

Communicating Science through Drama

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Drama and performance are two of the most effective media of communication. These two are interlinked and are very close to people's heart, and their feelings. In fact, drama is the most effective medium of communication through which the message **"Science is not meant for a selected few but meant for every one"** could be conveyed to the people.

In the past, people had a close rapport with the nature and their performances were confined to worshipping evil spirits, devils and gods. The simple traditional dramas evolved later gave tremendous pleasure to the audience. The art of drama developed later through the Jathaka stories such as Kusapabawathie, Sinhabahu, Kada walalu and Maname, which are still in heavy demand. In short, the most effective and most impact oriented medium of communication today is drama, whether it comes as a stage drama, street drama, open air theatre drama, or a tele-drama. Drama could be effectively utilized to popularize science in a meaningful way.

In this exercise we have to first clearly understand the national goal of education and the basic competencies required to achieve such goals. At the same time we should not forget the fact that the school curriculum is the main tool behind such competencies.

Although the aims of education can be differ from country to country, the common objective of education is to produce good citizens. **According to the philosophy of Carl Marx, education should aim at producing a man**

who believes in communism. In the United States its main objective is to produce a democratic man enjoying the fullest benefits of science and technology, who is second to no other.

Various countries have adopted classroom teaching in a formal way in order to achieve their educational objectives. They have been very successful in their endeavour, which has helped in the development of their countries.

China has been successful in producing working intellectuals and intellectual workers through the implementation of their educational programme. Unfortunately, we do not have such specific objectives. **The examination oriented education system in Sri Lanka has failed miserably to produce creative intellectuals who can assist in the economic and social development of the country.**

The education system implemented under the British rule in their colonies created a situation where although the nationals of those countries looked national in their blood and colour they were really British in their culture and thinking. However, we have to accept the fact that those intellectuals produced by the free education system in our country are far behind in their thinking and culture than those who studied under the British rule.

The present educational objective includes many ideas of great philosophers and educationalists. **"Education is the life and the**

way of living” is the philosophy of **John Duvie**.

“Education should lead to the development of the head, hand and heart” was the thinking of **Mahatma Gandhi**. Neither of these ideas was given any consideration in the implementation of the educational objectives in our country. **This is the very reason we are producing intellectuals with only brains lacking any knowledge of the art of living.**

Although the educational reforms have been introduced and implemented in various occasions in our country, traditional examination oriented teaching continues as it is. As a result, only those who obtain higher marks in the public examinations are entitled to get admission to popular schools, win scholarships, enter universities, and finally get the chance to find better jobs.

If the school system is successful in providing the necessary skills required by the new educational reforms, then only it is possible to reduce the problems of unemployment among youth and graduates at least to some extent. In order to do this, it is imperative that there must be an attitudinal change in teachers and parents. Otherwise, everything we do in the form of projects or evaluations will be of no use.

According to the **Dallow** report there are four pillars supporting education,

1. Education for knowledge
2. Education for work
3. Education for living together
4. Education for education

Education methods in all countries are organized in such a way that they can achieve the above universal aims of education.

The following could be identified as the most important aspects leading to the development of a complete man.

1. Emotional
2. Virtuous
3. Sociological
4. Intellectual
5. Physical
6. Aesthetic

The skills needed to develop these aspects are:

1. Communication, which includes literary, calculation and drawing skills
2. Environment based; which include social, biological, physical attitudes and skills
3. Religion; moral development
4. Sports and leisure include cooperation, group activities, competitions and exercises
5. Education; to get to know something and knowledge should be a continues process

Students in advanced level classes are youth who have basic needs such as the need for security, freedom, group dedication, sexual desire, love and acceptance. **Science students in particular have creative abilities and they are able to create new things to the society. The projects and assignment recommended by the new educational reforms would be of great help in this process.**

If these projects and assignments include scientific drama as a group activity, it would help in the development of skills knowledge and attitudes of the students. Those who have a linking to the art of drama would select such

projects and would be tempted to gather more information on the subject through the various media (Figure1).



Figure 1

The followings are aspects, which come into play when staging a drama.

1. Group get together
2. Read scripts and plan together.
3. Divide the characters according to their own capabilities
4. Train during leisure
5. Take others help
6. Respect others ideas and criticisms
7. Look at the society with a more positive frame of mind
8. Aim at giving the best performance to the audience

The following are directly linked to the communication of science through drama. These are some of the objectives expected to be achieved through the projects meant for students of grades 12 and 13.

1. Ability to use the acquired knowledge and skills
2. Development of favourable attitudes towards life
3. Respecting others' ideas
4. Ability to convey ideas, experiences, and knowledge to others.

After passing grade 13 students step into the society as citizens. The skills and thinking they developed in school will then be started to penetrate in to the society.

It is not necessary to do a complete drama in order to communicate science. We can make use of the following stages to achieve this.

1. Detailing with imitations as a tree, part of the body etc
2. Detailing with interesting dialogues
3. Taking part in comedies
4. Taking part in creative dramas



Figure 2

Creative drama is the most suitable and is most effective in communicating science through drama (Figure 2).

Therefore, it is necessary to make use of creative drama in Advanced Level projects. This important and self-educative project would help the students become good citizens who look at the society with a positive frame of mind.

New educational reforms should aim at creating citizens capable of contributing effectively to the development of the country. Personality development is a prime objective of these reforms. The most fundamental and elementary exercise to develop a dynamic personality is to build up a positive frame of mind and to cultivate an optimistic outlook. This project would undoubtedly contribute in a big way to achieving these objectives.