

Research on Children's Drama Workshops Based on User Experience

Wanxin Chen

School of Art Education, Guangdong Teachers College of Foreign Language and Arts,
Guangzhou, Guangdong 510640, China

Abstract. The workshop are combined with theatre rehearsals to form a drama workshop. The Wuyue Cultural and Art Center is a theatre workshop focused on teaching and experiencing children's theatre. The children's drama workshop leads children in role shaping using scene creation and language guidance, guides children to think and discuss the development of stories, creates scripts with children, and encourages children to perform stories. Enable children to develop creativity and imagination in role shaping, cultivate children's coordination and cooperation ability in improvisation, and promote children's all-round development. This paper studies the operating status and predicament of Wuyue Culture and Art Center through interviews. Using a questionnaire, this paper studies the motivation and satisfaction of customers participating in the workshop and puts forward that the workshop should increase the innovation of the course and increase the stickiness of users.

Keywords: User Experience; Drama Workshop; Children's Drama.

1. Introduction

Workshops are a way for people from various standpoints and backgrounds to think, discuss, and communicate with each other [1]. The workshop combined with the theater rehearsals to form the drama workshops. The drama workshop was characterized by collective creation and involvement without being confined to specific venues, being flexible and adaptable, allowing for widespread implementation at its inception [2].

Drama workshops have evolved from traditional forms to include traditional drama workshops, educational drama workshops, applied drama workshops, and amateur workshops. Traditional drama workshops combine theater rehearsals with drama learning, aimed at professional performers, providing an interactive space for actors and creators. Their curriculum is more professional, with teachers by director and professional actors. The main goal is to meet the needs of professional actors in their creation, learning, and rehearsal, and to help them explore and learn more performance techniques. Educational drama workshops are the application of drama methods and techniques in early childhood education. In the class, allowing children to enhance their awareness of consequences and the outside world through different dramatic scenarios, using strategies like role play and teacher involvement, to explore social issues, learn critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and thus understand themselves and society [3]. Educational workshops are divided into four segments: warm-up exercises, character creation, plot development, and performance communication. Teachers guide children in character creation through scenario building and verbal prompts, helping them think and discuss the progression of the story, and co-creating scripts with the children. Finally, they encourage children to perform the stories. Developing creativity and imagination through character creation., Cultivating children's coordination and cooperation skills through improvisational performances, Promoting children's comprehensive and sustainable development. Building on educational workshops, applied drama workshops have emerged. Compared to educational workshops, the practice scope and audience of applied drama is relatively broad and should use drama techniques applied in various fields. Applied theater can be established in various locations for different groups. Its main goal is to enhance participants' understanding of self and society through applied drama, facilitating positive changes in personality and spirit, currently used primarily in therapeutic contexts or for specific populations. With the development of performing arts, performance has gradually entered the lives of the general public, who yearn to learn acting and express and release themselves,

leading to the emergence of amateur workshops. Amateur workshops are designed for beginners and primarily target the general public interested in performance. The workshops set courses mainly for artistic outreach and drama education. Focusing on drama training experiences, the content includes voice, body movement, action, and script reading sessions. Workshop organizers can consciously adjust the activity themes based on the types and content of the drama, as well as the identities and needs of the participants to provide experiential value for participants. Participants can gain acting knowledge, performance experience, and relaxation.

This article uses the drama workshop at Guangzhou Wuyue Cultural and Art Center as a case study, using interviews to examine its operational status, analyze user experience and satisfaction, explore issues faced by amateur workshops, and propose optimization strategies.

2. Introduction to Children's Drama Workshops

The Wuyue Cultural and Art Center was established in 2017 and it aims to bridge the gap between drama and the public through drama workshops. Focusing on children's drama teaching and experiences, aiming to connect through dramatic activities to develop connected independent parent-child relationships, respect and encourage children's natural talents, and inspire people to explore themselves internally and perceive the world externally. They have established courses in physical development, props creation, picture book improvisation, script rehearsal and so on, and regularly hold mini children's art festivals and more. Instructors guide children and participants in understanding their roles. In addition to children's drama, this workshop relies on the strong teaching force of actors, educators, directors, and more. To conduct commercial theater activities, this is an amateur theater workshop focused on children's drama while catering to a diverse audience. This article first uses interviews and observations to gain insights into the workshop's operations and course structure.

3. "Object Puppetry Parent-Child Drama Workshop" Held by the Wuyue Cultural and Arts Center

Time: September 15, 2024, at 3:30 PM

Participants: 7 families

Preparation before class: 1. Arrangement of teaching aids. 2. Audio debugging.

Content One:

Pre-class introduction: The teacher first familiarizes themselves with the children through self-introduction. Then they operate puppets and use prompts to guide the children into the role.

Commentary: As the class begins, the teacher operates a puppet's entrance, a scenario is created where a puppet has no friends and wants to meet friends because it is ugly through some dialogues. By using a relatable puppet, the teacher connects it to the children's existing life experience of 'friends', bridging the gap between children, the puppet, and the teacher, making children enter their roles more quickly. Under the teacher's guidance, the children begin to actively reflect on their personal experiences: Why does the little puppet haven't friends? How can we help the little puppet make new friends?

Content Two:

Trust Game: Using two bamboo sticks as a guiding line, connecting parents and children, the person in front must close their eyes and feel how the person behind them controls the bamboo sticks, performing a series of movements such as moving forward or turning.

Commentary: After the game, one child mentioned feeling scared when they closed their eyes. In this game, parents need to provide more security and trust to their children. From an emotional perspective, this game fosters a deeper dependence and trust from the child towards the parent, allowing the child to feel the trust given by the parent. This type of game enhances the trust

relationship between children and parents, fostering a positive and close relationship that improves parent-child bonds.

Content Three:

Making puppets: The teacher distributes paper and colored pencils and also provides some props, such as a hot glue gun, glue, scotch tape, bottles, and twisting sticks. Parents draw the puppet's head and body on the paper, then the children need to fill in the remaining parts. Finally, parents need to assist their children in completing the puppet-making with the provided props, creating their own "friends".

Commentary: From a cognitive perspective, children learn through the teacher's introduction that drama involves roles and props. The teacher doesn't impart too much theoretical knowledge in class but instead guides the children to unleash their imagination, combining the prepared materials and scenarios to design a unique puppet. While designing the puppet, children consider the size, color, and whether the prepared materials can be used to create the puppet drawn on paper. In the design and making process, children learn about the function of colors, clothing and props, and the interactive relationship between props, color design and the puppet's character. By being hands-on in designing the puppet, children develop an emotional connection with it, increasing their emotional bond. Therefore, the process of making puppets and props can enhance children's understanding of drama, exercise their creative abilities, and cultivate their aesthetic abilities.

Content Four:

Learning to operate puppets: The teacher demonstrates and teaches simple puppetry techniques. The puppet like humans, it needs to breathe. So, the puppeteer needs to help the puppet breathe, speak, look around, and express emotions. The puppet's feet and head can also express emotions.

Comment: Puppets are objects that require human manipulation to perform actions. Puppetry is similar to drama in that it requires children to generate emotions while shaping characters; the puppet is like another self for the children. Operating puppets needs to be completed collaboratively by parents and children, giving life to the puppet so it can move. When designing puppet movements, children combine the puppetry skills they have learned with their experiences of making new friends in daily life. Imagining how a puppet would speak and designing a self-introduction script and movements for the puppet can enhance a child's expressive ability and imagination.

Content Five:

Puppet Show: Children need to operate the puppets together with their parents, move the puppets to music. They also lead the puppets to the center of the classroom for self-introduction.

Comment: The puppet show is the final part of the course, where parents cooperate with their children to operate the puppets, coming together to the center of the classroom for self-introduction. With their parents by their side, even shy children can take center stage to introduce themselves with the puppets, it building their confidence.

4. Satisfaction Survey of the Drama Workshop

4.1 Interview Design

The interview content is divided into three parts. The first part collects data on respondents' gender, age, education, occupation, and children's ages, allowing for an analysis of the audience demographics, experiential behaviors, experiences, and attitudes toward the drama workshop.

The second part interviews respondents about their needs and experiences, analyzing data to investigate users' motivations. It aims to understand users' needs and expectations for participating in the drama workshop.

The third part assesses respondents' satisfaction with the 'Object Puppet Parent-Child Drama Workshop', analyzing data to identify existing issues and recommending suggestions and measures for future improvements.

4.2 Interview Summary

4.2.1 Summary of User Characteristics

A total of 14 parents participated in the interview. The gender ratio is 36% male and 64% female, indicating that there are generally more female participants in the workshops. The percentages of parents are 43% about 20-30 ages and 57% about 31-45 ages. This shows that the parents participating in children's drama workshops are generally between the ages of 31 and 45. All parents have at least a bachelor's degree and their cultural literacy is relatively high. The consumer group tends to be younger, highly educated, and with stable earnings. These parents are accepting quickly new things, and as people's living standards improve, education develops rapidly and becomes increasingly diversified, leading parents to pay more attention to cultivating their children's various abilities. The children participating in the drama workshops are generally between 3-8 years old. Children aged 3-8 are in the preoperational period stage, during which their egocentric language gradually shifts to socialized communicative language, and their thinking is primarily concrete.

4.2.2 Analysis of User Consumption Behavior

Families participating in the drama workshops generally have some understanding of children's theater, with most parents having experience taking their children to see children's dreams. Nearly half of the parents maintain a frequency of taking their children to see a children's dream 1-2 times every six months. This indicates that the willingness of most parents to spend is based on their deep understanding of the matter. Therefore, one of the problems that need to be addressed is how to enhance public awareness of children's drama workshops.

Most parents learned about this drama workshop activity through recommendations from friends and the dissemination of social media. With the development of the internet and short videos, the channels for people to obtain and share information are increasing and accelerating. The visual descriptions in short videos allow parents to understand the content of the children's drama workshop most intuitively. Word of mouth among friends also enables consumers to trust the drama workshop more quickly. This means that the reputation of the drama workshop is very important. Therefore, word of mouth marketing and similar methods should be an essential marketing strategy for the drama workshop.

The vast majority of parents express a strong willingness to participate in children's theater workshop courses. In terms of course design, teachers can create activities that encourage interaction between parents and children. This increases the time and ways parents spend with their children, enhancing communication between them. During this time, parents also experience mental and physical relaxation. Additionally, the curriculum should include a showcase of achievements. This showcase allows parents to quickly and intuitively understand their child's learning progress and outcomes. It provides a stage for children to present themselves, not only enhancing their ability to express but also boosting their confidence through the showcase. Furthermore, this display serves as an intuitive and effective marketing method. When parents see their children performing on stage, they feel their child has grown, clearly noticing the changes in their child, which brings them pride and happiness, offering a sense of exceptional value.

4.2.3 Satisfaction Survey

This article analyzes the theater workshop's equipment, the professionalism of teachers, course design, professionalism, fun, interactions among parents, children, and teachers, as well as the presentation of the theater workshop's results. Respondents generally rated these aspects highly, but there are also some issues.

There is room for improvement in the theater workshop's equipment, and more thorough preparations are needed before the course begins. The significance of the course content can be further researched by teachers to enhance its educational value. Before designing a children's theater workshop, it is essential to set activity goals and determine the workshop's theme. The theme should relate closely to children's lives and be beneficial for their future. The range of theater themes is broad,

covering children's daily lives, fairy tales, traditional Chinese stories, natural sciences, and more. The atmosphere created by teachers can be designed according to the workshop's theme, determining the number of children participating and preparing a sufficient number of props. Through the theater workshop, children can learn about social life experiences, stimulate their creativity, and promote their physical and mental health development.

Some parents find that drama workshops enhance children's physical expression, language skills, imagination, creativity, and cognitive abilities. However, some parents remain skeptical about whether the courses can truly boost children's imagination and creativity. Therefore, the curriculum can incorporate more hands-on activities for children to create, providing them with space for thought and imagination, encouraging them to express their creativity by making props for the drama. On the other hand, short dreams can be included for children to engage in role-playing, where they can create lines and design actions based on their own experiences, thus enhancing their script writing and expression skills.

5. Optimization Strategies

In the interviews, it found that the public has limited awareness of children's drama workshops, indicating that children's drama education has not yet been fully popularized. Therefore, children's drama workshops should employ various marketing strategies to increase public awareness. For instance, operators can create and share articles and videos related to children's drama on social media platforms to promote their products and services. Through extensive promotion on social media, children's drama workshops can reach more potential customers. Social media has a powerful influence; when users see valuable and high-quality articles and videos, they tend to share them with others, creating a ripple effect. This requires operators to produce high-quality, valuable, and creative content that piques users' curiosity and attracts participation and purchases through free trial classes, while also establishing a good reputation through innovative and professional course design and outcome presentations. Additionally, drama education can be integrated with school curricula, and operators should actively explore collaborations with youth centers, kindergartens, and elementary schools to conduct drama activities in schools, allowing more children to experience and love drama education.

Abroad, children's drama is a common teaching method. In the United States creative drama guided by adults, allows children to actively engage in play, explore, grow, and express their feelings to one another. It enables children to feel, analyze, and solve problems during the drama performance, allowing them to subconsciously 'think' about various issues and relationships in their surroundings and society [4]. Using drama to simulate life's situations and realities, achieving genuine experiences., allowing children to better perceive and understand the world around them in a vibrant, fictional dramatic world. Educational drama in the UK integrates drama into teaching. Drama is a medium for teaching, providing children with knowledge, and stimulating their interest [5]. Educational drama in the UK respects children's interests and freedom of expression, emphasizing learning through doing. In contrast, the development of children's drama in China is still immature and needs continuous improvement. Therefore, practitioners need to conduct deeper research on the curriculum content and educational methods in drama workshops. The creation of children's drama should be rooted in life but also transcend it; operators can adapt Chinese stories and incorporate social and life into drama education. From a constructivist perspective, understanding knowledge requires the learner's own experience, and teachers should guide children to think and create based on their experiences during the learning process, enabling them to participate in the creation of children's plays. Thinking is a prerequisite for creativity; cultivating children's creative thinking hinges on helping them establish new ways of thinking, develop good thinking habits, and unleash their potential creativity [6]. In drama courses, teachers should place children at the center, giving them ownership of the curriculum. Course design should involve children in the development of the plot, dialogue, and props, providing them a platform to express themselves and a space to exercise their imagination. In drama courses,

children adapt the plot, design and create props based on their perceptions and ideas, thus developing their creative thinking and abilities.

6. Conclusion

This article analyzes interviews and field investigations of the Wuyue Cultural and Art Center's drama workshop, highlighting the needs of users participating in children's drama workshops and identifying the current issues existing in these workshops. By comparing with children's drama workshops abroad, suggestions for improvement and optimization are proposed.

References

- [1] Zhu Yiqun. Comparison and Analysis of Two Models of Amateur Drama Workshops. Shanghai Theatre Academy. 2009:6.
- [2] Zhao Lili. Action Research on Mixed-Age Children's Drama Workshops.
- [3] <https://www.fx361.cc/page/2022/0425/10274852.shtml>.
- [4] Yang Juan. Zhang Jinmei. American Children's Drama Workshops and Their Implications for Children's Drama Education in China.
- [5] Hu Chundan, Research on Children's Drama Education in the Process of Free Growth, Harbin Normal University, Master's Thesis, 2016.
- [6] Rong Jie, Research on Cultivating Children's Creativity Based on Drama Education, Drama Home, 2024 (15), 47-49.