

1)

Puppet Play: Dramatic Benefits for Young Performers

By Rebecca McMahon Giles and Karyn Wellhousen Tunks

http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=745

Helen, an experienced early childhood educator, is now teaching the children of the students from early in her career. She has seen many trends come and go and has enthusiastically adapted her teaching philosophy to embrace activities that best meet her students' needs. Through the years, her classroom has evolved as new technologies and advancements were introduced. One of the changes made however, is being strongly reconsidered. As Helen made space for new computers in her classroom, she eliminated the puppet theatre and related materials. Now, with many English Language Learners in her class, Helen wants to rearrange the space and resurrect the puppet center as a valuable means to building oral language skills.

Children naturally invent stories, create settings, develop characters, and utilize expressive dialogue as they play. An observant bystander can easily see the similarities between children "playing" and performing "a play." The parallels that exist between children's pretend play and drama provide the basis for extensive language learning in the early childhood classroom. Reenacting familiar stories or situations promotes early literacy skills as children recreate stories and provide a context for interacting with adults and peers (Soundy, 1993).

Puppets add a new and exciting element to children's impromptu or planned performances. Through puppets, children feel empowered to speak and behave on behalf of the character they are portraying. Children can pick up a puppet, begin speaking in a different voice, and quickly adopt the personality of the character they are portraying. (Often this personality is very different from his or her own). Children can also take part in performances in which the teacher acts as narrator, telling the story while pausing for actions and dialogue to be performed by the child's puppet. The opportunities for fun and learning through puppets are unlimited.

2)

Puppets in the classroom

By Cara Zelas

<https://www.worldoflittledude.com/blog/puppets-in-the-classroom/>

6 December 2017

Puppets can be an engaging and useful way to help students develop emotionally and grow their language and communication skills. However, as parents and teachers, using puppets may not be something we are familiar or comfortable with doing. Hopefully these tips will help you incorporate puppets into your teaching routine!

What does research say about puppets?

Puppets allow children to engage in imaginative play that differs from dolls and other figures. Children have the opportunity to bring puppets to life in a unique way. While using puppets, children are able to project their own emotions onto the puppet.

Research suggests that children view puppets more like a peer than an adult, so their interactions with puppets match that feeling. This makes children more likely to explain their ideas and answers to a puppet than to the adult operating the puppet. Just as children are more likely to listen to or talk to a peer, that same feeling applies to puppets.

Research shows that using puppets in education has many benefits especially with language skills. Children can practice their oral speaking skills by telling a story to a puppet or explaining words or expressions. If the puppet is “confused” and doesn’t understand something, the child can explain and show the puppet what he has learned. A 2015 study investigated the learning impact of puppets in a kindergarten classroom. Their findings showed a tremendous impact of puppet use on a child’s education. The puppet helped to motivate students and involve them in the learning process, it created an emotional relationship with students, and added a playful mood to the learning environment. Additionally, the puppet enabled teachers to elaborate more on the topic they were covering, have more direct conversation with students, and maintain positive behavior in the classroom (Ronit, 2015).

3)

Teaching Reading with Puppets by Ruth Bennett

How indigenous languages are being more effectively taught through puppet theater
http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/ILAC/ILAC_16.pdf

In Canada and the United States today approximately 210 indigenous languages are still spoken out of the over 300 spoken before the arrival of Columbus (Krauss, 1998). However, all is not well with these remaining indigenous languages. For a language to stay alive, somebody has to be learning it. Recent research indicates that only 35 of the remaining languages in the United States and Canada are spoken by young people (Krauss, 1998).

Will these remaining languages survive? Today, children are no longer being punished routinely for speaking their language in schools. Many schools with indigenous populations, particularly on Indian Reserves and Reservations, have indigenous language programs. But having a program does not guarantee that children are learning their languages. Factors external to a language program can play a considerable role. One researcher has stated that today English language movies, television, and videotapes are doing what a century of washing mouths out with soap in boarding schools could not accomplish (Reyhner, 2000). In addition to distractions from media, the family’s attitude is a factor. For many decades, it was a rare family that was in a position to do anything to retain traditional language or culture. The explanation for this is related to a need for sheer survival or to a belief that, given the long history of decline, nothing can be done stop the inevitable.

The fact is that the use of most indigenous languages in the United States has eroded and needs restoration. Effective instruction is needed in language programs to deal with a variety of issues. In this paper I offer an effective teaching method and illustrate it with a reading lesson based on native oral traditions. I take into account a range of recent research on children’s language and literacy learning.

Many tribal language programs have found that the story, that is, the oral tradition of the tribe, connects children’s reading to their lives. These tribes have a variety of ways of including content from the culture of the tribal community in their reading instruction (McCarty & Watahomigie, 1998). In California, at a recent Advocates for California Language Survival conference, led by Leanne Hinton and Nancy Steele, presentations on tribal reading programs by California tribes connected reading programs to their Native oral tradition using a variety of activities, including storybooks,

accompanying videos, live dramas, puppet plays, and games (Language is Life, 4th Annual Conference, March 17-19, 2000). Although puppet making is not traditional for California tribes, puppets go hand-in-hand with traditional stories. Puppet performances harness group energy for the reading task by requiring a team of performers, a narrator, and readers. Puppet plays facilitate children's literacy development because reading traditional stories can get learners close to the rhythms of their oral language. To insure this eventuality, I retained the original spoken Hupa language in writing the puppet show for the lesson described in this paper. I changed Hupa forms in the text only when necessary for coherence.

3a) **Interesting article on puppetry & language in the public realm, not the classroom:**

How the Czech language was maintained historically through the art of puppetry:

<https://www.history-a2z.com/the-real-reason-why-czechs-dont-speak-german/>

4)

"I Teach Better with the Puppet" - Use of Puppet as a Mediating Tool in Kindergarten Education – an Evaluation by David Tzuriel & Ronit Remer in American

Journal of Educational Research January 2015

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277552119_I_Teach_Better_with_the_Puppet_-_Use_of_Puppet_as_a_Mediating_Tool_in_Kindergarten_Education_-_an_Evaluation)

[277552119 I Teach Better with the Puppet -](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277552119_I_Teach_Better_with_the_Puppet_-_Use_of_Puppet_as_a_Mediating_Tool_in_Kindergarten_Education_-_an_Evaluation)

[Use of Puppet as a Mediating Tool in Kindergarten Education - an Evaluation](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277552119_I_Teach_Better_with_the_Puppet_-_Use_of_Puppet_as_a_Mediating_Tool_in_Kindergarten_Education_-_an_Evaluation)

Abstract:

A focus of interest among researchers and educators is to find teaching methods adjusted to developmental aspects in early childhood. Teaching that generates significant learning and creates motivation, interest and enjoyment in young children is a real challenge in contemporary education. The effectiveness of using puppets in early childhood has been demonstrated in clinical areas as having the potential to create communication, increase involvement and change attitudes. However, there is limited research literature relating to the use of puppets as a teaching method, and therefore a methodology based on measurement and evaluation is lacking in this field. This article presents partial results of a broader study that examined the influence of an intervention program integrating a puppet as a mediation tool on learning motivation, and enhancing literacy achievements in regular and special kindergarten children. One of the aims of this research was to evaluate, from mediators' perspectives, the use of puppets as a mediation tool for kindergarten children. This evaluation was carried out by means of personal interviews with each of the mediators at the end of the intervention program. From the interviews it became apparent that the mediators considered the puppets to be an effective tool for young children's developmental aspects, by means of which they could relate to cognitive, emotional, and social realms. Mediation using puppets facilitated learning processes, while using puppets, children's cooperation level increased, as did interest, attention span and their involvement in learning interaction was evident. The puppets contributed to the mediators' self-confidence and to their sense of professionalism. During the puppets mediation, the mediators felt that they were teaching in a clear manner, and they felt they were being interesting and interactive. By using puppets, they succeeded in creating a close personal connection with the children. These findings have an applicable contribution in presenting the

effectiveness of the puppet as a mediation tool for use in kindergarten and with special needs children.

5)

The Incorporation of Puppetry into Reading Instruction

Katherine Overholt

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http://www.takey.com/Thesis_270.pdf (pg. 7-8 below)

According to Mariane Hedegaard (1990), when children begin attending school the classroom teacher presents them with certain learning tasks that cater to their ZPD's, but also teach the children skills they need to progress to a more formal learning style. In other words, it is the job of the classroom teacher to help the child learn by catering to their ZPD, but also to teach them how to survive and learn in a traditional and formal school learning environment.

Accompanying the concept of ZPD, Vygotsky believed that play creates the optimal ZPD. He acknowledged that play was a transitional stage where students could take normal everyday objects and apply new meanings to them and convey ideas and understandings about the world using those objects (Vygotsky, 1978). He also pointed out how through play children are in fact demonstrating a great deal of self control and through that exertion are focusing inadvertently on the learning and meaning making they are attempting to convey through their play. In addition, he stated that "In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior: in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 102). This quote suggests that children are capable of reaching beyond the typical expectations of their age group when they are taking part in play activities.

Many researchers have experimented with the educational implications of play. Paley, for example, wrote numerous books encouraging the use of play as an instructional technique. In her book *A Child's Work: The Importance of Fantasy Play* (2005) Paley, who for years had engaged in a very sophisticated level of teacher research and self study, described the play driven learning environment of a Kindergarten classroom. Following along with Vygotsky's theory, she observed the benefits of play, and how through the use of play based activities, young children were able to exceed their normal learning capabilities and gain new knowledge. She presented the argument that since she attended school in the fifties that the use of play has slowly disappeared, and is now virtually non-existent in schools.

6)

How Playing With Puppets Turns New Learners into Future CEOs

By Alessandra Rizzotti <https://www.good.is/contributors/alessandra-rizzotti>

<https://www.good.is/articles/puppets-play-and-learning-how-to-read>

Puppetry drives students out of their comfort zones and into leadership.

#ProjectLiteracy

According to [Eric Jensen's Teaching with the Brain in Mind](#), when brain signals are passed from one side to the other quickly, or when the left and right sides of bodies work simultaneously, the brain is able to function more efficiently, and the stronger the

brain's connections become—thereby improving literacy, movement coordination, processing data, and communication skills. It is this reason Puppet School is starting to bring speech pathology to autism students in their puppet curriculum for behavior analysis nonprofit [Leaf Wing Center](#).

“Being a puppeteer exercises different parts of the brain. You use your hands, you work on speech, you become more aware of the space you inhabit. You become more aware of who you are,” Ferreira says.

7)

Sharon Peck on literacy & puppetry has no digital content to be found. I am still waiting on a book edited by Matthew Bernier and Judith O’Hare. The book features one chapter by Sharon Peck where she writes about puppetry & literacy skills.



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31946

Attenuated Attention to People but Not Humanoid Puppet Figures in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Poster Presentation

Thursday, May 2, 2019: 11:30 AM-1:30 PM

Room: 710 (Palais des congrès de Montréal)

H. Neiderman, N. Powell, E. Yhang, K. Joseph, K. Villarreal, C. Nutor, C. D. Gershman, Q. Wang, K. K. Powell, S. Fontenelle, S. Macari, K. Chawarska and T. Tsang, *Child Study Center, Yale University School of Medicine, New Haven, CT*

Background: Previous eye-tracking studies have found attenuated attention to faces in young children with ASD, relative to typically-developing (TD) and developmentally delayed (DD) groups (Klin et al., 2009; Chawarska et al., 2012; Pierce et al., 2018). While social attention varies by activity type (Chawarska et al. 2012) and social load (1 vs. multiple humans) (Moore et al., 2018; Speer et al., 2007), less is known about how simpler, humanoid figures (e.g., puppets) may influence viewing patterns in ASD. Research using artificial intelligence in interventions has found that simplified, predictable humanoid figures may facilitate learning in ASD (Scassellati et al., 2018). A direct examination of perception of humanoid vs veridical human social figures in ASD can critically inform such intervention practices.

Objectives: We investigated attention to the faces of a puppet and person engaged in a conversation and its association with clinical features. If puppet and person are perceived as equivalent social agents, then children with ASD may exhibit attenuated looking to both figures compared to TD and DD groups. If the puppet is less socially ostensive than the person, then between-group differences may be present for the person but not puppet.

Methods: 81 children with ASD (N = 29, mean age=46.92 months), TD (N = 27, mean age=39.83 months) and DD (N = 25, mean age= 51.29 months) participated in a free-viewing eye-tracking paradigm consisting of a video depicting a puppet and an actress engaged in conversation (Figure 1). Percent of time spent viewing the social scene (%valid), percent of valid viewing time looking at the puppet or person (%Face), and a puppet-person ratio

(PP_ratio) (e.g., relative time spent viewing puppet vs person) were calculated. Participants were administered the ADOS-2 and a cognitive test (e.g., Mullen or DAS).

Results: Children in the ASD group had lower %Valid than TD or DD groups ($F_{2,77}=8.26, p=.001, \eta^2=.17$; ASDvsTD: $p<.001$; ASDvsDD: $p=.004$). %Face-Puppet did not vary by diagnosis ($F_{2,77}=0.44, p=.65, \eta^2=.01$), but %Face-Person was attenuated in ASD ($F_{2,77}=3.84, p=.026, \eta^2=.09$; ASDvsTD: $p=.01$; ASDvsDD: $p=.05$; Figure 2). Using the puppet-person ratio, greater relative attention to puppet vs person in the ASD group was associated with greater social impairment ($r=.422, p=.032$). Across all participants, greater attention to the person was associated with lower ASD symptom severity ($r=-.374, p=.001$), and better verbal ($r=.409, p<.001$) and nonverbal cognitive skills ($r=.376, p<.001$). Attention to the puppet was not significantly associated with any clinical features.

Conclusions: Consistent with prior work, children with ASD exhibited attenuated attention to human-speaker face, but their attention to the puppet-speaker face was comparable to DD and TD groups suggesting that simpler, perceptually salient humanoid form may serve as an enhancer of social attention in children with ASD. This was particularly true of children with greater severity of autism symptoms who spent proportionally more time monitoring the puppet speaker's face than the human speaker's face. This suggests that puppet-like agents may provide a particularly effective way of engaging attention of children with more severe symptoms, though whether this enhancement facilitates social learning remains to be

determined.



Figure 1: Example still from video stimuli

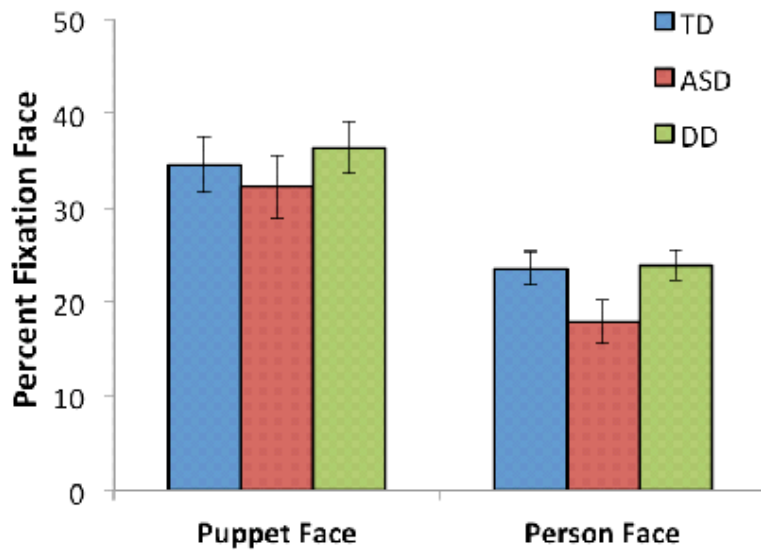


Figure 2: Percent fixation to the puppet is comparable across diagnostic groups; however children with ASD look less at the person's face than TD and DD peers.