Kingston Hill Academy Drama Club

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**Purpose:** I studied Erik Erikson’s fourth stage of development, industry vs. inferiority, because I wanted to find ways that school systems can help children gain self-confidence. This study aims to help readers understand how the attitudes and actions of teachers contribute to a student’s development of industry or lack thereof.

**Methods:**

I saved the sign-up sheets (that listed their interests) and met with 43 students every Tuesday and Thursday after school to audition, learn songs, study lines, and practice dances. Throughout the program, I kept note of interesting comments and situations by writing them down. I noted parent comments, student comments and attitudes, and teacher feedback. I then compared my observational data to their initial interest sheets to look for growth. Furthermore, I engaged in individualized conversations with parents to learn more about students’ personal experiences.

**Participants:** The study took place at my student teaching site: Kingston Hill Academy. The program was open to all students in grades 2-5 on a first come, first serve basis. There were 43 participants.

**Introduction:** According to psychologist Erik Erikson, children between the ages of five and twelve experience a psychological crisis: industry vs. inferiority. In order to feel industrious, they need to be placed in an environment that reinforces their efforts to achieve goals. If a child fails to achieve a sense of industry, that child will ultimately fail to live up to his or her full potential (McLeod, 2008). My goal is to create an environment of reinforcement in a school drama club, where students are encouraged to try new things and work hard to be successful. I hypothesize that this drama club will help build self-confidence and give students a sense of purpose.

**Results:** Overall, the program succeeded in giving students a sense of value and purpose that helped lead to the success of the group. As a result, students experienced increased senses of industry and self-confidence.

**Comments/Feedback:**

- “The play was a miracle for her. It went beyond finding new purpose, it changed her attitude and built her crumbling self esteem. She’s a new kid now and I am deeply thankful. I think you just changed my daughter’s life.” – Mother of a Fourth Grader
- “I was surprised by some of the kids that you wouldn’t expect it from.” – Teacher
- “It has given her a great amount of confidence and brought so much joy to her life and our families!” – Mother of a Fourth Grader
- “This is the last week of drama and I am so used to being with everyone that when it’s over, I’m going to feel empty.” – Third Grader
- “He has always loved to sing and dance, but I never thought he would be so willing to do it on a stage. He told me on the drive home after his Thursday performance that he wants to do more.” – Mother of a Second Grader

**Discussion:**

- My results confirmed the fact that an extra-curricular activity (such as a drama club) that praises students for pushing themselves outside of their comfort zones helps to increase children’s senses of industry and self-confidence.
- In many cases, the program helped students to discover a new passion, try something new, or build self-confidence.
- When a student was bored and/or frustrated during drama, it was because he or she felt unneeded.
- I was able to increase enthusiasm and increase participation by giving students individual roles and making them feel essential to the success of the play.

- Ex: Students in charge of certain props or microphones, or others in charge of handing out programs.
- I propose that the school try to incorporate additional extracurricular opportunities to help more students learn about themselves, be praised for their work, and develop a sense of industry.

**Literature Cited:**


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