



Drama in Education

Philipp Schendel
Corinna Schaeffer
Christiane Iden

Outline

1. What is drama in education? – characteristics & reasons
2. Neuroscientific basis of drama in education
3. Forms & techniques of staging drama activities
4. Drama activities - phases
5. References

Outline

- 1. What is drama in education? – characteristics & reasons**
2. Neuroscientific basis of drama in education
3. Forms & techniques of staging drama activities
4. Drama activities - phases
5. References

2. What is drama in education? – characteristics and reasons

drama in education \neq theatre in education



- holistic approach that “uses the means of theater for pedagogical/educational use, i.e., to initiate or enhance learning processes” (Ronke 2005: 21)
- aesthetic, (inter)cultural, (inter)personal & social value

2. What is drama in education? – characteristics and reasons

| | drama in education | theatre in education |
|-------------|---|---|
| focus on | students | audience |
| orientation | process-oriented | product-oriented |
| overall aim | holistic, multisensory language learning | performance (+ preparation and follow-up work) |
| procedure | role play, improvisations, feedback, reflection | choice of text, roles, lighting, sound, scenery, costumes, rehearsals |

2. What is drama in education? – characteristics and reasons

development
of all
competences

change of
perspective/
reflection

„Sprachnotsi-
-tuationen“

flow
experience

aesthetics/
emotion

interaction/
collaboration

body
movements

holistic/
multisensory
learning

activity-
oriented

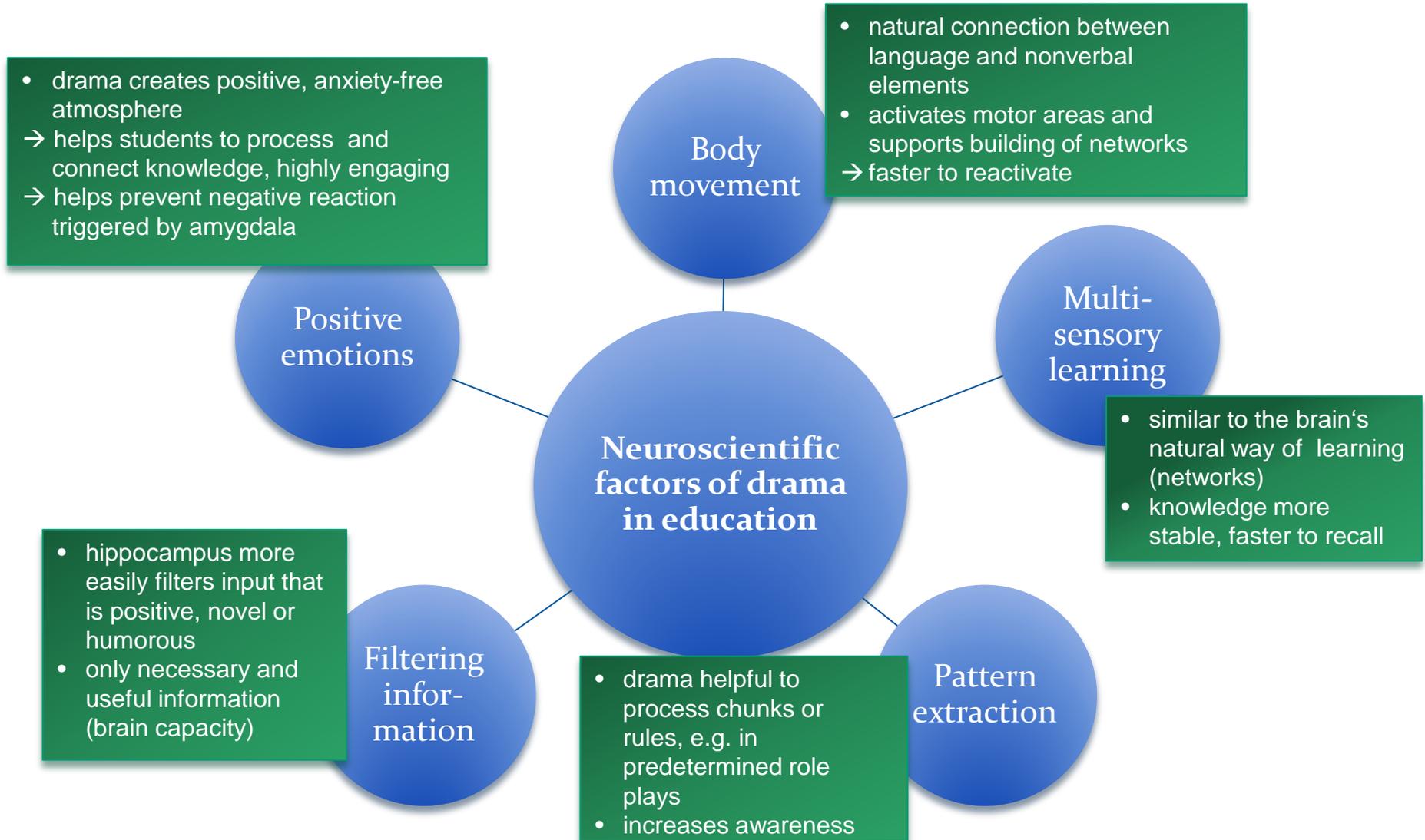
Outline

1. What is drama in education? – characteristics & reasons
2. **Neuroscientific basis of drama in education**
3. Forms & techniques of staging drama activities
4. Drama activities - phases
5. References

2. Neuroscientific basis of drama in education

Role Play

2. Neuroscientific basis of drama in education



Outline

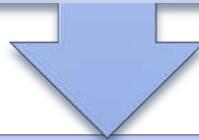
1. What is drama in education? – characteristics & reasons
2. Neuroscientific basis of drama in education
3. **Forms & techniques of staging drama activities**
4. Drama activities - phases
5. References

3. Forms of staging drama activities

Strongly regulated and predetermined drama activities

language learning games, role plays & simulations

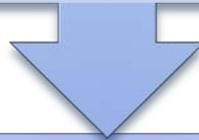
focus on **language proficiency**



Less regulated drama activities

improvized role plays & simulations
predetermind goal but open process

focus on language proficiency
& language use



Unregulated and open drama activities

improvized scenes

open scenario with different levels of action & various perspectives

focus on **language use**

3. Example-techniques of staging drama activities

➤ role play as basis of all dramatic activities



➤ strongly regulated and predetermined drama activities

- language learning games: Bingo, Memory, drawing pictures from description
- dialogue work
- narration

3. Example-techniques of staging drama activities

- less regulated drama activities
 - Frozen Image Technique – making emotions visible, focusing on key scenes or character constellations (variations)
 - open - close
 - mirroring facial expression, gestures, utterances, etc.

3. Example-techniques of staging drama activities

- unregulated and open drama activities
 - Soundscape
 - Hot Seat
 - Conscience Alley
 - imitating and creating own scenes (flashbacks and flashforwards)

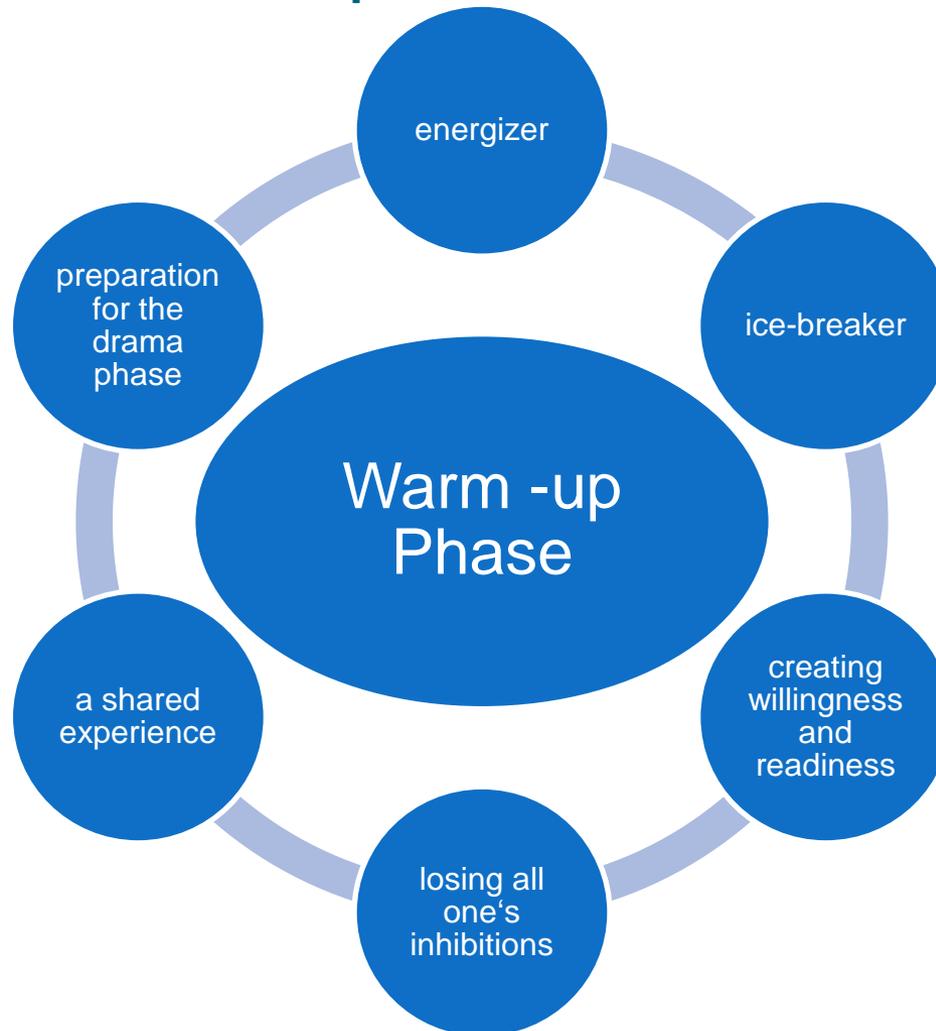
Outline

1. What is drama in education? – characteristics & reasons
2. Neuroscientific basis of drama in education
3. Forms & techniques of staging drama activities
4. **Drama activities - phases**
5. References

4. Drama activities - phases



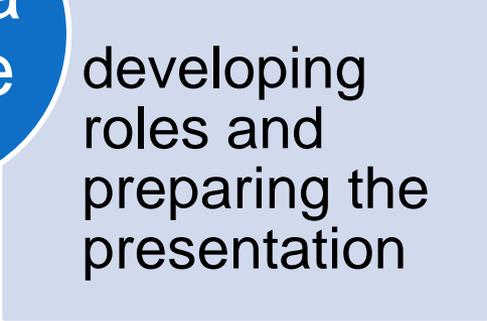
4. Drama activities - phases



4. Drama activities - phases



Drama
Phase



developing
roles and
preparing the
presentation

curiosity as the driving force

4. Drama activities - phases

- leaving the fictive character and taking off the mask...
- transitional phase towards reflection or feedback

→ **the Cool- down Phase**



4. Drama activities - phases

Let's start...

References

- **Farmer**, David (2015): Drama strategies – drama resource. <<http://dramaresource.com/drama-strategies>> [last accessed 23 Nov 2015].
- **Hermes**, Ursula (2014): *Working with Short Stories. 23 Kurzgeschichten mit Unterrichtsmaterialien*. Stuttgart: Klett Sprachen.
- **Sambanis**, Michaela (2013): *Fremdsprachenunterricht und Neurowissenschaften*. Tübingen: Narr Verlag.
- **Sambanis**, M. et al. (2013): Drama to go! Hints and hands-on activities for the classroom. In: *Scenario: Journal for Drama and Theatre in Foreign and Second Language Education*. Vol. VII(1), pp. 78-97.
- **Schewe**, Manfred (2013): Taking Stock and Looking Ahead: Drama Pedagogy as a Gateway to a Performative Teaching and Learning Culture, In: *Scenario: Journal for Drama and Theatre in Foreign and Second Language Education* Vol. VII(1), pp.5-24, <http://research.ucc.ie/scenario/2013/01/Schewe/02/en> [last accessed 25 Nov 2015].

In our first activity the table below was jumbled and had to be put back in the right order.

| | drama in education | theatre in education |
|-------------|--|--|
| focus on | audience | students |
| orientation | process-oriented | product-oriented |
| overall aim | holistic, multisensory language learning | performance (+ preparation and follow-up work) |
| procedure | choice of text | role play |
| | assignment of roles | feedback |
| | lighting, sound, scenery, costumes | reflection |
| | rehearsals | improvisations |

In Anlehnung an: Sambanis, Michaela (2013): *Fremdsprachenunterricht und Neurowissenschaften*. Tübingen: Narr Verlag.

In our second activity our fellow students were asked to watch a role play and find out facts about emotions, body movements, multisensory learning, pattern extraction and filtering information as well as their connection to language learning.

Teacher Conversation

Corinna Oh I am so frustrated, Jennifer again...I have just finished reading through Jennifer's quiz and it's almost unbearable how poorly she did on that test again.

Christiane Oh, that really surprises me. I had her last year and she did really well on nearly all of her tests. Was she able to study for the quiz?

Corinna No, it was a surprise quiz because the students didn't focus (on the subject at hand) anymore, so I figured it might be a good idea to get them focused again, also for the future.

Philipp Do you do this all the time?

Corinna Sometimes, yes...☺

Christiane You know, I read an article in the *Language Teacher* journal that was quite interesting. They said that it has really quite negative consequences for the students' ability to learn if you put them under pressure or scare them.

Corinna Well, when I was young, teachers used to do it all the time, and it didn't hurt me. Why should it have negative consequences?

Christiane You see, the thing is, on the one hand the students can memorize and learn, for example vocab, if they have negative feelings. But they are unable to process the information/input properly or transfer it because the amygdala, a small part of the brain, produces hormones that trigger a fight/flight/freeze reaction whenever under pressure. This reaction prevents the students from processing knowledge further.

Corinna Oh, that's interesting.

Christiane Yeah, it really is. Learning with positive emotions really promotes learning and helps to connect knowledge, and that makes it easier and faster to recall it. A positive mood helps students to focus on learning activities.

Corinna So what can I do to create a more positive atmosphere?

Philipp You could, for example, create a positive mood if you really appreciated your students and their work. Try and use praise more often – if you haven't done that yet – to make them feel comfortable. And you could even try to, you know, radiate joy yourself. Be cheerful. The students usually react to that in a positive way. And maybe Jenny would, too.

Corinna So can you think of some teaching methods to create a positive mood in class?

Philipp Sure. I've been to a workshop on drama in education recently. Basically, what they said was that drama activities have the potential to create a

positive, sheltered and anxiety-free atmosphere. I think, using drama methods sounds exciting, but I haven't really brought myself to try them out in class yet.

Corinna Well, since you mention that, I've read an article on drama methods in the EFL classroom the other day. The focus was on multisensory learning though.

Christiane What did you find out?

Corinna The article said that the brain is naturally multisensory. There are a great number of brain areas and pathways for multisensory interactions. The brain usually saves, processes and retrieves information in networks, so students supposedly learn better through all their senses – auditory, visual, etc.

Christiane So you could say that it would be brain-friendly and beneficial for our students' learning process to use drama activities in our language lessons because the approach is holistic?

Corinna Yeah, you could say that.

Philipp Mmh, take body movements, for instance. Drama methods could be perfectly useful if you want to combine language learning and body movements.

Christiane How so?

Philipp Scholars argue that the connection of body movements and language is only natural, since 2/3 of our communication happen nonverbally, that is through gestures, facial expressions or the look in our eyes. And there are studies that show that learning new words or chunks with matching body movements is beneficial for learners. These movements activate motor areas in the brain and foster the construction of networks – like we said before. These areas are reactivated once the students try to recall, read or hear the words they've learned with body movements.

Corinna Do you remember any long-term effects?

Philipp What I remember is that the knowledge is supposed to be more stable, more flexible in context and can be recalled faster than with unisensory vocab learning methods.

Christiane And I assume through posture, facial expressions, gestures etc. the students also get the chance to deal with a topic in an emotional way. This way drama activities could make language learning personally relevant. And I guess mastering drama activities successfully creates positive emotions as well.

Corinna I think what you said before about learning chunks and connecting them with movements was quite interesting. I remember a didactics lecture in which the instructor said that finding patterns and rules is an important strategy that the brain applies.

Philipp Can you explain that?

Corinna Well, drama activities seem to be helpful for the brain to process chunks of words or grammatical rules. I think what is great about drama activities is that you can embed all kinds of patterns in them, link them with movements, repeat them in more or less predetermined role plays etc. However – it

doesn't like fuzzy concepts.

Christiane What do you mean when you say fuzzy?

Corinna Let's say you are asked to memorize a certain figure which is basically an apparently arbitrary arrangement of 16 lines. If you tried to remember the figure, you'd probably forget a line or two and not get the exact figure. If you now, in turn, arrange the exact same lines regularly, like in squares, it is much easier to remember, even though the amount of lines does not differ from the first figure.

Christiane Ah, OK. And I imagine you could even say that building, applying and practicing these rules and patterns in drama activities might increase the students' awareness and shape their understanding of these rules?

Corinna Exactly.

Philipp And I would add that the linguistic input that you provide... the patterns you want them to learn become personally more relevant this way. I believe that's what drama activities could be useful for too: help students filter irrelevant stuff and focus on the patterns and rules we'd like them to process.

Christiane Ah yeah, and couldn't that also be the reason why your students were unable to focus on your lesson? Because the information wasn't personally relevant for them?

Corinna What do you mean? Everything I teach is relevant.

Philipp Well, I think what she is trying to say is that students have difficulties in filtering information because the brain can only process a tiny amount of information that it gets. This way the brain makes sure that only necessary and useful information use up the brain's capacity.

Corinna Yes, but how could drama activities be helpful in this respect?

Christiane I read somewhere that the hippocampus is part of the filtering process. It's the doorkeeper, so to speak. And through positive emotions, novel experiences or humour the hippocampus could become particularly active. And could, at the same time, block negative reactions by the amygdala, like I said before!?

Philipp I think so.

Corinna So maybe we should think about how we could apply some drama methods in our lessons?

THE END

In this warm-up activity our fellow students were each given a card with one sentence on it that had to be read out in the way prescribed by the adverb above the sentence.

| | |
|---|---|
| A EXCITEDLY Mary! Where did you come from? 1 | A ABSENTLY I live in New York now. 2 |
| A TENDERLY Always wondered what happened to you, Bill. 3 | B PROUDLY I'm a lawyer. Nice firm, way downtown. 4 |
| B UNHAPPILY I work in the bursar's office at Columbia. 5 | C AWKWARDLY You're looking very...well 6 |
| C SHYLY Married yet? 7 | C HAPPILY We have three children. 8 |
| C POLITELY You and your husband must have dinner with my family some night. 9 | C NERVOUSLY We'd love it. 10 |
| D TERSELY Good-by! 11 | D DISAPPOINTEDLY Oh... 12 |
| D SADLY There is my bus. 13 | |

A X 2= activity 1 Mary, **B X 2=** activity 1 Bill, **C X 3 =** activity 2 Mary and Bill, **D X 3 =** Christiane, Philipp, Corinna

In Anlehnung an: Hermes, Ursula (2014): *Working with Short Stories. 23 Kurzgeschichten mit Unterrichtsmaterialien*. Stuttgart: Klett Sprachen.

Group A - Mary

Task 1:

Read the short story "Early Autumn" by Langston Hughes carefully

(see http://www.mpsaz.org/rmhs/staff/dmsokol/101/files/22_writing_about_literature_1.pdf, p.625f.)

In the next step, fill out the table together with your partner, adding Mary's inner voice. Discuss your ideas as to what your character is really thinking. Once you have finished, decide who wants to step into which part, i.e. the "official" Mary and Mary's inner voice.

Task 2: "Play reading"

Now pair up with your partners from group B who work on Bill. Then act out the short story by including both the "official" voices as well as the inner voices.

| Mary | Mary's inner voice |
|--|--------------------|
| Bill Walker | |
| I live in New York now. | |
| Always wondered what happened to Bill. | |
| Married yet? | |
| Oh. | |
| We have three children. I work in the bursar's office at Columbia. | |
| We live on Central Park West. Come and see us sometime. | |
| We'd love it. | |
| There is my bus. | |
| (When...) | |
| Good-by. | |

Group B - Bill

Task 1:

Read the short story "Early Autumn" by Langston Hughes carefully

(see http://www.mpsaz.org/rmhs/staff/dmsokol/101/files/22_writing_about_literature_1.pdf, p.625f.)

In the next step, fill out the table together with your partner, adding Bill's inner voice. Discuss your ideas as to what your character is really thinking. Once you have finished, decide who wants to step into which part, i.e. the "official" Bill and Bill's inner voice.

Task 2: "Play reading"

Now pair up with your partners from group A who work on Mary. Then act out the short story by including both the "official" voices as well as the inner voices. Be prepared to present in front of the class.

| Bill | Bill's inner voice |
|---|--------------------|
| Mary! Where did you come from? | |
| Oh. | |
| I'm a Lawyer. Nice firm, way downtown. | |
| Sure. Two kids. | |
| And your husband? | |
| You're looking very ... well. | |
| Sure. You and your husband must have dinner with my family some night. Any night. Lucille and I'd love to have you. | |
| You ought to see my kids. | |
| Good-by. | |
| (When...) | |
| Good-by. | |

Group C - Scenic Reading

Task 1:

In your group, read the short story "Early Autumn" by Langston Hughes carefully (see http://www.mpsaz.org/rmhs/staff/dmsokol/101/files/22_writing_about_literature_1.pdf, p.625f.)

In the next step, have a close look at the table below and try to imagine Mary's and Bill's emotions, filling in what you came up with.

Task 2: "Scenic Reading"

Now decide who wants to be Mary, Bill or the narrator. Also think about the appropriate intonation. Try to feel into your character. Be prepared to present in front of the class.

If you are more than 3:

Act out the scene in addition to the scenic reading. Decide who does the reading and the acting respectively (two actors).

| Mary | Mary's emotions | Bill | Bill's emotions |
|--|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| Bill Walker | | Mary' Where did you come from? | |
| I live in New York now. | | Oh. | |
| Always wondered what happened to you, Bill. | | I'm a lawyer. Nice firm, way downtown. | |
| Married yet? | | Sure. Two kids. | |
| Oh. | | And your husband? | |
| We have three children. I work in the bursar's office at Columbia. | | You're looking very...well. | |
| We live on Central Park West. Come and see us sometime. | | Sure. You and your husband must have dinner with my family some night. Any night. Lucille and I'd love to have you. | |
| We'd love it. | | You ought to see my kids. | |
| There is my bus. | | Good-by. | |
| (When...) | | | |
| Good-by. | | | |

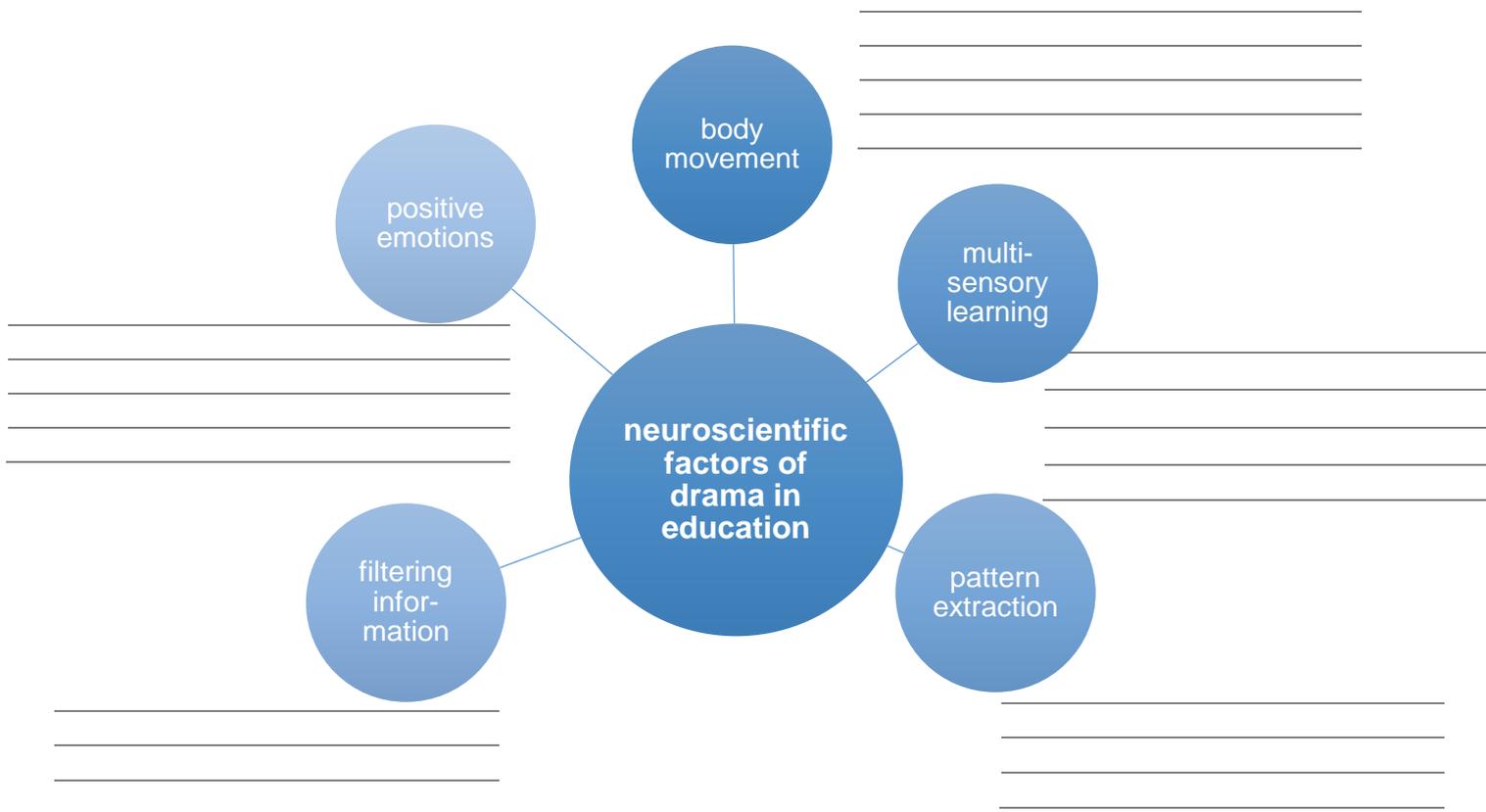
1. What is drama in education? – Characteristics & reasons (Philipp Schendel)

| | drama in education | theatre in education |
|-------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| focus on | | |
| orientation | | |
| overall aim | | |
| procedure | | |

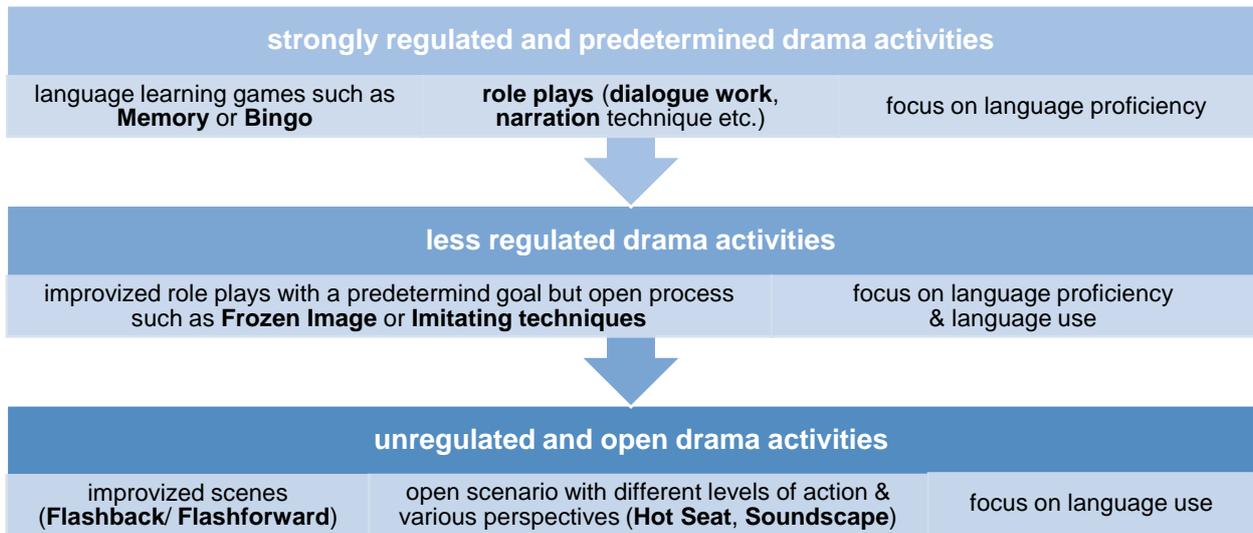
Reasons for drama in education:

- change of perspective
- body movements
- development of competences
- “Sprachnotsituationen”
- interaction/collaboration
- holistic/multisensory learning
- reflection/feedback
- aesthetics/emotions
- flow experience

2. Neuroscientific basis of drama in education



3. Forms & techniques of staging drama activities (Christiane Iden)



4. Drama activities – different phases (Corinna Schaeffer)



References and further reading

Farmer, David (2015): Drama strategies – drama resource.

<<http://dramaresource.com/drama-strategies>> [last accessed 23 Nov 2015].

On this website David Farmer describes different drama strategies that can be applied in a classroom context.

Hermes, Ursula (2014): *Working with Short Stories. 23 Kurzgeschichten mit Unterrichtsmaterialien*. Stuttgart: Klett Sprachen.

This collection contains 18 annotated short stories and five urban legends. Every short story comes with a synopsis, didactic suggestions, tasks and worksheets. It is a multi-faceted collection with classroom classics as well as modern short stories.

Sambanis, Michaela (2013): *Fremdsprachenunterricht und Neurowissenschaften*. Tübingen: Narr Verlag.

Sambanis, M. et al. (2013): Drama to go! Hints and hands-on activities for the classroom. In: *Scenario: Journal for Drama and Theatre in Foreign and Second Language Education*. Vol. VII(1), pp. 78-97.

Schewe, Manfred (2013): Taking Stock and Looking Ahead: Drama Pedagogy as a Gateway to a Performative Teaching and Learning Culture. In: *Scenario: Journal for Drama and Theatre in Foreign and Second Language Education*. Vol. VII(1), pp.5-24.

<<http://research.ucc.ie/scenario/2013/01/Schewe/02/en>> [last accessed 25 Nov 2015].

This overview article initially focuses on early connections between dramatic art, teaching, learning, and living, followed by a brief account of how Great Britain took on a pioneering role with regard to the establishment of drama as a school subject, method and educational sub-discipline.