

## **A Study of the Application of the Drama Therapy on ADHD Students' Social Abilities at the Resource Class of the Elementary School**

Wen-Lung Chang, Assistant Professor  
Department of Drama Creation and Application  
National University of Tainan  
E-mail: jw2001c@yahoo.com.tw

Wei-Ming Liu, Teacher  
Hsin-Hsing Primary School of Kaohsiung City  
E-mail: tea05@mail.hhps.kh.edu.tw

### **Abstract**

The purpose of the study is to apply Drama Therapy Skills in the resource-room classes for ADHD (Attention Deficit hyperactivity Disorder) students. During the study, the qualitative research methods are utilized for collecting data, and in the beginning and the end of conducting this group research, the Social Status Assessments are taken on a ADHD student in order to compare one's social status changes in the regular class and in the resource-room class. According to the Social Preference Rank, the social ability of the ADHD student can be identified. There are five conclusions in the study. Firstly, the Drama Therapy Skills had produced a positive result for the curriculum of the resource-room class; therefore, Drama Therapy is worthy of being promoted in the educational field in Taiwan. Secondly, the application of the Drama Therapy Skills on the group lessons had indeed enhanced the social abilities of the ADHD students in the

resource-room class to some extent. Thirdly, the purpose, process and effect of the Drama Therapy Skills had derived recognition from parents and teachers. Fourthly, ADHD students will have different reactions to different Drama Therapy Skills and different circumstances. Fifthly, the applications of the Drama Therapy are diverse.

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## Introduction

Drama Therapy is a term combining drama and therapy these two kinds of concept. Literally, it means using drama as a therapy. Drama Therapy combines acting performance of the drama with professional bases of remedy, psychology, sociology and pedagogy as a method of psychological therapy and guidance (Lee, 1998). In this term, "drama" means display an individual's inner thoughts, ideas, and behaviors by acting. Robert J. Landy indicated that the ideas of Drama Therapy is playing games, playing characters, telling stories, and delivering one's experiences creatively. All of these activities can help people who are living in extreme conditions to find out the meaning of live and reconstruct balances. School is a place in which Drama Therapy is used often, and special education sector is the first one to adopt this therapy (Lee, 1998).

Drama Therapy is used for helping us manage our own conflicts (Hon, 2002). Drama Therapy can inspire participants' introspection and distinguishability. When students are capable of recognizing or distinguishing their existent or nonexistent behaviors, they will dedicate themselves to "self-awareness". Particularly, when a behavior or task is specified and externalized, one's ability to cognize will escalate (Reid & Maag, 1998). The application of Drama Therapy is applicable for the special education field which demands "individual education".

Drama Therapy Skill is one of the methods for guiding special education students. It is rarely applied on elementary school students in Taiwan and neither do special education students. The researchers adopted Drama Therapy Skill as a medium for enhancing the social

abilities of the ADHD students who are studying in the resource-room classes. The spacious classroom of the resource-room class is utilized because of its convenience for constructing scenes that students need for staging.

### **1. ADHD students of the Resource-room Class**

Students of the resource-room classes at schools are nominated by tutors of the regular classes; after the SESEAC (Special Education Student Examination and Arrangement Consulting Committee) from every local government's education department recognizes that the nominated students are physically and mentally disadvantaged and it is necessary for them to accept the special education, they are entitled to study in the resource-room classes. According to Hon (1998), ADHD is the abbreviation for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, which means that a student's attention, hyperactivity, and ability to control one's compulsion have reached some extent of difficulty and furthermore result in a malfunction of one's development. In the revised version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), it defines the diagnostic standards of "attention deficit" which include unconcentrated (not pay attention to details, incautious, lack of durability, unable to listen carefully and complete a task, and being distracted easily), hyperactive(harebrained, unable to sit down for a long period), and impulsive (answer questions without thinking and unable to wait) (Hon, 1998).

The study is going to observe ADHD students, who are lack of social abilities and are studying in the resource-room class, which adopts the Drama Therapy. Also, these ADHD students hold the ADHD certificates issued by doctors and are approved to accept the special education in the resource-room class of an elementary school by SESEAC of Kaohsiung city.

### **2. Drama Therapy and Social Abilities**

Elementary school is the most important stage for pupils to construct their "socialized personhoods". During this stage, the social abilities of the pupils will influence them on constructing correct "optimistic

characteristics” and “ life philosophy”. Moreover, the most prevalent problem that the elementary school teachers have is students’ abnormal behaviors, which are impacted by the poor adaptation to the society. Many studies indicate that the crimes that youngsters committed are related to their devious behaviors at schools, which means that in fact youngsters’ crimes come from children’s devious behaviors in the early stage ( Lin, 1991; Wu, 1995; Jeng, 1995; Ma,1998; Frick, 1998).

Kauffman (2001) brought up three major points of having good social abilities, which are: an individual can keep a positive and optimistic relationship with the society, has good acceptance from peers and good adaptation to schools, and being able to adjust oneself to the environment easily. Some scholars like Mathur consider that social abilities are an individual’s general performance in the society which include appropriate social behaviors, social cognition, and social problem-solving ability. Glasser asserts that if we can train ourselves to control our behaviors more effectively, we will be content with our expectation to lives more (Chang, 2003). Goffman presented a theory called dramaturgical theory, which uses drama acting as a metaphor of social interaction. In the process of doing drama acting, every individual has to perform one’s own play (Yun & Yu, 1990). The perspective of the dramaturgic theory is that an individual has a good interaction with the society, depends on the image playing ability of the counterpart, adjusts one’s performance appropriately, and derives recognition and appreciation from others.

Drama Therapy, uses acting activities as the major skill. It regards social interaction as “playing”, and those scenes and stages, which are constructed for dramas, will help individuals eliminate all sorts of interruptions by combining all kinds of conditions and trying to form a new balanced condition for the individual. The researchers chose to apply Drama Therapy Skills for enhancing the social abilities of the ADHD students in the resource-room classes. Apart from emphasizing on the above advantages that had been mentioned, taking advantage of the classroom layout of the resource-room class, which is different from that of the regular class, is planned. Every time before conducting the Drama Therapy, stage construction will be done. Resource-room class offers pupils a shelter in the duration of accepting this therapy, making them able to perform the plays they design creatively and

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empathize themselves to the circumstances of the roles deeply, in another word, help them to depart from the environments that bring negative appraisements to them. Therefore, the individuals can relieve the pressures in their bodies by acting and afterwards get power to reset their behavior modes.

## Research Purpose and Questions

For the ADHD students in the resource-room class, the researchers intended to open their minds and enhance their social abilities through the Drama Therapy Skills. On the basis of the above discussion, the main purpose of adopting Drama Therapy Skills in the study is to know whether the Drama Therapy Skills will influence the social abilities of the ADHD students in the resource-room class.

On the basis of the above studying purpose, following are questions proposed by the study:

1. What is the result of the "social skills assessment" of the ADHD student studying in the resource-room class who had been influenced by the Drama Therapy Skills?
2. What are the viewpoints of the tutors and parents about the influences of the Drama Therapy Skills on the social abilities of the ADHD students studying in the resource-room class?
3. What had the student been through after the ADHD student studying in the resource-room class was influenced by the Drama Therapy Skills?

For pupils who are studying in a resource-room class of an elementary school in Kaohsiung, the study adopted the Drama Therapy Skills in the teaching activities and discussed the influences on the pupils' social abilities in the duration of conducting the practice.

### 1. Study Design and Tools

The researchers used the "Social Skills Assessment 3.x Software" which was designed by Dr. Tu, Chun-Ren as the study tool. They coordinated with the students' tutors of the regular classes and collected the statistics before the practice of the Drama Therapy on

February 17th, 2006. After the Drama Therapy was completed, the data after the practice was collected on April 28th in the same year. Thanks to the input of the data and the usage of the software for the “social skills assessment”, the researchers gained many analytic statistics and all kinds of graphs. After the information was analyzed, three before-and-after statistics was made for three students respectively. In addition, according to the characteristic of the content and problems of the study, participant observation, interview, and document analysis of the qualitative research methods were used as the study methods. In the places for studying, participant observation and interview were used for collecting information. Also, the observation diary constructed by the group leader of the Drama Therapy and the learning sheet of the participant students were organized, and the process of the curriculum design and the status of the students were understood in the way of document analysis. After the group activities were finished, the video recordings of the class will be transcribed as reports for inspection.

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## 2. Study conditions

### 2.1. Study field

The major field of the study is a resource-room class of an elementary school in Kaohsiung. The resource-room class of the elementary school currently has two certificated special education teachers and twenty-three students. Among these students, twenty of them are impaired students recognized by the Education Bureau, two of them are students with special needs recognized by the Special Education Enforcement Committee, and one of them is a drop-out student who is being tracked and guided. When the group activity started, the activity leader introduced oneself to the students first and then explained the rules and goals of the group in order to form a group ambiance. Also, after getting the improvement of the group members, the researchers set up a video camera at a location where would not effect the process of the activity in order to record the whole activity of the Drama Therapy. After the classes were finished, the researchers would transcribe the conversation in the video.

### 2.2. Participants of the Study

#### (1) Researchers

There are two researchers in the study; one of them is a drama education scholar who used to study in America. He holds a Ph.D. degree, more than fifteen-year experiences in drama and teaching, which includes Drama/Drama Theory, Acting, Playwriting, Drama Education, Fictional Drama, Educational Drama/Play, and experiences in therapies, which includes psychology, game therapy, drama therapy, psychological drama, family therapy, and inner healing. In the study, he takes charge in choosing the theme of the study, discussing the literatures, designing the study, studying out strategies, supervising the group activities. The other researcher is a certificated teacher of special education and performance art in Kaohsiung. He holds experiences in special education for more than ten years and the experiences in therapies (psychology, game therapy, drama therapy, and psychological drama) for four years. His jobs in the study is to lead the groups, collect information, analyze, and write reports.

#### (2) Focus Group for the Study

Members in the focus group for the Drama Therapy are three ADHD students and five students with different disadvantages. Among the three ADHD students, two of them are male students who were approved by SESEAC to study in the resource-room class for the first year for the purpose of observation, and another one is a female student, who was diagnosed as seriously emotional impaired. Other group members include three female retarded students and two male and female learning impaired students. After the interviews with the tutors of the mixed and the regular classes and the teaching observation in the resource-room classes, the researchers found that these eight students' social abilities are seriously deficient. Also, in the original regular class, the students who have most problems are those three ADHD students. Thus, the study aimed at these three students and defined them as students who needed to improve the social adaptation ability most. Following are the three students' (S1/S2/S3) data and descriptions of social abilities:

Student 1(S1) A. Sex: male; B. Age: 10; C. Grade: three; D. Diagnosed condition: 1. Holding an ADHD diagnostic document issued by the doctor. 2. Passing the observation for studying in the resource-room class and will be filed to the emotional disorder for further inspection next year.; E. Description of the current social abilities:

Although the student's age is qualified for enrolling the third grade, according to his tutor's statement, his behaviors are very naughty, such as when he was playing soccer, he would throw the ball at peers' backs on purpose. When his peers turned around and tried to revenge, the student would laugh out loud and run away. When he was running, he would yell, "I am just taking a mickey!" After his peers ran for some distance and didn't feel like to rap to him, the student would stop running and yell, "Do you wanna play again?" The similar mischievous behaviors kept happening in all kinds of situations; his peers kept talking up to the tutor and made the tutor unbearable to his mischief, and every time the tutor scolded him and put him on his best behaviors, all the speech the tutor said seemed to come out from the student's the other ear.

Student 2(S2) A. Sex: male; B. Age: 11; C. Grade: three; D. Diagnosed condition: 1. Holding an ADHD diagnostic document issued by the doctor. 2. Passing the observation for studying in the resource-room class and will be filed to the emotional disorder for further inspection next year; E. Description of the current social abilities: Since the student was in the kindergarten, he has problems with adjustment; therefore, his mother sent him to the elementary school one year late. Probably because his age is older than his classmates, he is much taller, and his strength is much bigger than other peers, he often handled things precipitously, and whenever he came across something unsatisfied to him, he would solve matters with his fists. As a result, all of his peers kept a distance from him. When they were undergoing the group activities, none of them want to grouped with him. In last semester, when every one was off school and stepping down the stairs, the student even pushed a peer down the stair at the back. Fortunately, at that moment, a parent was going upstairs, so she caught the falling student immediately and saved the student.

Student 3(S3) A. Sex: female; B. Age: 10; C. Grade: three; D. Diagnosed condition: Holding an ADHD diagnostic document issued by the doctor. 2. Recognized as a "seriously emotional impaired" student by the SESEAC of Kaohsiung city; E. Description of the current social abilities: Since her parents realize their child's situation, the student applied through the resource-room class and was recognized as a "seriously emotional impaired" student" by the SESEAC .His cognition



is distorted; whenever her opinions are opposite to others, she would say something like, "I know you'll get back on me in the future." Sometimes, she would stand up or run about in class without heeding the teacher's order; also, sometimes the student would make some noise sounds like "de, de, de" which made her classmates annoyed. When the teacher tried to stop her, the student would laugh out loud and keep making the same noise, these behaviors had seriously disrupted the teaching activities. In addition, the student has the habits of peeling off her nails and skin, and when her fingers and skin start bleeding, she would keep doing it without knowing that she should stop peeling, and she would even dispose her litters such as used tissues in other people's drawers and backpacks, untidying the environment, and this might be one of the reasons why her peers don't want to be close to her.

### 3. Lesson Plan of the Drama Therapy

After the study's lesson plan of the Drama Therapy was designed and discussed by the researchers, the strategies are made shown as Table 1; the educational activities were carried out in the fifth and the sixth classes on every Tuesday in the second semester in 2005. The educational activities commenced on March 7th, 2006 to April 25th, 2006. Every meeting started from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm; thus, the duration of the class is ninety minutes in total, and the group activities of the Drama Therapy was carried out eight times in total.

Garfinkel explicated the studying documents and after the documents were collected, the researchers organized them and presented them with the re-interpreted version in order to let us understand the sub-meaning of the actions more. In the way of tracking back and re-interpreting the process, we will correct our prejudice for matters and understand what another person is trying to say, even this person can never express his or her thinking appropriately (Hong, 2005).

In accordance with the principle of the qualitative research methods, following are procedures of the data processing: 1. The video recordings of the group activities were organized and transcribed. 2. The interviews with the tutors were transcribed. 3. The learning sheets

Table1 Lesson Plan of the Drama Therapy Skills

Date	ActivityName	Activity Goals	Activity Contents
The 1st activity (March, 7th, 2005)	Drama Games	1. relax the body and mind 2. form rapports 3. developing group chemistry	Relax, explore the body with rhythms
The 2nd activity (March 14th, 2005)	Game of trust	1. have body contacts 2. explore the impetus of the group 3. develop trust between group members	Tornadoes (body contacts, exploring game) and Game of Trust
The 3rd activity (March 21st, 2005)	Dumb Show I.	1. form creativity of the body language 2. improve the ability of communication 3. develop the abilities of observation and giving feedback	Statues Game of the Mirror
The 4th activity (March 28th, 2005)	Mask I.	1. explore the inner world of the participants 2. apply the projective skill of drama	Mask making
The 5th activity (April 4th, 2005)	Mask I.	1. explore the inner world of the participants 2. apply the projective skill of drama	Mask making
The 5th activity (April 4th, 2005)	Mask II.	1. skills of colloquialism and body language 2. imagination and creativity	Performances with masks
The 6th activity (April 11th, 2005)	Role Play	1. enforce the communicational ability 2. improve the social skills 3. develop the creativity of roles	Imagination of roles Activity of role play
The 7th activity (April 18th, 2005)	Dumb Show II.	1. non-conversational skills 2. develop creativity 3. cultivating social skills	Guess Who I Am Perform the biggest
The 8th activity (April 25th, 2005)	Improvisational Acting	1. problem-solving abilities 2. social skills 3. enforce the social ability	problem that the group member has at the moment

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from every activity were organized. 4. The transcripts were studied, and parts which are irrelevant to the study were deleted. 5. The down-sized transcripts and the recycled learning sheets were studied carefully. 6. The researchers compared the statistics of the "social skill

assessments” which were procured before and after the educational activities. Some important topics were figured out by the researchers during the process of reading and note-taking, and those topics were used for classification afterwards. And then, the data that had been collected before and after the practice of the Drama Therapy were analyzed, classified, induced, and interpreted as the inference of the study.

### **The Results of Application of the Drama Therapy on ADHD Students' Social Abilities in Social Skill Assessments**

The researchers utilized the “Social Skill Assessments 3.x Software” which is edited by by Dr. Tu, Chun-Ren as the study tool. He coordinated with the students' tutors of the regular classes and collected the statistics before and after the practice of the Drama Therapy. Thanks to the input of the data and the usage of the software for the social skills assessment, Coie mode is based on the analysis of the experiences and advantages of the social status classificatory study, which was conducted by Coie and Dodge for many times: Coie mode also a social status classificatory method developed by these two people in 1988(Hung, 1991). This classificatory method divided the examinations into five groups which are: “Welcomed”, “Rejected”, “Ignored”, “Controversial”, and “Normal”. The researchers gained many annalistic statistics and all kinds of graphs. After the information of the study was analyzed, cross-references in terms of the before and after statistics of the three students are shown as Table 2, 3, & 4.

From the cross-references for the before and after statistics of the three students, it is learnt that even though S1 was defined as being rejected in the original regular class by Coie mode, the number of the peers who disliked the student dramatically decreased from twenty-two in the beginning of the semester to six. The rank of the social preference index also went up to 3 places. For S2, event though the student was defined as being rejected by Coie mode, the number of the peers who disliked the student dramatically decreased from twenty-one to three. The rank of the social preference index went up six places. Finally, for S3, the student's improvement was the most

Table 2 The Cross-reference for the Before and After Statistics of S1

Item	Before the Practice of the Drama Therapy	After the Practice of the Drama Therapy
Times of Being Welcomed	2	1
Times of Being Rejected	22	6
Times of Being Welcomed and Welcoming in Return	1	v
Times of Being Rejected and Rejecting in Return	3	1
Coie Mode	Being rejected	Being rejected
Social Preference Index	-4.16	-1.71
Rank of the Social Preference Index	31/32	28/32

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Table 3 The Cross-reference for the Before and After Statistics of S2

Item	Before the Practice of the Drama Therapy	After the Practice of the Drama Therapy
Times of Being Welcomed	0	1
Times of Being Rejected	21	3
Times of Being Welcomed and Welcoming in Return	0	1
Times of Being Rejected and Rejecting in Return	3	1
Coie Mode	Being rejected	Being rejected
Social Preference Index	-5.14	-1.41
Rank of the Social Preference Index	33/33	27/33

conspicuous. Apart from in the Coie mode the student's mode was changed from being rejected to normal, the number of the peers who disliked the student decreased from seven in the beginning of the semester to two, and one's rank of the social preference rank hiked nine places. And in the form of the cross-reference, the dramatic increases of those three ADHD students' social statuses could be

Table 4 The Cross-reference for the Before and After Statistics of S3

Item	Before the Practice of the Drama Therapy	After the Practice of the Drama Therapy
After the Practice of the Drama Therapy	2	2
Times of Being Rejected	7	2
Times of Being Welcomed and Welcoming in Return	2	1
Times of Being Rejected and Rejecting in Return	1	2
Coie Mode	Being rejected	Normal
Social Preference Index	-1.31	-0.36
Rank of the Social Preference Index Times of Being Rejected and Rejecting in Return	26/29	17/29

recognized obviously. For the students who didn't participate in the Drama Therapy group, their records of being welcomed, being rejected and social preference index are unchanged or worse.

## Viewpoints of Tutor and Parents in Application of the Drama Therapy on ADHD Students' Social Abilities

### 1. Viewpoints of the ADHD Students' Tutor for the Effect of the Drama Therapy Skills

Before the practice of the Drama Therapy, the researchers interviewed three regular-class tutors of the students on February 15th, 2006. Not only did the researchers elaborate on the content and the effect of the Drama Therapy group, but also did the researchers learn the impressions of the tutors regarding the social abilities of the students and account for the effect of the short-term goals of the Drama Therapy on solving the serious mal-adaptation problems of the students in class. In addition, after the Drama Therapy was finished, the researchers interviewed the tutors again on April 26th and tried

to understand the social abilities of the students during the practice of the Drama Therapy and the comments of the tutors in terms of the students' social skills.

Following are three cross-references for the before and after interviews with the tutors:

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Table 5 The Cross-reference for the Before and After Interviews with S1's Tutor

	Before the Practice of the Drama Therapy	After the Practice of the Drama Therapy
Location for Interview	Class O of the 3rd grade, the original classroom of the student	Class O of the 3rd grade, the original classroom of the student
Synopsis of the Interview	The student in this case is an introvert person who had never participated in any learning activities or games actively. Since the student often answered the wrong questions and be very forgettable, he was often isolated by the peers purposely. The student was also very shy; due to the isolation of the peers, he would often cling to the teacher and talk up to the teacher about other students' wrong doings without noticing the conditions of the class. The student's behaviors had exhausted the tutor and made the peers feel upset about him and as a result, leading him into the circumstances of being isolated.	Two weeks after the student participated in the Drama Therapy group, he would begin to invite his peers to play with him; his tutor also found that the student had started observing other people's facial expressions and listening to other people's feelings. Also, he was isolated by the peers less often, and of course he had become happier. The student would still talk up to the teachers; however, he had leant to talk to the teacher after the class or in the afternoon. In general, the student has become a inconspicuous and in-special student.

Table 6 The Cross-reference for the Before and After Interviews with S2's Tutor

	Before the Practice of the Drama Therapy	After the Practice of the Drama Therapy
Location for Interview	Class O of the 3rd grade, the original classroom of the student	Class O of the 3rd grade, the original classroom of the student
Synopsis of the Interview	The student of this case is a lazy student. He didn't do his homework or only did some parts often, and most of the time he didn't complete the tasks assigned by the tutor; thus, he got punished very often. The student is very active but he is humoursome, either. Sometimes, he would be over excited during the activities, but whenever he had some arguments with the peers, he would push other students hard. His weird behaviors stroked his classmates and his rude behaviors annoyed the tutor. In general, the student's learning progress is behind the group and he was in short of etiquette.	After the student participated in the Drama Therapy group, his status in the class became worse. Apart from not handing in his homework on time and not completing tasks assigned by the teacher, he was procrastinated and he didn't do his homework all the time; thus, his poor grades would impact the averaged grades of the class (a management strategy implemented) by the tutor. As a result, none of the classmates wanted to be grouped with him.

From the three cross-references, Table 5, 6, & 7, the tutors were aware of the changes of the students' social abilities in class; however, the parts describing the situations in reality were influenced by the subjective biases. For example, for S1, the teaching style of his tutor is demanding students to do what they should do well, and the demeanors of the students are unchangeable and destined. For the case of S2, his tutor emphasizes on students' academic performances and the honor of the class, she considers that any more education for the bad students is unnecessary; if possible, she would send the bad students out of her class, and the rest of the students are perfect ones. For S3, her tutor takes every matter in the class seriously; she would try to cultivate every student as possible as she can. For the people who

Table 7 The Cross-reference for the Before and After Interviews with S3's Tutor

	Before the Practice of the Drama Therapy	After the Practice of the Drama Therapy
Location for Interview	Class O of the 3rd grade, the original classroom of the student	Class O of the 3rd grade, the original classroom of the student
	The student is conspicuous among the class. His seat was messy and his drawer was filled with litters; whenever he bumped into something troublesome, he would become very hysteric and not talk about his feelings to others. Probably because he was unreasonable and talked about something incomprehensible often, he had few friends. Sometimes, when he became hysteric, he would scratch his own fingers even they started bleeding. Also, he would mumble to himself, as well; he would say something indicate that he want to revenge on somebody or say something threatening.	After he student participated in the Drama Therapy group, he was more capable of expressing his ideas and distinguishing his feelings. He would talk to his peers saying, "I don't like it." And he had never done this before. The student had leant to wait and control his temper. From the tutor's aspect, the student was more obedient and he had started making some friends. For the live management, there were lots of improvement, either. His tutor expressed her gratitude to the researchers again and again.

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offer sources, she also showed her gratitude with sincerity. When the above situations are compared with the statistics of the students' social tatuses, the researchers found that the fact that the Drama Therapy group could not change the attitudes of the tutors in the original regular classes had indeed influenced the students' social abilities at school. Nevertheless, three tutors of the students all agreed that the students' behaviors were getting better and they were being able to get along with other peers after participating in the Drama therapy group.

## 2. Viewpoints of the ADHD Students' Parents for the Effect of the Drama Therapy Skillss



On May 16th and 18th, the researchers interviewed the students' parents and hoped to gain some information about the changes of their social abilities. Following are questions for the parents in the interviews: 1. What's the child's favorite activity? 2. What do they think about the practice of the Drama Therapy in the resource-room class? 3. Is there any changes in terms of the child's social skills after the practice of the Drama Therapy? 4. Had the group activity improved the child's most serious problem?

Table 8 shows cross-references of the interviews with the parents.

From the interview with the parents, the researchers found that the Drama Therapy group, which originally focused on the students' problems at school only, has effected the members' family lives deeply, as well.

Table 8 Cross-reference of the Interviews with the Parents

	<b>S1's father (P1)</b>	<b>S2's father (P2)</b>	<b>S3's mother(P3)</b>
1. The favorite activity	Improvisational Performance with a Mask Acting Activity at School The student felt very happy about being able to speak his ideas and feelings during the activities.	Hide and Seek The student said that he can catch other people quickly when he played the catcher and he can distinguish the claps of the catcher well. He was very proud of his performance.	Improvisational Performance with a Mask Acting Activity at School The student felt relieved after talking out the problems between she and her peers.
2. Opinions for the practice of the Drama Therapy in the resource-room class	Very appropriate	Very appropriate Different from the regular class, the resource-room class is an environment for happy learning, and the teacher in the resource-room class is the only person who can do those activities.	Very appropriate, since comparing to the regular class, the resource-room class is an environment for happy learning.

3. Had the social skills of the student improved?	Yes. The tutor reports about his bad behaviors are less.	Yes. The tutor reports about his bad behaviors are less.	Yes. She used to complain about the school very often; it sounds like it's torturing to go to school. However, recently, she would say that she gets along with some classmate very well, and she had helped her classmates solve some problems. Going to school becomes a happy matter.
4. Had the group activity improved the child's most serious problem?	The parent worries that his child would become a trouble maker in the class. Now, his child's behaviors are more similar to other students'. His social skills had improved, and the number of the students who would bully or isolate him had decreased.	The parent cares about his child's social skills the most. From the speech of the student, it seems that he begins to have more friends and his peers are more willing to be grouped with him.	The parent cares about the conflicts of her child with other peers at school, since the tutor would then report to her. Now, the situation of her child at school had improved.

### The Progress of Application of the Drama Therapy on ADHD Students' Social Abilities

After the researchers organized the transcripts of the Drama Therapy group, feedback sheet for the activities, observing notes for the activity participancy, and the diary of the Drama Therapy's educational activities, they began to deduce the causes for the students' poor social abilities and listed the attitudes and the social behaviors that the students had improved. Following are descriptions of the three students' progresses:

## 1. Progress of S1

The causes for S1's poor social abilities might be: 1. Too many actions; especially in the occasions which demand order, and the student's body coordination is poor; thus, he has lots of eccentric gestures, which strike his classmates. 2. Talkative; he often talks too much especially in the occasions in which quietness is required. Since his family is rich, he likes to compare with others and show off and talk other students' bad behaviors up to the teacher. 3. Talk too loudly. 4. He has no idea how to interact with other people; for example, he would push people at the back and then laugh out loud saying, "Come to catch me!" 5. He talks up to the teacher often; for example, he would say, "Someone tails after me." And most of his words are made-up or imagined, which make people scandalize.

In the Drama Therapy activities, the researcher would guide the students to understand that in fact their behaviors are not that pleasant as they expect, and they get negative comments instead. After the masks were finished, in the sharing activity, S1 actually defined that the characteristics of his mask and himself are both hot-tempered, and he also realized that this kind of characteristic is not appreciated by the society. The leader of the group also found that as a matter of fact, some of the student's behaviors are caused by the pressure of his family. Therefore, the researcher used other Drama Therapy activities for guiding S1 to get to know his family and the source of the pressure.

After the last group activity was finished, S1 indeed had improved his basic manners for getting along with the peers and had assured that in fact, he really wanted to help other people and further get recognition. After the discussion of the researchers and the observing teachers, they decided to score S1 100 points in the observing notes for the activity participancy, and they all considered that S1 had reached many goals of the group such as dedicating to the group activities, caring about other group members' feelings and self-awareness. In the last feedback sheet, S1 wrote down the traits that he likes the least and set up the goals of improvement in the future.

## 2. Progress of S2

The causes for S1's poor social abilities might be: 1. Heavy-handed; for example, he would hit the things that the peers put on the desks, so the peers often regard him as a rude person. Also, he often solved conflicts with violence; for example, he had ever pushed a student down the stairs. 2. Active, speak loudly, and stumble. 3. He didn't know how to interact with other people. 4. He was isolated by the teacher, and this had caused other students in the class to isolate him, either. 5. Procrastinate on handing in homework.

The researchers consider S2 has some abnormal behaviors, which might be caused by the inappropriate pressure from the tutor. Therefore, the researcher utilized the opportunity of the S2's tutor's absence, trying to guide S2 to be clear about his own ideas and emotions.

In addition, during the researchers found that S2 lacks of confidence desperately; it seems that he considers himself unable to do anything, and he would make himself as invisible as possible among the group. In the first few activities, the leader kept encouraging S2 to participate in role playing in many different aspects. Especially in the competitive activities, since S2 is an ADHD student, he has no problem with cognition, so he can understand those orders and express his feelings. Therefore, after the second activity, S2 can gradually catch up S1 and S3, leaded groups with two or three group members independently. In the fourth activity, Hide and Seek, which is a game of trust, S2 showed his strong intension to express himself and this had escalated his confidence.

The leader utilized this opportunity and used other group activities to help S2 develop his potential, and in the meanwhile, guided other members to observe and recognize S2's characteristics and formed a benign circle. After the last activity was finished, S2's behaviors had changed a lot; he had become a polite and positive person.

### 3. Progress of S3

Form the beginning of the activity, S3 was always the source of the group impetus. She is talkative and she speaks loudly. The researcher also constructed a fictional stage in order to observe S3 and discuss why her social ability is poor, since she is smart and generous. The

causes for S1's poor social abilities might be: 1. Talk loudly; she mumbles often and she often says that she wants to revenge and threaten others. 2. She likes drawing other people's attention; she would scratch her nails until their bleed and this makes her classmates feel bad. 3. Her seat is messy and dirty and her hair and clothes are tousy as well. 4. She doesn't know how to interact with other people. 5. She doesn't take her textbooks home and doesn't bring her textbooks to school often.

The researchers consider that probably S3 has a pressure that is insensible to others in her live, so she would have so many abnormal behaviors. Therefore, in the improvisational performance with masks, S3 was the first one to be asked to perform her social atom in term of the school life so that the researcher can understand her inner side further. During her performance, the leader found that it seemed that there were many conflicts between S3 and her classmates. Since S3 is a ADHD student and has the trait of being over-reactive, the leader applied some skills to make this trait emerge and tried to let S3 relieve her emotions during the activity in order to pacify and balance her mind. Since only her mind is peaceful can they continue guiding her and changing her cognition. The researcher observed that S3's development of cognition is the best among the group, so they tried to guide her to feel that "When I am performing with a mask, I can indulge myself and do lots of things that I dare not to do in my regular live; however, after taking off the mask, I have to leave all the bad things to the mask and go back to my original live, turning into a new self" and then receive good recognition from others. During many activities regarding self-awareness, S3 explored the specialty of her characteristics and generated a positive expectation to the society.

Another things that is worthy of being recorded is that when she was filling up the last feedback sheet, she used nicknames for answering researchers' questions and those answers made them confused. Thus, the researchers asked her mother to come to school and explain what the answers mean. As S3's mother saw the feedback sheet, she busted out of laughter and explained that the nickname of A-choan belongs to her father. Until now, her grandmother still calls her father A-choan. S3 loves her father the most, since her father would watch cartoons that her mother doesn't like with her; therefore, she

considers her father is standing by her. Nevertheless, when she makes some mistakes, her father would scold or beat her without giving her any chances to give explanations which makes S3 dislikes her father as well. However, through feedback sheets and interviews with parents, the researchers had gained further understandings to S3.

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#### **4. Documents of Interviews with Students**

The students of the research study in the resource-room class; thus, after the Drama Therapy was completed, they went back to study in the resource-room class. Every two weeks, the researchers would use the lessons of the resource-room class to interview them without the tutors of the regular classes and their peers. The first one to be interviewed was S1. During the interview, the researchers and the student discussed about the changes of his school life happily.

S1 is very content with his conditions with other peers; he thinks that he indeed is improving his social skills. And then is S2; with his shy smile, he confidently answered all the questions asked by the researchers. Following are the conversations:

S2 indeed had become more confident. In the beginning of the therapy, when he talked about his situations in the class, he would be glassy-eyed and dare not to express his opinions; however, after the Drama Therapy was finished, S2 had turned into another person. He is not afraid of express his own opinions anymore, even the person he is talking to entertain the opposite opinions. In addition to actively dedicate to the group, S2 also thinks that he deserves to get better treatments from the peers. Finally is S3; when the researchers interviewed her, she answered all the questions with a casual attitude. It seemed that she thought that this was a very casual activity, so she intended to make the researchers laugh with her. Following is the content of the interview:

#### **5. Document of the Interviews with the Peers**

The researchers interviewed three classmates who sat next to the students most closely, hoping that they can gain more perspectives from the peers. For the classifying number, C1, C2, and C3 stand for

the classmates of the three students and the numbers following C1, C2, and C3 stand for the order of the student who was interviewed. For example, C1-1 means S1's classmate who accepted the interview first, and C1-2 means the second classmate who were interviewed, and so and forth. In the process of the interviews, the researchers found that the classmates who sat next to the students most closely indeed had interacted with the students most often, and they all had observed the changes of the students after they participated in the Drama Therapy group. Below is a graph indicating whether the nine classmates like the students or not and their reason

Table 9 Cross-reference of the Classmates' Preference

	S1		S2		S3	
	Like or not	Reason	Like or not	Reason	Like or not	Reason
Classmate 1.	N	mischievous	Y	amicable	N	talk loudly
Classmate 2.	N	naughty	N	naughty	N	talk loudly
Classmate 3.	Y	funny	Y	funny	Y	has many friends

Deducing in accordance with the results of the interviews, the three students' social abilities indeed had improved dramatically. However, because the interviewed classmates sit next to the students, so they have more opportunities to interact with each other; as a result, the classmates expressed some negative opinions about the students. For example, Trait of S3 is that she talks loudly, and this problem is still bothering the classmates who sit next to her. Thus, it seems that S3 still has to learn how to express her emotions and the manner of being with others; also, she has to pay attention to her movements and the reactions of her classmates sitting next to her so that she can be a better girl. The collected information indicates that through the implement of the Drama Therapy, the three students had assured of themselves and they are able to actively develop themselves with the goal of gaining recognition of the society.

## Conclusion

For the study, the researchers adopted the Drama Therapy Skills. Focusing on the poor social abilities of the ADHD students studying in the resource-room class, they designed and conducted eight classes. The conclusion of the study is divided into the following points:

**1. Drama Therapy Skills had produced a positive result for the curriculum of the resource-room class; therefore, Drama Therapy is worthy of being promoted.**

**2. The social abilities of the students indeed had improved.**

(1) The result of the social skills assessment presented positive statistics.

The classified statistics of the social skills assessment that the study adopted can be used for deducing that the students in the study had changed their negative images such as being isolated and disliked in their original regular classes.

(2) The documents of the interviews indicate that the social abilities of the students have improved.

During the interviews with the tutors, it was learned that all of the tutors had recognized that during the study, the students' relationships with other peers was getting better, and in the interviews with the students, it was learned that the students had begun to have more confidence in themselves and they thought that their school lives had become happier; finally, in the interviews with the parents, it was learned that all of the parents agreed that during this semester, their children's social skills had had a huge progress, and during the conversation with the parents, they kept nodding their heads and showing their gratitude to the researchers for what they had done for their children.

(3) Observing notes recognize the huge progress of the students' social abilities.

The researchers invited a teacher of the special education class, H, to join the group as an observer. Whenever the group activity was finished, the researchers would discuss the conditions of the three



students with the observer and fill in a form called “observing notes for the activity participancy” together. According to the total scores of every note, the students were improving gradually; after the eight group lessons, the students finally have appropriate behaviors in groups and reach the goals that were set in the beginning of the study for their poor social abilities.

(4) According to the teaching diary, the students’ social abilities had improved drastically.

Whenever the group activities were finished, the researchers would write the group teaching diary right away, keeping down the goals that the group had reached and the special situations that they had observed. According to the observation diary children can exploring more issues such as confidence and self-image through the Drama Therapy activities. After the students inspected their previous experiences and the current problems, they had become more confident and begun to develop more positive self-images.

Since ADHD students have better performing abilities, they surely would become key people in the Drama Therapy group as well as the impetus generators in the group. Comparing to other students, probably because their EQ is normal and they are very creative, if the teaching content inspires them, they would participate in the activities enthusiastically. These characteristics had shown that Drama Therapy group is really a suitable therapy for ADHD students.

### **3. Drama Therapy Skills had derived recognition from parents and teachers.**

Not only had all of the members in the Drama Therapy group been asked for the willingness to attend the group, but also had the students’ tutors in the regular classes and their parents. After consideration and coordination, they finally formed an eight-people Drama Therapy group.

The most important accordance of the resource-room class is the “individualized teaching plan”, which is studied out by teachers and parents in every semester. (Every student has an individualized teaching plan, which conforms to the spirit of individualized education.) The teaching plan originally involves the field of “social adaptation”; thus, the researchers only had to deliver their ideas and ideologies for

the Drama Therapy to the experts, administrators, and parents in the beginning of the semester, then they can involve their ideas into their teaching plans. During the conference, which was held in the beginning of the semester, the researchers reiterated the contents and goals of the group to parents and tutors and answered some questions asked by the parents. After getting consentence from parents and tutors, parents and tutors were asked to leave their signatures on the agenda for authentication. Therefore, before the practice of the Drama Therapy, the researchers had gotten acceptance and agreement regarding the establishment, commencement, progress, and end of the Drama Therapy group from the tutors and the parents, and since then, parents and tutors started to concern about the learning progress, changes, and development of the students.

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#### **4. ADHD students will have different reactions to different Drama Therapy Skills and different circumstances.**

According to the total scores in the “observing notes for the activity participancy”, which were filled out by the researchers and the observer whenever the group activities were finished, it was learned that every dramatic experience had effected the students positively in many different ways, such as inspiring the students to cooperate with others and escalating the students’ confidence. Among those activities, “improvisational acting” can inspire the students’ inner emotions the most. This activity created a dramatic distance of beauty by letting the students act with masks in front of backgrounds conforming to the plots. Natural extension of the plots made students become empathetic and projective and reminded them of some personal experiences and subconscious. After they relieved their feelings, the researchers used imitation and role play for observing them and figuring out some plausible solutions. Another by-product of the activity is the cognition for the social valuation after experiencing some problems regarding all sorts of relationships with the society and emergent accidents. Since the society values each individual differently, the solutions to every accident should conform to the occasions and situations as well. And since the researchers could not make the students learn and realize this idea all of a sudden, they utilized every group gathering and

different Drama Therapy group activities for guiding them to construct the basic personal recognition gradually so that they can tackle with the complicated and capricious real lives.

Apart from different activities with dramatic skills, different stage backgrounds in the same activity can also conjure up different reactions of the participants. For example, in the activity of "improvisational acting", when the plot of the play takes place at school, the characters met at school often would appear in the play, and then the dialogue of the play would conjure up some discussions regarding tutors and peers. When we writing the feedback sheets, it was learned that the group members would discuss about when their tutors and peers would treat nicely and when they would treat them badly. As they were playing the domestic life, the play would conjure up discussions about the educational attitudes of the parents and comparison of each other's parents.

## **5. Applications of the Drama Therapy are diverse.**

According to the observation during the study, the impetus of the ADHD students who accepted the Drama Therapy can be divided into the following six parts:

- (1) Enhance the social abilities of the ADHD students (the theme of the study)
- (2) Escalate the group solidarity (for the resource-room class in the study)
- (3) Improve ADHD students' abilities of communication (oral and written abilities had improved)
- (4) Enhance confidence and centripetal force of the ADHD students' parents to the school
- (5) Change the family construction of the group members (for exam(ple, increase the topics for communication and opportunities for interaction between parents and their kids)
- (6). Improve the body language and physical strength of ADHD students

When tutoring ADHD students, the researchers adopted the Drama Therapy skill as a mode of the therapy. For one thing, this therapy is more economical in terms of time and manpower. For another is that

teaching methods like exploring bodies with rhythms and many other methods can be expressed orally; each student can opt his or her favorite way for communicating with the group. Such a teaching activity can make the students with different obstacles in the resource-room class relieve themselves at different points during the activity and get energy for solving problems together.

Although there were some problems in terms of time, money, students' abilities during the execution, Drama Therapy is very suitable for being adopted in the teaching plan of the resource-room class, and the characteristic of the progress of the therapy is very efficient for helping students with poor social abilities. Drama Therapy skill is a efficient way for guiding the special students; it is still uncommonly adopted by the elementary schools; thus, it is expected that the study can share some more applications of the Drama Therapy on special education and other fields.

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