

What is Drama Education?

Purpose

- ◆ To consolidate related terms and concepts into one clear and concise definition.
- ◆ To eliminate ambiguities and inconsistencies that currently exist in the literature.
- ◆ To clarify differences between the art form of drama and the pedagogy of drama education.

Definition of Drama

Drama is an art form that explores human conflict and tension. It generally takes the form of a story presented to an audience through dialogue and action. The story is conveyed using the elements of the theatre: acting, costumes, props, scenery, lighting, music, and sound.

Drama has an emotional and intellectual impact on both the participants and audience members. It holds up a mirror for us to examine ourselves, deepening our understanding of human motivation and behavior. It broadens our perspective through stories that portray life from different points of view, cultures, and time periods.

Definition of Drama Education

Drama education uses the art form of drama as an educational pedagogy for students of all ages. It incorporates elements of an actor's training to facilitate the students' physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. It is a multisensory mode of learning designed to:

- ◆ Increase awareness of self (mind, body, and voice) and others (collaboration and empathy);
- ◆ Improve clarity and creativity in communication of verbal and nonverbal ideas; and
- ◆ Deepen understanding of human behavior, motivation, diversity, culture, and history.

It also employs the elements of theatre—costumes, props, scenery, lighting, music, and sound—to enrich the learning experience, re-enact stories, and mount productions. Students gain experience in the various roles of actor, director, writer, designer, and audience member.

Drama education encompasses related disciplines and art forms such as pantomime, clowning, drama games, storytelling, radio drama, melodrama, puppetry, improvisation, mask theatre, public speaking, playwriting, directing, and play productions.