

Basic principles, content, and essence of theatrical pedagogy

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Received: 27 October 2024; **Accepted:** 29 December 2024; **Published:** 30 January 2025

Abstract: The article examines the pedagogical conditions for developing the artistic and creative abilities of students in higher scientific institutions through theatrical pedagogy. There is much to learn in the theater. Pedagogical practices that find an educational resource in theater form a special system known as theatrical pedagogy. Today, it addresses many challenges in education. Theatrical pedagogy (as part of artistic pedagogy) offers the creation of an open creative environment for dynamic communication. The principles and content of theatrical pedagogy are explained, emphasizing its essence. The system of artistic education includes training based on humanistic and cultural foundations, as well as the introduction of theatrical pedagogy methods.

Keywords: Pedagogy, artistic education, artistic culture, educational process, teaching methods, innovative technologies, theatrical pedagogy, creativity, abilities, personality.

Introduction: Theatrical pedagogy (as a branch of artistic pedagogy) offers the creation of an open creative environment for lively interaction. In this artistic and creative space, discussions can cover any topic—from science to religion—but their ultimate goal is to shape a holistic worldview while simultaneously developing students' artistic and creative abilities. Based on research into the principles of theatrical pedagogy and drawing from the French experience, I have formulated the following three key principles:

1. The Principle of Events – During training, something transformative must happen for participants. Before experiencing an event, one may think, feel, or act differently. Development occurs through lived experiences.
2. The Principle of Existence – A phenomenon cannot simply result from external conditions; it must be an outcome of personal experience and discovery. Education in theatrical pedagogy becomes an area of individual creative activity. Creative freedom during learning may be gradually shaped by proposed situations, challenges, and obstacles to overcome, but not by prohibitions. By following this principle, students achieve personally meaningful discoveries.
3. The Principle of Improvisation – A defining

characteristic of theatrical pedagogy. A good actor must act before thinking. These qualities enable children to unlock their potential, yet they are often stifled by traditional education systems.

Theatrical pedagogy provides a new perspective on education through the lens of theatrical art. Its value lies in transcending classroom boundaries. The aim of theatrical pedagogy principles is to ensure that what is done in class remains relevant and personally engaging for students. If students perceive the subject not merely as part of a curriculum but as a conversation about life, they will read books, watch films, and attend theater performances beyond their lessons.

How Does Theatrical Pedagogy Contribute to Education?

Theater-based conditions make education both engaging and humane. It is hard to imagine an actor learning to perform simply by reading or listening to others. Actors learn by performing. Teachers should embrace this aspect of theater—leading engaging lessons that capture every student's attention.

Furthermore, directors have long recognized that studying acting fundamentals helps students acquire skills valuable beyond the stage. They overcome psychological barriers, enhance their motivation for

learning, develop an appreciation for artistic imagery, and strengthen their communication skills.

Therefore, education should integrate tools developed for training actors to address complex pedagogical challenges.

There is much to learn in the theater. Pedagogical practices that find a source of educational tools in the theater form a distinctive system—theatrical pedagogy. Today, it continues to address various educational challenges.

Theatrical pedagogy is inherently based on play. When discussing theatrical pedagogy, we primarily refer to play with images.

Let us illustrate this with a simple example. A traditional game of "tag" may not initially seem connected to theatrical pedagogy. However, it can be transformed into a theatrical exercise, such as the "Magic Wand" game. The transformation is simple: each participant holds an imaginary magic wand. By touching another person with it, they can "turn" them into someone else. Students then take on the role of a designated character. If their portrayal is convincing, they succeed, and the game continues. If not, they are eliminated from the game.

Theatrical pedagogy structures lessons not according to the laws of free children's play but according to the principles of art. Psychologists argue that free play is often ineffective, lacking clear spatial and temporal boundaries. Theatrical performances, on the other hand, represent a conscious creative process, aimed at producing a final artistic product within well-defined spatial and temporal limits. Each session results in a concrete achievement, captured within an artistic image.

For instance, a lesson could culminate in a project exhibition on "Ancient Egyptian Pyramids," a choreographed representation of shifting galaxies, an autobiographical collection of insect life stories, or a vibrant musical performance imitating a steel factory orchestra.

These principles define theatrical pedagogy as an approach that creates a holistic image, integrating role-playing, collective creativity, and artistic expression.

Each era has contributed to the development of theatrical pedagogy.

One children's author once said that "silver bells are hidden deep in the hearts of every child. We must find and touch them, so they ring with a kind and joyful chime, brightening the child's world."

Every educator aspires to make students' lives meaningful, engaging, and creative. We all seek new methods for aesthetic education and artistic-creative

development, aiming to cultivate students' individual artistic talents.

Literature Analysis

Theater is a synthetic form of art. As Voltaire once said, "Theater teaches in a way that no thick book ever can."

By incorporating elements of theatrical pedagogy in the learning and educational process, we introduce children to the world of literature, music, visual arts, and other forms of artistic expression. Students develop effective interactions with both large and small social groups, acquiring creative competencies. Through this approach, we fulfill one of the most crucial educational tasks—developing artistic and creative abilities and competencies. Therefore, it can be confidently stated that theatrical pedagogy serves as an excellent tool for shaping well-rounded individuals.

What is theatrical pedagogy? Theatrical pedagogy is a method of personality development through education and training that involves play or stage movement, where personal growth progresses from freedom of choice to the joy of self-expression through responsibility. The primary language of theatrical art is action, and its key characteristics are dialogue and play. These features make theater particularly appealing to students, as communicative play feels natural to them, allowing them to feel at ease and comfortable.

Elements of theatrical pedagogy can also be applied in extracurricular activities, such as clubs, competitions, events, celebrations, and classroom lessons that incorporate theatrical games and stage performances at various stages of instruction.

By preparing for performances and extracurricular activities, young actors engage in different types of speech activities, including listening and speaking. They acquire various competencies:

- Social competence includes the ability to act according to social norms and rules in life situations. To achieve this, children learn to play both positive and negative characters and, most importantly, analyze their behavior. The implementation of this competence within group learning fosters the development of interpersonal communication culture, tolerant behavior, and moral values.
- Civic competence is aimed at acquiring knowledge and understanding of society and homeland. Given that ecological education is included in the curriculum, theatrical pedagogy provides an excellent means to explore the specifics of human-nature interaction.

METHODOLOGY

By interacting with characters in theatrical performances, children learn behavioral norms,

friendship skills, and effective communication. They integrate essential abilities and skills that contribute to ethical behavior, which is an integral part of a healthy lifestyle.

Most importantly, theatrical pedagogy aligns with traditional lessons. It plays a vital role in developing students' communication skills, artistic creativity, and linguistic abilities. Therefore, it is safe to say that theatrical pedagogy can be incorporated into every lesson.

Considering the characteristics of students' artistic thinking, it is essential to engage their emotional interest in the subject matter. The methods, forms, and content of theatrical exercises serve three primary purposes: they immerse children in a unique play environment, reduce the intensity of lessons, and foster creativity. Many educators use puppets and artistic characters to teach behavioral norms, introduce the concept of "magic words," and explain school rules. Theatrical games and dramatizations enhance comprehension, develop dialogue skills, and create engaging moments for physical education.

Observations of students using theatrical pedagogy reveal the following outcomes:

- It creates essential conditions for the well-rounded development of a child's personality.
- It enhances attention, thinking, memory, and independence.
- It expands students' knowledge.
- It sharpens language skills.
- It fosters a creative atmosphere.
- It develops students' artistic and creative abilities.
- It provides children with a unique opportunity for self-expression and personal growth.

CONCLUSIONS

Analysis shows that in foreign pedagogy, various forms of theater in education are more widespread and developed. In recent years, the use of theatrical pedagogy in the educational process has been associated with the concept of continuous and holistic development. The goal of this educational approach is not only to impart scientific knowledge but also to foster students' personal growth, shape a comprehensive worldview, enhance psychological well-being, and develop artistic and creative competencies. Various theatrical practices integrated into the educational process provide solutions to numerous challenges.

Thus, in foreign pedagogy, theater has long been used as a multidimensional tool for education, development,

and socialization, extending beyond specific academic subjects. This explains the diversity of theatrical practices abroad, where children and adolescents creatively reinterpret themselves, academic material, social reality, and political issues.

In Russian educational practice, theater is less frequently utilized, as its functions are mainly limited to moral education and cultural enrichment. Additionally, in school theater productions, the selection of storylines, role distribution, and overall design are typically determined by the teacher. This approach significantly enhances the pedagogical and developmental potential of theater in education, elevating it to the level of a reproductive educational technology.

Thus, incorporating theatrical practices into our educational system requires a thorough examination of approaches and their integration into the educational process.

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