

METHODS OF USING PUPPET THEATER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL QUALITIES OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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<i>A B S T R A C T</i>	<i>KEYWORDS</i>
<p>This study examines the potential of puppets in the educational context. The study offers a literature review on the benefits and possibilities of the puppet as a pedagogical tool. The literature was searched using primarily an international e-material search. Articles were chosen and included according to specific selection criteria. Fifteen papers met the criteria and are included in the review. The review reveals five potential uses for puppets in education. These potential uses include: (1) generating communication, (2) supporting a positive classroom climate, (3) enhancing creativity, (4) fostering co-operation in and integration into a group, and (5) changing attitudes.</p>	<p>Pedagogical Puppetry, Educational Methods, Elementary-Secondary Education, Literature Review.</p>

Introduction

Puppets are useful pedagogical tools, however, the potential of puppets could be more often utilized in schools. For example, Korosec (2013) reports how a number of educators in Slovenian schools have a predominantly positive attitude towards the use of puppets in classroom situations, but puppets are rarely used in the classroom. One explanation could be that teachers do not have enough knowledge of working with puppets and how these tools would be good and useful. There is relatively little comprehensive research available in English to show the significant benefits of using puppets or puppetry in education. The evidence is mainly provided through case studies, uncontrolled evaluation studies, or short educational interventions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A puppet is a movable doll that a puppeteer manipulates. The body movements provide visual impressions: a puppet conveys emotions and thoughts through movement, for example, of its hands and head. A puppeteer can also give the puppet a voice. A puppet is an inanimate object that, in the hands of a puppeteer, comes to life.

Hand puppets have an open interior enabling the manipulation of them directly with one hand. Some puppets have control devices. For example, rod puppets can be manipulated with sticks, and marionettes have strings. Puppetry is a form of theatre or performance that involves the

manipulation of puppets. A puppet is, in this context, an umbrella term, and in the reviewed studies, the authors do not necessarily give details about the puppets used. The focus of this article is on hand puppets and puppets manipulated with sticks or strings. Finger puppets, which are smaller than other puppets, are not included.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pedagogical studies of the use of puppets focus on how a single puppet or several puppets can be used for different purposes and in different educational contexts. The typical educational context for using hand puppets is that an educator plays a puppet theater for children. Puppet theatre as an art form is widely researched (e.g. Peltonen & Tawast, 2009; note also e.g. <https://www.unima.org/en/> and <http://www.unima.fi>). A show can have an educationally important theme, for example, it can present how to handle attitudes towards disabilities (see e.g. Dunst, 2012; 2014). On the other hand, creating a puppet show together, including making the puppets, writing the script, creating the scenery, and performing the play, can be part of artistic education (see e.g. Hamre, 2012; see also special guidebooks published for this purpose, e.g. Arasmo & Alopaeus 1992).

Puppets are also used in education without an actual theatre stage or script. For example, a teacher can use a puppet to ask children questions and discuss the questions with them. A puppet can also be a helpful tool in verifying children's understanding when they answer questions and participate in a dialogue (Remer & Tzuriel, 2015).

In the classroom, puppets are also tools of children and youths. Pupils can create puppets, or a puppet show, or they can play spontaneously with puppets. A puppet can even be a good friend of the children (see e.g. Gobec, 2012; Korošec, 2012).

Based on our review of the literature, we identified five potential uses applied extensively in educational and learning contexts. The five potential uses are presented here as the comprehensive framework of a pedagogical puppet (see Figure 1), and each potential is given theoretical support from the literature. The potential uses are (1) generating communication, (2) supporting a positive classroom climate, (3) enhancing creativity, (4) fostering cooperation in and integration into a group, and (5) changing attitudes.

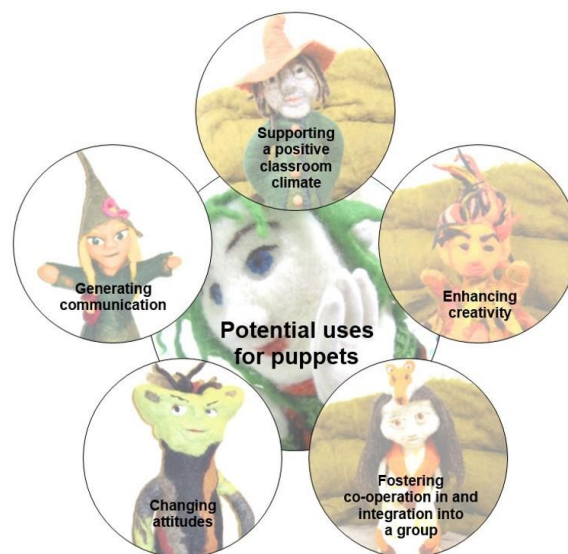


Figure 1. Potential uses for puppets. Pictures are from the web-site

The value of talk and communication in children's learning has been acknowledged since Vygotsky's (1962) work on language and social interaction. In the school context, there is communication between teacher and pupil(s), as well as between children and between teachers. Communication not only represents the transfer of information; it represents the establishment of a relationship with the person to whom we wish to transfer the information.

Eleven studies in the data set (Ahlcróna, 2012; Brédikyté, 2002; Çağanağa & Kalmış, 2015; Hackling, Smith, & Murcia, 2011; Keogh, Naylor, Maloney, & Simon, 2008; Korošec, 2012; Korošec, 2013; Maharani, 2016; Moriguchi, Sakata, Ishibashi, & Ishikawa, 2015; Remer & Tzuriel, 2015; Simon, Naylor, Keogh, Maloney, & Downing, 2008) highlight a puppet's potential to generate communication. Puppets help (1) increase and improve classroom talk, (2) increase communication by creating a favourable, relaxed atmosphere, and (3) establish teacher-student interaction and children's mutual interaction. We will treat these benefits in detail with help of data from literature below.

The potential uses of puppets proposed in the present study not only provide a framework for organizing these diverse outcomes and impacts of using puppets, but they also highlight the persistent difficulties associated with classifying learning outcomes. While empirical evidence concerning the potential of using puppets was found in the current review, there is need for more research to provide more rigorous evidence of effectiveness of the puppets. More studies would also help extend our understanding of the nature of engagement in using puppets. To encourage the use of puppets in learning, it is essential to develop a better understanding of the tasks, activities, skills, and operations that different kinds of puppets can offer and examine how these might match desired learning outcomes. As with other educational interventions, it is also important to consider how puppets are integrated into a student's learning experience.

The current review has limitations. It was limited by the search terms used, the journals included, and the time period of papers published. However, the papers discussed in this literature review provide a snapshot of the empirical research on the outcomes and impacts of puppets that is representative of the state of the art at the time of publication. The review excluded speculative and theoretical papers because it was important to ground our understanding of outcomes and impacts of using puppets in research evidence rather than in speculation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that puppets are beneficial in education. Puppets should not only be nice products that perform in a well-prepared puppet show, but puppets should be integrated into various contexts to support learning. Therefore, we suggest that puppets should be integrated into teacher education. Teacher education should provide diverse possibilities to implement puppets in learning activities to make this media attractive for teacher students and their future students in schools.

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