



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



A Case Study of Drama Education for Indigenous Children in The Alternative Classroom

Norhanim Abdul Samat, Nurul Nafisa Baharuddin, Ghazali Bunari

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i8/14495>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i8/14495

Received: 13 June 2022, **Revised:** 17 July 2022, **Accepted:** 02 August 2022

Published Online: 22 August 2022

In-Text Citation: (Abdul Samat et al., 2022)

To Cite this Article: Abdul Samat, N., Baharuddin, N. N., & Bunari, G. (2022). A Case Study of Drama Education for Indigenous Children in The Alternative Classroom. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(8), 1833 – 1846.

Copyright: © 2022 The Author(s)

Published by Human Resource Management Academic Research Society (www.hrmars.com)

This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this license may be seen at: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

Vol. 12, No. 8, 2022, Pg. 1833 – 1846

<http://hrmars.com/index.php/pages/detail/IJARBSS>

JOURNAL HOMEPAGE

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
<http://hrmars.com/index.php/pages/detail/publication-ethics>



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



A Case Study of Drama Education for Indigenous Children in The Alternative Classroom

Norhanim Abdul Samat, Nurul Nafisa Baharuddin, Ghazali Bunari

Language Academy, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia

Email: norhanim@utm.my

Abstract

The alternative classroom has recently attracted much attention as it can engage and encourage children while teaching them life skills. This study briefly investigated the impact of drama lessons on the growth of indigenous students in one of West Malaysia's orang Asli communities. It is essential in widening the option of teaching approach because it would enable educators and indigenous students to learn more about drama as an alternative approach to learning. Through drama education, the children would also be introduced to various learning experiences and classroom settings. This paper investigates how drama is used as a method in the alternative classroom for indigenous children. It hopes to prove that children will be interested in learning and be able to develop their social skills if given more opportunities. In the qualitative study, the instruments employed to investigate what transpired throughout the activities were observation and interviews. Findings of this research reveals positive outcomes of drama, categorised into learning from real-life situations. It also highlights the use of drama to improve the children's non-verbal communication. The findings can be used as a guideline for practitioners to get a general overview of how drama can be used as a teaching approach in the alternative classroom and could be a discovery for the curriculum planner to implement drama for both formal and informal learning. This study could be complemented by future research on the challenges involved in teaching drama to indigenous children. Other than this, observation periods should be longer and more frequent because social and educational progress takes time to develop. Finally, future researchers may need to think about using alternative drama strategies that would fit the children's abilities.

Keywords: Indigenous, Alternative Classroom, Drama, Learning Opportunities

Introduction

Drama is a form of performing, a way to express oneself, and a way to learn. Because it influences pupils mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally, it is an effective teaching method. Exercises in improvisation, playwriting, and scenario re-enactment are intended to enhance participants' creative thinking and support the development of their analytical thinking abilities. The benefits of drama as a teaching approach aligns with educational

objectives. The six educational objectives listed in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025 are knowledge, thinking abilities, leadership abilities, bilingualism, ethics and spirituality, and national identity. These objectives will help students compete on a global scale. The use of the drama teaching style is hoped to help students realise all their goals.

Every person's quality of life is influenced by various factors, including the standard of their education. Numerous researchers, like Tap (2005); Katt (2007); Walke (2008), contend that indigenous people have a poor quality of life (Mohd Fauzi & Nor Aini, 2012). These children experience a variety of academic issues in school. Their lack of enthusiasm for education, low academic performance, memory challenges, absenteeism rate, lack of parental involvement, poverty, and transportation issues are a few of the problems noted by their educators (Nor et al., 2016). The delivery system, which includes teachers and those in charge of students' education and the health of the educational system, is also partly to blame for the problems experienced. Due to these issues, the less fortunate children choose to drop out or not go to school and start working at a young age.

Selvaratnam et al. (2012) found that several factors prevent these indigenous students from obtaining a high-quality education. First, due to the high poverty rate for living in underdeveloped areas, many indigenous students in Year 1 do not receive pre-school education and begin their primary literacy and numeracy later in their years (Sawalludin et al., 2020). Furthermore, most indigenous pupils do not speak Malay language as their mother tongue. This prevents them from learning (Nor et al., 2016). Due to their inability to comprehend the teachers during teaching and learning sessions, the disadvantaged children may lose interest in their studies due to this language barrier. Second, teachers and school officials claim that the current training programmes do not sufficiently prepare to deal with this society's complexities (Nor et al., 2016).

In Chapter 4 of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has prepared alternative programmes or classrooms to reduce dropout rates among the indigenous groups. The same is covered in further detail in Chapter 4 with the heading "Equity and Education" of the 2013-2017 Aboriginal Education Transition Plan in the Malaysian Education Development Plan Annual Report. The Comprehensive Special School Program K9, Orang Asli and Indigenous Adult Classes, and the Integrated Curriculum Program of Orang Asli and Penan (KAP) Schools are all carefully designed initiatives whose goal is to raise the educational standards of these underrepresented groups (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013, p.22).

The above regulations demonstrate that MOE fully understands that indigenous people cannot just rely on formal education. MOE intends for all initiative programmes to impact the student's education. Consequently, an alternative classroom could have a different impact than a traditional classroom. Increasing teacher and student participation is one advantage of the alternative classroom (Swing et al., 1988). This is likely a result of the alternative classroom's informal environment, which encourages pupils to overcome their shyness and ask questions. Providing more comprehensive learning resources, such as notes and exercises, as well as the teacher's undivided attention, is another advantage of the alternative classroom (Ke, 2008).

In Malaysia, indigenous (Orang Asli) children are usually left behind in educational and social development (Aini et al., 2019). The explanation for the problem is they do not enter a primary school or, if they do, become dropouts before entering secondary school (Aini et al., 2019). Dr Mazlee Malik, a former Minister of Education, highlighted that more than 700 indigenous children did not attend school in 2018 (Lu, 2019). He further stressed that the problem was that they were not interested in learning and preferred to work or get married early. Moreover, they could not attend school because the schools were located too far from their home, or they could not afford the school's expenses (Lu, 2019).

For this study, we introduced an alternative program, which uses drama to engage the children and offers them a well-organised play environment. One of the benefits of the alternative classroom is increased engagement between the facilitator and the students (Swing et al., 1998). This is probably because the alternative classroom is made personalised based on the needs of the children. Furthermore, compared to the typical traditional classrooms where teachers should teach students according to a pre-set schedule, learning in the alternative classroom allows the teacher to give students full attention in ample time to improve learning. This could trigger the students to focus more on education and be engaged with the learning sessions (Sliwka, 2008).

Drama is a medium for self-expression and learning that affects students' mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally. Improvisation and scenario re-enactment exercises aim to improve the participants' imaginative ability and help build their analytical thinking skills. Implementing drama in a formal classroom is quite rare in the Malaysian context, especially in rural areas. Furthermore, a search on the qualitative study for drama teaching to the Orang Asli children found that minimal research is being carried out in this area. There are various programs for indigenous children, but no program for drama learning exists.

This paper aims to study the perceived efficacy of drama instruction in the alternative classroom for indigenous children. It intends to answer the following research questions:

- What are the indigenous children's learning experiences through drama?
- How do indigenous children perceive the effects of drama?

Generally, in the Malaysian context, drama teaching is relatively uncommon among teachers because teachers usually only follow the planned curriculum by the Ministry of Education. However, this project was conducted with the indigenous children of an Orang Asli settlement in Johor. They were assisted in learning through drama which focused on improving children's social development. Therefore, the study of using drama to teach indigenous children in the alternative classroom should be explored more for educators to help these children. For this reason, this study investigates whether drama teaching could be used as an approach for indigenous children by exploring their learning experiences.

Literature Review

Education for the Indigenous Children

Generally, indigenous children can be categorised as slow learners because they have problems with education. In addition, they may have low cognition, which refers to the psychological process's memory, concentration, learning, thinking, and motor production coordination (Swaminathan et al., 2019). Besides, the indigenous children could also be

struggling with their social skills. They are usually shy around people, cannot communicate properly because of the language barrier, and do not socialise with others apart from their community (Afizi et al., 2014). According to Rosnon & Talib (2019), to provide the Orang Asli children with the necessary preparation for mainstream education, JHEOA administered the schools and educational programmes for the Orang Asli on their own. They further cited that JHEOA's oversight of the educational system was ineffective (Ikram, 1997) and that the lack of training for the instructors, poor financing, and educators' ignorance of Orang Asli cultures and traditions were the leading causes of this failure (Department of Orang Asli Affairs, 1995).

Several factors hinder these indigenous learners' access to quality education (Selavaratnam et al., 2012). First, many indigenous students during Year 1 do not receive pre-school education and start their primary literacy and numeracy later in their years because of the high poverty rate and the tendency to live in undeveloped areas (Sawalludin et al., 2020). Furthermore, Malay, the national language of Malaysians, is not a native language for most indigenous students. This becomes an obstacle to learning (Md Nor et al., 2016). This language barrier could explain why the indigenous children lose interest in studying as they cannot understand the teachers during the teaching and learning session. Second, school administrators and teachers report that the existing training programs do not adequately equip them to deal with this society's complexities (Nor et al., 2016). Thus, these administrators and educators might have problems helping the indigenous students build engagement between them and explaining to them the importance of education.

Various educational programs have been planned to enhance the education and social development of indigenous children in Malaysia (Aini et al., 2019). These programs aim to generate their interest in learning and improve their educational background. Volunteer teachers have created alternative schools or classroom programs such as '*Kelas Kaseh*' (Roslan, 2018). Instead of bringing the indigenous children to school, the educators would bring the school to them. They would learn beyond the traditional classroom, which focuses on developing their interests in learning. Indigenous children may experience several educational issues in school, including a lack of interest in education, poor academic performance, memory issues, a high absenteeism rate, a lack of parental involvement, poverty, and transportation issues (Nor et al., 2016). Besides these, some indigenous children may not have attended formal learning. Because of these problems, the indigenous children choose to drop out or not go to school at all and start working at a young age.

Drama as an Approach to Teaching Indigenous Children

Drama is one of the teaching approaches that provide a basis for developing substantive language skills, making students use and improve their language abilities. It is process-centred in which a leader directs the participants to visualise, reflect, and conduct human experience (Demircioglu, 2010). Several studies promote pupils' educational drama to facilitate personal and social development and improve self-concept, self-discrepancy, and role-taking skills (Coban, 2017; Saerani, 2019; DICE Consortium, 2010). In drama, children could experience living with various characters that will give them a willingness to take risks to solve problems. With this attitude, children could improve their personal development. In addition, creating learning in a fun surrounding can encourage children to learn better. Thus, drama will be used as an approach in the alternative classroom to increase the children's interest in learning for this study.

The theory of constructivism synthesises behavioural and cognitive principles that allow children to learn from what they have experienced (Amine & Asl, 2015). In constructivism's philosophy, the essential thing is to emphasise the learner in the learning process. The elements that influence constructivist learning are: (a) giving to authentic learning, (b) the process is prioritised, (c) teaching and learning in the context of social experience, and (d) establishing experience through learning (Suhendi & Purwarno, 2018). According to a study, engaging in learning improves learners' creativity and self-directed learning to improve cognitive development (Mingazova, 2014). Thus, drama offers a special and irreplaceable educational experience that combines thoughts and emotions, leading to a type of education that is more realistic (Mavroudis & Bournelli, 2016). Additionally, drama boosts children's self-esteem and spontaneity while reducing inhibitions and feelings of loneliness (Demircioğlu, 2010). Using the constructivism learning theory, the researchers could measure the educational development of the indigenous children by observing their ability to deliver the performance by imitating the facilitators and generating ideas for problem-solving during the drama rehearsal. In addition, these criteria could be measured based on the children's attitude during the drama training.

In sociocultural theory, an important concept known as the zone of proximal growth proves the effectiveness of drama in improving interpersonal relationships between children, encouraging cooperation, and developing self-confidence (Joronen et al., 2011). Each child demonstrates their expertise experiences personal experience to interact and connect with other children to complete the collaborative act. As a result, children gain socially, escape from their daily identity, abandon their shyness, and communicate more openly by participating in drama. This technique empowers learners and encourages them to develop the trust and self-esteem required to act spontaneously. In a non-threatening situation, even students who are not naturally talkative seem more likely to join in and be more actively involved. Hence, for this research, they should be able to learn from their past experiences to solve a problem that arises during drama training.

Research Method

To better comprehend a research issue, this study employed a qualitative methodology based on interpretivism and constructivist approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). By better revealing people's distinctive opinions and their significance to those viewpoints, the researchers hoped to increase knowledge (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). This study used a qualitative approach because of the nature of the study, which is a case study of drama teaching. The case study design can be used if the researcher is interested in and actively involved in a project's structure, procedures, and results (Wee, 2011). According to Zainal (2015), a case study design enables the researcher to evaluate the data in a particular setting carefully. For this study, we chose a minimal geographic area or a minimal number of respondents. The four meetings were not carried out in the usual classroom but in the children's natural settings, which was where they were located. This case study fits well with research on drama education because drama, by its very nature, could be a rare experience for children (Wee, 2011). Based on the preceding, we concluded that the case study design is the most appropriate for the research since it adheres to the method for educational purposes.

The participants of this study were 20 indigenous children aged between 5 to 14 years old in a selected district in Johor, Malaysia. A convenient sampling technique was used to choose

the participants because they are easy and ready to be approached by the researcher (Taherdoost, 2016). Of these 20 participants, only four children attended formal learning in school, while the rest were illiterate. 11 children showed up for the lesson on the first day, and 14 showed up on the second day. The third session was attended by 15, and the last by 17 children. All participants are identified in this research using pseudonyms to protect their identities. The facilitators' pseudonyms are Farhan, Aisyah, and Farah. The children are referred to as Haikal, Huda, Aiman, Irfan, Fatin, Aira, Huda, Aina, and Nuri during this time.

Three facilitators led the workshops. Farhan: the first facilitator, is a volunteer for an NGO. He taught the children basic reading and math. Since the kids are familiar with Farhan, his presence was crucial in ensuring they took part in the lessons. Farah and Aisyah, both are language instructors at a public university had no prior experience teaching drama to the indigenous children. However, they do have some basics on training children in drama.

In this study, the researchers used an observation sheet to observe the participants and their progress. The observation sheet, adapted from Wiarsih (2017) sought a clear view of the children's learning experience. At the end of the study, the researchers conducted interviews with the children and facilitators to gather information on the facilitators and children's learning experiences during the drama teaching.

The drama lessons were developed into four consecutive sessions. Before the sessions, the facilitators met with the head of the indigenous group to seek an understanding of what worked best for the children. A module was developed for data collection. Due to the pandemic, the length of the proposed module had to be limited to four meetings. Classes were held at the makeshift hut by the beach, at the playground where the children played and in an enclosed area around the village.

The initial meeting included an adaptation of the Brothers Grimm tale "The Fisherman and His Wife" and drama games for the children. In the second session, the facilitators played another round of drama games and showed the children some paintings. The backdrop for the story presented at the final session was given to all the kids to colour in the second session. The facilitators attempted to introduce some letters to the kids during the third meet-up and set up a game of sentence rearranging. Following the game, the children were given musical instruments and encouraged to practise the taught melody. The story introduced to the kids at the first session was showcased during the final meet-up. The children's use of props and the music they learned were incorporated during the showcase.

Data analysis was done using thematic analysis. We examined several themes during the analysis to respond to the study questions, such as how drama promotes learning through experience and real-life situations, children's learning capacity, cognitive development, and non-verbal communication. The interview's goal was to confirm the lessons the participants had acquired. Details from the transcripts were carefully examined to assist with the research subjects.

Findings and Discussion

In this study, we organise the findings into four criteria: the learning experience concerning actual life situation, the children's learning abilities, their cognitive growth, and the development of the children's non-verbal communication skills.

Learning Experiences

According to constructivism learning theory, children can learn by making connections between new information and experiences that are already familiar to them (Olusegun, 2016). Based on the findings, only Haikal could connect the story's scene with his actual life. Living close to a large city exposes Haikal to large homes, which he then compares to what he has learned. Due to his exposure to a real school setting, Haikal was more mature. Farhan further remarked that drama instruction benefits them because it is connected to their culture. "I think the drama class is practical for them as it is close to their culture. They also have their culture such as cultural dance" (Farhan). Thus, for the children to relate to what they have learned, they must know something familiar.

Findings from the study also reveal that the children acquired new learning experiences from drama teaching. All children showed positive feelings and feedback after the drama lessons. During one of the drama sessions, the children were asked to prepare the props and backdrop for the final showcase, while in another session, they were asked to practise music for the showcase. They were given paints, brushes, and canvas to work with. The lesson was a collaborative learning experience for each of them, and the facilitators agreed that drama allowed the children to experience something new. In an interview, one of the facilitators mentioned, "I thought if we give them something to work with like painting, so they have a project to work on, it turned out to be quite successful. Able to come up with a backdrop. But not on the third session with the music activity. Things get out of hand. They are distracted by musical instruments. They would not pay attention. However, it is helpful. Somehow, they are exposed to classroom situation" (Aisyah, facilitator).

The drama exposed the children to the formal classroom environment and allowed the children to interact freely with the facilitators. Another facilitator, Farah, also agreed that acting enables them to participate in the process by doing, feeling, and thinking when she mentioned, "I feel like the drama is a great tool, not a tool but a learning experience" (Farah). Physical environment and culture would aid in enhancing the children's learning, according to (Afizi et al., 2014). Therefore, individuals would learn effectively when the learning materials are familiar. Learning through drama was meaningful since the children could use what they already knew and be mindful of their surroundings.

The findings also uncover that the children managed to experience new things such as painting and dramatizing. The two facilitators, Aisyah and Farah, agreed that drama teaching was a great learning experience for the children to expose them to the classroom environment and gain new learning experiences as they had not encountered any drama class before. Hence, the children can gain a learning experience when guided and interact with the facilitators directly during the drama lesson (Kalin & Šteh, 2015). Although this was their first experience learning through drama, the children adapted and completed the given task. Evidence of enjoyment of the lessons is revealed in the following excerpts.

"Yes, I want to learn more" (Fatin, 11 years old).

"I like story-telling" (Aira, seven years old).

"I like week's activity because I love to paint and do the colouring activity" (Huda, 14 years old).

"I like last week's because I love the story-telling more" (Aina, nine years old).

More positive feelings about the drama lessons are noted after the third session. Aira indicated that she enjoyed playing music on the third day of the class, "I like this week's lesson because I am having fun playing music." (Aira, seven years old). In addition, another child also had fun and loved playing the instruments when she responded with her preference for music, "I like the lesson because I can play music" (Fatin, 11 years old).

Some children preferred painting, and some preferred music over other activities. Based on the children's answers, the words such as 'love,' 'fun,' and 'like' described their positive feelings toward the activities they conducted. Ten children chose the painting activity as their favourite, and six preferred the story-telling activity. Overall, all children responded positively to the activities undertaken from the first session to the last session of the drama. More importantly, their preferred activities are based on personal preference, interest, and talent. This is because drama creates a fun learning environment that builds their interest in learning drama.

Learning Abilities

Observation during the first session reveals that all children could keep up with all the activities. However, the first activity was warmer, a physical activity in which they played a physical game with the facilitator.

They were also able to comprehend instructions during the presentation of the rules of the games. Despite having a disability in reading, they listened attentively during the story-telling activity. The facilitators included singing in the activity to increase their interest in the story. All children managed to focus, but their attention span lasted only five minutes. During the story-telling training, one of the children gave her opinion, "...because Ibu is not happy with the current house. She wanted a bigger house" (Nuri, 12 years old).

Self-directed learning among the children was conveyed when they did the painting activity during the second session. Some children had no difficulty completing the training but some needed guidance. The facilitators provided only base colours such as red, yellow, blue, and black. To get the desired colour, the older children initiated mixing colours without asking for help, while the younger ones needed to be taught to hold the brushes. In addition, three older children were willing to help the facilitator manage the younger children. The facilitator said in the interview, "We used the oldest child to help us facilitate the activity. Little children listen more to older children. In the third session, it was challenging to facilitate the children because the older ones were not there because they had to help their parents collect fish bait for fishing" (Aisyah).

According to the findings, the older children showed outstanding self-directed learning. This statement is supported by Foushee et al., where self-directed learning happens when children can use their information and be independent in tasks (Foushee et al., 2021). Thus, the

instructors would help manage the older children to complete the job and give more attention to teaching the younger children.

Cognitive Growth

Observation from all four sessions reveals the children's cognitive development. This analysis focuses on the children's ability to recall past lessons. After each session, the instructors would recap what the children had learned for the day and if they could remember the story they told. Answers given by the children varied. Among the responses, the children answered, "Listen to a story about a fisherman who caught a magical fish" (Aina, nine years old). Another child, Haikal mentioned the event of the story, "The wife wanted a bigger house" (Haikal, 12 years old), and Huda answered, "Lastly, the wife asked for the world, but she got her old house back" (Huda, 14 years old). Based on the findings, most children have a strong memory of recalling the story they have learned. This is because the story-telling activity greatly impacted the children's interest and curiosity in learning. Thus, curiosity to acquire new information enhanced the learning and memory of the children (Fandakova & Gruber, 2021) and made them remember the story from the first session to the fourth session. The children also had good memories of what was taught when they answered, "We raced together" (Aiman, nine years old), and "I played an instrument, the birds sound!" (Irfan, seven years old).

An interesting finding to note is the differences in the colouring outcome done by the children in the second meeting. The artwork produced by the older girls aged from 11 to 14 years old was neat. They had chosen suitable colours based on their preferences for the sun and the palace on the backdrop. The older girls completed the task without help from the facilitators. The younger girls aged 7 to 10 painted the beach scenery accordingly and chose the right colours. The younger girls managed to complete the task with the help of one of the facilitators throughout the painting process. We noticed that the boys smeared their artwork with all the colours on their backdrop, while another artwork produced by a group of 6 to 8 years old boys portrays a backdrop stained in blue and black. It is noticeable that there is a difference between the girls' and boys' artwork production. The girls' colouring is much neater than the boys' work.

In contrast, the boys did not paint according to the scenery drawn on the canvas. Overall, the children's learning abilities were relatively low. Other than that, there were differences in the boys' and girls' painting styles affected by their maturation and age. The painting skills of boys and girls were different. Painting by the girls is more organised than painting by the boys. Painting the sun yellow and the sea blue allowed the girls to think realistically because it is how most people perceive those colours. The boys, however, did not paint the scene depicted on the canvas. Thus, according to Ouz (2010), age and maturation are two characteristics that affect how children paint. According to the painting, the girls' images displayed a higher level of maturity than the boys' paintings did since the females' pictures were more organised. Due to their inexperience and lack of exposure to paint at home or school, boys experienced lower maturation levels than girls.

The children's cognitive development shows the impact of drama education. According to the results, most children have a good memory and can remember the stories they have studied up until the very last minute. This is due to the story-telling activity significantly impacting the

children's interest and curiosity about learning. Thus, according to Fandakova & Gruber (2021), the children's learning and memory were increased by their curiosity to discover new knowledge, which caused them to recall the narrative from the first session to the last session. However, they had a minimal attention span. All lessons were held for a maximum of 30 to 40 minutes. The students lost interest in the class after 40 minutes.

Findings from the interview with the facilitators also reveal that the children's attention span was relatively short. This is shown from the observations for all the lessons in four sessions in which the children's attention span was 30 to 40 minutes only. In an interview with Farah, the facilitator mentioned, "They had a problem with attention span. They did not have enough attention span" (Farah). Another instructor supported her comment, "It was difficult because there were not enough of us to go around. There are about 15 to 20 children, and only 4 of us. Not enough people to get everyone on board. That is why we only get to retain their attention for 30 to 40 minutes" (Aisyah). Attention span can be decreased if the children do not have school readiness (Liberati et al., 2018). As a result, they could not adapt to the school environment and continue to be left behind in developing their mental processes that support effective, goal-oriented learning and attention control approaches.

According to the results, we saw an increase in the children's self-esteem. Most notably, on the final day, children voluntarily offered to perform in front of their friends. Additionally, the kids exhibited the necessary emotions during the showcase, which helped them put on a solid performance. Furthermore, when the facilitators complimented them after they completed the activities, their confidence also improved. In addition, they were motivated by their self-interest to display acting. As a result, the drama activity might promote cooperation and confidence building in children because they can show off their mastery in dramatising the story in the drama performance (Joronen et al., 2011).

Non-Verbal Communication Skills among Children

Drama provides the children with an opportunity to improve their nonverbal communication ability. Because children must use their bodies to communicate, nonverbal signals are essential for conveying messages. Observation of what went on during the sessions revealed that the younger children mostly used non-verbal communication with the facilitators. For example, one of the younger children passed a glue bottle to ask the facilitator to open the bottle for her. Even without saying anything, she understood the child's request by studying her body language. According to the findings, non-verbal communication was displayed by the younger children. This is because of the language barrier between the younger children and the facilitators. The younger children are more familiar with the Seletar language as it is commonly used at home. They did not attend school and had minimal exposure to the Malay language. Thus, the younger children used more non-verbal communication during the sessions. It is also observed that the children had no difficulty communicating with the older children. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that to motivate the children to learn, and facilitators need to build a supportive relationship using encouragement and feedback (Sword, 2020).

Conclusion

It can be said that the indigenous children positively received the drama. Throughout the lessons they developed socially and gained new learning experiences. In addition, the impact

of drama in an alternative classroom for indigenous kids that provides a joyful learning atmosphere was measured for the first time in this study. Sadly, because of their poor attention span, the class only lasted 30 to 40 minutes. Finally, we also noticed that only the older kids demonstrated the ability to learn on their own. The smaller kids were entirely reliant on the facilitators.

This study is considered necessary in widening the choice of approach in teaching because it will help the educators and indigenous children explore more about drama as an alternative way of learning the language. This study will also help educators teach indigenous children to enhance their educational and social development through drama creatively. In addition, educators can also explore the indigenous children's problems in improving their education and social skills.

It may be drawn that using drama as a teaching method in an alternative classroom positively affects disadvantaged kids. Through learning drama, the children's social and educational development improved. When they participated in and carried out the activities, they also gained new learning experiences. The observation and interview questions were intended to stimulate the respondents to explore their views on drama. Additionally, this study was the first to assess how well drama works as an enjoyable alternative to the traditional classroom for underprivileged kids. As a result, the drama lesson was novel for disadvantaged children. This study also provides a novel approach to stimulate children's curiosity about learning and encourage them to attend formal education

The study would also open a new avenue for the Ministry of Education to develop a new children's curriculum. In addition, to ensure that no Malaysian indigenous child is excluded from education, the ministry of education may also establish an alternative classroom and be reminded to include drama in both formal and informal learning.

References

- Afizi, W., Hanafi, W., Ahmad, S., & Ali, N. (2014). Faktor budaya dan persekitaran dalam prestasi pendidikan anak Orang Asli Malaysia : Kajian kes di Kelantan Cultural and environmental factors in the educational performance of Malaysian aboriginal children : A Kelantan case study. *Geografia Online Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 5(5), 107–122.
- Aini, Z., Don, A. G., & Isa, N. I. M. (2019). Education development program to Orang Asli by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE). *Jurnal Hal Ehwal Islam Dan Warisan Selangor*, 1, 1–11.
- Alvi, M. (2016). A manual for selecting sampling techniques in Research. University of Karachi, Iqra. University. *Munich Personal RePEc Archive*, 1–56.
- Amineh, R. J., & Asl, H. D. (2015). Review of constructivism and social constructivism. *Journal of Social Sciences, Literature and Languages*, 1(1), 9–16. <http://blue-ap.org>
- Caroll, J. (1996). Critical and transformative research in drama classrooms. In P. Taylor (Ed.), *Researching drama and arts education: Paradigms and possibilities* (pp.72-84). London: Falmer Press.
- Wiarsih, C. D. I. (2017). Upaya Meningkatkan Kreativitas Dan Kemampuan Mengapresiasi Drama. *Khazanah Pendidikan*, X(2).

- Coban, P. (2017). The effect of process drama on English As a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. *Use of Communication Strategies*, May 2017.
- Demircioglu, S. (2010). Teaching English vocabulary to young learners via drama. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(2), 439–443.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.039>
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. In Synthese (Fifth Edit, Vol. 195, Issue 5). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-017-1319-x>
- Department of Orang Asli Affairs. (1995). *Memorandum Pengambilan Sekolah-sekolah Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli (JHEOA)*. Kuala Lumpur: Department of Orang Asli Affairs (JHEOA).
- DICE Consortium. (2010). *Making a World of Difference: A DICE Resource for Practitioners on Educational Theatre and Drama*. [http://www.dramanetwork.eu/file/Education Resource long.pdf](http://www.dramanetwork.eu/file/EducationResource%20long.pdf)
- Fandakova, Y., & Gruber, M. J. (2021). States of curiosity and interest enhance memory differently in adolescents and children. *Developmental Science*, 24(1), 1–15.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/desc.13005>
- Foushee, R., Srinivasan, M., & Xu, F. (2021). Self-directed learning by preschoolers in a naturalistic overhearing context. *Cognition*, 206.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2020.104415>
- Gray, C., Wright, P., & Pascoe, R. (2017). There's a lot to learn about being a drama teacher: Pre-service drama teachers experience of stress and vulnerability during an extended practicum. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 67, 270–277.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.06.015>
- Ikram, J. (1997). Kenyataan Ketua Pengarah Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli Malaysia pada perjumpaan dengan wakil-wakil media massa pada 31hb. Oktober, 1997 [Press release].
- Kalin, J., & Steh, B. (2015). Students' perspectives on significant and ideal learning experiences- A challenge for the professional development of University Teachers. *Review of European Studies*, 7(12). <https://doi.org/10.5539/res.v7n12p21>
- Lu, W. H. (2019). "Lebih 700 murid Orang Asli keciciran sekolah tahun lalu," *Malaysiakini*. <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/483248>.
- Mavroudis, N., & Bournelli, P. (2016). The role of drama in education in counteracting bullying in schools. *Cogent Education*, 3(1), 1–12.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1233843>
- Mingazova, N. M. (2016). Modification of the active learning methods in environmental education in Russian universities. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 131, 85–89.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.04.083>
- Oguz, V. (2010). The factors influencing children's drawings. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(2), 3003–3007. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.455>
- Olusegun, S. (2016). Constructivism: A Paradigm for Teaching and Learning. *Arts and Social Sciences Journal*, 7(4), 66–70. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2151-6200.1000200>
- Roslan, S. (2018). Budi kelas kaseh. 2018.
<https://www.hmetro.com.my/mutakhir/2018/09/373790/budi-kelas-kaseh>.
- Rosnon, M. R., & Talib, M. A. (2019). Indigenous Education Rights: The Malaysian Case. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 9(10), 149–167.
- Saerani, M. F. T. (2019). Using creative movement activities for orang Asli children in

- Kampung Chinggun, Perak : A transfer of knowledge from studio-based learning to community work. *2nd International Conference on Dance Education Proceedings*, 2, 158-163, 2019.
- Sliwka, A. (2008). The contribution of alternative education. *Innovating to Learn, Learning to Innovate*, 93–112. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264047983-6-en>
- Suhendi, A., & Purwarno. (2018). Constructivist Learning Theory: The contribution to foreign language learning and teaching", *KnE Social Sciences*, 3(4), 87. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v3i4.1921>
- Sword, R. (2020). Communication in the classroom, skills for teachers. *HUB*. Retrieved from <https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/hub/communication-skills-for-teachers/>.
- Taherdoost, H. (2016). Sampling methods in research methodology: How to choose a sampling technique for research. *International Journal of Academic Research in Management (IJARM)*, 5(2), 18–27.
- Wee, S. J. (2011). A case study of drama education for kindergarten children in the United States: Drama specialists' beliefs and practices. *Child Studies in Diverse Contexts*,1(1), 59–75. <https://doi.org/10.5723/csdc.2011.1.1.059>
- Zainal, Z. (2015). Case study as a research method. *KLIO*, 97(1), 81–134. <https://doi.org/10.1515/klio-2015-0004>