

# Research on Psychodrama

by Robert Crawford

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I am a keen advocate of evaluative research for psychodrama. One of the reasons that Action Methods are not more widely known and used, I believe, is that we have not proved them effective using common scientific methods. Imagine my pleasure then, when I discovered in the Christchurch Psychodrama Library a publication entitled 'Selected Abstracts of Outcome Research and Evaluation in the Action Methods'. It was published in 1984 by Thomas Schramski and Clyde Feldman of the Tucson Centre for Psychodrama and Group Process, 927 North 10th Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85705, USA.

Many of the 200 abstracts cited are unpublished doctoral theses, which is presumably why they are not more widely known. The commonest journals quoted seem to be The Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama and Sociometry; Group Process; and The Journal of Counselling Psychology.

Psychodrama, Sociodrama, Role Play, Role Training and related action methods are covered. Each abstract provides basic information about the parameters of the research and the nature of the outcomes. I have written to The Tucson Centre to find out if this publication has been updated and await a reply.

To demonstrate the breadth of coverage, here are some of the conclusions, selected more or less at random.

Role playing is effective in raising self concept and deterring school dropouts. Sociometry and sociodrama training improve classroom relationships between teacher and pupils. Role playing helps silent psychiatric patients to communicate. Role playing is superior to mini-lectures in teaching facilitative communication skills to dental students. An intensive 18 hours of non-continuous psychodrama (i.e., a weekend) was effective at reducing anxiety in nursing students when compared with 6 sessions of 3 hours duration once weekly, and the effects lasted 5 weeks. However at post-test at a longer interval after this, there was no difference between groups and controls. Role playing was superior to systematic desensitisation at reducing fear of snakes. Teaching volunteer reading tutors by Action Methods was superior to giving lectures. In a parent training programme, role play was more effective than other methods in increasing parent-child communication. There was mixed support for the efficacy of psychodrama in addition to other group therapy, in promoting the

adjustment of alcohol abusers, over group therapies alone.

Further information can be obtained by pursuing the original source cited at the beginning of each abstract. The abstracts are very thoroughly organised and I can recommend the publication to anybody who wants to discover what has already been done up to 1984.