

IWONA CZAJA – CHUDYBA

Instytut Pedagogiki Przedszkolnej i Szkolnej

Akademia Pedagogiczna w Krakowie

“Theory and practice of play and games for students of teacher’s specialisation”

Introduction

The major task in work connected with educating future teachers is to form an open and flexible person, supporting the individuality, evoking joy and optimism among the others, promoting creativity, but also responsibility. For pre-school and early years school teacher in integrated education system, and especially for kindergarten teacher, very important is a skill for common play with child, creating and holding up the special atmosphere as the way of building up the relationship with child and for finding the optimal - for his developing skills - way of transferring the knowledge (Brzezińska, 1985; Domań, 2003 ;Wygotsky, 1995).

This task may be realised by activities using methods of games and plays character that allow for common activities, versatile employment of abilities, interpersonal communication within the group – knowing each other through senses, dance, movement, singing, discussions and elements of drama (Czaja-Chudyba, 2004).

Few years ago there was introduced the subject pedagogic of play into study plan on teacher’s specialisation at Pedagogic Academy in Cracow. For the pre-school and early years school pedagogic the author’s program was carried out, where special emphasis was put on workshops. In theoretical layer there was realised the content presented in “*Spiel und Spielzeug*” handbook, worked out by our department and foreign co-writers within the frame of “*Erasmus*” project. It was based as well on experiences from such workshops as interpersonal skills training, communication training, creativity training and drama related.

Objectives

Researches aimed to check to what extent the workshops of types presented earlier develop student’s skills and equipped them into competencies important in teacher and pedagogic professions. Basing on literature two classifications of professional competencies for teachers are distinguished. The first one was elaborated by specialist of Polish Education Ministry [MEN]

(Standardy wykształcenia zawodowego nauczyciela. Projekt, 1997) and the second – by W. Puślecki (Puślecki, 1998). They became the basis for creating the research tools.

Materials

Questions included in prepared inquiries related to so called professional competence standards for teachers. Students had to answer the questions about *prakseological, communicational, co-operation, creative, informatic and moral/ethic* preparation to profession (*MEN standards*) and also about *scientifically-specialistic, scientifically-pedagogic, interactive, executive, interpretative, caring, facilitative, transgressive, negotiative, self-reflective* competencies (W. Puślecki).

Research group

70 female student took part in described research. In table 1 the characteristic of research group is presented.

Table 1. Research group characteristic

SEX	female
NUMBER	70
AGE	mean: 247 months (234 - 287 months)
<i>CONTACT WITH GROUP PLAY BEFORE STUDIES THROUGH:</i>	93%
<i>ORGANIZED CAMP DURING HOLIDAYS</i>	53%
<i>EXTRA ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOL</i>	50%
<i>RELIGIOUS MEETINGS AND ORGANIZATIONS</i>	47%
<i>SCOUTING</i>	22%
<i>PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS</i>	11%
<i>TAKING PART IN SUPERVISION USING GROUP PLAY</i>	31%
<i>ORGANIZING ANY TYPES OF PLAYS BEFORE STUDIES</i>	47%

The vast majority of students had contact with group play. More than 93% took part in plays before activities organized during studies at AP. Most frequently it was during: organized camp at holidays (53%), extra activities at school (50%), religious meetings and organizations (47%), scouting (22%) and psycho-educational workshops (11%). 69% of students have never taken part in supervision using group play. For the rest of them supervision was carried out while learning in secondary school of pedagogic profile. 53% of students had no practice in carrying out and organizing of play at the beginning of their studies.

Activities organization

All students took part in one-year course (30 hours) on the second year of studies, that included theoretical activities, taking part in workshops as well as planning and carrying out workshops, with taking into account basic assumptions of pedagogic of play methodology. Aims, program contents and ways of activities realisation are presented below.

AIMS

1. Getting familiar with theory of play. Acquiring knowledge about definitions, types and classifications of plays. Presentation and theoretical analysis of particular types of play function. Getting information about developmental and stimulative aspects of children play.
2. Initiation in observation and description of spontaneous children play.
3. Developing abilities for conducting plays and for creating the atmosphere of joy and spontaneous.
4. Building up abilities for using plays in educational process at pre-school and for arranging plays in small and big groups.
5. Acquiring knowledge on programs using plays in integrated education system in primary school.
6. Knowing aims, rules and forms of pedagogic of play realisation

PROGRAM CONTENTS

Lectures and classes

- I. Play as a cultural and social phenomenon. Play in psychological, sociological and pedagogical theories.

- II. Definitions, features and functions of play. Play and game.
- III. Classification and characteristic of free and organised plays.
- IV. Developmental aspect of play. Influence of play onto development of different fields of child functioning.
- V. Using of play in educational process in pre-school. Examples of plays organised by teacher.
- VI. Using of play and games in educational process in school. Working out the scripts with application of particular types of plays (didactic, research, creative, movement) – selecting the plays appropriate to age, needs and interests of child, using particular types of play during activities.
- VII. Play as a method of work with a group – organising activities inspired by pedagogic of play popularised by KLANZA association.
 - 1. Theoretical basis of pedagogic of play – history of association in Poland.
 - 2. Aims and rules of pedagogic of play.
 - 3. Animation technics and forms of work, characteristic of particular phases of work with a group.
 - 4. Communicational structure.
 - 5. Classification of plays according to pedagogic of play.
 - 6. Using the creative movement and the role of dance in pedagogic of play.
- VIII. Therapeutic and correctional aspect of play – application of plays in therapy of behavioural disorder and mental diseases. Application of plays in the work with disabled and mentally disabled people.

◆ **Workshops conducted by lecturers**

- 1. Plays facilitating the entering into group, getting familiar with the others - integration plays (realisation of complex subject titled “*Animals*”).
- 2. Elements of drama activities, pantomime and staging (realisation of complex subject titled “*In Indians’ village*”).
- 3. Selected animation dances (KLANZA), active listening to the music according to Battii Strauss, movement activities according to Carl Orff (realisation of complex subject titled “*Trip to Hollywood*”).
- 4. Specific integration plays for big groups (realisation of complex subject titled

“Ćwierćland”).

5. Plays and games of didactic and creative character (realization of complex subject “Fantasyland”).

◆ **Subjects of activities conducted by students**

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>Integration plays</i> | 16. <i>Plays with animation rug.</i> |
| 2. <i>Plays for aggressive children and children with ADHD.</i> | 17. <i>Travel through Poland (Polish cities).</i> |
| 3. <i>Self-esteem plays.</i> | 18. <i>Folk paly and dances.</i> |
| 4. <i>Travel around the world.</i> | 19. <i>Flight into space.</i> |
| 5. <i>Plays with balloons.</i> | 20. <i>The land of tales and stories.</i> |
| 6. <i>Four seasons.</i> | 21. <i>World of papers.</i> |
| 7. <i>In Fantasyland.</i> | 22. <i>We are entering the Europeen Community – getting familiar with plays of member countries.</i> |
| 8. <i>Plays of our grandparents.</i> | 23. <i>Chasing the adventure.</i> |
| 9. <i>Spring at the meadow.</i> | 24. <i>Origami word.</i> |
| 10. <i>Uninhabited island.</i> | 25. <i>Summer plays.</i> |
| 11. <i>In the land of dragons.</i> | 26. <i>Autumn walk.</i> |
| 12. <i>The world of colours.</i> | 27. <i>Carnival quiz-show.</i> |
| 13. <i>In the world of sounds.</i> | 28. <i>At the Christmas Tree.</i> |
| 14. <i>Everyone can be an actor – drama and staging plays.</i> | 29. <i>Santa Claus games.</i> |
| 15. <i>Birthdays plays.</i> | 30. <i>Plays developing creativity and imagination.</i> |

The principles that should be followed by leading person and by participants during activities are the following: spontaneous and activity in participation, using many levels of communications (material and emotional, verbal and non-verbal), avoiding rivalry and proposing instead of that emotions of joy and community as well as using the wide range of different means of expressing oneself (Zaorska, 1998). In order to check the efficiency of the course the researches were executed at the end of it.

Results

In table 2 there are presented received data as well as the estimation of activities in students opinion.

Table 2. Effects of pedagogic of play course in students-participants opinion

<i>RESULTS OF PEDAGOGIC OF PLAY COURSE</i>	% of students
Development of creativity, imagination and fantasy	46%
Improving contacts between students; integration of group, co-operation stimulation	38%
Preparing of students to work with children and getting familiar with methods of preparing for activity	30%
Getting experience in carrying out plays and controlling the group	27%
Minimalization of fear and shyness, improving self-esteem and courage	26%
Improving communicational skills, development of accuracy of instructions and commands	25%
Getting familiar with new plays, methods and forms of work	23%
Getting familiar with rules for play selection	15%
Improving the efficiency of behavior in teachers' role, self-consciousness,	15%
Flexibility, being open for the others' needs	13%
Better understanding of child needs	12%
Development of skills connected with planning, play time and space organization, preparation and constructing play scenarios	10%
Analysis of didactic process, understanding of reasons and character of detailed elements of didactic situation, analysis of mistakes	8%
Getting familiar with theory of plays	7%
Forming positive character features - responsibility, concentration and patience	6%

Direct results of workshops may be presented in sphere of emotions and individual development of participants (self-reflective, moral/ethic, communicative and transgressive competencies) as well as through the influence onto didactic process planned by them (prakseological, creative and communicative competencies).

Workshops eliminate the fear among the future teachers, help them to increase the self-esteem, learn flexibility in thinking. These effects were also noticed after workshops of similar type carried out by different universities. My research indicated that such activities form the other

personality features, mainly flexibility, allow for accepting the attitude of open approach to the people and to ideas, break – unfortunately frequent – habit for critic and distance for novelties among teachers. There are visible the atmosphere of engagement, positive emotion intensification and closer contacts between participants than before workshops.

Workshops' advantages in emotional, motivational and social domain are most frequently presented in students answers. Also important, but less outlined by students, was the aspect of their development on cognitive plane – looking for alternative solutions and acceptance for heuristic way of solving the problems.

As students design alternative scripts in comparison with standard ones, basing on information and plays known from the both training methods, they make it possible to get more satisfaction from work and getting familiar with new methods of teaching. Playing form of activities makes it possible to develop the carriage and breaking through shyness, somehow enforces future teachers to take similar trials in their own didactic activities. Success of workshops will be the result of individual activity and personal engagement of teachers.

Conclusions

As described course has been introduced into obligatory course schedule for students it is worth thinking over the directions of their improvement and over perspective for the next course.

Important factor influencing the quality of work during course with presented structure becomes the number of student in group – in activities of such type it is not beneficial to have too big group (over 15 people) or too small (below 8 people). Another interesting and useful factor would be the possibility of employing so called co-trainer, additionally taking control over communication and inter-personal interactions within the group. Essential would be also allowing students for supervising activities based on plays and creative classes in pre-schools, schools, cultural and educational centres as well as propagation of creativity and promoting the associations continuing vision of educational activities connected with pedagogic of play.

Activities should give a chance for students to supervise lessons based on plays and creative exercises in kindergartens and schools. Further studies should give also possibility to improve skills received by students – for example by special post-diploma studies from pedagogic of play.

References

- Brzezińska, A. (1985). Aktywność zabawowa i jej znaczenie dla rozwoju dziecka w wieku przedszkolnym. W A. Brzezińska i M. Burtowy (red.) *Psychopedagogiczne problemy edukacji wczesnoszkolnej*. Poznań: UAM.
- Czaja-Chudyba, I. (2004). Trening twórczości i pedagogiki zabawy w kształceniu studentów kierunków nauczycielskich – zarys programów, doświadczenia, perspektywy. W B. Muchacka i K. Kraszewski (red.). *Kształcenie nauczycieli przedszkoli i klas początkowych w okresie przemian edukacyjnych* (s. 76-88). Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Pedagogicznej.
- Domań, R. (2003). *Metody pedagogiki zabawy w pracy z dziećmi w wieku przedszkolnym*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo PRZEDSZKOLAK.
- Puślecki, W. (1998). Modernizacja kompetencji profesjonalnych nauczycieli edukacji początkowej. W I. Adamek (red.). *Idee i strategie edukacji nauczycieli klas I-III i przedszkoli* (s. 111-123). Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP.
- Standardy wykształcenia zawodowego nauczyciela. Projekt. (1997). Opracowanie: Zespół Przygotowania Pedagogicznego Nauczycieli przy Radzie ds. Kształcenia Nauczycieli, Warszawa: MEN.
- Wygotsky, L.S. (1995). Zabawa i jej rola w rozwoju psychicznym dziecka W A. Brzezińska, T. Czuba, G. Lutomski i B. Smykowski (red.). *Dziecko w zabawie i świecie języka* (s. 67-88). Poznań: Zys i S-ka Wydawnictwo.
- Zaorska, Z., (1998). Pedagogika zabawy – metodyka pracy z grupą. W E. Kędzior-Niczyporuk (red.). *Wprowadzenie do pedagogiki zabawy* (s. 18-20). Lublin: Wydawnictwo KLANZA

Abstract

The subject “pedagogic of play” was introduced into study plans for teacher’s specialization at AP few years ago. For specialization of pre-school and early years pedagogic the author’s program was realized with special emphasis put onto workshops.

In the paper there are presented results of researches for the group of 70 students of daily studies taking part in one year course (30 hours). The aim of research was to determine how this course was estimated by participants and how it could be helpful in their future work as a teacher. By the means of inquiries the following processes were tested: group integration, prakseology competency development of students (i.e. competency of efficient creation of educational situations), their diagnostic, self-reflective and cognitive abilities.