



Dance for the Hearing Impaired Children

Rawiwan Wanwichai

Abstract

This thesis is a quasi-experimental research with an objective of designing and developing a form of dance arts for hearing impaired children so that their emotional and mental capability can be further improved and developed. The target group included in this thesis consists of 20 male and female hearing impaired high school students attending Year 10 to Year 12 of Setsatian School for the Deaf Under the Royal Patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn, who have the hearing levels ranging between 40–55 decibels. These students in the target group voluntarily chose to participate in the experiment themselves.

From the research, it showed that, prior to the experiment, 19 hearing impaired students from the target group had the Thai Happiness Indicator falling in the “Poor” category, meaning that 95 percent of students in the target group had a mental health level below people with normal hearing ranges. Only 1 student in the group had an indicator falling in the “Fair” category, showing an equivalence of 5 percent of targeted hearing impaired students who had a mental health considered to be comparatively the same as that of people with normal hearing ranges. However, after the experiment, all 20 students in the target group, an equivalence of a 100 percent, had their mental health level categorized as “Fair”. It was observed that all 20 hearing impaired students, an equivalence of 100 percent, demonstrated a very pleasant level of satisfaction responding to the aesthetic dance arts activities, the sign language with dance arts movement, the dance performance ‘Kaew Kalaya’, the sound-induced instruments activity of the Kuek Kong Peri dance performance, the rhythm learning and creation using a body’s parts activity of the Taree Leela dance performance, the movement and visual learning relation activity of the Kratop Mai dance performance and the dance arts participation activity. Furthermore, all 20 hearing impaired students showed a pleasant level of satisfaction towards the aesthetic dance arts activities participation as performers among themselves and as co-performers with other performers without hearing disability, whereas, only 89 percent of 20 hearing impaired students were pleasantly satisfied as audiences.

Keywords: Hearing impaired children, Dance performances, Emotional and Mental Capability Development

Background of the problem

Hearing impaired children’s the most challenging problem is their ability to communicate with other people verbally since they are unable to use languages to communicate in the same manner as those without hearing

disability. As a result, such disadvantage can impact these children’s mentality and emotions as well as their ability to adapt and develop skills. Therefore, the aforementioned reasons were behind the motivation of this thesis in order to conduct a study designed to find the most suitable form of

dances for hearing impaired children's capability development in which the most emphasis is on emotional and mental capability development.

For this thesis of Dance for the Hearing Impaired Children, the researcher has an objective of conducting an experiment to develop a dance form, that is appropriate for the limitations found in hearing impaired children as well as to develop their learning and cognition abilities. The experiment was an integration of a dance principle, therapeutic principle and occupational therapy procedures that can effectively help restore and develop these children's emotional and mental capability, while providing some entertainment through the dance movements and means.

The Purposes of the Research

1. To experiment with different forms and methods of dancing to help develop hearing impaired children's emotional and mental capability.
2. To develop a dance form, that is appropriate for the limitations found in hearing impaired children as well as to develop their learning and cognition abilities.
3. To be employed as a means to further create or design more forms of activities or dance performances in order to help develop capability of children with hearing and other kinds of disability.

The Importance of Research

1. New branch of knowledge used to design a more suitable form of dance performances for hearing impaired children that can help strengthen, improve, and stimulate these children's mental and emotional capability development, which can be further used in future studies and researches in order to come up with the most suitable means to help develop such capability of children with hearing impairment.
2. Children born with hearing disability will be able to develop their mental and

emotional capability through the use of dancing methods.

3. This research can provide new means and concept for a creation of dance performances that can help developing capability of children with other types of disability or impairment.

Scope of Research

The study conducted in this thesis is a quasi-experimental research with the following scopes.

Research Area

The population of people in this thesis consists of 76 Year 10 to Year 12 hearing impaired students of Setsatian School for the Deaf Under the Royal Patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn

Target Group

The target group of this research includes 20 male and female hearing impaired high school students attending Year 10 to Year 12 of Setsatian School for the Deaf Under the Royal Patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn, who have the hearing levels ranging between 40-55 decibels. These students in the target group were chosen based on their voluntary.

Research Definition

Dance for Hearing Impaired Children means a form of dance performances that has been specially created in integration with dance principles, therapeutic principles and the hearing impaired children's emotional and mental capability development principles, with an objective aimed to help develop such capability of children with hearing impairment.

Research Process and Data Collection

Prior to the research

1. The researcher wrote a letter to the Chairman of the Research Ethic Committee requesting for a permission and approval to conduct a research on human beings.

2. The researcher wrote a letter to Setsatian School for the Deaf Under the Royal Patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn, requesting their permission and cooperation in providing data needed for the research and allow their students to participate in the research.

3. The researcher required the hearing impaired students who volunteered to participate in the research to have a mental health test based on the Thai Mental Indicator (New 2004): TMHI-54, pioneered by the Mental Health Department, Ministry of Health in order to be used as a preliminary information on hearing impaired children's emotion and mental capability before they started participating in the dance for hearing impaired children activities.

During the experimental research

1. The researcher created a number of art performance activities suitable for the hearing impaired children's capability development. Each activity needed to be experimented for 90 minutes, twice a week, for the consecutive 10 weeks, making up the total of 20 experiments. The experiments were conducted between December 2009 and February 2010 in accordance with activity designs and procedures alongside the researcher's observation of these children's problems and behavioural, emotional and mental development.

2. The researcher required the hearing impaired students who voluntarily participated in the research to answer a questionnaire about their satisfaction of the "Dance for the Hearing Impaired Children" activities they participated in as well as an in-person interview about their opinions on the activities at the end of each experimental session. The results could be used as an assessment for the activities' improvement for the following weeks as well as data on the hearing impaired children's emotional and mental capability development.

3. The researcher conducted an interview with dance teachers who participated in the "Dance for the Hearing Impaired Children" activities' observation at the end of each session so that the results could be used as an assessment for the activities' improvement for the following weeks as well as data on the hearing impaired children's emotional and mental capability development.

After the experimental research

1. The researcher required the hearing impaired students who participated in the experiment to have a mental health test based on the Thai Mental Indicator (New 2004): TMHI-54, pioneered by the Mental Health Department, Ministry of Health in order to be used as a preliminary information on hearing impaired children's emotion and mental capability after they started participating in the "Dance for the Hearing Impaired Children" activities.

2. The researcher required the participated hearing impaired students to answer a questionnaire about their satisfaction of the "Dance for the Hearing Impaired Children" activities.

3. The researcher then started the data analysis by comparing the test scores of The New Thai Mental Health Indicator (TMHI-54) before and after the experiment using the percentage statistics method.

4. After the data analysis, both from the scores comparison and observation, the researcher then reached the conclusion of the research which was written in a descriptive analysis style and the research finding was presented as documentation, performances and exhibitions.

Research Tools

1. The complete mental health test based on the Thai Mental Indicator (New 2004): TMHI-54) of the Mental Health Department, Ministry of Health, consisting of 54 questions.

2. The questionnaire on satisfaction of participation in the “Dance for the Hearing Impaired Children” activities consisting of 20 questions in which the questionnaire’s results can be further interpreted and used by the researcher.

3. Variety of activities and dance performances created for the hearing impaired children’s emotional and mental capability development purposes which were designed by integrating dance principles, therapeutic principles and the hearing impaired children’s emotional and mental capability development principles. The conclusive results of each activity would be presented as a creational dance performance by the hearing impaired students who participated in particular activities including the aesthetic dancing art activities, the sign language and dancing activity of the Kaew Kalaya dance performance, the sound-induced instruments activity of the Kuek Kong Peri dance performance, the rhythm learning and creation using a body’s parts activity of the Taree Leela dance performance, the movement and visual learning relation activity of the Kratop Mai dance performance and the aesthetic dancing art activities participation as performers among themselves and as co-performers with other performers without hearing disability.

4. Interviews, behavioural observation and record.

Data Analysis

The researcher conducted the data analysis by comparing the test scores of The New Thai Mental Health Indicator (TMHI-54) before and after the experiment using the percentage statistics method.

Conclusion

1. **The complete mental health test based on the Thai Mental Indicator (New 2004): TMHI-54) of the Mental Health Department, Ministry of Health, consisting of 54 questions.**

Prior to the experiment, 19 hearing impaired students from the target group had the Thai Happiness Indicator falling in the “Poor” category, meaning that 95 percent of students in the target group had a mental health level below people with normal hearing ranges. Only 1 student in the group had an indicator falling in the “Fair” category, showing an equivalence of 5 percent of studied hearing impaired students had a mental health considering to be comparatively the same as that of people with normal hearing ranges. However, after the experiment, all 20 students in the target group, an equivalence of a 100 percent, have their mental health level categorized as “Fair”.

2. The aesthetic dancing art activities: 100 percent of the target group showed a very pleasant level of satisfaction with higher satisfactory level towards the performances that had no lyrics but emphasized on dancing along with rhythms than performing with lyrics.

3. The sign language and dancing activity of the Kaew Kalaya dance performance: 100 percent of the target group showed a very pleasant level of satisfaction in their participation in dance movement choreography that could be used to communicate with other hearing impaired children during the performance.

4. The sound-induced instruments activity of the Bun Tueng Peri dance performance: 100 percent of the target group showed a very pleasant level of satisfaction in their participation in the drum beating dance moves choreography and rhythms creation as well as enjoyment gained from drumming.

5. The movement and visual learning relation activity of the Kratop Mai dance performance: 100 percent of the target group showed a very pleasant level of satisfaction in their participation in the bamboo beating rhythms creation and dance moves choreography as well as their enjoyment gained from using the performance instruments.

6. The rhythm learning and creation using a body's parts activity of the Taree Leela dance performance: 100 percent of the target group showed a very pleasant level of satisfaction in their participation in the performance's dance movement choreography and enjoyment gained from difference movements' creativity using different parts of a body such as arms, legs and hands.

7. The aesthetic dancing art activities participation: 100 percent of the target group showed a very pleasant level of satisfaction in their participation as performers among themselves and as co-performers with other performers without hearing disability.

Discussions

1. The complete mental health test based on the Thai Mental Indicator (New 2004) : TMHI-54) of the Mental Health Department, Ministry of Health, consisting of 54 questions, of the Mental Health Department, Ministry of Health.

The pre-experimental test: the target group of hearing impaired students were asked to have the test prior to the experiment and the findings showed that 19 hearing impaired students from the target group had the Thai Happiness Indicator falling in the "Poor" category, meaning that 95 percent of students in the target group had a mental health level below people with normal hearing ranges. Only 1 student in the group had an indicator falling in the "Fair" category, showing an equivalence of 5 percent of targeted hearing impaired students who had a mental health considered to be comparatively the same as that of people with normal hearing ranges. After the test was conducted, the researcher then started with the experiment with the designed art activities including the aesthetic dancing art activities by having these children as parts of the audiences, the sign language and dancing activity, the sound-induced instruments activity, the rhythm

learning and creation using a body's parts activity, the movement and visual learning relation activity and the aesthetic dancing art activities participation as performers among themselves and as co-performers with other performers without hearing disability for 90 minutes a day, twice a week for 10 consecutive weeks.

The post-experimental test: after all the targeted hearing impaired students had participated in the aforementioned dance activities, these students were then asked to have the mental health test again and it was found that all 20 hearing impaired students, an equivalence of 100 percent, had their mental health level categorized as "Fair". They also demonstrated a very pleasant level of satisfaction responding to the aesthetic dancing art activities in which they participated in as audiences, the sign language and dancing activity, the sound-induced instruments activity, the rhythm learning and creation using a body's parts activity, the movement and visual learning relation activity and the aesthetic dancing art activities participation as performers among themselves and as co-performers with other performers without hearing disability.

2. The aesthetic dancing art activities in which the targeted hearing impaired students participated in as audiences: we found that 100 percent of the target group showed a very pleasant level of satisfaction with higher satisfactory level toward the performances that had no lyrics but emphasized on dancing along with rhythms than performances with lyrics. This is because the ordinary dance movement could not be used to communicate with those children with hearing impairment. On the other hand, the performances that emphasized on the dance movement along with the rhythms but had no lyrics were more effective to be used to communicate with these children since they could visually see the entertaining dance movement of the performers.

3. The sign language and dancing activity of the Kaew Kalaya dance performance: from the research, it was found that 100 percent of the target group showed a very pleasant level of satisfaction in their participation in dance movement choreography that could communicate to other hearing impaired children during the performance. Furthermore, from the additional interviews with students in the target group, these students stated that they were happy and enjoyed their participation in the dance movement choreography that fundamentally had the sign language background especially designed for children with hearing impairment. They also expressed their enjoyment in the Kaew Kalaya performance in which the dance movement were specially created and designed in order to communicate with hearing impaired children so that they could understand the meaning of the song.

4. The sound-induced instruments activity of the Bun Tueng Peri dance performance: the research results showed that 100 percent of the target group showed a very pleasant level of satisfaction in their participation in the drum beating dance movement choreography and rhythm creation as well as enjoyment gained from drumming. The additional interview with the hearing impaired students participated in the experiment and dance teachers of the Setsatian School for the Deaf Under the Royal Patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn demonstrated that the students were excited to try drumming since the school thought that hearing impaired children might not be able to learn musical instruments, therefore, had not brought any musical instruments including drums to be used in the school. Thereby, when these students got to experience drumming for the first time with them, they were able to, personally, try different drumming styles created by themselves. They hence felt the sense of joy and had fun

learning new things. Additionally, this dance performance allowed hearing impaired children to participate in the drumming with children without hearing disability. As a result, confidence, as well as the sense of pride among the hearing impaired children were built and strengthened.

5. The movement and visual learning relation activity of the Kratop Mai dance performance: it was found that 100 percent of the target group showed a very pleasant level of satisfaction in their participation in the bamboo beating rhythms creation and dance movement choreography as well as their enjoyment gained from using the performance instruments. From the additional interviews with the hearing impaired students participated in the experiment and dance teachers of the Setsatian School for the Deaf Under the Royal Patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn, it showed that these students really enjoyed the bamboo beating with the rhythms and were very excited and enjoyed taking part in the performance's dance movement choreography. Moreover, some of the original "Rum Lao Kratob Mai's lyrics" were inserted into the performance, in which the special sign language dance movement were cooperated. As a result, the hearing impaired children understood what the song meant, making them think that beside from the fact that it had special sign language dance movement to communicate with them, this performance was also very entertaining and delightful with lively dance movement and beats that could further enhance visual learning with movements.

6. The rhythm learning and creation using a body's parts activity of the Taree Leela dance performance: it showed that 100 percent of the target group showed a very pleasant level of satisfaction in their participation in the performance's dance movement choreography and enjoyment gained from difference movements' creativity using different parts of a body such as

arms, legs and hands. Additionally, from the interviews with the hearing impaired students participated in the experiment and dance teachers of the Setsatian School for the Deaf Under the Royal Patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn, the students expressed their enjoyment and excitement during the dance movement choreography using their body parts such as applauding using their own hands, applauding with their partners or making rhythms using their hands and legs that were integration with the Hulu Thai Traditional Dramatic performance ideas. The hearing impaired children might not hear the sounds, however; they could acknowledge the fast and slow rhythms and beats from the rhythms and weights that placed on each part of their body.

7. The dance art participation activity:

the experiment showed that 100 percent of the target group showed a very pleasant level of satisfaction in their participation as performers among themselves and as co-performers with other performers without hearing disability breaking into all 20 hearing impaired students, an equivalence of 100 percent, were satisfied to have an opportunity to participate in the activity as performers among themselves and as co-performers with other performers without hearing disability, and 89 percent of 20 hearing impaired students were pleasantly satisfied as audiences. Extra interviews conducted with the hearing impaired students participated in the experiment and dance teachers of the Setsatian School for the Deaf Under the Royal Patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn demonstrated that these students were pleased to participate in the activity as performers since they took parts in the dance movement choreography for each performance, which were different from that of the conventional dance performance that students were given the dance movement directly

from teachers and usually allowed no participation of students in the dance movement choreography. Furthermore, some performances included in the experiment emphasized on the dance movement using instruments rather than lyrics. However, for the performances that had lyrics, the dance movement using the special sign language were created in order that the hearing impaired children could comprehend the performances. This type of performance is unconventionally different from the normal dance performances that emphasize on dance movement based on the dance principles. Consequently, the hearing impaired children were really delighted and happy to participate in the activities since they were also parts of the performances and could also understand them through the specially created sign language dance movement.

Recommendations

1. Dancing activities have forms and procedures that can be creatively adapted to be more suitable for target groups consisting of children with impairments. The development in these children's emotional and mental capability is considered to be one of the utmost benefits of such adaptation. Furthermore, it can also help enhance learning capability among these children. As a result, dancing activities may be further used to experiment on children with other types of impairments so that the most effective forms of dance performances could be developed for different groups of impaired children.

2. Art activities can play quite an important part in developing emotional and mental capability as well as strengthening learning capability of those who participate in the activities. Thereby, it is highly recommended that other types of art activities should be further tested and experimented in order that children's capabilities can be more effectively developed.

References

- Busakorn Samrongthong. (2008). Art Therapy. Bangkok : Sukhumvit Media Marketing.
- Helen Payne. (1992). Dance Movement Therapy : Theory and Practice. London : New Fetter Lane: Tavistock/Routledge.
- Lertsiri Bovornkitti. (2009). Art as Therapy. Bangkok : Bangkok Publishing.
- Panthip Siriwanabus. (2004). Psychology Theory Development. Type 2. Bangkok : Company Interactive Print.
- Sirimongkol Nattayakul. (2008). Dance Kinesiology. Bangkok : O.S. Pringting House.
- Sirirat Petchporee. (2005). A Study on Sign Language Vocabulary Memory of Hearing Impaired Children in Prathomsuksa 1 by Minor Game. Presented in Partial Fullfill of The Requirements for The Master of Education Degree in Special Education at Srinakharinwirot University.
- Sriruen Kaewkangwan. (2007). Psychology for Learning Disability. Type 5. Bangkok : Doctor Publishing.

