

## Potentialities of Drama in Language Education : What Students Tell Us

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This paper reports on students' reflective comments on their first experience of learning English through drama which is not widely practiced in Japan.

Drama in education is thought to be beneficial to learners in many ways. Drama experts claimed that

drama enhanced learners' social, emotional, and intellectual development. The literature of drama in language education reported that drama techniques improved learners' communication skills (i.e., speech acts, pronunciation and intonation, nonverbal signals, and discourse and socio-cultural strategies) and influenced learners' psychological states (i.e., reducing anxiety toward learning a second/foreign language, and building self-confidence, self-esteem, and motivation).

Kusanagi's (2006) report on an EFL class (N = 14), which was instructed with drama techniques at a university in Japan, supported the above views. Learners' written course evaluation at the mid- and end-of-semester showed that learners increased their motivation and interest in learning English, their awareness of multiple modes of communication, social skills, and creativity. As the result, these outcomes made the class community stronger week by week.

The former analysis focused on the learners as a group. However, the present paper focuses on the situated experience of the individual in order to examine his/her learning process as a story. Analysis includes four students' written comments and interviews.

The presentation concludes with a discussion on the potentialities of the drama approach and its pedagogical implications with the following questions; Should English lessons teach English skills only or communication skills as well? Should English lessons also address learners' personal development (an often-neglected-issue in language education)?