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(2015) DRAMA & EDUCATION: PERFORMABLE
METHODOLOGIES FOR
TEACHING + LEARNING

1 Defining the field

Drama then and now

LONDON: ROUTLEDGE

A mind is so closely shaped by the body and destined to serve it that only one mind could possibly arise in it. No body, never mind.

Antonio Damasio (2000: 143)

In this introductory chapter, we present foundational ideas as well as outline major themes presented in this book. We begin by defining drama as a teaching methodology, discussing its connections to contemporary neurological research. We also provide an overview of contemporary brain-based approaches to learning in order to contextualize the unique role drama plays in learning and provide both a rationale for drama-based learning and teaching and a set of curricular implications and predictions based on the latest research on cognition and emotions. Finally, we introduce you to three pioneering techniques for the use of drama, theatre, and performance in education that will serve as foundations for future chapters: linear drama, in-role and process-oriented drama, and drama for social change.

Drama and performance as educational tools

Drama and performance techniques are well-established tools for teaching and learning. In fact, you may have heard of them during your training as an educator or artist. You may have encountered terms like creative dramatics, drama in education, improvisation with youth, process drama, educational drama, or drama for learning, each of which describes a drama-based method for teaching and learning. Drama-based teaching and learning have a long history. As far back as we can trace, evidence exists to suggest that dramatic activities were used in rituals, ceremonies, classrooms, and daily life to teach and reinforce knowledge, stories, and skills. For centuries, teachers have used drama-based pedagogy to connect with children's inclination toward bodily-kinesthetic imitation as they try on identities and understandings of their world. Over the last 200 years, this process-oriented way of teaching through theatre and performance techniques was defined as

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drama, a word derived from the Greek verb "dran" meaning to do, act, or perform. While we can safely assume that imaginative play as a way to discover, practice, and imitate is as old as humanity itself, drama for teaching appeared as a distinct discipline in the US during the early twentieth century. Early pioneers believed that drama helped learners develop a number of skills in areas like elocution, rhetoric, and presentation, while also supporting development in critical thinking skills, social and emotional well-being, cooperation, and communication.

Drama contrasts with *theatre*, an art form that aims to produce an artistic product for an audience, through its orientation toward process. Unlike theatre, a product is not necessarily the main outcome of drama, even though participants in drama-based learning may share results of their work with co-participants and sometimes with a larger public. Drama-based learning focuses on deepening understanding of self, others, or the subject of the drama; on fostering creativity and critical thinking skills; on exploring modes of expression and communication; and on bringing together the cognitive, emotional, and kinesthetic domains that make us human. Whether drama is used as a teaching strategy in education, in community work, or otherwise, the benefits of drama as a teaching method are multiple. Drama can:

- reach participants who are not served by traditional methods of teaching and learning;
- connect participants to themselves and others;
- transform the learning environment through collaboration and explorations of uncertainty and ambiguity;
- adapt to fit the needs of diverse learners, providing both challenges for those participants who are already considered successful under traditional learning paradigms and support for students who experience difficulties within contemporary classroom settings;
- create space for new modes of creative and critical inquiry and expression;
- enhance understanding of regular curricular subjects, helping learners understand human experiences of heart, body and mind;
- stand as a subject in and of itself;
- advance the goal of metacognition (an awareness or analysis of our own learning and thinking processes).

When we talk about drama methods for teaching and learning, we consider them as a discipline, or a unique field of study. Drama as a discipline is a more recent phenomenon, not fully explored and articulated in the US and English-speaking countries until the twentieth century. Early practitioners in the US, such as Constance D'Arcy Mackay, Winifred Ward, Geraldine Siks, and Nellie McCaslin, as well as practitioners from the United Kingdom (UK), such as Brian Way, Peter Slade, and Dorothy Heathcote, advocated

for drama as a means to enhance affective, psychomotor, and cognitive skills. Although the use of drama as a discipline in the English speaking world is often positioned as a US, UK, and later Australian and Canadian movement, the reality is much more international in scope. For instance, in Japan, Shoyo Tsubouchi articulated his Child Drama for Domestic Presentation in the early 1920s. In the Netherlands, Wanda Reumer founded the first teachers' academy in Europe that specifically focused on dramatic education in 1956, attracting and training students from all over Europe. Students of these schools and movements spread their methods internationally, and the use of drama for teaching and learning has thus become a global phenomenon. In response to the increasingly global nature of drama as a discipline, the International Drama/Theatre in Education Association (IDEA) was founded in 1992 and currently has members in over 90 countries worldwide. The members of IDEA are culturally diverse, made up of drama, theatre, and education practitioners as well as artists, pedagogues, and teachers who are united in their commitment to making drama/theatre accessible, significant, and present in the lives of children and young people everywhere.

Despite drama's global proliferation during the twentieth century, this expansion has not occurred without struggle and controversy. As the use of drama as a teaching tool grew in popularity, the assertion that drama enhances learning also generated suspicion. This wariness of drama's value was especially pronounced among educators who maintained behaviorist perspectives (the idea that all human behavior can be explained by examining different stimuli and responses in people, to observe conditioning through pain and reward). Behaviorists were vocally skeptical of drama methods because the benefits of drama were so hard to substantiate, let alone test in a quantifiable fashion. In response to behaviorist critiques, drama researchers set out to prove drama's efficacy for learning. At US colleges and universities, where a number of drama programs were founded, including those at Northwestern University, Emerson College, the University of Minnesota, University of Texas at Austin, Arizona State University, the University of Kansas, and the University of Washington, researchers conducted studies during and after the 1950s to measure the effects of drama instruction on students' learning. Ann Thurman at Northwestern and Geraldine Siks at the University of Washington were particularly influential in providing a rationale for the use of drama as a teaching tool, pointing out its intellectual value and capacity to arouse critical thinking skills. Their ideas, rooted in the Progressive Education theories of John Dewey, William Heard Kilpatrick, and Hughes Mearns, gained traction amongst educational researchers and scholars. Nonetheless, most twentieth-century studies remained inconclusive, primarily describing case studies and offering generalized results (Wagner 1998: 2-3). Consequently, drama remained marginalized in general education despite brief upsurges during the 1960s to 1980s, and its potential advantages were only recognized by a few committed artists and educators.

The cognitive turn in arts education

Despite drama's historically marginalized status in education, in the mid-1990s research from other disciplines (most notably psychology, sociology, and the neurosciences) began to corroborate claims that drama practitioners had been making for decades. However, this field of research is still quite new. In 2014, new studies, research initiatives, and reports are steadily changing our understanding of drama's impact on the brain, and we anticipate more concrete studies to further demonstrate the brain-drama connection in the next ten years. Given the pathbreaking nature of neuroscience and drama-based research, we want to point out a few compelling studies that have direct implications for drama as a method for teaching and learning. Although the scholars we discuss here do not all explicitly address drama or performative practices, their ideas are highly applicable to drama and help underpin a neuroscientific argument for the use of drama as a teaching method. Psychologist Howard Gardner stresses the importance of different ways of teaching and learning in *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century* (2000), which extends his groundbreaking 1983 study *Frames of Mind*. Similarly, Joseph LeDoux (1998), Antonio Damasio (2000, 2003), Martin Seligman (2002, 2012), and Richard Davidson (Davidson and Begley 2013) have linked emotion and the functioning of the brain in a series of highly successful studies from neurobiological perspectives. Affective neuroscientist and human development psychologist Mary Helen Immordino-Yang is also in the process of publishing new research with compelling implications for embodied learning. Finally, psychologists like Daniel Goleman paved the way for a public understanding of the value of emotional intelligence (or EQ) in learning in addition to IQ (Intelligence Quotient, a number used to express the relative intelligence of a person measured through various standardized tests), in his popular work, *Emotional Intelligence* (2005). Taken together, this research from educational psychology, social sciences, and the neurosciences provides a scientific basis for drama as a valuable teaching strategy. In fact, several of the aforementioned theories closely relate to drama learning outcomes first articulated by drama education pioneer Nellie McCaslin in 1968. McCaslin's goals of drama include:

- 1 Creative and aesthetic development.
- 2 The ability to think critically.
- 3 Social growth and the ability to work cooperatively with others.
- 4 Improved communication skills.
- 5 The development of moral and spiritual values.
- 6 Knowledge of self (added in 2006).
- 7 Understanding and appreciation of the cultural backgrounds and values of others (added in 2006).

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As we will see in the following discussion, multiple intelligences theory, emotional intelligence theory, mindfulness, and brain-based and embodied learning all closely connect with what early theorists and practitioners of drama, like McCaslin, have been advocating for decades. Not only does recent research suggest that McCaslin's seven goals are important for human development, but it also provides evidence of the effectiveness of drama as a tool to reach these goals. The research of Davidson, Goleman, Immordino-Yang, and others suggests that the experience of drama-based instruction can indeed provide learners with opportunities for social growth, emotional development, improved self-knowledge, and a greater ability to empathize with and understand the emotional lives of others. While for the purpose of clarity we discuss the work of these researchers separately, each builds on the others, and new research continues to add to our understanding of the connections between mind, heart, and body. Additionally, remember that these theories are neither universal nor uncontested. As you read on, keep in mind that ideology, cultures, and context also shape these ideas.

Multiple intelligences

Since the early 1980s, eminent psychologist and scholar Howard Gardner has been advocating for the recognition of multiple intelligences. Rather than focusing on the most commonly recognized verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical aptitudes, Gardner sees multiple intelligences as "potentials [that] will or will not be activated, depending upon the values of a particular culture, the opportunities available in that culture, and the personal decisions made by individuals and/or their families, schoolteachers and others" (2000: 34). While Gardner claims that every human being possesses a basic set of intelligences in a particular blend unique to each person, he also points out that the destructive or constructive use of intelligences does not happen by accident (2000: 44–6). The conception of multiple intelligences is also a matter of cultural circumstance and environment. Intelligences vary from region to region and are dependent on the ideological positions (beliefs, values, norms) and identity locations (social, cultural, racial, economic, ability) of individuals. Thus an awareness and acceptance of a variety of different ideological positions and identity locations is crucial in our multicultural society in order to understand how a learner cultivates various intelligences. By opening space in classrooms and communities for the appreciation of different perspectives and ways of learning and knowing, drama-based instruction helps us cultivate and appreciate the diverse potentialities that Gardner identifies in his work.

While Gardner does not directly refer to drama as a teaching method, in his discussions of multiple intelligences he maintains that "literacies, skills, and disciplines ought to be pursued as tools that allow us to enhance our understandings of important questions, topics, and themes" (2000: 159). Because of drama's performative and interdisciplinary nature, it is a highly

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adaptable method for approaching complex questions through multiple intelligences, as will be demonstrated in the lesson plans throughout this book. Drama's potential for exploring multiple identities, points of view, and understandings also makes it highly suitable in teaching for inclusion, diversity, and social awareness – all important concerns for twenty-first century education. No matter the specific application, drama techniques directly connect with multiple intelligences.

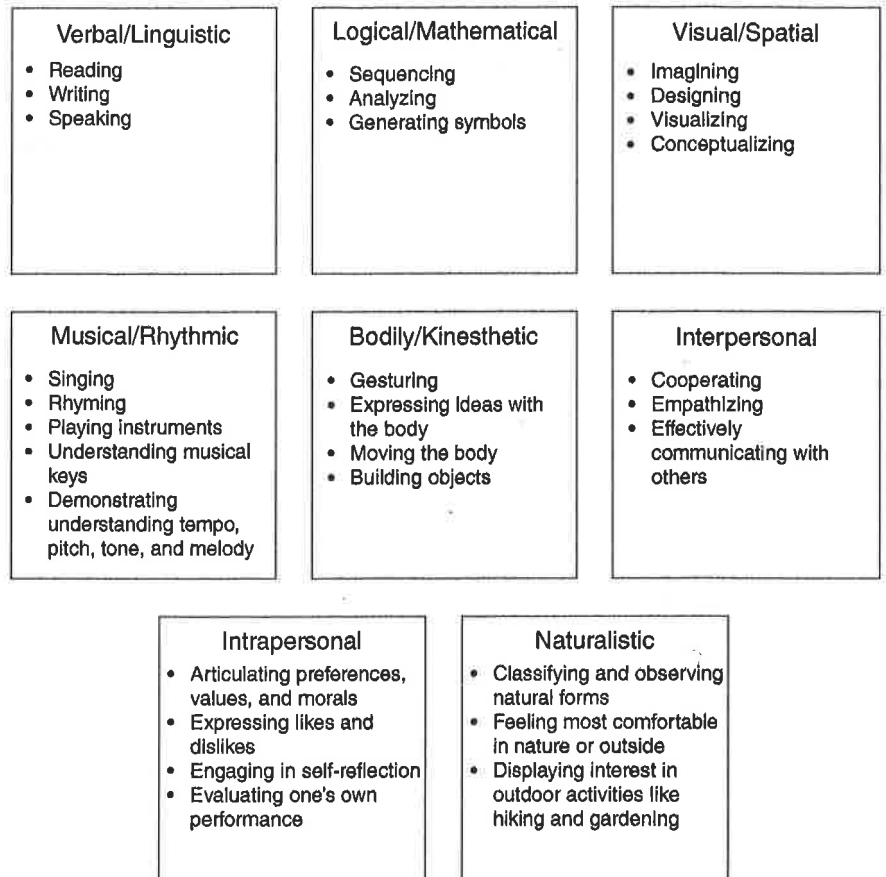


Figure 1.1 Multiple intelligences

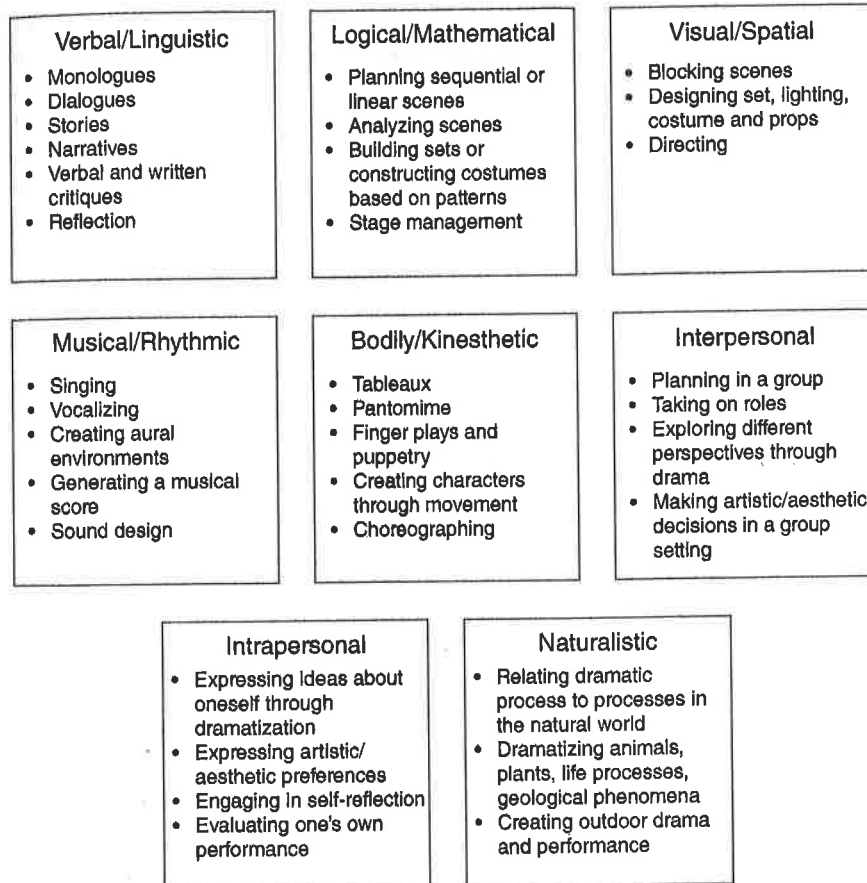


Figure 1.2 Related Drama Techniques

Cognition and emotion

Although the mind-body-heart connection has been a longstanding subject of research and philosophy across the globe, the connection between emotion and reason has been under-researched and relegated to the periphery of contemporary education in the US. Part of this neglect stems from the priorities of the US educational system, which continues to favor objective standardized testing and fairly rigid understandings of knowledge that depend on a limited view of what constitutes learning (see Chapters 5 and 6 for additional discussion). These understandings exert profound influence on what counts as education and how educators measure learning. Thus education has been largely reduced to a very specific, quantifiable skills-acquisition model that evaluates a limited set of abilities while all but eliminating the value differences in backgrounds, cultures, and heritages in

the classroom. As Howard Gardner points out, there are three interconnected biases in our society: "westist, bestist, and testist" (2006: 23). These notions of a standardized model of education are not limited to western nations. We see the same phenomenon to varying degrees in many other countries where entrance exams and tests are even more prominent than the US's SAT and ACT college entrance exams. The "testist" paradigm has become an increasingly global feature of formal education. However, these standardized test scores say little about students' quality of life, how they feel and engage with emotions, or how they work with others in their communities. In truth, they offer little data on the many dimensions of life that contribute to a whole and worthwhile existence.

Despite the prevalence of standardized testing models that focus on easily measurable skills, our emotions and the ability to channel these emotions are equally important in learning experiences. The connection between cognition and emotion is especially clear in creative pursuits. Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, one of the leading scholars of happiness and creativity, asserts that the ultimate pursuit and achievement of happiness depends very much on our personal perceptions and goals, with a combination of cognitive and emotional processes happening in tandem with one another. In his influential book, *Finding Flow: The psychology of engagement with everyday life*, Csikszentmihalyi describes the experience of flow, "the sense of effortless action [people] feel in moments that stand out as the best in their lives" (1997: 29). These moments, according to Csikszentmihalyi, occur when we immerse ourselves in tasks requiring a high degree of skill and commitment. In this sense, any task, from skiing to writing a paper to painting or creating a drama, can be both cognitively and/or physically challenging *and* emotionally rewarding, leading to "flow." Each individual discovers their optimal experiences and where their point of flow lies. Much like Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, an individual's sense of flow depends on personal, environmental, and cultural factors. However, the experience of flow is directly related to both cognitive and emotional domains.

If we see cognition and emotion as interrelated, then dramatic learning becomes essential: children learn about life through drama by exploring imaginary themes, topics, and issues on both emotional and cognitive levels simultaneously. For example, in drama we create parallel, symbolic worlds and situations. Sometimes they are more literal and sometimes more abstract, but they always involve real thinking and real feeling, embodied to the extent that we are each capable. Drama creates metaphors of our lives, which we lead through both cognitive and emotional domains; the two cannot and should not be separated.

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Emotional intelligence

In an extension of our discussion of the importance of learning that connects cognitive and emotional dimensions of the mind, consider the following: "The present generation of children [is] more troubled emotionally than the last; more lonely and depressed, more angry and unruly, more nervous and prone to worry, more impulsive and aggressive" (Goleman 1998: 11). This conclusion by Daniel Goleman, a psychologist who researches social and emotional learning (or SEL), still rings true today. Contemporary news reports and social science research point to a deficiency in regards to SEL (or Emotional Intelligence) in our educational and social systems that cannot be remedied by traditional teaching and learning models. Goleman advocates for curricula grounded in emotional intelligence that support the development of "decent human beings" as "more critical to our future than ever," and articulates five dimensions of emotional literacy: Self-Awareness, Self-Control, Self-Motivation, Empathy, and Relationship Skills (2006: 263). Research suggests that emotional health is fundamental to effective learning (Goleman 2006: 78–95), but our collective emotional health seems to be stagnant, if not in decline. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported (2012) that in the year 2010 suicide was the third-ranking cause of death among persons aged 15–24. A 2011 survey reported that 15.8 percent of youth in grades 9–12 had seriously considered suicide ("Suicide" 2012), and a 2006 study reported that the leading cause of disability in the world today is unipolar depression (Brunette 2006: 36). Furthermore, young people in the US are coming of age with a dire economic picture ahead of them. According to a 2014 *New York Times* editorial report, Millennials (young people born between 1980 and 2000) are

worse off than Gen Xers (born from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s) were at that age and the baby boomers before them by nearly every economic measure — employment, income, student loan indebtedness, mobility, home ownership and other hallmarks of "household formation," like moving out on their own, getting married and having children.

(The Editorial Board 2014)

Young people are saddled with ballooning student loan debt even as solid, middle-class jobs have evaporated. In many ways, their futures and, by proxy, their emotional lives seem grim.

If we connect these rather sad statistics to Goleman and others' ideas about emotional intelligence, teaching for emotional literacy is a natural and necessary conclusion. Drama techniques such as role-play, image work, spotlighting, hotseating, and parallel play (each of which are discussed later in this book) provide a means to acquire, experience, and enhance the aspects of emotional intelligence that Goleman recognizes as essential to success in today's challenging social and emotional landscape.

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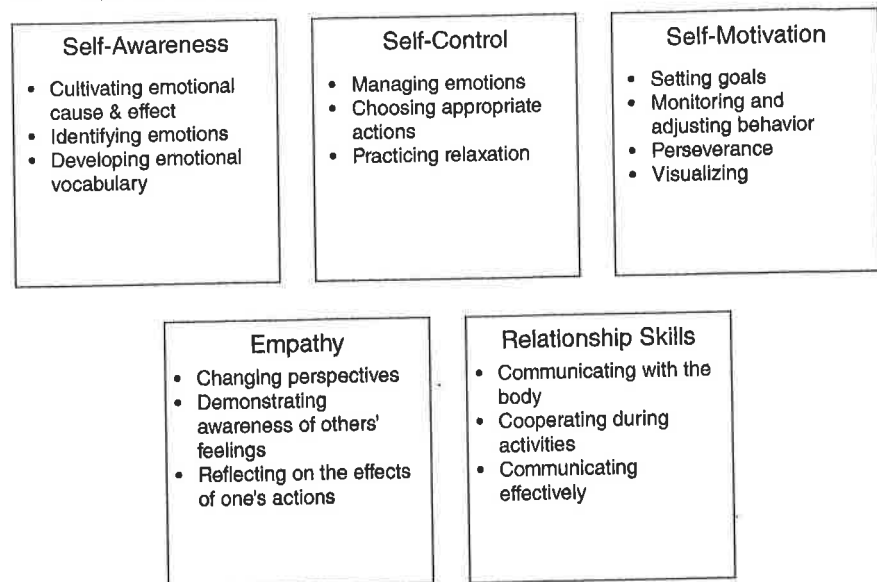


Figure 1.3 Emotional intelligences

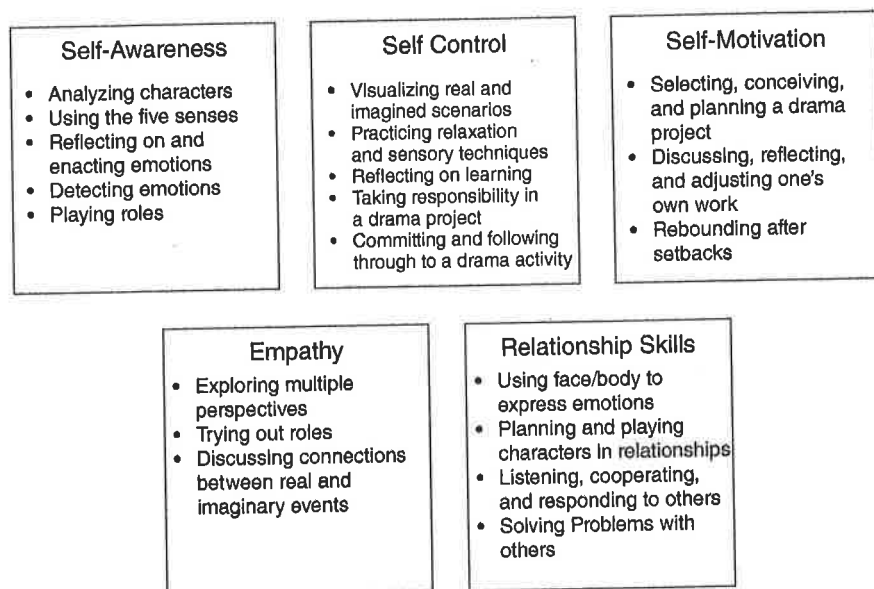


Figure 1.4 Related drama techniques

Mindfulness

In his study of mindfulness, renowned neuropsychologist Richard Davidson has extended work by figures like Goleman and Csikszentmihaly in the facet of emotional intelligence known as mindfulness. In 2013 Davidson, together with Sharon Begley, published *The Emotional Life of Your Brain*, suggesting that different people have different emotional styles and that specific emotional styles can be cultivated by individuals. Moreover, Davidson reveals, with empirical evidence corroborated by fMRI brain imaging, that the brain is a plastic, ever-changing organ whose physiology can be modified through basic practice in mindfulness. Key to Davidson's research are mindfulness exercises which can alter brain patterns that make up a person's emotional style, improving resilience, outlook, social intuition, self-awareness, sensitivity to context, and attention. According to Davidson, all of these emotional dimensions of the mind are founded on habituated patterns of brain activity. Davidson's approach to mindfulness springs from Buddhist meditation practices. Trained by the Dalai Lama himself, Davidson uses exercises in visualization and mental transformation as tools to improve emotional well-being.

Although drama is clearly a collaborative practice rather than an individual, meditative one, drama methods connect to mindfulness in that they not only encourage participants to visualize possibilities in their minds, but also create opportunities for individuals to embody these ideas, try on imagined transformations, and give life to various perspectives and ideas abstractly conceived in the brain. In this connection to mindfulness, drama may help in sustaining general emotional health and even potentially reshaping participants' brains. For example, many drama-based learning activities involve the use of visualization, heightened attentiveness to the senses, exercises in empathy, and awareness of the physical and emotional relationships between self and others. While not itself therapy, drama as a tool for fostering mindfulness can be seen as therapeutic in that it may positively influence the emotional and neurological development of learners.

Brain-based learning

Each of the researchers discussed in this chapter acknowledge the importance of emotional development, and their research can be referenced when making a scientific and/or philosophical case for brain-based learning (see for example Jensen 2008, Weiss 2000, Cercone 2006). According to Eric Jensen, a teacher and leading author on the subject of brain-based learning, brain-based education is a comprehensive approach to instruction using current research from neuroscience (2008: 4). Brain-based learning applies understandings of how our brains work to the design of effective teaching methods. This understanding of learning dictates that physical movement, social development, practicing routines, reducing stress, teaching in small

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instructional chunks, asking learners to devise new solutions to problems, teaching through and about emotion, and acknowledging differences between learning styles are all essential to effective instruction. Drama-based methods accomplish many of these goals at once, in that they:

- encourage the brain to perform several activities at once.
- engage the whole physiology.
- ask learners to understand and explore knowledge through doing.
- engage the emotions.
- involve learning through both conscious and unconscious processes.
- activate both spatial and rote memory.
- create a learning environment that is non-threatening, yet challenging.
- recognize the unique contributions of each person.
- create a context for active processing of experience.

Drama specialist and professor in theatre at the University of Utah State, Xan Johnson has been researching connections between drama and brain-based learning for decades. He argues that "the brain gives top priority to the most emotionally demanding input at any given moment, [and] this demanding input (emotion) then demands conscious attention, which motivates kinetic and cognitive action leading to new learning and new

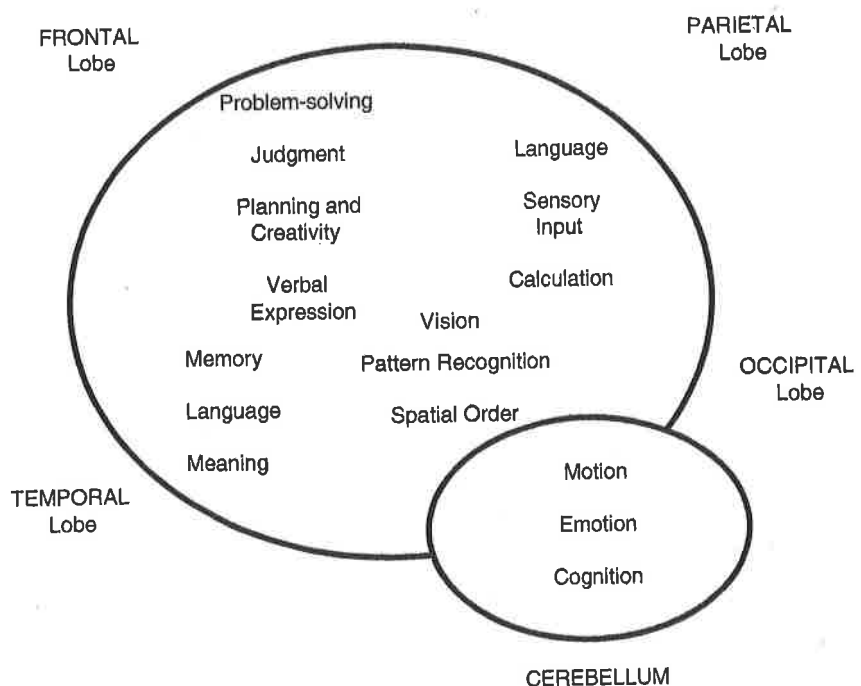


Figure 1.5 The brain

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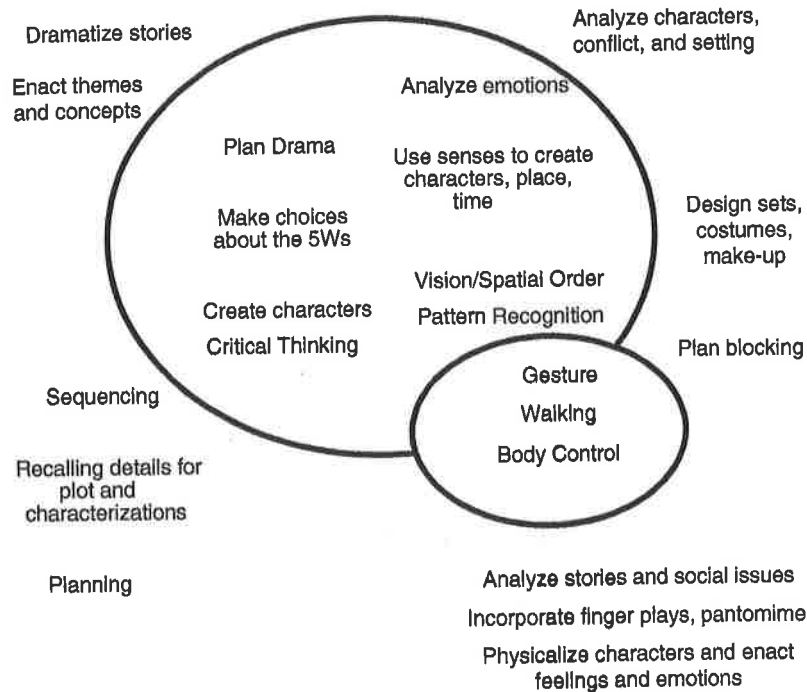


Figure 1.6 Dramatic techniques

memory formation" (Johnson 2003). Following this reasoning, drama, which is fundamentally tied to human emotions, is not only desirable as a creative medium that connects with brain-based learning, but it might also provide a direct route for engaging learners more deeply by connecting their learning experience to emotional and kinetic experience. Much like Davidson's research on mindfulness, brain-based research makes a compelling argument for conscious integration of drama and performance techniques in education and community work.

Embodied learning

The roles that art and creativity play in connections between the body, emotions, and the mind are perhaps most clearly laid out by scholar Mary Helen Immordino-Yang. As an affective neuroscientist and human development psychologist, Immordino-Yang who studies the neural, psychophysiological, and psychological bases of social emotion, self-awareness, and culture, and considers how these aspects of neuroscience impact education. In her groundbreaking work, Immordino-Yang studied the reaction of young adults to situations that elicit an emotional response, such as admiration, empathy, or sympathy. Through analysis of fMRI data gathered as subjects experienced emotional responses to other people's

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stories, Immordino-Yang's research reveals that how we experience emotional states is connected directly with culture. In fact, different cultural contexts influence areas of the brain in which we process emotion and thereby influence the ways in which we viscerally experience emotion. Through her research in neuroscience and psychology, Immordino-Yang, much like Gardner and other scholars, suggests that thinking, feeling, and learning do not take place in separate vacuums, but instead within social and cultural contexts: "[a] major part of how people make decisions has to do with their past social experience, reputation and cultural history" (2011: 99).

Indeed, no one learns in a vacuum. We experience and make decisions in context, based on what we believe and how we identify. Furthermore, based on new input from the world around us these values, ideologies, and categories of identity constantly shift. Moreover, learning is an embodied act; our brain, emotions, and physiology constantly connect to one another, interpreting information we receive from stimuli around us. Immordino-Yang's research suggests that our brains simultaneously operate within our bodies, within a culture, and in a world we are trying to understand: "we perceive and understand other people's feelings and actions in relation to our own beliefs and goals and *vicariously* experience these feelings and actions as if they were our own" (2008: 69–70). Ultimately, in presenting research that synthesizes many different threads that relate to education, the arts, and the brain–heart–body connection we have discussed in this chapter, Immordino-Yang's work provides one of the most convincing arguments for the necessity of creativity in education, including drama and performance. Her research suggests that drama, as a creative mode of expression, might be adopted not only as a method for teaching and learning, but also as a way to vicariously experience, practice, explore, and play with real-life situations in a fictional and safe environment. In effect, empathy is essential to learning: "We act on our own accord but interpret and understand our choices by comparing them against the norms of our culture, learned through social, emotional, and cognitive experiences" (Immordino-Yang 2011: 100).

Implications

Why is this research so important for the use of drama methods for teaching and learning? The idea of drama as an effective teaching tool is well-established. However, for the first time emerging research empirically documents the benefits, relevance, and necessity of drama for teaching and learning. Immordino-Yang and Damasio are some of the first to acknowledge that the famous Russian developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky had a compelling thesis seventy-five years ago when he maintained that the social and cultural dimensions of lived experiences underlie much of our nonsocial brain-based decision-making and reasoning (Immordino-Yang and Damasio 2007: 6). Through their focus on a more complex understanding of the

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experience and make decisions in ways we identify. Furthermore, based on these values, ideologies, and moreover, learning is an embodied process that constantly connects to one another, in response to stimuli around us. Immordino-Yang simultaneously operates within our lives as we are trying to understand: "we experience feelings and actions in relation to social context" (2011: 69–70). Ultimately, in presenting evidence that relates to education, the way we have discussed in this chapter, the most convincing arguments for including drama and performance as a creative mode of expression, might be in learning and teaching, but also as a way to connect, and play with real-life situations. In fact, empathy is essential to learning: to connect and understand our choices by our culture, learned through social context (Immordino-Yang 2011: 100).

use of drama methods for teaching as an effective teaching tool is well-supported. The emerging research empirically demonstrates the necessity of drama for teaching and learning, and some of the first to acknowledge this was psychologist Lev Vygotsky had a role when he maintained that the social contexts underlie much of our nonsocial learning (Immordino-Yang and Damasio 2011: 100). Immordino-Yang's complex understanding of the

brain, embodied learning, and how the brain acquires knowledge, these scientists, along with many others, also acknowledge and demonstrate the power of broadening the conversation about education, creativity, and the brain across and through increasingly diverse disciplines. This ongoing research needs to be further explored and embraced in conversations by educators, neuropsychologists, and theatre and drama specialists together. As Immordino-Yang points out, we are often so carried away by investigating our own hypotheses that we do exactly what she and Damasio warn against: ignore interdisciplinary ways of thinking that lead to sound and strong theories (2011: 102). We, as educators and artists, might reap great rewards by working together with open minds and a willingness to step out of our comfort zones, particularly for making a case for using theatre and drama methods not simply as a way to make or teach about art, but rather as a way we can improve our lives *through* the arts and education. Above all, we hope you will come to view drama methods as invaluable resources that help us to imagine, create, debate, show, and understand what it means to be human.

Pioneering drama pedagogies

In order to contextualize the different methods included in this book, we turn our attention from neuroscience and cognition toward history, briefly describing four pioneers who influenced how we view drama today. Their theories and practices form the underpinnings of this book, and they all anticipated, to varying degrees, the many connections between drama, emotion, and cognition that are now being validated by neuroscientific research.

John Dewey

To understand drama as a method for teaching and learning, practitioners should look back at the field's history. The decision to integrate drama into education, particularly in K-12 schools, came about in response to several US educational trends at the turn of the twentieth century. Most important for this discussion were developments in Progressive Education pioneered by intellectuals like John Dewey (1859–1952). Education Progressivists generally believe that education should be a tool for societal progress, and pedagogy (the way in which we teach) should be learner-centered in order to help make real-life connections between classrooms and life. Dewey's ideas about education transformed, and continue to exert influence on, the ways in which US teachers and students teach and learn, especially in arts education fields. During the 1920s and 1930s, at the same time that pioneers like Winifred Ward and her contemporaries developed new approaches for drama-based learning, Dewey's ideas circulated throughout education circles. Most importantly, along with similarly minded Progressivists, he advocated for the