

**Case study thirty-nine: Finland: Theatre and drama in grades 7-9 of Finnish
comprehensive schools**

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Aims

The primary objective was to determine what the pupils experienced in studying expressive arts and what they reported in their narratives.

Project outline

This research examines the practical teaching of theatre and drama in Finnish schools today. The cultural context was that theatre and drama are taught as elective subjects in comprehensive schools. Data was collected from 129 students in theatre and drama groups. Pragmatism was the philosophical construct used to examine the study of theatre and drama and learning experiences. Eight themes emerged from the analysis of the data.

These were:

- self-confidence
- joy, fun and craziness

- relaxation and calming effect
- self-discipline
- concentration
- role (acting)
- empathy
- being part of a group.

Research methods

Several methods (multiple research strategies) were applied in examining the topics:

- Historical survey
- Focus groups
- Case studies
- Stories and narrative
- Participant observation
- Personal learning diaries/journals
- Interviews

Pupils' voices were a valuable part of the methodology.

Results

Extensive information was gained about pupils' experiences in studying expressive arts.

Main Impact

- Some impact on national curricula, theatre and drama

- The community have been able to apply the findings to local theatre and drama education planning
- Teachers obtain information and ideas.
- Theatre and drama teachers gain self-confidence.

Main Challenges

The main challenge for the project was finances. Other issues were not seen as challenges or limitations.