

RESEARCH ON DRAMA IN EDUCATION INTEGRATED INTO GRADE-2 STUDENTS' LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAM—FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF ORIENTATION OF LIFE AND DEATH

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to discuss the integration of drama in education into second grade life education curriculum for teaching of the issues of life and death. Adopting the action research method, this study targets the 26 second grade students (14 males and 12 females) in the researcher's class. The curriculum is designed and implemented based on the three major themes: Life Circles, Pet Death, and Death of Relatives, and then reviewed and improved through interviews, sound and video recording, observation records, data analyses, and reflection. The study findings are as follows:

1. Process of curriculum design: The curriculum structure proposed by Needlands and Julie Dunn was adopted. The class became overly serious or encountered loss of focus. Advance organizers should be provided. There must be some time for cool-down activities for the transition from vigorous activities to moderate activities while focusing on the enhancement of students' knowledge and experiences. Use of the same drama strategy could help students become more familiar.
2. Process of curriculum implementation: Teachers should remain sensitive. Questions raised in class should be open-ended questions or conform to students' experiences. A reward system, drama strategies or a drama contract can be used to maintain order in the classroom during the initial period. The orders and instructions given to students should be clear and definite.
3. Growth of the teacher and students: The students had a better understanding of the issues of life and death and became highly familiar with drama activities, while the teacher became more sensitive to the issues of life and death, more familiar with related curriculum design and implementation, and capable of effectively maintaining classroom order.

INTRODUCTION

With advanced development of technology and material civilization, people lose their respect and care for "mankind" and meaning and value of life, and even neglect their own life as well as others'(Hui & Lau, 2006; Jennings, 2013; Lin, 2010; Varelas, etal, 2010; Woolland, 2014) .

Life and death education is also living opportunity education, which can be discussed in ordinary occasions as well as in life-and-death events for provision of correct life-and-death concept. With the beauty of Drama in Education, researchers (Ladson, 2009; Szecsi, 2008; Warren, 2008; Whitebread & Coltman, 2015; Winston, 2013) found that drama teaching can develop and integrate an open, interactive, and instructive environment through the interactions with children in preschools. Therefore, drama teaching is a kind of lively and enjoyable teaching with learning implication as well as a kind of teaching that can enhance communicative and expressive abilities. The primary purposes of this research are listed below:

- 1 To explore the difficulties encountered during developing integration of drama in education into life education program and the solving strategies.
- 2 To explore the difficulty encountered when integrating drama in education into life education program.
- 3 To explore the influence of integrating drama in education into life education program on teachers and students.

DEFINITION OF IMPORTANT NOUNS

Life Education

"Life education" refers to the value activity that in each life stage in the growing process, a positive starting point is established for the individual to teach him/her about understanding, experiencing, and practicing "cherish oneself, and respect others(Bollmfield & Childs, 2013 ; Kübler-Ross, 2011)".

Life-and-Death Education

Life-and-death education includes life education and death education, and its purpose is to manifest the meaning of life for everyone to have dignity of life and death, establish correct and healthy concept of death, and develop positive attitude towards life and effective corresponding behaviors (Erbay & Dogru, 2010; Peter, 2009; Prendiville, & Toye, 2013; Wu & Ho, 1999).

Drama-in-Education

Drama in education program is arranged by the teacher through goal-oriented drama activities for the participants to face, explore, and solve the problem or situation the story figure or oneself faces through group interaction, so that the participants can further experience living, understand relationship between oneself and others, and establish self-confidence (Bresler, 2013; Chang, 2004; Chen, 2001; Chen, 2007; Corr & Corr, 2012; Lin, 2005).

RESEARCH RANGE AND LIMITATION

The subjects of this research are students in Class 3, Grade 2 in the Sun Elementary School Where the researchers serve as their teachers? Drama in education applied in life and death issues in life education program. This research concentrates on how the teacher applies drama in education to the life and death issues in life education program, and the impact of application of drama in education to life education program.

Limitation of the Researcher

Since the research was also the teacher, observer, participant, and the assessor, subject prejudice is hard to evade. Therefore, we invited the professional consultant, observer, and research team to provide suggestions. Besides, the research also wrote retrospection notes.

Limitation of the Observer

The observer in this action research are the researcher and the Subject Teacher Lin. Due to insufficient familiarity and restriction of the only one comprehensive class in the research teaching program per week, there may be some neglect resulted from incomplete observation.

Limitation of the Research Data

Since our action research was not controlled by representative sampling and scientific variables, we adopted diverse data collection methods and triangulation to raise the reliability of our research.

Limitation of the Research Subject

The researcher's students had not participated in formal drama in education program, so the problem solving was limited to solution to specific situation without generalization for other situations.

Limitation of the Research Field

The field in this research was the classroom, so it is not spacious.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Life Education Theories

Content of Life Education

Life education is "human education", the education that enables students to recognize the meaning of life and value of existence, and further cultivate the sentiment of respecting and cherish life of their own and others (Ministry of Education, 2008).

With continuous development of life education, many experts and scholars have proposed the content of life education one after another. What follows are the viewpoint proposed by Taiwan scholars:

Table 2-1-1 Life education content proposed by Taiwan scholars

Scholar	Content of life education
Chang Chen-cheng (2001)	Content of life education should be thought from three dimensions--biological nature, social culture, and spiritual mind, and it includes level of cognition level of practice, and level of affection.
Chen Hsiu-zong (2001)	Life education is centered by human--it takes "human" as the purpose. Therefore, the content of life education should be covered by three dimensions: "human and oneself", human and others", and "human and nature".
Chen Teng-hsiang (2002)	Life education in a narrow sense is to learn thanatology, and it means education involving why we are human in a broad sense.
Lien Ting-chia, & Hsu Hsi-sen (2002)	Senior high school's content of life education materials: Life and death orientation, religion orientation, life career orientation, ethics orientation, health orientation, and environment orientation
Chen (2001/2007)	Four dimensions in content of life education: theory, level, philosophy, and dimension
Mao (2003)	Content off life education includes ethic education orientation, life-and-death orientation, environmental education orientation, life career education orientation, health education orientation, and spiritual education orientation

Life and Death Education

Life and death education is the educational activity that "breaks taboo and goes against culture" and "goes against utilitarianism", and it is basically a kind of preventive affection education. In Chang Shu-mei's (2005) study, life education includes exploring and confirming the meaning and value of pre-birth, after-death, and the life journey to guide people to live a valuable life and die with dignity.

Concept of Life and Death

Chen, Chen, & Wu (2008), and Hung, Tsai & Chen (2009) synthesized definition of life and death, operation, and relative nouns, which is generalized as below.

1. Universality

To indicate the fact that all living creature will die

2. Irreversibility

Once the creature dies, the flesh will not come into life again.

3. Nonfunctionality

In the jiffy when the creature dies, all life's functions, including biological, feeling, and emotional, and cognitive functions will stop.

4. Causality

What leads to creature's death includes, "spontaneous factors" or "external factors", or both.

5. Noncorporeal continuation

Certain form that that continues to exist after the physiological body dies; namely, "faith for after-life".

Children's Concept of Death

Age is the variable that is used to explain concept related to death the most frequently. Here, Nagy's theory of children's development of concept of death provides a reference framework for developing children's concept of death.

Table 2-1-2 Children and youth's concept of death and their cognition development model

Developing stage	Concept of death	Piaget's cognitive development stage	Cognitive mmodel
Infant	No concept	I. Sensorimotor stage II. Preparation and organization	To cognize the external with sense and motor
Preschool period	Reversibility, the external factors, come into life from death by means of different forms	1.Preoperational stage (2-7 years old)	Self-centered, and know the world from the angle of animism and the miraculous artificialization.
Early preschool stage to early adolescence	University, irreversibility, inorganic	2. Concrete operational stage (7-12 years old)	Less self-centric, the concept of preservation, reversible thinking
Early adolescence	Religion and philosophical theories and faith related to death and existence after death	III. Formal operational stage (above 12 years old)	Abstract, objective, and true thinking ability

Data source: Hsieh Su-mei (2005), Research on attitudes of the elementary school students' parents towards life and death education--Take Chia-yi County as example, page 16

From the above mentioned development of children's concept of life, it is learned that low grade students have already had mature concept of death.

Goals of Life and Death Education

Lin (2012) and Segal (2010) held that death education should target at students' need for mental and physical development, age, standard for cognitive development, and cultural difference. Wang (2013) synthesized Taiwan and foreign scholars' recounting on life and death education and proposed that there are 9 goals for life and death education: thinking

about death, grief education, death taboo, prevention education, medial issues, funeral ceremony, philosophy of death, and meaning of life.

Content of Life and Death Education

Leviton proposed 3 constructs for planning content of life and death education program: (1) nature of death; (2) issues regarding attitudes and emotions involving death and near death; (3) Adaptation for death and near death, the subsequent scholars derive life and death education from the related themes.

Research on Life and Death Education related Issues for Low Grade Students

The researchers(Chang, 2010; Kubler-Ross, 2011; Chu, 2006; Zong, 2006) generalized studies related to life and death for low grade students as below:

In research that the Experimental Group performed better than the Control Group in respect with extent of concern and acceptance for death, and performed significantly better than the Control Group in respect with extent of need and acceptance for life and death education.

The research results of Chung(2009) found that life education program starts at controlling students' experience and interest. It exerts children's books as the media materials, and influences on students' attitudes towards life through experience, discussion, and practice. Yun Mei-lien's (2007) studies regard that design of teaching activities should take children's experiences, need, and interest into considerations, and group discussion can encourage students to construct knowledge.

As for Hung Chao-chen (2006), she claimed that, to construct life education program, multiple intelligences are the method for teaching and assessment, while application of picture books as the teaching strategy, both are helpful for implementing life education. To sum up, from the literature above, it is evident that life education is a kind of education that demands our practice. In the mean time, for low grade pupils in elementary school, picture book is one of the best methods for teachers to deliver knowledge.

Theoretical Foundation and Strategy for Drama in Education

The Range of Children's Drama

Lin Mei-jin (2005) asserted that the subjects of children's drama are children. With the basic elements of drama, it aims to support children's normal development and growth.

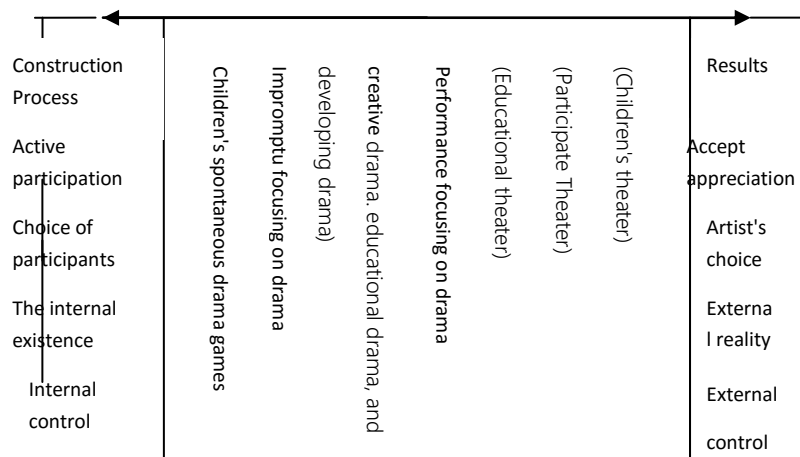


Fig. 2-2-1 Comparison of relative nouns' nature in each type of dramas

Data source: Lin Mei-jun (2005); Practice and theory of creative drama--Action research in the classroom

(Refer to Fig. 2-2-1) The closer of drama activity to the right side, the more the results are emphasized; the closer of drama activity to the left, the more the participants' construction process is highlighted.

Children's Spontaneous Drama Games

Children's imaginative game composed by children's partners at random, a kind of impromptu creative work.

Impromptu Focusing on the Form of "Drama"

Drama activity proceeded mainly in the classroom in class time-- the "participants" are also the performers, producers, and the audience. In nature, it centers on process of creation, and aims to foster the participants' growth and learning.

Performance Activities with "Theater" as the Main Form

"Theater" is the main media for presentation of drama, which is composed by professional personnel and the director.

Background of Drama in Education

Development of Drama in Education in England

Teacher Harriet Finlay-Johnson, (1817-1956) is the first person to apply "doing in learning drama" to program teaching. In 1917, Caldwell Cook (1889-1937) published *The Play Way*, in which he promoted the concept of "work-learning-play". In 1943, Brain Way advocated

"participate in theater", and in 1945, Dorothy Heathcote initiated the program of "drama in education" and proposed the teaching method, "the mantle of the expert". Moreover, Gavin Bolton published *Towards Theory of Drama in Education*, and *Drama as Education*, and proposed the teaching form, learning model, and program structure of drama in education. Lastly, in John Somers's viewpoint, drama in education has to comply with need of children of school age in order to integrate even closer to teaching for each subject.

Development of Drama in Education in the U. S.

In U.S., John Dewey (1857-1952) published *Art as Experience*, and his drama teaching, "learning from doing", aroused many school's imitation. In 1930, Winifred Ward published *Creative Dramatics*, in which she listed drama teachings like storytelling, children's creative drama role-playing, children's theater and so on, which become the basic teaching materials for drama teaching in the whole United States. In 1965, "Primary and Secondary Education Act" was passed; as a result, drama in education became single-subject program teaching in U.S. (Chang Hsiao-hua, 2004).

Taiwan's Drama in Education

Taiwan's drama in education is originated from Li Man-kuei's returning to Taiwan from U.S. in 1966 when she introduced drama in education to be applied to children's theater (Hsieh Hui-ling, 2006). It was until Art Education Act announced in March, 1979, and Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines announced in September, 2000, that drama was included into art and human teaching domain.

Definition of Drama in Education

Lin Mei-jin (2005) integrated the definition made by various experts and scholars and proposed a complete and definite definition of creative drama;

Creative drama is a kind of impromptu and spontaneous classroom activities, with main point focusing on the process of participants' experience reconstruction and expression of "spontaneity" of the movement and oral language. In the natural and open classroom atmosphere, the leader exerts questioning skills, storytelling, or puppets to trigger motivation. In addition, through body movement, impromptu mime, five sense feelings, and situational dialogue, the leader encourages the participants to employ "pretending" game playing instinct to imagine, and express by their own body and sound. In group interaction, every participant must face, explore, and solve the problem and situation the figure in the story or he/she

encounters, from which the participant experiences life, understand human-self relationship, and establish self-confidence to become a free creator, problem solver, experience integrator, and social participant.

Through integrating the definitions of the above-mentioned scholars, Hu Jing-wen (2008) held that creative drama emphasizes on learning elements of drama, and employs the concept of drama to organize activities. On the other hand, drama in education adopts drama as media to guide students to think and explore issues.

Therefore, it is learned that both drama in education and creative drama are drama activities arranged by the teacher or program to proceed in the classroom. Their difference lies in drama in education centers on the impromptu creation in the drama process, while creative drama highlights learning elements of drama.

The Concept of Education and Function of Teaching in Drama in Education

The Concept of Education in Drama in Education

The concept of drama in education is originated from "learning from doing", and characteristics of the basic concept of education can be generalized from the meaning and implementing condition of drama in education, including stage teaching for guiding oriented stage teaching, natural and progressive social learning, situational learning, and learning centered on experiencing activities (Hung, 2009; Luo, 2008; Winston, 2009).

The Teaching Functions of Drama in Education

Chang (2004) consider claimed that drama in education can not only cultivate the learner's imaginative ability, establish self-concept, build up social cognition, and develop virtue of gregariousness, but also enhance language learning and expression ability, foster ability of developing logic concept, and meditate the learner's emotions.

On the basis of Booth's perspective, when students participate in drama, they can construct their own drama experiences via their own movement and speech. Consequently, the world of drama helps students to develop their linguistic skills-- students develop their "ability of cooperation and creation" and feel "group's creativity" (Dunn, 2009)

It is thus learned that the functionality of drama in education is very sound, and it is effective for both subject learning and personality cultivation.

The Elements, Plan, and Procedures of Drama in Education Teaching Elements of Drama Composition

O'Toole & Dunn (2002) thought that the basic elements of drama contain time, preliminary plan, class and group arranging strategy, space equipment, and teacher's involvement in drama.

Hung, Tsai, & Chen (2009) regarded that the program design elements include theme (issue), plot (storyline), figures, tension, symbols, teaching strategies, and etc.

Design of Drama in Education Program

What follows will introduce Warren, O'Toole, and Dunn, and Needlands' Program design framework.

Warren's (1992) program design plan:

- (i) Select the theme of the drama
- (ii) Set up teaching goals
- (iii) Set to the drama's focus
- (iv) Decide the teacher's role in the drama
- (v) Transfer of the classroom's sovereignty

O'Toole and Dunn's program design plan

O'Toole and Dunn (2002) asserted that there are four stages in the process of drama implementation; that is, initial plan and implementation; plan and experience conduction stage; plan and response conduction stage; evaluation and assessment. During initially planning the drama program, Key Question has to be decided first. Then, the teacher "pre-sets the drama's materials", cuts in the core of the drama, and "deducts the focus problem". After that, the teacher "designs drama activities", and "throw the problems and difficulties". Finally, the teacher uses 5-W questions to concretely represent the situation in the drama (Dunn, 2009). Consequently, Liu Chia-hua (2007) modified the "critical question" to "determine direction of the issue", and added "select important event", as shown in Fig. 2-2-3.

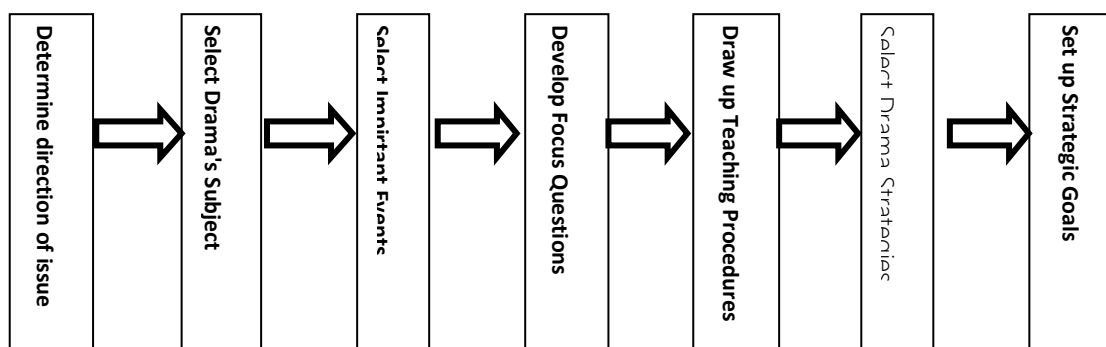


Fig. 2-2-3 Liu Chia-hua's Program Design Framework

Needlands' Program Design Framework

Needlands (1984) held that design of drama program should have three stages--Stage 1: Connection of the teaching subject and teaching materials is the starting point; Stage 2: On the basis of Stage 1, select the drama focus and clearly define role play as the starting point; Stage 3: Decide the drama's situation, plan the drama's framework, and consider drama's form, viewpoint, and tension as the detailed strategy of setting of drama's plot.

Procedures of Drama in Education Program

O'Toole and Dunn (2002) proposed drama's implementing process:

(1). Preliminary Plan and Implementation

The first step of drama teaching is to help students have a sense of participation and identify their own role (Dunn, 2009).

(2). Plan and Implementation Stage

Students can take part in the performance, and indulge themselves to performance.

(3). Plan and Reaction Stage

Students react to the drama activities spontaneously, and convert the meaning absorbed from the content of the activities into definite knowledge for actual practice.

(4). Evaluation and Assessment

The teaching content and document of implementation outcomes' summary that students should be aware for evaluation.

Strategies of Drama in Education

In *Structuring Drama Work: A Handbook of Available Forms in Theatre and Drama*, Neelands and Goode (2000) classify forms of drama into four types, which represent four different drama activities as described below:

- (1). **Situation establishes activity**--Establish background for drama or add data to dramatic situation
- (2). **Narrative activity**-- Emphasize story's development for the drama, what will happen to the "next step"
- (3). **Poetic activity**-- Develop drama's symbolic pattern through precise word selection and body language.
- (4). **Retrospective activity**-- Highlight the "monologue", "inner thought", or students' retrospection on the drama in the situation

There are a variety of drama's strategies, so we just list the following strategies (translated by Cheng Tei-chong, 1999; translated by Chou Hsao-yu, 2001; translated by Liu Tsun-fen, 2005; translated by Shu Chi-yi, LiHui-hsin, 2005; Chen Shu-hsi, 2006; translated by Cheng Tai-chong, Cheng Tai-jun, 2006): Teacher's involvement in the drama, mantle of the expert, still image, hint material, narration/storytelling, impromptu performance, diary, letters or notes, phone call conversation, action story/doing and talking, ceremony, and so on.

Literature Related to Drama Teaching in the Kindergarten

Explore How to Enhance Students' Learning

Through experiment and observation, Huang Yu-chu (2007) found that drama teaching has positive influence on students in the kindergarten. Lin Li-ya (2006) found that creative drama has significant influence on children's comprehension ability; however, it does not have significant influence on their oral expression ability.

As Tai Fei-hua (2006) claimed, storytelling and drama experience activities have positive impact on the four dimensions-- "development of self-concept", "development of socialization", "relationship with Nature", and "facing death".

Li Shu-hung (2007) held that Sun Teacher's philosophy of life education is shaped through children's characteristics, class operation, and teacher's growing group. Through integrating life education to thematic teaching, diversified assessments on teaching, children can develop "self-identification" and "cooperative learning", through which Sun Teacher can experience education and internalize/transform it.

Research that Discusses How to Enhance Teacher's Expertise

The following literature proceeds through action research method, and the researcher further classify them into two parts--strategies, and developing program and special teaching.

(1). Drama Strategies

Chang Hsiao-ping's (2006) research found that body movement, mime, sensual movement, group dialogue, and drama in education are all appropriate for kindergartener, and the teacher has to be not only familiar with the drama skills, but also generously accept the children.

Luo Hsin-mei (2008) proposed that teachers have to select the teaching goals of appreciation course from content and drama's elements in children's aesthetic program, and the appropriateness of appreciation teaching material is an important factor in organization program as well.

Gan Ji-pi (2007) applied DIE teaching strategies to teaching in the kindergarten properly, and found that it can not only construct children's overall concept of the subject, but also fulfill their imagination and release their feelings.

(2). Develop Program and Special Teaching

Li Wan-ju (2007) discovered that by adopting teaching model of creative drama activities and strategy of "puppet", children's rich lingual expressions can be triggered, and their intention for participation will be maintained continuously.

Research related to Low Grade Students in Elementary School**Territory of Language**

Hsieh Hua-hsin (2003) indicated in her research that when employing story in the picture book, students' can communicate their living experiences with one another if the teacher can dramatize the story by means of storytelling verbally.

Li Tsuei-ling (2003) indicated that through experiencing and learning in the virtual situation of the performance, students can re-experience their living experiences in the childhood. By fully participating in drama activities, students can not only enhance learning effect of Chinese, but also obtain abundant affection learning and situation recognition messages in the process of role playing. As for Liao Hui-juan (2007), she asserted that designing appropriate programs and the activities that can arouse students' interests, together with introduction of children's drama activities can effectively raise their writing intention and confidence in writing.

To sum up, regarding applying drama teaching to low grade students' language learning, it all involves with playing the roles in the story to have the students experience the plot, achieving the effect of learning Chinese.

Living Domain and Integrative Program

Hsieh Hui-ling (2007) referred to that drama in education relates to four constructs: Explanation, movement elevation, climax, and ending, which allow the program to achieve natural integration, have the teacher understand students' characteristics even more, and cultivate students' creative thinking ability effectively and quickly and learn positive thinking spirit actively.

Lin Su-fong (2003) implied that drama in education can raise students' learning interest, improve their interpersonal interaction, and enhance teacher's teaching quality. From what mentioned above, it can be observed that drama activities can enhance students' intention to go to kindergarten, and permit children to obtain satisfaction while they elicit knowledge and perceive affection from the drama activities.

Comparison of Drama Teaching in the Kindergarten and Drama Teaching for Low Grade Students in the Elementary

The Similarity in Drama Teaching in the Kindergarten and that for Low Grade Students in the Elementary

(1). Cognition

From those studies, it can be seen that through proceeding the drama activities and the messages provided by the teacher timely, students can extract knowledge as they participate in drama.

(2). Affection

Drama activities can better students' creative thinking ability and students' affection for the peers. In addition, through experiencing drama's plot, they can understand others and therefore improve the interpersonal relationship.

(3). Skills

Students have to get familiar with drama activities, so that they can grow in those activities. Therefore, students are deemed to learn dramatic skills in drama teaching in order to develop familiarity with drama and achieve certain performance.

Differences in Drama Teaching in the Kindergarten and that for Low Grade Students in the Elementary

(1). Different Learning Territories

Teaching in the kindergarten develops thematic teaching mostly, but that in the primary school concentrates on specific territory.

(2). Difference in Learning Goals

Research on kindergarten mostly focuses on fostering children's physical and mental development as the goal, but programs in elementary tend to emphasize on knowledge delivery.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Research Methods

The Meaning of Action Research

Action research is a practice oriented research method. In the practical situation, the action worker proceeds exploration in accordance with practical experiences and the problems he/she encounters, draw up the method to solve problems, and evaluate and review after implementation (Tsai Ching-tien, 2004). Such process is the dynamic cycled process of action and retrospection, with results only suitable for that working site without conducting the general theoretical deduction (Chang Shi-ping, 2000).

Procedures of Action Research

Action research proceeds scientific exploration by systematic procedures, and Lewin pointed out the process of action research is: "plan", "finding of the fact", "action", "detecting the results", and "re-plan", which is a spiral-shaped cycled model (quoted from Lin Su-ching, 2002).

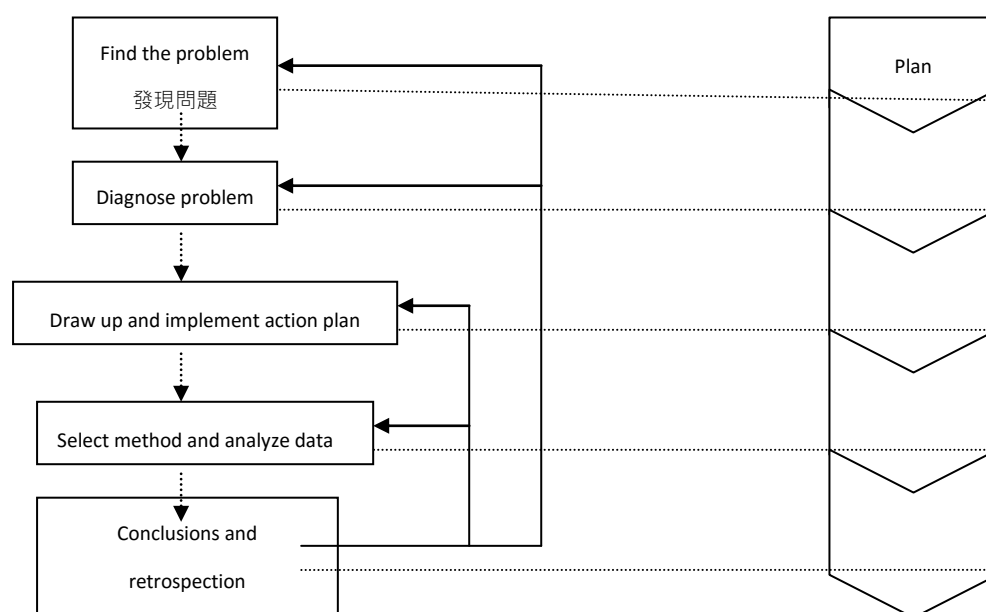


Fig. 3-1-1 Comparison of developing teaching action system and Lewin's action research model

Data source: Chang Te-jui (2007). *Practical Manual and Theory Introduction of Teaching Action Research*, Taipei City: Higher Education

To sum up, action research method suits for researcher's demand for solving problems when he/she encounters difficulties in teaching on the teaching site. Combining theory and reality, action research aims to conduct study on the teaching site. In addition to enhancing the researcher's professional knowledge, modification may be made for the strategies of action's effectiveness anytime.

Research Framework and Work Flow

Research Framework

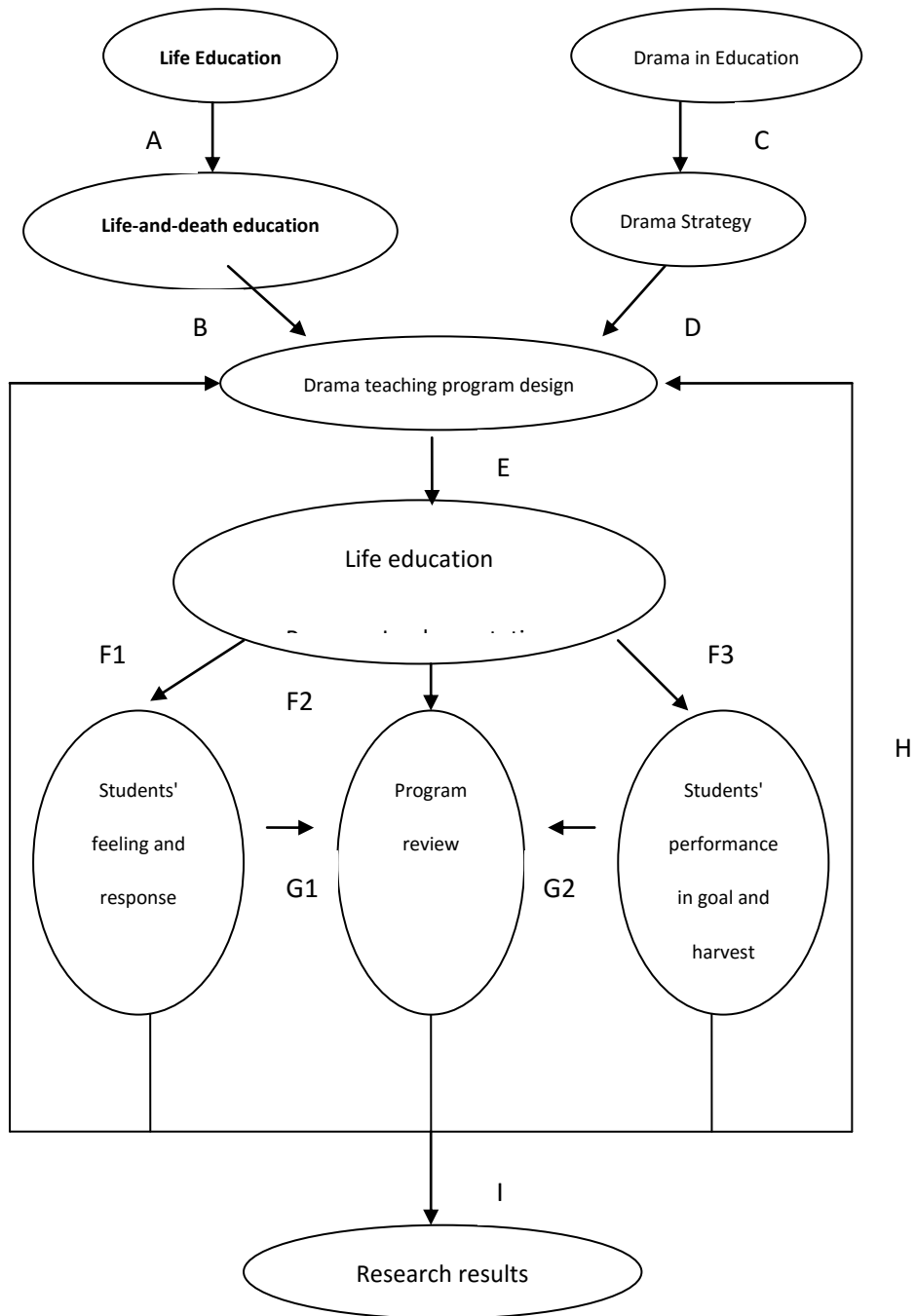


Fig. 3-2-1 Framework of drama in education integrated into life education program
Data source: designed by the researcher

Workflow of Action Research

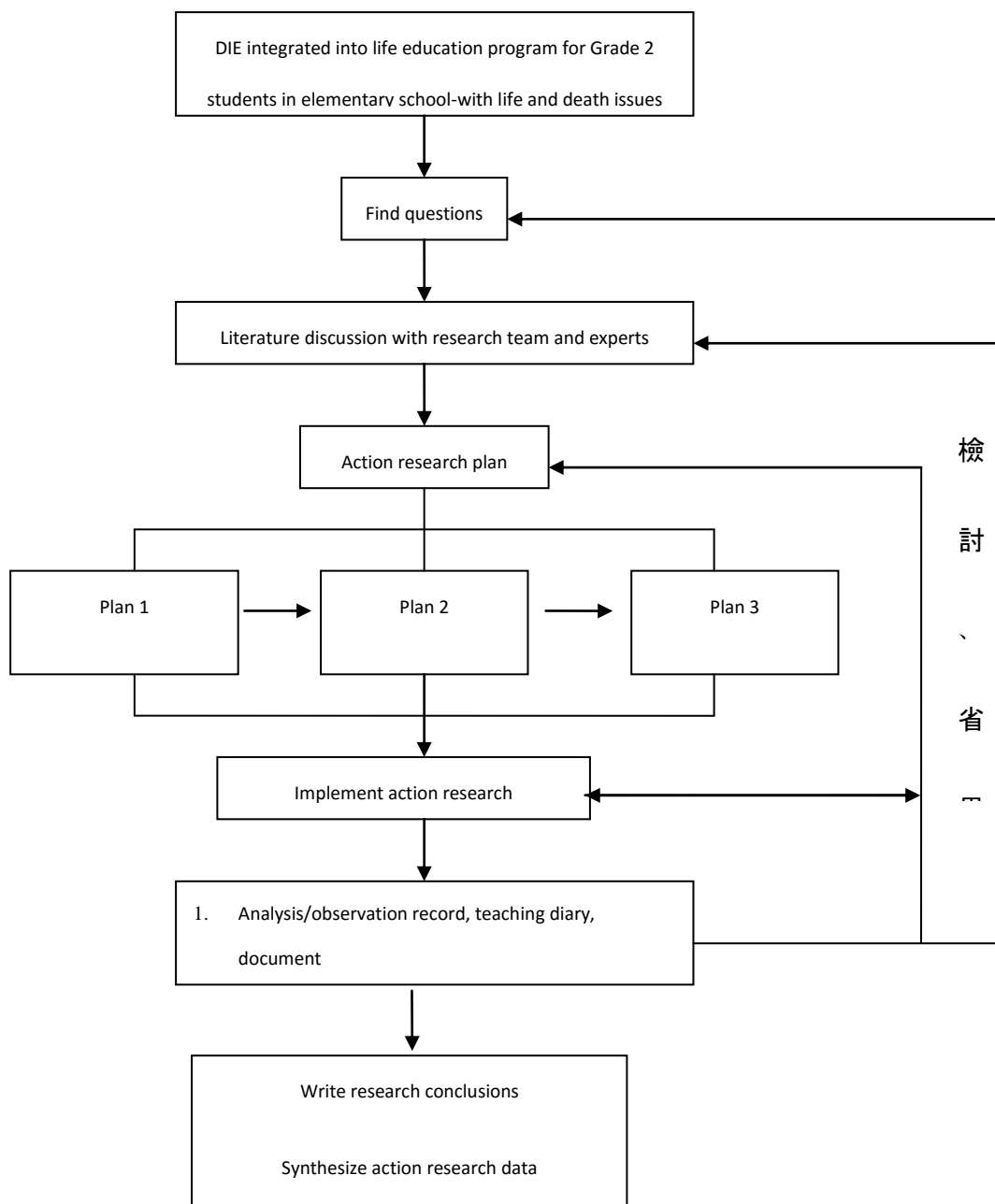


Fig. 3-2-2 Action research workflow chart

Framework of drama program design

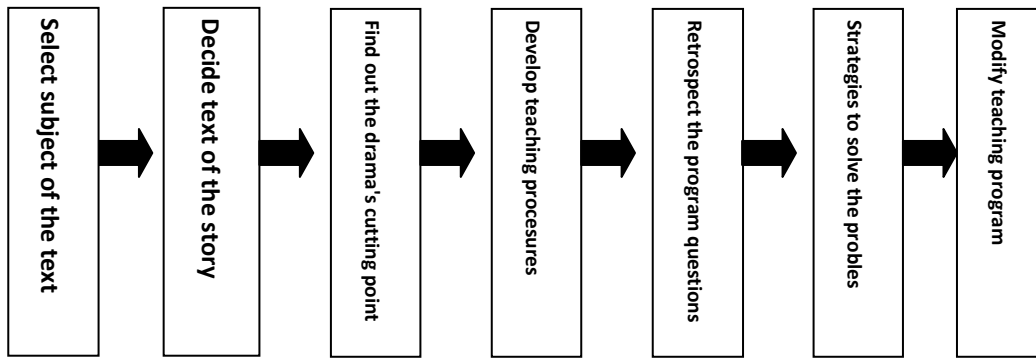


Fig. 3-2-4 The researcher adapt program design framework from O’Toole and Dunn

The researcher employ more than three drama program design frameworks to conduct three cycled program design. In addition, in coordination with development of the drama, drama strategies are put into teaching timely with expectation of students' unafraid of the death issues in life education, but accepting them instead.

Research Field

Class that Participate in Research

(1). Research Field

The field of this research is located at an elementary school in northern Pingtung county near Pingtung City. During proceeding of drama teaching activities, the researcher had been adopting the classroom of the class she taught as the space of activities. Before teaching, she asked the students to move desks and chairs to the sides of the classroom, and used the spared space as the primary space for activities of drama teaching.

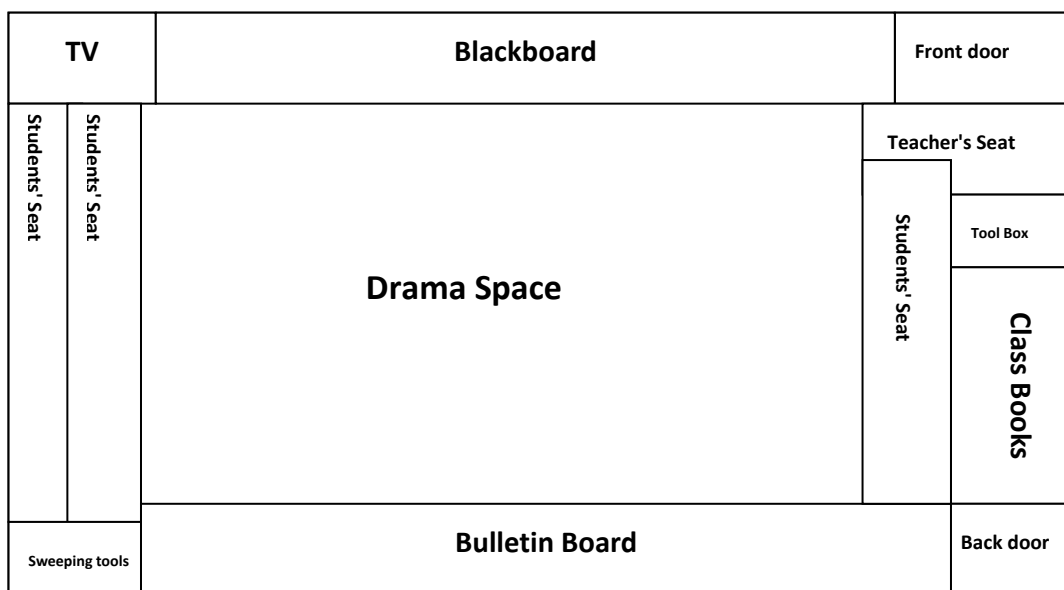


Fig. 3-3-1 Drama activity space-- Classroom of Grade 2 Class 3

Research Subject and Class Time

In this research, the participants were the class that the researcher taught. There were 26 students in the class, including 26 students and 14 boys and 12 girls, one of whom had medium intellectual disability and one was suspicious with learning and emotional disability.

The comprehensive class in this class was taught by Teacher Lin, who was also one of the observer in this research, so we made use of the two comprehensive courses and the three flexible courses every week for research conduction.

Research Team

(1). The Researcher

The researcher is the Level 88 graduate in Department of Social Education in the Normal College, and has taught in Sun Elementary School for six years. She took the Drama in Education Course taught by Professor Chen Jen-fu, finding that drama not only activate the teaching approaches, but also enhance the easy and agreeable interactive air in class time, which triggers the researcher's interest in integration of drama into teaching.

(2). The Observer

In this research, both Teacher Lin and the researcher played the role of observer. Teacher Lin has 16 years' teaching experience, and once taught the low-grade students in Taichung Elementary School, so she is familiar with low-grade students' physical and mental development and learning condition. In recent years, she has joined in performance in "Floral Ruffian Theatrical Troupe", and has accumulated rich performing experiences.

(3). The Research Partners

During studying in the graduate institute, Teacher Feng and Teacher Jien also focused on this research axis, so the researcher consulted them periodically. Meanwhile, during that period, Teacher Tsai in Pingtung University provided suggestions on the third cycle teaching video tapes. She was graduated from Graduate Institute of Drama, Tainan University, and was once the executer in chief of Little Star Theatrical Troupe, so she possesses rich drama experiences.

(4). Professional Consultants

One of the professional consultants in this research is Professor Chen, who has profound understanding of and rich experiences in skills and application of children's drama, creative drama, theater in education, and storytelling.

In action research, we further obtained opinions of Professor W and S, the former teaches in Institute of Drama and Theater in Education, School of Education, University of Warwick. and the latter is the honor professor of Exter University.

Program Design

The program in this research is supposed to implement with three thematic courses in the first semester in school year 2008 for duration of 13 weeks (as shown in Table 3-3-1).

Table 5-3-1 Picture Books and Drama Strategies

Theme	Picture Book	Content	Strategies
Cycle of Life	Cycle of Life	In an afternoon in late autumn, Dad and Mom took their kids to spend the holiday in the mountain for appreciation of the red leaves all over the mountain and the beauty of lake. The kid asked why leaves would fall when it come to autumn, and Dad replied, in Mother Nature, everything has its own cycle, just as there are four seasons in a year, the animals and plants have their own cycle of life, too.	Letters, notes, still images, group images, teacher's involving in the play, impromptu performance, telephone conversation
How to get used to what comes with death of the pet like sense of loss	Goodbye, Benben	Dog Benben was Hsiao Sung's best friend, but he was too old and passed away while Hsiao Sung went to school, although Dad and Mon, and the doctor tried their best to take good care of him. Dad took a new dog home to accompany Hsiao Sung, but Hsiao Sung thought that it was not Benben, and lost in the air of missing Benben.	Story circle, teacher's involving in the play, role on the wall, letters
How to get used to sense of loss that comes with death of the one's relative	Little Red Riding Hood	Little Red Riding Hood took a basket of stuff to visit her grandmother in the forest. On the way, she met the Big Wild Wolf. After knowing where she was going, he went before her to the little wooden house and ate her grandmother. Then, he pretended to be the sick grandma and ate Little Red Riding Hood as well. The hunter outdoors found out the fact, killed the wolf by gun and saved the Little Red Riding Hood and her grandma.	Story circle, teacher's involving in the play, role on the wall, converse by phone, thinking route, storytelling

Teaching Implementation Process

Life Education Program Design proceeded with Drama in Education

The researcher divided life education program into three cycles, and the subject were "cycle of life", "death of the pet", and "death of the relative", respectively. In the first stage, O'Toole and Dunn's framework of the program design was adopted; in the second stage, Needlands' program design framework was used; and, in the third stage, according to suggestions of the experts, O'Toole and Dunn's program design strategies and Needlands' program design framework were both employed.

The First-cycled Program - "Cycle of Life"

The researcher designed "Cycle of Life" program according to the program design framework adapted by Liu Chia-hua (2007).

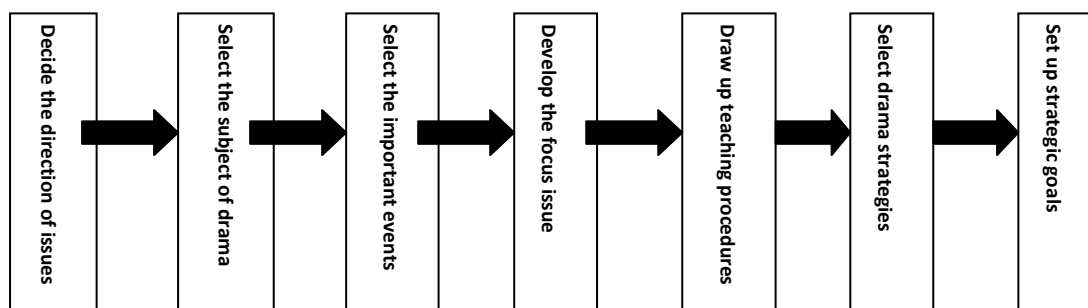


Fig. 2-2-3 Program design framework adapted by Liu Chia-Hua

Decide Direction of Issues

Chen Chen-Hsun (2007) claimed that animals and plants are the most natural and effective subject without menace, so this program design involves understanding the growth of animals and plants, accepting that ceaseless birth of new life leads to cycle of life.

Select Subject of Drama

Considering children's living experiences and the need for fun, the researcher adopted the picture book "Giant and Spring" as the subject.

Select Important Event

Since students will participate in drama personally, the important events must be dangerous enough, and the figures must be real enough (Dunn, 2009). By means of the genie of life's getting sick that makes him unable to work in the story, the researcher asked the students to help "spreading powder of life" as the important event in the teaching project "Cycle of Life".

Develop Focus Issue

The researcher considered how to make each drama activity link with one another tightly as the focus issue, so "Powder of Life" was set as an extremely precious stuff, and every new-born life was invaluable element-- how to spread Powder of Life this became the focus issue in the drama activity.

Draw up Teaching Procedures

Through continuous discussion and modification with the research team, the teaching procedures and content were drawn up.

Select Drama Strategies and Set up Strategic Goals

The research used "teacher's involving in the play" as the main axis in coordination with "letters", "telephone conversation", "still images", "group sculpture", "impromptu performance", and "ear on the wall".

The Secondly-cycled Program-- How to get used to what comes with death of the pet like sense of loss

The action teaching activity design adopted Needlands' program design framework.

Stage 1: Connect Teaching Materials and Teaching Subject

The subject in this research were 8-year-old elementary school students whose concept of death included universality, irreversibility, and inorganic of death. Therefore this cycle exerted *Goodbye Benben* as the drama's situation with sense of loss coming with the pet's death.

Stage 2; Decide and Clearly Define Possibility of Role Play as Starting Point

In stage 2, the possibility of role play as the starting point targeting at the drama's focus in Stage 1 must be clearly defined. Consequently, time, place, figures, relationship, and issues in the drama's situation were planned according to the textual situation.

- (1). **Time:** Death of Dog Benben, and the little master Hsiao-sung's feeling lost
- (2). **Place:** Hsiao-sung and Benben's home
- (3). **Role:** Benben, Hsiao-sung, A-ding, Mom, and the life genie in the first cycle
- (4). **Relationship:** A-ding is Hsiao-sung and Benben's good friend, and mom and Hsiao-sung are parent-child relationship.
- (5). **Issues:** Little Master Hsiao-sung is sad because of Benben's death

Stage 3: Plan the Form, Viewpoint, and Tension in the Drama's Framework

(1). Depict the Affection between Human and Pet with the "Story Circle"

While depicting affection between man and the pet, the drama strategy "story circle" was used in order to allow students to experience the deep affection between the pet and man through role play personally, and further indulge themselves in the grief after the pet passed away.

(2). The Teacher Played the Role of Hsiao-Sung to Narrate Death of Dog Benben

The researcher adopted "teacher involving in the play" by play the role of Hsiao Sung, and narrated the condition when Benben entered into old age and died of old age, and the inner feelings of facing the pet's death.

(3). Students' Played the Role of Life Genie and Narrated Cycle of Life and Inevitability of Death

In the activity, the researcher put Hsiao Sung's enlarged picture on the chair for the students playing the role of life genie to take genie's stick to comfort Hsiao Sung by turn.

(4). Discussed How to Miss Dog Benben

Therefore, after the researcher designed teaching content as students' discussing the methods to miss Dog Benben, she further designed the extended activity of writing a letter to comfort Hsiao Sung. Then, she read the letter, and wrote a letter from Hsiao Sung's mother to express her gratitude for the students.

The Thirdly-cycled Program--How to get used to sense of loss that comes with death of the one's relative

On the basis of Needlands' three-stage program design framework as well as O'Toole and Dunn's program design strategies, the researcher adapted their program design framework as what is shown in Fig. 3-2-3.

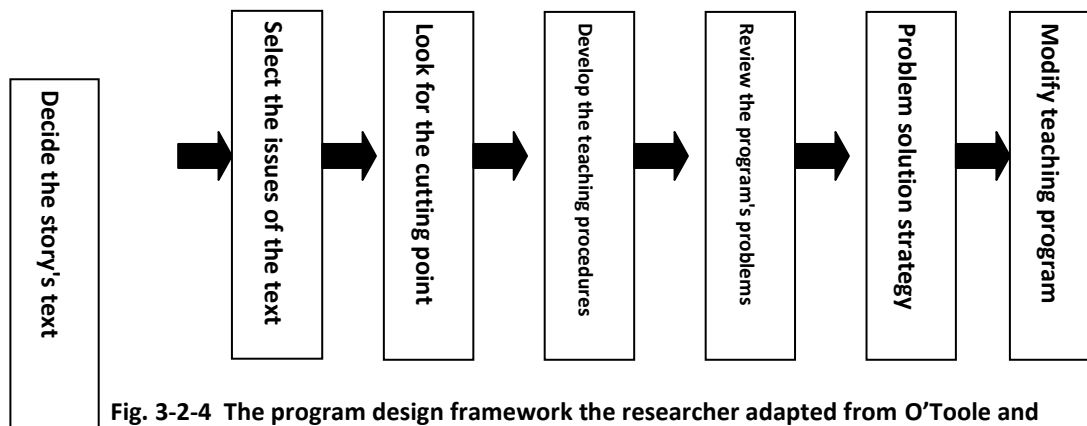
Look for Proper Text

Fig. 3-2-4 The program design framework the researcher adapted from O'Toole and

Dunn's and Needlands'

The researcher exerted "Little Red Riding Hood" as the text that shows how to get used to the sense of loss caused by death of relative, and looked for all relative issues in the text.

Look for the Issues Suitable for the Participants

Dunn (2009) considered that by answering 5W and all answers before and after the story will extend the different dimensions for information in the text.

(1). 5W of O'Toole and Dunn

- (i) What's happening ?
- (ii) Who's it happening to ?
- (iii) Where is it happening ?
- (iv) When is it happening ?
- (v) What's at stake ?

(2). Before and After the Story

i) Before the story: The wolf was hungry severely and Little Red Riding Hood was innocent.

ii) **After the story:** Little Red Riding Hood knew she could not wander around by herself. Her grandma moved out to live with her until she passed away.

(3). Issues Suitable for Grade-2 Students

The researcher took advantage of issues regarding "the elder" and "death of relative", and set up the focus on the elder's characteristics, funeral, the living people's grief for losing their relative, and comforting their sense of loss.

(i) Cutting Point of Drama's Situation

According to the situation in the drama, the researcher set the cutting point of the story as the funeral of Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother, and cultivate students' courage to face death through understanding simple funeral ceremony.

(ii) Teaching Procedures for Drama Program

The teaching procedures are planned as below:

A. Storytelling dominos was used for Little Red Riding Hood, and "story circle" was exert as the drama strategy for the students to perform and got familiar with the story content.

B. Little Red Riding Hood's grandma passed away.

In teacher's involvement with role play, Little Red Riding Hood's mother asked the expert to hold Grandma's funeral.

C. If I were grandma

Students were demanded to express which kind of funeral they would like to have from the angle of grandma's role to think.

D. Grandma's funeral

The classroom was arranged as the mourning hall and held the ceremony in accordance with what had been discussed.

E. Little Red Riding Hood was gone

The teacher asked students to look for her, and discussed and guess why she hid in the closet.

F. I am Little Red Riding Hood

Play the role of Little Red Riding Hood by turns.

G. The teacher recounted the ending part of the story, and quoted the content of "missing grandpa".

Proceed Life Education Program by Drama in Education

Implementation of the Firstly-cycled Program

It took 4 days to implement the teaching activity "Cycle of Life", during which one-class teaching activity was conducted in the comprehensive class or flexible class every day.

Implementation of the Teaching Activity "Cycle of Life"

(1). Picture Book of "Cycle of Life"

Before class, the researcher made the ppt of "Cycle of Life", introduced the content of the story to the students to arouse their interest in death of the creatures.

(2). Set up Agreement of Drama

The teaching goal of this activity is to include students' discussion of the drama agreement, so we had them deliver a rule after discussion in each group.

(3). Receive Letter from Little Genie

In class time, the researcher announced that students were going to enter into drama activity, and there would be a letter sent to the classroom, which aroused students' curiosity.

(4). Test of Life Genie

By means of message left by the Life Genie, the students were demanded to conduct group discussion on the four stages in life, and practiced presenting the four stages with the drama strategies of "still image" or "group image".

(5). The Barren Garden

"Teacher involvement into role play" as the agent of Life Genie, Mother Bird, test whether students could perform the four stages of life of each creature in the barren garden.

(6). Temporary Modification for Action--Birth of New Life

At first, it was supposed that students played the role of owl to conduct review activity in the teaching activity. However, due to unsmooth proceedings in the barren garden activity, it was replaced by the learning sheet about "a Letter to the Life Genie" and the integrative activity.

(7). Phone Call from Genie and Integrative Knowledge of Cycle of Life

Through the dramatic strategy of "phone conversation", the researcher delivered that the Life Genie's gratitude to the students' helping spreading powder of life to serve as the end of the whole dramatic activity line, and integrated knowledge of cycle of life through the whole class's discussion.

Implementation of the Secondly-cycled Program

It took 3 days to implement the teaching activity "How to get used to sense of loss that comes with death of the pet", during which one-class teaching activity was conducted in the comprehensive class or flexible class every day.

Implementation of the Teaching Activity "How to get used to sense of loss that comes with death of the pet"

(1). Depict Affection between Hsiao Sung and Benben

The researcher recounted Hsiao Sung and Benben played, ate, and slept together, and had the students to perform as well as adding creativity to the story.

(2). Death of Dog Benben

Through the dramatic strategy "Teacher involvement into role play", students understood Hsiao Sung's mood. Although death of the pet made him feel a sense of loss, he also perceived that Benben would not come back again, and that death of pet is inevitable.

(3). Life Genie's Message

The researcher had every student play Life Genie and comfort Hsiao Sung. Though it was not creative, the students expressed at least something for comfort.

(4). Discuss How to Miss Benben

The teaching goal in this activity is to have the students join in each group for discussion on how to miss Benben, and clearly explain the discussion results and propose suggestions.

(5). Hsiao Sung's Mother Replied the Letter and Told the Story of "Goodbye, Benben"

The teaching goal in this activity is to listen to the story told by the teacher, and delivered Hsiao Sung's mother's thank for the students through the dramatic strategy of "letter".

Implementation of the Thirdly-cycled Program

It took 4 days to implement the teaching activity "How to get used to sense of loss that comes with death of the relative", during which one-class teaching activity was conducted in the comprehensive class or flexible class every day.

Implementation of the Teaching Activity "How to get used to sense of loss that comes with death of the relative"

(1). Story Domino of "Little Red Riding Hood"

In the researcher's viewpoint, though "Little Red Riding Hood" is a well-known fairy tale, if the students can get more familiar with it, they will get into the dramatic situation even more quickly, and this was why we conducted Story Domino of "Little Red Riding Hood".

(2). "Story Circle" of Little Red Riding Hood

The researcher found that the students outside the "story circle" did not perform with those in the story circle as they were in the second circle, but they still wished to enter the story circle to perform the role not designated by the teacher.

(3). Grandma's Treasure

In this activity, the dramatic strategy "treasure case" was exerted. The teacher and students found a bag with the hat, glasses, silk scarf, books, and a picture of grandma inside. Have the students find out who is the owner.

(4). If I Were Grandma

The researcher asked the students to think from the role of grandma, and published which kind of funerals they would adopt. By such way, it was expected to think and face death, achieving the teaching goal through thinking of the role.

(5). Grandma's Funeral

The researcher employed "Teacher involvement into role play" and became Little Red Riding Hood. She told the students the process of a Christian funeral, making the students compare the previous activity, and perceive the grief on losing the relative.

(6). Look for Little Red Riding Hood

In this game, Little Red Riding Hood's mother called and expressed that Little Red Riding Hood disappeared after the funeral. The students played the game by looking for their partner. Upon hearing the teacher saying "Little Red Riding Hood is hiding in the two-man room", three students were in one group, and one hid in the room made up by the other two, and so on.

(7). If You Were Little Red Riding Hood

The teacher asked the students to sit as a circle and played the role of Little Red Riding Hood by turns. When he/she received the little cloth puppet, he/she had to share what he/she thought about grandma's death.

(8). Tell a Story

The researcher quoted the content of "miss grandpa" to recount how Little Red Riding Hood missed her grandma.

GROWTH AND CHANGE OF THE TEACHER AND STUDENTS

Students' Performance

Cycle of Life and Inevitability of Death

Students had already had cognition of cycle of life, and could accept death is the end of life and inevitability of death. Their attitudes towards little animals thus changed as well.

Face Separation from or Death of the Pet and Have Proper Emotional Reaction

The researcher held that after the students had the drama program, they could hold positive attitudes towards death of pet. As for their grief for relative's passing away, they could hold positive attitudes to face.

Through understanding simple funeral ceremony, develop students' positive attitudes towards life

The students could understand simple funeral ceremony through drama program, and further held positive viewpoint of life that life is valuable, so we have to treat it with kindness, care and help others heartedly, and live every day earnestly and positively.

Release the lost emotions for death of relative

This action research sets the teaching goal as helping students know how to release the lost affection for death of their relative. After the drama program, the researcher had the students complete "A Letter to Heaven" for them to express their missing days of accompany with the relative, and look for comfort or exert sympathy to understand the mood of those who lose their relative.

Students' performance in drama program

(1). Action research of the first cycle

When the students took part in the first cycle activity, they showed great creativity for the cycle of life. However, when the teacher involves with role play in the drama, the students seemed to get out of order.

(2). Action research of the second cycle

The students not only thrust themselves into discussion in each group earnestly, but also have more familiarity with the norms in drama program without the need to remind them repeatedly of following the agreement of drama. However, in discussion and role play, they tended to perform worse.

(3). Action research of the third cycle

When the students took part in drama activities, they remained enthusiastic, and could obey the agreement of drama without the need for the researcher to repeat agreement of drama.

TEACHER'S CHANGE AND GROWTH

Change in Mental Attitudes and Sensitivity in Life-and-death Issues in Life Education and

(1). The researcher's mental attitude

The researcher experienced the pain of losing her relative, so she has severe fear of the air of "death". Before planning the three teaching projects regarding cycle of life, she absorbed a large quantity of knowledge related to life-and-death education, and conducted the drama in education activities with the students with sympathy and true heart. Gradually, she got rid of the fear for death and modified her attitude of avoidance, but think of value of life positively.

(2). Sensitivity to Life-and-Death Issues

The researcher planned the life-and-death issues, attempting to guide the students from the alienated death of animals and plants to the close relative's passing away.

Raise the Drama Program Design Ability

(1). Familiar with Application of Program Design Framework Gradually

The researcher considers that O'Toole and Dunn's 5W and the dramatic strategies before and after the story. She can extend the different informational dimensions in the text, and confirm the drama's starting point quickly.

(2). Select Proper Dramatic Strategies to Organize Program

In the beginning of the research, the researcher designed various dramatic strategies because of eager for diversity. However, in process of research, in addition to exerting fixed dramatic strategies for several times, she was also enlightened by the dynamic and static dramatic strategies.

CONCLUSIONS

Cutting point of the situation in drama

Cutting point of the drama's situation has always been the difficulty the researcher kept on encountering in this action research. When drama in education stuck in dilemma, it is very important that which form enters drama, which relates to the arrangement in the situation in the drama. The researcher considered that the 5W proposed by O'Toole and Dunn can develop the varied dimensions in drama, and can effectively plan the drama's situation. However, Needlands' form, perspective, and tension can depict the cutting point in the drama's situation and represent drama's dilemma even more effectively.

Logic of the storyline

In the program of drama in education, what between activity and activity must be meaningful linkage.

Issues loss of focus

The researcher exerted the Grade-2 elementary school students as the research subject. Since the life-and-death issues are basically more serious and weighed, it was difficult for the researcher to decide the percentage of discussion time and game activity in design. Therefore, attention should be paid to balancing what between the serious activities and fun of games in process of planning the life-and-death related drama program.

Shortage of old knowledge and experiences

Since the life-and-death issues are more sensitive ones, when the teacher designs the

program, more preparations should be made so that the students can have sufficient prior experiences.

Proceed Life Education Program with Drama in Education

(1). Adoption of Dramatic Strategies

When selecting the dramatic strategies in drama in education program, the same dramatic strategies can be employed since the familiarity extent is one of the drama teaching assessments.

"Teacher in role" can highlight the dramatic tension and narrate the activity with the story's development effectively. As a result, it appears in program design the most frequently. However, in designing programs, if "teacher in role" is used to guide the students to conduct dynamic activities, the benefit of drama in education and activity regulation will be slightly less effective.

(2). Focus of Students' Emotions

In addition to enough tempo, variety, and fluency, alleviating activities have to be arranged. For example, music and stories can be exerted as the succeeding activities for the students to convert to emotions for drama in the dynamic/static activities.

(3). Skills for Question Proposal

Regarding the questions about life-and-death issues asked by the teacher, they should meet the students' experiences and knowledge, and the teacher should guide the students to conduct deep thinking with open questions.

(4). Control of the Order

The reward system is suitable to be used in the initial period of drama teaching. It can enhance the effect of controlling the class order. However, after the students got adapted to agreement of drama and reach consensus with the teacher, the reward system can be removed from the drama activities gradually.

(5). Completeness of the Story

The dramatic strategy "story circle" must pay attention to the soundness of the story. Before practicing the dramatic strategy "story circle", the plot of action must be added, the scenes have to be deleted, and the sentences must be modified. In proceeding the activity, the tempo of the story has to be controlled in order to decrease students' time to wait for perform and make the activity proceeding even more goes even more smoothly.

(6). Model of Commands

During the drama activity, the teacher's commands must be simple and clear, step by step, and consistent. In addition, the activity should be conducted after the teacher models and the students fully understand.

INFLUENCE ON TEACHER AND STUDENTS**(1). Students)****A. Raise Perspective of Life**

After carrying out life education drama program, in addition to clearly understanding cycle of life and inevitability of death, the students can show their cherishing life of little animals by actions. Understanding death is inevitable as the process of life, the students will face the issue of death with open mind and positive attitudes.

B. Familiar with Agreement of Drama

The children have been familiar with the agreement of the drama activities, so the reward system is no more necessary as the positive enhancement as the children have already been able to obey the order related rules in the drama activities.

(2). Teacher)**A. Treat Life Positively**

After the researcher proceeded three cycle teaching of life, she considers that to put life-and-death issues into teaching practice, the educator should absorb related knowledge actively, proceed drama in education activities with sympathy and true attitude, and cultivate the students' correct cognition and attitude for life.

B. Raise Sensitivity to Issues

When the researcher planned the dramatic program on life-and-death issues, it should proceed from the alienated relationship to the close relationship involving death of relative, so the students can gradually accept the issue regarding life and death.

C. Familiar with Program Design Framework

In addition to set up clear educational goals in drama in education program, the procedures of program activities have to meet the reasonable situation in the story.

D. Teaching with Open Mind

Guidance does not equal to direction. In the dramatic activities, the teacher can invite the students to take part and respect them, so that they will participate enthusiastically and obtain knowledge, experiences, and values.

SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions for Teacher

(1). Enhance professional knowledge on life-and-death education

The teacher should possess positive knowledge and attitude for life-and-death issues. In addition, in process of teaching, the teacher must be sensitive to his/her own as well as the students' psychological reaction, accept students' different emotional reactions, and provide timely grief consultancy and assistance for them to get adapted to the mood of loss.

(2). Enhance professional intellect and ability of drama

Familiarity with strategies of drama in education, the skills to ask questions, teacher in role, and class operation and management play an important part in the effectiveness of drama teaching. Consequently, to proceed drama program design and teaching, the teacher has to equip himself/herself with professional knowledge and skills and accumulate the practical experience in drama teaching.

(3). Emphasize on students' developing stage and ability

To design drama in education program, the teacher should fully understand the students who take part in dramatic activities, and seek for appropriate teaching goals on the basis of the students' developing stage, practical experiences, and feelings after the activities in order to sufficiently develop the design of the program.

(4). Establish learning-styled team

The researcher asserts that if a learning-based research team can be set up before action research, through cooperative learning, interaction, and sharing, not only the teaching difficulty can be broken through, but also the teacher will not work hard alone in the long journey of research.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SCHOOL AND PATENTS

(1). Provide spacious environment for the drama activities and support implementation of life education

Dramatic activities take larger space for the students to stretch and do activities, so in regard of arranging the teaching environment, the school should arrange classroom that can be used by the students to proceed dramatic activities.

(2). Implementation of life education should inform parents and seek for their support

The theme in this research involves the sensitive life-and-death issues, so before the program begins, the research will tell the students about the teaching content and methods, and try to obtain the parents' approval.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

(1). Research subject

It is suggested that the research subject can be students in kindergarten, elementary school, or junior high school, or even students in senior high school, college, and university.

(2). Research theme

The researcher holds that the theme can concentrate on exploring students' growth in discussion and publishing abilities in respect with drama in education teaching. Additionally, the question proposal skills and classroom management are supportive for drama teaching, since effective question proposal can guide the students to conduct deep thinking, while classroom management is an expertise. Consequently, the studies in the future can further probe into how to enhance the teacher's skills for propose questions in drama teaching and better the teacher's ability of classroom management.

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