

## The effect of creative drama activities on candidate teachers' self-directed skills

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### Abstract

This research aimed to specify the effect of creative drama activities on candidate teachers' self-directed skills. 35 candidate teachers participated in this study in which a mixture of a qualitative and quantitative method was used. The results obtained from the research showed that creative drama activities are effective on candidate teachers' self-directed skills. In this respect, it can be assumed that creative drama activities improved candidate teachers' self-directed learning skills. It has also been noted that the participant candidate teachers were satisfied with the applications in which creative drama activities were carried out.

Keywords: Creative Drama, pre-school education, self-directed skills, teacher training.

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## 1. Introduction

Information and technology are rapidly developing today and they provide societies with more information, thus it is expected that individuals have the ability to follow these developments to meet their societal needs. Sad and Goktas (2013) state that these developments in the field of information and technology brought together new requirements and understanding in the field of education. In this respect, understanding contemporary teaching has become of crucial importance. Genc and Eryaman (2015) explain education as the most important factor in development and draw attention to the fact that the needed changes cannot be achieved by the changes in the scope of education. Genc and Eryaman (2015) even add that meeting needs in education requires changes in teaching methods. Gursimsek (1998) puts forward a different argument and states that the process of raising individuals of the century is closely related with teacher training.

There is a great need for teachers and teaching methods to be applied in the most effective way during learning-teaching process to raise qualified individuals needed for today's community. In this respect, training teachers is of crucial importance. Unver (2014) emphasizes the need for the connection between theory and application and adds that studies are being carried out on this issue. Yoy (2012) talks about the need for developed and equipped individuals in all aspects and points out that instead of assuming that students have the knowledge of learning while doing, there is still the need for learning/teaching environments in which they can exhibit their own potentials, develop their critical and creative thinking skills. Toy (2012) goes on saying that in providing the mentioned environments, drama is an effective method. Namdar and Camadan (2016) argue that, creative drama is not only a field, but it is also a methodology in education which brings about effective outcomes. Namdar and Camadan (2016) continue emphasizing that practicing creative drama develops individuals' social skills positively and add that social skills are also important for candidate teachers, who can develop these skills while being trained. Similarly, Cayir and Gokbulut (2015) expressed in their study that creative drama is an effective way in teacher training. They also pointed out that creative drama is a method for candidate teachers to use in class while teaching as well as a tool to help individual development. Tanriseven (2013) states that there are researches conducted in literature on drama related to both candidate teachers and students and adds that most of these studies focused on specifying effectiveness of drama. Kara and Cam (2007) conducted a study with candidate teachers and came to a conclusion that creative drama activities have a positive effect on learners' personal development and their future professional life. At the end of an overview of the literature, it is noted that creative drama activities have a positive effect on the learners' success level, their social skills, and their creativity and social skills (Aykac & Adiguzel, 2011; Ulas, Tedik & Sevim, 2014; Ulubey & Toraman, 2015). However, a research has not been carried out in literature to specify the effect of creative drama activities on candidate teachers' self-directed skills. Canipe and Fogerson (2006) explain that self-directed learning is an important subject in adult education. In order to create learning opportunities and develop themselves, it is important individuals have self-directed learning skills (Karatas, 2017). Karatas also explains self-directed learning in a broader sense as the individual's directing self-learning process. Sze-yenga and Hussain (2010) stress that self-directed learning is a basic skill necessary in encouraging life-long learning and add that it is important for learners to adapt self-directed learning positively. Prabjandee and Inthachot (2012) talk about self-directed learning and say its importance was discussed for forty years and explain that it was a tool suggested by Knowles in 1975 for individuals and the people living in a new world to survive. Prabjandee and Inthachot (2013) also stated that self-directed learning is an effective way of learning particularly for university students and added that university students should direct themselves. Researchers emphasize that self-directed learning is of crucial importance in our life and draw attention of educational institutions to take into consideration students' individual differences and help them form self-directed learning skills (Prabjandee & Inthachot, 2013). On the other hand, Tekkol and Demirel (2016) argue that teachers themselves should have such skills in order to contribute student self-directed learning skills. They express worries that, in spite of students' increasing needs to learn, self-directed learning is not dealt with seriously in teacher-training. In this respect, the effect of creative drama activities on candidate teachers' self-directed skills is discussed in this study. Specifying candidate teachers' opinion and feelings towards the application was another discussion point in this research through the following questions:

1. Do creative drama activities create a significant difference in self-directed learning skills of candidate teachers?
2. What views do candidate teachers have towards creative drama applications?

## 2. Methodology

A mixture of qualitative and quantitative method was used in this research. While the quantitative data were obtained through self-directed scale, the quantitative data were collected through interview forms.

### 2.1. Research Participants

This research was done with 35 candidate teachers at the Department of Pre-school Education of Near East University. 15 of the participants were male and 20 of them were female. After graduating from the department, the 2<sup>nd</sup> year candidate teachers will be teaching at pre-school institutions as pre-school teachers.

### 2.2. Research Design

A self-direction scale was used before and after experimental applications to specify the effect of creative drama activities on candidate teachers' self-directed learning skills. In addition, after the application, an interview form was used to specify candidate teachers' views about creative drama activities. The interviews with the candidate teachers lasted 10-15 minutes. The research design is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Research design

	Pre-test	Application	Post-test
Study group	Self-directed learning scale	Application of the training supported with creative drama activities	Self-directed learning scale Semi-structured interviews

## 3. Data Collection

The data collection tools employed to specify the effect of creative drama activities on candidate teachers' self-directed learning skills are as follows:

### 3.1. Self-directed Learning Scale

In this research, in which creative drama activities were applied, the aim was to specify the effect of the activities on candidate teachers' self-directed learning skills. A self-directed learning scale, developed by Williamson (2007) was used to achieve the aim. The Self-Rating Scale of Self-Directed Learning consisted of 60 statements in an order from 5 (Always) to 1 (Never) and was interpreted between 60 to 300 points. The grade limits obtained from the scale were "low self-directed learning skills" for scores between 60-140 points, "average self-directed learning skills" for scores between 141-220, and "high self-directed learning skills" for scores 221-300. While students with average scores are considered to be developing their self-directed learning skills, the ones with 221-300 scores are assumed to be self-directed students (Williamson, 2007). The Cronbach's alpha value of the scale is 0.94.

### 3.2. Interview Form

Semi-structured interview forms, prepared by the researchers (2017), were used to specify candidate teachers' views about creative drama activities. The candidate teachers' views about the application they were involved in were tried to be defined. Face-to-face interviews were given to the volunteer candidate teachers at the end of the research (n=6).

## 4. Application

The application of this research to specify candidate teachers' views about the effect of creative drama activities on their self-directed skills was carried out in the fall term of 2017. The applications administered by only one of the researchers was conducted in one of the pedagogic formation classes. In the first week of the 14-week application, the candidate teachers were given a self-directed learning scale (pre-test). In addition, the researcher informed the candidate teachers about the weekly distribution of the content throughout the application process. The content supported by creative drama activities was transferred to the candidate teachers. The researchers had planned the activities prior to the start of experimental operation.

In in-class applications, the candidate teachers participated actively in the learning-teaching process and carried out group-work. Cooperative studies, which were highly important in this research provided the candidate teacher with the opportunity to learn by doing. Even more, projects reflecting the topics for each week were prepared and effective discussions were held. Because the creative drama activities were the main focus of this research, the candidate teachers had the chance to animate new experiences. At the end of the 14-week process, the candidate teachers were given the self-directed learning test (post-test) again. Meanwhile, interviews were given to volunteer candidate teachers (n=6) and their satisfaction with the application was tried to be specified.

## 5. Data Analysis

In the analysis of the quantitative data obtained from the self-directed learning scale percentages, mean, standard deviation and paired samples statistical analysis technique was conducted. The data obtained was interpreted through 0.05 significance level. The qualitative data obtained from the interview forms, on the other hand, were analyzed through content analysis technique, put into categories and the frequency values were shown in tables. The qualitative data obtained from the research were interpreted in the light of the prospective teachers' views. The prospective teachers were quoted as – (PT).

## 6. Results

In the framework of this research, the findings obtained for qualitative and quantitative data are presented in tables and interpreted as follows;

### 6.1. A comparison of the scores in candidate teachers' skills in self-directed learning

A paired samples statistical analysis technique was conducted to specify the effect creative drama activities on candidate teachers' self-directed learning skills. The findings from candidate teachers' pre-test and post-test self-directed learning skills are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. A comparison of the average scores in candidate teachers' self-directed learning skills

	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Self-directed learning skills	Pre-test	35	220.60	29.46	34	-8.383	.000
	Post-test	35	289.94	35.14			

\*Significant at the .05 level of confidence

As it is seen in Table 2, the pre-test self-directed learning scores of the participant candidate teachers are ( $M=220.60$ ,  $sd=29.46$ ). The scores of the post-test self-directed learning after the application are ( $M=289.94$ ,  $sd=35.14$ ). In this respect, there is a significant difference in favor of the post-test ( $t=-8.383$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). From the findings obtained, it can be noted that creative drama activities have a positive effect on the candidate teachers' self-directed learning skills (see Figure 1). Before the application, the candidate teachers' self-directed learning skills were at an average level, whereas after the application this level rose to a higher point. In this respect, it can be said that drama activities are effective on candidate teachers becoming self-directed learners.

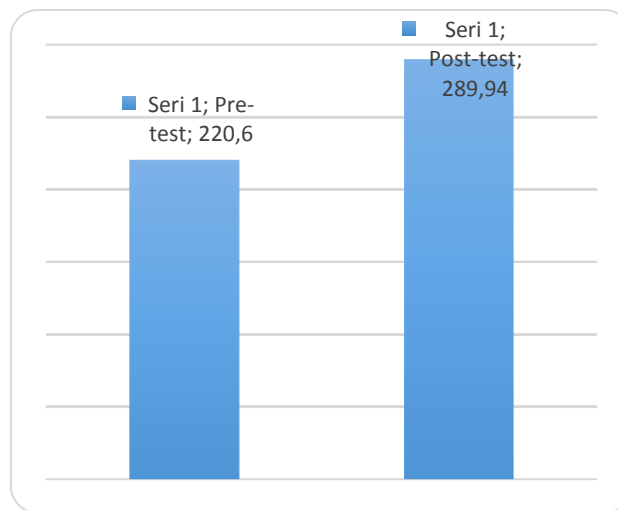


Figure. 1 The level of candidate teachers' pre-test and post-test self-directed learning

## 6.2. Candidate Teachers' Views About Creative Drama Activities

In order to specify the participant candidate teachers' views about creative drama activities, face-to-face interviews were held with volunteer candidate teachers ( $n=6$ ). The categories and frequency values of the qualitative data are as in Table 3.

Table 3. Candidate teachers' views about creative drama activities

Creative drama activities		
Codes	Theme	Frequency (f)
Advantages in the applications	Facilitating learning	6
	Empathy	6
	Attention	4
	Awareness of talents	2
	Confidence	2
	Effective communication	2
	Creativity	1
Emotions for the activities	Happiness	3
	Excitement	3
	Enjoyable	2
	Self-confidence	1
Limitations in the applications	---	0

The findings from the research indicate that the participant candidate teachers are pleased with the creative drama activities. The candidate teachers explained that the drama activities they took part in facilitated their learning (f=6):

PT 4: *"I learned a lot of topics better via creative drama activities"*

PT12: *"I got the information easily via this lesson."*

It is assumed that learning became easier due to the opportunity provided by creative drama activities for the learners to learn by doing. Another view expressed by the candidate teachers is that they developed their empathy skills after the activities they took part in:

PT 6: *"Creative drama activities helped me regard myself as others and understand them."*

Some of the participant teaches admitted that they were always active and followed the lesson carefully via creative drama activities:

PT1: *"Actively participating in lessons made me more attentive"*

PT5: *"The lessons were so interesting that I could not think of anything else, but lessons."*

The finding obtained from the research state that creative drama activities during teacher training are of great help in candidate teachers' gaining all the required professional knowledge. The candidate teachers stated at the end of the applications that the experiences made them aware of their competence. They also admitted that via the activities they involved in, they became self-confident and started effective communication both with the teacher and their class-mates (f=2). One of the participant candidate teachers said that creative drama activities improved creativity and another candidate teacher admitted developing decision-making skills at the end of the activities they took part in.

The findings obtained reveal that the candidate teachers were quite satisfied with taking part in the creative drama activities (f=3):

PT12: *"The activities I joined in were different from the usual methods. I feel happy to have taken such a lesson."*

PT3: *"I felt myself someone important and happy to be of use. We worked in harmony with my class-mates. I felt lucky for being a member of this lesson."*

The candidate teachers expressed their happiness and added that they participated in the lessons with great excitement (f=3):

PT5. *"I had the opportunity to take part in the activities. I had responsibilities during classes. I participated in every lesson with great pleasure."*

PT6: *"I had never participated in creative drama activities before. I had great pleasure in taking part in different activities."*

As it is noted, the candidate teachers were happy and excited about taking part in creative drama activities. In addition, they expressed that creative drama activities were enjoyable (f=2):

PT3: *"I enjoyed learning new things in a different environment rather than traditional classrooms where the teacher is always active."*

PT4: *"I can define creative drama activities as enjoyable methods."*

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion

This research aimed to specify the effect of creative drama activities on candidate teachers' self-directed learning skills. Specifying candidate teachers' feelings and opinions about the applications was another target in this study. The findings obtained from this research indicate that creative drama activities are effective on candidate teachers' self-directed learning skills. While the level of the candidate teachers' self-directed learning level was low before the applications, a high level was noted at the end of the applications. At the end of creative drama activities, the candidate teachers were defined as self-directed learners. Several researches in literature showed that drama method was effective in different variables. In their study in the effect of creative drama on "the level of women's developing self-respect", Altinova and Adiguzel (2012) found out that drama method was effective of developing the level of self-respect. Yenilmez and Uygan (2010) investigated the effect of creative drama method in geometry teaching on "self-sufficiency beliefs". The study, which was conducted with primary school children, indicated a significant effect of creative drama method on the children's belief in self-sufficiency. Cetingoz and Gunhan (2011) reached to similar findings in their study with pre-school candidate teachers. They argued that, drama activities created a positive difference in the candidate teachers' professional knowledge such as lesson planning skills. In this respect, it is clear that, creative drama activities affect learners' development in different fields positively.

The findings from this research reveal the satisfaction of the candidate teachers with the applications. Face-to-face interviews with the candidate teachers showed that the creative drama activities were carried out effectively. The candidate teachers expressed views that creative drama activities developed skills such as; facilitating learning, empathy with others, drawing attention, noticing abilities, effective communication, and critical thinking. In their study, Ormanci and Ozcan (2014) investigated the effect of drama method on the students' attitude and motivation level in science and technology classes. The findings revealed that drama method had an effective impact on increasing student attitude and motivation (Ormanci & Ozcan, 2014). Afacan and Turan (2012) found out that creative drama method were effective on helping students with their communication problems. Similarly, in their study in 2016, Saylan, Altintas and Kaya reached findings that support the findings in this research. Saylan, Altintas and Kaya (2016) pointed to candidate teachers' statements revealed that, if applied effectively, drama method facilitated understanding concepts, increased sustainability, and developed communication skills and creativity. Similarly Polat (2014) reached almost the same results in his research. In the study conducted with candidate teachers, it was specified that, drama applications contributed positively to social and emotional development of candidate teachers, and detected a significant difference in favor of female students in terms of critical thinking, getting information about events, and establishing communication skills. The findings reached in this research indicate that creative drama activities affect learners positively in learning for good, establishing effective communication, raising their motivation levels, and becoming creative individuals.

The candidate teachers with views about creative drama activities expressed their satisfaction with participating in the application and pointed out that the activities excited them and that they had a enjoyable time. In this respect, it is suggested that all pedagogical formation course in teacher training programs are supported by creative drama activities. In addition, it is suggested that the possible findings in future studies in this field are compared with the findings in this research. It is believed that, researchers discuss the effect of creative drama activities on different variables and relate the results with studies already conducted so that it contributes positively to teacher training.

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