

PLAYFUL EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR ASSESSING STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON DRUG ADDICTION IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Mariana Balhego Rocha¹, Maricana Demarchi² e Thais Pasquali³

Abstract

Adolescence is a period of developmental transition in which initial exposure to substances often occurs. In this context, schools and teachers play a crucial role in preventive education. This study aimed to strengthen cognitive dimensions and attitudes regarding drug prevention among eighth-year students in a public school in Uruguaiana through creative educational strategies, including fanzines, theatrical performances, and musical compositions. These activities were developed under the guidance of professors and graduate students from the Pharmacy and Education programs. Students produced a fanzine with informational texts and warnings about substance-related harms; the play staged dialogues between characters and their conscience to portray real-life conflicts and outcomes; a rap concluded the performance, critically addressing social and existential dimensions of substance use. A retrospective pretest-posttest questionnaire was administered to participating student actors (n = 23) to assess perceptions of impact and engagement. Overall, 94% reported that the play had a positive impact on the audience. Students described feeling challenged and valued while conveying messages to peers, highlighting their engagement in acting, scriptwriting, rehearsals, and performance. They also reported gains in oral expression, spatial/body awareness, and in integrating artistic expression with critical social themes. Findings suggest that arts-based, school-embedded activities can promote student engagement and personal growth while enhancing understanding of substance-related issues and the importance of preventive education.

Keywords: Adolescent health; Education; Illicit Drugs; Substance-Related Disorders.

ESTRATÉGIAS EDUCACIONAIS LÚDICAS PARA AVALIAÇÃO DAS PERSPECTIVAS DOS ESTUDANTES SOBRE A DEPENDÊNCIA DE DROGAS EM UM AMBIENTE ESCOLAR PÚBLICO

¹Doctorate in Pharmaceutical Care from Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil. E-mail: marianabalhego@hotmail.com

²Master's Degree in Science Education: Chemistry of Life and Health from Universidade Federal do Pampa (UNIPAMPA). Uruguaiana, Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil. E-mail: marcanademarchi@unipampa.edu.br

³Master's Degree in Science Education: Chemistry of Life and Health from Universidade Federal do Pampa (UNIPAMPA). Uruguaiana, Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil. E-mail: thaisppasquali@gmail.com



Resumo

A adolescência é um período de transição do desenvolvimento no qual a exposição inicial a substâncias frequentemente ocorre. Nesse contexto, escolas e professores desempenham papel crucial na educação preventiva. Este estudo teve como objetivo fortalecer dimensões cognitivas e atitudes relacionadas à prevenção do uso de drogas entre estudantes do oitavo ano de uma escola pública de Uruguaiana, por meio de estratégias educacionais criativas, incluindo fanzines, apresentações teatrais e composições musicais. Essas atividades foram desenvolvidas sob a orientação de professores e estudantes de pós-graduação dos programas de Farmácia e Educação. Os estudantes produziram um fanzine com textos informativos e alertas sobre danos relacionados a substâncias; a peça encenou diálogos entre personagens e sua consciência para retratar conflitos e desfechos da vida real; um rap concluiu a apresentação, abordando de forma crítica as dimensões sociais e existenciais do uso de substâncias. Foi aplicado um questionário retrospectivo de pré e pós-teste aos estudantes-atores participantes ($n = 23$) para avaliar percepções de impacto e engajamento. No geral, 94% relataram que a peça teve impacto positivo no público. Os estudantes relataram sentir-se desafiados e valorizados ao transmitir mensagens aos colegas, destacando o engajamento em atuação, escrita de roteiro, ensaios e performance. Também relataram ganhos em expressão oral, consciência espacial/corporal e na integração da expressão artística com temas sociais críticos. Os achados sugerem que atividades baseadas em artes, integradas ao contexto escolar, podem promover o engajamento estudantil e o crescimento pessoal, ao mesmo tempo em que ampliam a compreensão sobre questões relacionadas a substâncias e a importância da educação preventiva.

Palavras-chave: Drogas Ilícitas; Educação; Transtornos Relacionados ao Uso de Substâncias; Saúde do adolescente.

ESTRATEGIAS EDUCATIVAS LÚDICAS PARA EVALUAR LAS PERSPECTIVAS DE LOS ESTUDIANTES SOBRE LA DROGADICCIÓN EN UN ENTORNO ESCOLAR PÚBLICO

Resumen

La adolescencia es un período de transición del desarrollo en el que a menudo ocurre la exposición inicial a sustancias. En este contexto, las escuelas y el profesorado desempeñan un papel crucial en la educación preventiva. Este estudio tuvo como objetivo fortalecer dimensiones cognitivas y actitudes respecto a la prevención del consumo de drogas entre estudiantes de octavo grado de una escuela pública de Uruguaiana mediante estrategias educativas creativas, incluidas fanzines, representaciones teatrales y composiciones musicales. Estas actividades se desarrollaron bajo la orientación de docentes y estudiantes de posgrado de los programas de Farmacia y Educación. Los estudiantes elaboraron un fanzine con textos informativos y advertencias sobre



los daños relacionados con sustancias; la obra escenificó diálogos entre personajes y su conciencia para representar conflictos y desenlaces de la vida real; un rap concluyó la presentación, abordando de manera crítica las dimensiones sociales y existenciales del consumo de sustancias. Se administró un cuestionario retrospectivo pretest–posttest a los estudiantes-actores participantes ($n = 23$) para evaluar percepciones de impacto y compromiso. En conjunto, el 94% informó que la obra tuvo un impacto positivo en el público. Los estudiantes describieron sentirse desafiados y valorados al transmitir mensajes a sus pares, destacando su participación en actuación, escritura del guion, ensayos e interpretación. También reportaron avances en expresión oral, conciencia espacial/corporal y en la integración de la expresión artística con temas sociales críticos. Los hallazgos sugieren que las actividades basadas en las artes, integradas en la escuela, pueden promover el compromiso estudiantil y el crecimiento personal, a la vez que fortalecen la comprensión de los problemas relacionados con sustancias y la importancia de la educación preventiva.

Palabras clave: Adolescente; Educación; Drogas ilícitas; Trastornos relacionados con el uso de sustancias.

1. Introduction

When dealing with education, Article 205 of the 1988 Federal Constitution of Brazil states the following: “Education, the right of all and duty of the State and the family, will be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming at full development of the person, their preparation for the exercise of citizenship and their qualification for work.” According to the Brazilian Constitution, the family is considered the primary source of ethical, moral, and social values for children. However, many schools receive students who lack a foundational grounding in these values within the school environment.

Initial exposure to substances often occurs during adolescence, a transitional period when peer influence, experimentation, imitation, and behavioral disinhibition are frequently perceived as developmentally normative (Vargas, 2015; Schenker; Minayo, 2005). In this context of identity formation and emotional instability, substances may be taken up as perceived coping mechanisms (Canavez; Alves; Canavez, 2017). Accordingly, preventive strategies that account for adolescents’ psychosocial contexts are essential to reducing risk.

In a globalized world saturated with information and technological change, schools must adopt innovative approaches to meaningfully engage students. According to Corrêa et al. (2014), dramatization is a way to socialize, involve, and guide both the participant and the viewer. Recent evidence also points to the effectiveness of theater-based interventions in increasing awareness and promoting attitude changes regarding substance use (Junior, 2022). When dealing with drug addiction, this methodology helps address the

topic in a more accessible way and fosters the development of oral and physical expression.

Another useful, engaging, and easily developed tool is the fanzine, a self-published magazine widely used in educational settings. It is a type of magazine prepared by professionals or amateurs, self-financed and produced without rigid editorial standards or formal publication requirements. One of the goals of fanzine production is to encourage textual expression on diverse themes, making the person the author or co-author, fostering dialogue, and facilitating the exchange of experiences (Ferreira, 2012). Through such productions, individuals become authors or co-authors, promoting dialogue and experience-sharing, which can be especially valuable when discussing sensitive topics like substance use.

Therefore, this study aimed to strengthen the cognitive and attitudinal dimensions within the perspective of preventing and combating substance use among the eighth-year classes of a public school in Uruguaiana, located in the western border region of Rio Grande do Sul. The students involved in the work had previously participated in educational activities through card games and role-playing games (RPGs) related to the topic at hand. However, they responded to an invitation to create a fanzine and a theater performance, writing the script and designing the costumes for the performance. As part of the activity, a ninth-year student composed a rap song on the theme of drug addiction, which closed the presentation of the play.

2. Methods

This study was conducted between March and December 2019 at a public elementary school in Uruguaiana, southern Brazil. It was designed as a qualitative and quantitative action research study, involving continuous interaction between the researchers and the participants. Data were collected through three phases: fanzine production, a theater performance, and musical composition. Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Pampa, under CAAE 62656916.0.0000.5323, ensuring compliance with ethical standards for studies involving human participants.

The sample comprised two groups of students enrolled in the eighth grade. The first group ($n=70$) participated in the production of the fanzine and received an invitation to join theater performance for the school community. Out of these 70, 23 students voluntarily participated in the theatrical performance. All participants had previously attended cognitive and attitudinal training sessions on substance use in the preceding year, conducted by the research team, which was composed of professors and master's students in the fields of pharmacy (2) and education (1). Students' ages ranged from 13 to 15 years, and no other exclusion criteria were adopted.

The fanzine is an amateur publication that seeks to develop creative materials through cutouts, texts, and drawings, based on students' experiences

and knowledge on a given subject (Falk, 2010). Over the course of four weeks, eighth-grade students in the Portuguese Language class developed fanzines addressing substance use, focusing on the main drugs commonly used in the city of Uruguai, such as alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, cocaine, crack, and ecstasy, as well as emerging drugs that piqued their interest, such as “krokodil” and “zombie.” These materials were later distributed to the public during the final presentations.

The theater performance aimed to foster reflection on a relevant and controversial topic. The research team guided the students over six rehearsal sessions in creating dialogues. The team proposed that the play would be structured as a dialogue within a person’s conscience, meaning it would take place in the mind of an individual who would engage in dialogue with different types of drugs (each represented as a character capable of verbal communication). From these dialogues, some individuals would succumb to the temptation of drugs, while others would resist. Based on this concept, the students were divided into seven groups, each composed of three to four individuals, representing different drugs and the people interacting with them. The characters included: tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, cocaine/crack, krokodil, ecstasy, and zombie. All dialogues were written by the students, drawing on their prior knowledge and community experiences. Once proposed, minor adjustments were made by the team to ensure coherence. The final presentation took place in the school auditorium and a municipal amphitheater, reaching a wider audience of peers and teachers.

To conclude the educational and cultural strategy developed through the theater play, a ninth-grade student who was already composing hip-hop songs was invited to compose a rap song focused on the play’s theme. The song reflected the students’ experiences, impressions, and connection to the issue of substance use. According to Fernandes (2016), “rap is a musical genre made up of a rhythmic discourse with rhymes and poetry.” This art form is popular among the school’s students, making it a strategic tool to reinforce the play’s anti-drug message.

The actors carried out four rehearsals, the last two incorporating the rap song. In the final rehearsal, the students performed in full costume, all dressed in black and wearing makeup designed to reflect the effects of different drugs. During art classes, under supervision, the students researched appropriate characterizations, including makeup and costume design.

Two weeks after the final presentation, a six-item questionnaire (four closed-ended and two open-ended questions) was administered to the 23 student actors. The purpose was to assess students’ perceptions regarding their participation, engagement in activities, the personal impact of the experience, whether they felt a sense of overcoming personal challenges or discovery, and their relationships with their colleagues (Annex 1).

The quantitative data were organized in an electronic spreadsheet and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative responses were categorized thematically to capture the students’ reflections on their experiences. By

structuring data collection in this way, the study aimed to evaluate how participatory artistic activities could strengthen cognitive and attitudinal dimensions in the prevention of substance use among adolescents.

3. Results

For the creation of the fanzine, the students described the physical, psychological, social, and lethal consequences of the substance use—alcohol, tobacco, cannabis (marijuana), cocaine/crack, ecstasy, and emerging substances such as “krokodil” and so-called “zombie” drugs—according to their perceptions and understanding, and how these substances affect society.

The fanzine combined formal informational texts with more informal warning messages. To raise awareness about the harm of substance use among other students at the school, students who did not participate in the play distributed the fanzines to the audience during the performance. The fanzines contained phrases such as: “Life yes, drugs no”; “Drugs kill, but lack of solidarity does too”; “Crack doesn't just destroy lives, it destroys families.”

The students also emphasized the importance of the family in substance use prevention; some fanzines are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Some examples of fanzines prepared by students participating in the project.



Source: Prepared by the authors (2025).

The theater performance depicted real-life conflicts on stage, drawing the attention of teenagers and the school community to the importance of preventing substance use. Some of the characters showed resistance to accepting the invitation to use a particular drug during the dialogue between them and their conscience/desire, such as: "I will not engage anymore!" (ecstasy); "No, I will not use it anymore! My friends will help me with my problems." (cocaine); "Look, let's end this conversation here. I'm tired of you. Get out!" (marijuana); "You liar! Get out of here, get out! It won't happen to me!" (krokodil); "You will need a lot more to convince me, you know? Don't try this small talk with me." (zombie).

Other dialogues created by the students demonstrated that drugs could bring conflicts within the users' conscience, such as: "You'll see that after trying me, you'll feel great."; "I promise you that you will never want to be apart from me again."; "I swear you won't regret it."; "Come on, just a little bit."

To characterize the characters, everyone wore black clothing, and the makeup was created by the students and the project's executive team, revealing traces of the consequences that drugs can bring to users, such as ulcerations, premature aging, pallor, among others (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Characterization of some characters from the staging produced by the students.



Source: Prepared by the authors (2025).

Rap, composed by a student from the outskirts of the city, spoke critically about the topic of substance use in its social and existential dimensions, providing other students with a moment of reflection:

You are not alone

First, don't be fooled / See who's by your side, false allies / They invite you to
drink, instead of studying / What about life and learning?

Who am I to judge you / But try to understand, don't get lost and then regret
it / Life is hard, but focus on your dreams / If you understand, hope is what I
propose.

Bro, stop and think / Doing this won't change anything / But bro, stop and
think, you're not alone, I'm here to help you.

I write my life in each line to change your mind the same way I changed mine
/ Marijuana and cocaine, were already offered to me / And because I lived in
deception, my friends forgot me.

It is hard, I know / But drugs and alcohol weaken your faith / Don't be stupid,
run after what you want / I know you can do it / Face whatever comes.

(Lukinhas, 2019)

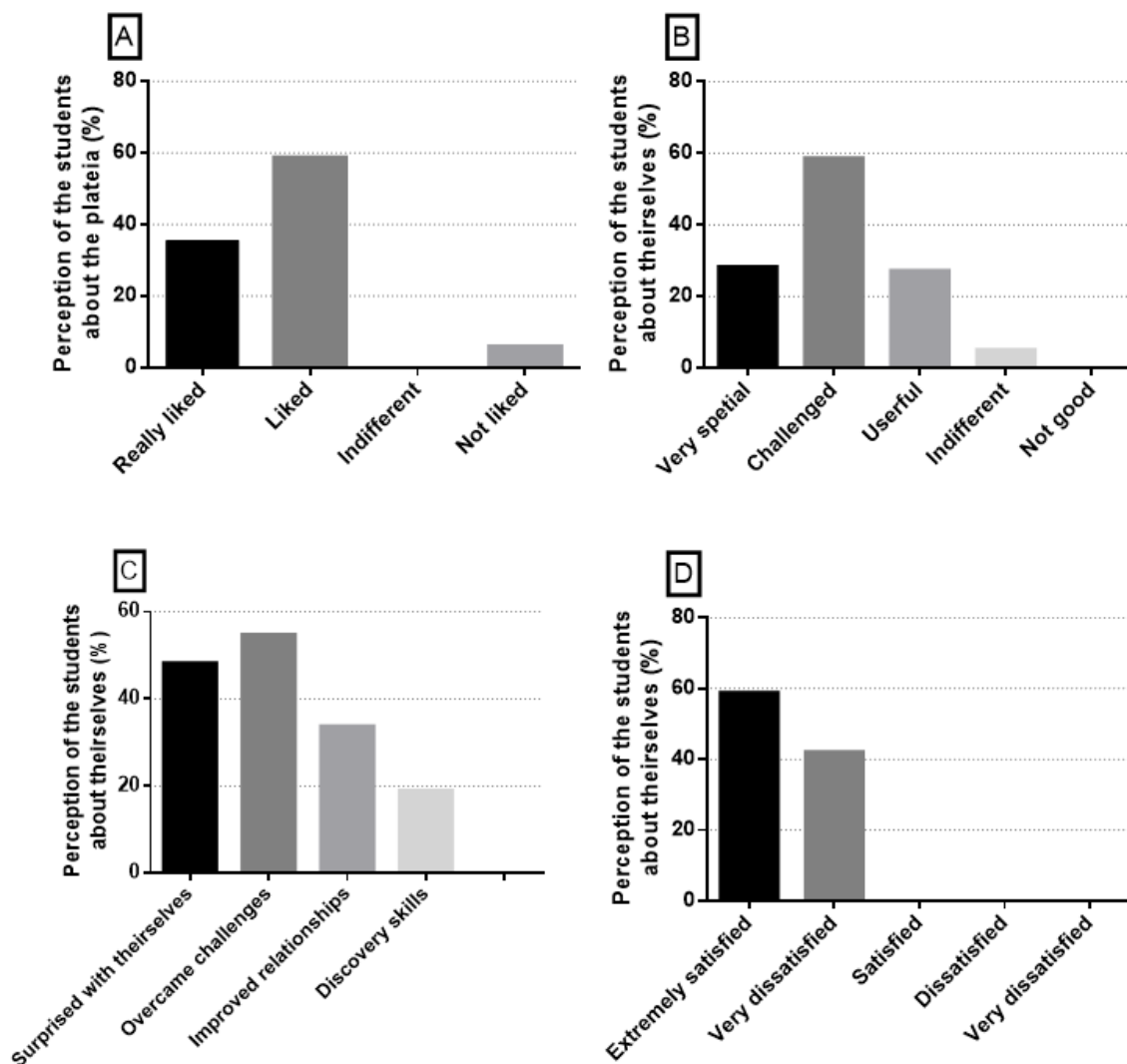
With the questionnaire, we verified the students' perception of the people who watched the theater produced by them, where over 35% believed that the viewers liked it a lot and 59% thought that they liked the staging; therefore, 94% of the participants in the play believe that the impact on the audience was positive, leaving only 6% who believed that their viewers did not like it (Figure 3a).

Among the 23 student actors, the vast majority (82.3%) and useful (76.5%) in delivering a message to their fellow students at school. Five of them reported feeling very special for their participation in the creation of the play, including rehearsals and presentations. Additionally, 5.9% of them also stated that they felt useful in bringing a positive message to people (Figure 3b).

Regarding personal challenges in participating in the play, out of 100% of the students who took part in the project and responded to the questionnaire, 88.2% were surprised by their own performance, claiming to have discovered that they were more capable than they imagined; 47% reported having overcome their inhibition and fear of performing in public; another 47% felt that their relationships with colleagues, especially with those they were not close to, had been positively redefined; and yet 47% reported discovering new skills and abilities (Figure 3c).

There were no negative responses regarding the performance of the team composed of students and teachers (Figure 3d). All participants believed that the work developed was either very satisfactory (59%) or extremely satisfactory (41%).

Figure 3. Student opinion, as shown in figures A, B, C and D.



Source: Prepared by the authors (2025).

The results obtained from conducting the empirical research with students, on drug addiction in a public school environment, will be analyzed below.

4. Discussion

Substance use among students is a global phenomenon, influenced by various factors such as feelings of loneliness, family problems, and the need for social acceptance. Adolescence, in particular, is a vulnerable phase, characterized by internal conflicts and external influences that may lead to substance use (Corrêa, 2020). In this context, this study is part of a broader project aimed at raising awareness among teenagers about the risks of substance use through artistic approaches such as theater and the production of

fanzines. Recent scholarship positions school-based prevention within critical, culturally responsive frameworks that emphasize dialogic, student-centered practices fostering agency and civic formation. In this view, arts-based interventions move beyond mere awareness to become sites of political subjectivation and ethical encounter, aligning prevention with broader projects of democratic education (Rosselli, 2025). Consistent with this perspective, our survey results, 94% perceived a positive audience impact, 82.3% reported feeling challenged, and 76.5% reported feeling useful, support the claim that participatory arts can promote student agency and civic dispositions in school settings.

According to Lopes (2013), some characteristics are inherent, are key to fanzine creation, including authors' self-visibility and the satisfaction derived from freely expressing ideas. Throughout production and distribution, we observed students' satisfaction with their fanzines as public expressions of their impressions and emotions. For some, especially those with family experiences of drug-related harm, texts and collages conveyed a desire for well-being and dignity. According to one of the students, it is like a gift of hope to the people who would receive them: "It is like when we go out to buy a gift for a friend, whatever makes a good impression." When asked what would be a "good impression," she replied: "May it bring peace, may it help to see that drugs do not lead to good things in life."

Building on these observations, contemporary zine scholarship clarifies why fanzine-making functions as a critical literacy practice in schools. Positioned within DIY traditions, it enables self-authorship, identity work, and the production of situated knowledge, while also operating as a grassroots medium for public communication. Watson's review traces zines' history as small, independent forms of expression and links current scholarship to politics and subjectivity, expression and materiality, archives, and research/teaching, highlighting their pedagogical value for engaging community issues (Watson, 2025). By centering youth authorship in this format, educators legitimize lived experience as an epistemic resource and cultivate agency, aligning classroom practice with culturally responsive, participatory approaches to public health education (Watson, 2025).

Theater, in turn, is widely recognized as a tool for social transformation. According to Boal (2009), the theater is one of the strategies to solve different problems of oppression. Within the strategic perspective, there is a shared aesthetic of sensitivity or sensitive thinking, linked to manifestations of images and sounds. At the same time, it draws upon the political and social context of specific demands related to human relations and productively incorporates these elements into the theatrical performance. In the context of this study, the theatrical play served not only as a means of raising awareness among the audience but also as a form of self-discovery and personal development for the students involved in the production. During rehearsals, a high level of student engagement was observed in constructing characters and dialogues, striving to make the narrative as close to reality as possible.

Corroborating this perspective, Teixeira (2008) and Canda (2012) argue that theatrical practice functions as a socioeducational method that enables the exchange of knowledge and experiences around social problems, rather than merely transmitting information. In our context, we found that theater could engage and “move” students toward reflective dialogue and civic dispositions. We also note that the constraints of resources and scope can be mitigated by the experiential intensity of collective creation when it is supported by generous peer collaboration and a safe, well-scaffolded environment, conditions that were actively cultivated in our rehearsals and performances.

A recent scoping review positions school-based, arts-based interventions as forms of practice-based research (PBR) that bridge education and theater (Lewandowska & Bojnarowicz, 2025). Our findings align with this framework by combining practice improvement (school prevention) with practice exploration (student-devised performance) along both the “aims” and “model of involvement” dimensions (Lewandowska & Bojnarowicz, 2025). In practical terms, the iterative cycles of scripting, rehearsal, and performance functioned as inquiry-through-practice, generating insights about peer dynamics, stigma, and resistance that would be difficult to access through surveys alone.

It is interesting to note that students, when discussing and sharing experiences to elaborate the characters' speeches, implicitly brought up these assumptions mentioned above. They desired intensity and veracity in the discussions to make their statements closer to real life. These facts demonstrated their positive involvement, from the elaboration of the statements, through the rehearsal sessions, to the makeup research, and the workshop on how to do it, culminating in the big moment—that is, the staging inside the school and in an amphitheater for several schools.

For the elaboration of the characterization, which involved costumes and makeup, the students showed motivation and unity, reducing the historical rivalry between the two eighth-grade classes. Some of the students engaged in self-makeup practice, which contributed to the characterization of the large group. The mastery of self-makeup is essential because, even in major productions, actors prepare their own faces (Romano, 2018). The ability to act, innate in some actors and cultivated in others, combined with their sensibility and generosity, helped them recognize when someone else needed assistance. This awareness led them to overcome challenges and offer a positive message to the public. These characteristics and the perception of a common goal were decisive in strengthening interpersonal relationships, replacing mistrust with encouragement and turning provocations into playfulness.

According to Guimarães (2014), some individuals tend to live under the Schopenhauerian quiet axiom, which is, motivated by psychological egoism, where they only use pseudo-altruism to, in fact, achieve a particular purpose. On the other hand, metaphysical compassion, according to Sober, calls for the possibility of the existence of those who, in their heart, are moved by simple acts that reach the need of others. In the latter, the presence of the suffering of others ends up generating solidarity. However, perhaps psychological selfishness

itself can be a source of metaphysical experience concerning the suffering of others by allowing it to come into contact with external fragility and, from it, to build a new look.

This dichotomy seems to be present in every community. Some individuals identify more with one perspective than the other (Guimarães, 2014). Here, we do not pass judgment on values, nor do we intend to delve deeply into this area. However, it is essential to note that the relationships between student actors transformed from the beginning to the end of the project. This transformation was not a purely rational process; rather, it occurred at each person's own pace. Some were more open from the start, while others were more resistant to collaboration. During the rehearsals, we observed that, as they learned more about each other, they began to see themselves in their peers; in other cases, they recognized the suffering or the resilience in their classmates' lives. Thus, in different ways, they began to see themselves as equals. And, while their initial concern was the final product, throughout the process, they learned to manage their emotions and relationships while still remaining focused on the final presentation.

The costume, consisting of black clothing, was designed to symbolize the darkness and obscurity that drugs can bring to users' lives. Nevertheless, as seen in physics, color is dependent on light reflection—without light, there is no color (Marques, 2013). Moreover, wearing black can signify pain and despair. Since ancient times, black has been associated with loss, death, and mourning (Harvey, 2004). However, the combination of black costumes with facial makeup helped to direct attention to the acting itself, minimizing distractions from elaborate sets. Additionally, this strategy kept the costs of the theater production low, making it more accessible.

Educational theater has the potential to significantly raise awareness about major public health issues, increasing the likelihood that viewers will engage with the topic, regardless of their age group. Furthermore, in public health interventions, messages are typically imposed on the audience, whereas theater presents issues in a more engaging and accessible way (AHMED, 2019).

Additionally, theater allows for learning and development that can be adapted to physical, cognitive, and emotional needs, yielding meaningful outcomes in both education and communication. These principles are demonstrated by various initiatives that highlight theater's role in enhancing school performance and promoting social inclusion among children and adolescents (Fernández-Aguayo, 2018).

Rap is a musical style that originated in African-American communities in New York City (USA), where rhythmic speech is delivered in a spoken or chanted manner over a musical accompaniment. More recently, rap has been integrated into hip-hop culture, a term used to refer to a broader cultural movement that includes rap, DJing, graffiti painting, and breakdancing with robotic movements (Britannica, 2020; Zeni, 2004).

This musical style serves as a form of expression for values, emotions, and social critique, providing a platform for the voices of those who are often



unheard by society (Dayrell, 2002). As Charlot (2000) states, rap contributes to "the individual's action upon the world" through art, aiming to create an impact and raise public awareness of various social realities by combining personal pain, experiences, and hopes. Positioning rap within hip-hop pedagogies connects prevention to youth cultural repertoires, promoting recognition and belonging while inviting critical reflection on structural drivers of substance use (Emdin, 2021). This resonance was evident in students' unanimous adoption of the song and active participation during performances, mirroring the high perceived impact reported in our survey; it also accords with arguments that arts-based education can support democratic formation in the Global South (Rosselli, 2025).

Notably, before integrating rap into the play, the student actors unanimously approved its inclusion. They immediately identified with the song's message, as it resonated with their daily lives and personal experiences. Additionally, rap is a genre that aligns with their musical preferences. Recognizing that the audience would likely relate as well, they embraced the song and enthusiastically sang the chorus: "Bro, stop to think / You doing this, nothing gonna change / But bro, stop to think, you're not alone, I'm here to help you."

This study has some limitations that should be acknowledged. The qualitative phase involved a relatively small sample (n=23), which limits the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Additionally, because the researchers also acted as facilitators during the intervention activities, potential bias related to their dual role cannot be entirely excluded. The instruments used, particularly the retrospective self-assessment survey, were based on students' subjective perceptions, which may have been influenced by enthusiasm or social desirability. These limitations indicate that the findings should be interpreted as exploratory. Nonetheless, they provide valuable insights into the educational potential of participatory artistic strategies for drug prevention among adolescents.

5. Final considerations

Drawing on the evidence reported, this study indicates cognitive and attitudinal consolidation among participating students regarding substance use prevention. Learners demonstrated strengthened knowledge, creative authorship in writing lines for the play and producing texts and illustrations for the fanzine, and overcame self-identified limits through performance and collaborative creation. They also developed oral expression, spatial/body awareness, and the ability to integrate artistic form with a contemporary public-health message relevant to their school community. In addition, the strategies presented here demonstrate a significant capacity to engage the educational process at both emotional and experiential levels, fostering inclusion and the recognition of individuals within their collective dimension.

Taken together, these outcomes suggest that arts-based, school-embedded activities can cultivate student agency, strengthen communicative competencies, and support civic formation within prevention efforts. While



exploratory, the results point to the value of integrating theater, zine-making, and music into curricular or co-curricular initiatives aimed at adolescent health promotion. Future work should test these effects with more robust designs and follow-up to assess durability over time.

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