

Emotional Theatre: an innovative educational tool

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In this work I'm presenting a classroom practice of theatre as an educative tool. For the last five years we play Emotional Theatre (E.T.) as an optional subject in the public secondary high school, INS Alexandre Galí, placed in Roquetes, at 45 km to Barcelona. E.T. is a combination between social theatre, psychodrama and dance/movement bases through which the development of artistic and creative activities, aims to improve empathy and emotional regulation.

We begin the class working with physical exercises that enable students to develop their sense perception, non-verbal communication skills and confidence with others. The main part of the practice consists in an approach to different themes related with students' interests. We play these activities performing psychodrama and scenic dynamics: the students are divided in actors and audience and all of them go through both roles. They are free to investigate about themselves, using guided improvisations, that raise insightful issues. Thus facing them with emotional struggles, which generate creative responses and alternative points of view. During and in the end of the session teacher and students talk about the issues that have been raised. The teacher work consists in to be aware about the behaviour of the students, detect the weaknesses and strengths, propose strategies and new actions and guide the group in the research of answers and solutions. Students and teacher built theatre pieces with the resultant material and show them in school events like Christmas Concert or Saint George celebration. In this work I will present, using a case study, the methodology, programme and results analysis of E.T.

Playing E.T. enhances the wellness of the students and the overall development of multiple intelligences and emotional regulation. Also generates changes in a personal level: improving the self-image and the sense of living. In a social level E.T. increases the feeling of belonging to the group, resulting in personal role changes, and in an inner and outer improvement of communicative skills. Some students testimonies are: "I have learned to be more confident", "I have a place to understand better my emotions", "I enjoy a lot and I learned lot of things of my mates".

This proposal also wants to think on the relevance of arts in human being development, especially in children and in educational contexts. Nowadays there is a growing social need to be creative, to be understanding and having a tolerant behaviour towards others in order to be happier and build a better world. All these educational values are related with the artistic development.

It is very important to implement this kind of teaching innovation in the compulsory curriculum areas in Spain. One way to do it may be through art or language classes. It could be considered from school to high school educational levels and also could be included in all range of teachers education at university.

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