

Introduction of puppet-play

Puppetry is an old, traditional art, which is still active in almost every culture, used in many different contexts, for spiritual, cultural and educational teaching. As puppetry is primarily a visual art, it can communicate to people who are not literate or who do not understand spoken language and it has been used in this way for thousands of years.

Puppetry is a form of theatre or performance which involves the manipulation of puppets. It is very ancient, and is believed to have originated 3000. Puppetry takes many forms but they all share the process of animating inanimate performing objects. Puppetry is used in almost all human societies both as an entertainment – in performance – and ceremonially in rituals and celebrations such as carnivals. Most puppetry involves storytelling.

The impact of puppetry depends on the process of transformation of puppets, which has much in common with magic and with play. Puppetry is a very ancient art form, thought to have originated about 3000 years ago. Puppets have been used since the earliest times to animate and communicate the ideas and needs of human societies. Some historians claim that they pre-date actors in theatre. There is evidence that they were used in Egypt in those days. When string-operated figures of wood were manipulated to perform the action of kneading bread. Wire controlled, articulated puppets made of clay and ivory have also been found in Egyptian tombs. "Walking statues" being used in Ancient Egypt religious dramas.

Puppets are an aspect of our history and everyday lives. In their different forms they appeal to both old and young alike, represent different customs and traditions and are valuable educational tools. Puppets are both entertaining and captivating. Young children can believe and relate to them; they can enter and explore the fascinating inventive world that puppets create.

The importance of puppets

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Learning through play is fundamental to our young children's education, helping them to develop the necessary skills in life. Puppets can stimulate children's imagination, encourage creative play and discovery and are a wonderful interactive way to introduce narrative to even the most reluctant reader. They can be a powerful way of bringing story time to life; puppets can provide a focus for role play, encouraging the child's imagination and involvement in

activities and can play a fundamental part in the recitation of stories and verse. In addition, hand puppets with workable mouths and tongues are an excellent motivational resource to inspire the teaching of phonics within literacy.

According to Jean Piaget theory, puppet play helps young children develop creative and cognitive skills by forcing them to use their imaginations. They make up the roles, the rules, the situations and the solutions. It is through imaginative play that children come to understand the differences between fantasy and reality. The real world becomes more real to children who have opportunities to pretend.

Any puppet can encourage the quietest of children to start talking. Puppets can break down barriers and provide an effective means to initiate communication. The young child trusts the puppet and doesn't feel threatened by it, making it a perfect neutral medium through which they can discuss sensitive issues. The child can express thoughts, fears and feelings through the puppet that they might otherwise find difficult to voice to an adult.

Puppets can assist young children with special educational needs. They can motivate and support children with difficulties in communication and interaction. They can help to develop their social and motor skills, and can meet the visual, tactile and emotional needs of the individual child. Large human puppets with glove hands and fingers can be used in conjunction with the different varieties of signing, adding a further dimension in helping children with both hearing difficulties and learning disabilities.

All puppets come to life as characters. They can portray different personalities and various traits and they cross all cultures. Puppets can share joy or sadness; they can be naughty or good, cheeky or shy; and when a child is engaged by a puppet they can learn lessons without even realising.

Puppets provide an essential link between learning and play which makes them wonderful teaching tools for at home, preschool, classroom and in the wider community.

A puppet is a representational object manipulated by a puppeteer; they are often figures representing human or animal forms. Puppet movements are controlled through hand movements, sticks or strings. The most popular type of puppets for young children are stick puppets and hand, finger puppets rather than the more complicated one.

Safety Precaution and Disadvantage of Puppets

Teaching by way of negative example is superbly handled by hand-puppets because it can overstress. The hand-puppets can say things that might seem offensive if spoken by a person. A hostile or hateful hand-puppet can more easily be made wrong, or be made to change his or her mind. Should be noted that since some children with autism often have trouble regulating their emotions, getting too excited can be a problem in addition to becoming uncontrollably upset. Sometimes children can get so wound up after viewing hand-puppets that it's hard for them to come down. Other times they may have a hard time transitioning from joking back to doing work. So transitioning should be practiced as well.

On the other hand, it could backfire. Young children may see the hand-puppet and react negatively towards them. Seeing the hand-puppet may distract the young children or cause them to not pay attention to what the hand-puppet is saying because they are too busy focusing on the hand-puppet's movements and the way the hand-puppet looks. There are an incredible range of hand-puppets available and these make great toys with which to entertain children and to help them learn about the world.

For young children the bright colours and textures of hand-puppets are great in stimulating attention span and eye tracking skills as well as being a fantastic form of interactive learning and entertainment which in itself helps to stimulate development. This is also the case for some of children who would be entertained by the hand-puppets actions as well as their interesting appearance.

Child sized hand-puppets are also widely available although the majority of these tend to be suitable for the children above age of 4 to 6. Puppets designed for hands can be a fantastic means of stimulating the children's confidence and imagination as well as providing them with an instant friend and means through which is to express their emotions. Many hand-puppet specialists provide hand-puppet sets which are great for creating stories and for general play. Some also offer special sets that encompass adult and child sized hand-puppets so that preschool teachers, parents and young children can easily play together.

When choosing from the huge selection of hand-puppets available must ensure that any aim to give to children as a toy are designed specifically for children who use and meet the necessary safety requirements. Preschool teachers and parents should be especially careful of hand-puppets with small parts and details such as beading as well as string puppets as these could pose a important hazard to children's safety if left unsupervised.

As long as preschool teachers and parents take the necessary safety precautions, hand-puppets can provide a fantastic channel through which to teach children about the world and to give them the confidence to explore it themselves.