; and positioning children as those who are responsible for resolving the situation, which also means taking up new roles in relations with teachers.

This approach responds to the child's needs and makes the situation exciting and appropriate to his daily observations. Selderslaghs (2020) highlights, that Heathcote program was guided by the expectations, needs, and capacity of the target group (children or youth, by leaving appropriate space for improvisation. This approach showed another way how to work with children avoiding using pre-prepared scenarios and control exercises. However, the Heathcote program also was based on a certain foundation in terms of external form, internal structure and strategy, which was based on both – the emotional involvement of participants and the distance that is required to provide emotional protection for participants. Eriksson (2009) compares two approaches for distancing. In the program developed by Heathcote, similar to the process drama, distance is perceived more as an emotional protection line, creating a distance between the participants and the role they are taken. Besides that, distancing could be understood as finding another angle from which to observe the situation and take decisions. In both cases, it is very important to get the emotional involvement of the participants, as well as to use different perspectives on how to look at the given situation Jarrah (2019) characterizes this process as an opportunity to explore parallel both – participant role and role of recipient.

Analyzing Heathcote's work, Selderslachs(2020) emphasizes the special role that teachers play. By taking up the role and becoming a participant in a drama situation every teacher could explore new forms of collaboration with students. The fictional context allows both – better knowledge transfer and immediate feedback. Drama provides a broad spectrum of interaction with the teacher playing a role and allows to change the discourse.

The challenge for drama practitioners, as Morris (2005) notes, is to develop a curriculum that meets modern requirements and engages young people in a meaningful artistic process by pushing them also to become drama agents. The potential of drama to stimulate synergies between external and internal factors is also acknowledged by Fleming (2010), who declares, that by engaging in drama, students acquire knowledge that mostly comes from outside. On the other hand, personal involvement in drama is based on everyone's potential or talent which should be developed. Another dichotomy as it is noted by several authors (Bolton, 2011, Fleming, 2016) rises between drama for learning or understanding and drama as an art form. Rasmussen (2010) reveals three drivers associated with drama in education. First, it is the correlation that is formed in the creation of drama with processes that have an individual meaning, which could be also called the inner vector. Another driving force is aesthetic enjoyment, and finally, it is a complex form of drama that creates both reflection and excitement.

2. Process Drama. According to O'Toole (2005) process drama has risen from the concept of Drama in Education broadly used by Dorothy Heathcote and Gaving Bolton. To emphasize reflections, non-linearity, and conventions of drama Cecilly O'Neill, Professor of Drama Education has introduced the term – process drama, which offers multiple perspectives on the dramatic focus. Several elements are characterizing the process drama. Dunn (2016) describes them as follows:

- a collaboration between all participants including the teacher/facilitator;
- the absence of an external audience – meaning is made for and by the participants;
- direct involvement in the action by the teacher or facilitator;
- the centrality of tension and the importance of symbolic transformation;
- its spontaneous and improvised nature;

Process drama, according to O'Neill (2014) and O'Toole (2005), is a form that offers students a holistic and universal experience. In the process drama, the dramatic world is created together, roles are formulated and accepted. The drama pays special attention to tensions in order to acquire experience of one or more tensions in each drama situation. Two main elements should be in focus when analyzing the Process Drama. The

first element is the context of the situation: educators need to determine, whether they want students to experience activities from within, based on their experiences, or from outside. The second element of the process drama is an inspiring pretext, which can be a play, a film, a diary entry, a work of art, or even a song. Structurally process dramas are organized in three phases: an orientation or initiation phase, an experiential phase, and a reflective phase. The process drama (O'Neill, 2014) is essentially reflective and geared to strengthen learning. It is a participatory program aimed at engaging children and young people in fictional reality through a variety of techniques, including role-plays, improvisation and dramatized poetry. The simultaneous presence of the participants in different realities gives them the opportunity to examine situations, problems and issues from several perspectives without losing a safe environment around them. The themes chosen for construction of process drama are humanly engaging, the knowledge is 'revived' and the learning content is multi-layered (Hatton, 2012, Bird, 2011, Jarrah, 2019, Kipling, 2017, Etherton, Prentki, 2006, O'Connor Aitken, 2014, Eriksson, 2009). Participants engaged in process drama have an opportunity to observe themselves from the distance through a role play and at the same time participate in the process creation. This proves the close linkage between drama in education and process drama.

3. Forum Theatre. Another influential worldwide movement has grown up in Brazil – “Forum theatre” characterized by a desire to empower those who are oppressed with the techniques which help them to deal with the oppression. The theoretical basis for this movement is Paulo Freire publication “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”. According to Bolton (2011) most European countries have realized the capacity of “Forum theatre” techniques to change children’s behavior and incorporated them into their training programs. O’Toole (2005), one of the “Forum’s theatre” practitioners, has noted, that educators should never work on topics that have little to do with the challenges that people face daily. Seminal author of “Pedagogy Oppressed” Freire (2005) offers the way have drama could be used for evaluation and analysis of problems and to change people’s attitudes towards them. Forum theatre does not have spectators as passive beings, but they are spec-actors, transformers, those who take on the main role and change dramatic action.

Forum theatre, as noted by Katsaridou and Gotzon (2015), is an effective method of strengthening the target audience to critically evaluate the reality in which they live, finding new solutions to the challenges facing society: injustice, violence, and all kinds of crises. By being involved in the theatrical activities, children and young people become prepared for real-life situations and this experience strengthens them. Forum Theater can be used as a tool for everyone to understand what their strong sides are, how they

are related to the power structures, and what can be done to change this situation. Evaluating the significance of the Forum Theatre, Katsaridou and Gotzon (2015) emphasize the opportunity for everyone to put themselves in the place of the “oppressed” and to see the world through each other’s eyes. Forum Theatre develops empathy and reflects the problems that people face daily. “Getting in other people’s shoes” gives an opportunity not only to understand each other better but also to identify moments, when everyone has felt oppressed and by engaging in dramatic action to release the main character. Having considered the difference in people’s characteristics, and social and cognitive abilities, everyone needs to develop a personal strategy to maintain and strengthen their empathy. Forum Theatre also provides an opportunity to discover and express individual and collective creativity. Burton, O’Toole (2005) emphasize that through Forum Theatre, children and youngsters can discover the art and by exploring it to explore their creativity and by using it to learn about themselves. It is an opportunity for everyone to express themselves, both physically and emotionally, and to offer new solutions to very important problems because two essential processes are activated: thinking and production. Forum Theatre is very much related to the empowerment of participants (Katsaridou and Gotzon,2015) It can be used to promote “empowering education”, which means strengthening critical thinking and learning to perceive and understand diversity, this method can also be well adapted to think about and to prevent violence in schools (Burton, O’Toole, 2005)

Drama education in relation to school violence

When searching for a link between drama and violence prevention, the main focus is on developing empathy, both cognitive and emotional. The opportunity to step into other shoes, as Lofgren, Malm (2005) and Shiakou, Piki (2020), note, raise awareness of the victim’s feelings and also empower children to deal with situations of violence. It should be stressed, that school violence is a problem, that affects everyone, regardless of their role. When analyzing papers on the connection between violence and drama, the most commonly used term by the authors, (Saldana,2005, Catterall, 2007, Burton, O’Toole, 2005) when talking about violence in schools, was bullying, which can combine all three types of violence (sexual, physical, psychological) and is recognized by 3 characteristics – power imbalance, systematic abuse and certain intension. It should be also noted, that bullying is a process, as Schott and Søndergaard (2014) point out, in which the social context is very important. The papers analyzed in the review mention 3 programs in which drama was used as one of the bullying prevention techniques – The Friendly Schools Program in Australia, Acting Against Bullying Program, Australia, Sweden, Malaysia and the Dare to

care in Canada Summarizing researchers' opinions (Caterall, 2007, Burton, O'Toole, 2005, Gallagher, & Rivière, 2004, Goodwin et al., 2019, Hatton, 2015, Joronen, Rankin & Åstedt-Kurki, 2008) on the implementation of the bullying prevention programmes, there are a number of constraints or limitations to consider when working with drama for violence prevention – they can also be called mistakes that are sometimes happen at lessons what should be learned – for example – unpredictability – drama is not a linear process and it is too naive – to pretend that bully always be demonic and victim weak – the situations, which are played through drama programme have to be connected with real life, and they cannot be simply solved. It is also very important to protect the adolescents involved from the external audience as well as to keep a distance- not to hurt anyone. The rules of the game must be set clearly. Researchers (Kipling, 2017, Etherton, Prentki, 2006, O'Connor Aitken, 2014, Eriksson, 2009, Johnson, Liu, Goble, 2015, Carter, Prendergast, Belliveau, 2015, Freire, 2005, Katsaridou, Gotzon, 2015) also acknowledge that drama is a lived event – hard to analyze systematically and cognitively The researchers Mavroudis, Bournelli, 2016, Lofgren, Malm, 2005, Shiakou, Piki, 2020) evaluate anti-bullying programs positively – after the implementation of the anti-bullying program the level of violence decreases, even for 53% – moreover, the longer the program, the greater its effectiveness. However, as noted above, there is a lack of data to show the direct impact of the drama on the reduction of school violence. The methods used to assess adolescent behavior change (surveys, focus group discussions) show that adolescents can recognize bullying situations quite well after the implementation of programs, but there is no evidence of whether and how they will act to prevent situations of violence. (Caterall, 2007, Burton, O'Toole, 2005, Gallagher, & Rivière, 2004. Goodwin et al., 2019, Joronen, Rankin, & Åstedt-Kurki, 2008, Schott, & Søndergaard, 2014). Although theory (Fleming, 2010, Rasmussen, 2010, Umerkajeff, 2012) suggests that drama as a pedagogical tool might be effective, research findings concerning its effectiveness in fighting bullying are limited (Mavroudis, Bournelli, 2016, Lofgren, Malm, 2005, Shiakou, Piki, 2020), This could be explained with the lack of well-designed (valid and reliable) measurements and theory-based research The effectiveness of an intervention is also linked to observing certain basic principles; it should be continuous and longlasting, it should incorporate a whole-school approach and well-trained teachers are needed (Mavroudis, Bournelli, 2016, Lofgren, Malm, 2005, Shiakou, Piki, 2020). There are studies that have used qualitative research methods (Mavroudis, Bournelli, 2016, Shiakou, Piki, 2020) that have activated and analyzed the positive results of using drama for violence prevention however they cannot be generalized until they are not verified in a broader context.

Conclusions

Drama can strengthen the personal development of children and young people, and give them opportunities and awareness of the diversity of life. Drama helps to understand, evaluate and solve complex situations, learn ways to react to them and to act accordingly.

Themes used in the drama lessons should respond to the needs of children and young people to train empathy and self-exploration

The role of drama in the learning process is to help children and young people to acquire the skills which are necessary for responding to the challenges in the society and environment. Along with practice, research on the different approaches of drama in education should be strengthened.

Drama educators need to be aware of the importance of daily classroom practice to work on empathy, critical thinking, and sensitivity for children and young people through playful interaction.

In its development drama in education went through the transition from a focus on an aesthetical approach to prioritizing the social approach and learning processes.

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