

Review Article

THE ABC'S (APPREANCE, BEHAVIOUR AND COMMUNICATION) OF HYGIENE CARE THROUGH PEDAGOGY THEATRE

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Abstract

Children around 3-6 years are often inflicted with issues of personal hygiene that leads to various diseases. A child's inability to understand the importance of hygiene ia the root cause that leads to this deficiency. The research was conducted to create awareness amongst young children (5-6 years old) on the importance of hygiene. For the purpose of the study , a total of 11 pre- schoolers were selected and data was collected on knowledge and practices of the respondents on personal hygiene through personal interviews. The data was then collated and analyzed based on observation and reflection to explore the pupils level of understanding on personal hygiene which is part of the pre-school curriculum (FK 5.1.1). Pedagogy Theatre which combines both art and educationist often used to develop language and intensify social awareness. Although pedagogy theatre is embedded in drama, it is used to educate people on important issues outside the sphere of theatre itself. In the study conducted, the respondents were found to be initially apprehensive and unclear on how to look after their personal hygiene. The findings suggest that through pedagogy theatre (researchers show and tell/ or act out situations), the pupils are able to develop an understanding to the importance of personal. They were able to respond to questions and show how to look after their personal hygiene. Here, the medium of theatre is used as a vehicle to achieve an objective that is educated the pupils on hygiene care.

keywords: Children, hygiene, knowledge

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INTRODUCTION

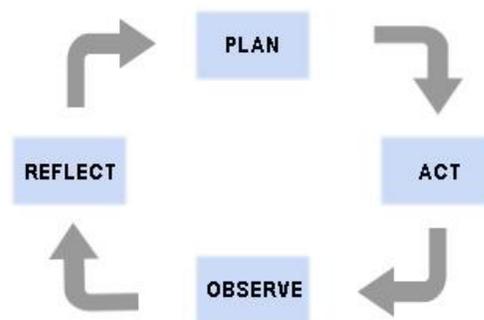
21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning or Early Childhood Education has been an increasingly emphasized approach in Malaysia lately. Teachers need to move in line with the needs of today's students, so 21<sup>st</sup> century learning should be given serious attention to improve the quality of the country's education. One of the approaches that is gaining a foothold is the use of theatre to infuse knowledge in a more relaxed environment. One such approach is the use of pedagogy theatre introduced director/facilitator Augusto Boal. Pedagogy Theatre is an independent discipline combining both theatre and pedagogy. All kinds of theatre work that makes use of non professional actors encompasses the term theatre pedagogy. Through pedagogy theatre, participants are given the liberty to express their own ideas and impulses which in turn expands the avenues of communication and interaction with one's self and also the sociocultural environment that one is part of. As such pedagogy theatre which combines both art and education is used to disperse social awareness.

The ABC program was introduced to a total of 11 pre- schoolers (4 boys and 7 girls) from Taksu Permata Kemas, Tanjung Malim, Perak after written permission was obtained from the parents as children of that age are often subjected to personal hygiene deficiency which leads them to be inflicted with ailments. Young children have inadequate knowledge on personal hygiene and its practices and as such they often disregard self-care. The primary purpose of this research is to create awareness amongst young children (5-6 years old) on the importance of hygiene. Data was collected on knowledge and practices of the respondents on personal hygiene through personal interviews.

METHODOLOGY

Action research has as its goal to address a specific problem within a specific setting, such as a classroom, a work place, a

program, or an organization" (Merriam, 2009, p. 4). Data was collated and analyzed based on Kemmis and Mc Taggart Model (1988) which involves planning, action, observation and reflection to explore the pupils level of understanding on personal hygiene which is part of the pre-school curriculum (FK 5.1.1). The use of the Kemmis & Mc Taggart model as a one-cycle study process (1988) for researchers that initiates the first step of making a preliminary survey before moving on to the next process. The research was carried out through a methodological triangulation method (observation, interviews, document analysis & questionnaires).



Kemmis and Mc Taggart Model one cycle model (1988)

Problem Statement

Reports indicate that the rise in diseases such as HFMD in Malaysia amongst children below 10 years of age, is due to lack of personal hygiene and cleanliness especially in locations that house children like kindergartens, daycare centers and pre-schools . (The Star Online, Thursday 2 March 2017). Therefore there is a need for the researchers to approach the issue with the

notion that pedagogy theatre is effective in addressing hygiene issues amongst pre- schoolers.

### Research Objectives

The study aims to create awareness amongst young children (5-6 years old) on the importance of hygiene through the use of Pedagogy Theatre. This is because children under the age of 6 years are susceptible to diseases such as HFMD. In fact, the incubation time for children is within 3 to 6 days. The researchers want to educate these children to care about aspects of hygiene & apply them throughout their life. This study hopes to provide awareness to parents, teachers and the community to be more sensitive to a child's hygiene.

### Population and Sample

The focus target group for the study is children under 7 and the selection was made at random. The researchers selected a sample of children between the ages of 4 and 6 to be included in the study. Researchers decided on these sample as the background of the children suggests that hygiene care was not a part of their daily routine as the parents were full time working parents who paid little attention to hygiene care. In fact, children of this age are prone to HFMD because of their condition, peer pressure and the environment around them. Researchers sourced out these children to simplify the research conducted so that researchers and the chosen population are able to collaborate and communicate with each other to make it easier for children to participate in learning sessions.

The following are the criteria for selection :

1. The number of samples to be under 15
2. Children between the ages 4 - 6
3. Children who are prone to HMD
4. Children who are approachable and willing to learn.

A total of 11 respondents comprising of 4 males representing 36.36% and 7 females at about 3.64% participated in this research. The was only one representative from the, 6-year-old and 5 year old categories that represented 9.1% each, while six 4-year-olds represented 54.55%, and 3 year olds comprised of 18.18% of the respondents in this study. Out of the 11 respondents, only 9 responded favorably to the questionnaires while the rest worked together with a friend. The respondents comprised of 100% of the Malay ethnicity and as such the Malay language was used as a means of communication amongst themselves and with the researchers. Researchers also used the Malay language to enable the children to feel at ease and also to provide understanding of the information presented by them.

## INSTRUMENTATION

### Planning stage

The researchers began the planning stage by identifying the pre-school that housed children from working parents. The pupils' hygiene condition was determined after interviews with the teachers. In the planning stages based on the Kemmis & Mc Taggart Model, the researcher carried out a test (a pictorial questionnaire) to deduce the child's understanding of hygiene. The researcher initiated the questionnaire by asking the children how to maintain good hygiene. Some of the children responded favourably while some stood in silence looking at their peers as they were clearly not comfortable with their surroundings. The researchers then decided on using the gift-giving technique while asking questions. If the child is able to answer the researchers' questions, they are aptly appreciated. Indirectly, the children who remained silent were lured into eliciting response through the gift giving technique. Based on the answers provided by the children, the researchers deduced that the children had very limed knowledge of hygiene care. The researchers decided to make use of puppets, demonstrations and personal interviews to impart knowledge on the importance of hygiene care as it was

clear that these children need many techniques and ways to approach them so that they are not isolated from their peers.

### Acting Stage -Pedagogy Theatre

According to Salmon and Sainato (2005) in Loy Chee Luen (2004) learning and teaching sessions that uses props, music, visual arts, drama and physical movement can provide children with the opportunity to express their feelings and create interaction with friends. The researcher began the induction with a warm up activity which infused music and physical movements. Music was played and the children were encouraged to show off their abilities. Clearly, the use of music in the learning and teaching sessions is important to help these children communicate with each other. Music ignites the interest to learn and the children were immediately drawn to the researchers and each other. It promotes friendship and allows the children to express their feelings. The song " Bangun Pagi" (Wake up in the Morning) which emphasises on a child's hygiene care as they get ready for school was played and the children were extremely excited and some even added on with their own actions.

This was then followed by the use of hand puppets to incite the children into participation as the researchers, found the children to be easily distracted and non-communicative. The puppets helped to draw attention to the researchers and hence the subsequent activities were carried out. As per pedagogy theatre, the researchers used impromptu acting (using the children as models) and puppets as a means of communication to show how to -bathe, wash hands, wash hair, cut finger nails and brush teeth. Hand gestures and voice intonation was used by the researchers to teach about oral hygiene and self-care. The researchers' body movement, facial expressions became a mode to transmit information to the children. Children were able to show response through social and emotional interaction. No script was used so the researchers were able to work spontaneously with the children and in turn elicit natural responses through inclusion of personal stories.

### Observation Stage

The researchers carried out observations on the children to gauge their level of interest before Pedagogy theatre was carried out. The children showed lack of interest. They were not paying attention as their teacher was trying to explain on cleanliness. There was no eye contact and the children were easily distracted. They also looked bored and were fidgety. The children showed signs of apprehension and were put to ease with the use of puppets to incite interest. As the Pedagogy Theatre was carried out, the children showed interest. This was recorded through facial expression, attention seeking and voice projection. Then interview sessions were carried out whereby the children were asked questions to gauge their understanding of the session that was carried out. In the initial stage, the researchers elicited response from the children by communicating with them so that they are aware of the presence of the researchers and are comfortable with them. A notable conversation that occurred between the researcher and a child is provided the opportunity for the researcher to gauge and understand the likes as well as fears of a child in regards to hygiene. A child refused to participate in an activity that required him to brush his teeth. A little prodding from the researcher revealed that he does not practice oral hygiene at home. The researcher then proceeded to coax the child by asking him what he would like to do. The child responded by saying that he would like to meet his superhero. The researcher then pretended to be the 'superhero' and showed the child the proper way to brush his teeth. The child responded by imitating and finishing the task. The researchers were able to instill the benefits of hygiene through pedagogy theatre. Worksheets were then provided to further enhance pupils' understanding of the sessions.

### Reflection and Findings

The researchers found the study useful for children under 6 years of age. It is able to educate these children to engage in the importance of their level of personal hygiene. Pedagogy Theatre allows the children to warm up and be impulsive as well as to share their own ideas. The children shared their thoughts on wanting to meet/ play with their super heroes (Ultraman, Iron man) after having brushed their teeth and the researchers found this to be of positive outcome of the study as the children have expressed a desire to be clean for someone they like. The children were able to answer were able to answer the worksheet correctly although some are not able to read or write their own name.



Figure 1 : unable to write name but able to match correctly



Figure 2 : attempted to write name and able to match correctly

### CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of the use of pedagogical theater in the theater in educational drama requires appropriate strategies according to the background and age of the respondent. These underage children require physical movement such as playing time and place even though learning activities are still on going and as such the development of the potential of minors plays an important role in physical, intellectual, emotional and social aspects.

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