

**The Efficacy of a Drama Therapy-Based Program in Enhancing Self-Perception of Social
Skills, and School-Based Behaviors and Achievement**

By,

Laura Harford, MA, MEd

**A Doctoral Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Psychology in the
Department of Psychology at Pace University**

New York

2016

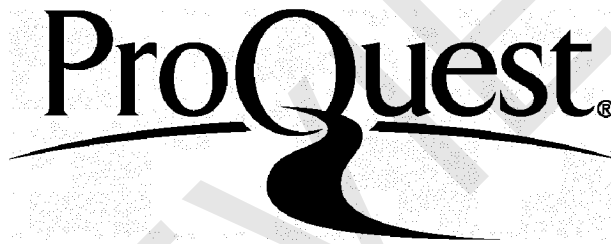
ProQuest Number: 10302003

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10302003

Published by ProQuest LLC(2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

PSY.D PROJECT FINAL APPROVAL FORM

NAME: Laura Harford

TITLE OF PROJECT: The Efficacy of a Drama Therapy-Based Program in Enhancing Self-
Perception of Social Skills, and School-Based Behaviors and Achievement

DOCTORAL PROJECT COMMITTEE:

PROJECT ADVISOR: Thalia Goldstein, PhD
Name

Assistant Professor Pace University
Title Affiliation

PROJECT CONSULTANT: Michele Zaccario, PhD
Name

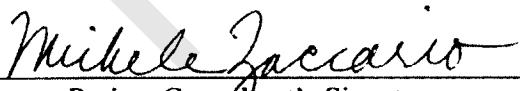
Associate Professor Pace University
Title Affiliation

FINAL APPROVAL OF COMPLETED PROJECT:

I have read the final version of the doctoral project and certify that it meets the relevant requirements for the Psy.D. degree in School-Clinical Child Psychology.


Project Advisor's Signature

9/16/16
Date


Project Consultant's Signature

9/16/16
Date

ARTICLE TEMPLATE APPROVAL FORM

NAME: Laura Harford

TITLE OF PROJECT: The Efficacy of a Drama Therapy-Based Program in Enhancing Self-Perception of Social Skills, and School-Based Behaviors and Achievement

DOCTORAL PROJECT COMMITTEE:

PROJECT ADVISOR: Thalia Goldstein, PhD
Name

Assistant Professor Pace University
Title Affiliation

PROJECT CONSULTANT: Michele Zaccario, PhD
Name

Associate Professor Pace University
Title Affiliation

Student is approved to produce an article-style manuscript as part of the dissertation requirement.

Authorship will be as follows:

Primary Author (must be student): Laura Harford, MSED

Co-Author: Thalia Goldstein, PhD

Co-Author: _____

Co-Author: _____

[Signature]
Student's Signature

9/18/16
Date

[Signature]
Project Advisor's Signature

1/29/16
Date

[Signature]
Project Consultant's Signature

9/18/16
Date

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the cooperation and participation of the ENACT program. Specifically, Site Director, Cristina Hernandez, was especially integral in obtaining consent and participation of the students. Further, the faculty of MS 363, teachers and administrators were very supportive in making this study possible. Thank you.

PREVIEW

Abstract

This study aimed to discover whether a drama therapy-based in-school intervention program, ENACT, was successful in promoting prosocial behaviors and decreasing problems behaviors over the course of one school year. Students were administered the 12-Item Grit Scale, Social Skills Improvement System Rating Scale, Morgan Jinks Student Self-Efficacy Scale, and a written version of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Fourth Edition vocabulary subtest at both pre- and post-intervention. Results indicated that students who participated in the program did not evidence any significant changes in their perceptions of themselves, with the exception of their self-perceived talent. This implies that ENACT may not actually be targeting different constructs than those that they propose. Further studies should analyze more changes related to self-perceived talent, such as self-esteem.

PREVIEW

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
SECTION 1	
Introduction	1
Review of the Literature	1
Statement of Purpose	5
References	8
SECTION 2	
Empirical Article	11
Conclusion	32
References	37
APPENDICES	
A Parent Consent Form	40
B Student Assent Form	42

APPENDICES (continued)	PAGE
C Demographic Form	43
D Qualitative Questionnaire	44
E 12-Item Grit Scale	45
F Vocabulary	47
G Morgan-Jinks Student Self-Efficacy Scale	50
H SSIS-RS Student Self-Report Form	52

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of Demographic Information (page 34)

PREVIEW

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Grit Scores (Page 35)

Figure 2: MJSES Talent Scores (Page 36)

Figure 3: SSIS Social Skills Scores (Page 36)

PREVIEW

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to discover whether a particular drama therapy program was an effective approach at increasing prosocial behaviors and decreasing problem behaviors in middle school students, which in turn would increase feelings of school engagement and decrease the potential of future dropout. A city-wide drama therapy-based program ENACT states that they have been able to achieve these goals. Through pre- and post-intervention surveys and standard tests, this study sought to discover whether students' perceptions of their own behaviors and beliefs changed over the course of a school year as a result of their participation in the ENACT program. The measures included the 12-Item Grit Scale, the Social Skills Improvement System Rating Scale, the Morgan Jinks Student Self-Efficacy Scale, and a written version of the WISC-IV vocabulary subtest. While ENACT operates a number of programs of varying lengths and school involvement, one site was chosen for this study based on previous relationship with the school and anticipated cooperation. Three 8th grade classrooms were participating in the program, and two were not. The remaining two classrooms were recruited for the control group. This resulted in group differences in the total number of participants and educational programming. Further, one of the classrooms involved in the experimental group was primarily Spanish-speaking. All measures and consent forms were translated and back-translated for this group.

The data was analyzed using a series of one-way ANOVAs to discover any group differences, and then a repeated measures ANOVA was used to find any change between groups over time. The results indicated that there were no significant differences between groups in terms of demographic information, previous ENACT participation, or verbal skills. The control group was found to have marginally more grit at both pre- and post-intervention, and was found to have a more significant increase in social skills over the course of the year. The ENACT group was not found to have any significant changes across variables, with the exception of a slightly increased endorsement of their self-perceived talent. These results indicate that the ENACT program does not in fact target the traits that it believes it is targeting, and may in fact be promoting more in the arena of self-esteem rather than problem solving.

INTRODUCTION

According to the New York Times, the graduation rate in New York City for the class of 2012 was 60.4%, with a dropout rate of 11.4%. In New York State overall, the graduation rate for 2012 was 74%. Further, The New York State Department of Education reported that only 38.4% of New York City high school graduates are considered ready for college or a career. These statistics are troubling and inspire many questions regarding what is occurring in the urban environment of New York City that is not happening in the rest of the state. In a city of ultimate resources, why are students not benefitting and what can we do about it?

Many studies point to a student's level of school engagement as a predictor of drop out (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Jimerson, Campos, & Greif, 2003; Lamote, Speybroeck, Van Den Noorgate, & Van Damme, 2013; McArdle et al., 201; Randolph, Rose, Fraser, & Orthner, 2004; Wang & Fredricks, 2014). In broad terms, school engagement has been defined in the literature as encompassing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive levels. Behavioral engagement has been defined as including observable actions or performance including homework completion, grades, achievement test scores and participation in extracurricular activities (Jimerson, Campos, & Greif, 2003). Emotional engagement is measured in terms of student's feelings about school, their peers, and teachers (Jimerson, Campos, & Greif, 2003). Cognitive engagement is defined in terms of students' motivation, aspirations, and expectations, as well as their perceptions and beliefs about their own self-efficacy and how much others care for and support them (Jimerson, Campos, & Greif, 2003).

Several studies have indicated the importance of school engagement in terms of dropout and have identified factors for increasing it, including building social skills in an after school environment. Lamote, Speybroeck, Van Den Noortgate, and Van Damme (2013) identified secondary school students with low levels of emotional and behavioral school engagement as more likely to not finish secondary school and drop out earlier than students with high levels of engagement, even if these high levels drop. The difference was even more pronounced for emotionally disengaged students. The profile for these students with low levels or high and decreasing levels consisted mostly of low socioeconomic status, lower cognitive ability, students starting in a remedial class, racial minorities, and those who were retained a grade in secondary school.

Wang and Fredricks (2014) also found that lower behavioral and emotional engagement and greater problem behaviors predicted dropout likelihood. After accounting for teacher support, parent support, and academic achievement as covariates, these researchers also found that the rates of change in behavioral and emotional engagement were negatively associated with the rate of change in problem behaviors over time. Thus not only reducing dropout, but also suggesting an improvement in overall behavior.

As retention has been identified as an indicator of lower engagement and extracurricular activities as an indicator of higher engagement, a study by Randolph, Fraser, & Orthner (2004) confirmed that retention in first grade and middle school had an increased impact on the likelihood of dropout, but also that youths who participated in extracurricular activities were more likely to stay in school longer regardless of retention.