

## CREATIVE DRAMA IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

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**Abstract:** Creative drama with its content and objectives is one of the indispensable methods when working with children in pre-primary education. It has universal application, it is applied in all daily activities in kindergarten and humanizes the whole educational process. Thanks to it, the teacher can find his way to the children sooner (Švábová, 2014a). Gradually, nowadays, it is successfully coming into the awareness of many creative educators, they are more and more open to it, and we believe that it will find a place in their creative work with children, who will welcome a motivating environment in which through their activity they gain experience, learn about themselves and the surrounding world.

**Keywords:** dramatic art, dramatic expression, creative drama, kindergarten teacher.

### 1 Introduction

Creative drama is applied in a various direction, therefore, it can be a subject, method or principle. In the Slovak educational space, it is most often used as a teaching method. It can also function as a principle, the great advantage of which is that it allows the integration of the learning content of several subjects into one meaningful whole. In the kindergarten environment, creative drama can be applied in all educational areas, thus creating a space for the child to gain a complex experience, i.e. a holistic picture of the world and to be aware of his place in it. In the school environment, we create the best possible environment for a child in pre-primary education so that they receive as many opportunities as possible to get to know themselves, their surroundings and have the opportunity to prepare for life in creative activities. Kotrba and Lacina (2010, p. 41) point out that a person will learn new knowledge much faster and easier if they have the opportunity to try it themselves, which means that they will be as actively involved in the activity as possible.

Creative drama has a special position among motivating and activating methods in the educational process. Creative drama is interdisciplinary, based on the knowledge, methods and goals of several scientific disciplines, and offers a comprehensive development of the child's personality through their own active activity and personal experiences. The advantage of working with creative drama is that new knowledge gained in the creative drama process through personal experience is more permanent and children remember it better.

In practice, we currently encounter the term *dramatic education* or *creative drama* in various authors dealing with the issue of creative drama. In the Czech Republic, the pioneers of dramatic education, Machková (2005), Disman (1976) and Valenta (1996, 2008), prefer the term *dramatic education*. Valenta (1996, p. 28) uses the terms *dramatic education*, but also *educational drama*, and *creative drama*. We also encounter the terms school play, drama, drama in education, and children's drama. According to Machková (2005, p. 10), the term *creative drama* is more interesting and attractive for the public and children, but the term *dramatic education* is more concise and precise.

Although the term *dramatic education* is equivalent to the term *creative drama*, many have recently been leaning towards the term *creative drama* as the notion of creativity, without which there would be no creative drama, has come more to the fore. Creative drama is not the dramatisation of a literary text, nor is it working with a puppet, nor is it performing theatre, nor is it playing at someone and something. It is active learning, a creative process in which the whole personality of the individual develops comprehensively based on practical experience gained by solving fictitious situations. Here the child becomes the

subject of education and has the opportunity to participate actively in the educational process, thus having the opportunity to understand himself, his surroundings and the world around him (Švábová, 2008).

Provažník (1998) points out that creative drama is a part of aesthetic education and is closely related to art, specifically dramatic art because it adopts elements and procedures that belong to theatre for the realization of its educational goals. It works with interpersonal relationships, with situations where relationships are best manifested, with the transformation of oneself into someone else, and thanks to this it can work with dramatic persons. According to Valenta (2008) Creative drama models life, in this perspective it is a significant subject of study of life experiences and situations. It is the study of life, people, problems, relationships, decisions and choices about the morality of practical action; it is practical anthropology, psychology and sociology; it is theatre and drama. The roots of drama and theatre go back to play, playing "at someone" and "at something", as a natural human capacity. Creative drama uses both the natural human interest in dramatic, dramatic situations and the spontaneous human capacity to play and imitate to fulfil formative goals. Creative drama as a perfectly elaborated humanistic-creative educational system allows educators to build a quality developing relationship with children and enables children to acquire vital competencies and cultivate their personality in a non-committal and non-threatening process of play (Bekéniová, 2012). If we care about children, we change our approach to them, we change the philosophy of school and education, which is helped by creative drama, which is specific in every way, bringing success to schools. The child and his or her activity are the main, essential elements of creative drama. Creative drama is active learning, primarily based on learning through experience, cooperation and communication.

According to Kollárová (2011), creative drama is one of the alternative approaches in school that can show the way that teaches the child to perceive the world around them through creative drama activities, to think about it, to express and interact with it through words and movement, and to form a relationship with it. In the educational process, the educator does not instruct, but motivates, guides and leads the group to open communication. Creative drama can be practically implemented in the educational process in various forms: creative drama as a separate teaching subject; creative drama as a teaching method; creative drama appearing in the form of an element, but its inclusion in the educational process must not be an end in itself; creative drama as a leisure activity in school clubs; creative drama as a club at school; drama therapy (Kovalčíková, Bekéniová, 1996; Švábová, 2008).

Zelina (2000, p. 107 – 108) confirms that creative drama can be used independently as a special occupation of children, as a separate lesson, or topic ( club, drama group, etc.), but also in the practice of education it is used in classes, lessons of aesthetic education as a part of it and finally it can be used in any lesson, in any educational occupation, where its formative and change-forming phenomena are suitable as a functional and highly motivating for children. We can agree with Machková (2005) that creative drama in schools can also be a therapeutic method used in working with children with different kinds of disorders and disabilities. It follows from the above that creative drama can be applied in the complex development of the child's personality throughout his/her attendance not only in kindergarten but also in the educational process at the higher school level (Švábová, 2008).

#### 1.1 Creative drama as a teaching subject

Creative drama as a teaching subject is firmly established in the curricula of secondary pedagogical schools and colleges of pedagogical studies, but it can also be taught in primary schools. In school environments, it is applied as a compulsory, optional or compulsory elective subject. Creative drama in pre-primary

education, as we have already mentioned, has its application in all educational areas, but it is most represented and used in the educational area of *Language and Communication*. We know from experience that the child is happy to declaim texts that are part of all educational areas. Those which inspire spontaneous movement, imitate and recreate dramatic situations using body play (stamping, clapping, flapping, snapping fingers, knocking) are welcomed.

We know from experience that the application of creative drama largely depends on the teacher, to what extent he/she is familiar with it, how he/she knows it, whether he/she can work with the group, how he/she has prepared in advance so that the children cooperate in the creative process with interest and without inhibitions to express themselves and realize themselves. As a teacher of creative drama, it is important not only to be professional but also to be creative, original and empathetic towards children. The role of the teacher is interesting and non-traditional, because in creative drama classes, by varying the use of creative drama methods, the role is as active and activating as possible.

Creative drama presented by Semjanová (1995, p. 61 – 62) as a method which, from a general pedagogical point of view, is characterised by the following features:

1. **Communication** - the child in the induced situation enters into communicative acts with his environment and with partners.
2. **Interpretation** - the child is encouraged to interpret the situation in which he finds himself, his vision of the situation, which has both a rational and an emotional side and an evaluative element, the child also presents it with some kind of creation - drawing, music, literary genre, action.
3. **Imagination** - the child has the opportunity to work with imaginary objects, partners, with stories in an imaginary environment, which constantly develops imagination and fantasy.
4. **Empathy** - in dramatic situations, the child puts himself in the role of other people and objects and expresses himself with feelings, thus developing the emotional side of personality and sensitivity to his surroundings.
5. **Socialization** - the child learns to cooperate with a partner, or with a group in various induced dramatic situations, there is an opportunity to assert one's own opinion at the same time.

We must point out that creative drama is specific in its goals because it does not focus only on the final effect but on the overall creative process and its course. Creative drama represents life, therefore it is a significant object of study of life experiences and situations. Marušík et al. (2008) point out that in the application of creative dramatics, the child is an active subject in the ongoing educational process, a co-creator, and in the activity he/she performs, he/she applies already acquired abilities, skills and experiences while gaining new experiences that contribute to positive behaviour and attitude towards life.

### 1.1.1 Objectives of creative drama

Creative drama can reach the soul of the child, it can remove the stereotype and draw him into a magical world where he finds his place and is able to create, experiment and gain subjective experiences in a stimulating environment. If we want to establish a hierarchy of objectives and tasks of creative drama, we start from the fact that its objectives, content and methods are specific and irreplaceable, it promotes and develops natural and spontaneous children's expression and it is based on experiential learning, learning through personal experience.

The goals of creative drama can be found in the methodologies of many authors in different ways. Many of them are identical, somewhere they enrich and complement each other (Machková, 1998, 2007; Valenta, 2008; Bekéniová, 2012; Šváblová, 2008, 2017, 2018, 2021, etc.). The primary goal of creative drama is

the best possible preparation of the child for life, the education of a creative and perceptive personality. As we have already stated, in the application of creative drama, the process of creation itself and its course is important, it allows the child to take on different social roles and forms of communication and to learn to be responsible for his/her behaviour, decisions and actions.

J. Valenta (2008) detailed the goals of creative drama into five areas (Table 1) (compiled by Šváblová, 2014b).

Table 1 The goals of creative drama

<b>Aesthetic-artistic-educational area</b>	- to develop the aesthetic side of the personality, sense of art and artistic creativity.
<b>General education area</b>	- to develop knowledge about life, about the world, about man, about relationships, about problems, to understand these phenomena and the relationships between them.
<b>Personality development area</b>	- to develop the cognitive side of personality, emotionality, self-knowledge, self-confidence, self-regulation and volitional qualities.
<b>Ethics development area</b>	- develop the ability to take a stance on ethical issues, sensitivity and receptivity to the existence of ethical problems, analyse and solve ethical problems.
<b>Social development area</b>	- to develop situational awareness, to develop communication skills, social.

Source: author

The hierarchy of goals of creative drama varies, depending on which goals are the most current. Sometimes those goals and tasks that are related to the need for social learning, i.e. the acquisition of social abilities and skills, will come to the fore; at other times, more emphasis will be placed on the development of thinking, critical thinking, but in the pursuit of all goals, the task of experiencing remains the dominant one (Šváblová, 2018). A teacher who wants to meet the objectives of creative drama has to try them out for himself in order to be able to motivate children to creative activities in the best possible way.

Table 2: Levels of improvisation by Machková

<b>Improvisation in the narrower sense of the word</b>	- it involves a dramatic activity, which is the child's immediate reaction to a fictitious situation, to the behaviour of others, - takes place without preparation, it is free improvisation.
<b>A game without text</b>	- it is organized based on advance agreement or preparation.
<b>A well-directed improvisation</b>	- it is a work on a chosen topic, theme, situation, or plot without textual preparation, but is created through mutual communication and cooperation of the actors.

Source: author

Depending on the number of actors, improvisation can be collective, group, pair, or solo. In various activities, collective improvisation is the most popular, where children first relax and together imitate and recreate the induced situation by moving together. As Machková (2007) states, working together frees children from inhibitions, they do not feel external pressure and they create their own shape according to their own ideas, which they enrich and complete in peace. Only after gaining experience and working collectively do we approach solo improvisation. Here the voluntariness of accepting the role is respected. We never force the child to do this improvisation. In many dramatic

situations, solo improvisation is carried out by the teacher himself. Improvisation ideas must be age-appropriate for the children and their abilities. They can be based on real life, on children's own life experiences, wishes and needs, on the real world, but also on the fantastic world. Themes taken from literature, art and music are motivating.

### Role-play

A key method in creative dramatics is role-playing, which is a mirror of life, reflecting human behaviour and actions. Role-playing someone or something forms the basis of active activities in creative drama. According to Valenta (2008), role play is an educational method that leads to the fulfilment of aesthetic-educational, personal and social development goals based on improvisation and subsequent reflection of the dramatic situation with valuable educational content. Role-playing allows the child to look at the world and life differently than only through his position. From the point of view of the comprehensive development of the child's personality, the application of full role-play in various fictional and dramatic situations is of fundamental importance. Here the child learns about different areas of life, makes decisions, imitates, portrays, and thus gains authentic personal experiences (Švábová, 2017, 2018).

Playing the role of someone else, empathising and playing a role in a certain activity, in an induced situation, is not something every child can do. The teacher already knows the group in advance, respects their capabilities and abilities and knows what dramatic role-play situations to evoke in the creative process, thus giving each child the opportunity to experience success. Role-play is not a performance, but a process in which the child gains new experiences. Personal experience is a child's best preparation for life (Švábová, 2007). The advantage of role-play is that the child in a simulated environment and an induced model situation has the opportunity to get acquainted, get to know, observe and understand what he/she could not experience in reality.

### Interpretation

Part of creative drama is interpretation, which as a method is closely related to other methods. Interpretation is the creative processing of a literary subject and its rendering using various means of expression. In creative drama, when interpreting a literary text, we are concerned with the creative process, with activity, with collective work and with the expression of emotions through movement and facial expressions. Unlike improvisation, which is based on the spontaneity of expression based on motive and theme, interpretation is an activity based on a certain literary model. It works with poetic, prose and dramatic texts allowing for creativity.

When working with the text, we can proceed and work in several ways: Children get to know the literary work as a whole and then carry out activities based on a specific text; The children already know the story and the text is read or retold in parts and the children creatively depict it with movement; The children are introduced to the literary subject and the teacher reads it in parts and asks questions during the conversations, encouraging them to give different answers, to predict the further course of the plot. This way of working with the text gives children the opportunity to independently invent and develop the plot, to understand the connections between the content of the text and the real world, allows them to work with the moment of surprise. Children are eager to know how the story continues and ends, which is a strong motivating factor that can keep children's attention (Švábová, 2021b).

A literary text that the child listens to and is accompanied by pictures, the child is able to better perceive and experience. This helps him to reproduce the story and, in a collective, encourages him to engage in conversation, and to look for different answers when completing tasks and suggestions. A teacher with years of experience can select and motivate children with stories with interesting characters, dramatic situations and tasks.

### Dramatic play

We speak of dramatic play when the ongoing play is with dramatic action, where all participants interact with each other, while in various dramatic situations, they come into contact with a real or imaginary person, where the play comes into action, which allows the individual a certain transformation, transformation, self-expression (Švábová, 2008). Dramatic play includes not only games with rules but also creative play, work with text, words, musical and movement elements. Dramatic plays, as Machková (2005) points out, differ from other games (didactic, movement, constructive) in that they must contain strong *social elements* (especially roles) and *a conflict, a plot*, to which children react and act, looking for an answer. It is appropriate to complement them with various improvised techniques and the creation of storylines (Zentko, Chanasová, 2011) so that the child has the opportunity to express himself spontaneously, work with the group, and thus gain new experiences. Each dramatic play and dramatic activity ends with self-reflection, reflection or discussion, where there is an opportunity to reevaluate the attitudes and feelings of all the participants in the play.

### Pantomime

Pantomime is the expression of activity and action through inner speech, usually performed in an individual form. The main means of expression in pantomime are movement, mimicry, and gesticulation. A child can use pantomime to express various activities, feelings, moods, experiences, attitudes, and relationships with someone and the environment. It is often included when working with a literary text, when expressing dramatic situations, when portraying a certain phenomenon, in dramatic plays and in movement improvisation.

Narrative pantomime is an activity during which the teacher tells or reads a story and the children simultaneously perform activities and represent situations with movement (Švábová, 2018). The story must be rich with enough actions suitable for pantomime performance. Narrative pantomime tends to be helpful in practising reproduction (Pršová, 2015). Pantomime can draw the child into a play in which they react and perform tasks.

### Dramatization

Dramatization is the transformation of a non-dramatic literary text (epic or lyric) into a dramatic form, while the meaning remains unchanged, i.e. its ideological and aesthetic essence (Švábová, 2008, p. 29). In a dramatic text, there is no narrator present, the whole plot is narrated by the characters who appear in the story. The characteristic feature is that in the course of rendering the situation, the actions of the characters, the mutual communication of the players, and the expressive aspect of speech, i.e. facial expressions, gesticulation, and movement with costumes and props are important.

When dramatizing a fairy tale in pre-primary education, we first act out only a certain dramatic situation with the children as part of educational activities and gradually the whole story. The text can be enlivened with music, song, and rhythmic movements that complement the whole plot of the fairy tale. This is always based on the children's prerequisites.

### Free dramatization

After gaining experience working with role-play and dramatization of simple literary stories (The Frog, The Mitten, The Three Little Pigs, The Goatlings and the Wolf, The Turnip, An Egg Went Wandering, Under the Mushroom), we can work with free dramatization in the group. This type of dramatization is about co-creating, but also creatively re-creating stories in which new situations with different characters are added. This opens up space for imagination, fantasy, self-realisation, social interaction and the creativity of all participants in the creative process. It is important to encourage children to express and experience spontaneously.

Stories can be motivated by music, which enlivens the course of the situation, replaces dialogue, relaxes the atmosphere and brings a deeper experience of the dramatic process.

### Puppetry

The puppet is dead material, it is an imitation of someone and something and is brought to life by the teacher by lending it his voice. The puppet, by its shape and appearance, must have a pleasant effect on the child, it will help to maintain attention, and concentration and by its expression increase interest in the perception of the word, the story. The puppet must be legible to the child. Its shape, colour and size convey its character and the child will reach for it and work with it without inhibition. There are situations where the child spontaneously engages with the puppet and can work together in a collective. At other times, the child reaches for the puppet in the course of play activities, talks to it, asks it questions, moves it from one place to another, and puts his feelings from real life into the play with the puppet.

The puppet can be used during the child's day at kindergarten. It relaxes the atmosphere and removes barriers to communication, motivates activity, to mutual cooperation, can suppress negative manifestations of aggression, prevents the emergence of stress, and develops verbal and non-verbal expression. Puppets that children can make themselves are popular in kindergarten. These include glove puppets, palm puppets, fruit puppets (poppies, chestnuts, pine cones, straw, pumpkins), flat-headed puppets, wooden spoon puppets, cork puppets, cup puppets and box puppets.

When working with the puppet, the teacher selects simple texts. The child sings with the puppet, and recites a nursery rhyme, but can also act out a fairy tale (The Adventures of the Snails, The Rooster's Slippers, About the Little Dog and the Little Cat, About the Pampúšik, Meduška, Guľko Bombuľko, Maya the Bee and Vilko).

Figure1 The Mitten fairy tale



Source: B. Švábová

When working with children and implementing creative drama, there is no exact instruction on *how*, *when*, *where* and *with which* methods to work in drama activities. There is also no indication of what environments, props and costumes to choose when implementing the evoked situations. All this is in the hands and mastery of the teacher. First and foremost, it is about the creative process and not about the final product, about the child's activity and experience.

Applying creative drama in practice requires an imaginative and creative educator. It is important to bear in mind that when working with creative dramatics methods, it is not the final effect that is important, but the creative process itself that is the most important focus. It creates an environment in which the child feels safe and uninhibited in dramatic situations to realise, express himself, solve different tasks, and imitate and portray 'someone' and 'something'. Motivation and evocation of the situation is a decisive moment for the success of the dramatic activities carried out. Managing the process of creative drama is challenging and requires a prepared teacher who is willing to relinquish the traditional single-role position with the highest status and all the authority. His/her position should be multi-role (Bekéniová, 2012).

### 1.1.2 Teacher of creative drama, reflection and self-reflection

Creative drama is interdisciplinary, based on the knowledge, methods and objectives of several scientific disciplines and opens a new way of working with children on the principles of drama. Turek (2014) points out that if a teacher is to educate, upbringing and develop a child's personality, he/she must have a quality professional, pedagogical, as well as general education. Zelina (2011) points out that a teacher working with children is partly a scientist, an expert and an artist. He or she knows as many methods, strategies and forms of education and teaching as possible, and verifies and monitors their effectiveness, which means having the most accurate and objective feedback on how they work and what their benefits are. Higher motivation can be achieved through creative tasks and activities aimed at developing divergence but also experiencing, creative perception, where children's artistic creativity is emphasized. In this regard, according to Machková (2005, pp. 49-52), a teacher of creative drama needs to be familiar with various concepts not only from the dramatic arts, but also from the fields of pedagogy, psychology, personality psychology, social psychology, developmental psychology, ethics education, biology and aesthetic-educational subjects. This requires a teacher who is flexible, professional, creative, moral, able to experiment, promptly and actively respond to new trends in the educational process.

Bekéniová (2012) emphasizes that the teacher of creative drama should become familiar with the system of creative drama, learn the methods, principles and strategies of creative drama, plan and manage the process of creative drama, diagnose and accept the needs of the child, implement self-reflection and constant self-development.

In a teacher of creative dramatics, not only professionalism is important, but also creativity and an empathetic relationship with the child. Machková (1998, p. 185), when mentioning the specific abilities of the teacher, emphasises pedagogical expressiveness, i.e. the ability to express oneself clearly and to be interesting for children, as well as pedagogical tact, which manifests itself in the relationship with children, to be able to react correctly to the situations that arise, to communicate, to cooperate.

It is up to the creative drama teacher to consider how to lead and direct the drama activities:

1. **direct input**, where he becomes a teammate of the children, directing and role-playing the activities to enliven activities that work towards the pedagogical goal,
2. **lateral guidance**, where he motivates and mediates the dramatic activities and the children carry them out without his direct contact,
3. **indirect guidance**, when he deliberately prepares a stimulating environment, materials, props, aids and monitors the children's work after the tasks have been set.

Practice shows us that not every teacher can implement creative drama effectively when working with children. It is important to have the opportunity to test its effects on oneself and to know oneself in the induced dramatic situations, to verify how one can work with creative drama, to broaden one's horizon and to gain new knowledge by participating in various educational programmes with a focus on creative drama, by studying professional literature and by creating one's stack of dramatic activities. This is the only way to plan and implement dramatic activities interestingly and playfully that will bring effective results when working with children in kindergarten.

## 2 Researched Issue

The main objective of the research was to find out the current state of the approach to art and creative dramatics in pre-primary education in Slovakia. This aim was reflected in the following sub-objectives:

1. To find out the current state of implementation of *educational activities through art* in the educational process in kindergartens from the point of view of teaching staff in relation to the type of kindergarten.
2. To find out the current state of the use of creative drama in the educational process in kindergartens from the point of view of teaching staff in relation to the type of kindergarten.

The research questions are derived from the research objectives:

1. What is the current status of using *learning activities through the arts* from the perspective of teaching staff by kindergarten type? (The current state of the use of the arts meant self-reflection of the frequency of their use by teaching staff in the process of pre-primary education in state, church, private, or another types of kindergarten),
2. What is the current state of the use of creative drama methods in kindergartens in individual artistic areas from the point of view of teaching staff according to kindergarten type? (The current state of the use of arts meant self-reflection of the frequency of their use by pedagogical staff in the process of pre-primary education in public, church, private, or another type of kindergarten).

## 2.1 Research population and research instrument

A total of 154 respondents took part in the survey, which ran from October 2023 to October 2024. Teachers who expressed willingness to participate in the research were selected in the sample, thus it was an available sample. In terms of the gender of respondents (Table 3), 153 females (99.351%) and 1 male (0.649%) participated in the research.

Table 3 Distribution of respondents by gender

Category	Frequency table: gender (data_final)			
	Count	Cumulative Count	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Woman	153	153	99.35065	99.3506
Man	1	154	0.64935	100.0000
Missing	0	154	0.00000	100.0000

The basic distribution of respondents in terms of type of kindergarten (hereinafter also "KG") as an additional category is shown in Table 4. It shows that a total of 138 respondents are working in public KG, which represents 89.610% of the research population, 5 respondents are working in private KG (3.247%) and 11 respondents are working in church KG, which represents 7.143% of the research population.

Table 4 Distribution of respondents in terms of type of kindergarten

Category	Frequency table: You work in (kindergarten type): (data_final)			
	Count	Cumulative Count	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Public KG	138	138	89.61039	89.6104
Private KG	5	143	3.24675	92.8571
Church KG	11	154	7.14286	100.0000
Missing	0	154	0.00000	100.0000

The research instrument - a questionnaire constructed by the authors was aimed at finding out the opinions of kindergarten teachers on the issue of integrative approach to art in pre-primary education in Slovakia. The questionnaire contained a total of 20 items. The subject of this research study was the field of art educational activities and creative drama:

*Q1- Do you think art education plays an important role in institutional education?*

*Q2- How often do you implement educational activities through art?*

*Q3- Do you think that creative drama methods can be used in all fields of art?*

## 2.2 Analysis of research results

In the first step, we will try to answer whether there are relationships between the type of kindergarten in which the respondent works and the respective items (Q1, Q2, Q3), while correspondence analysis was chosen as the basic method due to the scale of the variables (nominal or ordinal).

$$Q1 \chi^2=22,0993 \text{ df}=6 \text{ p}=0,0002$$

$$Q2 \chi^2=39,5459 \text{ df}=6 \text{ p}=0,0000$$

$$Q3 \chi^2=21,3344 \text{ df}=8 \text{ p}=0,0063$$

The first significant relationship ( $p=0.0002$ ) at the chosen level of significance was demonstrated between questionnaire item 1 (Do you think arts education plays an important role in institutional education?) and the type of KG in which the respondents teach. From Table 5, the table of the total relative frequencies of the respondents' responses to the first item of the research instrument in relation to the type of the KG in which they teach, it is evident that a total of 92.208% of all the respondents agreed with the question, 7.143% refused to answer and 0.649% of the respondents disagreed.

Table 5 Relative frequencies of respondents' answers to questionnaire item Q1 in relation to the type of KG

	Percentages of Total (data_final) Row variables: You work in (kindergarten type); Column variables: QUEST_1			
	Yes	Don't know	No	Total
Pub	84.41558	4.545455	0.649351	89.6104
Private KG	1.29870	1.948052	0.000000	3.2468
Church KG	6.49351	0.649351	0.000000	7.1429
Total	92.20779	7.142857	0.649351	100.0000

If we take a closer look at the responses of the respondents to the first item of the research instrument according to the type of KG (Table 6) we can see that 94.203% of the respondents who are working in government KG think that arts education plays an important role in institutional education, 4.545% of the respondents of this group "do not know" and only 0.649% of the respondents have chosen the option of "no". On the other hand, 40.000% of the respondents who are working in the private KG think that arts education plays an important role in institutional education and as many as 60% of the respondents of this group "do not know". Respondents who work in a church-based kindergartens mainly chose the option "yes" (90%) and the option "don't know" was chosen by 9.091% of respondents.

Table 6 Relative frequencies of respondents' answers to questionnaire item Q1 by type of KG

	Percentages of Row Totals (data_final) Row variables: You work in (kindergarten type); Column variables: QUEST_1			
	Yes	Don't know	No	Total
Public KG	94.20290	5.07246	0.724638	100.0000
Private KG	40.00000	60.00000	0.000000	100.0000
Church KG	90.90909	9.09091	0.000000	100.0000

From the relationship of the first item of the research instrument (Do you think arts education plays an important role in institutional education?) and the type of KG, it is clear that the "yes" option was mainly chosen by respondents working in public and church KGs, and the "don't know" option was preferred by respondents of private KGs.

When analysing the relationship between the respondents' answers to the research instrument item Q2 (How often do you implement educational activities through the arts?) and the type

of KG in which the respondents work (Table 7), it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship ( $p=0.0000$ ) between the items studied at the chosen significance level  $\alpha=0.05$ .

Table 7 Relative frequencies of respondents' answers to questionnaire item Q2 in relation to type of KG

	Percentages of Column Totals (data_final) Row variables: QUEST_2 Column variables: You work in (kindergarten type)		
	Public KG	Private KG	Church KG
Very often	21.8978	40.0000	18.1818
Often	75.9124	40.0000	63.6364
Rather rarely	2.1898	0.0000	18.1818
Never	0.0000	20.0000	0.0000
Total	100.0000	100.0000	100.0000

From the detailed responses of the respondents to the item of research instrument Q2 in relation to the type of KG (Table 7), it is clear that 21.898% of the respondents who work in public KG, implement learning activities through arts very often. 75.912% of the respondents who work in public KG implement learning activities through arts often and 2.189% never. Correspondingly, 40% of the respondents who work in private KG implement learning activities through arts "very often" or "often". However, as many as 20% of the respondents, never implement educational activities through art. 18.182% of the respondents who work in a church-based KG implement educational activities through art very often, 63.634% often and 18.182% rather rarely. From the above, the respondents who work in public KG are preferentially inclined to answer "very often" and "often" and the respondents who work in church kindergartens "rather rarely".

A significant relationship ( $p=0.0063$ ) is defined between the item of research instrument Q3 (Do you think that creative drama methods can be used in all fields of art?) and the type of KG in which the respondents work.

Table 8 Relative frequencies of respondents' answers to the questionnaire item Quest\_3 by type of KG

	Percentages of Column Totals (data_final) Row variables: QUEST_3; Column variables: You work in (kindergarten type)		
	Public KG	Private KG	Church KG
Very often	74.4526	40.0000	36.3636
Often	11.6788	40.0000	9.0909
Always	10.2190	0.0000	45.4545
Rarely	0.7299	0.0000	0.0000
Sometimes	2.9197	20.0000	9.0909
Total	100.0000	100.0000	100.0000

In light of Table 8, which shows more detailed frequencies of the respondents' responses to the research item of the research instrument Quest\_3 according to the type of KG in which the respondents work, it is clear that 74.453% of the respondents from public KG think that creative drama methods can be used very often in all areas of the arts, 11.679% think "often", 10.219% think "always", 0.729% think "rarely" and 2.919% think sometimes. 40% of the respondents who work in private KG think that creative drama methods can be used very often in all arts, 40% "often" and 20% "sometimes". 36.364% of the respondents who are working in a church-based kindergartens think that creative drama methods can be used very often in all areas of arts, 9.091% "often", 45.455% "always" and 9.091% "sometimes".

The research shows that in relation to the item of research instrument Q3, respondents who work in public KG are inclined

to answer "very often" or "rarely", respondents who work in church-based KG are inclined to answer "always" and respondents who work in private kindergarten are inclined to answer "sometimes".

### 2.3 Discussion

Interpretation of art presupposes a figurative generalization of the surrounding world and motivationally manifests itself in the emotional response to art, images of the surrounding reality and in the presence of interest in performing creative tasks. The teacher's personality is manifested in the ability to perform tasks of a creative nature originally, manifesting creative thinking and imagination.

Research by Rochovská, Šváblová, and Dolinská (2023) confirms that almost half of kindergarten teachers consider musical art important in their lives and more than a third of teachers consider it very important. They also apply it in educational activities in kindergarten, which was expressed by 81.4% of teachers, especially in the frequency of once a week. The use of works of art is mainly included in aesthetic-educational activities, in connection with which some of the results of research by D. Kollárová (2016) should be mentioned. These showed that 58.06% of kindergarten teachers included aesthetic games in a variety of activities throughout the kindergarten day. Among aesthetic games, musical activities had the most frequent representation during the day (46.45%).

Another research (Kocer, 2012) was conducted to evaluate art activities in preschool educational programs in terms of the child's self-expression opportunities. The research results showed that preschool teachers in the research set focus on strengthening fine motor skills when applying art activities in educational programs, and children lack opportunities for effective self-expression and manifestation. The findings of this research also point to the importance of organizing programs related to art education in teacher preparation. There should be courses in art education programs for teachers that provide teachers with an "education through art" perspective as well as an "education for art" perspective through interdisciplinary collaboration.

In the context of an integrative approach to art B. Šváblová and I. Rochovská (2023), in their research, found out on the basis of self-reflection of the respondents in which educational area the elements of creative drama are most applied. The most frequently mentioned educational areas were Language and Communication (93.4%) and Arts and Culture (73.2%). On a positive note, respondents were supportive of the application of creative drama methods in all educational areas, at least to some extent.

### 2.4 Conclusion of creative activities and reflection

After each activity it is important to reflect on how the activities have affected the child, how they have appealed to him/her, and what changes have occurred in his/her behaviour and actions. It is best when the children sit in a circle so that they can see each other clearly and the teacher asks open questions that encourage spontaneous responses and reactions from the participants in the drama activities. It creates enough space for children to express their inner feelings and experiences. According to Marušák (2010), it is very good if the teacher prepares in advance the questions he wants to ask in the reflection. He supports and encourages the children to answer and express their opinions about the situations they have experienced. Expression is not only through words but also through movement, facial expressions, gestures, as well as pictorial expression, the creation of puppets and props is also welcomed. By drawing, modelling, and gluing, the child can tell what he or she has experienced, and what has left a strong impression on him or her (Šváblová, 2017, 2018).

Reflection in the educational process is a space where an opportunity to communicate with all participants is created in a



pleasant atmosphere. The ability of introspection (self-observation) develops, social relations begin to form, relations to oneself and the environment, and a wide range of possibilities for self-perception, self-reflection and self-development of the child open up. Creative communication about acquired experiences positively influences the holistic development of the child's personality.

Figure 2 Modelling and drawing at the end of the drama activities



Source: B. Švábová

Creative drama is first of all a creative process, in which the creativity of the teacher is also manifested and it depends on what path he chooses to achieve the educational goal. It is important that the child feels comfortable in the school environment, is interested in taking an active part in various activities and cooperates with the group.

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