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Personality development through drama-in Teacher Education

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INTRODUCTION

Education is not simply concerned with the transmission of information. Its larger purpose is to support the development of individuals who can think, communicate, relate to others and respond responsibly to the changing needs of society. A teacher influences not only the academic progress of learners but also their attitudes, values, confidence and ways of interacting with the world. Therefore, preparing a teacher requires much more than imparting subject knowledge and teaching techniques. Teacher education needs to pay attention to the development of the whole personality of the future teacher. A student teacher should gradually develop self-confidence, self-awareness, emotional balance, effective communication, empathy, creativity, interpersonal skills and the ability to handle different situations. These qualities are closely connected with the professional role of a teacher, because classroom life is dynamic and often requires the teacher to respond to unexpected academic, emotional and social situations. Traditional methods of teacher education are important, but they may not always provide sufficient opportunities for student teachers to experience such situations directly. Experiential learning can bridge this gap by allowing learners to participate, observe, reflect and learn from experience. Drama provides one such experiential medium. Drama is an art form that brings together action, dialogue, emotion, imagination and human interaction. In an educational setting, it does not necessarily mean preparing a formal stage performance. It may include role play, improvisation, storytelling, dramatization, simulation and short classroom situations. These activities allow student teachers to step into different roles, express themselves and examine situations from more than one point of view.

Thus, drama has the potential to become a meaningful medium for personality development. It can create a space where student teachers learn not only through listening and reading but also through doing, experiencing and reflecting.

UNDERSTANDING PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Personality development is a continuous process through which an individual becomes increasingly aware of personal strengths, limitations, emotions, attitudes, behavior and relationships with others. It includes both inner and outward dimensions of growth. Confidence, communication, emotional awareness, positive thinking, interpersonal relationships, creativity, decision-making and the ability to deal with challenges are all connected with the development of personality. For a student teacher, personality development has a professional dimension as well. Drama can contribute to these different dimensions because it places the individual in situations that require expression, interaction and response. It creates opportunities to discover personal abilities that may remain hidden in conventional classroom settings.

DRAMA AS AN EXPERIENTIAL MEDIUM FOR PERSONAL GROWTH

One of the distinctive strengths of drama is that it allows learning through experience. When a student teacher participates in a role play, the individual is not simply studying a situation theoretically. The person is required to respond to it, communicate with others and make decisions within the situation. The value of the experience increases when it is followed by reflection. Discussion after a dramatic activity can encourage questions such as: What did I feel while performing the role? Why did I respond in that way? How might the other person have experienced the situation? Could there have been another response? Reflection transforms an activity into meaningful learning. In this way, drama can connect personal experience with professional understanding.

DRAMA AND SELF-CONFIDENCE

Self-confidence is an important quality for a teacher. A teacher is required to speak before a class, present ideas, lead activities and communicate with different groups of people. However, many student teachers may initially hesitate to speak publicly or express their opinions. Drama can provide repeated opportunities for expression in a supportive environment. Role play, storytelling and short dramatic presentations encourage participants to speak, perform and interact. With regular participation, the fear of making mistakes may gradually reduce. Drama also teaches an important lesson about confidence: effective expression does not always require perfection. Participants learn by trying, making mistakes, receiving feedback and trying again. This process can help develop courage and willingness to participate. For future teachers, such confidence may be useful not only in classroom teaching but also in seminars, presentations, meetings and other professional situations.

DRAMA AND COMMUNICATION AND EXPRESSION SKILLS

Communication is at the heart of teaching. The success of an educational interaction depends not only on what the teacher knows but also on how effectively the teacher communicates it. Drama provides opportunities to develop both verbal and non-verbal communication. Through performance, student teachers become more aware of voice modulation, pronunciation, tone, pace, pauses and clarity of speech. At the same time, they learn to notice facial expressions, gestures, posture, eye contact and other elements of body language. Role play can also provide practice in real-life communication. Student teachers can enact situations involving teacher-student interaction, parent-teacher communication, classroom discussion or conflict resolution. Such experiences encourage them to think carefully about the words they use and the manner in which they use them. Storytelling is another valuable dramatic technique. A good storyteller must understand the audience, organize thoughts, use appropriate expressions and maintain attention. Thus, drama can help transform communication from a theoretical concept into a practiced skill.

DRAMA, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMPATHY

A teacher works with learners who differ in their abilities, backgrounds, personalities and emotional needs. Therefore, emotional intelligence and empathy are important aspects of teacher personality. Drama can encourage empathy by allowing individuals to experience situations through the perspective of another person. When a student teacher performs the role of a learner who is anxious, excluded, confused or unable to participate, the experience may encourage a deeper understanding of what such a learner might feel. Similarly, role play involving conflict can help participants understand that the same situation may be viewed differently by different individuals. This can encourage patience, listening and sensitivity. Drama can also provide opportunities for emotional expression. Participants may explore feelings such as fear, happiness, disappointment, anger or hope through characters and situations. With appropriate guidance and reflection, these experiences can contribute to greater awareness of emotions and their influence on behavior. For a teacher, the ability to recognize and respond sensitively to emotions can strengthen relationships with learners and contribute to a more supportive classroom environment.

DRAMA, CREATIVITY AND CRITICAL THINKING

Teaching is not a mechanical activity. Every classroom presents new situations that may require creative responses. Therefore, future teachers need to develop imagination, flexibility and the ability to look at problems from different perspectives. Drama naturally encourages creative thinking. In improvisation and dramatization, participants may have to develop a

response without a fixed script. When student teachers analyses a character's behavior or discuss the possible outcomes of a situation, they are encouraged to examine causes, consequences and alternative solutions. This combination of creativity and critical reflection can be valuable in teacher education. A teacher who can think creatively and critically may be better prepared to respond to diverse classroom needs instead of depending only on predetermined methods.

DRAMA AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Personality develops within relationships. Teachers interact continuously with learners, colleagues, parents and members of the community. Therefore, interpersonal skills are an important part of professional personality. Most drama activities involve working with others. Participants must listen, cooperate, share responsibilities and respect different viewpoints. A successful group performance depends on the contribution of each member. Through such collaborative experiences, student teachers may develop greater awareness of teamwork, leadership, negotiation and mutual respect. These experiences can prepare future teachers to build healthier relationships in professional settings and create a more cooperative atmosphere in their classrooms.

DRAMA AND TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF NEP 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 places emphasis on holistic, experiential and learner-centred approaches to education. It also recognizes the importance of integrating arts and other forms of creative expression into the educational process. In this context, drama can find a meaningful place in teacher education. Student teachers may use dramatization to understand classroom challenges, role play to practice communication, storytelling to develop expression and theatre activities to explore social and cultural themes. The experience of learning through drama during teacher preparation can also influence future classroom practice. Therefore, the integration of drama into teacher education can support the broader objective of preparing teachers who are creative, reflective, sensitive and capable of making learning meaningful.

CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

Despite its potential, the use of drama in teacher education may face certain challenges. Lack of time, limited resources, insufficient space and the absence of trained facilitators may restrict regular implementation. Some student teachers may also feel uncomfortable performing before others, particularly during the initial stages. These challenges can be addressed through gradual participation and supportive guidance. Simple role plays, classroom simulations, storytelling and short improvisations can also provide meaningful

experiences. It is equally important to understand that the purpose of drama in teacher education is not to train professional actors. The focus should be on learning, expression, confidence, empathy, communication and reflection. Assessment should therefore value participation and personal growth rather than artistic performance alone.

CONCLUSION

Personality development is an essential dimension of teacher education because the effectiveness of a teacher depends not only on knowledge but also on the ability to communicate, understand others, manage emotions and respond creatively to changing situations. Drama offers a unique opportunity to support this development. Through role play, storytelling, improvisation and dramatization, student teachers can experience situations, express themselves, understand different perspectives and reflect upon their own responses. In the process, the development of a teacher's personality is achieved through development of self-confidence, communication skills, emotional awareness, empathy, creativity, interpersonal skills and reflective thinking. Drama can become an important part of this journey by giving future teachers a space to explore themselves, understand others and learn through experience, reflection and interaction. Therefore, purposeful use of drama in teacher education can make a valuable contribution to the development of confident, empathetic, creative and professionally responsive teachers.

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