

Empowering Young Language Learners

Drama as a method

in the English as a second language grade school classroom

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Abstract

In this action research project I was both researcher and teacher. It was conducted under the umbrella of the *Mestringsprogram*, a program linking the local culture school and partner grade schools in order to give students who struggle with personal or classroom issues a chance to express themselves in new ways and interact with their classmates using the arts. This research project examines how drama as a method empowers young English as a second language learners in three Norwegian grade school classrooms; 64 students in grades 3, 4, and 5 participated. Each class worked with a combination of different drama techniques including using body language, puppets, improvisation and games, role-play as well as the use of scripts and published texts over a period of four to eight weeks between January, 2014 and April, 2014. Students' feelings of empowerment, motivation, security and self-confidence, relationships to classmates, and interest in English as a subject were evaluated through two questionnaires, one completed immediately after the program and one a year later; 52 of the students completed the questionnaires. Observations made by both the classroom teachers and myself supplemented this data. Results were conclusive, supporting the initial hypothesis that drama as a method does empower, and thus motivate, young English language learners.

Keywords:

English as a second language, student empowerment, drama as a method, drama in the English as a second language classroom, ESL, drama based instruction, creative drama, drama in education, arts education

Sammendrag

I dette aksjonsforskningsprosjektet var jeg både forsker og lærer. Det ble gjennomført under paraplyen *Mestringsprogramet*. Gjennom dette programmet samarbeider barneskolene med den lokale kulturskolen for å gi elever som sliter personlig eller i klasseromssituasjoner, en mulighet til å uttrykke seg på nye måter og samhandle med sine klassekamerater ved hjelp av kunst. Dette forskningsprosjektet undersøker hvordan drama som metode utdanner unge elever med engelsk som andrespråk i tre norske grunnskoleklasser. 64 elever i tredje, fjerde og femte klasse deltok. Hver klasse jobbet med en kombinasjon av ulike dramaaktiviteter gjennom en periode på fire til åtte uker fra januar til april 2014. Disse aktivitetene inkluderte kroppsspråk, dukker, improvisasjon og spill, rollespill og bruk av manus og publiserte tekster. Elevenes følelser av mestring, motivasjon, trygghet og selvtillit, relasjoner til klassekamerater og interessen for engelsk som fag, ble evaluert gjennom to spørreskjemaer. Ett ble gjennomført umiddelbart etter programmet, og det andre gjennomført ett år senere. 52 av studentene fullførte spørreskjemaene. Observasjoner gjort av både klassenes lærere og meg selv supplerte disse dataene. Resultatene var entydige og støtter den opprinnelige hypotesen om at drama som metode styrker, og dermed motiverer, unge engelskspråklige elever.

Nøkkelord:

Norsk som andrespråk, mestring med elever, drama som metode, drama i engelsk som andrespråk, ESL, dramabasert undervisning, kreativdrama, drama som en del av undervisning, kunst som en del av undervisning

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Learning is a journey that has no end, and is full of adventure that enriches our motivation to learn, our confidence in our own abilities and perceptions, and deepens the encounters we have with those around us. Both this master's journey and this action research project have given me insights that I hope will enrich my teaching, and therefore empower those I teach.

To all I say thank you and tusen takk.

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1.0: Introduction

*“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember,
involve me and I learn.”*

(Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790)

Children take their play seriously, and when the idea of play is applied to language learning it can involve “the patterning of linguistic form, the creation of alternative realities, and the social use of both of these...” (Cook, 2000, p. 5). In this research project I set out to examine ***how drama as a method empowers English language learners¹ in three Norwegian grade school classrooms***. I wanted to examine how exposure to various drama techniques creates opportunities for language learners to play in and with language, allowing their linguistic competence to improve both through the language they receive as well as that which they produce. This thesis also explores how creating alternative realities through the use of scripts, role-playing, improvisation, drama games, and body language affect language learners’ feelings of empowerment in regards to their own motivation, feelings of security and self-confidence, and in the social environment of the classroom.

1.1 Background

I have worked with arts in education as a teaching artist², integrating drama as a method into grade school classroom curriculum, for over 30 years in the United States with mostly native English speakers. Upon moving to Norway in 2007, I wondered if the arts in education approach I had used in the United States could also be applied to young non-native English speakers there. I began using drama as a method in Norway in 2008 in single classroom visits with students in grades 1-10, and with grade school and middle school teachers. When the opportunity came in January 2014 to work more extensively with individual classes using drama as a method with English language learners, I recognized the potential for conducting research.

¹ In Norway, English is called the other language (andrespråk) instead of a foreign language (fremmedspråk) or English as a second language. Therefore in this thesis I often use the more general term *English language learners*.

² The term *arts in education* includes all artistic disciplines including drama, music, creative writing, dance, and the visual arts when incorporated into an educational setting through a partnership with an artist or cultural organization. A *teaching artist* is “a professional visual, performing, or literary artist ... an educator who brings the creative process into the classroom and the community” (Butler, n.d.).

In this study it is important to remember that I was not attempting to evaluate how much English the students were learning nor how well they were learning it. Instead, I wanted to see if, after using drama as a method in their English language classroom they felt empowered and if so, how these experiences might affect attitudes towards their future learning. I also wanted to see which drama techniques were the most effective with each grade level (third, fourth, and fifth) so that these techniques could be used appropriately in future language classroom work. As is typical with most action research projects, answering some questions has led to more questions and the potential for additional research. This is discussed in section 5.0.

1.1.1 The participants

One third grade class, one fourth grade class, and one fifth grade class from two different grade schools in a small town in a rural part of Norway participated in this project³. Although a total of 64 students participated in the different sessions (18 in third grade, 27 in fourth grade, and 19 in fifth grade), only 52 of those students (84%) completed the primary questionnaire (Q1)⁴. We worked together in 1 hr or 1 hr 30 min sessions, once or twice a week, over a period of two to eight weeks from February to April 2014. The fifth grade class worked towards a final performance, the fourth grade class used general drama games and techniques as well as picture book texts, and the third grade class used puppet and role-playing activities with their existing third grade curriculum as well as a picture book text.

In my roles as both project developer and teacher as researcher, I worked closely with the classroom teachers, adapting my material as needed throughout the process. Classroom visits were made possible through a program called *the Mestringsprogram*, a partnership between the local culture school and area grade schools, and both the teachers and the principal at the Culture School⁵ participated in creating the questionnaires, the primary data collection tool for this research project.

³ Barneskole (elementary, primary, or grade school) in Norway includes grades 1-7; children begin grade 1 if they turn 6 in that calendar year, so realistically can be 5 when they start if they have a late birthday. Therefore children in this research project were ages 7-9 years (third grade), 8-10 years (fourth grade), and 9-11 years (fifth grade).

⁴ I only received questionnaires from students with a signed parental consent form (see Appendix E); 18/18 in third grade, 18/27 in fourth grade, and 16/19 in fifth grade.

⁵ Culture schools offer children the opportunity to participate in music, dance, drama, creative writing and the visual arts, and can be found in almost every community in Norway.

1.1.2 Defining *mestring* and the *Mestringsprogram*

Since I will refer to the *Mestringsprogram* throughout this thesis, it is important to define what the Norwegian word **mestring** means, not a simple task as there is no single definition in Norwegian, nor a translation into English, that is universal. I have therefore selected the definitions that best apply to the use of *mestring* when defining the *Mestringsprogram*; mastery, motivation, and empowerment.

If you show **mastery**, you have the “knowledge and skill that allows you to do, use or understand something very well” (Mastery, n.d.). If you are **motivated**, you have a conscious desire to improve (Krashen, 2011) or are moved to do something (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Ryan & Deci (2000) approach the idea of intrinsic, or basic, motivation from an empowerment perspective as well, defining it as a desire to engage in an activity for no other reason than the task itself, getting lost in what Csikszentmihalyi (1990) would call ‘flow’, or a sense of altered time when nothing but the activity at hand seems to matter (Krashen, 2011).

Empowerment, the best overall definition of *mestring* in the context of this research project, promotes self-actualization (Empower, n.d.) and challenges assumptions about the way things are and can be (Czuba, & Page, 1999). It also provides the security needed to change one’s approach to something, and is characterized by collaboration, sharing, and support (Kreisberg, 1992). Considering these definitions, motivation as it appears in the questionnaires implies *mestring*, which is defined in this thesis as empowerment.

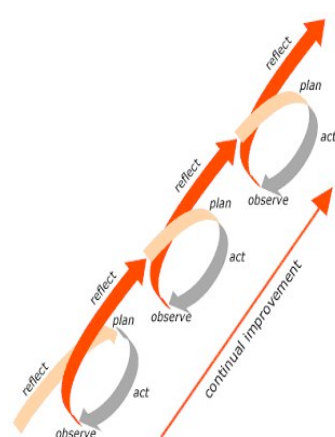
The *Mestringsprogram* is a partnership between a Norwegian culture school and area schools. It strives to boost students’ feelings of empowerment in regards to their own academic skills, the subject matter, and in the social environment of the classroom by strengthening their psychological health through broader exposure to artistic means of expression (Grendahl, 2010). Using drama as a method in an English as a second language classroom is thus congruent with the goals of the *Mestringsprogram* as it too fosters self-awareness (and awareness of others), self-esteem and a sense of confidence, as well as removing fears or barriers that hinder learning (Boudreault, 2010; Schewe, 2013) and in so doing actively engaging learners in the process (McCaslin, 2004) through the arts.

1.1.3 My experience with drama as a method

With over 30 years of experience using drama in grade school classrooms in the United States as a method to enrich subject curriculum and empower individual creativity, I was familiar with the approach. In the six years prior to this research project, I had also used drama as a method in many English language classrooms in Norway as a visiting teaching artist, but only in single classroom sessions or conducting teacher workshops. When the opportunity to work with young English language learners in three individual grade school classes over a period of time, exploring how drama as a method might contribute to their feelings of empowerment, I embraced it.

1.2 Action research

Action research was the most logical approach for this research project as I was attempting to find answers to my own questions in order to improve my teaching, as well as empower the language learners with whom I was working. Stenhouse (1975) refers to the teacher as researcher, the term I have chosen to use to describe my role in this thesis. “The outstanding characteristics of the extended professional”, he says, “is a capacity for autonomous professional self-development through systematic self-study, through the study of the work of other teachers and through the testing of ideas by classroom research procedures” (p. 144). In order to improve my own work with young English language learners, I needed to exam my work and students’ responses to different drama techniques in more measureable and systematic ways.



Elliot (1991) talks about how action research shapes practice in an action reflection cycle, as illustrated in Figure 1.1⁶. Teachers first **reflect** on a question, situation or issue before making a **plan** of action, taking **action** by executing that plan, **observing** what takes place, and then **reflecting** on how to incorporate the results. Often observations and reflection lead to additional action and the cycle continues as one strives for continual improvement.

Figure 1.1. The Action Reflection Cycle.

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This action reflection cycle can be applied to this research project. After experiencing drama as a method with young native English speakers in the United States, I believed it could be equally as effective in empowering non-native English speakers in Norway (*reflect*). This led to the development of my research topic, how drama as a method empowers young English language learners. Under the umbrella of the *Mestringsprogram* I worked with local teachers to identify how I could use drama as a method in their English language classrooms and from there chose the drama techniques and research tools I would use (*plan*).

Data was collected using questionnaires completed by participating students as well as my observations made in the role of teacher as researcher and teacher comments and observations provided throughout the project and in a brief discussion upon completion (*act/observe*). Upon conclusion of the research project I again *reflected* on what had happened, identifying new situations and formulating new questions that required attention; and so the action reflection cycle continues, one action leading to another. “It is not enough that teachers’ work should be studied,” writes Stenhouse (1975, p. 143), “they need to study it themselves.” It was my hope that as a result of this research project I would gain a clearer picture of the drama techniques that were the most effective as well as discover if drama as a method did indeed empower young Norwegian language learners.

1.3 Conclusion to the chapter

Manfred Schewe (2013) believes that the new approach to teaching and learning, as well as the ultimate goal of foreign language didactics, is an emphasis on forms of aesthetic expression that enhance the desire to play with all the interactive parts of language including words, sentences, and expressions. Playing with language is a natural part of using drama as a method.

This research project is not about how many vocabulary words a student masters nor what score he or she receives on a grammar test as the result of using drama as a method in the classroom; it is not about language *learning*. Instead, it is about the language *learner*. It is about language acquisition and the things that get in the way and hold a learner back from being receptive to the language learning process itself; it is about getting rid of the affective filters that hinder moving forward. Drama as a method is one way to turn learning fear into fascination, resistance into reception, and a passive learner into an active one.

2.0: Theory Chapter

“Word without meaning is an empty sound.”

(Vygotsky, 1997, p. 212)

Language is a complex communication system comprised of different combinations of variables that uniquely affect each individual second language learner in order that words might have meaning (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). This chapter first presents a picture of what influences language learning including Krashen’s (2004) thoughts on acquisition and the potential mental barriers that can stand in the way, before discussing childrens’ developmental stages and Vygotsky’s (1997) ideas on the social aspect of learning. The chapter then continues with an exploration of how drama as a method embraces these diverse variables by allowing students to play in and within language, acquiring knowledge through a process that engages them and thus uniquely affecting each individual. After defining drama as a method and briefly examining its historical roots in education, the language learning requirements in Norwegian schools are presented.

2.1 Theories about how we learn languages

Are we born with all the internal mechanisms we need to learn language innately? Noam Chomsky would say yes. He believed that we have a language acquisition device or LAD that determines how any language is learned and what form it may take (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982; Mitchell & Myles, 2004). In other words, we come hardwired for language learning with individual internal databases capable of processing any language we feed into it. If we process the input, we develop the language; all the tools we need to learn are already a part of us.

Stephen Krashen expanded on Chomsky’s ideas, applying them to second language learning. He believed (Krashen, 2004) that with quality exposure to and use of language, the linguistic parts of language learning come naturally through *acquisition*. We acquire language by understanding messages, or by obtaining comprehensible input and if we understand what we are being exposed to, if we can process and make sense of it, we will naturally absorb (or *acquire*) more of that target language (Krashen, 2003 in Krashen, 2008).

2.1.1 The relationship between subconscious (acquisition) and conscious learning⁷

Krashen (2008) identifies acquisition as the subconscious process of absorbing a language (input), mirroring the way a child learns their first language through meaningful interactions in which the speaker's primary goal is communication. As it is subconscious, it happens without the learner being aware of it, and the knowledge gained uploads into the brain automatically. He goes on to say that the *conscious* process of learning contributes to knowing about language and is the result of classroom experiences that tend to focus on the form and the linguistic rules of the target language (Mitchell & Myer, 2004, p.45), or becoming aware of the logistics on how a language is put together.

Although Krashen, like Chomsky, acknowledges there is a place for this conscious part of formal language learning, including grammar teaching, they both feel this is not essential in order to gain language proficiency. Instead, Krashen believes through comprehensible input⁸ the formal aspect will happen naturally. "Acquired competence plays a much larger role in language use than learned competence does," states Krashen (2014) feeling that we don't acquire language when we produce it, only when we understand it. In the use of drama as a method in the English as a second language classroom, opportunities are provided in which students live in the language, observing others and experimenting with it themselves, as a child does when absorbed in their first language; in both cases the language surrounds them.

2.1.2 The developmental stages of learning

Developmental psychologists have studied the behaviors and learning patterns of children at different stages in their lives, providing a general overview of how children learn. This is useful in considering the effectiveness of the drama techniques identified in this research project as well as shedding light as to why the 5 to 11-year-olds targeted in this project responded the way they did.

Jean Piaget believed that children go through four different fixed stages of development, each affecting how they see the world (Schunk, 2004; Shaffer, 2005; Siegler, DeLoache, Eisenberg, & Saffran, 2014). His third stage of child development, *the period of concrete*

⁷ The words learning and acquisition are often used interchangeably, so the distinctions subconscious and unconscious language development are often used instead (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982, p. 11).

⁸ Comprehensible input is discussed in greater detail in section 2.1.3 of this chapter.

*operations*⁹ (ages 7 to 12 years/grade school in Norway), identifies the stage when children are beginning to think more logically about tangible objects and experiences (Shaffer, 2005). Children in this stage gravitate towards things that are factual, observable and concrete; abstract ideas are a bit more difficult to grasp.

This implies that children also learn best by interacting with their environment, both mentally and physically (Siegler et al, 2014, p. 143). In a language learning setting this means providing activities in which students know what is expected of them. Drama techniques that allow for creativity within a structure, such as role-playing within a storyline, are appropriate. Other developmental psychologists refer to this period as the *concrete operational stage*, defining it as a time when a child begins to see things from multiple perspectives and so recognizes that there are other views than their own (Bourne & Ekstrand, 1982). This is also when children begin to apply their own experiences. Language becomes more social and, along with basic skills acquisition, accelerates dramatically (Schunk, 2004, p. 449). In terms of using drama as a method, this means that social interactions with classmates as well as opportunities to express opinions and ideas are valuable techniques.

In Erik Erikson's *eight stages of psychosocial development*, children in the 6-11 age range (first through sixth grade in Norway) are in what he calls the *latency stage*. During this time children are concerned with whether or not they can master the necessary skills to adapt (Bourne & Ekstrand, 1982, p. 308). They need opportunities to see that others can have different opinions, while still being surrounded by things that are familiar and comfortable. In referring back to the definition of *mestring* (1.1.2), we see that to master something one needs to feel that it is possible, to be motivated one is moved to do something, and when empowered one feels secure enough to change one's approach. In using drama as a method, the boundaries between what is correct and what is incorrect are often blurry, which takes the focus away from making mistakes. This in turn has the potential to increase feelings of *mestring*, or that mastering something is possible, as one feels motivated and empowered. A setting in which drama techniques are used also allows students to interact with each other in new ways within the comfortable and familiar confines of their classroom.

⁹ The concrete operational stage follows the sensorimotor stage (birth to age 2) and the preoperational stage (ages 2 to 7 years).

2.1.3 The Comprehension Input Hypothesis

Many different factors come into play when learning a language including the first language, the learner's personality and their age (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). Taking these factors into account Krashen (2008) believes that in order to acquire language the learner needs to understand it, or receive comprehensible input. This input goes through *the subconscious filter* (acquisition influenced by social factors, motivation, or affective filters like anger or anxiety) directly to *the monitor* (autocorrect feature of our brain) or via *the subconscious organizer* (responsible for the organization of learner's language system) that puts the ideas together and spits them out (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). As everything a learner is exposed to can have an affect on their language learning, it is important to find a way to ease the learner through these processes. Drama as a method can help learners find their way forward, and in so doing can contribute to increased or more rapid output.

2.1.3.1 Subconscious filters

In looking at language learning, Krashen also proposes the *affective filter hypothesis*, which although vague (Mitchell & Myles, 2004) acknowledges the *mental barriers* that may hinder the learner from fully receiving comprehensible input (Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982). Georgi Lazanov, best known for his alternative learning method, the Silent Way, believed that people set up subconscious protective barriers in language learning, just as they do in life, to prevent unwanted intrusions and pain (in Grabe, 1979, p. 24). In a learning situation, these barriers could be of one's own construction, a result of interactions with others, or lie within the material itself.

In a school setting mistakes, often viewed as marks of failure or insufficient knowledge instead of a natural part of the learning process (Fox, 2013), can cause mental barriers.

“Learners who doubt their capabilities to learn may not properly attend to the task or may work halfheartedly on it, which retards learning” (Schunk, 2004, p. 19). Looking again at the stages of child development (2.1.2), a child in grade school who feels he or she can't master a task or feels that he or she will never measure up, will fail to progress; feelings of success or inadequacy are formed especially during this critical stage.

Many different things can stand in the way of language absorption including mental barriers that hold a one back from moving forward in language learning. One such barrier might be *learned laziness*, a giving up or lack of trying because the learner feels they will fail anyway (Engberg, Hansen, Welker, & Thomas, 1972), or *learned helplessness*, a state in which a learner feels an important outcome is beyond their control and that nothing they do can change that (Seligman, 1992). *Fear*, and the *anxiety* caused when being required to produce language in front of others, can also cause the learner to refuse to use language because they don't want to make mistakes and look foolish (Fox, 2013).

Because drama as a method does not always require language production, allowing learners to use alternative ways to participate and communicate, some of these mental barriers may lessen. Learners can listen to instructions, observe others and follow their lead, or learn new vocabulary through acting out its meaning. "Comprehensible input-based methods encourage speaking but do not force it," reminds Krashen (1982, p.7).

One misconception often made in language learning is that a silent student is not learning. It is true that an anxious student may refuse to speak (Fox, 2013) but learners may also be silently absorbed in the language that surrounds them (Cook, 2000, p.12). They may not appear to be participating because they are not producing language, but they are engaging with it nonetheless (Widdowson 1984 in Cook, 2000; Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). Silent absorption also does not mean passivity, nor that a student is uninvolved in the learning process; it is important to remember that a student listening silently can be involved in communication and interaction, even if their responses are not externalized (Widdowson, 1978 in Cook, p. 31; Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982).

When what is being learned is both interesting and compelling, so much so that the learner loses themselves in the experience, they are absorbed whether it be silent or not (Krashen, 2011). Bathing a learner in language leads to this absorption and it is important to remember it is not just how much language a learner *produces*, but also about how much language he or she *absorbs* (Jungwirth, 2002-2003). In a drama setting music, role-playing activities, and drama games give these silent students another outlet for expression, a way to use their own voice without words. How we express ourselves with body language can also convey part of a message.

James Asher's method, Total Physical Response (TPR) is a good example of how we can communicate with our entire being, creating language-body conversations which enable students to interact with the language (Asher, n.d.). Based extensive study of infants who learn by playing with sound before producing understandable text, observing physical motion in order to interpret meaning, this method helps internalize language more quickly¹⁰. "TPR works because it is an excellent way of providing students with comprehensible input" (Krashen, 1998, p.83). Students not only hear language, but they see it in use, and in so doing are in an even better position to absorb it.

2.1.3.2 A closer look at the monitor in the language learning process

The conscious monitor, responsible for correcting mistakes (Krashen, 1982) warrants further discussion here as it can influence how much language a learner produces. For those who struggle it could be that they fear producing incorrect language so may not use the language at all. Those who are sure they will fail, may have already given up, and those who believe that nothing they do will make a difference may no longer even try. In each case the conscious monitor can be what is controlling the language production of these learners.

With young language learners, especially those who feel insecure, their monitor may keep them from producing language because they fear making mistakes (Fox, 2013). Drama as a method, especially games and improvisation techniques which stress participation through body language and language production made up of sounds, may nudge language learners forward in their production of spoken English, helping them achieve more of a balance. As Johnstone (Fox, 2013) points out, removing fear of mistakes may be the first step in producing language in front of others.

Krashen distinguishes between what he calls 'over-users' and 'under-users' of the monitor (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, pp. 46-47). 'Over-users' are those who will only produce perfect speech, so their monitor is active nearly all the time and their speech may sound more forced and less natural. 'Under-users' don't think as much about errors and their vocabulary can be limited; they are more concerned with producing language quickly enough to communicate a message. 'Optimal-users' balance the need for error correction with the desire to communicate, and that where the ideal learner will find him or herself.

¹⁰ For a comprehensible overview of TPR, go to Dr. James Asher's website, www.tpr-world.com.

2.2 The social side of language learning

Psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1997) felt the way for students to learn was for them to be active participants in their own learning process, often through group work and peer collaboration. “As students model for and observe each other, they not only teach skills but also experience higher self-efficacy for learning (Schunk, 1987, in Schunk, 2004, p. 291). He believed students must encounter others and participate in the environment in which they learn; they must be social learners. Students’ own ideas and points of view should be embraced as they become participants, helping to create rich relevant experiences for each other in which they are challenged to discover the answers for themselves (Schunk, 2004, pp. 316, 318).

Out of this thinking came Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (ZPD), which embraced the idea there was a difference between what students could do on their own and what they could do with the help of others, what they know and what they can learn from someone who knows a little more (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 210). As Harriet Finlay-Johnson (1912) observed, children have a wonderful faculty for teaching other children and learning from them. Using drama as a method in a second language classroom provides these young students the opportunity to share with and learn from each other without labeling it as such, the modeling just happens.

Vygotsky (1997) also believed that “the child’s intellectual growth is contingent on his mastering the social means of thought, that is language” (p. 94). In other words, in order for children to grow academically, they need to master their use of language, and this is done in a social environment. One way of accomplishing this is through communicative language teaching, a method that embraces this social dimension of learning by focusing on the learning process, communication, and embracing the contributions each individual brings to the experience (Nunan, 1991). John Dewey advocated learning by doing over one hundred years ago (Neiman & Levin, 2000) and his ideas still apply today.

In order to create a communicative classroom, Richards (2008) advocates the following: keep lessons short, have variety, integrate grammar into the lessons through exposure and engagement, and create opportunities for students to use what they have learned. By using drama as a method, all of these things occur. Learners are both involved in and directing the process so it naturally has variety, providing engagement and opportunities for language in use. “As students carry out communicative tasks they engage in the process of negotiation of

meaning” (Richards, 2008, p. 37). In a drama game, for example, activities are short and varied and, when appropriate, grammar is introduced in the moment. Students with less language proficiency learn by watching others’ responses, interpreting visual clues to connect words with meaning. Communication is emphasized as students play with ways of conveying meaning through production of the target language reinforced by body language.

Play is also an important word to consider in this process. Up until the age of 7 or 8 years (first through third grade in Norway) “play dominates the child’s thought to such an extent that it is very hard for the child to distinguish deliberate intention from fantasy that the child believes to be the truth” (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 18). In other words, the world of a child’s imagination is as real to them as the reality they are living in. It makes sense to merge reality and fantasy in a learning setting, and drama as a method does just that in a process that is active and collaborative, allowing participants to control, shape, and organize experiences (O’Neill, 1995, p. 1).

If we think again about language acquisition, considering it “an interaction between the child’s innate mental structure and the language environment” (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982, p. 8), then creating a learning environment that is engaging is important. If as Vygotsky (1997, p. xxxv) says the earliest speech of a child is social, then creating a social setting which is conducive to an active learning process is also essential in empowering young language learners. Both a communicative language teaching approach, a shared negotiation of meaning, and a drama approach advocate for and support a language-learning environment that supports these social interactions.

Krashen (2014) says that the ability to speak is the result of language acquisition, not the cause. For acquisition to happen, we must pay attention, and for this to happen, the input must be interesting to us (Krashen, 2014). Drama as a method creates interesting input naturally as it is directed *by* and *for* the learners and not *at* them. This helps them become more receptive to language acquisition, which is an often unexpected and sometimes even unrecognized by-product of compelling comprehensible input (Krashen, 2011).

2.3 Drama as a method for empowering English language learners

“The best teachers are those who lead their pupils into activities which, based upon the fundamental instincts of child nature, are to test and examine everything and to attempt all feats.”

(Cyr in the introduction to Finlay-Johnson, 1912)

One of the earliest published references for drama as a part of classroom education is Harriet Finlay-Johnson’s book, *The Dramatic Method of Teaching* (1912). Here she recognized the essential importance of validating children’s ideas and allowing them to be makers of their own creativity, even in the classroom, by tapping into their fundamental instincts. She understood that if discouraged or uninterested, children would feel repressed and learning would be hindered (p. vi), and therefore she encouraged the use of activities that empowered learners to attempt all feats.

Finlay-Johnson believed in natural and spontaneous conversation, and use of the whole body in telling a story or making a play. For her it was about igniting the innate desire to know, to test and examine everything that might come into contact with the learner. Finlay-Johnson’s belief that empowering the ‘desire to know’ in young language learners through their own creativity is crucial is at the core of this research project and the reason I chose to use drama as a method. But what is drama as a method and how does it fit into an educational setting? In this section it is first defined and then set into the historical context of drama in education.

2.3.1 Defining drama as a method

Finding a single term to describe the drama techniques I used in this project proved to be challenging as drama used in education has been defined in so many different ways with slightly different nuances. *Drama-based instruction* (DBI Network, 2015) is “an umbrella term used to describe a collection of drama techniques (including interactive games, improvisation, and role-playing) designed to be used in conjunction with classroom curriculum”. *Creative dramatics*, a term coined in the United States in the 1920s by Winifred Ward, is a child-centered drama method that encourages self-expression as children develop original plays based on their own ideas, emotions and imaginations (Yi, 2003). It focuses on the process over the product.

Educational drama can be defined as “a creative process that allows children to explore the full potential of drama as a learning experience. It is improvisational in nature and has as its

aim a quest for knowledge that involves every aspect of the child's personality: spiritual, moral, emotional, intellectual and physical" (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1999, p.2). Educational drama, therefore, can also be considered process oriented¹¹ and approaches learning from a holistic perspective. *Process drama* is even more concerned with the process, and not the performance product, as the teacher and students work together to create an imaginary dramatic world in which they explore a problem, situation, or theme for their own benefit and not for a separate audience (O'Neill, 1995).

There are many other ways drama has been used in educational settings, but this short list demonstrates the variety of terms that can be applied. As the drama techniques in this research project encompassed elements of all of these definitions, I have chosen to use the general term *drama as a method* to describe the use of drama in the English as a second language classroom. Process oriented, collaborative, and flexible, this approach empowers students to use a variety of drama techniques to explore language learning in creative, interactive, and physical ways.

2.3.2 How early purveyors of drama in education laid the foundation for the use of drama as a method for empowering English language learners

The idea of using drama as a method in educational settings is not new, although it is still not actively integrated into all classrooms. The following brief and selective history provides the foundation upon which this research study was built, and supports the use of drama as a method for empowering young English language learners in Norwegian grade school classrooms.

As early as 1912 Harriet Finlay-Johnson advocated active learning; "a child learns, and retains what he is learning, better by seeing and doing things" (p. 7). She goes on to comment that though it is assumed that young children benefit from this type of learning, it is appropriate for every age. Alice Minnie Herts, founder of the Children's Educational Theatre in 1903, recognized that "the dramatic instinct is the strongest instinct in the life of a child..." (Herts, 1911) and questioned why more attention wasn't paid to it despite others such as John

¹¹ According to Kao & O'Neill (1998), in Britain process drama, *educational drama*, and *drama in education* are almost synonymous terms.

Dewey (Leddy, 2015) who similarly advocated for the use of the arts in education and utilizing a child's natural spontaneity.

Herts provided experiences with acting, puppetry, storytelling, and Shakespeare as well as basic social services for immigrant and disadvantaged children through her settlement house work. She discovered that when these children had the opportunity to act out their behavior or social issues on stage, their real lives became more manageable. "The child doesn't know that he is being taught; he has no idea that anyone is trying to 'help' him. He is blissfully ignorant... what he knows is that he is enjoying himself. What is happening is that he is being educated" (Herts, 1911). Nellie McCaslin (New York University, 2005), Brian Way, and Peter Slade (Carkin, 2007) built on the ideas of Finlay-Johnson and Herts, advocating for the integration of drama in the schools in both the United States and Great Britain. Many who supported the use of drama in education also emphasized the importance of focus on the *process* over the finished product. Both creative dramatics, the brainchild of Winifred Ward (Yi, 2003) and process drama (O'Neill, 1995) utilize the ideas and creativity of their young participants in developing new scripts and stories.

Drama or theater games create a place where full participation, communication, and transformation can take place (Schwartz, 1996-2012). Viola Spolin (1999), originator of activities that became the basis for improvisational theater, believed that through tapping into that spontaneity we have the opportunity to become who we really are. "If the environment permits it, anyone can learn whatever he chooses to learn, and if the individual permits it, the environment will teach him everything it has to teach" (Spolin, n.d.)¹². In other words, in the safe environment created by using drama as a method, in an environment in which everyone is given permission to explore and test ideas without the stigma of failure, there is bound to be growth.

Keith Johnstone (Fox, 2013), Spolin's contemporary and also a leader in the field of improvisation and founder of many improvisation forms including Theatresports™, believes that getting rid of the fear of being looked at, of losing status in front of other people or of having the wrong answers, is where to start. He points out that school teaches students that

¹² This quote is taken from the home page of this website (www.spolin.com) dedicated to the improvisational work of Viola Spolin and is a great teacher resource.

they are not supposed to fail and so they learn to punish themselves. “But you can’t learn anything without failing” (Fox, 2013). He believes that people should be cheered when they make a mistake because that means they are learning something.

Drama games used in an English as a second language classroom often have no ‘correct’ way of being, and all ideas are explored. For example, there is a drama game where students are challenged to walk over different surfaces like mud, ice, or hot sand. Each can do so in whichever way they choose, and at first often copy each other. The teacher then adds details such as ‘it is windy’, ‘you have no coat’, or ‘you are hungry’. The participants then incorporate these instructions, given in English, into their movement; as they become more comfortable with the activity, they are encouraged to think for themselves and not copy others¹³.

When learners are active in and with language, when they are, as Krashen says (2011), exposed to comprehensible input that is engaging and relevant, they are more receptive to absorbing the language. Harriet Finlay-Johnson’s (1912) words from over a century ago still ring true; “a child learns, and retains what he is learning, better by seeing and doing things” (p. 7). If teachers use physical movement or body language to clarify the meaning of their words, some new language learners may gain understanding through that physical demonstration of meaning, while those with a bit more language proficiency can add more words to their own actions.

2.3.3 The Norwegian English subject curriculum

In 1997 with the document L97, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (Utdanningsdirektoratet) made English teaching mandatory from first grade upwards. In 2010, the Ministry established additional curriculum guidelines to be applied to teaching practices in grade school, middle school and high school, emphasizing the importance of having English as a second language in a Norwegian-speaking society.

According to the objectives outlined on the first page of this English subject curriculum (2010), learning English is essential because:

¹³ A list of many of the drama games used in this research study, including *ways of moving*, can be found in Appendix F.

- ▶ It contributes insights into the way we live and how others live.
- ▶ It provides understanding, both so we are understood ourselves and so that we understand others.
- ▶ It is necessary for communication in a variety of different situations.
- ▶ It is increasingly used in education and working life, both in Norway and abroad.

The Ministry considers English to be a tool, a way of “gaining knowledge and personal insight... promoting greater interaction, understanding, and respect... contributing to the all-around personal development ... that fosters democratic commitment” (2010, the objectives of the subject, paragraphs 1-5).

The definition of empowerment presented in 1.1.2 is tightly woven into the Norwegian Ministry’s objectives for English language learning. As defined in the Introduction (1.0) empowerment helps learners gain both the knowledge and skills that allows them to understand and improve because they feel they are able to do so. In turn, they are better able to communicate. Considering again Vygotsky’s (1997) belief that learning happens best in interactions with others, it is understandable that the Norwegian government believes a workable comprehension of English to be essential in interacting with the larger global community. A command of English allows learning from outside the confines of this small country, opening doors to additional opportunities as well as providing access to resources, both educational and economic, that Norwegian alone cannot provide.

Empowerment in 1.1.2 was also defined as the capability of challenging assumptions, both about the way things are and the way things can be. According to this definition, therefore, empowerment means believing in the possibilities and contributions of each individual. Drama as a method encourages this belief in self, as all participants are encouraged to use the skills they have. When young language learners believe in their own capabilities and capacity to learn they are on the way to gaining the self-confidence and feeling of security that enables them to become the democratic citizens the Ministry desires. Many students, especially as they get older, don’t always understand why learning English is important. In this document, the Norwegian Ministry is attempting to make that clear.

The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2010), has also defined specific competence aims after:

- ▶ Second grade (Year 2/age 7 years)
- ▶ Fourth grade (Year 4/age 9 years)
- ▶ Seventh grade (Year 7/age 12 year)
- ▶ Tenth grade (Year 10/age 15 years), the last year of middle school
- ▶ High school

I have taken into account both these competence aims and the aforementioned English language learning objectives in how I approached the use of drama as a method in this research project. In the following discussion all references made to the competence aims, both direct quotes and indirect summaries, come from this 2010 document. I have only provided a sample of the three main categories; (a) language learning, (b) communication, and (c) culture, society and literature. A more in-depth discussion regarding how they can be applied specifically to the use of drama as a method as presented in this thesis is explored in section 4.6.

English language exposure and abilities vary from student to student, teacher to teacher, classroom to classroom, and school to school in Norway, and not all students have reached the proficiency goals desired after second grade. Therefore it was relevant to consider these competency aims as well when I worked with the third grade class.

After second grade (Year 2/age 7 years) students are expected to have “proficiency in oral communication with practical-aesthetic forms of expression, and to understand basic instructions in English”. In addition they should “listen to and understand words and expressions in English nursery rhymes, word games, songs, fairy tales and stories” as well as “understand expressions and sentence patterns related to local surroundings and their own interests”. Use of texts from various English-speaking countries fulfills many goals listed for culture, society and literature.

After fourth grade (Year 4/age 9 years) students should also be able to “use simple reading and writing strategies” and “express their own thoughts and opinions in the encounter with English-language literature and child culture”. In addition, *after seventh grade* (Year 7/age 12 years) students should “use basic patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection, and different types of sentences in communication”.

2.4 Conclusion to the chapter

Understanding how languages are learned brings with it an awareness of the many factors that come into play in language learning, including the social impact of one learner teaching another. Developmental stages and affective filters can influence how language is absorbed, and the process of using drama as a method can provide techniques that may make young learners more receptive to the language learning process. Interesting and engaging input can accelerate language absorption by utilizing the natural creativity, participatory nature, and instinctual play so essential in developing empowered learners.

As Chomsky (Brown-Martin, 2014) advocates, teaching ought to be “inspiring students *to discover* on their own, *to challenge* if they don’t agree, to look for *alternatives* if they think there are better ones. If teaching is approached in this way, students may not remember what they studied but they will have discovered how to learn”.

Chapter 3: Methods Chapter

*“It is not enough that a teacher’s work is examined,
it is also essential for them to examine themselves.”*

Lawrence Stenhouse (1975)

3.0 Introduction

Action research is a design that allows for teachers to be researchers, investigating something they question or want to change in their own classrooms (Waters-Adams, 2006). In this research project I wanted to see if, after using drama as a method, young English language learners felt more empowered, and if so how it affected their motivation, feelings of security and self-confidence, as well as the social dynamics of the classroom.

I also wanted to find out which drama techniques proved most effective, and if there was a difference between what worked best with each age group. I chose to use student questionnaires as the source of my primary research data, one given upon completion of each class project and one a year later to two of the three classes. My own observations recorded after each session, as well as those of the classroom teachers provided orally throughout the process, augmented the data gathered from the questionnaires.

3.1 Identifying the participants

The Culture School partners with two different grade schools in the area as part of the decade old *Mestringsprogram* (see section 1.1.2). To participate, teachers identify individual students or situations in their classroom they feel might benefit from an alternative learning format led by a teaching artist from the Culture School. Although I had worked in the program previously with drama, I had not integrated English and drama under the umbrella of the *Mestringsprogram*. In February 2014 three teachers requested that English be incorporated into the general *Mestringsprogram* plan and thus this research project became possible.

The **fifth grade** teacher wanted to work with a specific text, *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Dahl, 2006), from their textbook that would be presented to the parents during an evening family night. I worked with her 19 students in their classroom in four, 1 hr 30 min sessions within the span of two weeks. This teacher already incorporated a great deal of drama and movement into her class, and was very active in the process throughout the entire time I worked with her

students. The school was large enough to support three sections of fifth graders, each with their own teacher; I worked with only one of those sections for this project.

The *fourth grade* teacher requested general drama activities with no final performance or project, so we worked with a variety of dramatic formats including improvised stories, picture books, puppetry, and drama games. This classroom was very crowded with 27 students in a small space. We met for 1 hr 30 min, once a week, for eight consecutive weeks. This teacher was more of an observer than a participant, and split her time in the classroom during our sessions with an assistant.

The *third grade* teacher wanted to work specifically with oral language production and sentences, supplementing what she was already doing within the established curriculum, so we worked with familiar stories, puppets, and a picture book text. We also integrated vegetables as a theme, already a part of their normal English lessons. I met her class of 18 students once a week, for about an hour each time, for eight consecutive weeks. We met in an almost empty classroom set aside for extra activities. This teacher was an active participant.

3.2 Collecting the data

Questionnaires were the principal data collection tool and questions were designed with three primary objectives.

- ▶ To identify if students felt empowered after using drama as a method in their English language classroom (questions relating to their feelings of motivation, security and self-confidence, and the social dynamics of the classroom environment were included in the questionnaires).
- ▶ To determine how students felt about English as a subject.
- ▶ To discover which drama techniques had the most impact on students, both during the experience and afterwards.

The **primary questionnaire (Q1)**¹⁴ included both qualitative and quantitative questions, the later clarifying the former (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). All three classes filled out this single page, double sided document in Norwegian, completed by hand, upon completion of our time working together (April 2014).

In addition, the fourth and fifth grade classes filled out a **follow-up questionnaire**¹⁵ in Norwegian, completed by hand, one year later (February 2015), and the third grade class briefly and informally discussed with me what they remembered from our sessions. My own observations were recorded in writing upon completion of each session and together with the informal observations made by each classroom teacher throughout the process, augment the data from the questionnaires.

3.2.1 Defining Action Research in an Educational Setting

Action research, a phrase coined by Kurt Lewis in 1934, is about exploring, understanding, and moving forward towards change through research. According to Elliott (1991) one starts with a general idea that is connected to something one wants to change or improve in the classroom. I recognized that although I had a great deal of practical knowledge based on experience using drama as a method in educational settings in the United States, I lacked concrete research upon which to validate my hypothesis that drama as a method empowers young English as a second language learners in Norway. If proven effective, I would have a foundation for future work and research in the use of drama as a method in English language learning in Norway with young students, student teachers, and in the *Mestringsprogram*.

Mills (2007) defines action research as a “systematic inquiry done by teachers (or others in the teaching-learning environment) to gather information about, and subsequently improve, how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn” (p.20). As mentioned in the Introduction (Figure 1.1), action research is a continuous reflection cycle in which one is always striving for improvement.

In previous encounters with young English language learners, I had observed many subconscious filters or mental barriers (2.1.3.1) in use; students who doubted their own capabilities, who felt they would fail no matter how hard they tried, or who feared the

¹⁴ The primary questionnaire (Q1) can be found in Appendix A.

¹⁵ The follow-up questionnaire (Q2) can be found in Appendix B.

judgment of others. I had also observed in my previous encounters with drama as a method that students who struggled shined when given alternative ways to express themselves; that the things that held learners back lessened when they were given permission to experience language learning in a new and different way.

These *reflections* led me to a plan of *action*, integrating drama as a method into Norwegian language classrooms as a means of empowering those students who needed it. Through the course of this research project I *observed* how my teaching methods, as well as the drama techniques I chose, affected student participation and behavior. The results of the questionnaires allowed me to *reflect* on the results, and therefore adjust my teaching methods, as well as the drama techniques I use, in future educational endeavors.

3.2.2 The Questionnaires

Because I was so closely integrated into this research study, having designed and executed it, I wanted to use a form of data gathering that would remove as much personal biases as possible from the results. Therefore I chose to use two questionnaires, one given immediately after the *Mestringsprogram* experience with drama in the classroom, and one given a year later.

I also spent some time considering the questions I would use knowing that how they were presented had the potential to affect the responses of the participants (Flick, 2013; Mills, 2007). The questions were developed with the assistance of the teachers involved in this research project, as well as the director of the Culture School, and were designed not only to explore how drama as a method in English language learning might empower students, but also to help advance the partnership between the *Mestringsprogram* and the schools in the future. I chose to use both quantitative and qualitative questions because I wanted clarification as to why students chose particular answers.

The primary questionnaire (Q1) was a double-sided paper version completed individually by hand by each student. I was most interested in general responses, as opposed to studying specific individuals, so the data is only identifiable by grade level (third, fourth, or fifth) and not name, gender, age, ethnicity, or skill level; in fact, I was never made aware of any of these details. A paper copy enabled students to complete the questionnaire quickly and avoided the issue of limited computer access at the schools.

The follow-up questionnaire (Q2), completed one year after the classroom projects, included many but not all of the original questions as well as one asking the students to remember what they had done. The purpose of this second questionnaire was to see if students' overall feelings of empowerment had changed, increased, or decreased over time after having been exposed to the use of drama as a method the year before.

Because I was working with students in the third, fourth and fifth grades, and wanted to use the same basic questionnaire for each group so data comparisons would be more straightforward, the questions had to be easy enough for the youngest learners to comprehend. Therefore I chose to use symbols (happy/sad faces or thumbs up/thumbs down), simple multiple choice (good, ok, not good), or options they could circle. For open-ended questions, students were permitted to write one-word answers instead of complete sentences, as I did not want concern over language ability to hinder their responses.

I chose to write the questions in Norwegian, even though we were working with English, because Norwegian was the first language for most of the children, and so there would be a greater chance of understanding what I was asking without assistance from the teacher. In other circumstances, it would have been beneficial to have the students fill out a 'pre-questionnaire' so I could compare feelings of empowerment both before and after the research project. Since the opportunity to conduct this research came so quickly, this was not possible. I did not have the teachers fill out their own questionnaire as I was most interested in the reactions of the students themselves and not how someone else observed them and their behavior. In hindsight, however, a teacher questionnaire might have been helpful.

3.2.3 A closer look at the questions

The following section outlines more specifically the objective of each question. Q1 indicates the primary questionnaire given right after each class completed their time working with the *Mestringsprogram*, and Q2 indicates the follow-up questionnaire given one year later to the students who had been in fourth and fifth grades.

3.2.3.1 Questions 1 - 4 (Q1, Q2)

In both the primary questionnaire (Q1) and the follow-up questionnaire (Q2), I wanted to see which subjects the students instinctively chose so that in the future I would know which subjects might benefit most from using drama as a method. The qualitative explanation for

Question 1 offered in Question 2 regarding the school subject each student liked best provided me with greater clarity as to why they chose that subject.

The same rationale applies to Questions 3 and 4 addressing the subject the student found most difficult; again Question 4 adding clarification to Question 3. So, for example, if I knew that the majority of students in third grade in my small sample did not like science, I could offer the teacher the opportunity to integrate drama into his or her science curriculum, perhaps increasing the appeal. These four questions were designed primarily to provide insights that would benefit future *Mestringsprogram* projects and not specifically this research project. Question 14 regarding whether the students prefer Norwegian or English is directly related to future *Mestringsprogram* projects and not discussed in this thesis.

3.2.3.2 Questions 5 - 8 (Q1)

These questions in the primary questionnaire (Q1) deal with the course work being presented in a different way. They were designed based on feedback I had received previously from teachers in other *Mestringsprogram* projects about students liking to do things outside of their normal classroom routines. “The drama of classrooms,” writes Dorothy Heathcote in the anthology *Children and Drama* (1975), “allows us to employ our own views while experiencing the nature of the tensions so that, in the act of making things happen, we think, wonder, communicate, and face up to the results of our decisions and actions” (p. 95). In other words, classrooms should be designed so that learners have the freedom to express ideas, even when controversial, in order to think, communicate, and act. One way to create this environment is through the freedom using drama as a method brings, especially in a system where sitting at desks facing the front of the room is still the norm, where learning is standardized and expected to be the same for each individual (Gray, 2013).

The questions in this section of the questionnaire address how students feel when they have more freedom to express ideas, or play with new ways of thinking not outlined in a textbook or in predetermined exercises; they take more ownership of their own learning. I did not specifically identify drama as a method in these questions or name individual drama techniques as I wanted the students to be more open with their answers and not lead them early on into thinking a certain way. My prediction was that few, if any, students would say learning in a different way was ‘not good’ or ‘ikke bra’.

3.2.3.3 Questions 7 and 8 (Q1)

These two questions specifically identified English as the subject and drama as the form of instruction. In the analysis section I look more closely at how these four questions compare; does adding the specifics change the response? My prediction was that the majority of the students would say ‘yes’, it was better to learn English with drama as a method. As in the first four questions, the qualitative, open-ended Questions 6 and 8 (Q1) provided more depth to the quantitative, measurable Questions 5 and 7 (Q1).

3.2.3.4 Questions 9-14 (Q1) and Question 8 (Q2)

These questions (Question 13 in Q1 and Question 8 in Q2 are the same) offered a closer look at the specific drama techniques and their affect on perceived student empowerment. I considered the age of the most students (7 to 10-year-olds) when writing the questions, and so chose to provide options for them to choose from that would then give me measurable results instead of allowing them to write whatever they chose.

Question 9 (Q1)

- ▶ The first and second options address the use of body language. Carr (2003) calls this the body mind link, explaining that mental capacities are increased when paired with movement.
- ▶ The third and fourth options deal with role-playing, a type of informal performance with no audience, costumes, or props (Kao & O’Neill, 1998). Students that shy away from being in front of others often discover a sense of security when using a puppet that can speak for them (Play Therapists, 2012)¹⁶.
- ▶ The fifth option focuses on drama games such as those used by Spolin (n.d.).
- ▶ The sixth option addresses the use of a script, both improvised or original
- ▶ The seventh option addresses the social process of learning. Macintyre-Latta & Buck (2008) talk about being in the moment, “at the juncture between self and other” in a reciprocal action building relationships as people work together.

¹⁶ Play therapy is based on the fact that play is the child’s natural medium of self-expression. It is an opportunity which is given to the child to ‘play out’ his feelings and problems just as, in certain types of adult therapy, an individual ‘talks out’ his difficulties (Axline,, 1981 in *Play Therapists*, 2012).

Questions 10 and 11 (Q1) were designed to see if the *Mestringsprogram*, or using drama as a method to empower language learning, was effective. In hindsight, Question 10 would have been better as a ‘pre’ question, getting the students’ opinion about English *before* experiencing the *Mestringsprogram*, and then getting their feedback *after* they had that experience as in Question 11. As the questions were presented, the students had to recollect how they felt about English before, and then after, the *Mestringsprogram*.

Question 12 asks the students to name one thing they learned in working with the *Mestringsprogram*. In retrospect, this question could have been framed differently as it now assumes the students *have* learned something, even if they feel they haven’t.

Question 13 deals with empowerment and how, because of the *Mestringsprogram* and using drama as a method, things are different for each individual learner.

- ▶ The first and second options deal directly with motivation, the first with English and the second with school.
- ▶ The third and fourth options address personal empowerment and whether the affective filters that hold the learner back have lessened so they feel more secure or self-confident both in regards to English and in front of others.
- ▶ The fifth and sixth options examine the classroom dynamic as a whole, and how each individual feels about their place in that social network.
- ▶ The ‘B’ part of this question gives students the opportunity to indicate that nothing changed for them because of the *Mestringsprogram* and using drama as a method in their language classroom.

3.2.4 Observations and my role as teacher as researcher

I continually monitored students’ behavior and responses, systematically observing how each lesson or drama technique was received. At the end of each session I wrote down what I remembered from the session¹⁷, including the observations I made about student participation and my own actions as an instructor. I reflected on the process, and changed my approach

¹⁷The observation form I used in my role as teacher as researcher can be found in Appendix C.

accordingly, adjusting my lesson plans as we went along. When possible, I tried to remember how much English had been used both by the students and myself, reflecting on how that affected the dynamics of a particular class session. I wrote down any comments teachers made to me, as well as things I overheard students saying about the process. I also noted the degree to which students participated and how engaged they were during each session.

I did not record or video the sessions because I did not have permission to do so. Because I was paying more attention than usual to what I was doing, as I was attempting to gather research data and not just teach, I was better able to see which drama techniques worked and then analyze why. This extra attention changed my teaching even as it was happening.

Throughout the process, I spoke with the teachers about their observations. Because of the casual nature of our discussions, often as we passed each other in the hallway or as the students were preparing to go outside or eat lunch after our sessions, I often had to rely on memory when I wrote down their comments. I also sat down with each teacher for a few minutes at the conclusion of the project to get a brief assessment¹⁸. Longer and more formal interviews with the teachers or some of the students would have provided more in-depth information and clarification for the questionnaire data and my own observations. Again, due to time constraints with the teachers and a desire to remain oblivious to individual student responses in order to maintain objectivity and so they could remain anonymous, this was not possible.

I acknowledge that my very presence in the room disrupted normal routines as we did things students were not accustomed to doing, and often worked within a much less regimented and predictable schedule. Prior to my work with the *Mestringsprogram*, the students didn't know me nor I them, so getting used to each other and finding the new rhythm of the classroom also may have affected how the students responded to drama as method in their English lessons. I was working with the students for a very limited time so there was a great chance that the experience would have no long-term affect. The follow-up questionnaire given to two of the three classes one year later was an attempt to see if the experience with drama as a method in the *Mestringsprogram* had any sort of lasting impact.

¹⁸ The teacher follow-up discussion questions can be found in Appendix D.

In the role of teacher as researcher it is difficult to always be objective as one's personal opinions and desires can get in the way. A questionnaire provided measurable data, allowing me to distance myself from the research because I had something concrete to measure. The classroom teachers distributed the questionnaires without my being present. Because I made this choice I had no control over how the teachers presented the questionnaire, nor do I know how much they influenced the responses of the students. This too may have affected the final results.

3.3 Using children as research subjects

Using children as research subjects brings with it a special set of considerations. They are not yet of the age of consent, so parental permission is required¹⁹; I only received questionnaires from those from whom parental permission had been obtained. I did not identify subjects by name, gender, race, nor ability; in fact, they handed in their questionnaires anonymously. I received forms from 100% of the third graders, 66% of the fourth graders, and 84% of the fifth graders. I also took no pictures or videos in which individual children could be identified, and any voice recording was done only for in class use and not distributed or seen elsewhere.

3.4 Factors that may have influenced the data

My background using drama as a method in the United States with native or fluent English speakers is extensive, but my experiences in Norwegian grade schools prior to this research project had been limited. This meant that in addition to observing how students responded to the drama techniques presented, I also had to learn how to adapt my own teaching methods for students in which English was their second language and not their first. This made focusing solely on observing how students were responding to drama as a method more challenging as I was also assessing whether the techniques I was using were appropriate for this audience.

Acting as both teacher and researcher can be challenging as you are so close to your work, however as Waters-Adams (2006) suggests, it also cuts across the theory-research divide, enabling the teacher researcher to see things from both the perspective of researcher *and* teacher. Because one is living in and experiencing daily the reality of the classroom, there is

¹⁹ For an example of the parental consent form, see Appendix E.

perhaps a greater awareness of what the actual needs of the students are. Stenhouse (1975, p. 142), who first advocated the idea of teacher as researcher, feels strongly that in general, curriculum research and development ought to belong to the teacher who understands the profession from the inside out.

My own observations could have been skewed because I was observing myself and perhaps had a subconscious desire for things to go well; perhaps in recording my observations after each session I interpreted them in such a way that they were shaped by my own perceptions of how I wanted things to be.

3.5 Conclusion to the chapter

The questionnaires used in this research project provided the concrete, measurable data that will be examined in the next chapter. The observations recorded in my own field notes after each session, as well as the informal observations of the teachers written down after-the-fact, add depth and greater understanding to the student responses.

The data analysis in the following chapter includes reflection on how the results tie in with the theories mentioned in the Theory Chapter (2.0) as well as the developmental stages of the learners and the process idea of drama in education.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis Chapter

*“Each new action you take will help you understand
a bit more about your own practice.”*

(Riel, 2010)

As stated earlier, the focus of this research study was not to see how well individuals learned English, but how they felt about the process. Drama as a method, therefore, was used primarily as a tool for empowerment. As this was an action research project, learning happened throughout the process (Mills, 2007) both for the students and myself. I knew that in my role as teacher as researcher I was coming into this research project with my own set of biases that might shape the way I interpreted the results. Therefore, a systematic examination of two questionnaires, one given upon completion of each class project in the spring of 2014 (Q1) and one given to the fourth and fifth graders one year later in the spring of 2015 (Q2), provided objective and measurable data.

Results have been tabulated in an excel document and presented as bar graphs or figures used to compare results within a grade level, between grade levels, and between the primary questionnaire (Q1) and the follow-up questionnaire (Q2)²⁰. Because the number of students completing each questionnaire was different, both during the research project year and the year following, I have chosen to present all the data from the questionnaires as figures in percentages instead of actual numbers so that the results are equally comparable²¹. In the document text I have referred to both the percentages and the actual numbers.

The third grade class did not complete the follow-up questionnaire (Q2). Instead, I informally asked them what they remembered from our time with the *Mestringsprogram* in 2014 before beginning a new project with them in 2015. The data from the questionnaires supplemented by my observations and teacher comments is presented in categories (teaching in a different way, drama as a method, student empowerment, and school subjects) and not in chronological order.

²⁰ Not all students filled out the questionnaires for different reasons. In the primary questionnaire (Q1) 100% of the third graders filled out questionnaires, 18 out of 27 or 67% in fourth, and 16 out of 19 or 84% in the fifth. In the follow-up questionnaire (Q2) there were 25 responses for the fourth grade and 18 for the fifth.

²¹ Appendix G contains all the actual numbers for this research study.

The handwritten documentation I made of my own observations upon completion of each class session, as well as verbal comments from the teachers and in an informal discussion upon completion of the project, adds a deeper level of clarification to the questionnaire results. Learning theories and rationale for the use of drama in the classroom, as outlined in the Theory Chapter, provide additional insights that help augment and explain the data.

4.1 Teaching in a different way: Questions 5-8 (Q1), Question 6 (Q2)

The stereotypical classroom in 2015 closely resembles that of a generation ago; students sit at desks, the teacher provides the information they are to learn, and subjects are taught using an established curriculum from textbooks (Gray, 2008). “Maybe we should ask whether schools are physical and mental spaces where young people can feel they really have a place,” Estola & Elbaz-Luwish (2010, pp. 711-712) observe. Although this is changing, and many teachers deviate from this stereotype and provide texts and experiences from outside the standard curriculum, the type of classroom described above is still the norm. Introducing drama as a method shakes up the standard classroom approach to learning, providing students with alternative ways to absorb information, express themselves, and interact with each other.

- ▶ Questions 5 and 7 (Q1) address the idea of learning in a way that is different than ‘normal’²²; answers to Question 6 (Q1) clarify Question 5, and answers to Question 8 (Q1) clarify Question 7.
- ▶ Question 9 (Q1) examines how the use of drama as a method (the *Mestringsprogram*)²³, helped with English language learning.
- ▶ Question 6 (Q2) asks if drama helped the students with their understanding of English.
- ▶ Questions 10 and 11 (Q1) identify how students feel about English after using drama in English lessons.

²² In this thesis, ‘normal’ is defined as the stereotypical classroom experience described in paragraph 1 of this section.

²³ The *Mestringsprogram* and using drama as a method were terms used interchangeably with the students and teachers throughout this research project. Therefore when the term *Mestringsprogram* is used in either Q1 or Q2 it is assumed by all to mean drama as a method of empowerment.

4.1.1 Questions 5 and 6 (Q1): “When a lesson is taught in a different way than it normally is ... “

Before looking specifically at drama as a method in Question 7 (Q1), I wanted to get a general idea of how students reacted to being taught in a way that was different than what they were used to. Thus, in Question 5 (Q1), I merely refer to lessons being taught in a different way and not specifically with drama as a method.

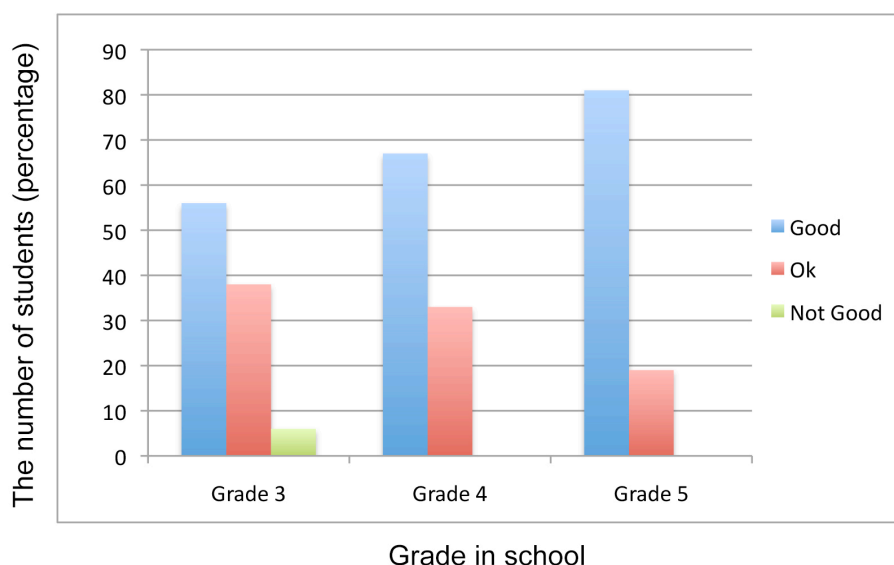


Figure 4.1. Question 5 (Q1): When Lessons Are Taught in a Different Way

In Figure 4.1 it is easy to see that the majority of students felt it was good (blue bar) or ok (red bar) to do things differently. It is also interesting that as students age, their desire to deviate from a traditional classroom approach increases; 56% of third graders, 67% of fourth graders, and 81% of fifth graders felt it was good to have lessons taught in another way. “We get a little variety”²⁴, said one fourth grade student.

In Norway, national exams are given at the end of fourth and seventh grades, which means specific goals must be met as students progress through their academic careers in order for them to pass these tests. Perhaps these numbers reflect the traditional concept of learning in which small children play but are expected to learn more serious material in a more serious way as they get older, and therefore must set aside play in lue of study (Kohn, 2004; Gray,

²⁴ In Norwegian this reads “vi får variert litt”.

2013). Further research would need to be conducted to get definitive answers to these questions.

Students' comments in Question 6 (Q1) shed some light onto why they answered the way they did in Question 5 (Q1). Words like 'fun' and 'different' were common adjectives used to describe their experience with a different teaching approach. A few also commented that 'it can be boring to just sit and do assignments' and that the use of body language was not the norm in their daily classrooms. Bowman (2004) says that we cannot remove our physical self from teaching or learning, recommending that "a teacher seek ways to draw students into the complexity of subject matter" (Bowman, 2004, p. 46). One way to do this is through the use of body language. "You learn more," commented the fifth grade teacher.

4.1.2 Questions 7 and 8 (Q1): "I understand English better with drama than when we learn it in a 'normal' way..."

In Question 7 (Q1) drama as a method is specifically named, and again, the majority of students marked "yes", it did help them understand English better. Comments in Question 8 (Q1) helped clarify why. Third graders thought drama made English easier to understand, and a fourth grader stated that "if we don't understand everything we understand based on what we can."²⁵ Stephen Krashen (2004) talks of the autonomous acquirer who, though not always a perfect speaker, is good enough to continue to improve on their own. "This is," he says, "the goal of all education – not to produce masters but to allow people to begin work in their profession and to continue to grow" (Krashen, 2004, p. 8), and it appears at least one fourth grader is on the way.

Children catch on quickly when they know they are being heard and their ideas taken seriously; in the third grade class it got to the point where the classroom teacher and I just looked at each other and smiled every time we heard "I have an idea!". In the fifth grade class one of the narrators of our dramatized version of *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Dahl, 2006) began of her own accord to help her fellow students when they forgot their lines, a good example of how empowerment can encourage leadership. "It's about give and take," reminded the fifth grade teacher, a concept that applies equally as well to the relationships created between students, between the teacher and the students, and between an action researcher and her subjects.

²⁵ The Norwegian text read "om vi ikke skjønner alt så kan vi forstå det ut fra det vi kan".

Observing empowerment in action helped me in my role as a researcher understand how drama as a method was working; observing empowerment in action as a teacher inspired me to continue. “The most effective work is done by researchers who view informants as collaborative researchers who, through building solid relationships, improve the research process and improve the skills of the researcher to conduct research” (Whyte, 1979 in Kawulich, 2005).

The comments of two fifth graders sum up why they might understand more English with drama better than in another way: it “gave text meaning” because “we live in English”²⁶. But “drama would have been a total failure if you didn’t listen to the students,” commented the fourth grade teacher, “you saw the students”.

A few third graders felt drama didn’t really help them with English because they understood Norwegian better, and I appreciated their honesty, a sign they felt comfortable enough to say what they were really thinking. However, 86% of the 52 students who completed the primary questionnaire (Q1) stated they understand English better with drama as a method than when they learned in a traditional way. “You gave them the opportunity to say ‘here I am’, you allowed them to try... and see that English is not as scary as they thought ... when you use music and drama this is quickly accomplished” (fifth grade teacher).

4.1.3 A comparison between Question 7 (Q1) and Question 6 (Q2): Drama as a method to help understand English

It is interesting to compare the responses from Question 7 (Q1), “I understand English better with drama than when we learn in a different way”, with the similar Question 6 (Q2), “I understand English better now because I worked with Heidi, drama, and English last year...”.

²⁶ The Norwegian text read “det gir teksten betydning” and “for da lever vi inn i engelsk”

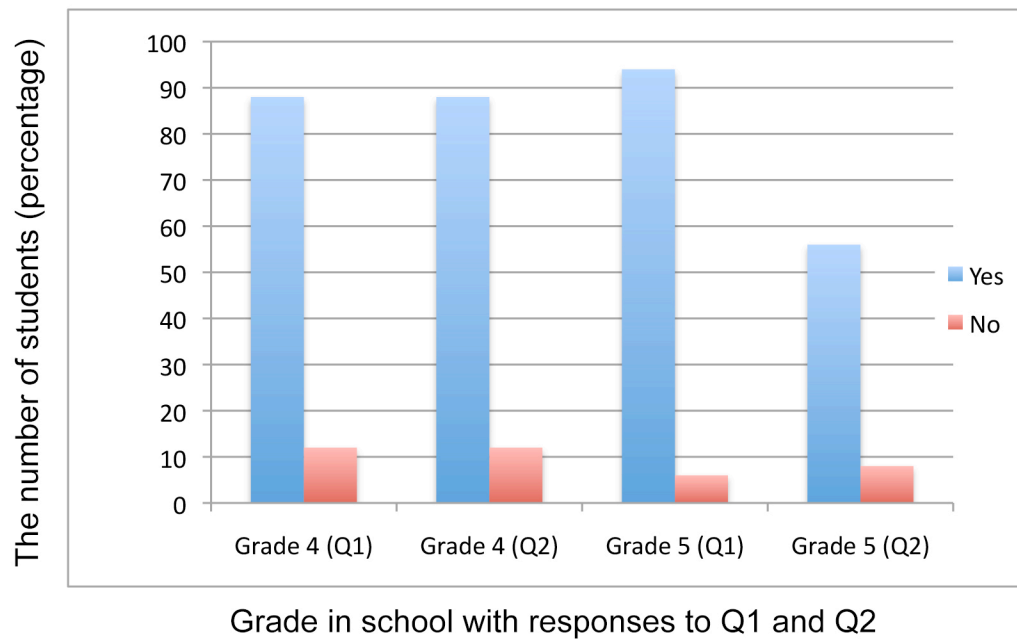


Figure 4.2: A Comparison Between Question 7 (Q1) and Question 6 (Q2): Using Drama as a Method to Help with English

As we see in Figure 4.2, in fourth grade nothing changed in the course of one year; they still believed the use of drama as a method helped them with English, and their responses were exactly the same. In fifth grade fewer felt there had been a change after one year because of using drama in English language learning than right after the *Mestringsprogram* experience, although over 50% still felt it had been a valuable experience one year later. Again, this change in opinion could be credited to age and greater academic pressures (in 2015 when completing Q2 these fifth graders were in grade six), or the fact that we worked on a specific text and had less general drama play. Interviewing specific students might have provided more clarity.

The data presented here suggests that, even though being taught in an alternative way than that which was considered ‘normal’ or traditional was not appealing to everyone, the majority found it empowered their learning process. Each of the classroom teachers mentioned at least once that the best thing about having drama in the classroom was that it gave their students something different to do apart from their everyday school activities, and acknowledged the benefits of learning this way in combination with traditional learning methods. “It was a bit more lively structure than what they are used to,” commented the fourth grade teacher.

Question 9 (Q1), presented in the next section, takes a closer look at the specific drama techniques used in this research project that provided that ‘lively structure’.

4.2 Drama as a method

Drama as a method brings learning to life, and integrating the body into learning is specifically addressed in Question 9. “The students weren’t restless,” commented the fifth grade teacher.

- ▶ Question 9 (Q1) looks more specifically at the drama techniques.
- ▶ Question 5 (Q2) provides insights into what students remembered, perhaps indicating those were the drama techniques that had the greatest impact.
- ▶ Questions 10 and 11 (Q1), assessing students’ feelings about English both before and after the *Mestringsprogram*, help identify whether this approach to teaching is effective in empowering learners in their English language learning experience.

4.2.1 Question 9 (Q1), drama techniques

In Question 9 (Q1), students were given the following choices and asked to circle three things that were true for them; there are more answers than the number of students.

- ▶ When Heidi used body language
- ▶ When we used body language ourselves
- ▶ When we used *puppets*
- ▶ When we played drama games in English - *Improvisation/games*
- ▶ When we had the chance to play different roles
- ▶ When we had a script instead of ‘normal’ text
- ▶ When we had the chance to *perform* in front of others

} *Body language*

} *Script Role-playing*

I included my own name (Heidi) in the option about body language because the students identified me with the process of using drama as a method and the *Mestringsprogram*.

Puppets describes both the paper vegetable puppets created in the third grade²⁷ as well as hand puppets and stuffed animals. **Playing different roles** includes both improvised stories, such as the zoo activity, as well as roles created with student suggestions to augment more formal scripts. It also includes acting out a picture book text.

The following discussion looks more closely at the drama techniques used and how different grade levels responded to them.

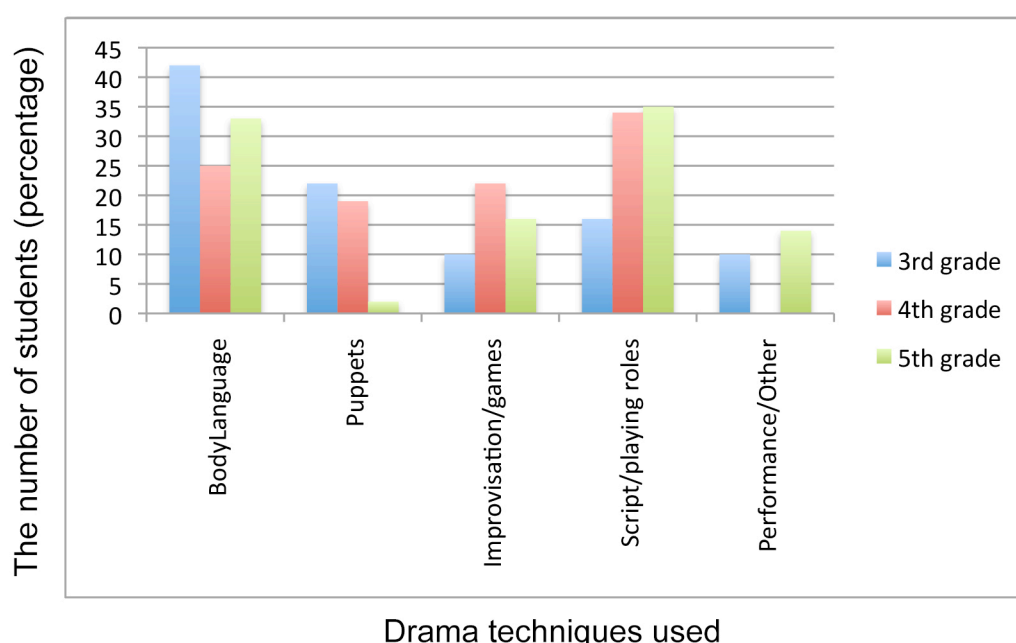


Figure 4.3: Question 9 (Q1): Drama Techniques

As we see in Figure 4.3, body language was the most important drama tool for the younger learners, reflected in comments by the third graders in Question 5 (Q1) referring specifically to body language as a reason why it was good to have a language lesson taught in a different way. Perhaps they felt this was important because they had less verbal English at their disposal and therefore relied on this non-verbal language in order to gain understanding. “I understand body language a little better”, said one third grader, confirmed by the fourth grade teacher who smiled and said “Heidi, you use so much body language that the students understand”. “We see it,” commented a fifth grader.

²⁷ For a description of our vegetable puppet project, see Appendix F.

Perhaps body language was less important for the fourth graders because they were more active themselves in our work with other drama techniques such as improvisation and games, a category that ranked higher for them than for the third and fifth graders. Fifth graders felt that using a script and playing roles was as valuable as body language, ranking much higher than the performance category, even though this class specifically prepared for a final scripted performance. “It’s important to lift up the children,” reflected the fifth grade teacher, “to instill in them that it is okay to be themselves, to believe in themselves, to understand that certain things are not dangerous.”

This supports the focus of the *Mestringsprogram* as well the goal of many who advocate for the general use of drama in education, that the process is more important than the final performance or product. For advocates of process drama (O’Neill, 1995) that is where the most learning occurs. Bowman (2004) states that “knowing is inseparable from action: knowing is doing, and always bears the body’s imprint”. In other words to know, to absorb, or to freely have comprehensible input, we need to be active learners. Both body language and playing roles allowed for this physical integration of ‘knowing’, and in this question the students acknowledge its impact.

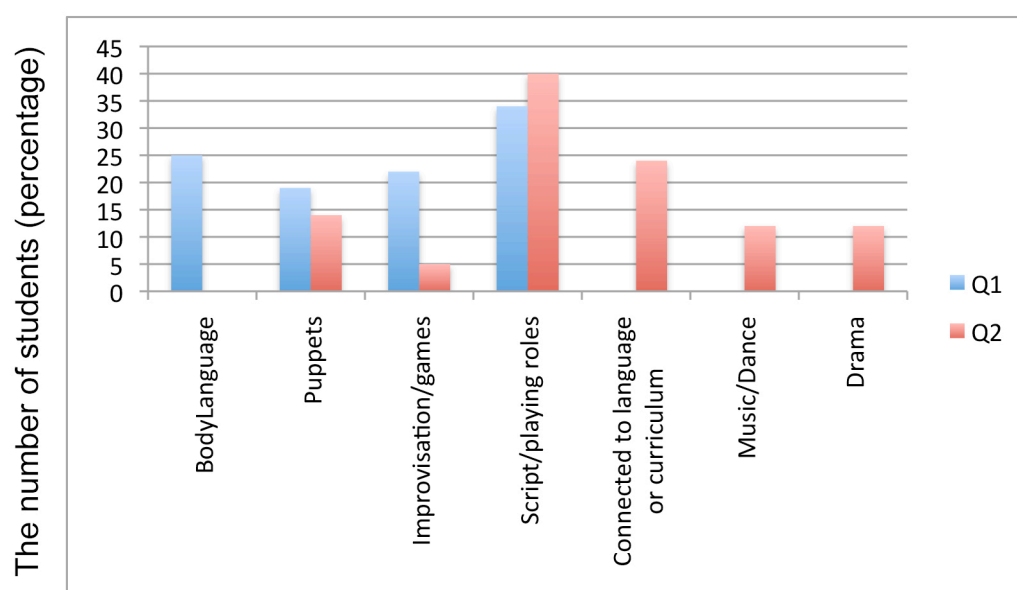
Looking at all three grades it also appears that physical expression, whether in the form of body language or script/role-playing, ranked highest for the fourth and fifth graders, while the use of puppets was highest for the third graders. These results could easily have been affected by what we did in class; for example the third and fourth graders worked more with puppets than the fifth graders did. It is also possible that the third graders, who were the least secure in English as demonstrated by my greater use of Norwegian with them in order to clarify meaning, felt more comfortable expressing themselves through a third party, in this case puppets. Additional study in the use of puppets in language learning as a form of empowerment is warranted.

4.2.2 Comparison of answers from fourth grade responses to Question 5 (Q2), “things I remember” and Question 9 (Q1) drama techniques

In an informal discussion with the third graders one year after I worked with them on this research project, they remembered the picture book, *The Magic Hat* (Fox, 2002) and the play and song we created based on that text. Only with a bit of prodding did they remember the activities we did around vegetables, a theme from their English language curriculum, and that

we had worked with sentences. This is interesting when looking again at Figure 4.3 in which script or role-playing was mentioned by 16% and use of body language by 42% of this third grade class in the primary questionnaire (Q1). Perhaps this indicates that body language helps with understanding language in the present and a concrete experience with a text or performance gives more structure to a memory in the future.

A comparison between the first questionnaire (Q1) given right after the research study and the second given one year later (Q2) for the fourth graders also leads to some interesting observations about the drama techniques used.



Drama techniques compared in Q1 & Q2 for the fourth and fifth graders

Figure 4.4: Question 9 (Q1) and Question 5 (Q2): Comparing Fourth Grade Responses Over One Year

As we see in Figure 4.4, body language ranked high in Q1 and not at all in Q2 for the fourth graders, just as it did for the third graders in Figure 4.3. This could have been because body language was specifically named in Question 9 (Q1) while students wrote in what they remembered in Question 5 (Q2) without any guidance, so they didn't think about it. It could also mean that since body language wasn't mentioned at all in Question 5 (Q2), students didn't think about it as a specific technique or, as speculated earlier, it could mean that body language has the greatest measurable affect in present time.

A majority of the fourth graders (68%) specifically mentioned the role-play we had in which we created a zoo; as a follow-up to this activity, the teacher had them write down the ‘story’ and illustrate it. Perhaps it was the writing and drawing that reinforced this drama technique in their long-term memory. The performance category was not relevant to the fourth grade students, as they had no final performance. In the second questionnaire (Q2) they specifically named dance and drama, even though they were integrated into everything else and not a specific category in Question 9 (Q1). The category ‘connect to language or curriculum’ included references to specific picture books we used as text, or elements of the English language itself and was also not a specific category in Q1.

In both questionnaires role-playing had the highest number of responses (34% in Q1, 40% in Q2) indicating that it is an effective drama technique that is remembered. It was interesting that in the follow-up questionnaire (Q2) 19 % wrote in specific English language texts we had worked with suggesting that the text itself had meaning when presented in a dramatic form for almost one fifth of the class. Music and dance were techniques used but not listed as options; but as indicated above, still had an impact on some (12% in Q2) as they chose to write them in. This supports the need for variety in order to appeal to different learner types.

The fourth grade teacher agreed that the variation was good, “it was enough so that things someone liked and was good at might be mixed with something that they didn’t like or thought was difficult”. This goes back to Richards’ (2008) ideas of what makes a communicative classroom (section 2.2); keep lessons short and have variety. From this data one could surmise that some drama techniques appeal to learning in the present, as in body language, while others establish themselves in long-term memory, like role-playing. Drama as a method is something students remember and that it can create better comprehensible input even in regards to curriculum.

In the follow-up questionnaire (Q2) almost every student remembered something; only two of the twenty-five fourth graders didn’t remember anything we had done when asked one year after the *Mestringsprogram* was over. Looking once again at Question 9 (Q1) and Question 5 (Q2), it is safe to say that a more physically active way of interacting with the language is an effective approach to language learning. This means that concrete things are remembered better than those that are abstract, as discussed earlier in Piaget’s concrete operational stage (section 2.1.2).

In this research project I also found that students worked best and more creatively when they had a clear framework in which to play. “Drama activities break the fixed social rules of the formal school by inviting participants to experiment with different roles under various imaginary conditions in a very safe manner” (Kao & O’Neill, 1998), i.e. the familiar school setting. The fourth grade teacher commented that students who struggled with English felt it was not as scary to speak English when using drama, and thought that was due to the play element, “they forgot that they were even using English”.

This relates back to Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and his concept of ‘flow’, or being so totally absorbed in an experience that the activity of the moment is the focus. Language is a tool used to progress through the moment, and not something one has to learn because it is a required subject in school. For learners in this state of play they are so immersed in the action that, as Herts (1911) observed, “the child doesn’t know that he is being taught...what he knows is that he is enjoying himself. What is happening is that he is being educated”.

As presented in 2.1.3.1, there are many subconscious filters that can stand in the way of learning and drama as a method creates an environment that may help a learner navigate through or around those barriers. This can also help a teacher who, for example, can better observe when a child is passive and when they are just remaining silent because their body language says what their words cannot.

For one of the fourth grade sessions I had an African drum with me and as I was setting up a boy, whom I had observed earlier as participating less than his classmates, came in and stood silently along the wall. I asked him to play the drum as his classmates entered the classroom after recess. I did not tell him what to play and did not tell him when to stop. For five minutes he sat at the front of the class, playing a steady beat, unwavering. He did not look up, but continued to play. That rhythm affected the class too, and their entrance into the classroom was less raucous than usual.

Later, when I asked him to play again, he said no, but in that particular moment he was in that state of ‘flow’ Csikszentmihalyi (1990) talks about and the class was with him. He and his classmates were totally engaged, even though no verbal instructions were given; and for that moment, he felt empowered. Did that make a difference in his language learning experience later on? I do not know, but every moment of empowerment that a child feels adds to their overall sense of security and self-confidence, and perhaps affects their motivation in the

future. Cook (2000, p. 21) says, “one function of rhythm may be to provide a path into language” and whether that be to the beat of a drum or the cadence of a poem, it is a step in the right direction.

4.2.3 Questions 10 and 11 (Q1): “Before and after the *Mestringsprogram* I thought English was...”

Questions 10 and 11 in the primary questionnaire (Q1) provide a before and after look at how students felt about using drama as a method in the *Mestringsprogram*, and are another indicator of how this approach can affect students’ feelings of empowerment and attitudes towards English language learning. They were given the options of choosing *good* (bra), *ok*, or *not good* (ikke bra).

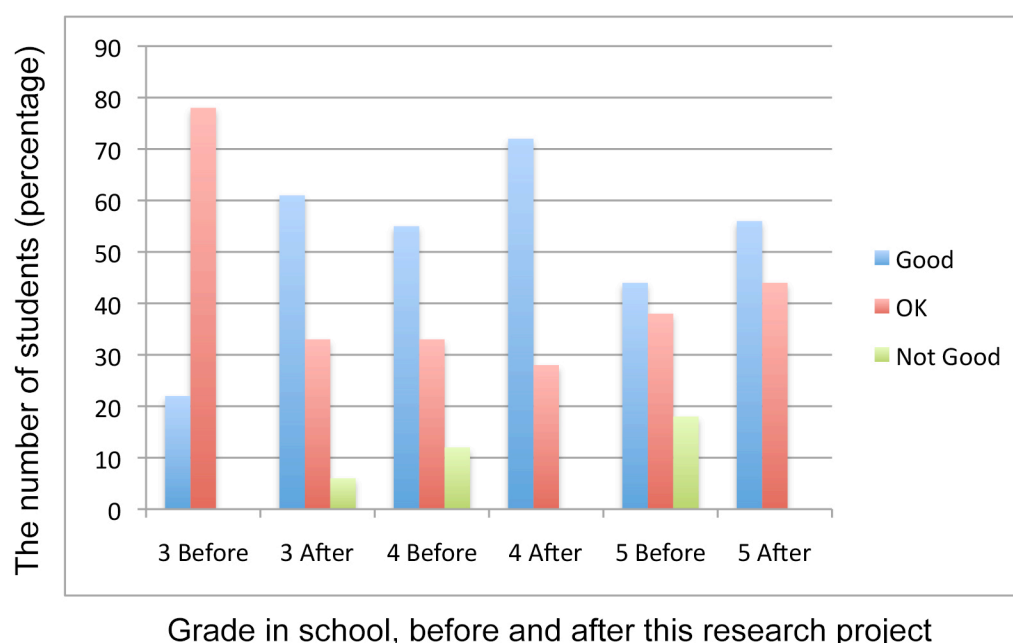


Figure 4.5: Questions 10 & 11 (Q1): Feelings About English Before and After the *Mestringsprogram*.

In each case when comparing the bars for good (blue) and ok (red) in Figure 4.5, more students felt that English was good (vs. ok) after the *Mestringsprogram* experience with drama as a method. The most dramatic difference occurred in the third grade; before the *Mestringsprogram* 22% indicated it was good and 78% that it was ok; after the *Mestringsprogram* 61% said English was good and 33% that English was ok. Drama as a

method literally raised their English learning bar. In each grade, students were more interested in English after our work together than before.

4.3 Empowerment: Questions 12-13 (Q1) and Questions 5, 8-9 (Q2)

If one is resistant to learning, it is difficult to learn and one's affective filter, as discussed in the Theory Chapter (2.0), could create barriers to that learning. Drama as a method offers learners a way of getting past whatever it is that is holding their learning back, enabling them to feel better about themselves and their relationship to their English language learning, feel more secure in front of others, and positively affect the dynamics of the English as a second language classroom.

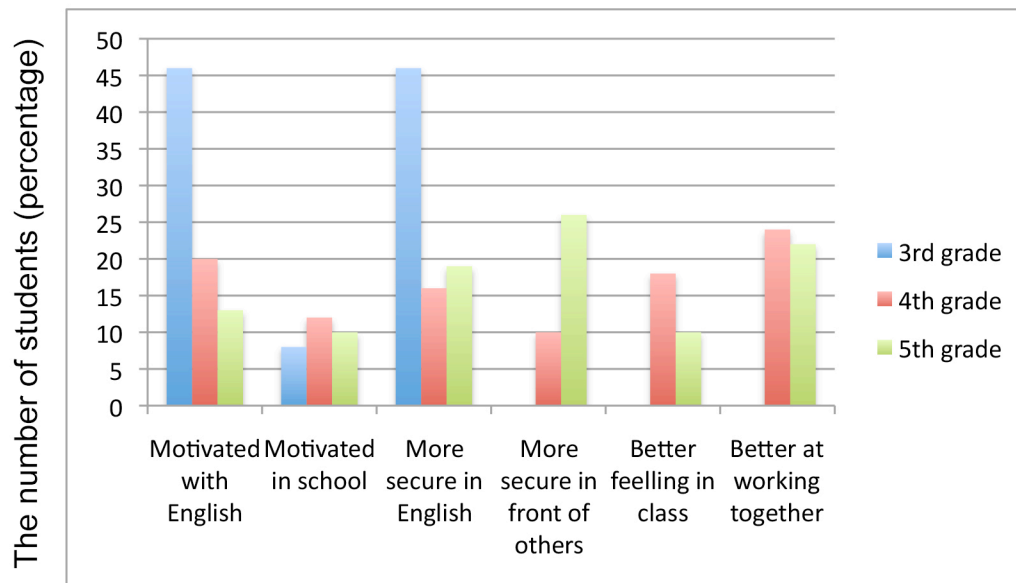
Question 13 (Q1) and Question 8 (Q2)²⁸ specifically address how motivation, feelings of security and self-confidence, and attitudes towards working with others, were affected by the use of drama as a method.

Looking at the students' reflections to Question 12 (Q1), "one thing I have learned in the *Mestringsprogram* with drama and English is" and Question 5 (Q2) "things I remember from last year when we worked with Heidi with English and drama" provide additional insights into feelings of empowerment as well as how drama as a method affected their language learning experience. These responses also add additional depth to Questions 13 (Q1) and 8 (Q2) and how things have changed for the students because of their experience with the *Mestringsprogram*.

4.3.1 Question 13 (Q1): Motivation, feelings of security or self-confidence, and classroom dynamics

It is interesting to look at Question 13 (Q1) independently before comparing it to Question 8 (Q2) as the third graders were not included in the follow-up questionnaire (Q2) and their responses are worth noting.

²⁸ Only those who answered 'yes' to Question 7 (Q2) were required to complete Question 8 (Q2). Because of this, only 72% of the students have answered Question 8.



How things are different because of the *Mestringsprogram* (drama)

Figure 4.6: Question 13 (Q1): How Things are Different Because of the *Mestringsprogram*.

In the last paragraph of her article, *Using drama and theater to promote literacy development*, Sun (2003) says that in addition to being fun, “kinesthetic²⁹ activities can help young learners, especially English language learners, develop decoding skills, fluency vocabulary, syntactic knowledge, discourse knowledge, and metacognitive thinking”. In Figure 4.6 we see that in the third grade class, the majority of the responses (92%) were directly related to motivation and feelings of security or self-confidence in English; the responses for motivation in school are much less.

In Figure 4.3 body language was important for third graders and here we see that using drama as a method helped the majority both with motivation and feelings of security with English thus supporting Sun’s claim that kinesthetic activities help young English language learners. This is an indicator that drama as a method is very effective in the younger grades for boosting feelings of individual empowerment. It is also interesting to note that in Figure 4.6 third graders felt the *Mestringsprogram* and drama as a method made them feel more secure with English; for them it made the greatest difference.

²⁹ Kinesthetic learning is physical learning, often done by manipulation of objects related to the lesson (Lewis, B., 2015). Body language and the movement that come with drama and role-playing are forms of kinesthetic learning.

As students get older their needs change. In Figure 4.6 the fourth and fifth graders have begun to see themselves more in relationship to others, interestingly non-existent in third grade as indicated in their responses to the categories ‘more secure in front of others’, and ‘better at working together’. These older students are in the middle of Erikson’s fourth stage of development (2.1.2), where relationships with peers help define who they are. A closer examination of the fourth grade responses show that they were quite evenly distributed, with 26% indicating that they are ‘better at working together’, and 20% that they are ‘more motivated with English’. Fifth graders had the greatest number of responses for the category ‘feeling more secure’ (26%), although their distribution of responses is also fairly evenly spread out.

4.3.2 Question 8 (Q2): Motivation, self-confidence or feeling secure, and classroom dynamics a year later

In Question 8 (Q2) students were asked to recall one year later how the *Mestringsprogram* and their experience with drama had affected them; only the fourth and fifth grade classes completed this questionnaire and only students who answered ‘yes’ to Question 7 were asked to complete Question 8. Therefore only three fourths of the fourth grade students and three fifths of those in fifth grade answered this question. It is also important to keep in mind that the students were one year older when answering these questions and had experienced many changes in their physical and mental development. In addition, their classroom dynamics had changed; they had new students in their classes, were placed in different physical classrooms, and the fourth graders had a different teacher³⁰.

³⁰ In Norway it is common for teachers to teach the same group of students for more than one year. The third grade class and the fifth grade class had the same teacher in the 2014-2015 school year as they did in the 2013-2014 school year.

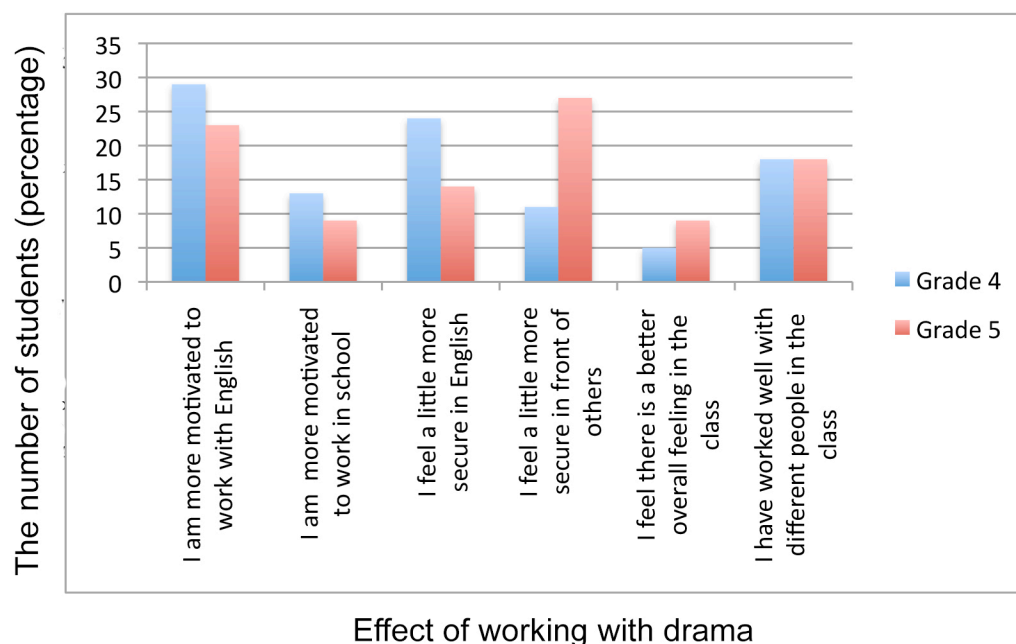


Figure 4.7. Question 8 (Q2): A Comparison Between Fourth and Fifth Grade Empowerment.

It appears that the younger class (fourth grade), who worked with drama games and had no final performance, gained more personal motivation while the older class (fifth grade) showed higher responses in their self-confidence, or in feelings of security with English and in front of others, as well as the general class feeling as a whole.

This is logical as the fifth grade worked together on a class presentation of an excerpt from Roald Dahl's *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (2006) to be performed in front of an audience, their parents. In a comment from the primary questionnaire one student exclaimed, "I don't have stage fright anymore"³¹, an indication that the overall experience had been positive. The fifth grade teacher also mentioned that one of the students, who usually didn't say much, went home and used a lot of words to describe his experience with drama. His mother noticed that it had made a difference in him.

³¹ In Norwegian this fifth grader wrote, "jeg har ikke seneskrekk lenger!!"

4.3.3 Comparisons between fourth and fifth grade classes and responses to Question 13 (Q1) and Question 8 (Q2)

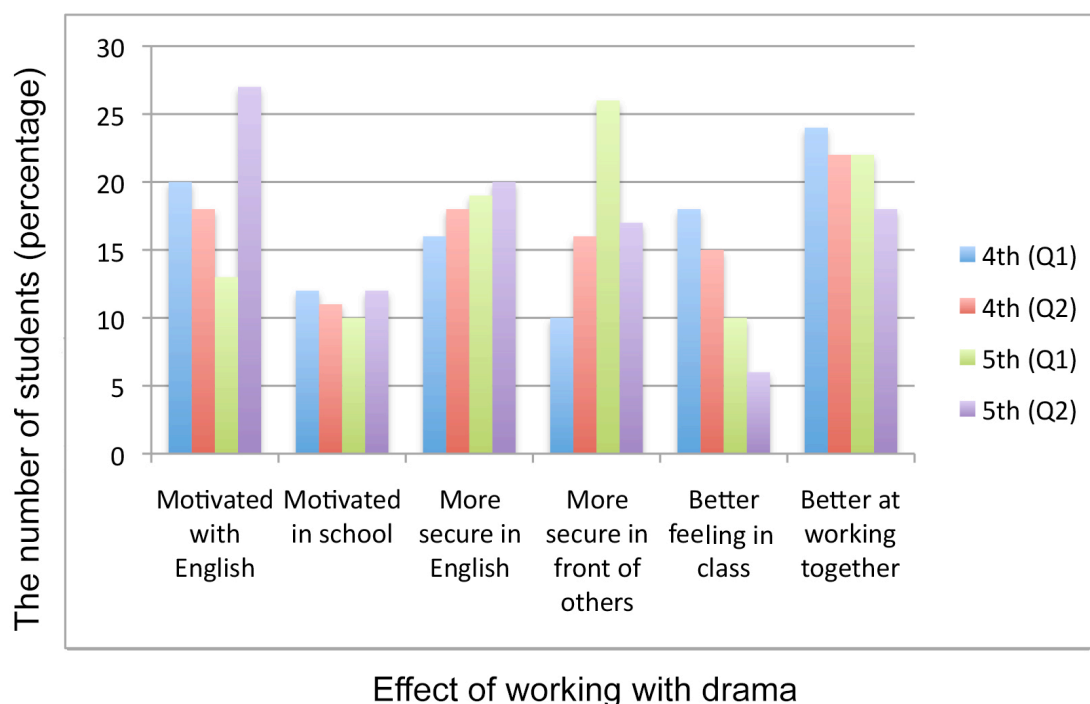


Figure 4.8: Comparison Between Question 13 (Q1) and Question 8 (Q2) About Empowerment

From Figure 4.8 it is apparent that both the fourth and the fifth graders felt more secure in English after one year, implying that the use of drama had a positive effect on their feelings of empowerment both with the language and personally as language learners. Motivation with English and in school decreased slightly for the fourth graders and increased for the fifth graders, while feeling secure in front of others did the opposite, increasing over time with the fourth graders and decreasing with those in fifth grade^e.

It is interesting that for both grades there were decreases in the social element of empowerment both in the ‘class feeling’ and in ‘working together’; this is a reminder that classroom dynamics need constant vigilance. Further research is required to know why this might be so.

4.3.4 Question 5 (Q2) Things remembered a year later from the Mestringsprogram, and Question 6 & 7 (Q2) examining if things have changed because of English and drama

The fifth graders focused on a particular text and all drama techniques used were designed to augment and move forward that process. It is not surprising, then, that the majority of the things they remembered in Question 5 had to do with the details of the story *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Dahl, 2006) and how it was fun³². About half stated that they understood English better now because of that experience. As stated earlier the third graders, who did not complete the follow-up questionnaire (Q2) but instead gave verbal feedback to me in an informal discussion one year later, remembered the play we created from the picture book *The Magic Hat* (Fox, 2002) and with prompting some of the other activities we did. They were not asked if they now understood English better because of that experience.

A closer examination of what the fourth grade students remembered provides insight into the drama techniques that were most effective, as they experienced the greatest variety and were not working towards a final product. 88% of the fourth graders (22 out of 25) answered ‘yes’ to Question 6, that even one year later they felt they understood English better because of drama. In Question 5, when the categories of role-playing, drama games and puppets were combined (all dramatic tools which allow expression through another medium) they comprised 82% of the total responses. This indicates that role-play, whether in person or through a medium like puppets, is very effective in empowering learners in English language learning, especially with the fourth grade (9-year-olds) learners. The fact that only three out of twenty-five didn’t write anything at all for Question 5 (Q2) indicates that the experiences they had with drama as a method left a lasting impression on most.

This is also supported by the answers for Question 7 (Q2), which asked if things were different for the learners because of the drama experience. In the fourth grade 18 out of 25 (72%) said yes, things were different. In the fifth grade exactly half of the class indicated that drama as a method as we had used it the year before had made a difference for them. Almost all of the fourth graders added an additional comment in Question 9 (Q2) while only four added additional comments in the fifth grade, three of which were in response to drama as a method having had no effect (“I don’t think anything has changed at all”, “I am not any

³² Norwegian comments included “det var gøy”, “artig”, og “morsomt”, translated here as fun.

better”³³). The fourth grade comments were all positive, many stating that the experience had been fun. Five comments were directly related to me, asking that I return as their teacher.

4. 4 School Subjects (Questions 1-4 in Q1 & Q2)³⁴

These four questions, as mentioned in the Introduction chapter, were not the focus of this research project but instead were intended to provide a more general overview in order to target other subjects that might benefit from the use of drama as a method in the future. They also provide a better picture of what students in each grade level struggle with. I acknowledge that using Questions 1 and 2 (Q1) in a pre-questionnaire may have provided a clearer picture of drama’s effect on making a subject ‘a favorite’ or ‘less difficult’. However, it is still interesting to take a brief look at the data, as there are trends that appear.

Comparing Questions 1 and 3 in the primary questionnaire (Q1) with Questions 1 and 3 (Q2) in the follow-up questionnaire given a year later when the students were one year older also provides a closer look at student development. As the responses to these questions also add additional insights into the students themselves, I have included a brief analysis of it here. The third graders did not complete the follow-up questionnaire (Q2) so only the fourth and fifth grade responses are represented. For ease of comparison between Questions 1 and 3 (Q1 and Q2), I have placed Figures 4.9 and 4.10 together on the following page.

³³ In Norwegian these comments read “Jeg syntes ikke det forandret seg noe i det hele tatt” and “Jeg ble ikke bedre”

³⁴ I am not including the students who selected gym as a subject or had multiple answers in this discussion.

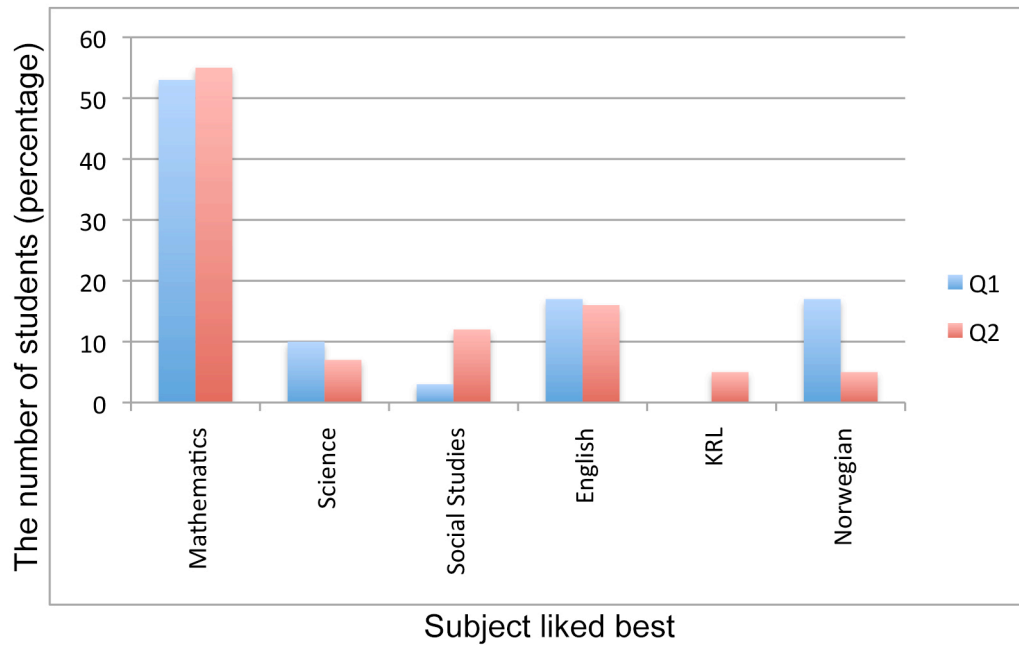


Figure 4.9. Question 1 (Q1) & Question 1 (Q2): Subject liked best.

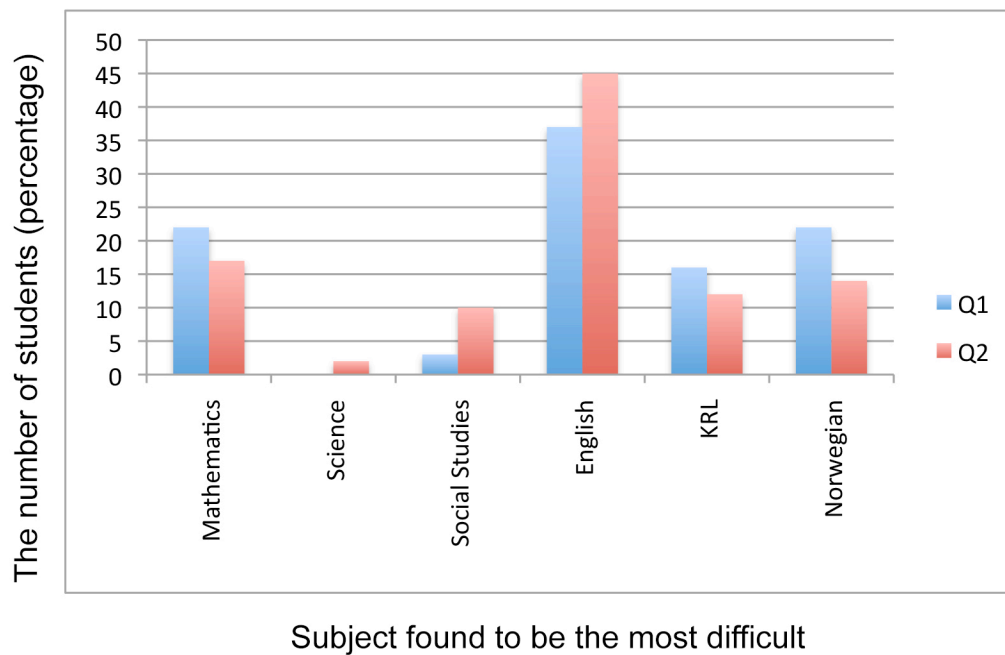


Figure 4.10. Question 3 (Q1) & Question 3 (Q2): Subject found most difficult.

4.4.1 Question 1 (Q1 & Q2): Subject liked best

Math is the leading favorite (about 50% in each grade chose this as a favorite subject), perhaps because it is so concrete, again something this age group favors (see section 2.1.2). Favorite subjects are more evenly distributed in the older fifth graders. A year ago, for example, few indicated that social studies or KRL³⁵ was a favorite, and Norwegian was a more popular subject than it is today. English remains consistent as a favorite with about 16% choosing this both in Q1 and in Q2. Students commented (in Question 2) that they liked a subject because they were good at it, it was fun, they felt connected, had a personal interest, or felt they could learn something.

4.4.2 Question 3 (Q1 & Q2) Subject found most difficult

Looking at the subject students felt to be the most difficult, the numbers are also fairly consistent. English (chosen by 37% in Q1 and 45% in Q2) was the subject most found difficult. In Question 4 (Q1) they commented that it was difficult, demanding, or just boring. The numbers for Mathematics (22% in Q1, 17% in Q2), KRL (16% in Q1, 12% in Q2) and Norwegian (22% in Q1, 14% in Q2) are fairly consistent from one year to the next, whereas a year ago science and social studies had few who found them difficult. Again, further research is warranted in order to know why students answered the way they did in both Question 1 and Question 3, and to examine how students in other grades perceive the subjects they are being taught.

4.5 A closer look at the drama techniques and the results

There are many things that can affect the results one gets in any research project, and this one was no exception. In my role as teacher as researcher I adapted my teaching to meet student needs as I went along, so the research plan itself was in a constant state of flux. If the students weren't engaging with me, the material, or each other, I tried something else; I wanted them to have a positive experience and feel empowered.

³⁵ KRL or Kristendoms-, religions- og livssynskunnskap (Christianity, Religion, and Philosophy) is now called RLE or Religion, livssyn og etikk (Religion, Beliefs, and Ethics) and is a standard subject in Norwegian grade schools.

I worked hard to help them understand my English words through actions, perhaps a reason so many found “use of Heidi’s body language” (Question 9/Q1) helpful. “Effective teachers use body language to communicate with students, build rapport with them, and make them feel safe and supported” (Ruland, 2013).

As my interactions with the students were so personal, it might make it difficult for another teacher to follow my lesson plan. I acknowledge that my personality, extensive background using drama in grade school classrooms, my role as project developer as well as teacher as researcher, all could have affected the data.

I observed that I used Norwegian when I was uncertain or had discipline or focus issues with the fourth graders, whereas with the fifth graders it was used only for clarification when necessary. “I don’t think the students really thought that much about it,” commented the fifth grade teacher. “It was English so we used English.” Perhaps my use of Norwegian was as much due to my own uncertainties as it was the English skills or the behavior of the students. When I had a clear plan, I was more comfortable using English and finding ways for them to understand; I was more patient. More research is warranted to determine if this is indeed the case.

I had the teachers give the questionnaire to the students so that my presence would not be interpreted as affecting student responses, but in hindsight it might have done just that. For example, many third graders wrote in ‘working with sentences’ in Question 11 (Q1) as something they had learned, not the type of specific response one would expect from this age group. Did the classroom teacher encourage that answer? Because I wasn’t there, I don’t know. If I had given the students the questionnaire myself, I would have had more control over how it was presented. Being present would also have enabled me to observe how the students received the questionnaire. The fifth grade teacher told me after-the-fact that her students were confused by some of the questions in the follow-up questionnaire (Q2), but didn’t go into more detail. If I had been present I could have clarified what the teacher could not. In order to get a more non-biased overview of how drama as a method empowers young English language learners, the participant base also needs to be much larger and the number of classrooms and researchers involved much more varied.

When students were fully involved in the process, it was magic, and as Krashen says (2011), being active in and with language, feeling that learning is engaging and relevant, leads to comprehensible input. All responded positively to lessons being taught in a different way (Figure 4.1), felt more positive towards English after using drama as a method (Figure 4.5), and responded that drama helped them understand English better (Figure 4.2). Even learners who didn't always comprehend the spoken language could participate when instructions were given slowly, often with repeated actions, and all three grades ranked high in use of body language (Figure 4.3). Games like the shape game, in which students were instructed to create shapes or objects with their bodies, allowed them to watch each other if they didn't understand and with repetition, gain understanding for themselves³⁶. Students were very receptive to lessons being presented in a different way and in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 responses were overwhelmingly positive, although there were more even more "good" ratings than "ok" when drama was identified as the different teaching method.

The curriculum itself can also become more engaging through drama techniques. In the third grade class we made vegetable puppets and filmed the puppets 'introducing' themselves and interacting with each other; after one such class I wrote in my field notes, "really great class today, worked a lot with sentences, engaged." In the story of the *The Magic Hat* (Fox, 2002) animals are introduced one at a time. However, when students had the opportunity to play whichever role they wished, often more than one wanted to play the same animal. This created the perfect opportunity to talk about plural and singular forms of a word. That was grammar teaching happening in the moment and in context, with students picking up language through comprehensive input (Ray, 2012). In the fourth grade class we created our own zoo improvising different roles. Afterwards, the students wrote and illustrated their own version of the story, incorporating the language they had acquired through this activity into formal writing skills. This can be seen in the responses in Figure 4.5 where all grades indicated that English was better after using drama as a method in the *Mestringsprogram*.

As Vygotsky (1997, p. 18) states, play is a dominant force in a child's life when fantasy easily merges into reality, and visa versa. Activities like making paper puppet figures out of different vegetables as described earlier, or talking about discrimination by playing roles based on different colors as I did when working with the picture book, *The Crayon Box that*

³⁶ The Shape game is described in greater detail in Appendix F.

Talked (DeRolf, 2007) with the fourth graders, takes real language and puts it into this natural fantasy world children of this age embrace so readily. When a lesson taps into this innate instinct to play, learners don't need to work so hard at understanding the process and therefore can use more energy absorbing the language input. This can be seen specifically in the third graders responses in Figure 4.6 where they indicate that they are motivated in and secure with English; they are empowered as language learners.

Ward (Yi, 2003) and O'Neill (1995) believe that the process should always be the focus, even when a final performance is the outcome. In two of the classes represented in this research study (third and fifth grades) scripts were used and final performances given. However, students continually contributed to the content of those scripts and played an active role throughout the ever-changing process; the final audience was then invited to a demonstration of what our joint efforts had accomplished instead of a final polished performance. In the fourth grade class many different scenarios were acted out based on suggestions from students and guided by myself in the role of teacher; they too were ever changing but never written down.

When we had role-play improvisations based on well-known stories like *Three Billy Goats Gruff* (third grade) or *Little Red Riding Hood* (fourth grade), students created dialogue based on something they already knew, enabling them to play within the familiar. "By allowing children to learn through the arts, they are awakened in a truly heartfelt way that connects them to whatever they are learning" (Palmer, P., 1999 in Goral, 2000, p. 54) and from this data there is no doubt that students connected to English. Third graders connected with puppets, all connected through the use of body language, and fourth and fifth graders connected by role-playing and the use of scripts (Figure 4.3).

"Children also develop theories about their competence relative to their peers," states Schunk (2004, p. 315), and it is important to consider the dynamic of a language classroom and how that affects individual language learners. When we played drama games like the Mirror game, Frogger, or ZipZapZoop³⁷, students had to interact with each other in a process of give and take. In developing and working with scripts, both those written down and those improvised, students needed be patient and let everyone take their turn saying their lines as well as being open to different suggestions. For the fourth grade, the process of working together through

³⁷ Descriptions of these drama games can be found in Appendix F.

drama helped stabilize the classroom dynamic (comment by the fourth grade teacher). Perhaps if students feel more empowered, and therefore more secure in their own skin, that can also affect the classroom dynamic in a positive way, or visa versa, as considered in the next example about the fifth grade.

The responses of the fifth grade class provide another perspective to consider. If feelings of personal empowerment increase (motivation, self-confidence or security with English) but feelings about the social network of the classroom decrease, will this affect empowerment in the long run? In Figure 4.8 we see that feelings regarding being motivated in school, motivated with English, and more secure in English went up, while feeling more secure in front of others, better feeling in class, and better at working together went down over one year's time. It is possible, then, that if the social dynamics represented by these last three categories are not addressed, over time feelings of personal empowerment may also decrease. This too would be a topic for further research.

4.6 How drama as a method fulfills the aims of the Norwegian English subject curriculum

If drama as a method is to become a more integrated part of English as a second language teaching in Norway, it is important to consider once again how it fits in with the Norwegian English subject curriculum competence aims and objectives (2010) as presented in section 2.3.3.

4.6.1 Objectives for learning English

According to the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, the English language provides insights into both the way we live and the lives of others on a global scale; a language classroom environment is an example on a very small scale of how different groups of people can work together for a common purpose. Students come to the language learning experience with their own set of issues, whether they be mental barriers that hinder learning (section 2.1.3.1), their sense of security in front of or with others (section 4.3), or their attitudes towards the subjects they are learning in school (section 4.4).

Drama as a method provides tools to help language learners gain better understanding and awareness of both who they are as individuals and how they can relate to and understand each

other (see section 4.3), again a specific skill identified by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research in English language learners.

Improvisation is a drama technique that enables learners to discover together what is going to happen next. As Viola Spolin believes (n.d., see also section 2.3.2), “if the individual permits it, the environment will teach him everything it has to teach”. A cardinal rule of improvisation is that every idea is worth considering, and there are no mistakes, just better ideas (Spolin, n.d., Fox, 2013). Learning to be flexible, to acknowledge the ideas of others and find ways to work with or through those ideas is a skill that can empower language learners for the rest their lives.

Using improvisation in the contained world of the language learning classroom ideally allows learners with any skill set to feel empowerment because they can participate at any level without the fear of being judged or that mistakes will mark them as failures. In *the Magic Hat* (Fox, 2002), for example, when the third graders wanted to have rabbits, whales and horses in their version of the story instead of bears, giraffes and kangaroos, that’s what we did.

It is also important that the teacher affirm the students by at least considering the ideas of the students, no matter how crazy they might be, modeling supportive and empowering behavior for the rest of the class. When the fourth graders wanted to play zoo, and we needed cages, we turned the desks upside down, and the fifth graders knew they could improvise their own dialogs for the main characters in the *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Dahl, 2006) during the project period, adding and adapting when the language was too hard to remember. Again it comes back to the process discussed earlier in section 2.3.2., over the final product. Drama as a method is often about discovery, not always about answers. It is “concerned with a wider context for exploration... to develop students’ insight and to help them understand themselves and the world in which they live” (Kao & O’Neill, 1998, p. 12).

As stated earlier (section 2.3.3), English is also necessary for communication in a variety of different situations, and drama as a method creates those situations, often with undefined outcomes empowering the participants to celebrate the process and learn through it. When I gave instructions, using my body language to clarify meaning, I communicated with the students even when they didn’t always understand the English words I was using. When students wrote down the stories from our zoo improvisation (fourth grade) or the names and

vegetables of their puppets (third grade), they were communicating in writing, which happens to be another competence aim outlined in this 2010 document.

4.6.2 Specific competence aims

After second grade (Year 2, age 7 years), students are expected to:

- ▶ Have “proficiency in oral communication with practical-aesthetic forms of expression, and to understand basic instructions in English.” I spoke standard American English when instructing, and students responded in English whenever possible. We used a variety of poems and tongue twisters in the fourth grade class to warm up, as well as singing a rock-and-roll version of the Alphabet Song (ABCs), and practiced vocabulary by passing vegetables (third grade) and alliteration connected to potential characters in the fifth grade dramatization of *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Dahl, 2006).
- ▶ They are to “listen to and understand words and expressions in English nursery rhymes, word games, songs, fairy tales and stories”. Drama as a method pulls from these categories for the basic materials from which to work, including the different picture books we used as text as well as stories the students already knew from Norwegian such as *Little Red Riding Hood* and *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. Students’ familiarity with these tales made it easier for them to work with them in English.
- ▶ “Students should also understand expressions and sentence patterns related to local surroundings and their own interests”, accomplished, for example, when using drama techniques in improvised stories based on students’ suggestions; it was they who determined where the action should go.
- ▶ Texts used from various English-speaking countries in various drama activities meet many of the goals for the competence aims for culture, society and literature. Picture books such as *Pretty Salma: A Little Red Riding Hood Story from Africa* (Daly, 2007) and *the Crayon Box that Talked* (DeRolf, 2007) allowed conversations about diversity and other cultures to occur, in English, and through play.

In addition to the goals mentioned above, fourth grade (Year 4/age 9 years) students should be able to “use simple reading and writing strategies”, accomplished when they wrote their own scripts or stories based on improvised dramas. The fourth graders read the story of *Pretty Salma* (Daly, 2007) together in a PowerPoint and they wrote their own stories after our zoo improvisation, and the fifth graders continually adapted the text they would use in *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Dahl, 2006). Another competence aim is that students should be able to “express their own thoughts and opinions in the encounter with English-language literature and child culture”. As the heart of drama as a method is listening to the ideas of the participants, acting on them and empowering their learning; this aim is met in everything this method does.

The aims after seventh grade (Year 7/age 12 years) also include a desire for students to “use basic patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection, and different types of sentences in communication.” This was accomplished through drama games, instructions in English, and lessons on how to use the voice, including tongue twisters, intonation exercises, and interpreting the music of a song.

Therefore, considering the above argument, it can be said that drama as a method fulfills many of the competence aims and objectives established by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research.

4.7 Conclusion to the chapter

Can unrelated drama techniques lead to learner empowerment through strengthening feelings of motivation and self-confidence with English, even when language learning itself is not the focus? Yes. In Figure 4.6 the third graders said they were more motivated and secure in English, as did the fourth and fifth graders after one year. The fourth grade teacher observed that “some students were more active in English after the *Mestringsprogram*, raising their hands more often”, indicating that they felt more empowered in the classroom. The ability to express oneself in a new way, either verbally or through a dramatic technique such as movement, puppets or song, can help take one out of oneself, therefore feeling more confident (Kao & O’Neill, 1998). One fifth grader refused to deliver even one line of our collaborative script, even when part of a group, but was willing and eager to use a puppet.

The data presented in this chapter supports the understanding that variety in the language curriculum is important; that students need opportunities to move, use their creativity, and

play: something which continues to be important even as students get older. It suggests that introducing non-traditional approaches appeals to students and, as they age, alternative approaches to teaching and learning become more and more interesting. The fact that students consistently find English difficult indicates there continues to be a need to find ways they can connect to the subject.

Even though each student didn't answer every question, enough did so that the data provides a good overall picture of how students in third, fourth, and fifth grade in this research project responded to drama as a method in English language learning. It was interesting, though not surprising, that all students answered the closed ended questions (those that had answers provided for them), but some did not answer the open ended ones where they had to come up with their own answers. Many left the "why" questions blank, as in Question 6 (Q1) "Why do you like to have a lesson taught in a different way", and Question 8 (Q1) "Why do you learn better with drama than when the teaching is done in a different way." I wonder if this was because they didn't understand, were uncertain about their own language skills, or had nothing to say; I suspect it was a combination of all three. It was also interesting to note that many students struggled with spelling in Norwegian, or writing in general, indicated by a great deal of erasing on the hand-written questionnaires; this caused speculation about their overall language skills. One might wonder if integrating drama techniques into Norwegian language learning as well would inspire language learning as a whole.

The research tools weren't perfect, observations were not always clear-cut, and my involvement as teacher as researcher at times clouded my research vision. However, the questionnaires provide concrete qualitative and quantitative data supported by the language learning theories and drama in education ideas. From these initial results it appears that drama as a method increases students' appreciation of and motivation towards English, using drama techniques engages learners and makes learning more interesting, and standard curriculum can be enriched and concepts (such as using sentences) can be learned through the use of drama techniques. Creating the active and participatory environment drama does (as in the use of body language and role play) provides students a stage upon which to freely try out language without the normal fear of judgment, which in turns leads to more comprehensible input.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

*“The playful uses of language do not end with childhood,
but continue throughout our lives.”*

(Cook, 2000, p. 11)

In 1997 with the document L97, the Norwegian government made English mandatory from first grade. However, despite increased exposure to English by non-native speaking children and youth via popular music, film, television, and video games (Rugesæter, 2014), not every child feels confident in an English language classroom. This research project is one step forward in creating an academic foundation upon which to build the idea of using drama as a method in empowering young English language learners in Norwegian classrooms. As Harriet Finlay-Johnson (1912) stated over one hundred years ago, teaching should be about igniting the desire to know, and today Steven Krashen (2011) agrees that compelling input is not just optimal: it may be the only way we truly acquire language.

In two questionnaires the students in this project were asked to reflect on feelings of motivation, security or self-confidence, and their relationship to their classmates, all indications of empowerment. In addition students were asked to reflect on how drama as a method affected their feelings towards English and comment on the drama techniques that had the most impact on them. Responses were resoundingly positive indicating my hypothesis to be true; when learners can participate in meaningful interactions (Krashen, 2008) as active participants in an environment where they feel safe and able to play, feelings of empowerment will grow.

Success for this study was determined not in how much English a student produced, but in how engaged he or she was in the *process*, and as the research data shows, most found their experience with drama as a method rewarding as they discovered new ways to play in and with English through body language, puppets, improvisation and games, role-play, scripted activities, and performance. Drama as a method, as presented in the data, can work through a learner's affective filters because they feel involved, interested, and listened to.

This research project set out to explore whether young English language learners felt empowered after being introduced to drama as a method, and I would say based on this small

study that the answer is ‘yes’. Drama pushes learning beyond the boundaries of a traditional classroom curriculum plan, giving learners the opportunity to express themselves in new and different ways. It gives students who may not normally interact with each other the opportunity to work together which positively affects the classroom dynamics, and by making the input interesting and engaging, helps accelerate absorption.

Drama as a method is not a magic solution, designed to turn every child into the perfect learner. It is not a method every teacher feels comfortable with nor has had exposure to. Using it in a language classroom does not mean that suddenly perfect English will spew forth from every tongue nor that full comprehension will come to every learner. It is a method to be used in collaboration with traditional methods. An athlete training for the Olympics doesn’t train in only one way, and language learning is no different. As Richards (2008) said about a communicative classroom, variety is the key. Variety provides opportunities for everyone to make connections, blending “things they like or are good at with things that are challenging or that they don’t like quite as much” (fourth grade teacher observation).

Language learners are different and therefore the drama techniques that appeal to them will also be different. When students recalled things we worked with one year after the program, they mentioned things we had done often and things we had done only once. Fourth graders, in addition to the popular zoo role-play mentioned specific texts by name like *Pretty Selma* (Daly, 2007) and *The Crayon Box that Talked* (DeRolf, 2007). Some mentioned instruments and rhythm, and some working with shadow puppets, a drama techniques I thought had been ineffective. The comments of these fourth graders are a good reminder that a teacher never knows what will reach a student and we need to continue to trust that when lessons are compelling, interesting, and relative to the learner, input will occur. “We worked with theater and ... and so we learned a lot of English” one student wrote in her comments”³⁸ and that was the goal.

I continue to learn from those I teach. From this research project I have a better idea of what drama techniques work, and today integrate more role-play with younger students, reinforced with writing activities. I hand over more of the responsibility for leading drama games or directing a script to older students and now ask students in other classes to fill out

³⁸ The Norwegian comment reads, “Vi holdt på med teater... og sån så larte vi mye engelsk”.

questionnaires before we start working together so I have a better means of evaluating what they need. I have begun to keep better field notes of my observations so I can see patterns in what works and what doesn't in order to apply the best techniques with the different age groups I work with, and I continue to retain an open channel of communication with classroom teachers. I continue the action reflection cycle on the path towards continual improvement for myself and for the students I teach.

People lock themselves into patterns, and students (and teachers) are no different. This research study was one step towards Herts' (1911) vision of what education could become; "nearly all child play is drama – now it would be perfectly easy to take this imaginative quality of childhood, this love of the dramatic, and make it the strongest educative force in the child's life". Do we do this in our classrooms today? Do we utilize the imaginative play of childhood, not only in how we present the English language curriculum but in every aspect of learning? Do we empower learners? As teachers, these questions warrant further reflection and research and one way to begin is to consider integrating drama as a method.

Drama shakes up what we think we know to be real, providing a new perspective into what might be possible. The data proves it. Attitudes towards language changed. Playing a role made learning more active. Sharing ideas made language come alive. Drama as a method for second language learning provides students the opportunity to express themselves in new ways, teaches teamwork and positive reinforcement of each other, and in so doing creates a better environment for learning and empowers the learners themselves. As with any action research project each new discovery leads to more questions, and I look forward to exploring the world of drama as a method in Norwegian English language classrooms in the future.

Using drama *is* a method that empowers English language learners

and it is a journey we are on together.

If you would like to continue this discussion,

please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for reading.

Heidi Haavan Grosch

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APPENDIX A

Primary Questionnaire (Q1) in Norwegian and English³⁹

Norwegian version

1. Skolefaget jeg liker best er:

- Matematikk
- Naturfag
- Samfunnsfag
- Engelsk
- KRL
- Norsk

Sett sirkel rundt

2. Jeg liker dette faget fordi.... (*skriv stikkord eller setninger*)

3. Faget jeg synes er mest vanskelig:

- Matematikk
- Naturfag
- Samfunnsfag
- Engelsk
- KRL
- Norsk

Sett sirkel rundt

4. Jeg synes det er vanskelig fordi... (*skriv stikkord eller setninger*)

5. *Mestringsprogrammet*: Å ha undervisning på en annen måte enn du vanligvis gjør: (*Sett X over riktig svar*)

BRA

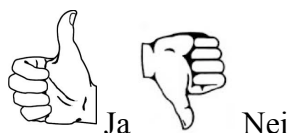
OK

IKKE BRA

6. Hvorfor? (*skrive stikkord eller setninger*)

7. Jeg forsto engelsk bedre med drama enn når vi lærer det på den vanlige måten.

(Sett X over riktig svar)



8. Hvorfor? (*skrive stikkord eller setninger*)

³⁹ Formatting is slightly different to fit this page.

9. *Mestringsprogrammet* hjalp dette meg med engelsk:

- Når Heidi brukte kroppsspråk (ikke bare sto i ro og pratet)
- Når vi brukte kroppsspråk selv
- Når vi brukte handdukker (du som har gjort dette)
- Når vi hadde mulighet til å spille forskjellige roller
- Når vi brukte dramalek med engelsk
- Når vi brukte manus (drama) i stedet for vanlig tekst
- Når vi hadde mulighet å vise fram arbeid til andre
- Andre ting _____ (skriv inn egne ord)

Sett sirkel
rundt max
tre
ting som
passer

10. **Før** *Mestringsprogrammet* syntes jeg at engelsk var (Sett X over riktig svar):

BRA

OK

IKKE BRA

11. **Etter** *Mestringsprogrammet* synes jeg at engelsk er (Sett X over riktig svar):

BRA

OK

IKKE BRA

12. En ting jeg har lært i *Mestringsprogrammet* med drama og engelsk er? (skriv stikkord eller setninger)

13 Svar på spørsmål 13 A **ELLER** 13 B

A. På grunn av *Mestringsprogrammet* har ting forandret seg:

- er jeg litt mer motivert for å jobbe med engelsk
- er jeg litt mer motivert for å jobbe på skole
- føler jeg meg litt mer sikker i engelsk
- føler jeg meg litt mer sikker foran andre
- føler jeg at vi har en bedre følelse i klassen
- har jeg hatt godt samarbeid med forskjellige elever i klassen

Sett sirkel
rundt **bare**
ting som
passer

B. Jeg synes ikke *Mestringsprogrammet* har forandret noe.

14. Hvis vi skal være med *Mestringsprogrammet* i framtiden, ønsker jeg å jobbe med:

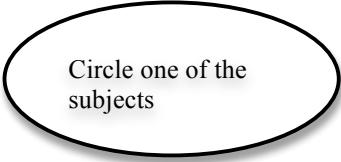
ENGELSK NORSK

Sett sirkel rundt svar

English translation

1. The school subject I like best is:

- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- English
- Religion
- Norwegian

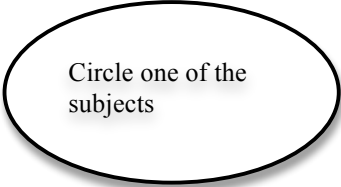


Circle one of the subjects

2. I like this subject because (*write a word or sentence....*)

3. The subject I think is the hardest is:

- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- English
- Religion
- Norwegian



Circle one of the subjects

4. I think it is hard because... (*write a word or sentence...*)

5. The *Mestringsprogram*: To have a lessons taught in a different way than they normally are, was: (Put an x over the correct answer)

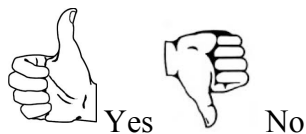
BRA

OK

IKKE BRA

6. Why? (*write a word or sentence*)

7. I understand English better when we use drama than when a lesson is taught in the normal way. (Put an **X** over the correct answer)



8. Why? (*write a word or sentence*)

9. The *Mestringsprogram* helped me with English:

- When Heidi used body language (and didn't just stand still and talk)
- When we used body language ourselves
- When we used puppets (for those of you who used them)
- When we had the chance to play different roles
- When we played drama games in English
- When we had a script (drama) instead of using other kinds of text
- When we had the chance to perform for others
- Other things (write in your own word)

Put a circle around three things

10. **Before** the *Mestringsprogram* I thought English was (put an **X** over the correct answer):

GOOD

OK

NOT GOOD

11. **AFTER** the *Mestringsprogrammet* synes jeg at Engelsk er (put an **X** over the correct answer):

GOOD

OK

NOT GOOD

12. One thing I have learned in the *Mestringsprogram* when using drama and English is (write a word or sentence)

13. Answer question 13 A **OR** 13 B

- Because of these things are different:
- I am a little more motivated to work with English
- I am a little more motivated to work in school
- I feel a little more confident with English
- I feel a little more confident in front of others
- I feel that we have a better feeling in the classroom
- I have worked as a team with different students in the class

Put a circle around **ONLY** the things that are true for you

B. I don't think the *Mestringsprogram* has changed anything.

14. If we work with the *Mestringsprogram* in the future, I would like to work in:

ENGLISH NORWEGIAN

Put a circle around your answer

APPENDIX B

Follow-up questionnaire (Q2) in Norwegian and English

Norwegian version

Hei.

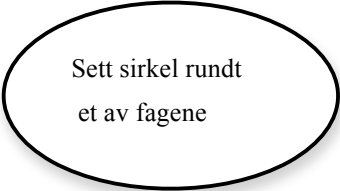
I fjor fylte du ut et spørreskjema om engelsk og drama. Nå vil jeg gjerne vite hva du husker.

På forhånd takk!

Heidi

1. Skolefaget jeg liker best er:

Matematikk
Naturfag
Samfunnsfag
Engelsk
KRL
Norsk

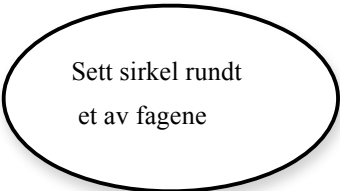


Sett sirkel rundt
et av fagene

2. Jeg liker dette faget fordi... (*skriv stikkord eller setninger*)

3. Faget jeg synes er mest vanskelig:

Matematikk
Naturfag
Samfunnsfag
Engelsk
KRL
Norsk



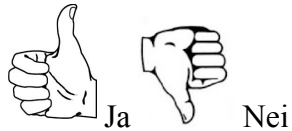
Sett sirkel rundt
et av fagene

4. Jeg synes det er vanskelig fordi... (*skriv stikkord eller setninger*)

5. Ting jeg husker fra i fjor da vi jobbet engelsk og drama sammen med Heidi (*skriv stikkord eller setninger*).

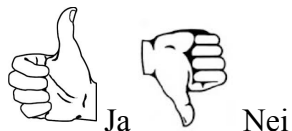
6. Jeg forstår engelsk bedre nå fordi jeg jobbet med engelsk og drama sammen med Heidi i fjor.

(Sett X over riktig svar)



7. Etter *Mestringsprogrammet* sa vi arbeidet med engelsk og drama sammen med Heidi i fjor har ting forandret seg:

(Sett X over riktig svar)



8. Hvis du svart **JA** på spørsmål 7, si hvorfor. (*sett sirkel rundt det som passer*)

- Jeg er litt mer motivert for å jobbe med engelsk
- Jeg er litt mer motivert for å jobbe på skolen
- Jeg føler meg litt mer sikker i engelsk
- Jeg føler meg litt mer sikker foran andre
- Jeg føler at vi har en bedre følelse i klassen
- Jeg har hatt godt samarbeid med forskjellige elever i klassen

9. Skrive andre kommentarer hvis du vil.

English translation

Hi,

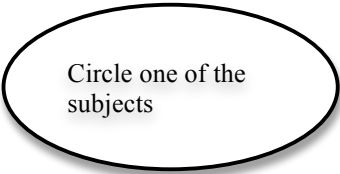
Last year you filled out a questionnaire related to English and drama. Now I am interested in knowing what you remember.

Thanks in advance,

Heidi

1. The school subject I like best is:

- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- English
- Religion
- Norwegian

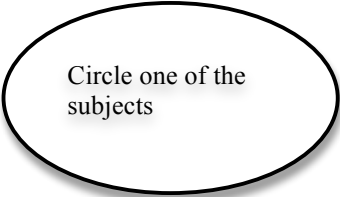


Circle one of the
subjects

2. I like this subject because (*write a word or sentence...*)

3. The subject I think is the hardest is:

- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- English
- Religion
- Norwegian

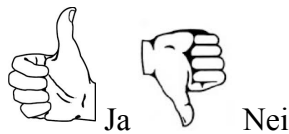


Circle one of the
subjects

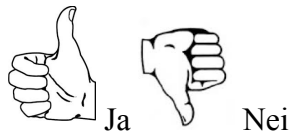
4. I think it is hard because... (*write a word or sentence...*)

5. Things I remember from last year when we worked with English and drama with Heidi
(write a word or sentence)

6. I understand English better now because I worked with English and drama with Heidi last year. *(put an x over the correct answer)*



7. After the *Mestringsprogram* when we worked with English and drama with Heidi last year, things are different. *(put an x over the correct answer)*



8. If you answered YES to question 7, write why. (Put a circle around the things that are true for you).

- I am a little more motivated to work with English
- I am a little more motivated to work in school
- I feel a little more confident with English
- I feel a little more confident in front of others
- I feel that we have a better feeling in the classroom
- I have worked as a team with different students in the class

9. Write additional comments if you wish.

APPENDIX C

Observation format I used in my role as teacher as researcher

Location:

Class/Teacher:

Date:

Session Number:

General physical setting:

Description information:

Activity:

Classroom alterations throughout course of interaction:

Student behavior:

Observations about activity:

Additional comments:

Student comments (observed or overheard during or after a session):

Teacher comments (made during or after a session):

Reflective information (including thoughts, ideas and concerns):

Brief Analysis:

APPENDIX D

Teacher follow-up discussion questions

(note: the questions are written in English but were asked in Norwegian)

1. What did you expect from the *Mestringsprogrammet*?
2. Have you worked with the *Mestringsprogrammet* before?
If so when and with what....
3. What was your overall feeling about what happened in your class?
4. Do you feel that your expectations about the *Mestringsprogrammet* (and the attention given to your “focus” children) were met?
5. How did it work to integrate drama into English?

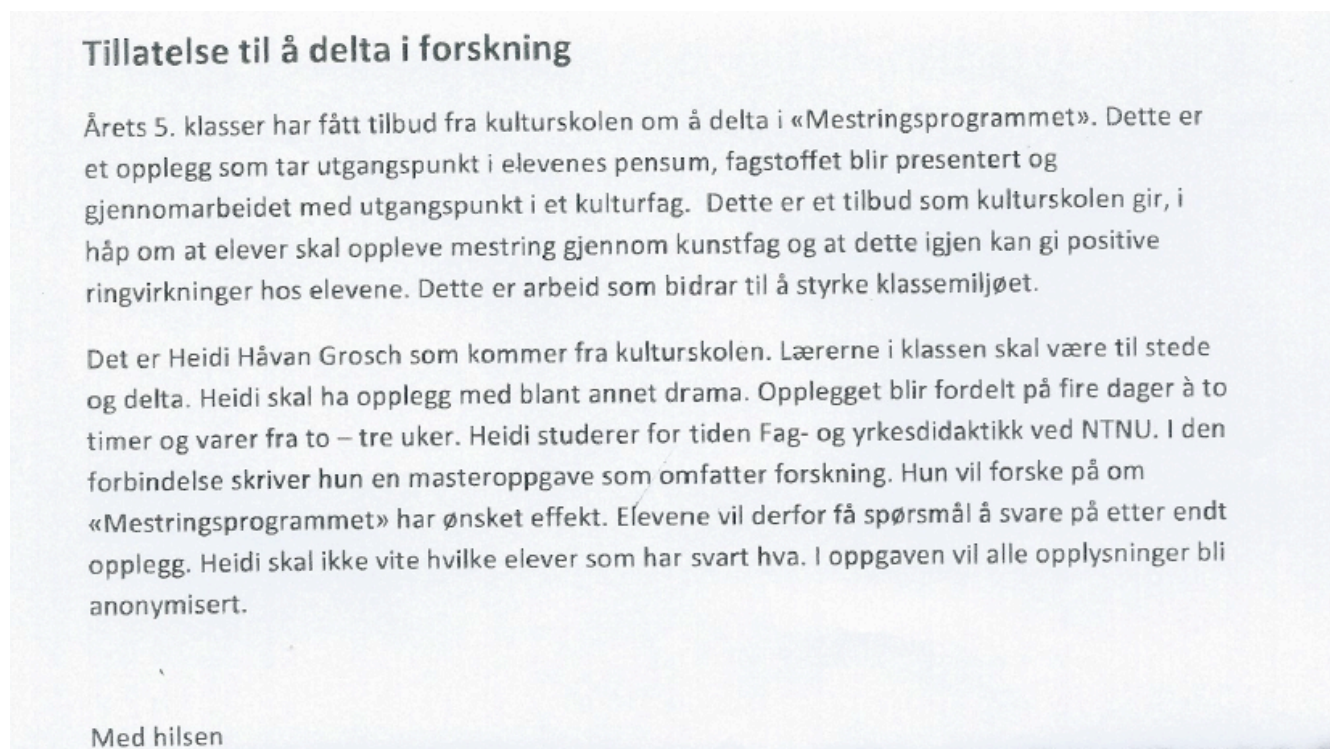
What did you observe in your students....

6. Did you learn/observe anything (techniques and/or approaches) that you will take further?
7. Do you think that the use of drama changes the atmosphere of the classroom? If so, how?
8. What training do you have in English?
9. What would make the teaching of English easier?
10. Were you surprised at the results of the student questionnaire? Elaborate.

APPENDIX E

An example of the parental consent form

The actual form is not included here as it uses the name of the school and other identifying information. The teachers all used the same text although the time frame in this sample applied only to the fifth grade; it was changed accordingly for the third and fourth grades to reflect the length of each project. The text was written by the school and not by myself.



English translation:

This year's fifth grade class has the opportunity to participate in the "*Mestringsprogram*". This is a program that is based in the students' curriculum, and subjects are presented through use of the arts. This is an opportunity offered by the Culture school in the hopes that students will experience empowerment through the arts, which in turn will provide positive consequences for the students. This is also intended to strengthen dynamics of the classroom environment.

Heidi Grosch is from the Culture school and will be using drama as a method in her work. Classroom teachers will also be present and participating. The program will last for four days, for two hours, for two to three weeks. Heidi is studying a masters of Science in didactics at NTNU. In connection to her master's thesis research, the students will be asked to answer questions about their experience. Heidi will not identify students and all information will remain anonymous.

APPENDIX F

A sample of the drama techniques used in this research project

(as reflected in questions 9/Q1, 5/Q2)

This is a partial list of the drama activities I used in the three classes I worked with for this study. Many can be found on-line, some are my own, and some I have adapted or used for years with no idea of the source. I have indicated the grade level in parenthesis (3, 4, 5), as well as which categories each activity could be connected to. In the primary questionnaire (Q1) body language, puppets, improvisation/games, script/role play, and performance/other were used.

In reflecting on the experience one year later, students added the categories music, dance/movement, and connections to the curriculum even though they were not specifically named as such. I have included this in this key as well.

KEY:

BL = Body Language

P = Puppets

IG = Improvisation/Drama Games = IG

S = Scripts = S

DM = Dance/Movement = DM

CD = Classroom Dynamics

V = Vocabulary Building

PR = Playing roles

P = Performance

CC = Direct Curriculum connection

M = Music

BT = Connected to a book texts

SP = Speech production

SC = Self-confidence building

For many of these activities, especially the songs and the book texts used, you can Google the name and find many activities, lesson plans, and YouTube videos. I have included book covers when appropriate. For many good ideas for drama games for children, Google Improv games, improvisation games for children, drama activities, drama games, or any variation of those words. We also did a number of activities, made up songs etc... on the spot which I have no further record of as they were created together while in that state of flow and not remembered afterwards. All instructions are given in English.

Mirror game (third, fourth and fifth grades)

Students work in pairs, one is the mirror, one looking into the mirror. Begin with just the face and move down the body with each round. Second part: have everyone stand in a circle. One person goes out, one person is the “leader” or looking into the mirror. The person who left the room comes back and tries to guess who the leader while everyone is performing the same movement (BL, IG, DM, CD, SC).

Frogger (third, fourth and fifth grades)

One person is the frog and the others in the circle are flies. The frog eats the flies by looking at them and sticking out his tongue. The fly then dies. One person leaves the room while the frog is secretly selected. They then return and have to guess who the frog is (BL, IG, CD).

ZipZapZoop (fifth grade)

Go around the circle saying “zip” and sliding hands together. Go around a second time saying “zap” and a third saying “zoop”. Finally, go around the circle saying (1st person) zip, (2nd person) zap, (third person) zoop etc... and then “throwing the zip, zap, zoop across the circle (each person saying a new word) (BL, IG, CD).

Roundabout (fifth grade)

Going in a circle. Zip = go to next person, Oil slick = skip or hop over the next person, Eek = change direction, Roundabout = change places. Person who calls roundabout starts again with zip (BL, IG, CD, SC).

Shape game (third and fourth grades)

First individually, students create the shape the teacher calls out. This progresses to pairs, smaller groups, larger groups and finally the entire class. Begin with simple shapes (circle, triangle, square) and progress to harder things (a show, a castle, a sailboat) (BL, IG, SC).

Ways of moving (third, fourth, and fifth grades)

Students move across the floor in different ways (imagine the surface is hot/cold, different character types i.e. old/young, different emotions i.e. sad/happy, different animals). Students are challenged to be in the moment and not copy others. As the activity progresses, they include more and more details (BL, IG, DM, PR, P, CD, SP, SC).

Pass the vegetable (third grade)

In this version of Hot Potato, various vegetables are used instead; a new way of learning vocabulary! This could be adapted to any passing game including “Button button, who’s got the button”. (IG, CC, CD, SP, V).

Alliteration sentences/Tongue twisters (fourth grade)

Play with different tongue twisters and then have the students create their own. Start with an animal, then add an adjective starting with the same letter, then a verb starting with the same letter etc... For example: The purple penguin passes peas perfectly or All ants are angry at Alice (IG, CC, CD, SP, VB, SC).

Clapping game (third and fourth grades)

One person claps and the next person copies, sending that clap around the circle. Different rhythms can be added and the clap or rhythm can be sent across the circle and not just around it (BL, IG, CD).

Do this, do that (third, fourth, fifth grades)

If the leader says Do This, everyone copies that movement, If the leader says Do That, no one copies the movement. This game is very much like Simon Says (BL, IG, CD, SP).

Song (third and fourth grades)

Here we Go Looby Loo is a common children's song similar to the Hokey Pokey. Make a circle and go in and out of the circle as a group holding hands on each line of the refrain. Many versions are available on YouTube or if you Google the song title (BL, DM, M, CD, V, SP).

Vegetable puppets (third grade)

1. Make black and white images (clip art works great) of the vegetable names you want students to learn. Have then select different vegetables to be the head, body, legs etc... of their puppet.
2. Glue vegetables onto a bookmark sized piece of cardstock and tape a popsicle stick to the bottom.
3. Have the student give their puppet a name. Write the name and the vegetables used on the back of the puppet.
4. Record the students introducing their puppet "This is Mr. Broccoli head" His ears are made of broccoli, his head is made of a cabbage, his nose is made of a carrot..."
5. Make a puppet stage by decorating the front of a cardboard fruit box. In pairs, have the students create a little dialogue between the two puppets, introducing themselves etc... Film this (P, S, PR, P, CC, CD, SP, V, SC).



Shadow puppets (third and fourth grades)

There is a lot to be found on-line about shadow puppets. We used a sheet with backlighting (cut figures out and hold them up behind the sheet to make shadows or use your bodies) and an overhead (cut figures out of cardstock and put on the overhead surface) (BL, P, CD, SC).

King Bidgood's in the Bathtub

written by Audrey Wood, illustrated by Don Wood. New York, New York: Scholastic, 1993 (fourth grade)

We act out the different roles. A rope in a circle or old cardboard boxes stapled together make a great bathtub. This works best in a smaller group (BL, PR, BT, SP, VB, SC).



The Magic Hat

by Mem Fox, illustrated by Tricia Tusa. Orlando, Florida: Voyager Books, 2006. (third grade)

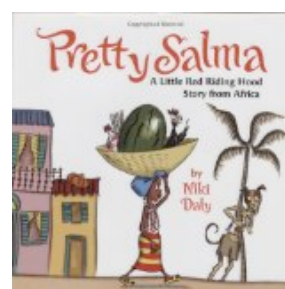
We read the story and sing a song based on the common refrain, “the magic hat, the magic hat, it moves like this and it moves like that” and act out the different animals. Then the children choose new animals and we create a new story in the same format. We wrote down their ideas into a script, which we then adapted as we worked through it (BL, S, PR, CC, M, BT, CD, SP, V, SC).



Pretty Salma: A Little Red Riding Hood Story from Africa

by Niki Daly. New York, New York: Clarion Books, 2006. (fourth grade)

Using Powerpoint, I created a reader's theater version of the text so the entire class could read it together. We then acted out the story before creating our own version, setting it in a different country. As all were familiar with the story of little red riding hood from before, it made it easy to change details and still have a comprehensible format (B, IG, S, CD, PR, BT, SP).



The Crayon Box that Talked

by Shane DeRolf, illustrated by Michael Letzig. New York, NY.
Random House Children's Books. (fourth grade)



Children get one color crayon and are asked to draw a picture with only that color. We talk about how limiting that might be. Then each child gets a piece of fabric in their crayon color to use as a costume. I create with them a short scene where the colors greet each other. “Hi blue” “Hi yellow”. The last color (not a natural skin color) is shunned by all the other colors when they greet them. “Hi blue!” blue says: “We don’t like green” Green greets red, “Hi red!” Red replies “We don’t like green” etc... In the end the last color (in this case green) is very sad and goes to the artist. “No one likes green”. The artist says “I have an idea” and then puts all the colors together in a picture. “Everything is much more beautiful with all the colors.” We then read the story (BL, IG, PR, CC, BT, CD, SP, V, SC).

The Three Billy Goats Gruff (third grade)

Dialogue (children took turns in the different roles and worked in groups)

Troll: Would you like to cross my bridge?

Billy Goat: Yes I would like to cross your bridge.

Troll: What kind of Billy Goat are you?

Billy Goat: I am a _____ (use a feeling word such as angry, sick, hungry, old, happy, thirsty, silly, young, sad) Billy Goat. (this is good grammatical practice for the use of a/an as well)

Troll: Ok then, you may cross (BL, PR, CD, SP, V, SC).

The Fantastic Mr. Fox (fifth grade)

Using an excerpt from their English fifth grade textbook, we created a script based on the story. Students contributed to the final text we used (P, S, CD, PR, P, CC, BT, SP)

Zoo Role-Play (fourth grade)

Students identified animals they wanted to play, and then I grouped them by categories and set them in cages (upside down tables and chairs) in the zoo. One or two students acted as the zookeeper and one or two came to the zoo to buy an animal. Afterwards, each student wrote down the story we had improvised adding their own illustrations (BL, IG, S, CD, V, PR, SP, SC).

APPENDIX G

The actual numbers from the questionnaires upon which the percentages were based.

Primary Questionnaire (Q1)

1. The school subject I like best is

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Sum
Mathematics	12	9	7	28
Science	1	3	0	4
Social Studies	0	0	1	1
English	3	3	2	8
KRL	0	0	0	0
Norwegian	2	1	4	7
More than one	0	2	1	3

3. The subject I think is the hardest is:

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Sum
Mathematics	4	1	6	11
Science	4	0	0	4
Social Studies	2	0	1	3
English	5	8	4	17
KRL	1	2	3	6
Norwegian	2	6	1	9
More than one	0	1	1	2

5. The *Mestringsprogram*: To have lessons taught in a different way than they normally are, was:

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Good	10	12	13
Ok	7	6	3
Not good	1	0	0

7. I understand English better when we use drama than when a lesson is taught in the normal way.

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Yes	15	15	15
No	3	2	1
No answer	0	1	0

9. The *Mestringsprogram* helped me with English (drama techniques):

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Body Language	21	15	14
Puppets	11	11	1
Improvisation/games	5	13	7
Script/playing roles	8	20	15
Performance/Other	5	n/a	6

(For a description of how the question options were divided, see 4.2.1 in the thesis)

10. **Before** the *Mestringsprogram* I thought English was

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Good	4	10	7
Ok	14	6	6
Not good	0	2	3

11. **AFTER** the *Mestringsprogram* I thought English was

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Good	11	13	9
Ok	6	5	7
Not good	1	0	0

13. Because of the *Mestringsprogram*, these things are different:

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Motivated with English	6	10	4
Motivated in school	1	6	3
More secure in English	6	8	6
More secure in front of others	0	5	8
Better feeling in class	0	9	3
Better at working together	0	11	7
I don't think the <i>Mestringsprogram</i> has changed anything	4	6	2

14. If we work with the *Mestringsprogram* in the future, I would like to work in:

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
English	9	14	11
Norwegian	9	4	3
No answer	0	0	2

Follow-up questionnaire (Q2)

1. The school subject I like best is

	Grade 4	Grade 5	Sum
Mathematics	11	12	23
Science	2	1	3
Social Studies	3	2	5
English	5	2	7
KRL	1	0	2
Norwegian	0	1	2
More than one	0	0	0
Gym	1	0	1
TOTAL	25	18	43

3. The subject I think is the hardest:

	Grade 4	Grade 5	Sum
Mathematics	3	4	7
Science	1	0	1
Social Studies	3	1	4
English	14	5	19
KRL	1	4	5
Norwegian	2	4	6
More than one	0	0	0
Gym	0	0	0
Nothing	1	0	1
TOTAL	25	18	43

5. Things I remember from last year when we worked with English and drama with Heidi (grade 4 only)

Body language	0
Puppets	6
Improvisation and games	2
Script and role-playing	17
Connected to language curriculum	10
Music and dance	5
Drama	5

6. I understand English better now because I worked with English and drama with Heidi last year.

	Grade 4	Grade 5
Yes	22	10
No	3	8

7. After the *Mestringsprogram* when we worked with English and drama with Heidi last year, things are different.

	Grade 4	Grade 5
Yes	18	7
No	10	10

8. If you answered YES to question 7

	Didn't comment	I am more motivated to work with English	I am more motivated to work in school	I feel a little more secure in English	I feel a little more secure in front of others	I feel there is a better overall feeling in the class	I have had good teamwork with different people in the class
Grade 4	6	11	5	9	4	2	7
Grade 5	6	5	2	3	6	2	4

