

The Development of Drama Appreciation Scoring Rubrics and Performance Assessment Tasks for Fourth Grade Students

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Summary

Based on the supplementary Drama Curriculum Guideline for Content III-Drama Appreciation, the research aims to develop a set of performance assessment tasks and the Drama Appreciation Scoring Rubrics (DASR) for the 4th grade primary students in the Performing Art class. Through comparing Drama Content III with those of the National Curriculum in Performing Arts, three learning objectives were identified and analyzed, which were then transferred into six items on the first draft of DASR. The six criteria for Drama Appreciation were identified including “Performance of Audience Etiquette,” “Description of Personal Preference,” “Prediction of Plot Resolution,” “Comprehension of Dramatic Conflicts,” “Analysis on the Appearance and Motivation of the Role,” and “Description on Sound or Visual Special Effects.” In the process, some steps for developing the Scoring Rubrics were found necessary for further revision including “locating the essential concept of the learning objectives,” “clarifying the concept of the objectives” and “describing the key words concretely for the scoring criteria.”

Afterwards, the researcher entered into the 4th grade classroom to further evaluate the practicality of the assessment tasks and revise the DASR through action research. The research team taught a drama lesson and did the follow-up assessment task once a week for about two 40-minute time periods. There were about 20 students in the class and each of them had some basic drama class experiences from 1st to 3rd grade. The drama leader is an experienced drama teacher from the graduate school of the researcher’s university. After

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16 weeks of drama classes, three types of assessment tasks were developed including “Activity-based,” “Discussion-based,” and “Writing-based” tasks. On the “Activity-based task,” it seemed that this type of task suits the middle-grade students best because the activity itself offers a lively and interesting nature in which the students’ potential were brought out easily in the process. However, students’ disciplines in the drama class were hard to control and some activities became fragmental that influenced the effects of the assessment. On the “Discussion-based” task, it was easier for the teacher to manage the teaching process because the timing and depth of questions were under the teacher’s control; yet, for some students whose oral skills were not as good as the others, it would be unfair for them to use discussion as the only task for their assessment. In order to receive better responses from the students, teachers might pay more attention on some questioning skills such as “repeating the story plot,” “addressing questions concretely,” “explaining specific usage of words” and “waiting for delayed answers.” On the “Writing-based” task, it was concrete and easy to do; moreover, these written records can be kept for long that provided the teachers with plenty of time to do the assessment after the drama activities. It had its pitfalls as well; however, for those that were not used to write or not good at writing tend to copy other students’ works on the written reports. And it took longer to collect the students’ written report and sometimes it became an extra homework. To sum up, it was found that each kind of task had its strengths and limitations. Teachers need to decide which kind is suitable to their needs. Other finding also indicated that for the better use of the assessment, it is suggested that each task need to be led with different instructional activities before its use. In another word, students needed some warm-ups or preparations before any task was used in the classroom.

Through repeated teachings, discussions and reflections, more details were further refined on the DASR including its “Criteria,” “Assessment Reminder” and “Levels of Mastery.” In terms of “Criteria,” Item 2 “personal preference” was changed into “parts of deepest impressions” and Item 3 was rephrased into “prediction of plot development.” Item 4 and 5 were also revised individually into “differentiating the conflicts in drama” and “analysis of role motivation.” In terms of the “Assessment Reminder,” major revisions included Item 1, 2, and 5. On item 1, the focus for assessment was to see if the students can concentrate on the performance and if they understand whether it’s appropriate to talk or

eat during the performance. On Item 2, the emphasis needed to be on students' descriptions of the plot, character or special effects. On Item 5, students needed to judge the motivation of the characters from their physical appearances, actions or dialogues. In terms of the "Level of Mastery," Item 3 and 4 were under revisions. The levels of students' performances depend on the degree of completion of students' answers.

For future researches, first, it is suggested that the topic can be expended to "relationship to student's social life." In another word, besides purely assess the student's aesthetic judgment and attitude toward performing arts, teachers can also evaluate the application ability related to their own social life. Second, the research setting was only done in a 4th grade primary classroom in the Southern part of Taiwan. More data needed to be collected in other schools to build the inter-rater reliability. Finally, "peer assessment tool" needs to further develop to solve the problem of time and subjectivity from the teachers. Usually, the peers can assess each other within small group or one-on-one base that might provide a different perspective and save some time for the teachers when doing assessments.

On the application of the research, it is suggested that teachers can take the present Rubrics as assessment reference in the Performing Art or Drama class; however, it is expected that teachers should use it flexibly and wisely. They can choose two or three items on the scale to fulfill their teaching objective in each class. Moreover, it is also expected that teachers can use the developing process in this research as a model to build their own Rubrics on any teaching content for themselves. In this way, teachers can really make the full use of the developed Rubrics and make the students' assessments more objective and rigorous.

Keywords: drama appreciation, performing arts, drama curriculum, performance assessment task, scoring rubrics

