What Do Basic Education Teachers Participating in Creative Drama Instructor/Leadership Program Think about the Creative Drama Method?

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Abstract: This study aims at revealing how basic education teachers, as the foundation of the educational system participating in the Private Creative Drama Instructor/Leadership Program, comprehend the creative drama method and their experiences with this process. The study was designed using the phenomenology qualitative research pattern. The participants consisted of nine teachers (six female and 3 male teachers), working in different branches who completed the first two stages (96 hours of training). Data were collected through unstructured interviews and participant diaries. The data were analyzed using inductive content analysis. Criterion sampling was preferred in the formation of the study group to include situations that meet the determined criteria in the study. The first criterion was that the teachers had taken the first two stages of the drama course as they understood the nature of drama. Participants emphasized the strengths of using creative drama as a method at the end of the course. The findings revealed that drama education and applications contribute to skills such as language, decision-making, and expression skills and have a positive effect on personal development. In addition, getting to know each other in the group is significant in creating a convenient and appropriate setting in drama practice.

Keywords: Creative Drama, Basic Education, Drama Practice, Phenomenology.

1. Introduction

Fact that a teacher-centered process does not allow for an effective learning process, hence they switch from a traditional to a constructivist approach. This transformation has an impact on educational programs as well as changes the teachers' view of the learning and teaching process. Therefore, teachers must better themselves both professionally and personally. From this point of view, teachers' development requires a comprehensive awareness of everyday life as well as the application of multiple methodologies and techniques. As the finding, the employment of constructivist methods and techniques in an activity-based and practical manner can be highly beneficial for a student-centered learning process. One of the methods is the creative drama method.

In the educational system, creative drama is an effective method, and frequently used to assist student involvement in the learning process. An instructor/teacher must be qualified when applying this method in their lesson; they should engage in field knowledge through training programs to implement the creative drama successfully. This is in line with Adıgüzel (2010)stating that qualified instructors/leaders who are well-trained in this field are needed to achieve the goals of creative drama. The reason is that an uneducated teacher/instructor turns into a simple game or imitation activity when trying to apply this method to the impact of limited knowledge. There is an institution responsible for the training program, Contemporary Drama Association (CDA). It carries on with the Creative Drama Instructor/Leadership program approved by the Ministry of National Education since 2000. This institution, apart from universities, trains important instructors in the field. The participants receive a total of 320 hours of training in six stages and are trained with both theoretical and applied field knowledge of creative drama. Contemporary Drama Association (CDA), a non-governmental organization, is the first institution that developed a creative drama instructor certificate program approved by the Ministry of National Education. Through its works, It also fulfills an important need in drama leadership in our country. The experiences, sentiments, and opinions of the trained

drama instructors/teachers are expected to be an essential part of the training. Views of creative drama processes about teachers (E. A. Aykaç & Metinnam, 2019; Güler & Kandemir, 2015), pre-service teachers (Başci & Gündoğdu, 2011; Hamurcu, 2018; Kaf, 2017; Ormancı & Ören Fatma, 2010) and university students (M. Aykaç & Tanrıseven, 2013) were analyzed in previous studies. However, there has not been study revealing the views of the instructor/leadership program participants on drama throughout the course.

1.1 Related Research

After graduating from teacher training institutions, teachers are expected to have adequate knowledge and skills. Teachers can support children's development and effective learning by using the drama method in their teaching programs (Szecsi, 2008). However, it is imperative that the teacher who incorporates the creative drama method into educational programs has the required abilities and expertise to provide positive effects on children. Drama offers both personal and professional development opportunities to adults, particularly teachers. Thus, acquiring drama education can help them advance professionally. In this context, the fact that teachers have been trained is regarded as crucial in terms of the objectives of this field. Furthermore, it is thought that it is important to increase the number of studies to be carried out in this field in terms of revealing the perceptions of teachers about the creative drama method and the perspectives of the education they receive on the creative drama method.

1.2 Research Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to reveal the existence of the creative drama method in the learning process, how the teachers are the foundation of the educational system, and participating in the Private Creative Drama Instructor/Leadership program comprehend drama and their experiences in this process. In order to fulfill the purpose of this study, the following research questions were addressed:

1   How do basic education teachers participating in the Creative Drama Instructor/Leadership program comprehend the drama method?
2   What are the drama experiences of basic education teachers participating in the Creative Drama Instructor/Leadership program?

2. Theoretical Framework

Drama studies are implemented in Turkey with varied age groups and developmental participants' characteristics within the scope of formal and non-formal education; it is used in almost every lesson and subject in the field of creative education. Creative drama has proven its usability in education (San, 2020). Many studies reveal the importance of drama in education. These studies have focused on the impact of drama on children, its contributions to their development, teachers' competencies, and students' opinions, perceptions, and attitudes about drama. The findings of this study improved the understanding of the value of drama in education (Fleming et al., 2004; Hui & Lau, 2006; Sextou, 2002; Veach & Gladding, 2006). A meta-analysis study discloses that creative drama is an effective approach by analyzing all drama studies conducted at the basic education level in Turkey on the impact of academic achievement, permanent learning, attitude, skill, and value development (E. Yıldırım, 2021). For this reason, as mentioned above, basic education teachers have great responsibilities and duties in the implementation of the method in the classroom.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This study was designed with the qualitative method by Creswell (2007) since it aims to reveal the essence of the experiences of the drama method, phenomenology. Phenomenological research tried to reach the essence of experience by questioning the experiences related to the phenomenon. Studies that define the common meaning of lived experiences of several people about a phenomenon or concept are defined as phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2013). This definition aims to answer the questions: "What did individuals experience?" and "How did they experience it?". Thus, experience is significant for phenomenological research.

The phenomenology pattern intends to expose the phenomena that we are familiar with and lack a deeper understanding of, with the assistance of those who experienced them (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Patton, 2002). (Creswell, 2007) focused on two types of phenomenology: hermeneutic (interpretive) and Empirical (descriptive). Empirical (descriptive) phenomenology focuses on uncovering lived experiences and understanding the phenomenon. This study employed the empirical (descriptive) phenomenological method as the experiences of the teachers who implemented the creative drama method were tried to be understood and interpreted, and it was aimed to describe their experiences of the method applications. In this context, it was regarded as the most appropriate pattern for this s. Hence, through the interpretations of the teachers, first-hand in-depth information about the subject would be acquired properly.

3.2 Participant

In phenomenology research, the participant's experiences are the starting point. In these studies, the data source is the primary person who experienced the phenomenon that the research focuses on and can reflect on the phenomenon they experienced (A. Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The study group involved participants who completed the first two stages (96 hours of training) of the Contemporary Drama Association Special Creative Drama Instructor/Leadership Program and participated in the research voluntarily. Purposive sampling methods are frequently used in phenomenological research. However, this study used criterion sampling. Accordingly, the main criterion in this study was that the teachers had completed the first two stages of the creative drama course in July and August as a form of they reached the level of understanding the nature of drama. In addition, another justification is that drama, by definition, is focused on incorporating playful processes. Considering the developmental characteristics of preschool and primary school children, the views of teachers who teach students at this level on drama are particularly essential, since they take a role in the play period. The descriptive data for the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Information on the Study Groups

Participants	Gender	Age	Department	Education Status	Seniority/ Experience
Participant 1	Female	27	Pre-school teacher	Bachelor's degree	3
Participant 2	Female	33	Pre-school teacher	Doctorate	9
Participant 3	Female	28	Primary teacher	Bachelor's degree	5
Participant 4	Female	23	Primary teacher	Postgraduate	1
Participant 5	Female	33	Primary teacher	Postgraduate	1
Participant 6	Male	36	Pre-school teacher	Bachelor's degree	10
Participant 7	Female	25	Primary teacher	Bachelor's degree	2
Participant 8	Male	30	Primary teacher	Bachelor's degree	6
Participant 9	Male	35	Pre-school teacher	Bachelor's degree	10

Table 1 presents that the participants of this study consisted of six female and three male teachers. The age range of the participants varies between 23-36. In addition, three participants continue their postgraduate education. Moreover, four participants are working as preschool teachers, and five participants are working as classroom teachers. According toCreswell & Poth (2016), participant selection strategies are in a very narrow range in

phenomenological studies. A. Yıldırım & Şimşek (2016) stated that the number of participants in phenomenology studies has an important role and that this number should not exceed 10, while Wilson (2015) stated that even though there is no strict rule, the number of participants generally varies between 6 and 20. The interviews continued until the participant provided the necessary information. A total of nine participants, including six female and three male participants formed the participant group of the research within the scope of volunteering.

3.3 Data Collection

The main data collection tool in phenomenology research interviews (Sanders, 1982; A. Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The purpose of the interview is to collect data about the research question. The researcher asks questions to reveal the participants' experiences about the phenomenon in detail, to learn how they feel, and how this circumstance affects them. In phenomenology studies, semi-structured or unstructured interviews are most commonly used. According to Aspers (2009), structured interviews are not ideal options notably in phenomenology studies since they are created within the framework of the researcher's perspective and are not open to new and varied ideas that the participants would bring up. This study used an unstructured interview and took approximately one week during the data collection. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes and was recorded with a voice recorder to be transcribed later. Another data collection tool used in this study was student diaries. Diaries can be useful in reaching individual observations, feelings, reactions, comments, and explanations (A. Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Diaries served as a valuable additional source that helped to shape the process and assess the implementation.

3.4 Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected through unstructured interviews were analyzed using the inductive content analysis technique (Patton, 2002). The principal feature of inductive content analysis is that it derives categories and themes from the analyzed data. The researcher initially produced open coding while examining and analyzing the text, then constructs categories and finally summarizes them. Open coding is the process of categorizing texts based on the researcher's readings (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Then, categories were created in which similar characteristics are produced. These categories could be grouped under more inclusive headings if necessary. It is one of the important researchers' responsibilities to decide which codes should be gathered under the same category (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). In the summarizing phase, the researcher formulates a general description of the topic through the categories developed. Within the scope of validity and reliability studies, first of all, expert experience in qualitative research was obtained for the questions asked during the data collection process. After getting the expert point of view, there were no changes to the questions, but some corrections were made to make the questions clear and intelligible. Moreover, confirmation analysis was carried out in line with the strategies suggested in the relevant literature (Guba, 1981; Merriam, 2002). During the confirmation review, the professional analyzed the compatibility between the category and subcategories using the raw data texts. The reliability [Reliability = Consensus / (Agreement + Disagreement)] formula recommended by Miles & Huberman (1994) was used for the percentage of agreement between the researcher and expert coding. The agreement between the coding of the two researchers was determined to be 94%. The findings were supported using direct quotations. In this context, P1, P2, and P3 codes were used for interviews, while D-P1, D-P2, and D-P3 codes were used for diaries.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

In this study, various criteria were used to maximize validity and reliability. First and foremost, long-term interaction with basic education teachers and expert opinions were attempted to give credibility. The researcher also participated in the lesson with the teachers in this process. During the preparation of the interview questions and training activities, all procedures and expert opinions were considered. Coder reliability is one method for increasing the accuracy of research in qualitative investigations. This study used the encoder reliability formula proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994). The Decisiveness of the analysis between the researcher and the experts was calculated in accordance with the formula "Reliability=Number of Agreements / Number of Agreements + Number of Disputes". Among the researchers, Decoder's reliability

was 0.94. Therefore, since it is above 0.80, the analysis of the data collection tool used in this study is considered reliable.

4. Findings

This study aims at revealing how basic education teachers participating in the Special Creative Drama Instructor/Leadership Program comprehend drama and their experiences. The data of this qualitative research study were collected through unstructured interviews with the participants and their diaries. The data were analyzed using content analysis. The data were first divided into codes, which were then combined under themes during the analysis. These themes are presented under the title "Findings on the experiences of the participants participating in the drama course regarding the drama method".

4.1 Findings Related To the Experiences of the Participants Who Attended the Creative Drama Course Regarding the Drama Method

The experiences of the drama course participants were organized under the themes of making sense of drama, strengths of drama, weaknesses of drama, contributions of drama to participants, and difficulties that may be encountered in drama practices. The themes are presented below respectively:

4.2 Making Sense of Creative Drama

In this part, the codes of the categories determined by the finding of data analysis were provided along with the models. The researcher classified participant opinions into themes and code models. Moreover, the findings obtained from the participants were supported by direct quotations. It was observed that the participants frequently emphasized the concepts of animation, improvisation, gamification, role-playing, method, and technique. The concepts that the participants attributed to the drama while making sense of it are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Concepts in Drama Definition

The participants expressed the method of creative drama as follows: "It is the animation of a subject, the emotions, and thoughts that are desired to be given, with techniques such as improvisation and role-playing" (Adıgüzel, 2019). It was determined that the participants emphasized the definition of drama in the literature when understanding drama. Examples of direct quotations from the opinions of participants (P1 and P6) are given below:

"It is the enactment of a target or idea with techniques such as improvisation and role-playing based on the experiences of the members of a group," said P1.

"It is the gamification of the message that is meant to be given by the use of techniques such as improvisation and role-playing," said P6.

P4 said: *"Drama is a very powerful method that can be used both as a tool and a goal. It can be used as a method in the learning process, as it makes learning permanent and enjoyable; It is one of the best methods used as a tool to support personal development, such as the ability to express oneself in front of the public and speaking skills."*

P5 said *"(…) It is a technique that shows us various ways to solve the problems we encounter in life. It is a learning and teaching method that incorporates the process of learning how to deal with problems and experiencing it in different problems, thanks to the methods and techniques used in drama."* P5 emphasized that creative drama is a method that guides problem-solving. In addition, it is understood from the diaries that P8 emphasized drama problem-solving skills. A view of P8 on this is as follows: *"I was amazed by the power of drama to develop problem-solving skills. I've experienced this. In activities, you need to think about a situation or an event at that moment, and this situation improves your decision-making skills by fueling creativity in a chain. You solve a problem by thinking about different alternatives with those decisions."* From the views of P7 and the diaries of P2, it is pointed out that drama is similar to theater, but it is not the same as theater, it is a method with variations, and the entertaining, and instructive part of the drama is emphasized:

"….. actually I thought drama and theater were the same things. But after the course, I realized that there are big differences, even though the drama is more fun and instructive. One of the most important points between drama and theater for me is the difference between role-playing and acting. So, although there are big differences between drama and theater, I can say that they support each other," said P7.

"When I think of drama, I can only think of concepts such as play and theatre. However, after this course, I learned so much, and I realized that it is a very powerful method in itself that contains the play in its formation and is supported by the characteristics of the theater. In addition, when we look at it in terms of purpose, we can see that it is different from the theater. A very powerful interdisciplinary method in every respect," said D-P2.

Finally, P8 stated that drama creates awareness and explained it as a method that provides an opportunity for the individual to get to know himself in this process:

"Drama is the process of self-knowledge of the individual. Drama is a method that helps the individual to raise awareness about himself and his environment, to cooperate more easily with the group and social environment, and to teach him to look at and evaluate life from an aesthetic point of view," said P8.

4.3 Strengths of Creative Drama

Participants' opinions about the strength of using drama as a method are presented as a model in Figure 2 as themes and codes.

Figure 2. Codes Related to Strengths of Drama Theme

The teachers who participated in the study emphasized the method's strengths rather than its flaws, claiming that it would not have any disadvantages if used by experts. The participants expressed a common thought that the drama method rescued the subject from boredom and made learning fun and permanent. The opinions of the participants on this subject are as follows:

"Drama supports fun and permanent learning by making a living. (…)," said P1.

"What I have said here are just some that come to mind. Because this method is so effective that whatever I write, I will put it in half. It can be said that it has many benefits, such as learning by doing and living, being a fun process, and having achieved permanent learning (…)," said P2.

"It makes the process more fun. It ensures that what is learned and what is done in the process are more permanent since learning will occur by doing and living," said P6.

"(…) Students can get bored in usual lessons. But the lesson taught through drama will make the students more active, the students will enjoy the lesson because they will learn the lesson by having fun, and perhaps most importantly, the students will understand the lesson better and permanent learning will take place," said D-P1.

"While lecturing using creative drama, the group gets to know each other better, the participants in the group express themselves easily and learn better, permanent learning occurs," said D-P8.

P4 and P5 reported that the atmosphere created by creative drama in the teaching process strengthened the group ties by making the participants feel like they belonged to a group, and contributed positively to communication and interaction. The participants' opinions on the subject are as follows:

"(…) game-like processes facilitate the attention and participation of the participants by making even boring topics enjoyable. It strengthens group ties," said P4.

"Drama enables people to get to know each other, communicate and interact with each other. Acting cooperatively, belonging to a group or class, and being included can be achieved through drama. (…)," said P5.

As P7 stated and P5 wrote in the diary, it was expressed that an individual could overcome shyness. The opinions on the subject are as follows:

"Actually, when we focus on the drama process, we can see that it affects all age groups, whether adults or children. I realized that individuals who were shy at the beginning started to communicate and take responsibility within the group at the end of the process, I think all of these can be included in the category of benefits," said P7.

''(…) I am not a very talkative person. I do not like talking much. Thanks to this method, I feel stronger to express myself. My self-confidence has come, I can say that I shed my shyness," said D-P5.

P8 emphasized that drama strengthens the child's self-confidence, that the child takes responsibility for many issues, and activates their creativity. His view on the subject is as follows:

"It helps the child to adapt more easily to the class or group he is in, to regard himself as a part of the group, and to develop a sense of belonging. The child feels valued. He gains a sense of "I can do it". He expresses himself more easily in a group. Most importantly, the child's creativity develops in the process, and he does not avoid taking responsibility," said P8.

4.4 Weakness of Drama

Participant opinions on the weakness of applying drama as a method are presented in Figure 3 as themes and codes.
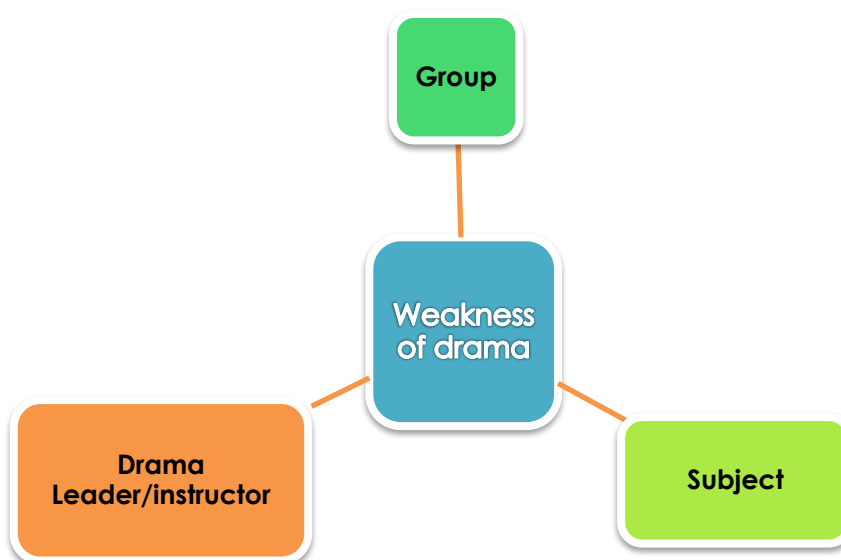

Figure 3. Codes Related to the Weakness of Drama Theme

While the participants emphasize the deficiencies of creative drama, it is clear that they pay attention to the basic elements and components of creative drama, such as group, subject, and drama leader. They claimed that the lack or deficiency arising from these three elements might diminish the efficiency of the drama method. The participants' opinions about the subject are as follows:

"The group members must be willing when the creative drama method is used. No matter how well the drama leader teaches the subject with the drama method, no matter how suitable the subject is for the creative drama method, all these will not make much sense unless there is group dynamism and group desire. This is an issue that needs to be analyzed. If the group members are reluctant, there will be difficulties in reaching the target," said P4.

"If it is thought that the target subject can be taught by a method other than the drama method and the aim can be achieved, the lesson should be taught with that method. First of all, everyone should know well that drama is not a magic stick. The idea that every subject can be taught better using drama is also wrong. Unfortunately, as teachers, we think that we can explain every subject with the drama method," said P6.

"To me, one of the most important and overlooked aspects of using the creative drama method in the lessons is the teachers (drama leaders) who use the drama method in their lessons and are not trained on this subject. I think this is a neglected issue. There are many teachers who use the creative drama method in their lessons without taking a drama course or training anywhere. No matter how well the drama leader/practitioner uses the creative drama method in the lessons, he may not behave in accordance with the nature of drama because he has not got any training, which can turn into a disadvantage for the students in the learning process," said P7.

"One of the most important points that caught my attention in drama practices during the course was how qualified and experienced the drama leader was. If the person applying drama does not have background knowledge or experience, it can lead to bad findings, but it can turn this advantage into a disadvantage when I think that I successfully use the drama method in my lessons. Therefore, my advice to teachers or researchers who will apply the creative drama method in their classes is to be well-trained and experienced on this subject," said P8.

4.5 Contributions of Creative Drama

Themes and codes about the contributions of drama to the participants after the drama course are presented as a model in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Themes and Codes Related to the Contribution of the Drama Course to the Participants

Participants expressed that the creative drama course contributed to many aspects, such as decision-making, self-expression, contributing to group relations, cooperation, problem-solving, and empathy in terms of basic language skills.

P1 affirmed that the course contributed mostly to basic language skills by saying; "…….*I realized that my speaking and listening skills improved thanks to this drama course.*"

P2 underlined the drama's effect on developing decision-making skills by saying; *"I can say that creative drama contributed to me mostly in decision making. Because at that moment, you need to be very active in the process and you need to concentrate so that you do not miss any details. Is not it the same in daily life, there must have been moments when you had to think and make a quick decision in the face of certain events.*"

P3 agreed that before the drama course, she regarded drama as an insignificant and useless method. However, this thought changed completely after the course, and he overcame her shyness. Her opinions on the subject are as follows:

"(…) Before I took the course, creative drama meant nothing to me except as a method used in the learning process. I thought it was a method that could only be used in classes like all other methods, But after taking the course, I realized that the creative drama method is not such a simple method. We can also base this on; I am normally very shy and have difficulties in socializing. But as I understood the nature of creative drama and actively participated in the practices during this course, I saw that I overcame my shyness at the end of the process. Because here you have to participate in the practices even if you do not want to, and at first I was very shy here as well and did not want to participate in the practices. However, as the process goes on and you have to participate in practices, you break that resistance here and you always want to participate in the practices like a child. Here, I want to express that creative drama should also be used at the point of personal development (…)," said P3.

In addition, P3 emphasized the effect of drama on learning and the affective dimension. She expressed her opinion as follows: *"(…) The things you gained after the course and the methods you learned make you realize their powerful effects on both the teacher and the student and make those fun moments relive. One of its strengths is that it allows us to enjoy the whole process, as it is process-oriented rather than result-oriented and on permanent learning. (…)"*

P4 stated that drama contributed to him in terms of expressing skills. Her opinions on the subject are as follows:

"I must say here that I luckily came to this course and participated in drama practices. My purpose in coming to the course was actually to understand the practices and nature of drama and to use it in my lessons. However, as the process progressed, apart from this purpose, there was something that drama contributed to me. It was the skill of self-expression. Because I am a person who is criticized a lot by friends in daily life for expressing myself. I realized that this skill has improved thanks to drama practices. I was also amazed by the power of creative drama to unite people (…)," said P4

P2, P4, P6, P7, and P8 emphasized the effect of drama on the group and stated that they attached the group together and contributed to group relations. Views on the subject are as follows:

"The authoritarian, non-hierarchical teaching of the course by the leader creates a strong tie between leader-participant and participant-participant. It makes you feel like you belong to the group. Group activities strengthen cooperation skills," said D-P2.

"I was amazed by the power of creative drama to unite people (…)," said P4.

"Creative drama unites group members together in a very short time with a steel bond. The friendship relations of the group members become very strong in a short time. Group members have the opportunity to get to know each other well in a short time," said P6

"The ability to organize in groups and adapt to collective decisions are some of the strengths of drama," said P7

"(…) the harmony and unity of the group actually opens every door. Everyone has equal rights there. When different minds come together in equal status, very original ideas emerge. There you think fast, you have to make quick decisions, you try ways to solve the problem (…)," said D-P8

P6 expressed that the drama course contributed both professionally and personally. Opinions on the subject are as follows:

"I want to answer this question by dividing it into two parts. First of all, drama has personally contributed to me. It helped me see my own strengths and weaknesses. It made me feel more comfortable in the group and I can say that it helped me to express myself more easily and to overcome my shyness and excitement in public speaking. Drama has also professional contributions to me; it makes the lesson fun, learning by having fun and permanent learning is provided thanks to drama. With this method, it will facilitate my classroom management, and discipline problems will be less experienced. However, since the class will actively participate in the lesson, full learning will occur," said P6.

P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6 emphasized the effect of drama on many skills such as problem-solving, empathy, self-expression, using body language, self-knowledge, and creativity. Their opinions on the subject are as follows:

"I realized that creative drama is a problem-solving tool. There was producing solutions to problems through improvisations and animations. In addition, I think that one of the strengths of drama is that it is effective in expressing themselves better and developing their empathy," said P2.

"The drama has so many strengths that I do not know which one to say. Because of the activities in the course I attended, I saw its power in many areas such as communicating with people, acting in cooperation, expressing oneself, using body language effectively, getting to know oneself, and developing creativity," said P5.

"(…) I think drama develops creative thinking, critical thinking, and empathy very well. Gestures and facial expressions improve speaking and self-expression skills (…)," said D-P3

"(…) it improves speaking skills, makes participants more active, and socializes them. The participant is not introverted, on the contrary, he can express his feelings more easily," said D-P4

"At the beginning, I had a lot of prejudices about the method and the course. I can say that I am an introverted antisocial person. I thought I couldn't. Then, as I attended the classes, I realized that my communication skills improved, I could express myself very easily, and I opened up socially. I really enjoyed (…)," said D-P6.

P8 stated that drama should be taught as a compulsory course in educational programs departments of education faculties and emphasized its role in gaining many values and developing many skills. His opinion on the subject is as follows.

"I think that drama should be a compulsory course in all education faculties. Developing skills, thanks to drama, such as empathy, interpersonal relations, respect and tolerance for differences, and taking responsibility can be counted among the strengths of drama. It's being spontaneous and natural also improves one's skills such as thinking fast, generating ideas, and finding solutions to problems, and it is a very powerful method in terms of allowing the individual to experience them," said P8.

4.6 The Difficulties They May Encounter During the Application of Creative Drama

When the opinions expressed by the teachers in the previous themes are analyzed, it was seen that the drama contributed to the participants in many ways. In addition, the participants stated that drama is a very powerful and effective method of making learning more enjoyable and permanent and improving the self-confidence and communication skills of the individual. However, teachers also stated that there were some obstacles in front of using creative drama effectively. One of the obstacles most emphasized by the teachers is the inconvenience of the place: The participants' opinions on the subject are as follows:

"While applying the drama method, the subject, place, and people should be suitable. If the place is not suitable for the drama, the desired target may not be achieved," said *P1*.

"Place, place, place. The place is so important that you cannot do anything in a place where you are not comfortable. We must provide an environment in which participants should feel good. In addition, if you do not do the activities in a suitable place, you will reduce the effectiveness of that application. It's so simple," said *D-P3*.

"(…) At the same time, place (…) can be counted among the difficulties," said *P4*.

"Classroom environments-primary school, secondary school, high school- are not physically suitable for the application of this method. To use this method, there must be a large free space in the classrooms. Some activities cannot be implemented because the floor is concrete. In other words, the fact that there is not more than one drama hall in schools (even if there is one) is one of the difficulties that will be encountered in applying this method," said *P6*.

"I realized how important place is for drama practices. We should provide an environment where students can feel comfortable. When I think about our classroom environment, both the desks and tables and the space of the classroom are unfortunately not suitable for this. Classrooms already cover a very small space. Also, the classrooms are crowded," said *D-P8*.

P3 stated that the drama-applying process is difficult, and the theory part is very good, but it is not reflected in practice and is expressed as an obstacle. Her view on the subject is as follows:

"For me, the most difficult part of the drama is the difficulties experienced at the point of practicing. Although many of our friends know the characteristics and stages of drama very well, even me, we cannot reflect it on the field, that is, in the applications, so this information we learned is not so important," said *P3*.

P4 also draws attention to the harmony of the group and sees the practice of drama by people with weak creative thinking skills as an obstacle. In addition, her view on the subject is as follows:

"Creative drama, as the name suggests, requires a lot of creativity. For this, both sufficient knowledge and qualifications and creativity skills are needed. (…)," said *P4*.

P2, P4, and P5 emphasized the group and considered not knowing the group, not knowing their needs, not designing suitable activities for their age, and disharmony of the group as barriers to using creative drama effectively. Their opinions on the subject are as follows:

"I consider not being able to control the group well enough as the difficulty I may face. At this point, I think it is important to know the group members well and to identify the needs of them," said *P2*.

"Insufficient group dynamism is one of the difficult situations that the group leader may experience (…)," said *P4*.

"If we do not choose activities according to the age of the group while applying the drama method, we may have difficulties. If we cannot plan the stages of the drama exactly, we may have difficulties. Before the drama leader practices, he/she needs to plan the activities. The leader should know the characteristics of the class while doing these," said *P5*.

P8 regards issues such as crowded classrooms, shyness, and staying away from each other as obstacles. His opinions on the subject are as follows:

"I teach fifth and sixth grade. I tried to make the first meeting and orientation with the methods I learned in the drama and I got very good feedback. But lack of experience, overcrowded classrooms, and (sociological) distancing of girls and boys from one another make it difficult to achieve desired goals. However, using drama as a method is indispensable for education," said *P8*.

5. Discussion

According to the findings obtained from the diaries and interviews, the participants defined drama as animation and gamification of an event with certain techniques, based on their life experiences. In addition, when defining drama, the participants frequently emphasized these

concepts, such as animation, improvisation, and role-playing, which form the basis of drama. Moreover, drama might be described as a method, with emphasis on its methodological dimension. Data in the diaries obtained during the interviews with the participants about the application and kept after the application are compatible, consistent, and support each other.

The participants drew attention to the elements of drama related to the group, the subject, and the drama leader, and stated that if there was a problem, the effect of the drama method and the practices might be interrupted and weakened. They claimed that the issue of the drama leader's training was neglected and that many practitioners who applied this method did not receive training. In this context, they stated that practitioners using this method should be trained, experienced, creative, familiar with the group, and well-qualified. Adıgüzel (2019) stated that to use drama as a method, teachers must undergo training covering certain periods. He also stated that drama practices applied by people who did not have these experiences could be evaluated as practices that could lead to incomplete and wrong findings.

According to the findings reflected in the diaries of the participants and the interviews with them, they stated that the drama would facilitate learning by experiencing it, making it fun, and contributing to the permanence of what was learned. It is stated in many studies with pre-service teachers (Hamurcu, 2018; Saylan et al., 2016) that drama is fun, facilitates learning, and increases permanence. As a finding of the research conducted by Başci & Gündoğdu (2011) with pre-service teachers, it is stated that creative drama provides learning by doing, and has positive contributions to permanent learning and learning by having fun. Fainley-Johnson (Bowmaker, 2002) also states that free environments created by drama can facilitate learning. From this point of view, it can be explained that these findings are in the literature of many studies, that the drama method makes learning by doing concrete, contributes to learning by having fun, and makes what is learned permanent.

The interactive feature of the drama made the participants experience the feeling of belonging to a group, and they expressed that due to this communication and interaction, their shyness decreased and they improved their self-confidence and self-expression skills. The findings of the study are consistent with the findings of many studies in the literature (Kaf-Hasırcı et al., 2008; Kaf, 2017). In the study conducted by M. Aykaç & Tanrıseven (2013) with university students, it was found that drama contributed positively to the participants' ability to express themselves more easily, overcome their shyness, communicate, and adapt to the group. It was emphasized in many studies that the self-confidence of the participants increased with drama (Adıgüzel, 2019; Calp, 2020; Palavan, 2017; Švábová, 2018). Similarly, Phillips (1999) stated that even shy students gain more confidence thanks to drama because drama provides socialization. In this context, it is clear that the findings obtained in this study are compatible with the findings in the literature.

Participants stated that the drama method improved their basic language skills. This finding is similar to the findings of many studies in the literature, and it shows that drama positively supports the language development of children (Eti & Aktaş Arnas, 2016; Yalçınkaya & Adıgüzel, 2019). Szecsi (2008) argued that drama supports the social and language development of the participants since the interaction, cooperation, and speaking skills of the people participating in the creative drama processes are important. Marschke (2005) stated that the drama techniques applied in the course make positive contributions to the communication and language skills of the students in his research.

Participants stated that the drama method contributed to the development of many skills such as decision-making, expression, problem-solving, empathy, and creativity. Annarella (1992) stated that creative drama activities could also be effective in problem-solving skills. Palavan (2017) concluded in his study that drama improved the problem-solving skills of pre-service primary school teachers. According to McNaughton (2004), in education, drama can help the development of communication and decision-making skills of the individual and can enable the individual to gain social sensitivity towards his/her friends. In addition, it was revealed in meta-analysis studies on drama that drama was effective on social skills (Özbey & Sarıkaya,

2019), social communication skills (Batdı & Elaldı, 2020), and skills (Ulubey, 2018; Yildirim, 2022). All these findings show that drama affects many skills. In this context, the findings obtained in this study are consistent and compatible with the findings of the studies in the literature.

On the other hand, the participants stated that many problems could be seen during the application of drama in schools. These problems were mainly stated as the unsuitability of the place where the drama was applied, the crowded classrooms, the inability to reflect the theoretical knowledge of the practices and the implementation of the practices by uncreative practitioners. Maden (2011) expresses in his study that the environments used in drama studies in schools are an important problem. In the related literature, similar to the findings of the study, it is indicated that the environment in the lessons where the drama method is applied is crowded and noisy (E. A. Aykaç & Metinnam, 2019; Ezer & Aksüt, 2020; İşyar, 2017). In this context, it is obvious that the findings obtained in this study are consistent and compatible with the findings of the studies in the literature.

In this study, the findings revealed that the Creative Drama Instructor/Leadership program contributed to the participants who took the first two stages of training, personally, socially, and professionally. In addition, the drama process contributed to the participants' attitudes towards communication, interaction, and the drama method. The participants' individual and social contributions to the training were emphasized. This study was planned as a phenomenology research focused on the participants' evaluation of the process. The effect of the process can be revealed statistically from a quantitative point of view in other studies. To be implemented effectively in schools, suitable places should be created for drama. It is recommended that teachers be encouraged to use the creative drama method in the classroom.

6. Conclusion

The main purpose of this study is to reveal how basic education teachers who play an important role in the educational system to educate students participating in the Private Creative Drama Instructor/Leadership program comprehend the creative drama method and their experiences with this process. The study was designed using the phenomenology qualitative research pattern. It was determined that the participants emphasized the concepts included in the definition of drama in the literature while understanding drama. They believed that when the creative drama method is applied by experts, this method cannot have severe drawbacks; on the contrary, it is a highly powerful method. Participants emphasized that the drama method saves the subject from boredom and makes learning exciting and permanent, increases self-esteem, activates creativity, and socializes students by overcoming shyness. The participants stated that the creative drama course contributed to many aspects, such as basic language skills (speaking, telling, listening, etc.), decision-making, self-expression, contributing to group relations, cooperation, problem-solving, and empathy. They affirmed that among the difficulties they may encounter when applying the method is the unsuitability of the place and crowded classrooms. Various recommendations were made depending on the findings of the present study. This study was conducted with basic education (preschool and primary school) teachers who took drama courses. After that, the studies were carried out with different branch teachers who have received drama education. This study was conducted with teachers, which consists of six stages of drama education, and have completed all of these stages. This study was conducted as a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed research method.

7. Limitation

This study is limited to teachers working in basic education (preschool teachers and primary teachers who took the first two stages of the drama course.

8. Recommendation

Various recommendations were made depending on the findings of the present study. This is expected to be used as a reference for researchers in conducting similar research related to the teachers who took drama courses and complete all of the stages. Teachers and researchers who will practice drama should make the place where the practice will be held convenient and appropriate.

Acknowledgments

Conflict of Interests

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

Reference

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Notes

The creative drama course is a 320-hour training program consisting of six stages. The researcher participated in the first two courses together with the participants. Ethics committee permission was not obtained because the data of the research belongs to 2019. In this study, all the rules specified in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed. None of the actions specified under the second section of the Directive, "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", were carried out.