

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study examined the incorporation of creative dramatics into a language arts classroom for students with special needs. Participants were initially eight 8th grade identified special education students, although the number became seven during the latter portion of the study. Early assessments indicated these students had difficulty in the areas of reading and comprehension, while student surveys expressed little to no desire to read for enjoyment. These students all were identified as learning disabled while a majority also exhibited emotional and behavioral disabilities. One student was emotionally disturbed with an additional medical disability. These students were observed during specially designed instruction given individually, in small groups, and in full class discussions, and activities. Students took part in drama activities including journal writing, writing in role, and activities incorporating movement. Student engagement and participation improved while involved in these methods. Student writing improved in depth and details and content after being exposed to these methods. When tested and surveyed again later in the school year, all students improved in their writing skills while increasing their outside reading, as well. The presence of these dramatic, instructional strategies enhanced overall reading and writing performance and helped students gain confidence in themselves and their abilities to express themselves in verbal and written form.