



EduInspire-An International E-Journal

An International Peer Reviewed and Referred Journal (www.ctegujarat.org)
 Council for Teacher Education Foundation (CTEF, Gujarat Chapter)
 Patron: Prof. R. G. Kothari
 Chief Editor: Prof. Jignesh B. Patel
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Effectiveness of Drama-Based Pedagogy in Enhancing Teaching Competencies among Pre-Service Teachers: A Mixed-Method Study in B.Ed. Teacher Education Programs

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Abstract

Teacher education has undergone significant transformation following the implementation of India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which advocates experiential, learner-centered, and competency-based pedagogical practices. Drama-based pedagogy has emerged as an innovative instructional strategy that promotes communication, creativity, collaboration, empathy, and reflective thinking among pre-service teachers. Despite its educational potential, systematic integration of drama into Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programmes remains limited, particularly in teacher education institutions in India. The present study examined the effectiveness of drama-based pedagogy in developing essential teaching competencies among pre-service teachers.

A mixed-method research design employing a quasi-experimental approach was adopted. Sixty B.Ed. student-teachers from Shri B.S.P.M. Adhyapak Mahavidyalaya, Ambajogai, Maharashtra, participated in an eight-week intervention consisting of role-play, improvisation, forum theatre, scripted performances, and reflective discussions. Quantitative data were collected through pre-test and post-test questionnaires measuring communication skills, confidence, empathy, and classroom management competencies. Qualitative data were gathered through reflective journals and focus group discussions.

The findings revealed statistically significant improvements across all measured competencies following the intervention.

The study concludes that drama-based pedagogy represents an effective and innovative approach to strengthening teacher preparation programmes. The findings support the integration of structured drama activities within the B.Ed. curriculum to align teacher

education with the objectives of NEP 2020, NCTE quality standards, and twenty-first-century teaching competencies.

Keywords: Drama-Based Pedagogy, Teacher Education, Pre-Service Teachers, Experiential Learning, Teaching Competencies, NEP 2020, B.Ed., Mixed-Method Research

Introduction

Teacher education plays a pivotal role in preparing competent, reflective, and socially responsible educators capable of addressing the diverse learning needs of contemporary classrooms. The quality of school education is fundamentally dependent upon the professional competence of teachers, making teacher preparation programmers central to educational reform worldwide. In India, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has introduced a paradigm shift by advocating experiential, competency-based, multidisciplinary, and learner-centered approaches to teaching and learning.

Traditional teacher education programmers have often been criticized for overemphasizing theoretical knowledge while providing limited opportunities for authentic classroom practice and professional skill development. Consequently, many pre-service teachers encounter challenges related to classroom communication, learner engagement, confidence, creativity, emotional intelligence, and classroom management during their teaching internships.

Drama-based pedagogy has gained increasing recognition as an experiential teaching strategy capable of bridging this gap. International research has consistently demonstrated that drama-based education contributes significantly to communication competence, emotional intelligence, inclusive teaching practices, and reflective professional development. However, empirical evidence regarding its systematic implementation within Indian B.Ed. programmers remains relatively limited, particularly following the introduction of NEP 2020.

The present study seeks to examine the effectiveness of an eight-week drama-based pedagogical intervention in improving teaching competencies among pre-service teachers enrolled in a Bachelor of Education programme. The findings are expected to contribute to evidence-based innovations in teacher education and support curriculum reforms aligned with national educational priorities.

Objectives

To examine the effectiveness of drama-based pedagogy in improving communication skills among pre-service teachers.

To assess its impact on classroom confidence and instructional competence.

To evaluate the development of empathy and inclusive teaching attitudes.

To investigate improvements in classroom management skills.

To explore student-teachers' perceptions regarding drama as an experiential pedagogical approach.

Research Questions

Does drama-based pedagogy significantly improve teaching competencies among pre-service teachers?

Which teaching competencies demonstrate the greatest improvement following drama-based intervention?

How do student-teachers perceive drama-based pedagogy as a professional learning strategy?

Review of Literature

Drama-based pedagogy has gained increasing recognition as an innovative approach to teacher education because it integrates experiential learning, reflective practice, collaboration, and emotional engagement. Recent studies indicate that drama enables pre-service teachers to connect educational theory with authentic classroom practice, thereby strengthening professional competence and reflective decision-making.

Research by Wells, Sandretto, and Tilson (2023) demonstrated that process drama helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching.

Dutton and Rushton (2022) examined drama pedagogy in multilingual classrooms and found that drama created inclusive learning environments by encouraging collaboration, creativity, and meaningful participation.

Yoon (2024) conceptualized drama-based pedagogy as a "pedagogy of possibility," arguing that it encourages future teachers to imagine alternative instructional practices, solve classroom problems creatively, and develop reflective professional identities. The study highlighted the importance of drama in preparing teachers for uncertain and diverse educational settings.

Recent research by Tuncdemir (2025) reported that creative drama significantly improves communication, teamwork, creativity, and student engagement in teacher education programs. The study concluded that playful and participatory learning experiences strengthen both pedagogical competence and learner motivation.

Within the Indian context, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 advocates experiential learning, art-integrated education, competency-based instruction, and holistic learner development. Recent Indian research has shown that drama-based learning promotes learner

engagement, creativity, communication, and problem-solving while supporting the development of twenty-first-century skills.

Synthesis of Literature

The reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that drama-based pedagogy:

Enhances communication, confidence, and classroom interaction.

Develops empathy, collaboration, and inclusive teaching practices.

Bridges the gap between theory and practice through experiential learning.

Supports reflective practice and professional identity formation.

Aligns closely with the objectives of NEP 2020, competency-based teacher education, and contemporary teacher preparation frameworks.

Methodology

Research Design

The present study employed a mixed-method research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively examine the effectiveness of drama-based pedagogy in enhancing teaching competencies among pre-service teachers. A quasi-experimental one-group pre-test–post-test design was used for the quantitative component, while reflective journals and focus group discussions constituted the qualitative component. The mixed-method approach enabled triangulation of findings and provided a deeper understanding of participants' learning experiences.

Population and Sample

The target population comprised Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) student-teachers enrolled in a teacher education institution affiliated with Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Maharashtra.

A sample of 60 pre-service teachers (Second Year B.Ed.) was selected through purposive sampling, considering their regular attendance and willingness to participate in the intervention programme .

Variable.	Description
Institution	Shri B.S.P.M. Adhyapak Mahavidyalaya, Ambajogai
State	Maharashtra, India
Sample Size.	60
Age Group	21–25 years
Sampling Technique	Purposive Sampling
Research Approach	Mixed Method

Research Hypotheses

There is no statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of student-teachers after participation in drama-based pedagogy.

There is a statistically significant improvement in the teaching competencies of student-teachers after participation in drama-based pedagogy.

Intervention Programme

The intervention lasted eight weeks, with two sessions per week, each lasting approximately 90 minutes.

Table 1. Weekly Intervention Plan

Week.	Activity
1	Orientation and Ice-breaking Activities
2	Voice Modulation, Facial Expression and Body Language
3	Classroom Role Play
4	Inclusive Classroom Simulation
5	Forum Theatre and Classroom Problem Solving
6	Improvisation Activities
7	Script Writing and Group Performance
8	Reflective Discussion and Final Presentation

Research Instruments

The following tools were used for data collection:

Teaching Competency Scale (5-point Likert scale)

Communication Skills Rating Scale

Classroom Management Observation Checklist

Reflective Journal Format

Focus Group Discussion Schedule

Validity and Reliability

The research instruments were validated by experts in teacher education, educational psychology, and educational research.

Internal consistency of the Teaching Competency Scale was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.87, indicating good reliability.

Data Collection Procedure

The study followed these stages:

Administration of Pre-test.

Eight-week Drama-Based Pedagogy Intervention.

Maintenance of Reflective Journals.

Focus Group Discussions.

Administration of Post-test. 6. Data Analysis and Interpretation.

Statistical Analysis

The quantitative data were analysed using: Mean, Standard Deviation , Percentage Improvement

Paired Sample t-test, Effect Size (Cohen's d)

Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis, following coding, categorisation, and theme development.

Ethical Considerations

Prior permission was obtained from the Head of the Institution.

Informed consent was secured from all participants.

Participation was voluntary.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained.

Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any stage without any academic consequences.

Results and Discussion

Quantitative Analysis

Table 2 presents the comparison of pre-test and post-test scores of pre-service teachers after the eight-week drama-based pedagogical intervention.

Table 2. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Teaching Competency	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Difference	% Improvement	Significance (p)
Communication Skills	2.80	4.00	1.20	42.0	< 0.01
Confidence	2.60	3.60	1.00	38.0	< 0.01
Empathy	2.90	4.20	1.30	45.0	< 0.01
Classroom Management	2.70	3.80	1.10	40.0	< 0.01

Interpretation

The findings indicate statistically significant improvements in all four teaching competencies following the intervention. The highest improvement was observed in **empathy (45%)**, followed by **communication skills (42%)**, **classroom management (40%)**, and **confidence (38%)**. These results suggest that drama-based pedagogy provides meaningful experiential opportunities that enhance both pedagogical and interpersonal competencies among pre-service teachers.

Effect Size

To determine the practical significance of the intervention, **Cohen's d** was calculated.

Variable	Effect Size (Cohen's d)	Interpretation
Communication Skills	0.84	Large
Confidence	0.76	Moderate to Large
Empathy	0.91	Large
Classroom Management	0.81	Large

The calculated effect sizes indicate that the intervention had a substantial educational impact on participants' teaching competencies.

Qualitative Findings

The thematic analysis of reflective journals and focus group discussions identified four major themes.

Theme 1: Increased Professional Confidence

Participants reported feeling more confident while delivering lessons and interacting with learners. Drama activities reduced stage anxiety and encouraged active classroom participation.

"Drama activities helped me overcome my fear of speaking before a class and improved my confidence during teaching practice."

Theme 2: Development of Empathy

Role-playing activities enabled participants to understand the perspectives of learners with different backgrounds and abilities.

"Playing the role of a learner with special educational needs helped me understand inclusive teaching in a practical way."

Theme 3: Improved Classroom Communication

Participants indicated improvements in voice modulation, questioning techniques, non-verbal communication, and learner engagement.

Theme 4: Collaborative Learning and Reflection

Group performances and reflective discussions fostered teamwork, creativity, and professional reflection, encouraging participants to analyse their teaching practices critically.

Discussion

The results demonstrate that drama-based pedagogy is an effective instructional strategy for developing essential teaching competencies among pre-service teachers. The findings are consistent with recent international research showing that drama-based learning strengthens communication, collaboration, and professional identity development among future teachers. They also align with the objectives of **NEP 2020**, which advocates learner-centred, experiential, and competency-based teacher education.

The notable improvement in empathy is particularly significant because inclusive education requires teachers to understand learners' diverse social, emotional, and educational needs. Drama-based activities enabled participants to experience classroom situations from multiple perspectives, thereby promoting reflective and inclusive teaching practices.

The study further indicates that drama-based pedagogy can complement traditional teaching methods by providing authentic simulations of classroom situations before school internships. This contributes to improved professional preparedness and supports quality enhancement initiatives in teacher education institutions.

Educational Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications for teacher education institutions, policymakers, curriculum developers, and teacher educators. Drama-based pedagogy can serve as an effective instructional approach for promoting experiential learning and developing essential professional competencies among pre-service teachers.

The study supports the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which advocates learner-centred, competency-based, multidisciplinary, and experiential education. Furthermore, drama-based pedagogy contributes to quality enhancement initiatives under NAAC, promotes innovative teaching practices, and aligns with NCTE Professional Standards for Teachers by strengthening practical teaching competencies and reflective professional practice.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the encouraging findings, several limitations should be acknowledged.

The study was conducted in a single teacher education institution, limiting the generalizability of the findings. The sample size was relatively small (60 participants).

The intervention lasted only eight weeks; a longer intervention may produce different outcomes. Self-reported questionnaires may have been influenced by participants' perceptions.

The study focused only on pre-service teachers and did not include comparisons with in-service teachers.

Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that drama-based pedagogy is an effective instructional approach for enhancing teaching competencies among pre-service teachers. The findings indicate significant improvements in communication skills, confidence, empathy, and classroom management following an eight-week experiential intervention.

Drama-based learning provides authentic opportunities for active participation, reflective thinking, collaborative learning, and professional growth. By engaging student-teachers in realistic classroom situations, drama bridges the gap between educational theory and teaching practice.

The findings strongly support the integration of drama-based pedagogy into Bachelor of Education programmes as an innovative strategy for preparing competent, reflective, and inclusive teachers capable of meeting the demands of twenty-first-century education.

The study also contributes to the implementation of NEP 2020, aligns with NCTE quality standards, and supports NAAC initiatives promoting innovative teaching-learning practices in higher education.

Future Research

Future research may focus on:

Large-scale multi-state studies involving diverse teacher education institutions.

Comparative studies between government and private B.Ed. colleges.

Longitudinal research examining the long-term impact of drama-based pedagogy.

Comparative studies involving online, blended, and face-to-face drama instruction.

The use of digital theatre, virtual reality, and AI-supported drama activities in teacher education.

Comparative investigations across different subject specializations

The influence of drama-based pedagogy on student teachers' reflective practice and professional identity development.

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