

## Enrichment of Emotional and Sensory Experience in Preschoolers with Mental Retardation in a Theatrical Game

Urolbaeva Shokhsanam Odil qizi

2 year students, Undergraduate students Gulistan State University

**Abstract:** Art continues to be an important part of the educational process from past to present, facilitating students to acquire new skills such as problem-solving and social cohesion. Creative drama, which has a relationship with all branches of art and the play and theater is evaluated with a new perspective, has been reported to be effective in different age groups and different academic areas and has become an important part of the educational system since it addresses many senses. Sensory integration is defined by processing and using the information coming from our senses by our brain in a purposeful way. It provides the proper development of the basic to the complex skills including daily living skills, and the skills necessary for academic learning including reading, writing and arithmetic skills.

**Keywords:** Sensory Integration, Creative Drama, Visual Perception, Self-Regulation Observation

### INTRODUCTION

It is a fact that art holds an important place in all stages of human history, is an important part of our cultural heritage and maintains this effectiveness even today. Also in the last 30 years it continues to be an important part of the process and makes it easier for students to acquire new skills such as problem solving and social cohesion (Bautista, Moreno Nunez, Bull, Amsah and Koh, 2018; Gadsden, 2008). The fact that art is a part of education is directly related to the change in the perspective of learning and teaching. Since the 1970s, the behavioral approach has been replaced by a cognitive approach. With this change, the educational process is no longer aimed at transmitting information directly to the passive listener; it takes into account the individual and social development of the active learner and aims to internalize information with the help of different teaching materials. For this purpose, new tools or methods have been developed and continue to be developed.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

It is related to the characteristics of creative drama as being an effective education method in early childhood, including play and animation, appealing to many senses at the same time and embodying the skill to be taught. Play and animation, which are also the elements of creative drama in early childhood, are the spontaneous empirical way of learning. In this period, children can create a new environment for themselves with the freedom of play, put themselves in the place of someone else, and thus have a better understanding of their own feelings, the feelings of others, and empathize better. They can also contribute to their mental, emotional, social and physical development through representations created through play and imitation (Mages, 2008; Peter, 2003; Sağlam, 2003; Ulutaş, 2011; Ummanel, 2017). With this functional aspect, play and its components have become an important part of education systems in early childhood. The inclusion of the play in the education systems and making it structured within the curriculum has been possible with creative drama.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the reasons why creative drama is an effective method in early childhood is that it appeals to many senses. In the drama process, the participants are both listening, watching, touching using body language, sometimes pretending or in real smelling and tasting (Öztürk, 2001; Baldwin and Fleming, 2003). When working with children in early childhood, the use of concrete objects that address multiple senses is more effective than verbal expressions and facilitates concretization and learning (Peter, 2003). However, it is emphasized that more materials based on vision are used in educational programs since the effect of visual perception on learning is higher than other senses. (Heinich, Molendo and Russell, 1993; Lightning, 2002; Lean, 2007). The process of perceiving and processing the visual information coming from sensory and mental processes that are tried to be activated by these materials is called visual perception (Gal and Linchevski, 2010). The reason why visual perception is important in learning is that it is directly related to many school period skills such as reading-writing, visual motor coordination, and solving math problems.

The senses which are related to the education process, daily life and many other factors, are being organized by our brains and used for a purpose is defined as sensory integration (Ayres & Robbins, 2005). Sensory integration is the control of senses such as balance-motor, gravity and motion (vestibular), muscle- joint, posture (proprioceptive), as well as the senses of vision, hearing, tasting, smelling and touch, and organizing the adaptive response by organizing information coming from each of them (Smith-Roley, Blanche and Schaaf, 2001). Self-regulation skill is the systematic use of cognitive or metacognitive strategies by individuals who set their goals, assessing their own abilities and taking responsibility for individual learning (Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2011). This skill is an essential element of a meaningful interaction of development and maturation throughout the life (Bronson, 2000). At the same time, self-regulation, which is accepted as a key to lifelong learning, plays an important role in the learning processes of individuals on behavioral, cognitive and motivational basis (Yıldız Demirtaş 2013; Ramdass and Zimmerman, 2011). It is stated that individuals who learn by self-regulation regulate their behaviors and thoughts in three stages. These are: (1) Thinking ahead (effort comes before the action) (2) Performance control (occurs during the learning process) (3) Self-assessment (takes place after learning). These three stages occur cyclically and affect each other. In particular, the pre-thinking process influences individuals' motivation, self-regulation, self-judgment and self- response, which are the three important dimensions of self-regulation.

The relationship between self-regulation skills and sensory integration Dunn (1997) revealed that the data obtained from 1000 normal developmental children with developmental delay. According to Dunn (2007), when people search for a sensory stimuli, they are running from one experience to another in daily life; if they avoid the senses, they moves away from situations that disturb their senses quite quickly. In other words, if a person has a sensory sensitivity pattern, he reacts to situations. For example, the child who is disturbed by the sound closes his ears or tells others to be quiet. If a person has a low registration sensory processing pattern, he has difficulty in recognizing what other people have already noticed because their neurological thresholds are too high, they miss some things and do nothing for additional information. Such children can be emotionally neutral, unresponsive.

## CONCLUSION

As a result, it can be suggested that pre-school teachers working in the field can gain skills related to the methods, techniques and approaches for pre-school teachers in the in-service education program, starting from the fact that self-regulation and visual perception can be developed or learnable skills. . At the same time, it can be said that research on familial and environmental factors

on self-regulation, visual perception and sensory integration may increase the effectiveness of the education programs to be prepared in this direction.

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