Drama-Based Pedagogy: Supporting Literacy Development for English Language Learners

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Research Problem & Question

Research Problem:

English Language Learners often face barriers with:
- Reading fluency
- Oral language development
- Vocabulary acquisition
- Classroom participation

Traditional literacy instruction may not provide enough opportunities for authentic language use.

Research Question:

How does drama-based pedagogy support literacy, reading fluency, oral language development, and language acquisition among K-12 English Language Learners?

Theoretical Lens

❖ **Vygotsky**
Learning is social.
❖ **Dewey**
Learning is experiential.
❖ **Ladson-Billings & Battiste**
Learning should honour culture, identity, and lived experience.

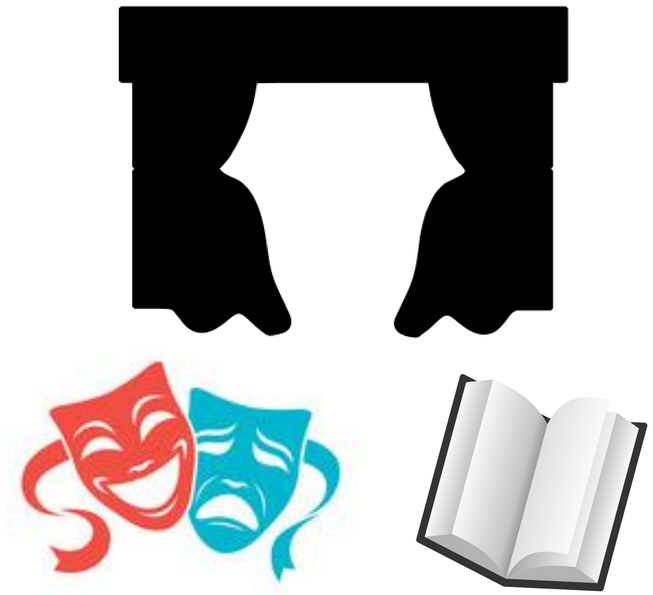
Why This Research?
Canadian classrooms are increasingly multilingual and culturally diverse.
Educators need literacy practices that are:
- Inclusive
- Interactive
- Accessible
- Culturally responsive



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Key Findings

Drama-based pedagogies:
❖ Improve reading fluency
❖ Increase oral language development
❖ Strengthen vocabulary acquisition
❖ Build confidence and motivation
❖ Support multilingual learners
❖ Create authentic opportunities for communication



Drama is more than an engagement strategy. Drama functions as a literacy practice, allowing students to learn language through communication, collaboration, movement & performance.

References

Recommendations & Barriers

Recommendations:

❖ **Integrate Drama Into Literacy Instruction**
Examples:
Readers Theatre
Storytelling
Role play
Improvisation

❖ **Invest in Teacher Learning**
Support educators through:
Professional development
Demonstration lessons
Collaborative planning
Professional learning communities

❖ **Use Culturally Responsive Drama Practices**
Include:
Student voice
Oral storytelling traditions
Community narratives
Multilingual opportunities

Barriers
- Teacher confidence
- Time constraints
- Professional development access
- Funding and resource allocation

Conclusion

My review demonstrates that drama-based pedagogy supports literacy development by improving reading fluency, oral language, vocabulary, confidence, and participation.

For English Language Learners, drama creates authentic opportunities to use language while building inclusion, belonging, and success.