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Stefanie Giebert / Eva Göksel (Eds.)

Dramapädagogik-Tage 2022 Drama in Education Days 2022

Conference Proceedings
of the 8th Annual Conference
on Performative Language Teaching and Learning

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Dramapädagogik-Tage 2022

Drama in Education Days 2022

Conference Proceedings of the 8th Annual Conference on Performative Language Teaching and Learning

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I. Foreword

These proceedings gather selected contributions from the Online Drama in Education Days (DiE Days) that took place on June 10th-11th 2022 and from the first on-site Drama in Education Days following the Covid 19 pandemic. This face-to-face gathering took place at Kempten University of Applied Sciences in Germany on June 17th-18th 2022. As this was the first time since 2019 that we were able to hold this conference in person again, these days will certainly remain particularly meaningful and memorable, with a smaller group of participants but with a very special atmosphere. Also, this was the first year where we held both an online and an on-site conference, something we have continued to do, as we feel that the online format provides a high level of accessibility, encouraging participants from all over the world to connect across time zones, whereas the in-person format provides that particular energy you will only experience by spending several days in the company of fellow drama enthusiasts.

That these proceedings were particularly long in the making is due mainly to the personal circumstances and career changes of the editors. Stefanie transitioned from university teaching to teaching secondary school and can now finally understand why secondary school teachers might often not have the time and mental energy to engage in academic work in addition to their regular teaching job. Meanwhile, Eva successfully defended her PhD, and has been exploring various Swedish educational settings in which to apply drama and theatre.

We would like to thank all of our contributors for their patience in waiting to see these proceedings finally published. We would also like to thank the wonderful Evelyn Leissenberger for once again taking care of the layout for these proceedings.

In this volume you will find the following contributions. If not specifically noted, all texts are written in English.

Keynotes

In his keynote, **Karl Eigenbauer** looks back on his many years as a drama pedagogy teacher and teacher trainer, discusses the benefits of drama pedagogy from a practitioner's perspective and also debunks some of the common objections to it.

Cecily O'Neill takes the reader on a journey into the world of storytelling and identifies key elements of the drama in education tradition such as safe space, the reversal of status relationships between teachers and learners and the importance of pre-texts.

In his bilingual keynote article, **Harald Volker Sommer** provides insights into the "choral principle", explains the many facets of working with the theatre chorus and also how this body- and group-focused devising concept can also lead up to working with voice and language.

Articles

Anna Santucci and Patricia Sobral provide insights into "artful teaching" in an interdisciplinary university course. They describe the building blocks of this course at Brown University which placed a focus on self-reflection and gave participants the chance to try out selected activities.

In his article **Andreas Wirag** focuses on the area of drama-based vocabulary teaching and learning. After providing a review of the literature, he introduces the "Word Gap Task" (WGT) approach, illustrating it with an example for A1 learners of English.

In her article titled "confetti and Kehrwoche" **Bettina Christner** describes a GFL lesson sequence at a university revolving around objects found in German everyday life. She argues that Process Drama and specifically the oscillation between dramatic presence and reflective meaning-making phases can complexify cultural learning in the foreign language classroom, hereby drawing on theories of presence by Gumbrecht and Lehmann.

In their workshop report **Christina Zourna and Ioanna Papavassiliou** describe the structure of a drama-based intervention developed for postgraduate students in educational leadership at the University of Macedonia. It is based on real incidents in the lives of leaders in world history. This provides a non-threatening risk-taking environment where future educational leaders can experience problems, challenges, dilemmas, and choices in role before facing similar ones in their respective professional contexts.

Leif Dahlberg and Anders Hedman describe two role-play exercises they developed at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden to help university students of Media Management acquire the critical skill of engaging with issues of ethics and sustainability and reflect on the suitability of role play as a teaching method in the higher education sector.

Workshop reports

In their workshop report of their on-site workshop **Anna-Maria Matala and Janya Cambronero Severin** describe the building blocks of their Spark Method which aims to share tools to enable a creative, safe space where students can develop their communicative competence together with others through drama and theatre.

In her report of her online workshop **Bettina Stokhammer** describes a number of tried and tested drama games which, in the relaxed setting that drama provides, combined with the fun and the mildly competitive nature of games, allows for a successful use of the language as a tool of quick and easy communication in an online setting.

In her workshop report (in German) of her on-site workshop **Brigitte Hahn-Michaeli** describes how she used the story of the divided brothers "Uzu und Muzu aus Kakaruzu" by Efraim Sidon to devise a process drama for learners of German in a university class.

In the report of her online workshop "Drama for Listening: Improving our holistic listening skills in digital spaces", **Eva Göksel** describes how participants were encouraged to explore embodied listening in an online space via drama activities. In a low-stakes safe space, they experimented with selected drama games in order to generate ideas and exercises that could be immediately implemented in online teaching.

In her text reporting on both the online and on-site versions of her workshop **Stefanie Giebert** focuses on evaluating language proficiency within EFL process dramas. The workshops enabled participants try out selected activities from the process dramas and invited them to discuss how language learning within a process drama could be assessed.

I. Vorwort

Dieser Tagungsband versammelt ausgewählte Beiträge der Dramapädagogik-Tage 2022, sowohl der Online-Tagung am 10.-11. Juni 2022 wie auch der Präsenzveranstaltung, die vom 17.-18. Juni 2022 an der Hochschule Kempten stattfand. Da dies die erste Konferenz war, die wir nach der Pandemie-bedingten Pause seit 2019 wieder vor Ort organisieren konnten, wird diese uns als speziell in Erinnerung bleiben – zwar mit weniger Teilnehmenden, aber doch mit besonders familiärer Atmosphäre. Auch war dies das erste Jahr, wo wir die Konferenz sowohl online als auch in Präsenz organisierten. Ein Prinzip, das wir beibehalten haben, da wir feststellten wie die Online-Konferenz Interessierten in aller Welt eine Plattform zum Austausch bietet, während eine vor-Ort Konferenz einfach die spezielle Energie der intensiv mit Gleichgesinnten verbrachten Tage bietet.

Dass dieser Tagungsband besonders lange zur Fertigstellung benötigte, ist den persönlichen und beruflichen Umständen der Herausgeberinnen geschuldet. Stefanie wechselte von der Hochschullehre an die Sekundarstufe I und kann mittlerweile sehr gut nachvollziehen, dass Lehrpersonen in diesem Bereich eher weniger Zeit und mentale Energie bleiben, um sich akademisch zu engagieren. Eva hat mittlerweile ihre Doktorarbeit erfolgreich verteidigt und erkundet nun verschiedene schwedische Bildungseinrichtungen, in denen Drama und Theater angewendet werden können und könnten.

Wir danken allen Beitragenden für ihre Geduld!

Wir möchten uns zusätzlich bei Evelyn Leissenberger bedanken, die wieder einmal das Layout für dieses Tagungsband übernommen hat.

Im vorliegenden Band finden sich die folgenden Beiträge (auf Englisch, sofern nicht extra vermerkt).

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Keynote Vorträge und -Workshops

Cecily O'Neill nimmt den Leser mit auf eine Reise in die Welt des Geschichtenerzählens und nennt die zentralen Elemente der *Drama in Education* Tradition wie den sicheren Raum, die Umkehrung von Statusbeziehungen zwischen Lehrenden und Lernenden und die Bedeutung der Prä-Texte.

In seinem zweisprachigen Keynote-Beitrag gibt **Harald Volker Sommer** Einblicke in das „chorische Prinzip", erläutert die vielen Facetten der Arbeit mit dem Theater-Chorus und auch wie dieses körper- und gruppenfokussiertes Inszenierungskonzept als Hinleitung zur stimmlichen und sprachlichen Arbeit dienen kann.

In seiner Keynote blickt **Karl Eigenbauer** auf seine langjährige Tätigkeit als dramapädagogisch arbeitender Lehrer und Lehrerausbilder zurück, diskutiert aus Sicht des Praktikers die Vorteile der Dramapädagogik und entkräftet außerdem noch einige der häufig vorgebrachten Einwände dagegen.

Artikel

Einblick in ihr Konzept des „Artful Teaching" in einem interdisziplinären Kontext geben **Anna Santucci und Patricia Sobral**. In ihrem Artikel schildern sie die Elemente ihres auf Selbstreflexion und Identitätserkundung ausgelegten Kurses an der Brown University, aus dem Konferenzteilnehmer ausgewählte Übungen selbst erfahren konnten.

Andreas Wirag beschäftigt sich mit dem Gebiet des Wortschatzerwerbs durch dramabasierte Methoden und stellt nach einem Überblick über vorhandene Literatur den Ansatz der Word-Gap-Task an einem Beispiel für Englischlernende auf A1-Niveau vor.

In ihrem Artikel mit dem Titel „Konfetti und Kehrwoche" beschreibt **Bettina Christner** eine DaF-Unterrichtssequenz im universitären Kontext, die sich um Gegenstände des deutschen Alltags dreht. Sie argumentiert, dass Prozessdrama – und insbesondere das Wechseln zwischen dramatischer Präsenz und reflektierenden Sinngebungsphasen – das kulturelle Lernen im Fremdsprachenunterricht komplexer machen kann, und stützt sich dabei auf Präsenztheorien von Gumbrecht und Lehmann.

In ihrem Best Practice-Bericht beschreiben **Christina Zourna und Ioanna Papavassiliou** die Struktur einer dramabasierten Unterrichtssequenz, die für

Postgraduierte im Bereich Bildungsmanagement an der Universität Mazedonien entwickelt wurde und auf realen Ereignissen im Leben authentischer Führungspersönlichkeiten der Weltgeschichte basiert. Mit diesem Konzept entwickelten sie einen sicheren, kreativen Raum, in der zukünftige Führungskräfte im Bereich Bildung Probleme, Herausforderungen, Dilemmata und Entscheidungen in Rollen erleben können, bevor sie in ihrem jeweiligen beruflichen Kontext mit ähnlichen konfrontiert werden.

Leif Dahlberg und Anders Hedman beschreiben zwei Rollenspielübungen, die sie am KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Schweden, entwickelten, um Universitätsstudierenden im Studiengang Medienmanagements dabei zu helfen, die kritische Fähigkeit zu erwerben, sich mit Fragen der Ethik und Nachhaltigkeit auseinanderzusetzen. Sie reflektieren auch über die Eignung von Rollenspielen als Lehrmethode im Hochschulsektor.

Workshop Berichte

In ihrer Zusammenfassung ihres Online-Workshops beschreibt **Bettina Stokhammer** einige beliebte und bewährte dramabasierte Spiele. In der entspannten Atmosphäre, die diese Spiele schaffen, in Verbindung mit der anregenden und leicht kompetitiven Natur der Aktivitäten kann man diese auch sehr gut in Sprachlern und -übungssettings online einsetzen.

In ihrem auf Deutsch verfassten Bericht ihres in Präsenz gehaltenen Workshops befasst sich **Brigitte Hahn-Michaeli** mit der Parabel des streitenden Brüderpaars „Uzu und Muzu aus Kakaruzu“ von Efraim Sidon und beschreibt ein auf dieser Bildergeschichte basierendes Process Drama für DaF-Lernende.

In ihrem Bericht zu ihrem Online-Workshop “Drama for Listening: Improving our holistic listening skills in digital spaces”, beschreibt **Eva Göksel** wie Teilnehmende mit Drama-Übungen mit dem Thema Zuhören in einer Online-Umgebung spielen konnten.

Stefanie Giebert berichtet über die Online- und Präsenzversion ihres Workshops zum Thema Bewerten von Sprachaufgaben in EFL Process Dramas. Teilnehmende probierten ausgewählte Process Drama Aktivitäten aus und diskutierten, wie das sprachliche Lernen hierbei bewertet werden könnte.

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II. Keynotes

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1 Telling Tales

Keynote at the 2022 Drama in Education Days

This keynote talk explores the significance of story in world culture and the potential of using story and drama in second language teaching. A re-negotiation of the classroom context will be necessary if teachers are to be effective in employing these approaches. The initial aim is engagement and fluency, rather than accuracy. Students need to be protected into the drama, so that they, and the teacher, feel safe working in the realm of 'pretend'. Some examples of students and teachers working in role are included, as are the advantages of working in this way.

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TELLING TALES AND SECOND LANGAUGE LEARNING

Stories, folk tales, and legends are among the greatest treasures of the past. They carry the soul of a people. They are a powerful conduit for transmitting values, beliefs, and knowledge to the next generation. They contain the possibility of change and transformation, and the hope of a better life. The better we come to know the great stories of our own heritage and the stories of other cultures, the more of ourselves and our own world is revealed.

I was looking through some old books the other day, and I found my very large, very decrepit copy of the *Stories of Anderson and Grimm,* illustrated by the wonderful Danish

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artist Kay Nielsen. I treasured it as a child, and carried it with me from Ireland to the UK and after that through many changes of address.

The book fell open at the story of *The Juniper Tree*. Immediately I remembered this refrain:

> *My mother killed her little son*
> *My father grieved when I was gone*
> *My sister loved me best of all.*
> *She laid her kerchief over me*
> *And took my bones that they might be*
> *Underneath the Juniper Tree*

Why has this rhyme been lurking somewhere in my mind all these years? What was it about *The Juniper Tree*? It is one of Grimm's darker stories. A jealous stepmother, love, murder, revenge, transformation. With just a few changes, it could almost be the plot of *Hamlet*….

The philosopher Hannah Arendt pointed out that storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it. And the playwright and philosopher Friedrich Schiller claimed that deeper meaning resided in the fairy tales told to him in his childhood than in the truths that were taught to him by life.

In folktales, patterns, and images, and relationships re-appear again and again across cultures and across the world. They involve a move from one situation or relationship to its opposite, from failure to triumph, from a problem to its resolution. And change, transformation, is always the central theme. Think of Cinderella, the Frog Prince, Beauty and the Beast, the Crane Wife in Japan, the Selkie or Seal Wife in Ireland and Scotland, the Canada Goose in North America and the Dolphin in the southern seas – and perhaps even a crocodile in Papua New Guinea. These tales all have transformation at their heart and they all raise deep questions about identity and belonging. Working in drama we can confront the questions raised by the story from within the story.

The profound significance of story in every nation and every culture is revealed in the ways they're introduced...

In English we say – Once upon a time…

In Germany – Es war einmal...

In Ireland – Fado, fado, fado...

In Turkey – Once there was and once there wasn't...

In Japan – Mukashi, Mukashi…

And even Sci-fiction makes use of a stock phrase – Long ago in a galaxy far away...

Often the stories end in similar ways – "They all lived happily ever after." "They lived long and prospered.' Or, less positively, "If they're not dead, they're living yet." There is something very ritualistic about this – an insistence on the importance of what is to be told. These are never just anecdotes. The recurring phrases activate our expectations and interpretations as the story unfolds. Sometimes there is a warning that what we are about to hear may not be true. I came across a Turkish story that began thus:

Once there was, and once there wasn't – long ago in a strange land, far, far away…
I rocked my baby grandmother to sleep…

How could this be possible? Don't we immediately try to think of explanations? Is it madness? Time travel? And of course the most banal choice – maybe it was only a dream!

Many teachers are accustomed to reading stories to their students, but I wonder how many of them actually *tell* stories? It is a very different experience! I am certain that every teacher, at whatever level and whatever their subject, should master this skill. Perhaps I should call it an art – because telling a story is always a social act – a kind of performance – aimed at capturing our imaginations. As we listen to a story, our imagination releases us from the normal, the mundane, the taken for granted, into the realm of the possible.

In his book *Teaching as Storytelling* (1989) the Canadian academic Kieran Egan insists that because students' imaginations are activated, the story form can be used to teach every kind of curriculum content, including the sciences, more meaningfully and memorably.

Safety

A well-told story temporarily suspends the classroom context and allows a new kind of connection between the speaker and the listeners in what can become an intimate space,

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a safe space. It is important to note that listening to a story is safe because, like other art forms, stories operate within the aesthetic element of **Distance.**

Distance is crucial, especially when the subject matter is disturbing. However distressing the events in the stories – bad parenting, cruelty, murder – they occur at a distance in time and space – long, long, ago and far, far away – making it safe for us to encounter them. We are experiencing the story, but we are not in it. We are detached – at a safe distance – and as it unfolds, the story becomes available for contemplation, investigation and response.

But for learners of second languages, trying to operate in an unfamiliar language does not always feel safe. How many of us have felt as helpless as children when trying to make sense of strange menus, and road signs, or negotiating the simplest of human interactions?

Surely I cannot be the only person who has been reduced to sign language in order to survive? Even those fortunate people with several languages at their disposal may have been baffled by Finnish, or Hungarian, not to mention the wealth of Asian and African languages. And this feeling of ineptitude is increased by the contrast to one’s own usual linguistic competence, especially when all around, tiny children are displaying extraordinary fluency. How much more will this bafflement and unease be felt by students, who are likely to be assessed on their performance?

Re-negotiating classroom relationships

However engaged we may be while listening to a story, we maintain a level of detachment. But in drama we are invited to enter the story, so the usual classroom circumstances have to be re-negotiated. Most classrooms have rules about speaking, and these rules place huge constraints on the students – even in a language classroom. The teacher is the privileged speaker and the challenge is to share this privilege and to confer speaking rights on the students. Too often, demands are made on students, rather than rights conferred. Unless teachers are willing to find creative freedom within themselves, they will not be able to allow speaking rights and creative freedom to their students.

Real involvement in drama will demand a toleration of uncertainty and ambiguity – a willingness to pretend – from both teacher and students. Ideally, an element of discovery will be present – the possibility of something unplanned, unpredictable – and never merely become a rigid pre-planned scenario.

In Dorothy Heathcote's phrase, the challenge is to create a 'no-penalty zone' (O'Neill, 2015). As she puts it, "Theatre is life depicted in a no-penalty zone" (2015:130) where the possibility of failure cannot arise. Story and drama provide that zone, that safe space. The usual classroom context is temporarily suspended in favour of new situations, new roles, and new relationships, in which unique possibilities of language use and development may be opened up.

And when we find a way to use that safe space of drama, it becomes possible to engage the students and diagnose their language skills and understanding. We can support their efforts, sustain interactions, and encourage their responses, particularly if we work in role. When students are asked to respond to a text through drama – whether it is a work of literature, or a newspaper article, or a folk tale, they have been given rights of interpretation – a degree of authority over the text. But this should never remain just sterile de-coding. Ideally there will be a sense of agency, a growth of insight.

Less is more

Like so much else in life, in attempting to move the students from engaged but passive listeners to active involvement in drama, *less is more.* It is wise at first to limit what is asked of the students so the possibility of failure does not arise – remember Heathcote's no-penalty zone. At this stage, the aim is involvement and fluency rather than precise accuracy. And it is important that the students can operate within the shelter of the group, rather than suffering exposure and potential failure.

It is also helpful if teachers manage to withhold their own linguistic competence – perhaps by adopting a role in which they will need help from the students. This stance will increase the status and significance of the student's contributions.

I remember working with a group of six- and seven-year-olds a number of years ago. They were recent arrivals from India to East London, and were having additional language instruction. They were fortunate to have a creative and resourceful teacher, who invited me to work with her class. I took on the role of an Alien who had come from Outer Space, with no knowledge of English whatsoever. The students welcomed me and, encouraged by their teacher, tried to engage me in conversation. They gave me instructions – sit down, eat, drink – and they provided names for all the items in the classroom. Quite a useful revision exercise! But I was a very slow student and I got everything wrong. Finally, one boy, frustrated by my slow progress, took me by the hand and led me to a wall display of alphabets from different languages. He tried to teach me the letters of the alphabet in what I think was Guajarati. I did my best, but unfortunately, even then I did not make much progress. But my role as a slow learner allowed the boy to demonstrate his already considerable linguistic competence.

Pretexts[1]

The stories and legends and myths of the world have captured the imagination of the world for centuries. They will provide us with all the ideas we need, whatever the age of our students. After all, they are Pretexts – Pretexts that been used for centuries by writers, artists, poets, film-makers, and, in particular, by playwrights.

An effective pretext will supply a source or impulse for the work and a framework to support and extend the work. But where do we begin? Maybe start by asking a question either in or out of role – perhaps one that requires only a single word or phrase in reply – a word that will be accepted and affirmed without being challenged, whether it seems ‘correct’ or not.

Of course it is possible to have prepared vocabulary earlier, but in my experience that can restore the ‘normal’ classroom context, whereas I would want to suspend it temporarily. If it is felt to be essential, perhaps vocabulary work could take place at another time in the more familiar classroom context.

If you are setting a task, whether in or out of role, it will helpful if the students can imagine that they are all people who have the right to ask questions – maybe parents or advisers or detectives who are all working from a particular perspective. There will be no differentiation of roles at this point, although that perspective may grow into a role, as

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[1] O’Neill, Cecily (1995) Drama Worlds: a framework for process drama. US. Heinemann.

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different attitudes emerge. Note that I do not say ‘character’. The persons in old stories are never really characterized in any detail – they remain simple archetypes – a princess, the youngest son, an old soldier – and this makes it easier for us to project into their situations.

I might ask students to imagine that they are all people who knew Cinderella before she married the prince. They may have been neighbours, or other people in the household, or maybe even the birds and animals who observed her sad situation. I could then take on the role of a TV interviewer who was making a documentary about Cinderella’s life. Or I might become a detective, about to bring charges of cruelty against the wicked step-sisters. We might even proceed to a trial!

Or perhaps the students are all advisers to the King and have been asked to find a suitable partner to marry the princess. Perhaps the suitors include the Frog Prince and the Beast and Rumpelstiltskin.

It is also possible to ‘rehearse’ interactions and to try out different approaches. For example, suppose the Three Bears come home to find Goldilocks eating their food. How should they respond? Drive her away? Ask her politely to leave? Or maybe enquire why she seems to need to come to their house to eat and sleep? Should they approach her parents and find out what is going on? The teacher can take on the role of Goldilocks or perhaps her parent, as the students rehearse different strategies.

Pretexts in World Drama

The greatest dramatists – from Sophocles to Shakespeare, to Racine, to Goethe, to Sartre – have all taken ideas from ancient sources. They have chosen their pre-texts for the questions they raise and the transformations they suggest. Their plays echo the crucial elements that underpin the story form, including Time, Repetition, Ritual, and Transformation.

For these playwrights, the task is not necessarily to be original, but to take rich source material and select, re-arrange, and if necessary, distort it so it attains a dramatic shape. It is useful to consider the patterns that emerge in their work. I am fascinated by the frequent use of dreams by great dramatists – even in the titles of their plays – Calderon's *Life is a Dream*, Strindberg's – *The Dream Play* – Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream.*

When you think about it, theatre itself is a bit like a dream – real and not real at the same time. But these dreams are never just feeble explanations – they are warnings, omens, memories, repetitions, denunciations.

Shakespeare loved using dreams – think of *Julius Caesar*, *Richard III*, *Macbeth*. Shakespeare loved using dreams – and so do I. Dreams can be a wonderful way to add a new dimension to a process drama. Working in small groups, participants could choose one person to represent the Dreamer, while the others create a sound and movement sequence that might reveal their state of mind, as they recall the past or anticipate the future. Tableaux is also a very useful non-verbal approach, and a help in clarifying understanding of the text. Dialogue can be added to the tableaux and relevant questions asked of the participants.

Some of us will have met students who may feel that to engage in something as seemingly playful as drama is not an acceptable way to learn. Perhaps setting an 'academic' task will seem more appropriate. The teacher might take on the role of a book publisher, who has been asked to produce a translation of Shakespeare and needs the help of the students. Working in small groups, they might be given passages like this – the first scene in Hamlet:

> *Long live the King!*
>
> *Bernardo?*
>
> *He.*
>
> *You come most carefully upon your hour.*
>
> *Tis now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco.*
>
> *For this relief much thanks. Tis bitter cold, and I am sick at heart.*
>
> *Have you had quiet guard?*
>
> *Not a mouse stirring.*
>
> *Well, goodnight.*

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This scene is full of the dramatic elements I mentioned earlier. Time, repetition, the ritual of the changing of the guard, even the weather – all adding to the growing sense of tension. There is very little linguistic difficulty in these opening lines. But working with this scene will help to give students a sense of mastery, of ownership, as they translate the English words into their own first language. And of course, the scene can be read aloud and then different interpretations of the scene presented. Later, students might create tableaux for an illustrated edition of the text.

Conclusion

Stories are powerful sources of communication, and ought to become essential features of language instruction. Working with story and drama we can give our students access to the resources of their own imaginations, and to the treasury of the world's stories and literature. We can build a community of learners in the classroom, where students are encouraged to cooperate, share knowledge and resources, and gradually gain control of their own learning. Through story and drama, we can help them to understand and articulate their own feelings and those of others, and to discover glimpses of possible and perhaps better worlds.

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Karl Eigenbauer

2 The Ups and Downs of Drama: A Practitioner's View

Reflections of a Secondary School Teacher

Abstract

This keynote highlights Karl Eigenbauer's beginnings as a high school teacher, a late encounter with drama, and his subsequent work as a teacher and later teacher trainer who infused drama in his work at every opportunity. From course design, to facilitation, he has worked in tertiary education and in adult education in Austria and internationally.

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In the beginning

When I was asked by Eva Göksel and Stefanie Giebert, if I was willing to give a keynote, my first reaction was, 'But what can I offer?' I have never done any real research and apart from a few small-scale essays, course documentations, descriptions of drama conventions and workshop minutes handed out to the participants of my workshops and courses, I have never really published anything. In other words, my message to them was that I am a practitioner and not a researcher. Hence my perspective would be subjectively based on personal feelings and observations and not really on valid quantitative or qualitative data.

But then they said that was just what they wanted – a practitioner's view of the advantages and pitfalls of drama teaching. They wanted to hear how I had started out implementing drama into my lessons against the background of the specific situation in Austria.

Accordingly, this keynote will deal with my beginnings as a teacher, my late encounter with drama at the age of 35, my work as a teacher trainer both in teacher development workshops and at a University of Teacher Education, as well as my volunteer work developing Austrian school theatre. I have been involved in designing a range of courses, amongst them a Master's Course focused on Theatre Pedagogy, and I have worked in tertiary education both at the university level and in adult education at the University of Applied Sciences in Vienna.

All of the above means that this keynote will be a very personal and anecdotical one and I would like to begin with a few autobiographical sketches since everybody's teaching is determined by their individual experiences.

School, University, and Beginnings as a Secondary School Teacher

a. School

I grew up in the fifties and sixties, in the south of Burgenland, a rural area which in my early childhood was still part of the Russian zone – one of my earliest childhood memories is of the Russian barracks. It is the easternmost province of Austria next to Hungary, and it was on the western side of the Iron Curtain till 1989. Today it is the only Austrian province without a professional theatre apart from seasonal summer festivals.

As a child, there was little opportunity to view any theatre, aside from occasional puppet shows of the Punch and Judy type. Fictional drama and dramatic performances were primarily experienced through radio broadcasts, the cinema, and, in my secondary school years, TV (in Austria TV had started as late as 1955).

At school there was no extra-curricular school theatre either. I loved play-reading in class with assigned roles, a commonly used teaching method at that time, which we did in our German (native speaker) classes. We read all the classics, and as we had a very good

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teacher, we also read modern plays and novels. I was an avid reader from my early childhood, borrowing from the local public library like mad due to a lack of other media.

In other words, I grew up without any real exposure to live theatrical performances. My first visits to the big theatres in Vienna and Graz were in my two final years at school. A special memory was the first Austrian performance of 'Hair' in the Viennese City Hall in 1969.

As to doing theatre actively, apart from this passive consumption, there was nothing at all except for the aforementioned play reading in class. Since I was a good reader and had a pleasant reading voice, I was often picked to recite a poem when some official was paying a visit or for reading the epistle in church services. At the back of my head there was this love of acting even at that time. An only child, I loved child role play and had my own puppet theatre.

b. University Studies

My studies of English and History at the University of Vienna were not at all down-to earth. I wanted to become a high school teacher but there was hardly any difference between academic scholarly studies and teacher training. The lectures were the same. In English, for example, we took literary studies and linguistics, historic linguistics, and even historic syntax. We would draft papers on 'Irony in Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure' or Noam Chomsky's transformational grammar in English or 'Erasmus of Rotterdam's Idea of Peace in his Querela Pacis' in History. My two Master's theses were on 'Gender in the Names of Countries and Towns' (for English) and 'England and the Foundation of the Second German Empire' (for History).

So, we were all educated as Anglicists, that is to say, as literary critics and linguists as well as historians. We were not specifically educated as teachers although most of us would go on to teach. Our pedagogical studies amounted to nothing more than the 'History of Austrian secondary schools' or the reading of Pestalozzi's 'Letter on Stans'. When I graduated, I was equipped to do historical research or stylistic analyses of fiction and poetry, but I was *not* equipped for school. No didactics, no methodology. Fortunately, this has changed in the meantime, with the pendulum swinging perhaps a little too much in the other direction, from the subject discipline towards pedagogics.

c. *Secondary School Teacher*

I started teaching at the *Musikgymnasium* in Vienna, which was at that time an upper secondary school for 14 – 19-year-olds (since 1994 from 10 – 19), with a strong emphasis on music. About a third of our graduates later become professional musicians, from music teachers to members of big orchestras, from renowned soloists to famous conductors. This was the school I would stay with for my whole teaching life. In my first year I taught English and History to 16 and 17-year-olds, as well as being a form teacher for the 16-year-olds[2]. I had never taught before. I can remember that on my first day at school I had five lessons. My first lesson in front of a class (and that really did mean in front at that time) was actually my first lesson as a teacher in a class. 10 minutes into the first class, one of the pupils took a photo of me, which I have still got. That was the first situation I had not reckoned with and had to deal with. I was thrown in at the deep end and my first year at school was largely learning by doing, also with respect to the pupil-teacher-relationship, classroom management and dealing with disturbances.

At the beginning of my teaching career teaching meant '*Frontalunterricht'* (frontal teaching), a word that does not really exist in the English language, in other words teacher-centred teaching held in the manner of a lecture (particularly in my history lessons) with the teacher standing in front of the class. It was a sort of chalk-and-talk teaching with teacher-guided debates in the manner of teacher-question – pupil-answer. We followed the text-book-instructions although at that time there were hardly any methodological instructions for the teacher to be found in textbooks. Naturally it also meant a lot of grammar-based lessons focusing on accuracy rather than fluency. It meant reading aloud in class and in my upper secondary classes it meant interpretations of class readers in the form of whole novels, discussions directed by the teacher with always the same two bright and motivated pupils taking part and the teacher – me – leading them to ready-made messages, e. g. 'Animal Farm' – 'power corrupts', 'Lord of the Flies' – 'human beings are inherently wicked'. And all that was part of school tests developed by the teacher, with grammar parts, literature-related topics, or quotation-based essays of the type 'We've become the men we wanted to marry'[3].

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[2] In the Austrian school system, this is the teacher who is responsible for a whole class.

Professional development

a. *Communicative Language Teaching Workshops*

As one can imagine, this was not entirely satisfying but I did not know any better. There was an important turning point in my second year of teaching, however, when I took part in a five-day teacher development seminar on 'Communicative Language Teaching' led by three facilitators from Britain. This opened a new world of teaching for me. At that time, in the late seventies and early eighties, communicative language teaching (i.e., using and practising the target language in interaction with one another and the teacher, the study of authentic texts, conversing about personal experiences etc.) started to gain ground. In this five-day-workshop, I remember jotting down about 80 different activities, from information gap exercises to jumbled texts, opinion sharing in pair work, scavenger hunt, interviews, language games in the widest sense, authentic texts etc. We had a lot of fun at this workshop, not to mention the drinking and singing classes in the evenings.

So, whenever there was a chance, I would take part in teacher development workshops, which gave me many creative ideas. These workshops usually lasted for five days and were out of town, attracting teachers from all over Austria. These courses left an impact, particularly since I also started buying books by the likes of Penny Ur, Andrew Wright, and Mario Rinvolucri, to mention just a few, which also gave me lots of creative ideas.

b. *The Communicative Classroom*

Accordingly, my teaching gradually changed and became more communicative and less grammar-based and teacher-centred. In my classes, students would pin little notes on each other with names of famous people, and by walking around and asking each other questions they would have to find out who they were. I would cut up sentences and distribute the snippets to pupils and by talking with each other they would have to form meaningful sentences. Nonetheless, these creative activities remained sort of isolated

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[3] coined by US feminist Gloria Steinem

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add-ons that we would do at the end of a lesson. Although they were fun, I was dissatisfied and I was left wondering whether they were meaningful and if they were leading to better linguistic competence.

In textbooks one could sometimes find role plays, which were embedded into topics. You were allocated role cards that defined your points of view. The results often left me frustrated, however, as these role plays did not work. Now I know the reason, of course: The participants were not tuned in to any fictitious situation, thus the roles were not developed. Affective factors were lacking, and it was impossible to immerse oneself into the 'as if'. Hence my pupils were not engaged and did not identify with the roles suggested by the role plays, nor apply the target language. An often-used classroom phrase on my part at that time was, "In English, please!"

Also, about that time I came across my first drama book, Maley and Duff's 'Drama Techniques in Language Learning' (Maley & Duff, 1978) which led to my first tiny performative[4] games in class. The exercise "Alibi" from this book (Maley & Duff, 1978: 98) is still one of my favourite activities for teaching the past tense.

c. Theatre Pedagogy Workshops

Then, in 1986 there was a decisive change in my life as a teacher. A colleague told me about a summer course – *'Sommerworkshop Darstellendes Spiel'* (summer workshop performing arts)" – a one-week course for teachers wanting to do school theatre as an extracurricular subject.

In Austria *Darstellendes Spiel* (school theatre/performing arts) unlike music and arts is not a school subject in its own right but an extra-curricular one (*AG*). This was the case in 1986, when I did my first drama course and is still the case. Likewise, there was and is no formal education for people wanting to teach school theatre. Anyone who felt and feels fit can do it, which might sometimes lead to rather sterile productions of classics in examples of self-actualization on the part of the teachers, where young people with glued-on beards obediently recite their lines.

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[4] For a discussion of the new term 'performative teaching and learning' see Even & Schewe, 2016

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This workshop, a beginner's course in basic theatre and improvisation techniques, opened a new world for me. I was thirty-five then and it was actually my first active theatre encounter. Looking back, I think it changed my life both as a teacher, and probably also as a person. The workshop facilitator told me much later that at the beginning he had experienced me as a rather stiff person (also in a physical sense), who had then opened up tremendously.

I enjoyed this performative workshop so much that for the next 10 or 12 years I would take any chance I could get to improve my practical skills in this respect. I have been committed to practice ever since. There were workshops on various theatre techniques from Lecoq to Grotowski, from Stanislavski to Brecht, from improvisation to directing, very often given by renowned professionals. I even had the chance to take part in a 5-day exclusive workshop with Augusto Boal, which he gave for a small group of twenty people.

During the breaks, I would meticulously take notes of all the activities and approaches – a typical teacher behaviour – in order to use them for school later. But because I had actively done them myself, it was different from just copying them from books as I had done it before with the Maley & Duff book. It was what Erika Piazzoli calls "embodied knowing" (Piazzoli, 2018: 25).

d. School theatre

After 4 years of extensive training, I felt ready to offer school theatre/performing arts as an extracurricular subject in the afternoon, first for 14 – 19-year-olds, and then a second group for 10 – 14-year-olds. The groups were usually exceptionally large. Due to my training, the theatre approach was process-oriented starting out on a workshop basis with a production developed by the group, which we showed to an audience from outside (parents, friends etc.) at the end of the school year. These productions were in German and not in English, rarely multilingual. Amongst the plays we produced there were our own adaptations of e. g. 'Lysistrata' or 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' collage dramas, e. g., 'Something Is Rotten in the State of Denmark' on Shakespeare, or 'amor, -oris, m.' on relationships and love. There was play devising, e. g. 'All This in Wonderland' on growing up, there were musicals and there were improvisation shows, e. g. Shakespeare-based narrative long forms, etc. We were quite successful and frequently travelled to national and international youth theatre festivals.

We also had joint projects with groups from outside, e. g. with an Islamic school for social work, with a group of senior citizens or with a group from the job centre for young people without any formal school leaving qualifications.

All this meant an immense workload, poorly paid, with extra rehearsals before premieres, also because of the large group sizes. I remember a particular Sunday rehearsing at school from 8 a. m. till midnight, but the reward you got was the involvement of the students, the development you could see in their social skills and their improved performance competence.

For the participants, the school theatre group, like any theatrical work, meant learning about themselves. Whether it was presenting oneself, i.e. standing up in front of other people and presenting one's cause; whether it was getting involved, i.e. positioning oneself in a group where one can do the most for the group by using one's own strengths but also recognizing the strengths of others and using them in the same way; or whether it was observing and doing the right thing at the right time, i.e. learning perfect timing. The young people learnt to accept offers that came their way and to shape them in such a way that they became a success for them and for everyone involved; they learnt to react quickly and to concentrate; they learnt to immerse themselves in one thing and to apply the acquired knowledge and skills again in other contexts. In other words, they developed a new and diverse repertoire of actions that they could have at the ready and use when the occasion arose.

And above all it meant closer ties amongst the group, of which the facilitator was part. To put it in a nutshell, our performances were group productions, jointly developed, with extra tasks for everyone, from lighting to music and catering, with me having the final responsibility, of course.

e. *Drama in Education – Classroom Drama*

In Austria, the school theatre situation was and is special. The scene is still rather small since – as I said before – school theatre is still only an extra-curricular activity. Up to 2010 there were hardly any competent contact persons in the Ministry of Education. Most impulses for Austrian school theatre came from the national Amateur Theatre Association 'ÖBV,' the reason being that most of its officials were teachers. As ÖBV was and is the national branch of AITA/IATA, from 1974 a biennial international 'AITA/IATA Drama in Education Conference' has been held in Austria during the Easter holidays[5]. I took part from about 1993, participating in workshops with all the educators from English-speaking countries, e. g. Judith Ackroyd, Patrice Baldwin, Gavin Bolton, David Booth, Emelie FitzGibbon, Kathleen Gallagher, Brad Haseman, Andy Kempe, Jonothan Neelands, Cecily O'Neill, Allan Owens, Sir Ken Robinson, John Somers, Larry Swartz, or Joe Winston, to mention just a few, who used structured improvisations for teaching purposes in 'normal' classrooms. I am deeply indebted to all these people since they gave me valuable insights into teaching and an abundance of creative drama strategies and approaches[6].

This was how I came across Drama in Education at about the time when Manfred Schewe coined the term 'Dramapädagogik' for the German-speaking world (Schewe 1993) and the concept of 'process drama'[7] was developed by John O'Toole, Brad Haseman and Cecily O'Neill.

On top of that, I participated in a three-week summer course in Bristol in 1996 on 'Drama in TEFL' organized by the British Council. We were thirty-one participants from 17 nations from all over the world – from a Brazilian primary school teacher to a Malaysian school inspector, from a Syrian university professor to a secondary school teacher from Mauritius Island. Not only did I learn a lot about different school systems but I was also inspired with a range of methods and new ideas, from 'playback theatre' – at that time literally unknown in Austria – to storytelling and process drama. Again, the workshops were led by excellent facilitators.

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[5] Since 2017 this conference has been organized by the Austrian branch of IDEA, IDEA Austria.

[6] For a comprehensive list of drama strategies cf. Neelands & Goode 2015; see also Owens & Barber 1997: 22-32 and Baldwin & Galazka, 2022: 49-73

[7] For a definition of process drama and some of its characteristics – e.g., an episodic structure, the absence of a script, an integral audience – cf. e.g., Piazzoli 2018: 34ff

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My knowledge in this respect was further broadened in 2004 through my encounter with Ingo Scheller at a conference in Germany, where we both had been invited to give workshops. The approach and methodology of his 'scenic play' and his 'scenic interpretation' and his set of strategies influenced, for example, by Augusto Boal or Moreno's psychodrama, for the teaching of literature and for teaching in all kinds of social contexts fascinated me (cf. Scheller, 1998 and Scheller, 2004). "Voice sculpture" (*"Stimmenskulptur"*) (Scheller, 2004: 74f) or "auxiliary ego" (*"Hilfs-Ich"*) (Scheller, 2004: 70f), to mention just two, have become part of my methodological repertoire.

All these forms of learning were exactly what I had been searching for in my classroom, a new avenue for teaching, a holistic approach with emotional engagement, a learning with and through the body. I started out by copying the drama units and scenic approaches I had learned from all the excellent experts by adjusting them to my needs and carried on by developing my own drama units in accordance with the curriculum and teaching goals.

For the next twenty years my classroom teaching gradually became more and more process-drama-based with elements of scenic play – up to a third of my lessons were taught in this manner. Process drama and scenic play became a didactic programme for all kinds of topics, for intercultural learning and cultural studies, for teaching literature and for teaching grammar, and also for all kinds of school subjects. I began implementing process drama and elements of scenic play into my history lessons as well and I assisted colleagues teaching other subjects (e.g., German, French, Geography, Religious Education, etc.) by facilitating a drama lesson for them.

Classroom Drama – Notions and Misconceptions

a. A valuable teaching and learning tool

Teaching became varied and lively, which was also noticed by my 17-year-old students, who very well understood drama when being interviewed for a film the Ministry of Education made on drama teaching in one of my classes. Although we had never reflected on the benefits of doing drama at a metalevel, they said, for example, that at the very beginning, when I had begun teaching them when they were 15 and they had been unfamiliar with drama – it had been quite an effort to get into role. But then it became

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easier for them to communicate or to understand distant historical times and personalities.[8] Some of these pupils, who are now teachers themselves, told me during a class reunion that they were using some of the drama strategies they had experienced with me in their own classrooms.

There have been numerous studies on drama as a learning tool in recent years, so let me just summarize a few of the findings and add some personal observations, with particular emphasis on language learning. The theatrical classroom is always a space for trial and error. The situations are 'as-if' and can therefore be understood as play in contrast to real social situations, which allows for action with reduced consequences and thus facilitates developmental progress (Kotte, 1988: 781 – 795). In my classes this was reflected in an increased readiness to speak the foreign language. My classroom was frequently open for visitors (students, student teachers, teacher development seminars) that repeatedly remarked on the fluency, spontaneity and creativity of my pupils. The latter did not surprise me, for in my experience the power of creativity is also developed by constantly doing process drama. As all performative methods and especially the strategies of process drama are much more activating than many other teaching methods, they even get notoriously silent students to come out of their shells, e. g. in the 'hot seat', where a student in role is questioned by the rest of the class, who are in or out of role. I can remember motivating scenarios when students were literally fighting to be on the 'hot seat'.

Research indicates that the best results in language production are achieved when learners are confronted with "language emergency situations" (*"Sprachnotsituationen")* (Tselikas, 2002: 39ff), in which they must speak situationally and directly, just like in everyday life. The overall much stronger role identification reduces the learners' fear of making mistakes. They are speaking as different characters and personalities, and this creates direct, personal speaking opportunities and interactions that result in an improvement of communicative competence.[9] Body language and non-verbal communication are also included.

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[8] DVD: Drama in Education Methode Drama bm:uk 2012. There is a short teaser on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XC9eYvxcrwsy

In reading, I used the strategies and conventions of drama in education and Ingo Scheller's scenic interpretation primarily at the level of reading comprehension and reading reflection since not only skills like creativity and the ability to imagine, but also inferential reading comprehension are trained.[10] Students are encouraged to think critically and inferentially and to develop their own ideas, which they can incorporate into the joint interpretation process.

Since my encounter with process drama and scenic play I have never taught aesthetic literature other than with this highly motivating, holistic, experiential, sensory, action-oriented approach, which also enables children and young people to express themselves kinaesthetically, visually, and verbally before a writing process. The drama methods are suitable for all school levels and text types and can be used in all phases of reading ("pre-, while- and post-reading").

In process drama, learning and emotion are interconnected as has often been stated by researchers (cf. e. g. Sambanis, 2013).[11] Depending on the scenario, process drama units can indeed become very emotional. I have experienced this occasionally, for example when working on a unit dealing with National Socialism with a group of adult learners. It is necessary for the facilitators to be aware that participants might need some emotional support and a way out of the drama. The facilitators should have distancing strategies at their disposal, so that the participants can safely experience and explore emotions in the drama (see Bolton 1984).

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[9] This was corroborated by a meticulous triangular mixed method study conducted by one of my Master students, who researched the increase in oral language production over a year of 17-year-old fourth-year students in one class of L2 French. Cf. Chalupsky, 2015

[10] For example, through 'still images' – when you ask the participants to present the gist or their interpretation of a text in a group tableau – or through methods of exploring characters, such as 'character pot' (I learned this particular technique from Andy Kempe) or 'role on the wall'; through a change of perspective; or also through reflective methods, such as 'power line' or 'spectrum of difference' – e.g. according to the moral quality of the protagonists of a text – from good to evil – or according to their dramatic function in the text. For a description of most of these techniques see e. g. Neelands & Goode, 2015.

[11] For the implications on second language learning see also Piazzoli, 2018: 133-161

Although conflict or anger management issues can be explored through performative methods, it should be remembered that unlike psychodrama, drama in education is not a form of therapy. If you deal with topics like bullying or eating disorders, you do it in a preventive, supportive manner. In acute crisis situations, it will therefore depend on the teachers' therapeutic training to what extent they are confident in using these methods. In a case of 'happy slapping'[12] in one of my classes, some drama methods (e. g. the "empty chair" technique) (Owens & Barber, 1997: 30) were used in class by me but in consultation with the supervising therapists.

A drama-based classroom is definitely not monotonous. It is action-oriented holistic learning with "head, heart, hand, and foot"[13] in "designed scenic improvisations" *("gestaltete szenische Improvisationen")* (Schewe, 1993: 81f) that includes physical movement in the classroom. The students are involved throughout the lesson. Other forms of teaching seek to pour as much as possible into the learners. Drama-based pedagogy tries to bring out and develop as much as possible of the feelings and prior knowledge already present in the students' minds. Teachers are often co-actors and move within the group, which in turn acts in changing groupings and configurations (from individual work to large groups).

I was once observed by a group of teachers. I taught two lessons in two different forms, one was process-drama-based, and the other one was what I call a 'handout approach' to teaching (i.e., the more handouts I give out per lesson the better my teaching), in other words a 'traditional' lesson. In the first one student input was about 80 %, in the second one only 20 %, which came as a surprise even to me.

The more one's lessons are oriented towards this drama-based teaching method, the further the lessons will move away from the teacher-question-student-answer situation, which is often perceived as dull by both teachers and learners. This also means a transformation of the teachers' role, away from blackboard-centeredness towards being coaches, co-actors, spectators and, above all, facilitators of the lesson, since in process drama lessons we are dealing with teaching situations in which offers from the pupils are taken up and the direction of the drama is often jointly determined. Process-drama-based teaching sequences have an open design – there is always a moment of unpredictability – which also demands flexibility from the teacher and consequently means saying goodbye to a lesson planned down to the smallest detail. Through the technique of 'teacher in role', however, teachers can give new impulses to the action. One way they can do this, is for example to play a character whose status is lower than the roles played by their students – a situation which will be unfamiliar for most teachers.

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[12] an extreme form of bullying, which is filmed by the perpetrators

[13] Schewe (1993), 146: in adapting Pestalozzi's dictum: *"Lernen mit Herz, Hand, Kopf und Fuß"*

b. Disadvantages of Drama?

Taking all these benefits of drama into account, one might wonder whether drama has any disadvantages? Why are teachers hesitant to use drama and why is it not at the core of the curriculum? In the following passage I will try to refute some common misconceptions about drama and its disadvantages, which I have also come across, particularly from teachers who have never had any experience in this respect.[14]

Objection number 1: Drama is too time consuming

Teachers sometimes complain that they do not have the time to do drama because of scheduling constraints or due to curriculum requirements they must fulfil. This raises the question what the classroom time should be used for. In L2 teaching, the primary teaching goal is L2 language proficiency and there are different ways to achieve that. I did not meticulously follow the official curriculum, and neither the 'hidden' one, namely the schoolbook. Despite that, language production and overall achievements became better in the drama-based classes, since long-term retention was improved through movement-based learning and emotional engagement (cf. in this respect also Sambanis, 2016: 206 – 221). Austrian A-levels are largely based on the Cambridge exam (with 25% of the written exam for each of the 4 skills – reading, listening, language in use and writing). This has led some colleagues in upper secondary schools to a 'teaching to the test' attitude doing almost solely the required reading/writing/listening and language-in-use formats, which makes English so boring that I myself would doze off while teaching. I, on the other hand, used to hand out the required formats as home-exercises (sometimes with the keys) and instead, I did drama in class, which seemed to have no negative effect at all. The standardized written A-level results in the class I had taught with performative methods (mostly process drama) resulted in 14 As and 4 Bs in the written exam. In the oral exam there were only As.

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[14] Some of the headlines of the following passage are taken from the following internet source: *https://prezi.com/uu7hixa0hkfs/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-using-drama-in-elt-classroom/;* [accessed 3 June, 2022]

This better retention was also true for my history lessons. In history, amongst some teachers with rather traditional attitudes there is still this horrendous misconception about the teaching goals, namely, that you have to overload the pupils with an abundance of facts and details, of which probably less than two per cent are stored in long-term memory. I remember having to substitute for a colleague, who told me in advance that he wanted me to teach his thirteen-year-olds all the territorial shifts during the Napoleonic wars – e. g. "Which country was Bessarabia ceded to in the treaty of Campo Formio?" The pupils could not have cared less, as they did not know where or what Bessarabia was[15]. On the other hand, some of my former pupils, who became my students at the Teacher Training College, would come up to me and say that they still remembered the content of certain process drama lessons that we had done in history.

Objection number 2: The teacher preparation time is disproportionate

In fact, with a little routine I think quite the contrary is true provided you re-use your pre-texts. Even text-book authors re-use their successes. As to structured dramas, I have the feeling it is like with good wine, the older they are, or rather the more you do them, the better they get. Of course, preparing a structured drama takes some time and requires some thinking. Like with any teaching, you should have your teaching and learning goals in mind. And you need a motivating pre-text that gets your participants 'hooked'. A wide repertoire of appropriate games and strategies helps in devising a drama.

Objection number 3: Students may not want to participate in acting all the time

As mentioned above, process-drama-based pedagogy is an activating form of teaching and learning, which keeps learners continuously occupied but not necessarily with acting all the time. There are also phases of developing, of watching, of collaborating on a topic, of reflecting, and so forth.

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[15] a historical territory that today is part of Ukraine and Moldova

Objection number 4: Students are hard to control since they can have too much fun

What is wrong with a tension-free and effective learning atmosphere that is fun and enables positive experiences in learning? "When drama activities are successfully established in the classroom, the learning environment will be relaxed and merry, preventing destructive forms of stress while fostering positive emotions." (Sambanis, 2013) When the students enjoy the activities, they learn better. Language production is connected to emotions (Sambanis, 2016: 216). It is true that classroom drama, like any form of play, even child play, needs commitment and rules in order to function. One way of doing this is to create appropriate framework conditions and to enter into a kind of contract with the class, in which the pupils commit themselves to engage seriously in the method. During the drama unit, the teacher can on the one hand control the events by using the technique of teacher in role or also intervene as a participant by asking specific questions, for example, if individual questions from participants lead too far away from the text or topic.

Objection number 5: A certain amount of language is needed for doing process drama

In my experience, this view is not borne out. One just has to pick suitable topics and drama strategies. Even with first year pupils we would do thought tracking after we had read some little beginners' texts from the schoolbook or we would do still images, and in their second year of English pupils were sitting on the hot seat as characters answering questions, in the 'imagined world' overcoming their shyness to speak the foreign language and developing L2 fluency more quickly.

Objection number 6: It encourages incorrect forms of language as long as the teacher does not correct mistakes immediately so as not to discourage students

It is true that I did not correct mistakes immediately, but I would not do that in a traditional lesson – e. g. during a class debate – either. We dealt with serious linguistic inconsistencies, which I jotted down during the drama, afterwards, in the reflection phase. There was one exception, however: Some authors argue that one should correct grave

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pronunciation mistakes immediately so that they do not imprint themselves on the memory.

Objection number 7: Activities may not be suitable for the whole class

One argument against drama is that at a certain age (e. g. teenagers) pupils do not want to do drama because they consider it childish. From my experience, if you choose motivating pre-texts and activities and appropriate methods and you as a teacher believe in what you are doing, in other words if you are authentic, you will be able to capture most of the participants. A friend of mine teaching at a problem school, where 98 per cent of her 10 – 14-year-olds did not have German as their native tongue, said doing drama was the only way for her to teach German or to deal with fictional texts. There was one exception, however: Drama work may not be suitable for people with severe cases of Asperger's, who usually have difficulties with any form of group work. My challenge, was that I do not really have expertise in this field. Only with milder cases was I successful in encouraging them take part.

Though my regular job was to teach 10 – 19-year-olds in secondary school, I have also had several other teaching experiences. For a couple of years, I taught English in a part-time evening Master programme for people in employment at the University of Applied Sciences in Vienna – the course was 'Knowledge Management and Human Resources' – and my students were 30 – 50-year-old managers. My professional development drama workshops were not only for teachers but for groups as diverse as the Financial Academy and a group of TV-editors of a popular Austrian talk show. I would do drama with all of them, covering topics from business and finance, reflecting on agendas with the managers and the financial officers, and enacting strange and unexpected scenarios with the TV-editors of the talk show.

Objection number 8: Performative teaching is not suitable for very crowded classrooms

I did drama in very small classrooms. It is the 'imagined world' that matters, not the space. Shoving aside desks and chairs and putting them back at the end of a lesson usually takes one minute. If you have a very large group, you will have to find methods to motivate and engage them all, but even so I found doing drama much easier than giving a lecture, where at least half of my pupils would fall asleep.

Objection number 9: I cannot act therefore I cannot teach drama

On the other hand, is this not one of the advantages of process drama? In educational drama you do not really need sophisticated acting skills. After all, it is not 'how' one plays that is important but 'what', or as Dorothy Heathcote put it

"The difference between theatre and classroom drama is that in theatre everything is contrived so that the audience gets the kicks. In the classroom, the participants get the kicks. However, the tools are the same: the elements of theatre craft." (Heathcote cited in Wagner, 1998: 147)

And do not forget that it is the participants that will do the acting. Nonetheless, even though theatre as an artform is not the focus, by and by an understanding for the semiotics of the theatre and for dramatic forms of expression, such as tension, spatial awareness, focus, gesture, posture, or proxemics will develop, since

"Like theatre, the primary purpose of process drama is to establish an imagined world, a dramatic "elsewhere" created by the participants as they discover, articulate, and sustain fictional roles and situations. As it unfolds, the process will contain powerful elements of composition and contemplation, but improvised encounters will remain at the heart of the event as the source of much of its dramatic power." (O'Neill, 1995: xiii)

There are, however, three real structural obstacles:

1. The 50-minute lessons which we have in Austria are counter-productive (for any form of learning)

We once asked Allan Owens about this topic during a workshop in Austria, he just said, "So make it short!". This is not the only strategy, of course, although you can do 50-minute dramas. What I did was sometimes use just one or two drama conventions when they fitted in with an issue in the schoolbook. Schoolbooks are often excellent resources for pretexts, by the way. Or I would pick up the previous lesson's thread through a freeze frame or tableau or a reflection out of role. Of course, it is more difficult 'to tune in', or rather to get into the spirit of drama in 50 minutes, of which only 45 are left if we discount organizational matters. So, if I felt it was important not to interrupt because of the complexity or the empathic nature of a drama, I would borrow one or two lessons from a colleague.

2 & 3. Schoolbooks do not contain drama and drama is not part of teacher education

Except for re-enactments in the form performing little scenes and rather dull role plays there are literally no elements of performative teaching to be found in Austrian coursebooks. No drama conventions, no prefabricated dramas. When I asked two coursebook authors, who I happened to know personally, why this was the case, the answer was that they were not at all familiar with any performative methods. So, while our small group of insiders is discussing academic subtleties, the vast majority of teachers out there (at least in Austria) have never come across a strategy like 'hot seat', 'thought tunnel' or ever used a 'still image' – let alone more sophisticated conventions or whole process dramas for classroom purposes.

Therefore, I plead to make performativity part of teacher education for all teachers, not just language teachers or the ones leading a school theatre group. This is confirmed, for example, by Eva Göksel's recent PhD work (2021, 2022). Indeed, teachers need performance competence since teachers *are* performers, with 20 – 24 premieres a week, and teaching is sometimes considered an art form these days (cf. Lutzker, 2007: 295 – 319).

A young professor at the Institute of Mathematics in Vienna, Michael Eichmaier, has realized this. In 2017 he set up an elective course for his students called 'Mathematik macht Freude' ('maths gives pleasure'), the idea being that maths should no longer be an 'anxiety subject', which it is, at least in Austria. So, the course curriculum of the students – future secondary school maths teachers – apart from subject-based innovations also covers areas like inclusive schooling or crisis management. The students receive supervision, and I was invited to teach them performative skills. In the summer there is usually a one-week course for new teachers to prepare them for their career.[16]

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[16] https://mmf.univie.ac.at/

Multiplier (school theatre representative, facilitator in teacher development and teacher education)

One of the high-brow essay topics I remember from the beginnings of my career was an Aldous Huxley quotation, 'There is no Hope for the Satisfied Man', and looking back at my drama years there are areas where I do not feel satisfied. While I have been quite successful in disseminating performative methods, and particularly process drama, in my workshops to my pupils and students, to teachers and other professional groups all over Austria and abroad over the past 30 years, I feel I have been less successful at an institutional level.

The Austrian school theatre scene is relatively small. There are numerous schools that do not offer drama clubs as an extracurricular activity. Around 1994 I was asked by the Austrian Amateur Theatre Association ÖBV whether I was willing to oversee their school section, at that time literally *the* Austrian organisation for coordinating anything connected with school theatre or educational drama, a position I held until around 2014. Meanwhile this has switched to a subsection of the Ministry of Education.

There have been a few successes during this time, admittedly, one being the continuation and organization of the school theatre summer course in Hollabrunn, even in difficult times when government officials tried to cancel it. This unique one-week event for 100 teachers from all over Austria has taken place every year since 1982. It is the largest and longest course of such a kind that is free of charge in Austria. Literally anyone who has made a mark on Austrian school theatre was professionally socialized there. I organized this course from 1995 for 22 years, and from 2001 until today I have also been the facilitator of the beginners' course.

Another achievement was, together with four colleagues, the development and establishment of a three-year part-time extra-occupational Master programme in Theatre Pedagogy with a strong emphasis on Drama in Education at the University College of Teacher Education Vienna/Krems (KPH Wien/Krems) in 2012. The problem is, however, that this course, which starts every three years, is not substantially subsidized. Participants have to pay tuition fees (about € 1500 per semester). Whereas the first rounds from 2012 to 2015 and from 2015 to 2018 had about 40 participants, the present one, probably due to the economic crisis, is struggling with dwindling registration numbers (only about 12 participants).[17]

I do not really count the process-drama-based teacher course for 'Drama in Modern Language Teaching', which I set up together with my colleagues Stefan Egger and Egon Turecek, as a personal success. This free course was set up as six modules, which took place between 2004 and 2008. It was booked out within two weeks and was tremendously well-received by the 40 participants. We had exceptional international facilitators, including Judith Ackroyd, Emelie FitzGibbon, Andy Kempe, Jonothan Neelands, Cecily O'Neil, Allan Owens and Bethan Hulse. Despite all these successes, we did not succeed in obtaining sufficient funding to run the course a second time, so that it remained a one-time event.[18]

Definitely one of the ultimate 'downs' of my career as a drama teacher, to get back to the title of this keynote, was that in spite of numerous negotiations with all kinds of officials, I did not succeed in establishing 'Darstellendes Spiel' (school theatre/drama) as the third arts subject in the Austrian curriculum and neither did I succeed in attaining one of my major goals, namely making performativity an obligatory part of teacher education.

In Austria, Teacher Education Universities can set certain priorities in their curricula. From 2007 the University of Teacher Education Vienna/Krems made a small 8 – 16-hour module of drama taught by me and a colleague compulsory for all their student teachers. When I retired in 2016 and my colleague Egon Turecek retired one year later, this programme was stopped immediately. Last May I was asked to teach a one-week Erasmus course on drama as a learning tool for student teachers from 10 nations at the same

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[17] https://kphvie.ac.at/institute/zentrum-fuer-weiterbildung/hochschullehrgaenge-im-ueberblick.html?detailDceUid=38535&cHash=f6f708cc49e48788fb6165fa73823fc5. It is one of two master courses for theatre pedagogy in Austria, the other one – also commencing around 2012 – being situated at the Private University of Education, Diocese of Linz

[18] The two-volume proceedings of this course, "Drama in Modern Language Teaching" and "Drama in Modern Language Teaching Part 2 Follow-Up" can be downloaded from https://kphvie.ac.at/fileadmin/Dateien_KPH/Forschung_Entwicklung/KPZ-Theaterpaed/downloads/Drama_in_MLT_1.pdf; and https://kphvie.ac.at/fileadmin/Dateien_KPH/Forschung_Entwicklung/KPZ-Theaterpaed/downloads/Drama_in_MLT_2.pdf

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institution. The Austrian participants were the only ones who had never experienced any drama, neither at school nor at the university of teacher education.

My overall prediction for any form of performative teaching or learning to gain ground amongst Austrian teachers – except for a small, committed community – is therefore rather pessimistic. Whether educational drama (and particularly process drama) is part of teacher development seems very much to depend on the individual initiatives of the people in charge[19]. Development workshops are usually short, only one afternoon immediately after school. This, of course, raises questions about the purpose of such workshops: If one aspect is to break teaching routines, I have considerable doubts if such a thing can really happen after one afternoon: What can be successfully packed into such an afternoon with tired participants coming directly from work? I have experienced quite a few such short workshops myself towards the end of my teaching career and they went in one ear and out the other.

As for teacher education, performativity is literally non-existent in the curricula for 'regular' teachers of all levels and subjects. For teachers teaching extra-curricular drama it is up to them whether they acquire the necessary competencies since one still does not need any formal requirements or training for teaching 'Darstellendes Spiel' (school theatre). In other words, performative teaching is not institutionalized in Austria, neither as a school subject or as a learning tool (and certainly not process drama as a method in L2 language acquisition) nor does it have an academic tradition unlike in other (e. g. English-speaking) countries. Perhaps it is due to this lack of academic embedding that performative teaching and learning have no place in Austrian education.

Conclusion

I do not want to give the impression that performative teaching and learning can replace all other methods and forms of teaching. It is one learning opportunity among many others. My concern was and still is to make process drama, scenic play and other performative methods better known and to point out that they are not age-bound, but are suitable for all school and age levels, including the university sector, as well as for adults.

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[19] Teacher development workshops and courses in Austria are offered by twenty different regional governmental departments.

Applying drama in pedagogical settings allows for serious explorations of themes and texts. This requires a certain methodological competence on the part of the teachers, which can only be achieved by developing their own performance experience. As Jonothan Neelands remarked: "Drama of course, by itself does nothing. It is only what teachers do with drama that makes the difference." (2009:11). Since Austria is a relatively blank spot on the international map in teacher education both in the school theatre sector and in the field of drama in education, performative methods – primarily those of scenic play and process drama – are missing from the methodological repertoire of the vast majority of colleagues, as I notice time and again in my in-service training courses. The feedback I receive from teachers and students shows me that performative methods are desired and accepted by student teachers and teachers alike.

It is to be feared that in view of a common European frame of reference, which mainly focuses on cognitive aspects and standardised teaching objectives, especially in foreign language acquisition, any performative forms of teaching will become even more marginalised. Not only has the pandemic led to a decline in enrolments in drama courses, particularly those liable to be costly, but there has also been a tremendous boost in digital teaching, which has led to a reduction of other teacher development offers, particularly 'artistic' ones. In times of crises there seems to be no place and money for "lovers of culture" ("Kulturverliebte") as our former young Federal Chancellor called anyone interested in arts and culture in a derogatory manner[20]. Politicians and ministry officials often lack the knowledge and insight that drama can be a powerful means of education, or even worse, they do not care.

It is my firm belief that education must equip learners with the competencies they need to shape their own lives and to contribute meaningfully to the lives of others. It must therefore not be limited to knowledge that can be tested. Education should prepare children and young people for a constantly changing modern world. Performative

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[20] Sebastian Kurz in a radio interview, 2 November 2020. Cf Laher

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teaching – and this comprises school theatre work as well as classroom drama – can make indispensable contributions to this.

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Harald Volker Sommer

3 The choral theatre principle as an impulse for body-centred work with language

This article explores how choral theatre work can support work with language. The chorus is described as a platform of learning processes that are only possible in the group. The individual players in the chorus experience themselves through open communication and a high level of attention to the other group members. On this basis, the manifold possibilities of physical-gestural, vocal, and linguistic work with the chorus are outlined: the voice connected with physical movement as a pre-linguistic expression is the prerequisite for the use of language; and language itself in the chorus is in turn inseparably connected with physical shaping and the inner and outer posture adopted. The goal remains the personal and individual expression of individuals in the context of a group.

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Theatrical learning processes in the chorus

What can choral theatre work do for language work? What aspects are interesting in this group-oriented and strongly body-emphasized approach? What can the individual learn physically and linguistically in the chorus, and what questions are provoked, what experiences made possible? Central elements of a theatrical learning process in choral

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performance arise from the relationship between the individual (protagonist) and the chorus. For example, a gesture that is performed in the chorus – synchronously or asynchronously – or a sentence that is spoken by the chorus, changes the perception of this very gesture or sentence. I speak a sentence in the chorus, but I don't speak it alone, I hear it simultaneously in many vocal variations. In this way, language in the chorus also becomes a tool for finding one's own position in the group. Postures taken together, words spoken simultaneously or offset by different speakers show the diversity in the collective: this is all of us, all together, and yet different.

Choral work is challenging: the power of the chorus is discovered together with the group: discovering language together, trying out gestures, copying, mirroring. This is also part of the theatrical learning process. The sensitive relationship between uniformity and the individual playful idea of each person is an essential part of choral work. Within the chorus, it is important to "rub" one's own creativity against the others and to develop it together with the others. It is not one's own idea that is decisive, but rather that the chorus agrees on a common framework – and uses it playfully. The fear of losing one's ego can step by step give way to a trust in the group-dynamic, choral play, and its possibilities.

The chorus offers the individual player numerous opportunities to discover the different sides of his own self together with the others – and thus also to try out different ways of speaking. The path of theatrical learning within the chorus runs from "outside to inside", e.g., from the appropriation of the gestures of others, to one's own expression. These steps require a high degree of communication – both between the facilitator and the group, as well as between the players in the group. One's own perception meets that of the other players. Gestures are adopted and worked out. Not one's own originality, but the way of shaping the "foreign material" provided by others (gestures, words) is the essential artistic-pedagogical process.

Once this familiarity has been established in the transformation, the individually developed gestures or words become a common choral gesture. The goal is to abandon oneself, to leave one's own expression for the time being, to arrive back at personal expression through the choral experience. When everyone in the chorus develops the

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common, perhaps individually executed, but overall, equally motivated linguistic or physical gesture, the "choral gesture" emerges.

What does this mean for the individual player in the chorus? When the power of language is carried into the group, there is also a common feeling for sound, for language, for the rhythm of the spoken language. You speak and listen at the same time. You speak in a sound space. You speak in a sound space, and in a common rhythm. You listen and speak at the same time. This sound space carries your own language and encourages you to speak.

The choral group thus defines itself through a common code of expression and shows this in its postures and in its language. Developing a common form is the core of the choral theatrical learning process. Each is an indispensable part of this process and is dependent on the other. The player in the chorus must be humble, attentive, and courageous at the same time. The responsibility is distributed among all the players. Every action trigger reaction in the other players, and all actions and gestures are interconnected with the choral ensemble. Individual players may experience themselves as impatient, too focused, dominant, patient, shy or loud. It is possible and likely to experience oneself in several of these reaction patterns, and sometimes one of these patterns can be observed more strongly. Thus, as a chorister, I am confronted with my usual patterns of behaviour, and I must try out new patterns within the choral framework – with the protection and support of the chorus. This applies first to the physical and then especially to the linguistic. The choral experience thus becomes synonymous with theatrical learning processes. The form of the chorus enables and facilitates theatrical communication and creates a connection between the players. Rather shy and reserved players notice that they are strengthened by the chorus. In this way, elementary social questions are negotiated within the choral play: How do I define myself in relation to others? How do I take a stand, opposite or as part of the group? One's own freedom and one's own playful decision are co-determined by social conditions – namely, belonging to a chorus. I am only I because the others are there, or more precisely: I am playing this I right now because the others react to me scenically. Players in the chorus share their concentration and attention. The individual in the group does not at any moment act only in a self-referential and self-observing way but sees him-/herself mirrored by variants of his or her action, to which

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again a reaction must be made. Every individual action or emotion is amplified, relativized, changed, reflected, or mirrored by the presence of the group. One acts vocally, linguistically, and physically individually, but never alone and without reference to the chorus. The choristers observe the other chorus members and thus their own reflections. In this way, they experience the resonance of their performance with their own bodies and senses. The content of the chorus is the "we". The formal aspects of choral work – physical coordination in choreographies, linguistic design, repeatable movement, voice and breathing patterns – form a supportive framework for the creativity of the individual. In the chorus, the personal can unfold. This is particularly evident in the work with language: The individual is carried by the vocal wave of the group. Each experiences their own voice, their own words amplified, changed, varied.

The expression of the chorus through the body and through language

The choral principle is gestural. Action, movement, and language manifest themselves in choral work from the interplay and alternation of physical and linguistic postures. Posture as a concept, encompasses both the purely physical assumption of a posture and the inner attitude towards someone, which can express itself both physically and linguistically. The body as both tool and material is a central element of the choral principle, and the physical corresponds closely with the linguistic in the chorus. The choral feeling can be experienced most clearly through the body. It prepares the linguistic work. It therefore makes sense to first define the concept of gesture in physical terms. The chorus magnifies and multiplies physicality. Together, the common movement and gesture become the choral gesture. The gesture itself no longer includes only the physical level of play, but also linguistic actions. So, it is always about an attitude towards someone or something else. Either the gesture is directed towards the other players within the chorus or, as a whole chorus, towards the players outside the chorus – and then towards the audience.

If the choral group has found this common expression, one can speak of a choral gesture, which always has a social function, and is directed towards someone. The choral gesture can be intensified through synchronicity. Synchronicity in this context means an increase in expression through collective action. However, the physical actions or gestures of the choristers themselves do not always have to be synchronous in the strict sense, i.e., individual actions within a framework of the group situation are quite possible. Synchronous physical action as a chorus is not to be equated with a complete de-individualization of the individual gesture. A synchronous action of a group can, for example, magnify a solo action like a magnifying glass, an alternation of synchronous and asynchronous individual movements and actions can show an individualization of the group. Often, choral physical play is even characterized by asynchrony: many different gestures and movements take place simultaneously as parallel action. The choral principle in its emphatically physical-gestural approach is a theatre method beyond role or psychologically motivated action patterns. Physical postures can provoke the corresponding emotions. Brecht describes the effect of physical tension and emphasizes the connection between the gesture or posture adopted and the emotion to be portrayed. The state of tension of the body produces the corresponding inner postures. The chorus magnifies this effect. Thus, in choral work, the body is an important means of arriving at the representation of emotions in the group through common movements and postures on the one hand and preparing the work with language on the other. In choral work, a connection between physical, strongly movement-oriented aspects and the use of language arises automatically. An interaction between language and movement develops, especially for work with texts that already have a rhythm. Finding a common rhythm, e.g., of the steps, can thus precede the work with language.

The expression of the chorus through voice and language

If one explicitly deals with voice and language in choral work, then the above-mentioned elements of the choral principle become more important. Before any use of the language itself, however, there will be the play with the voice in all its diversity, and in this context also the jointly developed group breath. As a group, it is important to find a choral language gesture based on this common breath and a common use of voice. In the choral sound, the individual voices transform into a common choral voice. It is less and more than the individual voice at the same time. The apparent loss of individual expression is made up for in choral work by the experience of playful vocal variations that are only made possible by the chorus. The use of language in choral performance does not necessarily mean choral speaking in the sense of synchronous text passages or choral sound spaces. The joint rhythmic shaping of texts and the division of text passages between many speakers or between two rival speaking groups, the alternation of individual speaker and chorus, these are only a few of the many possibilities. Further and more complex elements of choral performance are possible. The speaking chorus thrives on rhythm, variation, counter-runs and pauses, from the distribution of the portions of meaning to different speakers, from dialogue within the group.

The chorus can be the echo of a single speaker. It can answer or contradict, it can become the multiple inner voice of a person. A monologue can rise from a common whispering tapestry of sound, work in silence and sink into the resurgent babble of voices. A collective murmuring of the chorus, a parallel speaking of the chorus members, only distinguished by changing volumes, shouting, calling, loud rhythmic breathing: these means of expression can be played with in a variety of ways to experiment with the effect of voice and language in the chorus. The organized, varied, and surprising linguistic and vocal play makes up the special charm of the chorus. The individual voices change in importance, but it is always the impression of the simultaneity of all voices that is created. The perpetual presence of the chorus, no matter how many are speaking, dominates the play. The moment of total simultaneity as "unison", is only one element within the linguistic choral design. The motivation for this must lie in the situation itself. The theatrical shaping of texts is an exciting challenge. Here, the chorus is a theatrical catalyst when it comes to the linguistic representation of great emotions. It is precisely the alienation of the choral form that creates the necessary distance for theatrical interpretation. And it is precisely through the choral approach that a personal play with great emotions is possible. The goal of a choral work is a group of choral players acting together, each with their own personal physical, vocal, and linguistic expression. So, as a conclusion, how is choral work in language teaching beneficial? Choral work directs the focus away from the individual speaker and towards the group, thus promoting individuality through the jointly found expression in the protection of the group. Paraverbal elements in the chorus such as sound, rhythm and phonetics playfully break down inhibitions and thus promote the desire to express oneself and prepare the use of language. The individual player stands in a sound and language field of the chorus. In the next step, the individual's own speech can emerge from the protection of the chorus-group.

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Sommer, Harald Volker (2023): *The choral principle. A workbook for theater, pedagogy and teaching*. Ibidem Verlag Stuttgart.

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Harald Volker Sommer

4 Das chorische Theaterprinzip als Impuls für eine körperlich zentrierte Arbeit mit Sprache

*In diesem Artikel wird untersucht, wie Chortheaterarbeit die Arbeit mit Sprache unterstützen kann. Der Chor wird als Plattform von Lernprozessen beschrieben, die nur in der Gruppe möglich sind. Die einzelnen Spieler*innen im Chor erleben sich über eine offene Kommunikation und eine hohe Aufmerksamkeit für die anderen Gruppenmitglieder. Auf dieser Grundlage werden die vielfältigen Möglichkeiten körperlich-gestischer, stimmlicher und sprachlicher Arbeit mit dem Chor umrissen: die mit körperlicher Bewegung verbundene Stimme als vorsprachlicher Ausdruck ist die Voraussetzung für den Einsatz von Sprache; und Sprache selbst wiederum ist im Chor untrennbar mit körperlicher Gestaltung und der eingenommenen inneren und äußeren Haltung verbunden. Ziel bleibt der persönliche und individuelle Ausdruck von Individuen im Zusammenhang einer Gruppe.*

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„Der Chor exponiert den Körper als soziales Medium.“ (Haß,2020: 123)

Theatrale Lernprozesse im Chor

Was kann die chorische Theaterarbeit für die Arbeit mit der Sprache leisten? Welche Aspekte sind bei diesem gruppenorientierten und stark körperbetonten Ansatz interessant? Was kann der Einzelne im Chor körperlich und sprachlich lernen, und welche

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Fragen werden provoziert, welche Erfahrungen ermöglicht? Aus dem Verhältnis der einzelnen Person (Protagonist*in) und Chor erwachsen zentrale Elemente eines theatralen Lernprozesses im chorischen Spiel.

> Das Individuum löst Probleme der sinnlichen Selbstvergewisserung im Umgang mit seiner gegenständlichen und sozialen Umwelt, indem es szenisch-spielerisch interagiert und aus der Interaktion einen ästhetischen Ausdruck entwickelt. Unter theatralen Lernprozessen verstehen wir entsprechend Lernprozesse, die sich sozial-interaktiv vollziehen. (Wiese, 2006: 29)

Aber diese sozialen und interaktiven Lernprozesse vollziehen sich nicht ohne Widerstände und Stolpersteine. Chorische Arbeit ist auch herausfordernd: Die Lust am Chor wird gemeinsam mit der Gruppe entdeckt. Auch das ist Teil des theatralen Lernprozesses. Das sensible Verhältnis von Einordnung und individuellen spielerischen Vorstellungen jedes Einzelnen bestimmt die chorische Arbeit wesentlich mit. Innerhalb des Chors gilt es, die eigene Kreativität an den anderen zu „reiben“ und mit den anderen gemeinsam weiterzuentwickeln. Nicht der eigene Einfall ist entscheidend, sondern, dass sich der Chor auf einen gemeinsamen Rahmen einigt – und diesen spielerisch nützt. Die Angst vor dem Verlust des Egos kann Schritt für Schritt einem Vertrauen auf das gruppendynamische chorische Spiel und dessen Möglichkeiten weichen. Der Weg des theatralen Lernens innerhalb des Chors verläuft von „Außen nach Innen“, z.B. von der Aneignung der Gesten anderer hin zum eigenen Ausdruck. Diese Arbeitsschritte verlangen ein hohes Maß an Kommunikation – sowohl zwischen Spielleiter*innen und Gruppe, als auch zwischen den Spieler*innen der Gruppe. Die eigene Wahrnehmung trifft auf jene der anderen Spieler*innen. Gesten werden übernommen, gefüllt und erarbeitet. Nicht die eigene Originalität, sondern der Weg der Erarbeitung des „fremden Materials“ ist der wesentliche künstlerisch-pädagogische Prozess. Wenn diese Vertrautheit im Anverwandeln hergestellt ist, werden die individuell erarbeiteten Gesten oder Worte zu einem gemeinsamen chorischen Gestus. Von sich abzusehen, den eigenen Ausdruck vorerst zu verlassen, um durch die chorische Erfahrung am Ende wieder beim persönlichen Ausdruck anzukommen, ist das Ziel. Wenn alle im Chor die gemeinsame, vielleicht individuell ausgeführte, insgesamt aber gleich motivierte sprachliche oder körperliche Geste entwickeln, stellt sich der chorische Gestus ein. Die Chorgruppe definiert sich somit über einen gemeinsamen Ausdruckscode und zeigt das in ihren

Haltungen und in ihrer Sprache. Das Entwickeln einer gemeinsamen Form stellt den Kern des chorischen theatralen Lernprozesses dar. Jeder ist ein unverzichtbarer Teil dieses Prozesses und ist auf den anderen angewiesen: *„Die anderen nehmen teil an dem ästhetisch-gestaltenden Prozess des einzelnen und sind dessen konstituierende Voraussetzung."* (Wiese, 2006: 50) Der Spieler im Chor muss bescheiden, aufmerksam und mutig zugleich sein. Die Verantwortung ist auf alle Spieler*innen verteilt. Jede Aktion löst Reaktionen bei den Mitspieler*innen aus, und alle Handlungen und Gesten sind vernetzt mit dem chorischen Ensemble. Einzelne Spieler*innen erfahren sich vielleicht als ungeduldig, zu sehr auf sich konzentriert, dominant, geduldig, schüchtern oder laut. Es ist möglich und auch wahrscheinlich, sich selbst in mehreren dieser Reaktionsmuster zu erleben, und manchmal ist eines dieser Muster verstärkt zu beobachten. Somit werde ich als Chorspieler*in mit meinen gewohnten Handlungsmustern konfrontiert und kann innerhalb des chorischen Rahmens vielleicht neue Muster ausprobieren – im Schutz und durch die Unterstützung des Chors. Das betrifft zuerst das Körperliche und in der Folge besonders das Sprachliche. Das Chorische wird so zum Synonym für theatrale Lernprozesse:

> Die ästhetisch-theatralen Erfahrungen der Lernenden bilden sich erst dadurch, dass sie in einem gemeinsamen Lernprozess der Gruppe eine Resonanz finden – jeder individuelle Ausdruck spiegelt sich in der Sozietät des Ensembles und wäre ohne diese soziale Spiegelung gar nicht möglich. (Wiese, 2006: 49)

Die Form des Chors ermöglicht und erleichtert die theatrale Kommunikation und schafft eine Verbindung zwischen den Spieler*innen. Eher schüchterne und zurückhaltende Spieler*innen merken, dass sie durch den Chor gestärkt werden. So werden elementare soziale Fragestellungen innerhalb des chorischen Spiels verhandelt: Wie definiere ich mich im Verhältnis zu den anderen? Wie nehme ich einen Standpunkt ein, gegenüber oder als Teil der Gruppe? Es wird die eigene Freiheit und die eigene spielerische Entscheidung von sozialen Bedingungen – nämlich der Zugehörigkeit zu einem Chor – mitbestimmt. Ich bin nur Ich, weil die anderen da sind, oder präziser: Mein Ich ist genau jetzt dieses spielende Ich, weil die anderen auf mich szenisch reagieren:

> Individuum sein, Ich-Sagen entwickelt, geschieht und differenziert sich in der Beziehung zu anderen, und zwar jeweils neu, auch in derselben sich verändernden Situation. Ich-Sagen heißt aber offenbar auch immer, eine Rolle übernehmen und

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> spielen, die die anderen mitbestimmen, die aber auch umgekehrt die anderen definiert, ihnen Rollen abfordert oder zuweist. (Kurzenberger, 1998: 25)

Spieler*innen im Chor teilen ihre Spielkonzentration und -aufmerksamkeit. Das Individuum in der Gruppe handelt in keinem Moment nur ichbezogen und selbstbeobachtend, sondern sieht sich gespiegelt durch Varianten seines Handelns, auf die wieder zu reagieren ist. „Die eigentliche Aufgabe besteht also darin, die Umgebung wahrzunehmen und immer besser wahrzunehmen, auf sie zu reagieren und den eigenen Anteil sinnvoll und präzise auf sie zu beziehen.“ (Löffler, 1998: 40) Jede individuelle Handlung oder Emotion wird durch das Vorhandensein der Gruppe verstärkt, relativiert, verändert, reflektiert oder gespiegelt. Man handelt stimmlich, sprachlich und körperlich individuell, doch nie allein und ohne Bezug zum Chor. Die Chorspieler*innen beobachten die anderen Chormitglieder und somit die eigenen Spiegelungen. Und erleben so am eigenen Körper und mit den eigenen Sinnen die Resonanz ihres Spiels. Der Chor hat zum Inhalt das „Wir“. Die formalen Aspekte der chorischen Arbeit – körperliche Abstimmung in Choreografien, sprachliche Gestaltung, wiederholbare Bewegungs-, Stimm- und Atemmuster – bilden einen unterstützenden Rahmen für die Kreativität des Einzelnen. Im Chor kann sich das Persönliche entfalten. Das zeigt sich besonders in der Arbeit mit der Sprache.

Der Ausdruck des Chors durch den Körper

Das chorische Prinzip ist gestisch. Handlung, Bewegung und Sprache manifestieren sich in der chorischen Arbeit aus dem Zusammenspiel und Wechsel von körperlichen und sprachlichen Haltungen. Die Haltung als Begriff umschließt sowohl das rein körperliche Einnehmen einer Haltung als auch die innere Haltung zu jemanden, die sich sowohl körperlich als auch sprachlich äußern kann. Der Körper als Werkzeug und Material ist ein zentrales Element des chorischen Prinzips, und das Körperliche korrespondiert im Chor eng mit dem Sprachlichen. Auf dem Weg über den Körper kann das Chorgefühl am deutlichsten erfahrbar gemacht werden. Es bereitet die sprachliche Arbeit vor. Es macht daher Sinn, den Begriff des Gestus zuerst einmal körperlich zu definieren: „Das Gestische ist das Körperliche. Es bestimmt nicht nur, wie man sich bewegt, wie man sich, grobkörperlich’ verhält und wie man sich mimisch verhält, sondern auch, wie man Worte

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spricht, wie man Sätze schreibt.“ (Fiebach, 1998: 41) Der Chor vergrößert und vervielfältigt die Körperlichkeit. Die gemeinsame Bewegung und Geste werden zum chorischen Gestus. Der Gestus selbst beinhaltet dann eben nicht mehr nur allein die körperliche Spielebene, sondern schließt nach Brecht auch sprachliche Handlungen mit ein:

> Unter Gestus sei verstanden ein Komplex von Gesten, Mimik und (für gewöhnlich) Aussagen, welche ein oder mehrere Menschen zu einem oder mehreren Menschen richten. [...] Ein Gestus kann allein in Worten niedergelegt werden [...]; dann sind bestimmte Gestik und bestimmte Mimik in diese Worte eingegangen und leicht herauszulesen [...]. Ebenso können (im stummen Film zu sehen) Gesten und Mimik oder (im Schattenspiel) nur Gesten Worte beinhalten. Worte können durch andere Worte ersetzt, Gesten durch andere Gesten ersetzt werden, ohne dass der Gestus sich darüber ändert. (Brecht,1993: 616f.)

Es geht also immer um eine Haltung zu jemandem oder etwas. Entweder richtet sich der Gestus zu den Mit-Spieler*innen innerhalb des Chors, oder, als gesamter Chor, zu Spieler*innen außerhalb des Chors – und im Weiteren zum Publikum. Hat die Chorgruppe diesen gemeinsamen Ausdruck gefunden, kann man von einem chorischen Gestus sprechen. Der Gestus als überindividueller Ausdruck hat im Unterschied zur Geste immer eine soziale Funktion, ist zu jemandem gerichtet. Der chorische Gestus kann durch Synchronität verstärkt werden. Synchronität heißt in diesem Zusammenhang eine Steigerung des Ausdrucks durch kollektives Handeln. Die körperlichen Handlungen oder Gesten der Chorspieler selbst müssen aber nicht immer synchron im strengen Sinn sein, d.h. individuelle Tätigkeiten in einem Rahmen der Gruppensituation sind durchaus möglich. Das synchrone körperliche Handeln als Chor ist nicht gleichzusetzen mit einem völligen Entindividualisieren der einzelnen Geste. Eine synchrone Handlung einer Gruppe kann z.B. eine solistische Handlung wie eine Lupe vergrößern, ein Wechsel von synchronen und asynchronen, individuellen Bewegungen und Handlungen kann eine Individualisierung der Gruppe zeigen. Oft ist das chorische körperliche Spiel sogar von Asynchronität geprägt: Viele unterschiedliche Gesten und Bewegungen finden gleichzeitig als Parallelhandlung statt.

Das chorische Prinzip ist in seinem betont körperlich-gestischen Ansatz eine Arbeitsweise, die mit nicht-identifikatorischen Theatermitteln arbeitet, jenseits von Rolle oder psychologisch motivierten Handlungsmustern. Körperliche Haltungen können Emotionen provozieren. Brecht beschreibt die Wirkung körperlicher Spannung und hebt den Zusammenhang von eingenommener Geste oder Körperhaltung und dem darzustellenden Gefühl hervor. Der Spannungszustand des Körpers erzeugt die entsprechenden inneren Haltungen:

> so wie <bestimmte> [sic!] stimmungen und gedankenreihen zu haltungen und gesten führen, führen auch haltungen und gesten zu stimmungen und gedankenreihen. Das anspannen der halsmuskulatur und das anhalten des atmens wird als begleiterscheinung <oder folgeerscheinung> [sic!] des zorns betrachtet. Durch das anspannen der halsmuskulatur und anhalten des atems kann aber auch zorn hervorgerufen werden. ein verlagern des körpergewichts auf das eine bein, zittrighalten der muskeln, fahriges drehen des augapfels usw. kann furcht erzeugen. (Brecht nach Hentschel, 1996:92)

Der Chor vergrößert diesen Effekt. Somit ist in der chorischen Arbeit der Körper ein wichtiges Mittel, in der Gruppe über gemeinsame Bewegungen und Haltungen einerseits zur Darstellung von Emotionen zu gelangen, andererseits die Arbeit mit der Sprache vorzubereiten. Es entsteht eine Wechselwirkung von Sprache und Bewegung, gerade für die Arbeit mit Texten, die schon einen Rhythmus vorgeben. Das Finden eines gemeinsamen Rhythmus z.B. der Schritte kann so der Arbeit mit der Sprache vorausgehen.

Der Ausdruck des Chors durch Stimme und Sprache

Befasst man sich in der chorischen Arbeit nun explizit mit Stimme und Sprache, dann werden die oben genannten Elemente des chorischen Prinzips umso wichtiger. Die gegenseitige Wahrnehmung innerhalb des Chors und das individuelle Agieren als ein Teil der Gruppe, werden, sobald die Stimme hinzutritt, hörbar. Vor einem Einsatz der Sprache selbst wird allerdings das Spiel mit der Stimme in seiner ganzen Vielfalt liegen, und in diesem Zusammenhang auch der gemeinsam entwickelte Atem. Es gilt als Gruppe auf der Basis dieses gemeinsamen Atems und eines gemeinsamen Stimmgebrauchs zu einem chorischen Sprachgestus zu finden. Im Chorklang verwandeln sich die einzelnen Stimmen in eine gemeinsame Chorstimme. Sie ist weniger und mehr als die Einzelstimme zugleich. Der scheinbare Verlust an individuellem Ausdruck wird in der chorischen Arbeit durch die Erfahrung spielerisch-stimmlicher Varianten wettgemacht, die nur durch den Chor ermöglicht werden. Der Einsatz von Sprache im chorischen Spiel muss nicht unbedingt chorisches Sprechen im Sinne von synchronen Textpassagen oder chorischen Klangräumen bedeuten. Die gemeinsame rhythmische Gestaltung von Texten und das Aufteilen der Textpassagen auf viele Sprecher*innen oder auf zwei rivalisierende Sprechgruppen, der Wechsel von Einzelsprecher*in und Chor, das sind nur einige von vielen Möglichkeiten. Weitere und komplexere Elemente einer chorischen Spielweise bieten sich an:

> [z]eitlich verschobene Einsätze, [...] die Verbindung von Sprechen und Singen; die Spannung zwischen dem Versinken des Textes im rasanten Durcheinandersprechen und der Klarheit und Ruhe, die einzelne Stimmen ausstrahlen; das Entstehen eines Satzes durch Wortwiederholungen. (Nübling, 1998: 43f.)

Der sprechende Chor lebt von Rhythmus, Variation, Gegenläufen und Pausen, von der Verteilung der Sinnportionen auf verschiedene Sprecher*innen, vom Dialog innerhalb der Gruppe. Der Chor kann das Echo eines einzelnen Sprechers sein, kann diesem antworten oder widersprechen, er kann die vielfache innere Stimme einer Person werden. Aus einem gemeinsamen flüsternden Klangteppich kann ein Monolog aufsteigen, in der Stille wirken und im wieder aufkommenden Stimmengewirr versinken. Ein kollektives Murmeln des Chors, ein Parallelsprechen der Chormitglieder, nur durch wechselnde Lautstärken unterschieden, Schreien, Rufen, lautes rhythmisches Atmen: Mit diesen Mitteln kann variantenreich gespielt werden, um mit der Wirkung von Stimme und Sprache im Chor zu experimentieren. Das organisierte, variierte und überraschende sprachliche und stimmliche Spiel macht den besonderen Reiz des Chors aus. Die einzelnen Stimmen wechseln in ihrer Wichtigkeit, doch immer ist es der Eindruck der Gleichzeitigkeit aller Stimmen, der sich einstellt. Die immerwährende Präsenz des Chors, gleichgültig, wie viele gerade sprechen, beherrscht das Spiel: *„So wie man in der Musik Melodie und Harmonie gleichzeitig hört, aber in unterschiedlichen Gewichtungen, einmal mehr die Einzelstimme[n], dann wieder mehr den Akkord, so nimmt das Publikum eine chorische Aktion wahr."* (Nübling, 1998: 85)

Der Moment der totalen Gleichzeitigkeit als „Unisono", ist nur ein Element innerhalb der sprachlichen Chorgestaltung. Die Motivation dafür muss in der Situation selbst liegen:

> „Unisono, mit einer Stimme, spricht der Chor nur in Augenblicken völliger Einheit. Viele Stimmen verschmelzen zu einer Stimme, viele Individuen werden zu einem Wesen. Immer liegt der gleichzeitigen Aktion des ganzen Chores ein starker Affekt zugrunde, denn es braucht viel Energie, um alle Spieler auf einen Schlag zu mobilisieren." (Nübling, 1998: 85f.)

Die darstellerische Gestaltung von Texten ist eine spannende Herausforderung. Der Chor ist hier ein theatraler Katalysator, wenn es um die sprachliche Darstellung von Emotionen geht. Gerade durch die Verfremdung der chorischen Form entsteht die notwendige Distanz für eine theatrale Gestaltung. Und gerade durch die chorische Herangehensweise ist ein persönliches Spiel mit Emotionen möglich. Das Ziel einer chorischen Arbeit ist eine gemeinsam agierende chorische Spieler*innengruppe aus einzelnen Darsteller*innen mit ihrem jeweils persönlichen körperlichen, stimmlichen und sprachlichen Ausdruck.

Harald Volker Sommer legt mit Das chorische Prinzip. Ein Arbeitsbuch für Theater, Pädagogik und Lehre *(ibidem-Verlag Frankfurt) ein praxisorientiertes, theoriegestütztes Arbeitsbuch mit über 100 Übungen und Tools zum Chorischen vor.*

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III. Articles

Bettina Christner

5 Confetti und Kehrwoche

Towards Complex Cultural Learning with Presence and Process Drama.

In an increasingly interconnected global world, the challenge of cultural learning in the foreign language classroom is to balance the need to learn how to act and participate in this interrelated world and to understand and critically engage with cultures and cultural actions. Research shows the success and benefits of using Process Drama for language as well as cultural learning (Bowell and Heap 2013; Bräuer 2002; Piazzoli 2010; Even, Miladinovic, Schmenk 2019). This paper describes a lesson sequence revolving around objects found in German everyday life and argues that Process Drama and specifically the oscillation between dramatic presence and reflective meaning-making phases can complexify cultural learning in the foreign language classroom. Based on presence theories by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (2004) and Hans-Thies Lehmann (2006), I show how the productive oscillation between dramatic presence and off-stage meaning-making can help equip foreign language learners to become actively curious as well as critically informed participants in today's global cultures while also gaining confidence and ability in using the target language.

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The benefits and successes of using Process Drama to foster both language and cultural learning have been widely demonstrated (Bowell and Heap 2013; Bräuer 2002; Piazzoli 2010; Even, Miladinovic, Schmenk 2019) including for balancing language proficiency and learner autonomy (Dalziel and Piazzoli 2019), the dual affect of drama-based instruction (Piazzoli 2014), and for developing critical consciousness and active participation in their own and other cultures (Córdova 2006). In this paper, I propose that Process Drama and specifically the oscillation between dramatic presence and reflective meaning-making phases can crucially complexify cultural learning in the foreign language classroom. When learners create and interact with each other in spaces of dramatic presence, they become active participants in 'as-if' cultural realities that promise meaning (yet without it being available to learners just yet). Learning to reflectively consider and understand the underlying meanings of cultural actions and interactions then in meaning-making phases complement creative action during dramatic presence and foster an understanding of cultures as complex, evolving, and interconnected.

This paper is based on a presentation at the 2022 Drama in Education Days, in which I proposed to create moments of presence and cultural engagement with Process Drama to give foreign language learners the opportunity to actively experience and participate in everyday life culture, specifically in German everyday culture. I will describe a lesson sequence that was structured around the two notions of the German love for order – "Ordnungsliebe" – and 'Narrenfreiheit' (that can be roughly translated to the freedom to do whatever one pleases). The sequence was designed to expose learners to the coexistence of the two seemingly contradictory concepts in German everyday culture and the cultural complexity as well as everyday meanings and manifestations that the two notions entail. Based on Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's dialectic model of presence and meaning (2004), I examine how using Process Drama in the foreign language classroom can foster dialectic movements between active and direct encounters with the world in moments of presence and reflective productions of meaning that complement these experiences. This dialectic movement allows learners to engage with cultures in a direct and physical manner and beyond stereotypes while also acquiring an understanding of their underlying meanings. Actively participating in cultural action offers learners the chance to view cultures as being alive and evolving as opposed to looking at another culture from the distant and passive observer position. Hence, the goal of the lesson sequence was to give learners the chance to gain a sense of the fluid and interactive nature of cultures in Germany, and of cultures at large, and to practice ways of interacting and participating in them.

The non-scripted and collaborative nature of Process Drama offers effective ways to practice such interactions and to explore complex cultural topics in the classroom. In *Words Into Worlds. Learning a Second Language Through Process Drama*, Shin-Mei Kao and Cecily O'Neill point to an important shift in viewing drama not as a linearly developing continuum where one sequence logically leads to the next, but, as Dorothy Heathcote famously claimed, as part of the learning process that gets kicked off and can move into many possible and unpredictable directions.[21] Based on Heathcote, O'Neill and Kao argue that "one cannot force people to adopt a commitment to a particular point of view, but if they are put in a position to respond, they begin to hold a point of view because they can see that it has power." (1998: 26) Putting learners in a 'position to respond,' that is 'to act,' is crucial here as these are the moments that kick off the learning process and the active exploration of potentially new perspectives while using the foreign language as an exploratory tool to uncover some of the underlying meanings the situation holds. Importantly, learners are given explorative and creative control over where their learning takes them. Communication and the language that learners use as they respond and act are spontaneous, unscripted, and open. Therein, learners build "hypothetical worlds arising from significant texts and from the imaginations of all the participants," as O'Neill notes in her foreword to *Process Drama and Multiple Literacies* (2006), where she emphasizes the significance of building imaginary worlds for cultural and intellectual learning. The significant difference between learning about another culture and learning how to navigate life in another culture crucially arises from the initial moment of approaching another culture. Whether one approaches that culture from an outside observer position or from an immersed participant position, the perspectives, insights, and experiences one can gain from either position differ considerably.

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[21] For Heathcote, instances of what she calls 'productive tension' allow learners to take control and create their own learning experiences by exploring the dramatic space collaboratively and in any possible direction. See also O'Neill 2014: 55-61.

Traditionally, when learning a foreign language, learners are thought to approach culture from the observer position in the classroom that should then, in the best case, prepare them for the immersive participation in that culture at a later time, i.e., when traveling, studying, or working in that culture. The scaffolding of cultural learning in such a way, however, bears three significant risks. First, the distanced observer position reinforces the tendency of learners to compare and inadvertently judge a culture based on select (and frequently stereotyping) representations of that culture. Secondly, the inherently passive and removed position of the observer can block learners' reactions to certain situations and therein also to valuable opportunities of becoming active participants in cultural interactions (that would inevitably happen in any real-world cultural encounter). And thirdly, cultural learning and teaching would be in danger of ignoring the fact that individuals are what make and move any culture; that individuals and their interactions shape their own as well as other cultures, with which they come into contact. In this regard, the inherent fluidity of cultures that evolves with individual actions and interactions cannot be overstated in the increasingly global and interconnected world, for which foreign language education wants to prepare and equip learners.

The moments in which learners step into positions of active cultural participation within the aesthetic space of a Process Drama sequence are moments that provoke a strong impetus in learners to respond and act that is similar to Heathcote's 'productive tension' (O'Neill, 2014: 55-61). They occur, I argue, isolated from and yet dialectically connected to episodes of meaning-making and reflection. Based on Gumbrecht's presence theory (2004; 2014) as well as Hans-Thies Lehmann's conceptualization of the presence experience in *Postdramatic Theater* (2006), I suggest that what pulls learners into the moment and into an immediate and active response appears so meaningful that they are drawn into immediate participation. Simultaneously, intellectual engagement, reflection, and efforts to decipher its meaning will be delayed to a later moment. Postdramatic theater practices provide a useful model for understanding this productive duality of presence and meaning, or reflection. Lehmann suggests:

> The aesthetic experience of theatre – and the presence of the actor is the paradigmatic case here because as the presence of a living human being it contains all the confusions and ambiguities related to the limit of the aesthetic as such – this aesthetic experience is only in a secondary manner reflection. The latter rather takes place ex post and would not even have a motivation had it not been for the prior experience of an event that cannot be 'thought' or 'reflected' and which, in this sense, has the character of a shock. All aesthetic experience knows this bipolarity: first the confrontation with a presence, 'sudden' and in principle this side of (or beyond) the rupturing, doubling reflection; then the processing of this experience by an act of retroactive remembering, contemplating and reflecting. (2006: 142)

Cultures and certain cultural behaviors often escape our intellectual understanding, at least in the moment in which we encounter them, we are struck by their unfamiliarity and our inability to understand them. In the foreign language classroom, rather than prioritizing intellectual understanding of cultures, allowing for the first response to be interactive and immediate can provide access to other cultures on the active individual and collaboratively explorative level that delays and simultaneously enhances reflection and meaning-making afterwards.

Kao and O'Neill acknowledge this dual productivity and add that the goal of creating (cultural) 'as-if' realities, or hypothetical worlds, is not a certain final product but "always the experience itself and the reflection that it can generate." (1998: 12) Notably, experience and reflection, or presence and meaning in Gumbrecht's terms, occur in two separate stages of the dramatic project and complement each other. Allotting space to both is what allows learners to immerse themselves and become active participants within another culture. In addition, they learn to unpack underlying meanings, reflect on and practice the linguistic tools needed to act within these cultural spaces, while also gaining confidence in their use of the target language.

Creating Moments of Presence with Process Drama

In the foreign language classroom, cultural encounters are usually connected to language, or more specifically, to the ability to respond and navigate a cultural situation using the language. Many language situations, at least communicative, oral language situations, in real life happen in presence spaces that require immediate reactions, often in the form of a verbal response, without there being much time to prepare or think about what to do or say. The situation can be as simple as a visit to a restaurant in a different country or culture. Learners may have memorized vocabulary and practiced ways of ordering, of getting the check, and other typical modalities of a restaurant visit, but once they sit down in the restaurant, rehearsed phrases and conversations tend to reach their limit rather quickly. For instance, when the server or another guest ask or tell them something that is out of context or which they could not have predicted or prepared for. Suddenly, learners find themselves in a moment of presence, without access to a dictionary, nor time to carefully think about or prepare an answer yet faced with the necessity to somehow produce a response.

Thinking about such situations can be anxiety-provoking, especially for new language learners, which makes practice and normalization in the classroom all the more necessary. Instead of ‘throwing’ learners into new and unexpected situations, Process Drama allows learners to practice stepping into and explore such situations, giving them creative and linguistic agency from the beginning (Kao/O’Neill 1998; O’Neill 2014). Process drama is concerned with creating opportunities for the narrative and active exploration of a fictional space in the interactions with others and places communication and the encounter with others at the very forefront of any pedagogical effort (Kao/O’Neill, 1998: 12). A sense of reality is inherent to the aesthetic experience and creation of the fictional space alongside other learners, while the simultaneous awareness of its distance to reality, can provide the necessary relief and foster creative curiosity and the readiness to take risks, including in learners’ use of the target language.

A Cultural Learning Session on Everyday Cultures

In the context of a professional development seminar on ‘Everyday Cultures in German-Speaking Countries’ for high school teachers of German, I taught a lesson that specifically focused on the two notions of German ‘Ordnungsliebe’ (the love for order) and ‘Narrenfreiheit (the freedom to do whatever one pleases). While this group consisted of very proficient speakers of German, the lesson can also be taught at the intermediate-low to intermediate-high level. The goal of the lesson was to familiarize learners with the seemingly contradictory coexistence of German ‘Ordnungsliebe’ and ‘Narrenfreiheit’ and the ways in which they are a part of German everyday life. An initial explorative phase, or the construction of pretext (Kao/O'Neill 1998), i.e., a fictional environment, in which further action is set, kicked off the lesson and presence experience. Learners were presented with a variety of objects, including a bag of confetti, a 'Kehrwoche' schedule, a Leitz folder, a roll of 'Gelbe Sack' trash bags, a garden gnome, a wooden carnival mask, and a few other items.[22] They all represent different aspects or manifestations of the two notions in daily life; a fact that learners were not yet made aware of. Each group of learners received two of those items and the explanation that they have been found in the street. The task was then for the groups to create a profile of the person who lost the objects, tell the story of how they lost them, and what they had used the objects for.

After introducing their dramatis personae and telling the stories of their lost objects, the class decides together whose story they want to explore further. For this group, the story revolved around Kevin from Dresden and his lost 'Kehrwoche' schedule and bag of confetti. The story went something like this: Kevin had just recently moved to Baden-Württemberg and was not familiar with the hallowed custom of the 'Kehrwoche'. Thus, his new neighbors educate him on what it means to properly fulfill his duties. Especially Frau D, who has taken it upon herself to keep a particularly close eye on Kevin and the cleanliness of the house. Being new to town, Kevin wants to both establish good neighborly relations and also make new friends. He invites a few of his co-workers over to his new home for dinner and they decide to go to a carnival celebration afterwards. In preparation, he bought a bag of confetti. Kevin had heard that carnival was important in Southern Germany and figured it would be a good way to blend in and meet new people. When he wanted to bring the bag of confetti from his car into the house, he sees Frau D looking out her kitchen window, which made him so nervous that he simply abandoned the bag of confetti in the middle of the street. When dropping the bag, his 'Kehrwoche' schedule accidentally fell out of his pocket without him noticing.

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[22] The items were a mix of familiar staples (such as the 'Gelbe Sack' trash bags used for recycling plastic and provided for free to all German households) while others are more unique in nature and associated specifically with Southern Germany. Notably, the ‚Kehrwoche' regulates the shared responsibilities of cleaning stairways, shoveling snow in the winter, etc. in apartment buildings and is a particularly common custom in the south of Germany. If necessary, clarification of what these objects are can be given in class prior to the start of the activity

After having told their stories, learners step out of the presence sequence to retroactively reflect on their aesthetic productions, to ask and answer questions of meaning, and to address potential questions regarding vocabulary and language structures. Here, I give a first introduction to the two notions of ‘Ordnungsliebe’ and ‘Narrenfreiheit’ based on the various objects with which the learners had worked.

During this first episode of dramatic presence, learners may not yet be fully aware of the significance behind the objects. However, their active involvement with them as part of the presence experience, puts on hold the need for a concept, the need to think about and understand what is happening with and around them. In moments of presence, learners do not primarily assess the world and interact with it by way of thought and reflection but by way of spontaneous reactions, interactions, and explorations. Encountering cultural objects connected to everyday life allows learners to not only observe and make sense of cultural phenomena, but to become active participants in an interconnected and evolving cultural world. Therein, they gain an increased understanding of their own role within it.

The oscillation between experience and reflection that happens in these learning phases is significant and productive. Gumbrecht’s presence and meaning dualism offers a helpful framework to understand the manifestations and consequentiality of this complementary relationship between what happens – unpredictably and collaboratively – in moments of presence and how we can make sense of it in separate phases of meaning-making. According to Gumbrecht, ‘presence’ refers to the immediate, close encounter with objects and persons in the world while ‘meaning’ designates our way of accessing and understanding the world around us by way of reason and thought. Presence disrupts the continuity of thought, which means that one element does not necessarily and logically have to follow the next. Rather, the interactions with others and the world around us shape and develop the experiential space of presence in multiple and unpredictable directions. Consequently, in the disruptive spaces of presence, truths and reality (in the very broadest sense of the words) are not a given but inextricably linked to an immersed and acting subject that creates endless possibilities. Hence, presence can provide access to the world, the reality and truths surrounding us and of which we are a part, not by way of intellectual comprehension or interpretation but by way of immediate experience, encounter, and agency. Presence can give us a sense of being an intricate part of the world we inhabit with others and the sense that we can contribute to, act in, and navigate that world alongside others. The immediate experience of the world in moments of presence can then complement our reason-based understanding of the world in what Gumbrecht refers to as 'meaning'. Relatedly, with regards to the performativity of presence, postdramatic theater emphasizes the importance of presence in a similar duality with what Lehmann refers to as the "reflected experience" (2006: 141), or reflection. Crucially, instead of imitating reality, or a real-life situation, the creative exploration alongside others in moments of presence can produce a sense of reality that is immediate and productive. Every participant becomes part of shaping this reality that develops in unexpected ways. As Lehmann notes, we understand presence here "as something that happens" (2006: 144), and that precedes and is separate from any logical understanding that can follow.

Episodes of Meaning-Making

After a phase of reflection and an opportunity to revisit issues and questions regarding language, students read a short text about the history and definitions of 'Narrenfreiheit,' thus, they learn about the concept itself, the ways in which it is rooted in carnival traditions, and the socio-historical role of the 'Narr,' or jester figure. With regards to the juxtaposition of 'Ordnungsliebe' and 'Narrenfreiheit', I asked students to consider how these two could go together in daily life. Their answers were informed both by the reading and the previous encounters with Kevin and Frau D. The discussions of the figure of the 'Narr' in connection to 'Narrenfreiheit' and the variety of carnival traditions in Germany then took us back into the dramatic space, where Kevin attempts to join a local carnival club (or rather, because this takes place in Baden-Württemberg, a local Alemannic *Fasnet* club). A new club is being founded and Kevin becomes part of the founding team who is charged with presenting and defending the concept of the new club before a committee. Participants are informed that traditionally Southern German *Fasnet* rests upon the principle of universal participation – a carnival for the people – that gives every individual the right to establish a new club provided it is rooted in a specific, local traditions. Facing the problem of too many new clubs that have been flooding the *Fasnet* scene of Baden-Württemberg in the past years, however, voices advocating for more restrictions on new clubs have been coming up. For the scene, individuals from the initial ‘lost-and-found’ episodes return, along with Frau D, who is one of the members of the committee.

Following the presentation of the club proposal and debate with the committee, learners leave the dramatic space once again and enter a guided reflection phase that takes them back to the co-existing notions of ‘Ordnungsliebe’ and ‘Narrenfreiheit.’ Moreover, learners research and discuss the differences between the better-known Cologne carnival traditions and the Alemannic variety in Southern Germany. Complementing their initial construction and experience of the fictional world around Kevin and Frau D, learners can now examine and start to understand underlying cultural meanings of the two notions of ‘Ordungsliebe’ and ‘Narrenfreiheit’ and the roles they play in everyday life. These roles are complex and can escape intellectual understanding, but in the active integration and exploration of these notions in fictional ‘as-if’ realities, learners can get a sense of how they might encounter them in everyday life in Germany.

In addition to gaining and practicing more complex cultural understanding and interaction, learners also benefit from the explorative and immediate nature of dramatic presence when it comes to their ability to use the target language. Namely, when learners find themselves in an active position, from which to respond, they start taking risks with the language as they contribute to the construction of the fictional world. While the characters and scenes come to life, the effects of having this sense of the here and now, the immersion and agency that presence produces also affect their readiness to use the target language in more confident and creative ways. After all, it is the language that allows them to become active contributors and agents in this world that has started to come to life in front of their eyes. Thus, as learners take control and gain agency of their own cultural learning, they simultaneously benefit from the complementary nature of dramatic presence and meaning-making in their use of the target language.

Cultural Learning and Language

While participating in dramatic (inter)action, language accuracy, Kao and O’Neill argue, is not the main goal. Rather, they define fluency in terms of “the motivation to communicate

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within the dramatic situation.” (1998: 20) Certainly, motivation to participate in creative action of the moment is an important factor as the previous scenes have shown. Yet, what sounds like a teaching and learning situation that compromises language accuracy for the sake of increased language use, does not necessarily have to be a compromise. Both language accuracy and confidence in language use can equally benefit from the oscillating effects of phases of presence, where immediate action suspends thinking for a moment, and phases of meaning and sense-making, where they can come back to thoughtfully consider and understand certain mechanisms and manifestations of what happened, including with their use of the language.

Therefore, culture, learning, and language should not be separated, nor do they need to be. By exploring cultural meaning with their peers in moments of dramatic presence, learners can benefit from the spontaneity and unscripted nature of presence in their language use. Anecdotal evidence suggests that learners do not only gain confidence in their ability to speak the foreign language, they tend to also take more risks and try to express themselves in the foreign language spontaneously and independently. In the immediacy of the situation, they stop less frequently to think about or ask for a specific word or structure. Instead, learners acquire and use valuable tactics such as circumlocution or peer support to communicate in the moment. Similar to the effects of cultural learning in moments of presence and meaning, learners are able to take control of their own language learning experience here. Especially for groups of learners in upper-level courses, that often consist of learners with widely varying proficiency levels, this can be beneficial as learners can say as much or as little as they want, use the vocabulary and structures they are familiar with, and finally, get clarification and build on what they already know in the following meaning phases. Therein, such episodes of uncontrolled and unpredictable language use can help with confidence and accuracy of language use, while allowing continuous progress on all levels of proficiency.

While empirical evidence is needed regarding language accuracy, it is clear that language and cultural learning are inextricably connected beyond certain translatable structures and phrases. Relatedly, Nelson Brooks argues that there is a gap between phrases and structures and the “meaning [a native speaker] attaches to the words and phrases he uses.” (1968: 206) In "Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom," Brooks conceptually distinguishes culture from other areas of study such as geography, history, folklore, sociology, literature, and civilization as culture investigates and depicts groups of people and the rituals of their communal lives. Therein, Brooks suggests that underlying cultural 'meaning' is situational and inextricably linked to the (inter)actions of individuals (1968: 210). The individual, its actions, and interactions with others are part of a cultural essence that manifest themselves in and through language. Cultures contain a fluidity and openness that determine their evolvement and unfixed, communal nature. Therefore, if we follow Brooks' notion of 'meaning,' culture cannot be conceived as something concrete that can be found or fully understood intellectually. Rather, their 'meaning' is tied to situations and encounters as they happen while interacting with the culture and others – in moments of presence.

Concluding Thoughts on Cultural Learning

In this paper, I addressed the challenges that foreign language educators face when it comes to teaching cultures. Geographical distance is often seen to delay 'real' cultural immersion, for which the foreign language class seeks to prepare learners, while textbooks and other materials bear the risk of putting learners in an outside observer position on the one hand and to miss current cultural phenomena and the inevitable interconnectedness of cultures in today's global world on the other. Based on the demonstrated success of Process Drama in the foreign language classroom and the effects of an oscillation between episodes of dramatic presence and meaning-making as shown by Gumbrecht (2004) and Lehmann (2006), I suggested here that learners can benefit from the immersive learning experience in 'as-if' cultural realities as they participate in cultural interactions and use the foreign language spontaneously. Learners can take control of their own learning – of the culture and the language – and learn how to navigate a complexly interconnected cultural world. Specifically, they can benefit from gaining confidence in their use of the target language as well as their interactions with other cultures. In an increasingly interconnected global world, the ability to engage with a variety of ways of living in and seeing the world, and to be able to do so in another language, has become an invaluable skill to any field or occupation. Moreover, this more complex look at interconnected cultures does not exclude but gives a chance to address certain stereotypes. While learners may still bring preconceived notions of another culture to the table and even introduce stereotypes into the fictional worlds they create, the oscillation between creative and collaborative dramatic presence and reflective meaning-making phases can provide opportunities to complexify and discuss them. The 'as-if' cultural realities demand critical examination, including of these stereotypes, as learners encounter them alongside others in the dramatic space and during reflection phases. That, for me, constitutes an important step towards making cultural learning more complex, global, and current in the foreign language classroom.

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Leif Dahlberg & Anders Hedman

6 Pedagogic Role-Play for Engaging with Ethics and Sustainability

Learning to think and act in sustainable ways is largely a question of language skills, i.e., to understand the meaning of sustainability and related terms and to understand the grammar — language game — of sustainability. To help university students acquire these skills, we developed two role-play exercises for engaging with issues of ethics and sustainability. In one exercise, students in a university course on theory and methodology in interactive media technology prepared for the exercise by reading three short texts on ethical theories, and a scenario description. In the role-play exercise, students took on various roles to enact the scenario. In the second exercise, students in a course on intercultural communication were tasked to analyse and discuss the relevance of the United Nations 17 Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) for the course content. In the role play, the students had to summarise the discussions and advocate for their views. In both role-play exercises, students took on various roles to enact the scenario. Finally, there were debriefing sessions. Both courses were taught at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden, during the academic year 2021-2022. In the paper, we summarise our findings, including strengths and weaknesses of role-play as a teaching method.

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1 Introduction/Background

The present work on pedagogic role-play for engaging with ethics and sustainability developed out of two contexts. The first context was a project to develop course content on sustainability to be integrated in mandatory programme courses in the master's programme Media Management, at KTH Royal Institute of Technology (Stockholm), a project conducted during the academic year 2020-2021. In this project, course responsible teachers for seven mandatory courses – all in the first year – had a series of joint meetings to discuss dangerous climate change (UNFCCC, 1992), sustainability and sustainable development (Brundtland Commission, 1987), how to introduce these topics in relevant ways in their respective courses, and possible ways to build a progression between these course elements addressing climate change and sustainability. In the first project meetings, we discussed scientific articles on global warming and sustainability, in order both to establish a shared knowledge base and to provide conceptual clarity. In the following meetings, we discussed the challenge to offer practical knowledge to students. That is, we felt that the students would not necessarily be helped by learning more about the causes and effects of dangerous climate change and about our current unsustainable society. One of the participants suggested that ethics, in the form of ethical grounds for decision-making, could provide a useful perspective on sustainability, and also make it possible to iterate similar modules in different courses.

The second context was the Covid pandemic, which had forced all teaching to go online. This created many challenges, not only pedagogical, and many students clearly suffered from the absence of social interaction, both in the classroom and outside. In order to alleviate this situation, one of the project participants had decided to experiment with pedagogic role-play in a course on intercultural communication, to be given in the spring semester 2021. In the course, role-play was used as a way to make online seminars more interactive. However, as a teaching method role-play also has the pedagogic advantage to force students to apply theoretical knowledge to concrete situations, developing practical knowledge. The experiment turned out well, the students clearly enjoyed it, both the social dimension and the practical component. Since role-play was used iteratively throughout the course, the students acquired a competence in doing pedagogic role-play, which they would be able to practise in other contexts as well.

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The idea then took form to design pedagogic role-play for engaging with ethics and sustainability, which could be adapted to and iterated in different course contexts. This project was implemented during the academic year 2021-2022.

2. Theory

In many universities today, one can find courses on anthropogenic climate change and on sustainability, both on introductory and advanced levels. At KTH, there is an official policy that the university should provide an education “that prepares future professionals with knowledge, commitment, critical thinking and practical tools that will enable them to contribute to a sustainable society” (KTH, 2020). According to KTH’s webpage for Environment and sustainable development, “sustainable development has been integrated into all educational programmes at all levels so that students, post-graduation, are aware of technology’s role in society and people’s responsibility for how it is used. They possess the knowledge and skills to drive sustainable societal development and contribute to the transition to an equal and climate-neutral society” (KTH, 2022). This sounds fabulous, but there is a real risk that students’ knowledge of anthropogenic climate change and sustainability will be both superficial and not well integrated with the core subjects in the educational programme. The challenge, as mentioned above, is to provide the students with a skill set that enables them to use and apply this knowledge in a practical way. What does this mean? Two things, on the one hand to present anthropogenic climate change and sustainability in ways that are relevant for the educational programme; and on the other to find teaching methods that combine theoretical and practical knowledge. Drama pedagogy, and more specifically pedagogic role-play, has proven to be a useful way to address this challenge (Alden, 1999; Rumore et al., 2016).

There are extensive discussions of and research on the use of play and pedagogic role-play in teaching environments, from preschool, elementary school and secondary school, to higher education (e.g. Rogers et al. 2008; Chesler et al., 1966; Manorom et al., 2006). Role-play is often used to help students make practical use of acquired knowledge, as in language teaching, business and engineering (Dent-Young, 1977; Pardo Leon-Henri, 2014; McConville, 2017). Pedagogic role-play is also used outside institutional teaching

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contexts, and is often used in workshops to develop professional skills (Management Review, 1987; Mintzberg et al., 2001). There are many individual case studies of the use of role-play both as a teaching method and as a form of examination (see e.g. Paschall, 2012). In our project, we did not dive deep into theories on play and drama pedagogy and how this relates to various theories of learning. Let's say that we were experimenting, our principal objective was to find ways of teaching sustainability that would be both meaningful and useful for the students. In the project, we have also developed our practical skills in using role-play in teaching, e.g. how to deal with different group dynamics as well as hesitancy or even resistance from individual students (Clawson, 2006). Similarly, we have had to adapt pedagogic role-play both to online teaching and classroom teaching.

Nevertheless, we would like to acknowledge the long tradition of combining play, drama, and teaching. One could begin by mentioning Plato's philosophical dialogues, written in the form of drama, and supposedly used as teaching material in his school located outside the city walls of Athens. We do not know how they read these texts, and if they performed them, but we know that in antiquity, texts were read aloud – not silently – and often by slaves (Svenbro, 1988). One could also mention the long-standing tradition in law schools of moot courts, where students practise – play – trials. This tradition in legal education is very much still alive today. A third example that illustrates the importance of play in education is Friedrich Schiller's *Letters on Aesthetic Education* (Schiller, 1795), in which he identifies a 'play drive' (Spieltrieb) that keeps in check two other drives, the form drive (Formtrieb) and the sense drive (Sachtrieb). The play drive frees the human mind from the domination of the latter two drives and brings them into harmony with reason. Of course, in German, as in English, the word 'play' has several senses, not all connected to human activity. For instance, the German word 'Spielraum', translated as play or leeway, describes well the mechanics of the play drive in Schiller's aesthetic education. A fourth example of the importance of play is Johan Huizinga's study *Homo Ludens: A study of the play-element in culture* (1955). The book, which has had as significant an impact on pedagogy as Schiller (and of course also Jean-Jacques Rousseau), discusses the importance of the play element of culture and society and argues that play is primary to and a necessary (although not sufficient) condition of the generation of culture. Finally, we would like to mention the importance of games in the thinking of Ludwig Wittengenstein, who coined the term ‘language game’ (Sprachspiel) to describe simple examples of language use and the actions into which the language is woven. Wittgenstein argued that an expression – verbal or non-verbal – has meaning only as a result of the rules of the game being played (Wittgenstein, 1953). Between the mentioned examples of combining play, drama, and teaching in Plato, law schools, Schiller, Huizinga and Wittgenstein, there obviously are connections, but they also belong to a tradition that emphasises play as a central element in human society, including education. A dimension of play that is sometimes disregarded, is the capacity to bridge the gap – or even conflict – between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge.

In the engineering and business contexts, decisions are often made on parameters of efficiency and economy (cost), and in these contexts students learn to identify, analyse and assess such parameters. However, students are neither used to identifying ethical dimensions of decision making nor made to see that there can be more than one ethical perspective that may be relevant at the same time (Brown, 1994; Doorn, 2013). In other words, students not only are not taught to take ethical considerations into account, but they also lack an ethical literacy in the sense that they are unaware that different ethical approaches may produce different ethical considerations and perhaps also consequences. For this reason, and as part of the first one of the role-play exercises, the students were given a short introduction to ethical theories relevant to decision making, including virtue ethics, consequentialist ethics, and deontological ethics (Kuusela, 2011).

In the second role play exercise, students got an introduction to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN SDG, 2015), which provide an institutional framing of sustainability as social discourse. There are several important concepts in the SDGs, not only sustainability and development, but also social equality, human rights, and gender identity. There are also inherent tensions and contradictions between some of these concepts, which become explicit in concrete situations. This is explored in the second pedagogic role-play, using a scenario highlighting cultural differences.

The format for the second role-play followed a standard model in pedagogic role-play: The students were given instructions, background reading material, roles and a script;

they worked with the material in groups, rehearsed, and performed the role-play (Chesler et al., 1966; Manorom et al., 2006). After the role-play performance, there is usually a debriefing session, when the students explained what happened, and also discussed issues they may have had in enacting roles that they were not comfortable with playing. Although it is often said that the debriefing session is the most important element in pedagogic role-play – because it is here that learning takes place (Manorom et al., 2006) – this is not always what happens in real life. Also, when using role-play in an iterative way, the students develop a practical knowledge of doing role-play, which is as important as the critical reflection that takes place afterwards. The first role play was conducted using the same format as the second, but without an obligatory debriefing. This allowed for the role play to be carried out in a manner that closely approximated real or everyday life – where there are no debriefings – and with minimal procedural interference to the course being taught. We are not suggesting that debriefings are generally unnecessary, only that in some cases they can be left out and that doing so has both benefits and drawbacks.

3 Role-play on Ethics of Persuasive Technologies

A current, pressing issue in media management is to understand the use of so-called persuasive technologies. Persuasive technologies were pioneered around the turn of the millennium by B. J. Fogg at the Stanford Persuasive lab and during the past decade they have become highly controversial. An example of a persuasive technology is engagement-based algorithms for content on social media platforms such as Facebook and TikTok. One reason for the controversy of these technologies is that they are typically used for coercive rather than persuasive purposes. In other words, the aim is not (necessarily) to persuade us to stay on the platforms but to coerce us to do so using content algorithms that optimise for time spent on the platforms, whether or not that content is something we need, want or find useful. When Fogg pioneered persuasive technologies, he stated that they should be used for persuasive means and warned against possible coercive use of them (Fogg, 2003). But what Fogg warned about is what eventually happened (Kampik et al., 2018). Persuasive technologies have been deployed so as to influence political elections, cause online addictions, and have been linked to a host of other problems as summarised in

Tristan Harris' television documentary *The Social Dilemma* (2020). The point to keep in mind here about persuasive technologies is that they are technologies that make and keep us dependent on social media, typically through coercive manipulation rather than informed persuasion.

In a university course on research methodology for interactive media technology we sought to expose and bring awareness of the use of persuasive technologies where we could discuss the topic in relation to the fields of interaction design and human-computer interaction. However, we were not simply content with exposing how these technologies are used, we also wanted to go deeper in a moral sense. We wanted the students to reflect morally about how persuasive technologies should be used – if at all. The moral situation was presented from a perspective aligned with John Rawls' theory of social justice, justice as fairness (Rawls, 1971). The students were introduced to three ethical perspectives: consequentialist, deontological and virtue ethics. We settled for these three perspectives to keep things simple. They are common cross-cultural ethical perspectives. Together they are also fairly comprehensive. Most ethical issues can be discussed by using these perspectives, either singularly or in combination.

3.1 Consequentialist Ethics

As the name indicates, this perspective has to do with consequences. Moral reasoning often has to do with figuring out or calculating the consequences of our actions. According to the most common form of consequentialism, utilitarianism (Mill, 1863), we ought to do what brings about the greatest good, both in qualitative terms and in quantitative terms. For example, given a moral situation, what action(s) bring(s) about the most of some good that we value and wish to maximise, e.g. happiness or well-being. A simple example is the family who sits around the breakfast table on a Sunday morning and takes a vote on what to do for the day: go to the zoo, the cinema or the beach. Whatever makes most people happy is the utilitarian choice here.

3.2 Deontological Ethics

Much moral reasoning has to do with rules. People commonly follow rules because they believe certain rules dictate what is the right thing to do. Philosophers have tried to identify what moral rules we ought to follow and we find many moral rules in the religions of the world. An example of a deontological rule comes from the philosopher Immanuel Kant and it dictates that we ought always to treat human beings as ends-in-themselves and not mere means. It is OK to treat people instrumentally, e.g., to ask a barista to make a coffee, but only if we at the same time recognise the barista as a human being with dignity. If we just ignore them or treat them like a machine, then we have failed to act morally. For Kant it is our duty to treat human beings as ends-in-themselves.

Another example of a Kantian rule is to never lie. Here we can see how different Kantian deontological ethics is from utilitarian ethics according to which it would be justified to lie if it brought about the best outcome. For example, if Kant's mother would have served him an awful dinner and asked him if he liked it, he would have to tell the truth out of moral duty, while a utilitarian like Mill could well lie to make his mother happy. Kant seeks to ground his moral philosophy in rationality and is not interested in happiness from that perspective. According to him, there are certain things you do and do not do as a rational being, lying is one of the things you ought never do. To take an example that may speak closer to some of our intuitions, think of a burning house with a baby inside. A utilitarian standing in front of it might calculate, should I risk my life, what are the chances that we both die if I go in and so on. But someone who is not a utilitarian and thinks closer to Kant might just run inside without any calculation. If someone did that and was interviewed afterwards, they might say they did not think about it, they just had to do it. They might say it was their duty.

3.3 *Virtue Ethics*

This perspective builds on the ancient Greek ideals of human flourishing. We are asked to think of moral actions as those that bring about human flourishing. The central question is how can we make the best of ourselves and others. How can we foster the development of virtuous flourishing human beings? This perspective may seem intuitively clear, but vague. How exactly are we supposed to flourish and what does it mean to flourish? To understand a little better let us try to put ourselves in Aristotle's shoes back in ancient Greece. This was a time when ethics was pioneered in the West. At that time, Aristotle looked around himself in an attempt to understand how to live the good life. Who knew how to live a good life? Further to this, what would these people manifest in terms of

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moral qualities? Not anything goes of course: virtue, wisdom, excellence and happiness are the most important things Aristotle is looking for. Now switch to your own perspective and ask the same questions. Most of us have people around us that we admire because they seem to know how to live life well – what the French call *savoir-vivre*. For Aristotle the question is how do they do it? Well, we must observe those who flourish around us. Aristotle has not given us a set of specifications; he has given us moral philosophical anthropology as a general method. We can engage in the same basic timeless approach as Aristotle today and it is still relevant, because, psychologically speaking, we do not seem to be on a clear upward trend of human flourishing in the modern world.

3.4 The preparation for the role play

The students read parts of Fogg's *Persuasive Technologies*, the article "Coercion and Deception in Persuasive Technologies", and listened to the podcast "What is Technology Doing to Us?" by Tristan Harris and Sam Harris (2017). The students also read a textbook chapter each on the ethical theories of consequentialism, deontological ethics, and virtue ethics (Kuusela 2011). They also attended two lectures, one on the three ethical theories and one on persuasive technologies.

3.5 The role play assignment

The students were asked to write a short essay in small groups in which they could argue for or against the use of persuasive technologies by major social media actors. In the assignment they could, but did not have to, state if they took on a positive or negative disposition as contrary to their own dispositions or if it was aligned with their dispositions. After the assignment had been turned in, some groups volunteered to present their essays in class. The essays and the presentations along with the discussions in class constituted the role play. This tripartite structure allowed the students to engage in the role play through different phases (collaborative writing, presenting/listening and discussing).

3.6 Findings and reflections on the persuasive technologies role play

The role-play exercise allowed for looking at social media from the perspective of the big media companies. For example, more than one group argued that social media companies

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were justified in using persuasive technologies for coercive means, using utilitarian arguments. Others argued against such means, on what appeared to be more deontological and virtue ethics grounds. An interesting finding was that some of the groups who argued for the side of the media companies, expressed noticeable stress in doing so, e.g. by sighing heavily at the end of making argumentative points. We came to think of this phenomenon as the *stigma of acting*. It showed us how easy it is to take on a different role contrary to one's own and do it in such a way that brings about revolting sentiments. By easy, we do not mean that it was comfortable, but that cognitively speaking, we can take on these roles. It made us wonder about how easy it could be to just fall into the ways of acting and being that others engage in naturally online. Thinking in this way could perhaps help us understand the political echo chambers and polarisations that are currently so strong in North America, Europe and many other places in the world.

When we engage in role play we can see the roles and sides of a controversy clearly and perhaps that is why the students showed signs of the stigma of acting when taking on contrary views to their own. This was evidenced by gestures, e.g., shaking heads and sighs. We can understand such behaviour in a similar to the way that actors sometimes force themselves go into character and may even experience some trauma in doing so. Erving Goffman (1961) writes about how we may distance ourselves from the roles we engage in. He calls this phenomenon role distance, but for Goffman this has more to do with how we play with roles in the production of social realities. So, for example, a doctor may break character during an operation and make jokes or use non-technical language in order to show that she is in control of the situation at hand. The stigma of acting, in contrast, is something forced and automatic, and associated with an emotional reaction.

In our situation the task was to switch and deliberately take on a role. But in real life, things are different. We may not see things so clearly. We often fall into different ways of thinking and acting because of enculturation. As Wittgenstein put it, we inherit our world pictures without satisfying ourselves of their correctness (Wittgenstein, 1969, #94). Wittgenstein helped us see another way in which role play can be understood. Role-play allows us to reach what Wittgenstein scholar Naomi Scheman has described as privileged points of marginality, where we can clearly scrutinise different positions and ways of thinking/being and acting at the margins of our own practices and beyond (Scheman, 2006).

Another finding, and it is related to the stigma of acting, is what we came to think of as the *uneasiness of acting*. This phenomenon arose because it was unclear in many cases what the students really believed. That is, when students argued for the use of coercive persuasive technologies it was unclear if their own beliefs aligned with their argumentation or not. In some cases, it became clear at the end what they really believed, but not in all cases. We may compare the situation to what can happen in social situations where we are unable to gauge the sentiments and beliefs of others. We may be hoping that they do not have certain sentiments or beliefs, but we cannot be sure. Master directors know how to leave the audience feeling uneasy by the creation of characters whose sentiments and beliefs are veiled by obscurity to the point that social situations seem surreal. In this role-play exercise, we chose not to do a systematic debriefing. Thus, the uneasiness may have remained in some cases. We think this is close to real life and that there can be a benefit to doing role play this way.

We live in a world where science and democracy have come under attack, fascism is on the rise, a world in which the news media has been largely taken over by a new generation of social media entrepreneurs or national states with totalitarian aims, and populism has risen to alarming heights. The uneasiness of acting reminds us of how important it is to find ways in university education to stimulate critical thinking so that our students can find their way in our increasingly confusing world. If you think about it, when someone says that it is alright to manipulate people's mental lives through coercive technologies, they are either saying that it is justified to ignore our human rights as laid down by the UN, that they have never heard of them or they simply do not care about the right to freedom of thought whether or not the right was laid down by the UN. Note that according to the right to freedom of thought, you have the right to think that there should be no freedom of thought, but you must nevertheless respect the freedom of thought of others. The UN declaration of human rights state clearly that we have the right to freedom of thought. What has happened in the time since those human rights were laid down? What has happened to our sense of truth, freedom and human dignity? Role play can be one way of accomplishing what Hanna Arendt would have thought of as a common discourse where people's opinions can be voiced and heard (Arendt, 1958). It can be a way of tackling the most pressing issues of our time.

3.7 *Notes on the methodology on the persuasive technologies role play study*

The study was undertaken using auto-ethnography.[23] It is an often-used method in ethnography that can be conducted unobtrusively. We could have conducted this study in more formal/systematic ways with, e.g. research instruments such as questionnaires and interviews to gather data. But, as the students were taking a university course, we thought that it would be too obtrusive. We wanted them to be able to take the course as usual without having to engage in such exercises.

4 Role-play on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The UN SDGs are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the ambitious objective to “free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet” (UN SDG, 2015). The Agenda proposes “bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path” (UN SDG, 2015). These ideas, as well as the rhetoric, sound familiar to central tenets in the European Enlightenment, replacing ignorance with unsustainability. At the same time, the SGDs can in many ways be seen as complementary to the 2015 Paris Agreement, achieved the same year, which promises to mitigate anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions with the ambition to keep global warming below 1,5 degrees Celsius. That is, whereas the objective of the Paris Agreement is to mitigate GHG emissions, to provide support for adaptation to global warming for developing countries, the SDGs focus on sustainability in social and economic areas. It goes without saying that the significance of the SDGs is not the same in different parts of the planet.

The SDGs were conceived as a bottom-up project, engaging representatives of all UN member states in identifying and formulating the individual goals. However, it can be argued that in its implementation it has become a top-down project with set targets to be achieved. And, as already mentioned, it appears to push Western values as a universal norm. Moreover, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, there is no discussion of limits to growth, which is alarming in a programme focusing on 'sustainable development'. It is easy to get the impression that 'sustainable development' here has become a hollow notion, a disguised attempt to legitimise business as usual. Many of our students have heard of the SDGs, although they have quite vague ideas of their content and the overall objective. Since the SDGs constitute an official programme for a transition to a (more) sustainable society, they are both valuable and useful for a discussion of the ethics of sustainability. The SDGs also have a complex deontic nature, blending the imperative mode with blatant normativity. In other words, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – which includes and frames the SDGs – is an ideological document, and as such has received scant attention from a critical perspective. For these reasons, the SDGs are worth analysing in a pedagogical context because they reveal so much about our own time.

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[23] Ethnography based on the researcher’s own experiences. In this case as a teacher.

Since the second role-play took place in a course on intercultural communication, it was decided to select those SDGs that were most relevant for the course. The subject matter of intercultural communication is to teach students skills to communicate across cultural differences, national, regional, professional and other. An important part of intercultural communication is to understand what culture is and how it works, as well as the difficulties and complexities involved in communicating between cultures. Like with all academic subjects, there are different approaches. Whereas in the early days of intercultural communication, in the 1950s and 1960s, it was primarily instrumental, providing tools for Americans working abroad to communicate more efficiently with the locals. Later generations of intercultural communication scholars have developed more critical approaches, incorporating a higher degree of respect for cultural differences as well as for people and peoples.

The following six SDGs were selected:

SDG 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
SDG 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries;
SDG 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
SDG 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;

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SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels;
SDG 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development. (UN SDG, 2015)

When comparing cultural patterns in different societies – and different professions – the cultural conceptions of gender and gender identities stand out, not only between western and non-western countries, but also within the latter. The challenge in SDG 5 is very much a cultural issue, and one in which intercultural communication can provide support, both technically and morally. Similarly, an important cultural pattern refers to 'power distance', the extent to which a given society accepts difference in power between individuals and groups. Less power difference implies a more egalitarian society. Working with this issue from a cultural point of view is relevant for SDG 10. In the two Western countries where intercultural communication is well established as an academic subject – Australia and USA – the main focus is not to learn how to communicate with foreigners, but to create an understanding of cultural diversity at home ("e pluribus unum"). Indeed, most Western metropolitan cities today are at one and the same time multicultural and highly segregated, both in terms of ethnicity and wealth. Indeed, one of the reasons for the rise of populist political parties is due to a failure of societies to achieve SDG 11. Further, learning to think and act in sustainable ways is largely a question of understanding the meaning of sustainability and related terms, as well as an ability – or competence – to apply sustainability in concrete situations. In that sense, sustainability is a language, with its own grammar and ethics. In order to shift to a more sustainable society, we need a cultural shift related to both consumption and production – recycling, repairing, but also design and marketing – which is all about culture (SDG 12). The next SDG, #16, perhaps needs no explanation, since intercultural communication is all about promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. The last SDG selected, #17, aims at implementing and revitalising a global partnership, which (obviously) needs intercultural communication to work. This was a very succinct run-through, but hopefully gives an idea of why these SDGs were selected for the role-play.

4.1 The preparation for the role play

In the course, and as mentioned in the introduction, we had frequently used role-play as a teaching method. Hence the students were both familiar and at ease with this form of teaching. In most of the seminars, the students had been given a scenario and had been tasked to write a dialogue, and then to rehearse and perform the script. The character roles provided by the scenario descriptions were quite general – e.g. to impersonate somebody from another culture – and the students had to flesh them out themselves. It should be mentioned that the class is very international, not only with students from all over the world, but many of them also have hybrid cultural identities. For this particular exercise, the students were requested to read the presentation of Agenda 2030 on the UN SDG website, as well as the presentation of the 17 SDGs. They also listened to a lecture on the same material, which highlighted the six SDGs that are more relevant for intercultural communication, and explained in general terms the connections between the two.

4.2 The role play assignment

The students were then tasked to discuss in small groups the connection/s and relevance of the selected SDGs for intercultural communication, and also vice versa, with the purpose to present their findings to the class. The point of the exercise was not only to articulate the two areas, but to identify tensions and possible conflicts, both explicit and implicit. In particular, the students were asked to think of concrete situations where the SDGs could be implemented, in which cultural issues may occur. It was also an exercise in penetrating the special language used in the UN SDG website. The students then summarised the discussion for the whole class, advocating their findings. Each presentation was followed by a general discussion. The group discussions and the oral presentations along with the class discussions constituted the role play. As in the first role-play, this tripartite structure allowed the students to engage in the role play through different phases (group discussion, presenting/listening and class discussion). Following the discussion, there was a short debriefing session where the students reflected both about the discussion in groups and the oral presentations.

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4.3 Findings and reflections on the role-play on the UN SDGs

The role-play took place at the end of the course, and the students had become familiar with working with different forms of role-play, and were – generally speaking – comfortable with the format. They were also at ease with class discussions. Apart from using role-play, the purpose of the seminar was to make the students understand the relevance of intercultural communication in a wider perspective, using the UN SDGs as a test case. As the seminar took place towards the end of the course, one could have expected that the students had acquired a good and nuanced understanding of intercultural communication as a subject area. However, the exercise revealed that this was not the case, that their understanding of intercultural communication was fragmented, un-holistic, and also lacked a critical perspective. That is, although the students could sense the relevance of intercultural communication for the SDGs, and vice versa, they had difficulty in articulating these connections.

By contrast, the students had less difficulty in identifying the tensions between the critical and moral perspective on culture they had acquired in the course, and the universalising tendency in the SDGs. That is, to take an example, although the students (of course) were all for increasing gender equality, alleviating poverty, improving health, etc., they could see that this may create conflicts on different levels – individual, social, professional – that would need to be addressed. They could also see that the unabashed ideology of progress and growth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development could come into conflict with the rights of indigenous peoples. And this is where the discussions – both in groups and in class – became really interesting: the students began to move back and forth between different perspectives and positions, and also different roles. This engagement was done in a modality of respect both to others and to other cultures, which showed that even if at one level they had not yet acquired a critical and holistic understanding of intercultural communication, they had nevertheless internalised and integrated the moral stance that is central to the field. That is, the discussion was governed by ethical rules such as listening to and respecting the other/Other, openness and flexibility, and above all critical reasoning.

Further, it was not surprising that the students had issues with the language in which the SDGs were formulated. Although the texts on the UN website are well written, they are promotional texts rather than being pedagogical and/or constructively critical. There is a fundamental difference between the texts on intercultural communication they had engaged with in the course, which were both pedagogical and critical, and the promotional text on the UN website. This difference would manifest itself in the discussions by students expressing frustration that the terms on the UN website were not clearly defined, and hence impracticable. This forced the students to critically engage with the language of the SDGs, and also to begin looking elsewhere for both background material and implementation. Obviously, they did not have much time for this, but it showed that they understood they had to break through the polished veneer of UN language.

Finally, and this point brings us back to the overarching objective of the pedagogic role-play for engaging with ethics and sustainability, in the role play there emerged a discursive understanding of different moral perspectives. The moral stance of the UN SDGs is basically utilitarian – i.e. the well-being of many is better than the well-being of a few – and also based on the idea that the good life – defined by modern Western ideals – somehow is desirable and possible for everybody. The ethics of intercultural communication, in contrast, in fundamental ways is deontological, based on rules and critical strictures that should be applied in all social interactions. Although the understanding was not articulated in these terms, it was clear that the fundamental disarticulation between SDGs and intercultural communication is grounded in the difference between moral perspectives. In the next iteration of this exercise, we will try to bring this to bear more explicitly on the discussion.

5 Conclusions

The two pedagogic role-play exercises turned out successful, even if they leave room for improvements, including mutual reconciliation. They show that it is possible to use role play to engage students in ethics and sustainability, and in this way to provide students with practical skills that they can apply in real life situations, management and decision-making. The exercises also show that role play can be intrinsically enjoyable, that students find it intellectually stimulating within their curriculum, in particular if it is used iteratively throughout a course.

Further, the role plays show that mastering the language of ethics – by which we not only mean one moral theory, but the logic and grammar of ethical discourse – is relevant for the students, and in particular in order for them to acquire a mastery of sustainability. An important dimension of ethical discourse is to understand the mechanics of different theories and concepts. Thus, even if the respective ethical theories constitute separate language games (in Wittgenstein's sense), the students would need to understand how to play the game on another level. We believe that the role plays on ethics and sustainability achieve this, although of course they need to be further developed.

Perhaps the most obvious weakness of these role plays is that they constitute singular events in the educational programme. In order to have a real impact, they would need to be iterated – although of course not identically – in other courses throughout the educational programme. In order to accomplish this, there needs to be an engagement and an orchestrated effort, both from the programme director and course responsible teachers.

But there are also other possible weaknesses. From our experience, not all students appreciate role play to the same extent, which directly affects the engagement and learning outcome. Even if they can be supported in various ways, drama pedagogy may not be for everybody. At the same time, the effect of working with students through role play is empowering – and not only for the students. It has the effect of making people grow as individuals, to make them more assertive and more prone to express themselves, which in turn fosters a critical discussion in the classroom. In the course on intercultural communication, in which role play was used throughout the course, it was apparent that some students flourished in this – for them – new and playful teaching environment. This is the kind of personal development that teachers love to be part of.

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Christina Zourna & Ioanna Papavassiliou-Alexiou

7 Authority or Authenticity? Developing Educational Leaders' Skills through Drama in Education

Professional trainers around the world seek to find effective methods to prepare future educational leaders to face 21st century challenges. In this article it is claimed that Drama in Education can provide such a service. Experiential workshops can be purposefully based on real incidents in the lives of authentic leaders in world history; as such, they can provide a non-threatening risk-taking environment where future leaders can experience problems, challenges, and dilemmas in role before facing similar ones in their respective professional contexts. Every year students at the Educational Leaders' Professional Development postgraduate program, University of Macedonia, develop their intra- and interpersonal career skills in such workshops. This article will focus on a workshop presented online at the 2022 Drama in Education Days. It is based on the life and achievements of Alexander the Great, the Macedonian King who led the united Greek city-states army and defeated the Persian empire in 4th century BC.

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Introduction

Drama in Education (DiE) has been implemented in many disciplines over the years involving children of all ages, in teaching and learning across the curriculum, in primary and secondary schools, and in developing key learning skills (DICE, 2010; Zourna & Papavassiliou-Alexiou, 2021); but its potential as a training method for adults and professionals has also been proven during the last decade. It has been used as an innovative method for developing skills in leadership, business, human resources, professional development in education (Papavassiliou-Alexiou & Zourna, 2016; 2017).

During the last eight years in our pre- and post-graduate courses at the University of Macedonia, DiE has been used as one of the core methods for professional skills development. In the Educational Leaders' training program in particular, teachers from all disciplines are prepared to become effective educational leaders to face upcoming multiple challenges in 21st century schools. This preparation takes place in DiE workshops focused on the dilemmas, crises, and decisions that contemporary educational leaders need to make. Moreover, personal, social, and professional skills of authentic leaders are investigated, acknowledged, acquired, and applauded. In the present article a concrete example is described in detail in the next paragraphs.

DiE Workshop

The workshop entitled *'Educational Leadership: Authority or Authenticity?'* was presented at the 2022 Drama in Education Days by the authors of this article; it has been facilitated face-to-face several times during the last two years. Its usual duration is six to eight hours depending on the group of participants and the actual implementation conditions. The assessment and feedback results are provided in later paragraphs. The pretext was based on the life and achievements of Alexander the Great, who provided the world with a most recognizable example of an authentic leader (Maninis, 1997). After each activity the enhanced leadership skills of the participants are also mentioned.

Purpose

Through personal involvement, emotional engagement, and reflection, via individual and group activities, this workshop aims at helping participants experience the behaviour, needed skills, dilemmas, and informed choices of an authentic historical leader, and make connections with their own professional lives. Suggested activities and their purpose to enhance educational leaders' particular skills are explained in detail.

Major Questions

The major questions investigated during the workshop are:

1. How can the life and leadership of Alexander the Great inspire 21st century teachers to become authentic educational leaders?
2. What skills should teachers develop to effectively fulfil their role as leaders?
3. Can DiE be an effective training method to prepare future educational leaders?

Structure

In the beginning, some introductory activities are needed to clarify important notions and to secure personal involvement. These could be as follows: brainstorming about meaning and dimensions of authority and authenticity[24], the discernment between skilful[25] and non-skilful educational leaders as well as a retrospective of the past times when the participants were in the position of a leader focusing on their own leadership traits and overall performance.

Pretext

The drama starts with a pretext (O'Neill, 1995) taking place in 342 BC; Alexander is 14 years old. In the School of Mieza, near the modern city of Naoussa in Central Macedonia, he is being educated by the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle. His classmates are the sons of the friends and high-ranking officials of King Philip II. He is being prepared to be

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[24] We here understand authority as the power to control, command, determine, settle issues or disputes (https://www.dictionary.com/); the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience (oxford-english-dictionary). We also understand authenticity as the quality of being authentic; genuineness (https://www.dictionary.com/); being true to one's own personality, spirit, or character (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary).

[25] Skill: the developed aptitude or ability to do something well; competent excellence in performance; expertness; dexterity (https://www.dictionary.com/); the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance; a learned power of doing something competently; a developed aptitude or ability (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary)

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the next king; however, there is no doubt that at the time he is also a teenager seeking his identity, following his own intuitions, feelings, passions, and dreams.

Picture 1. School of Mieza. Picture retrieved from http://www.sxoliaristotelous.gr/en/

In *improvised scenes* supported by appropriate excerpts from historical biographical texts (Karykas & Markantonatos, 2000; Maninis, 1997; Tsopanis, 2009), the participants in groups enact the experiences Alexander had during his adolescence; in these scenes, they can investigate the attributes of his personality that emerged through these experiences as well as the gradual development of his character over the years. The main idea behind this activity is that each lived experience from a younger age may gradually add up to the person one will become in the future. Thus, a future leader may also be acknowledged earlier in life by studying his/her behaviour towards the important others in his/her life – classmates, friends, teachers, parents – as well as his/her stance towards the established laws, rules, and traditions of the time. During the activity, participants practice teamwork, collegiality, creativity, imagination, spontaneity, empathy, and taking initiative. Later in a group discussion, they can be facilitated to note down a leader's main attributes and connect them to their own past experiences where early competences may have been revealed but remained unrecognized.

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Picture 2. Aristotle. Picture retrieved from Wikimedia Commons

Picture 3. Alexander the Great. Picture retrieved from https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/

After each improvised scene, the action freezes and the technique *voices in the head* or *thought tracking* (as described in Avdi & Chadjigeorgiou, 2007:95) may take place: when indicated by a facilitator, the participant-in-role unfreezes and explicitly expresses the inner thoughts and viewpoint of the impersonated role concerning Alexander; the other participants observing the scene may also voice the character's inner thoughts. To articulate meaning and keep a record of these revelations the activity *role on the wall* follows (Neelands & Goode, 2015): on a piece of cardboard hung on the wall, a simple outline of a Macedonian military casket is drawn; inside the casket the participants write the inner thoughts of Alexander expressed in the first person and outside the casket they write the inner thoughts about Alexander expressed in the third person by the significant others in his social environment. Through this activity, feeling safe and protected by the role they have taken on, participants become personally engaged and are trained to explicitly reveal hidden thoughts and emotions without hesitation or fear.

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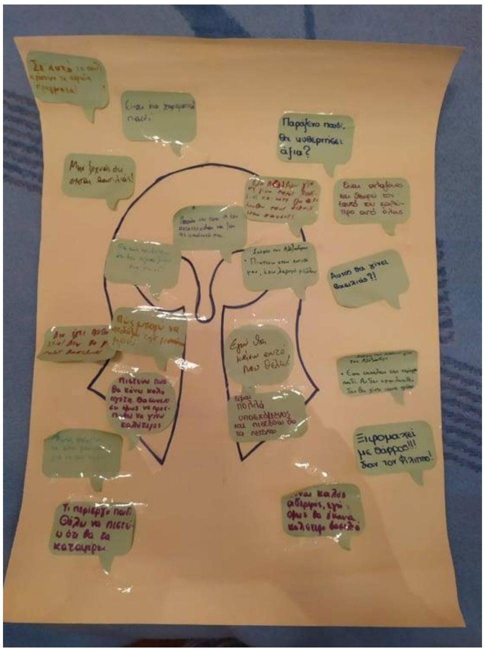


Picture 4. Character on the wall (Macedonian casket). Picture retrieved from the authors' personal archives.

ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑΣ
UNIVERSITY OF MACEDONIA

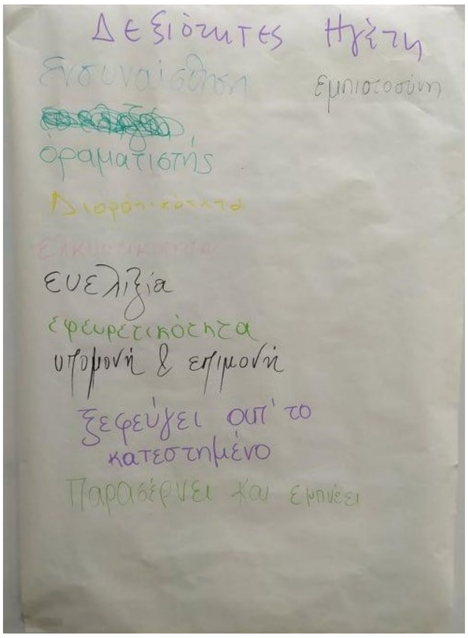
Picture 5. Character on the wall (another example). Picture retrieved from the authors' personal archives.

Episode 1

The story evolves (Karykas & Markantonatos, 2000): in 336 BC Alexander's sister gets married; during the ceremony King Philip is murdered. Alexander is the immediate heir to the throne. But is he legitimized to become king? Will he be recognized as leader by military officials, former friends, and the people?

These questions can be answered through the activity *taking position* or *space between* (as described in Avdi & Chadjigeorgiou, 2007:97) where subconscious intentions may be revealed: Alexander's throne is placed somewhere in the room. Participants choose to impersonate people from Alexander's social environment and stand at a distance from his throne proportional to their support – or challenge – of the new king. After everyone has taken position, they are asked to explain who they impersonate and how they feel at that exact moment. Motives, desires, feelings, and doubts about the new leader are revealed. Participants are thus trained in empathy, critical thinking, taking responsibility, decision-making, self-revelation, and self-exposure.

As Dorothy Heathcote suggested, drama techniques and conventions allow the facilitators freeze the flow of events at any point of the evolving story so that the participants may focus on the "five levels of deepening engagement": the action itself, the motivation behind it, future investment, the model being imitated and a general stance in life[26] (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995). What facilitators may find rather challenging during this activity is the fact that participants usually get so influenced by the main hero's personality and known history (being in a state of 'metaxis', according to Augusto Boal, 1979) that they find difficulty in connecting their perception of and expressing their true stance towards a newly appointed leader in their own professional life.



Δεξιότητες Ηγέτη
Ενσυναίσθηση
Εμπιστοσύνη
οραματιστής
Διορατικότητα
[illegible]
ευελιξία
εφευρετικότητα
υπομονή & επιμονή
ξεφεύγει απ' το
κατεστημένο
Παρασέρνει και εμπνέει

Picture 6. Leadership skills enhanced. Picture retrieved from the authors' personal archives.

Picture 7. Taking position. Picture retrieved from the authors' personal archives.

Episode 2

The story goes on: military officers, officials and lords in Macedonia recognize Alexander as their new leader; but not in Southern Greece. In Thessaly rebellion starts, in Athens opponents' voices keep rising. King Philip's achievements of the last decade are in danger of collapsing (Karykas & Markantonatos, 2000). How will Alexander react? His plan is to unite all Greek city-states against their common enemy, the Persian Empire. Before taking action, he consults with friends and close counsellors.

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[26] See also https://www.facebook.com/groups/commissionmodel/posts/742441699662258

In the activity *group improvisation* the participants divided into two groups present their arguments in favour of reacting either fast or wisely. One half of the group impersonate Parmenion who was King Philip's favourite counsellor and of old age; the other half impersonate the younger officers, eager to fight. Both groups offer alternative options and points of view for Alexander to take into consideration before making final decisions. Participants are thus experientially trained in debate, negotiation, persuasion, conflict resolution, and crisis management.

Episode 3

The story still evolves: The united army of the Hellenes starts conquering the East. Victory follows battle after battle: by the river Granikos in 334, in the Issos valley in 333, freeing Ionian cities one by one. It is 331 BC when Persian King Darius III prepares his unprecedentedly huge army and waits for the Greeks near the city of Gavgamila. What is more, the night before the final battle on September 20, a total eclipse of the moon spreads fear within the military camps. Superstition, incoherent beliefs, and spreading rumours escalate to an urgent crisis that Alexander must resolve at once. He cannot succeed in winning the so-called "battle of all battles" if fighting alone (Karykas & Markantonatos, 2000:73).

In the activity *meeting,* participants in the roles of Alexander and other stakeholders – close friends, officers, and soldiers facing death the very next day – express fear, hope, and faith in Alexander who led them so far from their homeland but rendered them rulers of the world. As various points of view are deployed, Alexander answers accordingly and negotiates by revealing his own thoughts, fears, and doubts; he demonstrates openness, courage, empathy, and communicates his own vision of the future with confidence. This activity can also be carried out as a *circular drama* (as described in Avdi & Chadjigeorgiou, 2007:87-88) where Alexander negotiates in turn with small groups of stakeholders. In the end of each negotiation, the men must state explicitly if they still stand by Alexander – or if they have decided to leave before dawn. Through this activity participants can practice focused listening, communication, crisis management, conflict resolution, and decision-making skills. After all, no leader can succeed while struggling without followers/supporters backing up his/her ideas and decisions – not even in the 21st century AD.

In a follow-up activity enhancing reflection like *thought tracking* while wandering around the room and listening to suitable music (Boal, 2013), the participants-in-role express Alexander's feelings. The activity aims at making explicit that an authentic leader can have real feelings, and a genuine interest in his/her collaborators. Additionally, he/she can be influenced by followers' attitudes; and decisions will soon follow. Empathy, emotional awareness, and collegiality are cultivated via this activity.

After these two activities, participants individually take on the role of Alexander being isolated in his tent and writing a letter to himself. The idea is that leaders need to face their own doubts, innermost fears, self-questioning, uncertainties, and dilemmas, and make informed choices and decisions, not at all light-heartedly. In the activity *instinctively writing* (Greig, 2005), by revealing weaknesses and strengths, participants practice imagination, empathy, and creative writing skills. By reading their letters to the plenary they practice openness and self-exposure.

Episode 4

The story evolves a little further: the huge Persian army is defeated thanks to the Greek army's high skills and morale and Alexander's brilliant strategic moves. Persian king Darius III flees the battlefield in panic; later he dies. In 326 BC Alexander arrives at the lands bordering India; he plans to conquer more lands. However, his troops are now tired; they have been following him and his vision for ten years now; exhausted and nostalgic they wish to go back to their homeland and families. Alexander argues: 'We are creating history together' (Maninis, 1997:34).

In the activity *conscience alley* (Neelands & Goode, 2015), the participants divided in two groups, stand along two parallel lines forming a narrow corridor. Each one chooses the best argument in favour of or against the proposal to continue the campaign. Then, one participant at a time eyes closed, passes through the corridor in the role of Alexander, and listens to the arguments consecutively, one in favour and one against. In the end he/she needs to decide what the hero of the story will do. In this most engaging activity participants practice focused listening, critical thinking, and informed decision-making skills. After each one of them has passed through the corridor, they reveal and justify their decision to the plenary.

However, regardless of the participants' decision, either unanimous or not, real history cannot change: Alexander the Great indeed decided to listen to his troops' request, stopped the campaign, and ordered everyone to return home after he had a special commemorating monument built in his honour with the carved inscription: 'Here stopped Alexander' as "he only accepted to be defeated by none other than his own soldiers" (Maninis, 1997:35). As this workshop is based on real history, there are times during the implementation that the group of participants would be influenced by the real incidents that cannot change as they lie in the past; however, thanks to drama conventions and 'framing' (Davis, 2014; Heathcote & Bolton, 1995) facilitators and participants are permitted to question alternative routes and diverse development of the actual story under investigation.

A final activity facilitating emotional withdrawal or de-rolling (Gualeni et al., 2017), e.g., *human sculpture* (Avdi & Chadjigeorgiou, 2018), is strongly recommended before the closing discussion or debriefing session where participants may share their thoughts and experiences during the workshop as well as give feedback about the skills enhanced and comment on whether the initial questions to be investigated were sufficiently answered.

Workshop Assessment

At the University of Macedonia, the above-described drama was implemented several times during the last two years and evaluated by the participants, either university students, adults, or professional groups. In online Google forms or written questionnaires, they recorded their perceptions of the skills that they used and/or improved during the workshops and their beliefs about the usefulness of the method in social and professional skills development. Some of these are presented in the next paragraph.

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The participants realized the challenges of the procedure to make informed choices, how difficult it is to establish unanimity, to argue in favour of or against alternative proposals, and to act upon the decision made. Furthermore, the participants perceived that the activities used in the workshop were helpful; they enjoyed experiencing emotions they were not aware of, being in two worlds at the same time, expressing inner thoughts while in role. In their opinion, the skills they improved included focusing, active listening, self-awareness, empathy, teamwork, creativity, spontaneity, critical thinking, trust, accessibility, out-of-the-box thinking, communicating vision, inspiring, taking responsibility, information management, debating, negotiating, informed decision making, and personal engagement. The participants also stated that the DiE method could prove useful for educational purposes, in training teachers and students in decision-making processes, crisis management, ameliorating the school climate, and positively affecting attitudes towards self-directed learning, goal setting, problem solving, and crisis management.

Conclusion

The use of DiE in training future teacher leaders may develop and enhance their leadership skills, contributing to their professional development. In the course of human history there are other examples of leaders e.g., M. Gandhi, N. Mandela, etc., who could be chosen as central heroes in similar DiE workshops, specially designed to explore leadership issues or being particularly focused on educational leaders. Once DiE is experienced by teachers and students, extensive training in the method may lead to high competence in designing tailor-made scenarios for investigating important issues emerging in their respective schools. Self-awareness, creativity, decision-making, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and various social skills can be experientially developed through personal involvement, emotional engagement, and reflection in DiE workshops. Overall, the interaction between actual and fictional contexts makes learning meaningful, memorable, embodied, active, enjoyable, spontaneous, challenging, and stimulating even in cases of dealing with potentially difficult or sensitive situations (Finch et al., 2015; Sutherland, 2012).

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The two researchers and authors of this paper use DiE as an effective experiential method for the development of personal, social, and professional skills in teenagers, university students, young adults, teachers, and professionals. Based on this experience they believe in the potential of DiE to be used as a training method to obtain authentic educational leaders who will manage to deal with unprecedented future challenges in 21st century schools.

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Andreas Wirag

8 The Word Gap Task to Teach Planned Vocabulary in the EFL Drama Classroom

In earlier research, few suggestions were made for planned word teaching in the drama classroom (Giebert, 2021: 121). As a result, there is a need for further drama-based methods that can be used to teach students a deliberate set of new words (e.g., from a coursebook). As a new method, this article introduces an activity for planned word learning: the Word Gap Task. In the Word Gap Task, students are presented with a task within a drama scenario (Find a place to hide, the giant will be back soon!). In order to solve this task, learners have to make use of a planned set of words (table, chair, bed, wardrobe, etc.). Thus, learners need to produce these teacher-planned new words in order to successfully complete the drama task. This article, to introduce the Word Gap Task, first reviews earlier suggestions for planned word teaching in drama settings (Walter, 2014; Elis, 2015; Cannon, 2017; Kalogirou et al., 2019; Giebert, 2021). Then, the planning and teaching of the Word Gap Task is discussed and an A1-level example is given (The nasty giant). Finally, limitations of the proposed teaching method will be discussed.

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Vocabulary teaching in the foreign-language drama classroom

Without doubt, vocabulary is a decisive building block in learning any foreign language. Since words are needed to refer to any object, event, or attribute that learners want to discuss, they need to master a large number of foreign-language words before they can communicate effectively in a wide range of situations. As Penny Ur (2022: 1) points out: "Vocabulary is the most important component of language to learn. You can communicate with limited grammar and less-than-accurate pronunciation, but you cannot do so without a lot of vocabulary." In line with this argument, Nation (2006: 77) showed in an empirical corpus study that EFL students have to acquire roughly 6,000-7,000 words in order to understand 98% of an ordinary English conversation.

Despite the importance of word knowledge for foreign-language (FL) learning, until now drama research has given little attention to the teaching of new vocabulary. In fact, relatively few suggestions were made for the planned teaching of FL words in drama classrooms (exceptions are Walter, 2014; Elis, 2015; Cannon, 2017; Kalogirou et al., 2019, and Giebert, 2021, all of which will be discussed below). To widen the repertoire of available methods in EFL drama teaching, this article suggests a new drama-based method to teach learners a planned set of words – the Word Gap Task (WGT). In the WGT, the teacher puts students into a make-believe scenario in which they are presented with a communicative task. In order to successfully complete this task, learners need to make use of words that were planned for by the teacher.

Before describing the WGT in detail, earlier findings from word learning research provide the necessary theoretical basis for the new drama-based teaching method. Research in vocabulary learning distinguishes "incidental" (or: implicit/unplanned) and "intentional" (or: explicit/planned) word learning (Webb et al., 2020). Here, unplanned word learning, as its name suggests, takes place in an implicit, unconscious fashion while learners are pursuing another activity in the foreign language, such as reading a book, listening to a podcast, or watching a theatre performance. Implicit learning thus occurs as "by-product of a meaning-focused task" (Webb, 2020: 225), when learners are exposed to FL words that are part of their reading, listening, or viewing. As a yardstick for implicit learning, an empirical study by Brown, Waring, and Donkaewbua (2008) showed that learners who read three stories (once), in which 28 new words are embedded, acquire 1 out of 28 new words. This corresponds to an average learning rate of 4% of the new words in a FL text, when the text is only read once. Given that the learners neither knew about nor aimed to pick up these new words, this learning rate is astonishing. (See, for further evidence for unplanned word learning from FL reading, Pellicer–Sánchez & Schmitt, 2010; from FL listening, Pavia et al., 2019; and from watching FL television, Rodgers & Webb, 2020).

In turn, planned word learning occurs when teachers decide that specific FL words should be acquired by students and select appropriate classroom activities through which these words can be practised and learnt. Intentional word learning thus refers to teacher-planned words and "activities in which the purpose is to learn vocabulary in exercises such as cloze, matching, sentence production, and flash cards" (Webb, 2020: 226). Again, as a yardstick for acquisition, the learning rate for planned word learning is virtually unlimited. A recent meta-study by Webb, Yanagisawa, and Uchihara (2020: 727) showed that learners, when using word lists or flash-cards to study new words, on average learn one new word for every minute they spend studying. This rate is achieved when students are tested immediately after their study sessions. But even if they are tested in a delayed test (i.e., two weeks after studying), the learning rate from word lists or flash-cards is still two new words for every three minutes of study time (Webb et al., 2020: 728).

Both unplanned and planned word learning are part and parcel of any FL classroom. Teachers will make use of intentional word learning to prepare students to carry out specific tasks (e.g., make a leaflet), discuss topics (e.g., climate change), or other (e.g., analyse a poem) in the foreign language. Here, they will rely on the teaching of new words which are necessary (or at least helpful) to perform the task or discuss the topic. Typically, teachers find these task- or topic-specific words in the vocabulary section of the coursebook or in specialised vocabulary collections, such as *Words in Context* (Carleton-Gertsch, 2013). In addition to such deliberate teaching, unplanned word learning takes place automatically in classrooms with any FL activity that students are engaged in. Learners, whether they intend for it to happen or not, will constantly acquire new vocabulary that is part of their FL reading, FL listening, or FL viewing.

In drama teaching, the earlier research literature has strongly emphasised unplanned word learning through drama activities in the classroom. Here, the basic assumption, which is found across a wide range of FL drama articles, is that students acquire new vocabulary implicitly while they take part in contextualised drama activities (cf. Kurtz, 2008: 422-423; Giebert, 2014: 141; Surkamp & Elis, 2016: 6). Elis (2016: 52), for instance, describes this rationale for unplanned word learning through drama as follows: "The acquisition of new linguistic structures [i.e., grammar and words] takes place holistically and embedded in a meaningful drama-pedagogical context and is usually linked to spoken language, movements, and facial expressions" (translated). As shown above, this assumption is fully supported by empirical research on implicit word learning through FL reading, FL listening, and FL viewing (Brown et al., 2008; Pellicer–Sánchez & Schmitt, 2010; Pavia et al., 2019; Rodgers & Webb, 2020). However, it is also true that, for implicit word learning to occur, learners need to actually encounter new FL words in their drama activities. Here, it is not obvious whether the vocabulary input that classmates bring to, for instance, a drama dialogue does in fact contain any new words, since the learners' own word knowledge is typically limited. In this case, teachers, if they want unplanned learning to take place, will have to consider other, systematic ways to insert new FL words into a drama activity (e.g., via the drama script, via teacher talk, or via scaffolding of new words, as described in Kurtz, 2008).

At the same time, while unplanned word learning has been foregrounded, FL drama research has paid little attention to planned word learning and has rarely engaged with the question of how to deliberately teach new vocabulary to students (Giebert, 2021: 121). Among these earlier suggestions are Walter (2014), Elis (2015), Cannon (2017), Kalogirou et al. (2019) and Giebert (2021). These articles represent the current state of research on planned word teaching in the drama classroom and will briefly be outlined below.

Maik Walter (2014: 239-241) proposes the method of scene painting. Here, the words to describe a room or other scenery can be taught to intermediate or advanced learners. The teacher 'paints' a fictional space with her body, while describing the objects in this space (e.g., a doctor's surgery): "There are four white chairs with yellow cushions and without armrests. Behind the chairs, there is a wall with a picture of the Berliner Reichstag. There

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is a glass table with last week's newspaper on it. [etc.]" Once the setting is prepared, a coursebook dialogue is inserted: "A [doctor]: Hello, Mr. Aigner. What seems to be the problem? B [patient]: Well, I have a bad cough and a sore throat. [etc.]" As an evident problem, the room is not referred to again in the dialogue, so that the new words are not repeated. It is therefore uncertain to what extent students will acquire them.

Franziska Elis (2015: 104) describes two activities for younger FL learners. In the first method, students are standing in a circle. A new word is introduced that students pass around the circle (e.g., *shirt*). The passing can be stopped, its direction changed, or the word is 'thrown' across the circle. The word is spoken out loud in different emotions, volumes, and intonations. Then, the teacher introduces a second or third word which learners pass around simultaneously. The repetition ensures that students commit these words to memory. In a second method, learners exchange objects with their classmates, which can be real objects or drawings on paper (e.g., *key*, *ruler*, *scissors*). On their first exchange, they say: "This is my key". After that, "my" is replaced: "This is Laura's key". As before, the vocabulary is repeated frequently and therefore learnt. As a difficulty, it is not obvious how vocabulary for anything other than a noun-type object could be taught in this activity.

Anneliese Cannon (2017: 396-402) describes a statue activity for intermediate and advanced learners, which aims to teach formal, academic vocabulary to students. In the activity, learners work in pairs: One student has the role of a sculptor, the other one is a statue. First, the sculptor finds a suitable position for the statue, then she writes a formal speech about what the statue represents, what material it is made of, its location, etc. (e.g., a Buddha statue made of sand). To write the speech, the sculptor receives a handout with academic vocabulary and phrases (e.g., "notice how…", "this represents…"). In their final speeches, some students made use of the words and phrases from the handout, while other students did not. The reason is that some students simply did not require any of the expressions from the handout to fully express their ideas (Cannon 2017: 399-400).

Kalogirou, Beauchamp and Whyte (2019) conducted a control-group study on planned word teaching and drama with primary school learners of Welsh. The target vocabulary consisted of 21 Welsh words and 3 expressions of like/dislike on the topic of food. While

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the control group used slide presentations on a whiteboard, the drama group used the new words “in various drama contexts, such as drama games (e.g. dance with props), dramatized settings (e.g. supermarket scene), [and] film-making (e.g. online video clip creation using iPads)” (Kalogirou et al. 2019: 336). The study showed that learners in the drama group outperformed the control group in terms of word retrieval (i.e., naming pictures), controlled production (i.e., using words in sentences) and free production (i.e., improvised role-play). While this is valuable empirical support in favour of drama-based word learning, the authors do not give a more detailed account of their drama activities than the information above. This makes it difficult to reproduce these drama activities in other classrooms.

Stefanie Giebert (2021: 120-124) finally proposes a role-play activity to teach formal, academic vocabulary to intermediate and advanced learners. In the role-play, students actively use words that were introduced over the previous classes (e.g., *warranty*, *defect*, *liable*). First, students are given a corresponding word list and a scene prompt (e.g., a customer buys an electronic device from a sales clerk). Then they write out a dialogue that contains a minimum number of these words, and finally perform their role-play in front of the class. To ensure that the words are repeated frequently, the scene prompt is open to audience interaction (e.g., the boss is meddling with the sale). Learners in the audience have vocabulary cards, with the same words, that they inject into the role-play dialogue (boss: “Have you told him about the extended warranty?”). Also, the audience has to listen out for all words on the word list. After each performance, the teacher asks which list words they have spotted, which ensures another repetition of the academic vocabulary.

After this state of research for planned word teaching in drama classrooms, I would like to suggest a new drama-based method to broaden the range of available teaching methods: the Word Gap Task.

The Word Gap Task

The Word Gap Task (WGT) is a drama-based activity which teachers can use for planned word learning. It invites learners into a make-believe scenario that contains a task. This task is designed in such a way that students have to make use of a planned set of words. In other words, the WGT can be used to teach a deliberate set of words, for instance, from an academic word list, a coursebook, or a vocabulary collection. The Word Gap Task therefore refers to a task whose gaps are words that the students have to contribute. Or, more simply perhaps, to a task with (deliberate) word gaps.

The below Table 1 gives a short overview of the planning and teaching of a WGT. The following paragraphs will describe the planning and teaching steps of a WGT in more detail. The teaching steps will be further illustrated with an example for A1-level EFL learners (*The nasty giant*), to make the account easier to follow and more appealing.

Planning a WGT	Teaching a WGT
▪ Choose 10-12 new words ▪ Create a task that requires the use of these words; make the task instructions narrow ▪ Put the task into a make-believe scenario (everyday/fantasy/future) ▪ Write model phrases that students would use in the task ▪ Add a voice and body warm-up (before) ▪ Add reflection questions (after)	▪ Tell students about today's task ▪ Put on (or: write down) the new words ▪ Explain the new words via L1 and pictures ▪ Students repeat them in chorus ▪ Voice and body warm-up ▪ Introduce the scenario and task ▪ Show the task once using the model phrases ▪ Students carry out the task in pairs or triplets ▪ Students present their task results ▪ Short reflection round

Table 1. *Steps in planning and teaching a Word Gap Task*

Planning a WGT

How then can a WGT be planned for learners in a FL drama classroom? First, the teacher needs to select the new words that she wants the students to acquire. As discussed, this vocabulary may come from an academic word list, a coursebook, or a vocabulary collection. For a WGT, 10-12 new words seem reasonable, since more words cannot usefully 'fit' into a single task. Then, the teacher designs a task that will require the students to use these 10-12 new words. Here, the teacher deliberately creates a "communicative emergency situation" for learners, "in which they have to act with language" (Tselikas, 1999: 28; translated). The language to fill this emergency situation are the new words that were planned for by the teacher. This is why the task instructions ought to be narrow rather than open-ended and strongly suggest the use of the new words (which is easier said than done). After that, the task is put into a make-believe scenario, which may be from everyday life (e.g., home, school, city/town), a fantasy world (e.g., fairy tale), a future world (e.g., space station), or else. Finally, the teacher adds a suitable voice and body warm-up before the acting (see for warm-up collections, Farmer, 2009; 2012), and a series of reflection questions after the acting.

Teaching a WGT – An example for A1-level EFL learners

The following example illustrates a WGT for EFL learners at the A1 level. In Germany, typical A1-level EFL learners would attend 5th grade and be 10-11 years of age. Although students learn basic English terms in primary school (e.g., colours, clothes), 5th grade is usually the first year of studying English as a fully-fledged language. In the teaching example, the EFL words to be learnt are pieces of furniture, which is a typical A1-level word field: *bed*, *desk*, *chair*, *bookcase*, *wardrobe*, *poster*, *curtain*, etc. When teaching *The nasty giant*, the teacher first tells the students about the upcoming activity: “Today, we’ll meet a nasty giant! So we need to be well prepared.” She then displays the new words (“Let’s look at some words that can help us.”), each with a suitable picture, on an interactive whiteboard: *bed*, *desk*, *chair*, *bookcase*, *curtain*, etc. Since these words are still unknown to the learners, she explains the meaning of each new word via the L1, or shared classroom language. Here, “the use of the L1 to explain vocabulary actually frees up more time for target-language use” (Ur, 2022: 31) in the later part of the activity, when students actively produce these words themselves. Then, prompted by the teacher, the learners repeat each new word in chorus to ensure that they pronounce all words correctly. This is followed by a warm-up for the voice and body to loosen up the students for the acting part. After that, the teacher introduces the drama scenario: “A nasty giant has caught you, and he has brought you back to his cottage. In his cottage, he has all kinds of furniture [points to whiteboard]. His furniture is also huge [gestures].” – and the task within this scenario: “The giant has gone outside to get some vegetables for his dinner [points to students]. You quickly need to find a place to hide!” The teacher then models the task using the new words to give the learners a clear idea of what they are supposed to do: “Quick! Where can we hide? Under the chair? In the bed? Behind the curtain? In the wardrobe? etc. [she pretends to hide in giant furniture]". In pairs, students then carry out the task themselves in line with the teacher's example. Here, the learners will actively produce the new words, which are used in chunks rather than in isolation. Also, the word learning takes place in a drama setting, so that students use the new words in an authentic, meaningful context (Elis 2016: 52). Moreover, they will hear and produce the new words repeatedly, so that they are committed to memory. Finally, some pairs present their version of the task to the learner group. Here, a suitable observation question would be: "Where did they hide?", which will again prompt the use of the new words in the answers. To finish, the teacher concludes with a reflection round: "Was this a difficult task? What was difficult about it?" The learners comment on either the acting, the new vocabulary, or other difficulties they may have encountered in the activity. This will show which words have been easy or difficult to retain and use, which may inform future teaching. Also, the teacher can highlight the usefulness of drama as a tool for language learning rather than as mere play or pastime (Giebert 2021: 124-125). Ideally, after the WGT has been taught, the learners have acquired (the majority of) the teacher-planned words, since they have had plenty of opportunity to hear and actively produce the vocabulary, both of which took place in a meaningful context and was combined with meaningful gestures.

Limitations

Finally, a number of limitations need to be pointed out for the WGT: Firstly, finding a suitable drama task and scenario for a particular word set may be rather challenging. While this is more straightforward for words on the same hierarchical level (e.g., furniture, clothes, colours, pets, ways of walking, etc.), which can easily be 'lined up' in a single task, it is much harder to find a fitting task for a more diverse word set (e.g., environmental words, words for poem analysis) that still manages to prompt all of those words (e.g., a 200-year-old tree observes the changes in his forest over the decades). Secondly, the WGT may work best for concrete words that allow for a physical interaction in the drama world (e.g., pieces of furniture, ways of walking). If the words are more abstract (e.g., colours, words for poem analysis), it is harder to imagine a scenario in which learners would use meaningful bodily actions to accompany the new words (e.g., a poem's metre is shown by stooping and standing students). At last, since this article suggests the

WGT as a new method for the FL classroom, the word learning outcome of the activity has not been empirically examined. It is thus unclear if the WGT results in a higher learning rate in comparison to a traditional, non-drama-based method (e.g., word lists, vocabulary cards). However, study evidence from Kalogirou et al. (2019), which showed that learners with drama activities outperformed learners without drama activities in terms of word retrieval, controlled and free production, suggests that the WGT could achieve similar outcomes when compared with a traditional activity. Still, conducting a control-group study for the WGT, preferably with different class grades and different word sets to achieve a degree of generalization, would be a worthwhile endeavour for future research in drama education.

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IV. Workshop Reports

Anna-Maria Wiklund Matala & Janya Cambronero Severin

9 The Spark Method

Language learning that lights sparks!

The purpose of the Spark Method is to share tools to enable a creative, safe space where students can develop their communicative competence together with others through drama and theater. The Spark method can be used with students of all ages, languages and language levels. It is based on drama and theater work and exercises – most exercises from the world of drama can be used as language learning exercises. In this article, we will thoroughly explain the six building blocks that make up the entire method.

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Lighting sparks with language

We, Anna-Maria Wiklund Matala and Janya Cambronero Severin founded Teater Aros in 2009 in Uppsala, Sweden. Before we knew we were about to develop a method, we had a two-week summer course for youngsters who had just immigrated to Sweden. They came from all over the world, and spoke different languages. Together we decided to put up a play in Swedish. When the day for the performance came, the audience (consisting of friends, family and teachers) were stunned to see the development these youngsters displayed in their Swedish skills. We started to realize we were onto something… We named it the Spark method, because in the Swedish word “Sprak” (spark) is very close to the word “Språk” (language). And when we work with language, sparks are lighted!

Since then, we have developed the Spark method through drama and theatre exercises. In this article, we will share anecdotes about what we have learned and experienced when working with the method in various settings. Today, we use the Sprak method in collaboration with SFI (Swedish For Immigrants) in four different municipalities, in schools and in theatre groups consisting of both Swedes and international participants. We also use the Spark method when working with asylum seekers. In 2022, we were invited to facilitate a workshop around the Spark method at the Drama Education Days conference in Kempten, Germany.

Group dynamics

The Spark Method consists of 6 building blocks, the first of which is creating group dynamics. The purpose of working with group dynamics is to create the best possible conditions for joyful learning. Several studies (Maslow, 1943, Skolverket 2019, Hamre & Pianta 2001) show that in order for us humans to be able to take in new knowledge, we need to feel safe. Research shows that if we feel scared and insecure, our body and brain lock up and the focus becomes to remove ourselves from what scares us (McEwen, 2007). This is how our 40,000-year-old brain works.

How do we work with group dynamics?

In the Spark Method, we work with group dynamics in different ways. We would like to state that most exercises that students do in groups, large or small, include this first building block. The exercise *Name and movement* may appear to be a presentation exercise, but we claim that this exercise aims to connect the group. In the exercise, we stand in a circle so that everyone can see each other. The task is easy for the vast majority of people, and the exercise is playful and invites laughter.

Name and movement – instruction

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The task is that everyone presents themselves with their name and makes a movement as they say their name. All the other participants repeat the name and the movement and then it is the next person's turn to say their name and do a movement.

Embodiment

To embody is to give something a form by displaying it with your body. Embodiment takes place without the need to speak or to make a sound. You can use embodiment to communicate a thought, an idea, or an entire story. Humans embody things several times a day without thinking about it. By using our body language when we communicate with each other we embody different emotional states and thoughts, which are interpreted by our fellow human beings around us. In the Spark Method, language students access embodiment as a way to explore their physical abilities and to practice using the body as a tool for communication.

Why work with embodiment?

We believe that body, thought, feeling and voice are connected. In our experience, being new to a language, one tends to speak at a low volume, the body tends to make itself small, and one often feels scared or nervous and thinks anxious thoughts. In what way can anyone take in new knowledge when feeling and thinking all this at the same time? For embodiment to serve as a tool for acquiring and consolidating knowledge within the group, it is essential that the group feels confident in using their bodies freely. The work with embodiment requires that you, as an educator, also place emphasis on working with group dynamics.

Language research today is in agreement that learning a new language requires students to immerse themselves in the language (Göksel, 2019; Piazzoli, 2018). The new target language needs to be used in different ways in different contexts. Through embodiment, new knowledge is deepened. By linking body movements to words and sentences, students link the new knowledge to muscle memory. Often, our students forget certain words in Swedish, but we have rarely seen them forget the movement they made together with the word. There are several studies (Pulvermüller, 2005; Glenberg & Kaschak, 2002; Asher, 1969) that show that to succeed in language learning, the whole body needs to be

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activated, because it also activates our brain. When you have fun with others, happy hormones are released in the body, which also helps in learning (Even, 2008).

The Magic pen – Instruction

The task is to portray and mime with the body what kind of object the pen is and what you can use that object for. The pen can become just about any object, both living things and objects that are far from the shape and size of the pen (e.g a puppy!). It is only the imagination that sets the limits. The purpose is to get started with embodiment and to learn new words.

Tip! Use the exercise to practice the vocabulary by deciding a given theme in advance. This could be a theme that you are currently working on, such as shopping, or cooking. The pen can also be exchanged for other "magical items" such as a coffee mug, shawl, a pillow or a trash can. Try and see if other objects result in other word suggestions.

The teacher writes all the words on the white board, and this bank of words can later be used in other exercises.

Voice

Why work with the voice?

When you are new to a language, it is easy to feel a little shy at first. You may be nervous about saying the wrong thing, and the nervousness often leads to not really daring to speak out loud. The voice and the body are connected. This can be clearly seen in the exercise *Name and movement*. When the students are given the task of saying their name and making a big movement, the volume often goes along with it, you say your name out loud together with the big movement. When you then make a small movement, your voice also becomes small and you say your name at a low volume.

When we are experimenting with voice exercises, we have noticed that working with the voice and diaphragm support often produces effects such as increased self-esteem. We encourage students to take their place with both body and voice. The students stand firmly with both feet on the floor and get to feel the feeling of making themselves heard, if only through a rhyme like *Fly ugly fly fly* (flyg fula fluga flyg) but the feeling of saying something so loud that it echoes in the room feels good.

Another purpose of working with the voice is of course to practice the different sounds of the language. For example, vowels like Y and U in Swedish are often difficult to form in the mouth. By using tongue twisters, which are difficult for anyone to say correctly from the start, we want to de-dramatize the challenge of pronouncing sentences correctly. Through tongue twisters, students are challenged to exaggerate lip and tongue movements. In the work with tongue twisters, discussion about how we pronounce words and different language sounds also becomes natural. In working with voice, it is important that the students have space to test and try many times. The teacher can use song lyrics for support, or try using the body and different rhythms to bring out the voice. Dare to be a little crazy and feel free to exaggerate!

How do we work with the voice?

One can easily divide the voice work into three parts: Breathing, abdominal/ diaphragm support and articulation.

Breathing

We usually start voice work by finding our way down to the belly button. This can be found in different ways. One way is to focus on exhaling and emptying the lungs of air, this can be exaggerated by drawing in the stomach while exhaling. You can also push out the air by sounding the exhalation through SSSSsssssss. Then you relax and let the inhalation take care of itself. Here you quickly notice how the diaphragm is activated.

Abdominal/Stomach support

Find contact with the diaphragm support by putting your hands on your waist and sounding short consonants such as: P and K and SHH.

When the stomach jumps a little, you are in contact with the abdominal support. Here we tend to experiment with different sounds with a focus on hard consonants. You can also say different words such as: Hello! Hey! Go! Phew! etc.

Articulation

We use different tongue twisters, and we like to exaggerate the mouth movements and use the whole mouth to form the words. When everyone knows the chosen tongue twister, it is a good idea to try saying it with different emotions and with different volumes. In our work with the voice, we naturally come into contact with words for different body parts, here the voice work also becomes a way of language learning.

The written word

By the written word we mean written text, regardless of how long the text is, regardless of who wrote it. This building block is perhaps not so much about specific types of written text, but more about how we, using the Spark Method choose to use written texts and how we can connect text with embodiment.

We noticed early on how our participants needed to be able to write down the words we worked with during the drama sessions. The students wanted to be able to spell the words correctly and practice, for example, tongue twisters at home. We noticed that pre-written text also gave rise to reflections on language and expression, grammar and word classes without us having planned it in advance. As the students themselves are allowed to ask questions about e.g grammar around a written text, they take responsibility for their own knowledge acquisition.

Why work with the written word?

The purpose of working with the written word is to give students another tool to process new words and create a feel for the language. Reading and writing skills are basics of the language that we need to master in order to cope in society. The Spark Method is not a text-heavy method. We want to offer a broad way of working with language development and the written word fulfils an important function. The students get the opportunity to write down reflections and to be able to look back and discover how their language has developed over time. We all acquire knowledge in different ways and with the help of the written word we gain access to another tool for knowledge acquisition.

How do we work with the written word?

When we work with written text, we start small. Let's return to the exercise *Name and movement*. In order to be able to connect it to the written word, you can write down the adjectives that the students had to create movements for. For example, the adjectives *big* and *small*. In the exercise, the students had to create a big movement and say their name, and a small movement and say their name.

They have been able to portray the adjectives with their body and voice, and now they get the opportunity to see how the adjectives are written: the educators writes them on the board and the students write them in their notebooks. To deepen the written word, the students could now work further with the same adjectives by writing sentences using the adjectives. These sentences can be used in the next exercise where they can form the basis of a staged scene or in an oral performance exercise.

When we use scripts, it is important that we begin the work by jointly investigating what the script is about. We prefer to do this work as a whole group. Here it is important that everyone gets a chance to understand what the script is about, and what is happening. A script simply explains sentences and words that characters say on stage. But why they say what they say and what they do is up to the readers to figure out.

Let’s look at the first lines of the play Hamlet:

> Bernardo: Who's there?
> Francisco: No, answer me! Stand still, who are you?
> Bernardo: Long live our king!
> Francisco: Bernardo?

Questions that start the investigation into what is really happening:

> *Why does Bernardo ask who's there? In what situations is that question usually asked?*
> *How is it that Francisco responds the way he does?*
> *What does the line “Long live our king” mean?*
> *How does Francisco know that Bernando might be called Bernando?*

With the help of questions like these, we can discover what a script is about and answer questions about what is happening and why the characters say what they say. All scripts, all lines, are the result of something happening, a reaction to an action – consciously or unconsciously.

Reflection

Being able to put our thoughts, opinions and feelings into words is something we humans do almost daily. In school students are trained early on to answer questions out loud in front of the class about what day it is, what month it is, etc. – but how often are students trained to reflect?

In the reflection, we try to keep the conversation open without any given answers about what is right or wrong. Here, it is not important that everyone agrees with each other. On the contrary, you as an educator can encourage the expression of different opinions.

Why work with reflection?

In the reflective conversation, the participants in the group get the opportunity to jointly put into words what they have just experienced together. In the conversation, you as an educator get the opportunity to see if the students interpreted the exercise in the way you intended. You get a direct evaluation of whether the exercise produced the result you wanted and/or expected. We connect reflection to language learning by giving the students the opportunity to use different language strategies in the reflection. We use a still-image exercise as an example:

The students are given the task of creating a statue that represents the word *Respect*. This group work requires planning, reflection and feedback. The students can both use the language themselves but also listen to their classmates' ways of using the language. The language strategies linked to the statue exercise can be divided as follows:

The planning phase: where the language is used to reason and plan. The language is sometimes also used to argue and to negotiate. The aim is to agree on a common idea.

The reflection: the students put into words what they think they see when they look at each other's statues.

The narrative phase: the students talk about how they percieved the statue and what they thought it represented. Space is also left here to talk about how the process went.

How do we work with reflection?

In the Spark Method, we use different kinds of reflective conversations. One thing they all have in common is that they happen in Swedish. The spontaneous, short conversation. The longer, descriptive conversation and the more, as we call it, "controlling conversations". What all reflective conversations have in common is that the conversation takes place openly without "right or wrong answers" and where the students have the opportunity to talk, but it is also ok to choose not to answer.

The spontaneous, short conversation always takes place in direct connection to an exercise. For example, after the *Name and movement* exercise, we often ask these questions:

> *How does your body feel now?*
> *Was there any difference in the sound volume when we made a big movement compared to a small movement?*
> *Why was there a difference?*
> *How is it that almost everyone interpreted the big movement this way?*

In order for the spontaneous and short reflection to be successful, it is important that you as an educator are open and curious about what happened in the group during the exercise.

The longer and descriptive reflection is often linked to a longer exercise the students did. Perhaps they have had group work where they prepared and rehearsed something that they showed to each other. Or you have done an exercise with the whole group where something unexpected arose. In this type of reflection, we usually gather the group in a circle so that everyone can see each other. In this type of conversation, it is important that you as an educator also contribute with what you saw during the exercise.

We link the more controlling conversation to a "pulse" exercise: The teacher asks a question that everyone in the group answers. The order of speaking is set by the order in which the participants are sitting in the circle. After each person responds, they ask the question again to the person next to them, until the pulse (the question) has come full circle back to the teacher. In this way, the reflection round also becomes a way to practice asking questions.

Oral presentation

In our experience, speaking in front of people is a fear that many people carry. Nevertheless, most of us have been faced with exactly that challenge. For many, speaking in front of people can feel very intimidating and so difficult that they shy away from doing it. This last building block connects all the others, the embodiment, the voice, the group dynamics, the written word and the reflection.

We saw early on in our work with children who have Swedish as a second language that it was greatly beneficial for them to prepare a performance and to later stand on stage, in front of an audience, and to demonstrate that they learned to master the Swedish language. A challenge that turns into a great victory and is rewarded with applause. Wow!

Why work with oral presentation?

This building block involves the students preparing a performance, with or without acting but where what is said is decided in advance. A performance, within the context of the Spark method, could be as small as saying "My name is…" in front of a group. The students get the opportunity to gain good knowledge of project management as this building block works towards an opening night with clear deadlines. The students get to experience many elements – rehearsal work where it becomes clear that everyone is needed, that it is important to be on time and that you have to respect each other to generate a good working climate. You have a common goal and you can be proud of the fact that together you pulled it off in front of an audience.

An audience can consist of unknown people that we invite to a performance or relatives or another class if we are at school. The point of showing something to an external audience is that it helps the participants feel the importance of taking responsibility – in the meeting with the audience all the building blocks are activated at the same time.

How do we work with oral presentation?

In the work of oral presentation, we educators take a step back and become mentors. Or in theatre language, we become directors rather than drama educators. Depending on the type of student group you have and how much time the students have, the length of the script will differ. Whether the students were allowed to write the text themselves or if they use pre-written material also determines the length of the script.

This is group work, a project work for which the students must take responsibility. Whether they have 2 lessons or 2 weeks, the process is the same:

> *What should it be about?*
> *Where does it take place?*
> *Who are they and what do they look like?*
> *How can we make the audience understand what we want to tell?*

Oral presentation:

> *What do you want to say?*
> *To whom are you speaking?*
> *How can you get the audience to listen attentively?*

We attach great importance to letting the students take ownership of the project, letting them work independently but also inviting them to reflect on the work together and to give and receive feedback. Group work is something that the vast majority of people will benefit from and carry out in their working life. Working with the oral presentation is an excellent chance to practice this.

Conclusion

In order for you to succeed with the Spark Method, you as an educator need to instil calmness and openness in your students. We are all here to learn, so let's make learning as easy and as fun as possible.

We live in a global world and our classrooms are global and filled with languages from all over the world. We have students who all have different needs and learning styles, and

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some students need more support. Let the Spark Method work as a supplement to your regular teaching and let it create sparkles in your classroom.

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Eva Göksel

10 Drama for Listening: Improving our holistic listening skills in digital spaces

A mini-workshop exploring empathetic and embodied listening via Zoom

In this article I reflect on my workshop "Drama for Listening: Improving our holistic listening skills in digital spaces", presented at the online edition of the 2022 Drama in Education Days. Participants were encouraged to explore embodied listening in an online space via drama activities. In a low-stakes safe space, we experimented with selected drama games in order to generate ideas and exercises that could be immediately implemented in our online teaching. As working in digital spaces will likely remain a post-pandemic reality, this workshop focused specifically on using drama to communicate authentically and to listen meaningfully in virtual spaces.

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Listening is more than just comprehension

In the language classroom, the importance of listening can often be diminished, mainly due to time constraints and a lack of specifically tailored teaching material. All too often, a few perfunctory listening comprehension exercises are all that students experience in class as there is no time – nor much precedent – to focus on a more holistic approach to listening. Indeed, as Michael Purdy (1991) points out, we in the western world live "… in a culture that does not give praise for listening, and is not focused upon the importance of listening". And yet – and this idea is not new (see Purdy, 1991) – by focusing on listening as a key component of communication in the classroom, we open up spaces for co-creating understanding between members of the class. In particular, I argue for the importance of listening with empathy, for as Saxton and Miller point out: "To be aware empathically, we need to understand what others are thinking and how their hopes and dreams, beliefs and fears are invested" (Saxton and Miller, 2022: 54). This is important because empathic listening creates an inclusive atmosphere in which every voice matters. This is very much in line with Mary Ann Hunter's plea for the creation of a safe space before engaging in collaborative work in the context of applied performance practice (2008). Additionally, co-creative work in a safe space is particularly relevant for the language classroom, in which learners should be encouraged to speak in, and listen to, the target language.

Listening to co-create

Scaffolding co-creative work in a safe space, in which speaker and listener are equals (see Purdy, 1991), is also highly pertinent in online settings, where listening is often a passive activity by default: Indeed, one simply has to join a lecture, workshop, or meeting on Zoom to experience this. In my own experience, online platforms such as Zoom, seem to (inadvertently) facilitate a speaker-centred approach, where one person does all the talking while everyone else remains passively present with their microphones on mute, and often with their cameras off. (For a counter-proposal to this approach to teaching and learning online, see Göksel and Abraham, 2022). Thus, achieving equality between speaker and listener remains a challenge in classrooms, particularly in online settings where teachers are used, and perhaps even expected, to do much of the talking.

If, however, we were to shape our language classrooms as spaces of co-creation, in which we listen not just holistically, but also empathically, it could indeed bring us a step closer to a more equal relationship between speaker and listener. By signalling the importance of listening playfully, by reflecting on the different ways in which we can listen (i.e. not just with the ears, but also by reading other factors such as posture, body language and

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gestures), and by experiencing the empathic dimension of listening through play, we sensitise learners to the potential of listening both in language learning as well as in daily life. Indeed, as Saxton and Miller remind us, listening is about connection: “This deeper feeling of connection – a whole *body/self-response* that attunes to others – is indicative of deep listening, one of the essential skills, not just in theatre or drama but critical for caring, collaboration, community, and democracy” (2022: 54). If the teacher were to model listening and to engage in play alongside the students, this would surely create a safe space in which to take risks as a language learner. As Brené Brown reminds us:

> Empathy is a strange and powerful thing. There is no script. There is no right way or wrong way to do it. It’s simply listening, holding space, withholding judgment, emotionally connecting and communicating that incredible healing message of ‘You’re not alone’ (2015: 81).

In other words, given that we listen in order to connect to others, to share in their experiences, and to learn from them, emphasising the importance of (empathic) listening as a cornerstone of community building (and thus classroom building) makes sense, especially in educational settings. Indeed, in a 2014 interview with Michael Purdy, Anne Libera, Director of Comedy Studies at The Second City, highlights the transformative power of working with improvisational theatre (impro). Libera emphasises that by improvising, players pay close attention to the nuances of *how* we listen to each other: “…you become aware of the ways in which you can alter yourself so that communication is more effective”. Libera maintains that this experience transcends the world of play to positively impact the players’ everyday relationships. She cites impro participants who have told her that they notice people responding to them differently, for example at work. Thus, by practising holistic and empathic listening through play, a wide range of participants, including actors, students, teachers, and business people (the list goes on…) build community. I therefore argue for the value of including drama and impro games and activities – particularly those that allow us to focus on listening – in language education, as they encourage participants to listen not just with their ears, but also with their whole bodies. Indeed, working with drama invites participants to listen with empathy and with intuition (Göksel, 2021). In particular, I wish to emphasise the important role that drama for listening can play in the online classroom, where “[E]mbodied drama will continue to serve as a mediator between the removed, confined and often solitary digital world and the real and intensely human one to which we are also bound." (Saxton & Miller, 2023: 21). In the examples shared herein, I will focus on playful and empathetic listening, specifically in online spaces.

Experimenting with embodied listening online

The workshop described below explores the potential of using a few simple drama games in the online language classroom, with the aim of creating a fun – and embodied – focus on listening. The idea is to highlight the power of holistic listening (i.e. using the whole body) for teachers and students alike. The class should be able to transfer the kinds of listening practiced with the exercises described below into other classroom activities, including group discussions, presentations, and group work in general. I argue that by making listening a fun and applicable skill, students (and teachers) become more aware of how they do – or do not – listen, whether this be in face-to-face or in online settings. This leads us to consider how we listen in digital spaces.

Passive listening seems to be the default for many of us when we are online. And thus, most would probably argue that teaching and learning online is often a frustrating experience. The barrier of the screen, the challenges of mastering technological tools, as well as battling the fatigue of participating passively for extended periods of time, can make us long for face-to-face settings (see Göksel and Abraham 2022). However, as the online space is likely to accompany our teaching and learning journeys into the foreseeable future, why not focus on the benefits it offers us as well as discovering tricks for communicating authentically and for listening meaningfully in virtual spaces?

While drama in education affords us a playful escape into fictional worlds, it is also an embodied practice (Piazzoli, 2018) that encourages participants to work cooperatively and holistically. Thus, when using drama, participants communicate via kinaesthetic (body), affective (heart), and cognitive (head/brain) channels (Schewe, 1993; Göksel, 2019). I argue that this embodied approach scaffolds better listening for students and teachers alike, particularly as it helps keep participants present in the moment. This is especially valuable when working in virtual spaces, where it is particularly easy to lose focus and to drift off during a meeting, thus becoming a Zoombie (Göksel & Abraham, 2022). The term Zoombie refers to the zombie-like state prolonged screen time can induce, in particular after extended sessions on meeting platforms such as Zoom, Teams, or Google Meet.

Listening is widely recognised as a key skill in curricula around the world, and yet, in language teaching, it is often reduced to a little check box on a long to-do list. Indeed, in my personal teaching experience, out-dated approaches to listening remain present in the language classroom, where it is still likely that students will mainly encounter listening in the form of comprehension questions after listening to a recording, often during a test. This seems to be the extent to which listening is included in the language classroom, although listening comprises a much wider skill set. Indeed, listening occurs every day, for all sorts of reasons, such as to ensure our safety, to communicate with others, and to gather information. Listening at school is practice for listening at work and, as with other skills, such as reading and writing, practice makes perfect. As will be show below, a few simple tips, practiced through play, can scaffold better listening in teachers and students alike.

Thus, in the drama workshop described herein, the participants experimented with incorporating their whole bodies – not just their heads – to listen to each other deeply when working online. In a low-stakes safe space, the workshop participants, mainly drama and language teachers, explored a subset of drama games with the aim of generating exercises that they could use to practice holistic listening in their own classes. Although the time in the workshop was spent testing out only a few small changes in the way we listen through the barrier of the screen, the discussion after each activity was fruitful and generated ideas about how to practice listening in the online language classroom. This contribution does not seek to fully define listening, which is a vast field of study. Indeed Purdy et al. remind us that “the experience of listening is rich and varied and there are many definitions which shed light on its nuances” (2017, 3). Thus, this text aims to explore a nuance of listening in a particular setting – the online language classroom.

Workshopping ‘Drama for Listening’

The following section will describe the 45-minute drama for listening workshop in detail and it will highlight some of the participants’ and the facilitator’s insights. We began with a few simple warm-up exercises that work well both in physical and online spaces: I invited the group to mirror what I was doing with my hands, which I held up in front of my camera. Keeping the movements slow and synchronising both hands helped to keep the group together, allowed them to work together for a few moments as a cohesive group. This short exercise is designed to reduce participants' initial fear of being asked to do a solo performance in a 'drama' space; instead everyone participates and works together as a group. It is also a smooth way to transition from their previous activities and locations into the workshop space. For the second warm-up exercise, the group was asked to *popcorn* (Dawson & Lee, 2019), meaning that they contributed one at a time and in no particular order. This is particularly challenging in online settings, where there is often a time lag due to poor Internet connections. The group attempted to count up to 21, without cutting each other off, nor speaking at the same time. We took a moment after both of these warm-ups to discuss the benefits and challenges of using them in our own teaching, as well as what kind of listening these exercises involved in online vs. face-to-face settings.

The next phase of the workshop offered moments of playful listening as we experimented with two drama games that were shared with me by my colleague Bettina Stokhammer (see chapter 14/pages 181-191 in these proceedings). We began with a variation of the game 'rock, paper, scissors', which Bettina calls 'Huhn, Hase, Hai' (chicken, rabbit, shark). The German name for the game is playful in itself, as it features some fun alliteration, allowing the words to roll off the tongue! We chose to play in English, for as with so many drama and language activities, this game can be adapted to suit different levels of learners in various languages, in face-to-face or in online settings. The two games discussed below require participants to turn on their cameras and their microphones.

Chicken, rabbit, shark

The goal of this game is to reach a non-verbal group consensus about which animal to become. The choices are a) a chicken b) a rabbit or c) a shark. The chicken is represented by placing one's hands in front of one's mouth, palms together with the fingers pointing away to form a beak. The rabbit is represented by holding both hands above and at the side of one's head, to form rabbit ears. The shark is represented by placing one's hands, palms together, above one's head to form a 'fin'. These signs are easy to see even when

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the Zoom screen is crowded with many participants. I suggest that everyone use the Zoom setting 'gallery view' while playing, so that all the participants can be seen on screen simultaneously. To begin playing, the participants are instructed to look down (i.e. away from their screen) while selecting one of the three animals. On the count of three, the group chants 'chicken, rabbit, shark'. They then raise their heads to look at the Zoom screen and to reveal their choice of animal. The participants are given a moment to look at everyone else's choices. They are then asked to decide for themselves (no talking!) which animal is in the majority. The task is then to switch to that animal. This continues for a few rounds until the group is unanimously representing the same animal. The game can be repeated with variations, such as: Only a small group plays while the others watch. Teams compete against each other in a timed event. New animals are selected, or the animals are named in a different language. This game thus contains both verbal and non-verbal elements. The aspect of reading body language and facial expressions is an interesting dimension of this game, as participants try to encourage others to choose their animal, or if a maverick in the group simply will not adapt to the group's choice… These and many other small moments can lead to interesting conversations.

During the discussions in our workshop, the participants, who were mainly language teachers and researchers, shared their thoughts via the chat as well as verbally. They felt that the activity was a good way to practice active listening as well as to observe group dynamics. One participant noted that the activity was: "hilarious, and that relaxes people". Others reflected on the moments of anticipation and tension created by the game, as well as how it helped them to be aware of the potential of the virtual space that they were co-inhabiting with the group. The group discussed how this activity could be used as a teambuilding exercise to help create a safe learning space, while also noting that engaging in the game made them aware of themselves within that learning space. It was felt that playing in the online space "helps us to be in the moment and to be present", thus participants were aware of themselves and of the group. The game was also judged as being helpful for reading the room – who was there and how where they participating and interacting with others at that moment? It was felt that the activity gave the participants, whether they were engaging as teachers or as learners, space to observe and to focus on a variety of things, including other participants, their (own) body language, group dynamics, or on a particular story.

Never has anyone suffered so

Our second activity ‘never has anyone suffered so’ encourages participants to experiment with proximity and distance to the camera/screen, to show and to read empathy on other participants’ faces, and to either blend into the group or choose to stand out for a short solo performance. The game is played as follows: The group is instructed to come up with a light-hearted story about a pet peeve, or something strange or irritating that they recently experienced. The stories can be made-up[27]. I suggest that this game be played in ‘gallery view’ mode, although it might be interesting to experiment with ‘speaker view’ after having played a few rounds.

To begin the game, one person leans in towards the camera, so that their face is framed in the screen. This is the cue that they wish to share a story. In response, the entire group also leans in towards their cameras, to demonstrate empathy and to practice active listening. The storyteller begins with the words ‘never has anyone suffered so’. As the story is being told, the listeners (microphones off) may show their support via various cues: nodding or shaking their heads, rolling their eyes, smiling, and other forms of back channelling. When the story is over, the storyteller repeats ‘never has anyone suffered so’ and retreats from the camera. The group also draws back from the camera and waits for the next storyteller to begin.

This activity led to a lengthy discussion, in which we reflected on the power of showing empathy, both in terms of how that impacted the storyteller, but also how it affected the listeners. When it was pointed out that shy learners could easily sit on the sidelines, we discussed both the benefits and downfalls of this. Opinions varied, as some felt that working in a safe space must allow participants to opt out of a particular activity. Some pointed out that the shy learners were actively listening and participating in other ways, even if they did not choose to be in the spotlight as a storyteller. Others felt the activity could be adapted to make it more inviting for shy learners, for example by working in smaller groups.

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[27] Depending on the type of work being done, it is important to give clear instructions about the kinds of stories that can and should be shared. In this workshop, we purposely chose light-hearted made-up stories, which we soon realized engrossed the listeners just as much as a true or serious story might.

Overall, the group described their experience as “tuning in” to the group and to the moment at hand, which allowed them to focus on key words and key moments. One participant commented that “leaning in is fun” adding that the game activates learning through the affective channel (empathy). Other participants added that “the leaning in means students cannot be on their phones while waiting to speak”, and that “the leaning in elevates the stakes of the story”. Another participant reflected on how this activity broke down the barrier of the screen: “I think movement is the one thing that’s missing the most in online teaching. So, leaning in, moving hands, and head, etc. helps to keep focused while engaging with the words that are being said”.

In addition to the thoughts discussed above, the group collectively came up with suggestions for variations to this game, which I will share here. The group discussed the importance of providing scaffolding for language learners and it was suggested that this game would suit beginners if they were given a clear context in which to apply vocabulary that they had already acquired. For example, the stories should all take place at the beach, at the market, at school, and so on. It was also suggested that it might be beneficial for beginners to first practice playing the game in smaller groups (for example in breakout rooms) before playing with the whole class. It was also suggested that the catchphrase “never has anyone suffered so” could be simplified for beginners, or be given a more positive spin, for example: “I’ve had a bad day”, or “never has anyone been so amused/happy/surprised…”. One participant suggested a variation to practice vocabulary around being ill/injured. The catchphrase is changed to: “I’ve had an accident”. Then the injury is added: “I broke my arm”. The next person then says: “I’ve had an accident. I broke my arm *and* I have a headache.” The next: “I’ve had an accident. I broke my arm, I have a headache, *and* I bruised my knee.”

Additionally, several suggestions involved writing exercises: It was suggested that the stories shared during the game could be incorporated into a larger story. This could then be used, for example, to practice a grammar point, such as the past tense. Such a lesson

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would thus include an embodied approach to creating a story, as well as more traditional classroom methods such as scribing, transcribing, and proofreading a written text. The story could later be read aloud to other classes or to an external audience, to further practice skills such as presenting, reading and listening. Another suggestion was to have the group collectively compose a short story, which would be used as the entry point into the game. All the 'moments of suffering' would originate in or be connected to the group's fictional tale. It was suggested that an element of competition might inspire students: As they listened to their peers, they should select a favourite story, which would then be retold in various ways by the group. It was pointed out, that the choice of such an approach would depend on the group, as it might alienate shy students. Another suggestion, particularly if working online, was to do group work in breakout rooms. Each room would be assigned a different emotion, such as joy, jealousy, awkwardness, etc. The students continue to tell the same stories as they moved to the different rooms, but they would adjust the narrator's emotions according to the room they are working in. Alternatively, it was suggested that students could develop stories in breakout rooms, which would then be shared with the larger group. The larger group must then guess whose story was shared. As a way to practice every day and idiomatic expressions, it was suggested that the group learn a selection of key phrases. These are then shouted/whispered at the end of each story. Examples of these phrases might be "oh, how terrible, how awful, you don't say…" etc. Workshop participants also mentioned enjoying the experience of observing how others reacted and responded to the various stories with their bodies and their use of facial expressions. This lead to a discussion of the importance of learning about, modelling, and practicing "back-channelling" in the language classroom.

There are many ways to listen

In the space of 45-minutes, the participants in this online workshop at the 2022 Drama in Education Days tested out two drama games and considered how these activities and variations thereof could be used in an online language-teaching environment to focus on and practice a subset of listening skills. These included paying attention to elements such as non-verbal and paraverbal communication as well as, for example, experimenting with proximity to the screen. The group explored listening as a holistic, embodied practice,

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which, according to their own observations, allowed them to experience empathy and to connect meaningfully with fellow learners in an online environment. The exercises described herein generated fruitful discussion about the many ways in which we can listen, as well as how we choose to model listening in our language classrooms, particularly in online settings. Furthermore, the participants came up with many creative and innovative ideas for adapting two drama games for their own teaching and learning contexts. We hope that you, the reader, will be motivated to experiment with and to adapt the content that was generated in this workshop in your own teaching contexts.

*The author would like thank her workshop participants for sharing their ideas and expertise at her workshop “Drama for Listening: Improving our holistic listening skills in digital spaces”, facilitated at the 2022 online Drama in Education Days.

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Stefanie Giebert

11 “And did the company fold?” – Assessing oral language proficiency in a process drama

This practice report focuses on evaluating language proficiency within EFL process dramas. In summer 2022 I co-taught a speaking class that included, among other formats, also three process dramas, one of which was assessed as part of a final course grade. I presented these process dramas within the framework of two workshops at the 2022 Drama in Education Days (online and on-site). The workshops enabled participants try out selected activities from the process dramas and invited them to discuss how language learning within a process drama could be assessed. In this report I will look at process drama as an educational format, its potential for language learning and the challenges connected to assessing language learning within this format and describe the three process dramas that I facilitated as part of the abovementioned language class.

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Introduction: process drama for language learning

Process drama has been an established form of educational drama in the L1 classroom for decades (O’Neill & Lambert 1982, O’Toole 1992, Wagner 1999, Booth 2005). One of the first publications to look at process drama for the foreign or additional language classroom is Kao & O’Neill’s Words into Worlds (1998), later Stinson et al. investigated the benefits of process drama especially for oral language production in EFL classrooms (2006, 2007). More recently, for example Hulse & Owens have looked at process drama in Modern Foreign Languages (2017), Piazzoli investigated the use of process drama in the Italian as a foreign language classroom (2018), Göksel inquired into building intercultural competence through process drama (2019), and Baldwin and Galazka published a teacher’s handbook on Process Drama for Second Language Teaching and Learning (2021).

In all of these publications, the focus has not been on how language learning within a process drama could be assessed, as usually participants are encouraged to concentrate on the development of the drama, i.e., the story or plot, and not on language accuracy. In a language class, however, it might be necessary to evaluate students’ linguistic proficiency as this is usually what their grades will be based on.

In this article, I reflect on an EFL class at university level where process drama was used as a teaching format. The students’ language proficiency was assessed and graded as part of the requirements for students passing the course and receiving ECTS credits. This is a practice report of my teaching during the summer 2022, which includes a reflection of how this format could be further developed. I additionally presented and discussed my practice with participants of my workshops at the DiE Days in June 2022, and at the IDIERI 10 conference in July 2022. The teaching of the course at Kempten University of Applied Sciences and the workshops partly overlapped, so that I could integrate some of the insights gained from my first workshop (at the Online DiE Days 2022) into the final, assessed process drama at the university. Additionally, the ideas and insights from the other two workshops serve to adapt and develop this teaching format for future use[28].

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[28] I am also indebted to Dr. Aya Murray who interviewed me about my class at the end of the semester and shared the recording with me, which enabled me to revisit my reflections of July 2022 while I was putting the finishing touches on this article sometime later.

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The «Effective Speaking» class

In summer 2022, I facilitated several process dramas in an EFL class for students at Kempten University of Applied Sciences in Germany. “Effective Speaking” was a 13-week oral communication English class at a level B2 or higher, according to the Common European Framework of Reference (i.e., upper intermediate). Participants came mostly from technical or business programs and received 2 ECTS credits and a passing grade on successfully completing the course requirements. About half of the 12 participants were German, the other half were international students. The course was team-taught by two teachers as it was a new format, and we were experimenting with new content and formats and thus had the chance to brainstorm and reflect together and to include our respective expertise[29]. Before doing process dramas towards the end of the semester, discourse formats that students had practiced in class were presenting, discussing, and debating, and the rationale was that the process dramas would use some of the skills and vocabulary students had practiced in previous lessons, moving from more structured monologic language use to progressively more dialogic and more spontaneous language use. Topics covered during the lessons preceding the process dramas included current issues such as sustainability, fast fashion, discrimination, and greenwashing. These topics were also taken up in the process dramas in order to give students the chance to reuse the vocabulary they had studied.

Participating students had no or little experience with drama and theatre, but throughout the course, small-scale activities had been included to familiarize them with speaking activities that required playfulness (for example, speaking about “nonsense” topics, practicing tongue twisters, etc.), and sometimes movement (name & gesture ice breakers, Boal’s machine activity, etc.), and overall, we put a strong focus on group work and oral communication. Attendance levels were relatively high in this first iteration of the course, so students had become familiar with each other and were comfortable working together in small groups[30]. In addition to the classroom sessions, students had been assigned to study groups to deepen their practice or prepare for upcoming classes – but as the study groups were not assessed, they were not attended by all participants.

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[29] In the second semester we alternated teaching on the course, as two teachers were only justifiable in the pilot phase.

We did process dramas in three consecutive class sessions, with the last one being assessed. This assessment formed 20 percent of the students’ total grade, with the assessment consisting of two parts: the students’ performance in the actual process drama, plus an informal individual reflection that each student had to record as a video. The reflection could also have been done in written form, but we opted for an oral format as the focus of the class was on speaking.

Considerations on assessing language in a process drama

As with many formats of drama in education, teachers and learners have to find a balance between a focus on creative expression and immersion in the world of the drama on the one hand, and a focus on linguistic target structures and language accuracy on the other. As O’Neill cautions, it might be unwise to focus too much on the language, as this counteracts the goal of immersing yourself in the fictional world.

> Of course, it’s possible to have prepared vocabulary earlier, but in my experience that can restore the ‘normal’ classroom context, whereas I would want to suspend it temporarily. If it is felt to be essential, perhaps vocabulary work could take place at another time in the more familiar classroom context. (2025, 17)

As the course we taught was in many ways a “conventional” language class, we decided to partially disregard this advice, as language was the focus and the imaginative and dramatic aspects of process drama had to take second place. Depending on the learning objectives for the class, teachers should keep this in mind.

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[30] One student remarked that he found the course to be one of the most enjoyable classes he had ever attended, so maybe this anecdotal evidence gives a hint towards why students attended. In the second iteration of the course in the following winter semester, attendance was more irregular and there seemed to be less group cohesion and familiarity with each other.

In general, low attendance levels seem to have become common in language classes at this university in the last two years (based on my own experiences and information from colleagues). This might be a late consequence of the pandemic with students having got used to not attending classes as long as attendance is not compulsory.

Of course, this creates challenges for creating suitable assessments, as Kao & O’Neill observe:

> Many teachers feel that selecting or designing evaluation is one of the most difficult aspects of their practice. Any assessment procedure must match closely what has been taught. Because of the dynamic and unpredictable nature of drama activities, constructing meaningful assessments becomes an even more complicated and challenging task for language teachers. (1998, 133)

Marschke remarks that typically – as the focus is on the *process* – process dramas don’t have a product that can easily be assessed. However, he describes how students produced written work that organically developed from the process dramas (2004, 51). In our case, in a course where oral language development was the target, not having a written product was not a problem. But in many cases where a written product is required for assessment, this is relevant.

The other challenge, namely that language accuracy is not normally focused on, Marschke suggests, “can be overcome by a focus on form (Willis 1996, QSCC, 2000) phase attached to the end of an activity” (2004, 10). In fact, in her thesis she outlines how learners would switch between drama-focused and language-focused tasks: After a dramatic context had been built, students went out of role, discussing what language (vocabulary, grammar structures) they would need to act in the fictional situation that had been outlined. Then they went back into role and tried it out. This dramatic phase was then followed by a discussion in how far meaning was communicated successfully and what they might need to change if they had not (completely) succeeded. Sometimes it was complemented by a reflective phase (2004, 59). She does not state if the students then went into role again to enact the scenario. It seems that in this context, a conscious change between in-role and out-of-role phases was successful.

In their advice for language teachers who want to work with process drama, Kao and O’Neill go on to pose the questions of what will be evaluated, when, and how. We used their chapter on assessment as a guideline for designing our own assessment and we found the following answers: The “what” to be evaluated was target vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, pronunciation and delivery (fluency), as well as communicative and reflective abilities. When? These skills would be assessed at four points during the semester, at the end of each format section (presentation, debate, process drama, final presentation). How? As assessment instruments we chose observation of the drama and assessment based on grade descriptors for all the required skills[31]. In addition, we assessed the recorded reflections. Here the focus was mainly on reflective and critical thinking skills and done on a three-item scale (excellent/some/hardly any or no reflective skills)

We already had grade descriptors for presentations and debates from courses we had previously taught, which we used for assessing vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, pronunciation and delivery. To do justice to the specific format of process drama, I reviewed and adapted assessment criteria from O’Neill & Lambert (1982, 145-6) and we integrated those into our grade descriptors.

Out of the list of categories mentioned by O’Neill & Lambert (ibid.), we determined the following points (in bold) robust enough to be assessed in the context of our class:

- **willingness to co-operate with the rest of the group**
- ability to adopt, sustain and develop a role
- **ability to initiate ideas for the group**
- **willingness to respond to and develop the ideas of others**
- **respond appropriately both verbally and non-verbally within the action**
- willingness to take risks and tackle the unexpected
- **ability to reflect and evaluate their own work**
- capacity to see wider implications and to draw parallels between the dramatic situation and the real world

As the focus of the class was on language, role-development and acting were not explicitly taught and not assessed. Combined with criteria geared more directly towards assessing language proficiency and building on the skills students had previously practiced in the course, we worked with the following grading criteria, which derived from our previous experience of teaching oral skills in other classes:

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[31] Grade descriptors are descriptions of levels of mastery expected of a learner to reach a certain grade. For example, to be rated “excellent” in the category of communication and problem-solving students had to fulfil the following requirements: “You were able to establish and maintain rapport with ease. You showed excellent turn-taking skills and engaged others very well. You listened very well, and your eye contact, body language and facial expressions were very appropriate throughout.”

1. Content & key vocabulary:

    - ability to initiate / develop ideas for the group
    - critical / evaluative thinking
    - imagination and originality
    - use of key vocabulary (as covered in the course)

2. Language (grammatical accuracy)

3. Pronunciation & delivery

4. Communication & problem solving:

    - rapport
    - turn-taking
    - responding to others
    - body language, eye contact
    - respond / develop others’ ideas
    - co-operate and use repair strategies

The last aspect had emerged from one of the practice sessions, where we discovered that students needed repair strategies. As it happened, in the practice press conference one student was unfamiliar with vocabulary another student used: one of the journalists asked: “And did the company fold?” (“fold” was on his vocab card and students should have learned the word in class), which prompted the latter student to ask: “what do you mean by that?” and his counterpart had to search for ways to explain that he wanted to know if the company was permanently shut down due to the accident. We then used the second practice session to introduce repair strategies, such as paraphrasing or using analogy.

The students were informed about the assessment criteria in advance, with example sentences that linked back to previous lessons and process dramas (see Appendix). In the classroom we used the term “simulation” to refer to the process drama because this was closer to the students’ lived reality.

The students were also informed that pronunciation, key vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy and general communicative ability would be assessed, and they had access to the grade descriptors.

In order to motivate the students to study the key vocabulary, we asked them after the second practice drama to reflect on their use of target vocabulary. If they responded that they had not used it (much), we asked them consider what they could do to increase their use of it. Some observed that they had indeed not used a lot of target vocabulary, but concluded that this was mainly because they had not revised it. As most students were motivated to achieve a good final grade this apparently prompted them to study the key words and phrases before the assessment – at least we observed an increased use of key vocabulary in the assessed process drama.

As we taught this group of students for only one semester, we did not have the chance to test if they could retain the key vocabulary long-term.

The process dramas

In the following paragraphs the two practice process dramas will be described and reflected on as well as the third, assessed, process drama.

Process drama 1: Accident at the factory

This process drama took up the previously covered topics of sustainability and manufacturing, but introduced a new angle, namely the car industry.

After a vocabulary activity on words related to the semantic field of factories and car manufacturing, students received role cards. Based on that, they were asked to do a guided tour of the factory (with some students in role as visitors (journalists), others as employees) with two students providing a soundtrack of factory noises. The two “sound engineers” had secretly been given the instruction to choose a point in time when they would produce noises suggesting an emergency in the factory.

At the moment of the emergency (signalled by one student making hooting noises), I asked students acting in the factory tour to freeze and, in the resulting frozen image, asked

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them about their feelings (in role) – what did they think had happened, what was their reaction to the accident?

The students then did a role-on-the-wall & hot-seating activity in pairs where they reflected on who they were as employees of the factory (most drama conventions used here were either described by O’Neill & Lambert (1982) and/or Neelands & Goode (2000). In hindsight, it would have been better to do this activity before the factory tour, to warm the students up for speaking, as they were rather inhibited during the guided tour activity.

After that, I acted as a narrator and told the students that rumours had been leaked about an accident at the factory and that the company was going to have a press conference (with the previous visitors now attending the press event as critical journalists). Each student was also given a card with a phrase from the semantic field of “describing success and failure” to be used in the press conference.

Overall, the lesson was partly successful, but far from smooth. The two students who provided the soundtrack by making noises (by using their voices or banging on the table) during the factory visit seemed to be enjoying their task and when they discussed with me what kind of noises they might make they used some of the newly taught vocabulary (hiss, valve, etc.).

The other students struggled with the new vocabulary, and only showed limited willingness to move and act during the factory visit. There was an awkward silence and then one student launched into a monologue while the others stood and listened. I intervened in role as a factory technician and asked them to move on to a different part of the factory at the boss’s request, which prompted another student to also start speaking, but overall this activity seemed challenging for the students.

Most students seemed more confident during the following press conference activity which took place seated around a table, but two (Asian) students were very reluctant to

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participate here[32]. My teacher colleague intervened and non-verbally signalled to them to contribute. One student reacted to the prompt, the other didn’t. This was an aspect for which we would need a safeguarding mechanism for the assessment, as we could obviously only assess students if they spoke at least once. Luckily, during the assessment all students contributed without teacher prompting.

In their reflections of the process dramas, students also commented on how awkward they had felt during the first process drama, but also remarked that things went better with the second one.

Process drama 2: Encounter on an exoplanet

This was very loosely based on O’Neill’s & Lambert’s drama structure “starship” (1982, 212-17). At the beginning of this session, students were given a pre-text in form a letter, informing them about the mission to an exoplanet that they were about to take part in.

As a next step, in two groups (inhabitants of the planet and explorers from earth), students were asked to brainstorm their ideas about the exoplanet. They were given some categories to focus on (e.g. resources on the planet, society structures, etc.).

They were then handed role cards, as explorers or inhabitants (who were assigned an area of expertise). Again, a guided tour took place, but this time each inhabitant partnered with an explorer and showed/explained them a particular aspect of the planet (e.g. agriculture, cultural highlights, education, etc.). This worked better than the earlier whole-group guided tour (in the first process drama), as the students only had to talk to one another and they had also been assigned a topic to speak about. They were also allowed to do this activity sitting down if they wanted to.

Afterwards, inhabitants and explorers met again in separate groups to compare what they had learned from the others (what is the planet like? What are the intentions of the

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[32] This might have been due to their cultural background, as we knew that in their schooling in South Korea, the focus in English lessons had been very heavily on grammar and writing, with little or no oral communication. It might also have had to do with personality or individual language learning ability, as the third Korean student contributed with no difficulty. In general, in culturally heterogeneous classes, teachers will need to be mindful of cultural differences and different expectations of how to act in the classroom.

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explorers?), so that the whole group and the teachers could learn how the participants had developed the world of the drama.

As a final activity, the teacher narrated that some time had passed, and the inhabitants were sceptical about the peaceful intentions of the explorers. They would call a meeting to decide what they would do with the explorers. In this activity, students were supposed to use their skills from the sessions before the process drama sessions when we had practiced discussions to reach a decision.

It seemed overall that students were becoming more comfortable with the requirements of process drama (acting in role, moving in a fictional scenario), even though some took to the less realistic Sci-Fi scenario a lot easier than others.

Assessed process drama: Fashion company

The final process drama was set in a fashion company about to launch two new fashion-lines. In two groups, students brainstormed the target group for each line, discussed in how far these clothes were sustainable (not assessed). They were also asked to create a very short scene (“TV advert”) of about 10-30 seconds that was to appeal to their chosen target group (not assessed).

The students decided that their target group were young urban people interested in sustainability and that organic, recyclable material (e.g. banana skins) would be used in the manufacturing of these clothes. They came up with short scenes and showed their “adverts” to the class. These two activities were not assessed but served as a lead-in to the topic and as a drama warm-up. The students appeared to enjoy doing them.

I then narrated that rumours were going around, accusing the company of greenwashing and that the management board had organized a press conference to speak with representatives of the media. Students were randomly given role cards (PR-officer, textile engineer, journalist) and thus divided into three groups.

Before the press conference, they had to discuss what they were going to tell the journalists (group 1 and 2: PR officers and textile engineers in separate groups) and what questions they could ask to find out what was really going on in the company (group 3: journalists).

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Students then held the press conference. Overall, they seemed reasonably comfortable and carried out this task with some confidence. There were moments, however, when the two groups who had been nominated as employees of the fashion company, were confronted with the fact that the other department was not behaving as expected. They then had to react quickly in order to continue the drama, and the students remarked on this in their reflections[33]. As observed before, students did use a lot more target vocabulary in this process drama than in the previous ones.

Conclusion

In contrast to other applications of process drama, our success criterium was if students made progress in applying certain linguistic target structures, as this was the focus of this language class. It was also interesting for us to see if students used soft skills such as listening and establishing rapport, and how critically they were able to reflect on course contents and on their performance, but this was only a side aspect in the assessment. While we were also curious to see how successfully the dramas went overall (were the students engaged, were characters believable, etc.) and how the group developed, we did not assess these aspects explicitly.

The process drama structures used for process drama 1 and 3 were developed further at conference workshops, as stated in the introduction. For example, special attention was paid to developing vocabulary or language that can be used in a situation of crisis or conflict (such as hedging language), but I have not had a chance to use them in class since then as the class was discontinued because both teachers were employed on temporary contracts. While there is room further refinement, I would, however, conclude that the “Effective Speaking” class showed that process drama can be used successfully as a teaching and assessment format in higher education language classes.

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[33] In fact, I included this explicitly in the role cards in conference workshops based on the same drama structure to create dramatic tension: PR want to gloss over the problems while the technical department wants to be transparent – no side is aware of this as they go into the press conference.

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Appendix

1. *Assessment information for students*

The following information was given to the students ahead of time (ca. two weeks before) in preparation for the assessment.

> Think about how you can use language in a simulation. Typical situations are listed below (example sentences are in brackets):
>
> - create and control the situation (e.g.: "There's been another accident! What can we do?")
> - regulate the activity ("Who volunteers to show the visitors around?")
> - define the roles ("We have lived here for a long time – we can tell you how to survive in this environment.")
> - bind the group together ("We must decide how we will navigate in this unknown space!")
> - deal with conflict ("I don't agree with your view but we have to arrive at a compromise quickly.")
> - use repair strategies if there are communication problems (for example "what you drink out of a bottle" or "something like water", "the opposite of something dry", if someone doesn't know the word "liquid")

typical categories of language used in a simulation (practiced throughout the course):

- describing past experiences
- instructing and explaining
- logical reasoning, convincing, persuading
- planning, predicting, deciding

2. *Reflection task for students*

1. Briefly describe what happened in the simulation and what kind of choices you made in your different roles? How did your decisions affect the other participants? Give examples.
2. How did you feel during the simulation?
3. Overall, what do you think went well?
4. Overall, what did not work so well?
5. How does the simulation compare with the previous simulations? Did you feel more/less comfortable?
6. How did you use functional language for presenting and discussing? If you did not use any functional language, why not?
7. Did you use any of the key vocabulary covered during the semester?

Try to speak for about 3 minutes.

Brigitte Hahn-Michaeli

12 Bilder zum Leben erwecken und darin (eine) Geschichte entdecken.

Wie gelangen wir vom Bild zum Text und dadurch zur Textproduktion und –interpretation? Bilder eignen sich ausgezeichnet als Inspiration zur Deutung und zum (Er)finden von Geschichten. Wenn diese Geschichten über das Schreiben und Erzählen hinaus von den Lernenden aktiv dargestellt werden, kann das aktive Texterleben zu einer kritischen Reflexionsphase der Textinhalte führen.

Die Geschichte handelt von zwei Brüdern, die harmonisch zusammen leben und beste Freunde sind. Doch eines Tages geraten sie über eine völlig unsinnige Frage in einen schrecklichen Streit. Dieser Streit führt dazu, dass sie eine riesige Mauer zwischen ihren Grundstücken bauen. Erst nach vielen Jahren wird die Existenz dieser Mauer von den Nachkommen hinterfragt und letztendlich abgerissen.

Durch die Einbeziehung von Elementen des Processdrama wird ein Lernumfeld ermöglicht, in dem die Lernenden und die Lehrperson gemeinsam in einer imaginären, dramatischen Situation handeln und reflektieren.

Die Einheit kann sowohl im Präsenzunterricht als auch im Online-Unterricht durchgeführt werden. Für beide Rahmenbedingungen werden entsprechende Unterrichtskonzepte vermittelt.

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Vorüberlegungen

Streitigkeiten sind ein allgegenwärtiges Thema, Konflikten begegnen wir ebenso im privaten Leben wie auf der politischen Bühne des Weltgeschehens. Zum Glück resultieren diese Unstimmigkeiten jedoch nicht immer im Entstehen von Mauern und Grenzen, wie es in dem Buch beschrieben wird, auf dem diese Unterrichtsreihe im Fach Deutsch als Fremdsprache basiert. Die Zielgruppen, mit denen dieses Projekt sowohl im Präsenz- als auch im Online-Unterricht durchgeführt wurde, waren Studierende des Technion, der Technischen Hochschule in Haifa, Israel. Sie lernen DaF als Wahl-Pflichtfach (3 UE wöchentlich) und das Lernniveau entsprach der Stufe A2/B1.

Vorab noch kurz einige Anmerkungen zu den Übersetzungen (Deutsch, Englisch, Arabisch) des Buches und den daraus entstandenen musikalischen Kompositionen. Der israelische Komponist Avner Dorman hat die in Versform geschriebene Geschichte „Uzu und Muzu aus Kakaruzu“ von Ephraim Sidon musikalisch interpretiert und zusammen mit Yuval Rapaport entstand die deutsche Übersetzung. Im Rahmen der NDR-Familienkonzerte wurde das Werk 2014 von dem NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester aufgeführt. Im gleichen Jahr hat die Phoenix Symphony in englischer Übersetzung und mit Kompositionen von Beethoven das Werk von Sidon inszeniert. Somit ist der Einsatz des Buches nicht nur auf den DaF-Unterricht beschränkt.

Die Parabel „Uzu und Muzu aus Kakaruzu“ von Efraim Sidon mit den Illustrationen von Yossi Abulafia, erzählt die Geschichte von zwei Brüdern, die harmonisch zusammenleben und beste Freunde sind. Doch eines Tages geraten sie über eine völlig unsinnige Frage in einen schrecklichen Streit. Dieser Streit führt dazu, dass sie eine riesige Mauer zwischen ihren Grundstücken bauen. Erst nach vielen Jahren wird die Existenz dieser Mauer von den Nachkommen hinterfragt und letztendlich abgerissen.

Inspiriert von dieser Parabel und vor dem Hintergrund der politischen Situation in Israel, in der sich nicht zwei Brüder, sondern zwei Völker unendlich streiten und riesige Mauern und Grenzen diese Menschen voneinander trennen, sollte diese Unterrichtsreihe neben der Sprachvermittlung und dem aktiven Texterleben einen möglicherweise ‚sanften Impuls‘ zur Reflexion über die eigene Realität vermitteln. Die 700 km lange Grenze, die den jüdischen Staat und die von Israel besetzten palästinensischen Gebiete trennt (dort leben etwa fünfeinhalb Millionen Palästinenser) wird weitgehend ignoriert. Die mehr als 140 km lange Mauer, die die Stadt Jerusalem in einen jüdischen und einen palästinensischen Sektor teilt, wird als notwendige Gegebenheit akzeptiert und die 60 km Grenze, die die Palästinenser in Gaza wie in einem Ghetto einschließt, betrachtet man als eine erforderliche Notwendigkeit.

Die überwiegende Mehrheit der Israelis lebt vor dem Hintergrund dieser Tatsachen, verschließt jedoch die Augen und schweigt. Der Autor Ephraim Sidon lässt jedoch seine Stimme verlauten und schweigt nicht. In seinem satirischen Text mit den einfallsreichen Charakteren Uzu und Muzu, geschrieben in humorvoller Reimform, vermittelt er eine starke Moral, die zum kritischen Denken inspiriert. Dieses Werk als Grundlage für die Projektarbeit mit den Studierenden könnte möglicherweise die Voraussetzung zur vorsichtigen Annäherung an das in Israel brisante Thema schaffen. Es sollte keinesfalls der moralische Zeigefinger erhoben werden, vielmehr der Versuch erfolgen, einen Denkanstoss zur eigenen Reflexion zu geben.

Planung und Durchführung der Unterrichtseinheiten

Die Bilder liefern die Ausgangsimpulse und leiten über in eine Reihe von dramapädagogischen Übungen, die an ein performatives Gestalten des Textes heranführen. Durch das aktive Texterleben soll eine Annäherung an mögliche kritische Reflexionsphasen der Textinhalte erreicht werden. Inwieweit dieses Ziel erreicht werden konnte, soll am Ende des Workshops erörtert werden.

Die Einheit kann sowohl im Präsenzunterricht als auch im Online-Unterricht durchgeführt werden. Für beide Rahmenbedingungen werden entsprechende Unterrichtskonzepte vermittelt.

Im Folgenden wird der Workshop, der im Rahmen der Dramapädagogik-Tage 2022 an der Hochschule Kempten durchgeführt wurde, in den einzelnen Phasen in seiner Planung und Durchführung beschrieben. Zeigten sich im Laufe der Veranstaltung des Workshops Schwachstellen oder Möglichkeiten zur Verbesserung der Unterrichtsschritte, erfolgt im Anschluss an jede Übungseinheit eine kurze Reflexion.

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Die Phase des Ankommens

Während die Studierenden im Raum ankommen, spielt im Loop die Musik von Pink Floyd „Is there anybody out there” (beginnend bei ca 1’20 bis zum Ende des Liedes) und über den Beamer läuft eine Abfolge von ausgewählten Bildern aus dem Buch. Die visuellen und akustischen Impulse im Hintergrund bereiten eine stimmungsvolle Atmosphäre für die darauffolgende Zusammenarbeit und sind wichtiger Bestandteil für die Einführungsphase.

1 “HERZLICH WILLKOMMEN IN KAKARUZU”

Die Lehrperson begrüßt die Teilnehmenden und teilt mit, dass sie für alle etwas aus ‚Kakaruzu‘ mitgebracht hat. In einer kleinen Kiste / Tüte sind unterschiedliche Objekte doppelt vorhanden. Jeder nimmt ein Objekt und sucht dann seinen / ihren Partner*in mit dem gleichen Objekt. (Als Objekte eignen sich Steine, Muscheln, Schlüssel ......, vorzugsweise Gegenstände, die einen relevanten Bezug zum Textinhalt haben)

2 Der beste Freund / die beste Freundin

Die Teilnehmenden haben sich in Paaren zusammengefunden. Es erfolgt die Anweisung: „Ihr beiden seid beste Freunde / Freundinnen, definiert ganz kurz warum. Beginnt jeden Satz mit:

Du bist mein*e beste*r Freundin, weil ....“

Jede*r spricht 30 Sekunden ununterbrochen zum Partner/zur Partnerin und erklärt, warum die andere Person beste*r Freund*in ist (LP stoppt die Zeit und ruft „Wechsel“).

3 Der Konflikt

Lehrperson: „Eines Tages passiert aber etwas, was euer gutes Verhältnis in seinem Fundament total erschüttert.“

Jede*r definiert still für sich, was passiert ist. Zwei Teilnehmende werden nun gebeten, sich vor dem Rest der Gruppe Rücken an Rücken zu stellen. Jede*r ist still bei sich, sammelt sich und vergegenwärtigt sich den Konflikt ohne zu sprechen. Wer sich bereit fühlt zu beginnen, dreht sich ohne Absprache langsam zum Partner / zur Partnerin um,

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schaut ihn / sie an und beginnt zu sprechen. Der Konflikt wird verbalisiert und die andere Person reagiert darauf. Mehrere Paare präsentieren so ihre Improvisation vor dem Rest der Gruppe.

Die Übung beinhaltet eine sehr starke Dynamik. Man wendet sich einer Person zu und kann nicht vorabsehen, mit welchem Konflikt man gleich konfrontiert wird. Die Sequenz sollte jedoch kurz gehalten werden. Der Konflikt wird ausgesprochen und die andere Person reagiert knapp darauf, vielleicht nur mit einem Satz. Wichtig ist hierbei auch der Einsatz von Körpersprache und Mimik. Ein verzweifelter Gesichtsausdruck, ein Stammeln von Worten, Wut, Lachen, alles ist erlaubt und trägt zur Spannung der Situation bei.

Rückblick:

Während des Konferenzworkshops erfolgte bei der ersten Präsentation ein längerer Austausch zwischen den beiden Teilnehmenden. Es wurde argumentiert und der Dialog geriet zu sehr in die Länge und verlor dadurch an seiner ursprünglichen Kraft, dem Überraschungseffekt und der spontan darauffolgenden Reaktion. Wichtig ist also bei dieser Übung zu bedenken: In der Kürze liegt die Würze. Den verbalen Austausch knapp halten und mehrere Versionen von unterschiedlichen Lernenden kurz anspielen lassen.

4 Bilder in eine Reihenfolge bringen

(Jamboard für Arbeit mit Zoom)

Lehrperson: „Hier haben wir auch beste Freundschaft, die im Streit endet. Wie ist denn die Reihenfolge der Geschichte?"

Auf dem Boden werden die Bilder verteilt (oder in größeren Gruppen mehrere Bilder-Sets). Die Gruppe soll kurz den Verlauf der Geschichte anhand der Bilder rekonstruieren und die Bilder in die richtige Reihenfolge bringen. Im Forum wird dann über die Entwicklung der Geschichte berichtet.

5 Bilder interpretieren

Jede Kleingruppe erhält ein Bild aus der Serie und soll dieses nachstellen. Durch Körperposition und Aufstellung im Raum wird das Bild dargestellt. Jede Person soll einen kurzen Satz bereit haben, den er / sie bei Antippen laut ausspricht. Die Bilder können fließend nacheinander von den Kleingruppen in Karussellform dargestellt werden, alternativ dazu auch als Augentheater. Hierbei schließen alle „Zuschauer“ die Augen. Die handelnde Gruppe baut sich auf und nimmt Bezug zueinander. Wenn das Bild fertig komponiert ist, gibt die Lehrperson ein akustisches Zeichen und alle öffnen die Augen und nehmen die Szene wahr.

6 Wortschatz Übung

Lehrperson: „Die folgenden Wörter kommen gleich in einem Text vor. Wie passen die Wörter in Reimform zusammen?“

Es werden Wortkärtchen mit den sich reimenden Wörtern mit der Anweisung auf den Boden gelegt, die Reimpaare zu finden. Die folgenden Wörter wurden vorbereitet:

- Gipfel
- Wipfel
- Zeit
- Seligkeit
- führen
- verlieren
- wahr
- Gefahr
- Land
- Verstand

Rückblick

Der Workshop basierte auf einer deutschen Textgrundlage und war für deutschsprechende Lehrende konzipiert. Da jedoch die Zahl der Konferenzteilnehmenden relativ gering war und auch nicht deutschsprachige Teilnehmende integriert werden sollten, beschloss man kurzfristig, alle Workshops auf Englisch durchzuführen. Somit war diese Übung für nicht deutschsprechende Mitspieler weniger geeignet. Sie konnten zwar die Reimform erraten, verstanden aber nicht die Wortbedeutung. Es wäre unter diesen Gegebenheiten auf alle Fälle besser gewesen, die Textbeispiele aus der englischen Übersetzung zu übernehmen.

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Alternative zu dieser Übung: Menschliches Memory

Bei dieser Übung verlassen zwei Lernende den Raum. An die Gruppe, die im Raum zurückbleibt, werden zwei zusammengehörende Textteile an jeweils zwei Personen (Frage-Antwort, Reimzeilen im Gedicht, ...) ausgeteilt. Die Elemente müssen klar definierbar als zusammengehörig erkennbar sein. Im Kreis stehend erfolgt eine Neuverteilung, damit die Partner*innen nicht zusammenstehen. Die Handflächen werden nach oben ausgestreckt. Nun werden die beiden von draußen reingeholt und beginnen nach dem Prinzip des Memory abwechselnd zu spielen. Sie tippen zwei unterschiedliche Hände an. Diese Personen sagen ihren Satz oder das Wort und die Spielenden finden heraus, ob die Elemente zusammenpassen. Wenn ja, spielen sie weiter. Wenn nein, macht der andere weiter. So müssen alle zusammengehörigen Textteile gefunden werden.

7 Verszeilen in die richtige Reihenfolge bringen

Ein Teil aus der Geschichte (in Zeilen zerschnitten) wird in der Gruppe ausgeteilt. Nachdem Wortfragen geklärt wurden, gehen die Teilnehmenden frei im Raum herum und rezitieren laut ihre Zeilen. Auf Anweisung hin tragen sie dann in der nächsten Stufe ihre Zeilen einer anderen Person, der sie beim Gehen begegnen, gegenseitig vor. Nach einigen Minuten erfolgt die Aufforderung, sich im Raum zu positionieren und eine Aufstellung zu erreichen, die der Reihenfolge der Verszeilen entspricht. Der ganze Vers wird dann mehrmals in der Gruppe laut vorgetragen.

8 Orchestriertes Sprechen. LP = Dirigent, TN = Orchester / Chor

Die ausgeteilten Verszeilen sind mit Buchstaben gekennzeichnet. Es erfolgt die Anweisung der Lehrperson: „Ich rufe Buchstaben auf und ihr rezitiert eure Zeilen. Ich zeige euch wie ein Dirigent an, ob ihr laut oder leise, schnell oder langsam sprechen sollt“.

9 Beat vorspielen als Hintergrund und Text rappen

Teil drei des Textes wird an alle ausgeteilt. Es wird instrumentale Musik vorgespielt, für diesen Text eignet sich am besten eine Rapform, zu der dann alle den Text rappen. Im Internet finden sich viele musikalische Versionen, die sich hierfür eignen.

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10 Bericht über die durchgeführte Projektarbeit

Im Workshop wurde ein Ausschnitt aus einem Videoprojekt der Studierenden des Technion gezeigt, ebenso ein Arbeitsergebnis (PPP) aus dem Online-Unterricht. Aus Zeitgründen konnte jedoch nicht näher auf die eigentlichen Arbeitsergebnisse der durchgeführten Projektarbeit eingegangen werden. In allen Unterrichtseinheiten hatte es sich erwiesen, dass die Studierenden mit viel Freude und Engagement aktiv mitgearbeitet haben. Die Bilder inspirierten zur individuellen Interpretation und zum Vergleich „anderer Mauern". Überraschend war jedoch, dass keine Parallelen zum eigenen Land gezogen wurden. Natürlich wurde die Berliner Mauer als Thema aufgegriffen und war auch Grundlage einer Hausarbeit. Lediglich als in der Videoprojektgruppe am Ende die Mauer abgebaut wurde (die Studierenden hatten zum Höhepunkt des Streites zwischen den beiden Brüdern Lagen von Backsteinen draußen im Freien aufgebaut und diese dann am Ende bei Musik von Pink Floyd „The Wall" abgebaut), fiel in dieser Situation der Kommentar von einigen in der Gruppe: „Wenn es nur immer so einfach wäre."

11 Reflexion

In der Durchführung der Unterrichtseinheit mit den Studierenden und ebenso in dem während der Tagung durchgeführten Workshop hat sich erwiesen, dass sich Bilder effektiv zur Projektarbeit mit jungen Erwachsenen eignen. Besonders wenn der Textinhalt in einen Bezug zur eigenen Lebenssituation gebracht werden kann, empfiehlt sich der Einsatz im Unterricht. Auch Bücher von Janosch, wie „Oh, wie schön ist Panama" oder „Komm, wir finden einen Schatz" wurden in anderen Projektarbeiten von den Studierenden sehr positiv angenommen, bearbeitet und dargestellt.

Im Anschluss an den Workshop in Kempten sollte ursprünglich reflektiert werden, wie und ob die einzelnen Arbeitsschritte den Text und das Thema relevant im Unterricht behandelt haben. Es war ebenso geplant, zusätzliche dramapädagogisch einsetzbare Übungsschritte in der Gruppe zu sammeln. Leider kam es nicht zu diesem wichtigen Austausch, da die Ankündigung der gelieferten Pizzen für die Mittagspause eine magische Wirkung zeigte und die Kolleginnen und Kollegen rasch dem Pizzaduft folgten. Fazit: Hunger und Appetit siegen selbst bei Dramapädagogen über jegliches akademische Engagement. ;-)

Zusätzliche Arbeitsschritte

Die folgenden Übungen wurden im Seminar aus Zeitgründen nicht erarbeitet, sollen hier jedoch als weitere Ergänzungsmöglichkeiten für den Einsatz im Unterricht aufgeführt werden.

Ein Objekt spricht. Augenzeuge eines Geschehens.

Da in diesem Textbeispiel die Mauer eine zentrale Rolle spielt, basiert diese Übung auf einem Stein der Mauer. Ein Stein in der Mauer hat die ganzen Geschehnisse verfolgt und berichtet aus seiner Perspektive. Dieses Vorgehen ermöglicht das Einbringen von persönlichen und unterschiedlichen Stellungnahmen zum Handlungsablauf. Der Stein kann auch von der Gruppe zum Geschehen befragt werden. Jede*r Sprechende beginnt mit dem einleitenden Satz: „Ich bin ein Stein in der Mauer und habe alles gesehen“.

Die Mauer zwischen euch beiden“. Identifikation mit einem Objekt.

In die Raummitte werden einige Steine gelegt. Es erfolgt die Anweisung: „Hier liegen Steine aus dieser Mauer. Nehmt einen Stein und fühlt, dass dieser Stein ein Teil der riesigen Mauer ist, die euch jetzt trennt. Wenn ihr bereit seid, tretet vor und teilt euren Satz / eure Aussage dazu mit.“ In dieser Arbeitsphase bietet es sich an, mit dem Beamer eine Mauer als Hintergrund zu projizieren.

Erzähler und Handelnde

Dieser Arbeitsschritt empfiehlt sich VOR Übung 9 (Text rappen). Es werden Rollen verteilt. Es gibt eine*n Erzähler*in, zwei Brüder. Mauersteine usw. Dem / der Erzähler*in wird der Text ausgehändigt. Während sie / er vorträgt, handeln die beiden Brüder / die Objekte und stellen performativ den vorgetragenen Text dar. Spontan können andere Mitspieler hinzukommen und weitere Personen (Nachbarn / Objekte) repräsentieren.

Anhang: Arbeitsmaterial zur Unterrichtseinheit

(Arbeitsphase 7, Gedicht Teil 1, Zeilen in die richtige Reihenfolge bringen)

A

Weit von hier hinter hohen Gipfeln

Im Dorf Kakaruzu unter grünen Wipfeln

B

Lebten vor langer Zeit

In einem weißen Haus

C

Zwischen roten Blumen

Zwei Brüder in Seligkeit

D

Wir wollen sie einzeln vor Augen uns führen

Der ältere hieß Uzu

Den jüngeren rief man Muzu

E

Uzu und Muzu aus Kakaruzu

Sollten wir nicht aus dem Blick verlieren

F

Die Brüder liebten sich treu und wahr

Dass in Streit sie gerieten war nie die Gefahr

G

Kein Freundespaar gab es im ganzen Land

Das, wie sie, die Seele sich teilte, das Herz, den Verstand

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(Arbeitsphase 7, Gedicht Teil 2, Orchestriertes Sprechen)

A

Aber dann kam ein Tag

Mit Wind und Regen

B

Sie saßen am Herd und starrten verwegen

Die Flammen tanzten höher und freier

C

Da begann ein Streit

So stürmisch wie Feuer

D

Ein Disput, der sich selber hoch heizte

Nämlich, wie man am besten die Beine kreuzte

E

Uzu brüllte und bestand einfach drauf

„Das rechte Bein runter, das linke hinauf"

F

Doch Muzu beharrte mit hochroter Stirn

„Links unten, rechts oben, du hast kein Gehirn"

G

„Du Blödmann", schrie Uzu aus sperrweitem Mund

„Links hoch bis zur Decke und rechts auf den Grund"

H

„Ach Quatsch", sagte Muzu, aus der Nase kam Rauch

„Du bist ein Narr und ein Dickschädel auch"

„Man du bist blöde“

„Und du ein Idiot“

I

„Du hältst dich für schlau, was?“

„Du blöder Despot“

J

„Halt das Maul, bevor mein Arm niedersaust“

„Du willst mir drohen? Auch ich hab ` ne Faust“

K

„Ach ja?“

„Ja“

„Na, dann komm“

„Da“

****

(Gedicht Teil 3 / auch Rap, Erzähler und Handelnde)

Weit von hier hinter hohen Gipfeln

Im Dorf Kakaruzu unter grünen Wipfeln

Ging eine Woche ins Land seit dem Streit

Doch was ist los in der Brüder Haus

Alles sieht dort plötzlich anders aus

Eine Mauer entsteht dort

Halbiert schon das Haus

Trennt Bad und Küche

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Wächst zum Garten hinaus

Schweigend mischen die Brüder Beton

Reden kein Wort, denken nicht an Pardon

Fügen stattdessen mit jedem Stein

Ihren Hass in die Lücken der Mauer ein

Ein Jahr ist vergangen, nun ist es soweit

Eine Mauer trennt die Brüder

Grau, hoch und breit

Ein Bunker für jeden, sie hören sich nicht

Keiner muss ertragen des andern Gesicht

Literatur

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13 Artful Teaching: Drama as Extra-Disciplinarity

A Workshop Report

This workshop focuses on the role of Higher Ed instructors and posits the college-level classroom as a site of explorative extra-disciplinarity. Participants will be invited into our dialogue to discover together and share our experiences concerning working towards genuine inter-/trans-/extra-disciplinary conversation. It is a collaborative exploration of the classroom as the site of possibility where our extra-disciplinary improvisational (im)pulses can live at their fullest and nurture a generation of leaders who think and feel with drama-informed complexity.

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https://dramapaedagogik.de/wp-content/uploads/proceedings2022/final.pdf

Genesis, Context & Authors' Positionality

This Drama in Education Days 2022 workshop was born from a years-long relationship between two friends and colleagues. This relationship started in 2013 thanks to the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning at Brown University. Anna Santucci was a graduate student interested in Patrícia Sobral's work on arts integration in the foreign language curriculum. Since that serendipitous meeting, they have been blurring the lines

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between student and teacher identities and growing together as co-learners. In the spring of 2016, Patrícia and Anna co-taught "Artful Teaching: the intersection of the arts and language acquisition" at Brown University. Patrícia taught the course in the spring of 2014 when Anna took it as a graduate student in Italian Studies and Theater and Performance Studies (TAPS). Before creating the course, Patrícia was often approached by students who envisioned a teaching life and wanted to talk to her about the pedagogical approach she used to teach language, literature, and culture. Patricia created a course for educators who wanted to work with the arts. The first time Patrícia taught the course, there were twelve students – a mix of undergraduate and graduate students in the humanities and STEM. Anna was one of the graduate students. They subsequently had the opportunity to co-teach the course in the spring of 2016 with 24 students.

Patrícia has always lived between cultures. She moved back and forth between Brazil and the United States growing up and then went to college in the U.S. Later, she married into a third culture and spent time working in Mexico. Anna's identity as an interculturally thirsty learner has shaped her journeys throughout her childhood in Italy, where she was born and lived until concluding her BA, her graduate studies in the UK and the US, the beginnings of her professional career in Teaching and Learning and Educational Development in Rhode Island (US), and now her role in Teaching and Learning enhancement in Ireland. Their combined lived experiences shape their collaborative work and how they conceive of Drama as Extra-Disciplinarity, thus informing the design and facilitation of this workshop.

Workshop description

Anna and Patrícia’s workshop at the 2022 DiE Days engaged participants in investigating the college-level classroom as a site of explorative extra-disciplinarity. As theorists and historians of thought increasingly challenge us to question and push the boundaries of disciplinary silos in academic knowledge production (Darbellay, 2015), Teaching and Learning scholars have been advocating for the importance of engaging in interdisciplinary dialogue and inhabiting multidisciplinary pedagogical settings (McKinney, 2013), and for the transformative potential of such dialogically and relationally complex exchanges to transcend disciplines (Santucci Leoni and Nasrollahian

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Mojarad, 2024). We choose here intentionally the term “Extra-Disciplinarity” to highlight the expansive socialization implications of environments intentionally designed to facilitate skills development and professional identity formation situated beyond traditional disciplinary expectations (Riviere & Stewart, 2019). Academic disciplines are ephemeral creatures: as new ideas are born from the supposed ashes of their ancestors, histories and genealogies keep boiling underneath the surface and emerging in bubbles of counterproductive incommunicability. For example, Shannon Jackson's Professing Performance (2004) describes this phenomenon in performance studies elegantly. Why do we "hold" disciplines? When, where, and how do these artificially created divides promote and/or instead prevent productive exchanges of ideas as we navigate the vast sea of knowledge creation? What are the implications for our practice as educators?

We started our investigation during the workshop by presenting the structure of the course we co-taught at Brown University, which focused on what we call the "extra" discipline of Artful Pedagogy: as we questioned disciplinary boundaries (drawing on materials and concepts from literature, linguistics, cognitive studies, education, anthropology, performing arts, visual arts), we came to appreciate the co-creative potential of participatory drama as the sense-making methodology that made this possible. Participants were invited into our dialogue to discover together and share as a group our collectively diverse experiences concerning working towards genuine inter-/trans-/extra-disciplinary conversation within academia. We hope the DiE Days community benefits from this collaborative exploration of the classroom as the site of possibility where our extra-disciplinary improvisational (im)pulses can live at their fullest and nurture a generation of leaders who think and feel with drama-informed complexity.

Workshop outline

Our workshop shared with participants the essential questions in our work by modeling some of its activities in practice (we picked a sequence that we felt could best represent its ethos and signature pedagogies) and then unveiling the "behind the scenes" choices that went into its design. The core trans-disciplinary question was explored through a framing activity that leaned into the remote facilitation space and the Zoom virtual frames through which we were interacting with each other; after playing with the possibilities offered by positioning our bodies with(in) our Zoom frames, we transitioned from experience to language and asked our participants to reflect via independent writing on this prompt: How does your discipline inform the way you look at things? How does it shape your identity? The insight generated from this writing augmented the "thick air" pretext provided by a short text and a poem. The term “thick air” comes from the poet Rick Benjamin, who brings many texts to his creative writing classes as a generative source of inspiration (see course overview below) exploring the notion of home and identity. All these materials then informed a process of collaborative performance creation that occurred in breakout rooms. Before separating into breakout rooms, we showed the YouTube video of "Unforgettable"– a slam poem by Pages Matam, Elizabeth Acevedo, and G. Yamazawa – to give participants a sense of their collective performance. This was followed by a quick presentation of their performance by each group. Finally, we asked the participants:

- What potential did you discover through this co-creative participatory experience?
- How might drama frame extra-disciplinary possibilities in academia?

Interspersed within this debrief of their experience, we offered relevant additional detail from the course we co-taught; this overview was populated and pinpointed by our original students' voices in the form of quotes from their final reflective essays.

Workshop report

We had warmup and community-building activities in the first ten minutes of the workshop. While people were arriving, we asked them about where home was and to put their song of the moment in the chat. We quickly introduced ourselves and told participants that we would be modeling the class with them, and at the end, we would show them a behind-the-scenes view of the activities and projects we do in class. Lastly, we had a Q&A.

After this quick overview of the workshop, we asked participants to share something about themselves that no one could tell by just looking at them and putting it in the chat. Next, participants filled the camera frame and zoomed in and out. Then, we asked them to create a frame with their hands and fill it. While doing so, we asked them to remember the following transition question: How does your discipline inform how you look at things? How does it shape your identity?

In breakout rooms of three, participants told a story about their names – first, middle, or last name. We had already modeled this exercise by telling stories about our names. Each had ninety seconds to tell their story. This activity aimed to delve further into community building and start a conversation about identity and our personal histories.

To create "thick air" we shared with them two generative options:

- short reading – My name: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nzjhYbPFI1KDyCNWpDjbGF2VzUjQikvS/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=114908204548533219134&rtpof=true&sd=true
- poem – Inbetweener: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kbzpGY0lh_RQRV8lScsfNudoNdHKIepM/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=114908204548533219134&rtpof=true&sd=true

After reading or listening to these two texts, participants did some writing of their own with the following prompts (reshaped from a workshop Patrícia had participated in years before):

My name feels like
My name smells like
My name tastes like
My name looks like
My name sounds like

Home feels like
Home smells like
Home tastes like
Home looks like
Home sounds like

Each participant wrote individually. After they finished writing, we showed them the YouTube video “Unforgettable” (2014) as a model for the breakout room activity. It's a video by three well-known performance poets in the United States. After viewing the video, participants were placed into breakout rooms and had to create a collaborative performance piece based on the following "thick air" elements:

- text
- video
- your input
- your frame

After sharing their writing in their group, participants created a performance of their names/homes as group representations. Each group had forty-five seconds to perform for the entire group. We then showed them an overview of our work via a PowerPoint presentation with examples of our activities and projects with our students, including their own debrief of these classroom experiences. We had two last prompts:

a. What potential did you discover through this co-creative participatory experience?
b. How might drama frame extra-disciplinary possibilities in academia?

We finished with a Q&A and invited participants to contact us with additional questions or to continue the conversation.

Conclusion

In saying goodbye to our workshop participants, we highlighted a critical takeaway that surfaced during our debrief conversation about extra-disciplinarity: as both of us authors have the joy of bringing drama into academic spaces that are not used to it, we are constantly reminded of how important it is to own, name, cherish, and share outside of our immediate circles as drama practitioners, the transformational magic of its signature pedagogies (Shulman, 2005) that allow for co-creative exploration of cultural complexity. Our disciplinary epistemologies are a stark example of how our cultures are thick in structuring how we think and behave and yet often invisible to us, like the proverbial water in the fish tank. As drama educators, our disciplinary blind spots originating in habituated practice may frequently prevent us from seeing and articulating the elements that make drama such a powerful space of Extra-Disciplinarity.

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Bettina Stokhammer

14 GET THEM TALKING WITHOUT NOTICING

Workshop Report

Talking is a vital part of language learning. However, students often feel reluctant to speak in the foreign language. One way to break down the barrier of self-consciousness is to use drama games in order to establish a natural communicational context in which the training of oral language skills cannot be detected as the main goal. The relaxed setting drama provides, combined with the fun and the mildly competitive nature of games, allows for a successful use of the language as a tool of quick and easy communication. This paper introduces the reader to the author's favourite games that work.

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INTRODUCTION

I have been teaching English as a foreign language to 10-18-year-old students for 22 years at a secondary school in Vienna (Gymnasium Geblergasse 56). In all these years the most powerful opponent has been shyness. To tackle a language pragmatically on paper is one thing, but to actually use it in conversational settings is another, and it usually turns out to be very challenging. Students tend to be extremely self-conscious when it comes to actually using a new language. However, skills can only develop if one dives into the task, and there are ways of easing the path to communicative success.

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I found that if I want them to put their language skills into practice, I have to trick them a little bit. And the thing that does the trick, is to touch upon their playful side and use the language in a game.

This almost always works. And it works particularly well, if you start at a very basic, easy level, where they see that there is no harm done in participating. If the game then is so attractive that they cannot resist joining, the conversational journey is on track. While the ten-year-olds love the games for their own sake, the older students like the intellectual challenge. All of them appreciate the fact that they can stand up, leave their places, and be physically active.

I would like to introduce you to my most successful games, the ones I come back to on a regular basis. I have picked them up on the road working with drama for more than two decades. Some of them I have adjusted, some of them have adjusted themselves. You might have come across the games yourself, and maybe you played them with a different tweak. Feel free to use them as you please, they are out there to serve their purpose. As they belong to the collective drama consciousness, it is impossible to locate the source, hence there will be no references. You will find versions and explanations of some of the games on the net. I have shared these games with participants of the online 2022 DiE Days and I share them now with you.

MY BASIC RULES

Whenever I meet a group of students for the first time, I always make sure that they follow two basic rules.

Rule 1: Whatever happens, we stay relaxed! We are here to enjoy ourselves, there is no competition. Nothing bad will happen.

Rule 2 (even more important than rule 1): Whatever happens, we look fantastic! How do we achieve that? We adjust our posture! Sitting straight instead of slouching makes a huge difference to your attractiveness. Smiling never comes amiss, but even thinking of a smile makes the eyes shine.

Above everything though, there is one major rule, in which every theatrical act is rooted: Claimed is claimed! When you claim an action, you never, ever take it back, but go through with it. There is no right or wrong in drama-games, there is just “half” and “full”. Once you do something, you do it with all vigour possible, nothing by halves. What can possibly go wrong if you look fantastic anyway?

WOOSH / WOAH / GROOOOOVELISCIOUS

This game is very basic and will make people feel at ease instantly as it is easy to explain and to follow. It is voice- rather than language-focussed and it is a great warming-up exercise.

Setting:

Everybody stands in a circle. The game can be played with up to 30 players (I would not play it with more, as then it takes too long for the individuals to get their turn and they get bored).

How to play:

1. One person waves both hands to their neighbour, shouting: “Whoosh!”. The gesture should be big, the whole body should be moving.

2. The next person passes the “Whoosh” to their neighbour or to a person on the far side of the circle. Hence the “Whoosh” is being passed around everywhere.

3. Once the group is familiar with the “Whoosh”, other gestures/sounds can be introduced.

4. If you want to block the “Whoosh” you can react by making a grand repelling gesture, holding up both hands and blocking the “Whoosh” by loudly and dramatically shouting “Whoa!”

This returns the “Whoosh” to the “Whoosher”, who has to find another person to pass it on to.

5. Any person who receives a “Whoosh” can interrupt the game for a short while by shouting out words that the whole group will have to react to. For example, someone may shout: “Grooooooovelicious!”. As a reaction the whole group starts moving in a groovy way. If someone shouts “John Travolta!” everybody does the “Saturday Night Fever” move.

Other actions include:

“Hipp Hipp Hurray!” in which the person, who has the “Whoosh” shouts “Hip Hip!” and everybody runs to the middle of the circle, jumps in the air and shouts “Hurray!”

“Freakout!” is indicated by waving both hands in the air in a maniac way. Everybody starts screaming and moving to the centre of the circle. When everybody has freaked out a new circle is formed.

Whoever has started any of these group-actions sets the “Whoosh” in motion again, in any direction.

This game can easily be adapted, gestures and sounds can be added, and it can also be played with words that the group should remember.

GRANDMA’S UNDERPANTS

Setting:

Any classroom setting.

How to play:

The rule is very simple. People ask a question, and the answer always is “Grandma’s underpants”.

“What are you thinking?” “About grandma’s underpants.”

“What is your favourite food?” “Grandma’s underpants.”

Even if the answer does not make sense, the game is funny and it trains participants on how to structure questions.

WRONG ANSWER

Setting:

Any classroom setting.

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How to play:

A addresses a question to B. B does not answer, but addresses another question to C, who instead of answering B's question answers A's question. C then addresses a new question to D, who answers to B's question, addressing a new question to E and so on.

A: How are you today?

B: Is this your mobile?

C: Fine! Will you marry me?

D: Oh yes! Do you like puppies?

E: No, absolutely not. What do you think of zombies?

F: I absolutely adore them! Are you in love with Alex?

The exercise keeps the students alert and interested as ideally, they will find questions that might fit the anticipated answer which makes the game extra-funny.

HAS EVER A HUMAN SUFFERED SO… A VERITABLE TRAGEDY

Setting:

Everyone sits in a circle. The game ideally is played with 8-10 people.

How to play:

We all take up a still posture of despair and suffering, until one person starts talking. The first words will always be "Never ever has a man / woman suffered like me today." In an instant, everybody turns to the person, adjusting the posture to show intense interest. We are listening to the story of suffering very carefully, very compassionately, very emphatically. The person tells their story, and ends with the words "Actually, my suffering is beyond words". Then everyone strikes a different pose of despair again, until the next person starts telling a story.

This game is very funny as people can make up stories or actually really relate something that is bothering them at the moment. Usually, topics like the weather or school-workloads are on top of the list.

LIE LIKE HELL

Setting:

The players form two rows, sitting on chairs, each row facing the other. The rows should be at a distance of at least four metres or more. There can be up to 30 players.

How to play:

The game is played in three steps.

STEP ONE

Everybody can ask a question, for example: “Who has ever been in love with Santa Claus?”, “Who picks their nose?”, “Who has never …”. Those who want to show that this is true for them stand up. Those who claim that it is not true stay seated. The most important thing is: YOU ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO TELL THE TRUTH (although, occasionally, you can). In your mind, you take up the role of any person other than you for whom the statement might or might not be true and you answer the way this person might answer. If you stand up, you do it decisively. I you stay seated, you do not do it because you are too lazy to stand up, but because you make the bold statement of saying, “No, this is absolutely NOT true for the person I want to be right at the moment!”. Do not think of anyone in particular, just follow your gut feeling. If you feel like being someone who claims that “I am in love with Santa Claus!” is true for them then stand up. Try not to overthink things but be bold and see how it feels to stand up as a person who is totally different from you.

When no one stands up anymore, everyone sits down again. You move back to being yourself and wait for the next question. Then you take up another role of a different person for whom other things may be true – or not. The most important thing is that everyone is totally aware that no one ever answers the questions as themselves.

STEP TWO

If you want to emphasize, HOW true a statement is for you, you not only stand up but take ONE bold step ahead. Mind that there should be two distinct movements. You stand up because you want to express that the statement is true for the person you have just decided to be. You think about it a bit. You take one step forward when you have decided that you want to emphasize your statement.

After that everyone sits down again.

STEP THREE

You stand up, because you claim that the statement is true. You take a step forward to emphasise HOW true it is. Then you reflect upon it and realise that this is actually totally embarrassing, so you just let yourself fall to the floor. Try to avoid collisions with other falling people!

Psychological aim: The game helps the group relax, it is fun, it makes everyone look “silly” and this is not problem at all, as we still look fantastic! It teaches people that they can claim anything and that they can communicate it through their body. It is also a great warming up exercise for actual acting.

Communicative aim: The game makes people ask questions. It can have a focus on the present perfect tense (Has anyone ever seen a ghost? Who has never been to Mars?). It also makes people LISTEN, as they want to know what the question is. As opposed to normal classroom settings, where the students’ interest in their classmates’ statements is quite subdued in my experience, here they really focus on what is being said. They also ask for clarification if they have not understood the question.

Indeed: I encourage people to stand up ESPECIALLY when they did not understand the question, just because in this game they can claim anything.

COFFEE BREAK AT THE CONFERENCE

This is a great game to get people to talk. However, it is not for beginners, as you need a certain language level (at least B1). The game can be played with 4-10 players.

Setting:

You are at the annual international conference and there is a coffee break. You know no one and you enter one of those rooms where the hotel serves lukewarm coffee, wilting sandwiches and dry cake. You grab some food so that you do not look too awkward and you join a group of people who are engaged in conversation. Soon, you get the eerie feeling that you are not among “your” tribe. This must be the coffee break room of a totally different conference! You try to look very inconspicuous and just by listening you try to

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find out, which conference the group of people you have accidentally stumbled into are actually here for.

How to play:

One player leaves the room, the rest decide on a topic for their conference, e.g. the “Unicorn nose hair collectors”, the “Stamp glue taste assessors”, the “Municipal Pre-adult tree climber enablers in public parks” – whatever comes to your mind. Nothing is too absurd, you just have to be able to act out your membership with utmost dignity!

Then the player returns and joins the group standing around a table, sipping (pretended) coffee, eating (pretended) sandwiches. By listening intently, the player tries to find out, which conference these people are here for.

When the player thinks they have an idea, they interrupt and ask, “Excuse me, are you attending the conference on….” If you are right (or at least quite close), the people brighten up and shout “Why yes, so we are!”

If you are wrong, people just shake their heads indignantly and continue the conversation.

The idea of the game is to keep the conversation going without actually giving away your true profession for as long as possible.

After a certain time (I suggest ten minutes) the members of the conference can become more concrete, so that the game does not drag. The player does not ask questions but just listens.

The object of the game is not to win, rather it is about the fun of talking about quite absurd things – In a foreign language – in a very serious way.

ZOMBIE-APOCALYPSE

You need at least two groups of 3-4 people playing against each other. If a group is caught using a word that is not in the target language, the group automatically loses.

Setting:

It is – yet again – the time of the zombie-apocalypse. The world is full of bloodthirsty creatures trying to track you down and feast on your flesh. You and your group have managed to survive – so far.

How to play:

You name four items that are readily at hand – a roll of toilet paper, scissors, a cup, a sock – any items that every competing group can easily obtain (every group should have the same four items)

Within 10 minutes the groups must decide in which way they can successfully apply these items to fight the zombies and to guarantee the further survival of the group. Then each group introduces their strategies. Every member of the group has to explain at least one strategy, while the others most dramatically show how to use the various items under the dire circumstances.

In the end the teacher decides which groups survives. This group celebrates, while the others turn into sulky zombies and walk away, in a most zombie-like fashion.

JOHNNY, YOU’RE LATE

I have come across this game in many different shapes and sizes, but this is how I play it:

You need 6-8 people playing the obedient workers. You also need one boss and one Johnny or Joanne, who – obviously – is late for work.

Setting:

There is an office with a very stern boss. 6-8 people sit next to each other in a row, diligently typing away on the keyboards of their computer. The boss is enormously strict. Whenever a person stops working, they risk being fired at once. Even so, Johnny / Joanne is late for work this day. The aim of the game is for him/her to find out why!

How to play:

Johnny / Joanne is sent outside. The other players decide, why this person is late for work today. The more ludicrous the story is, the better. They might have woken up in a different country, been abducted by unicorns, fallen through a black hole – nothing is too absurd.

Then Johnny / Joanne is allowed back and starts with the words "I am terribly sorry I am late but…" All the workers are typing, the boss stands with their back turned to them, facing Johnny /Joanne. As long as the boss is not looking, all the workers try to act out in pantomime WHY Johnny / Joanne is late today, while he/she interprets the mime and tries to talk without taking a break. Whenever there is a long pause, the boss can turn around. In this second, the workers have to resume their position as diligent employees, innocently typing away on their keyboards. If someone is still standing or doing something other than typing, the boss can shout "You are fired!" Of course, workers can find excuses, such as "I was just stretching my back", and the boss can decide whether to accept the explanation or not.

The group should agree on a gesture that ends the game, indicating that now Johnny / Joanne has arrived at the office. When he/she sees this gesture, he/she ends the tale by saying something like, "And this is why I am late today." or "And now I am here."

In the end the boss decides whether this story is a plausible excuse or whether Johnny / Joanne gets fired.

Do not worry if the story being told by Johnny / Joanne has little to do with the original one. Encourage the workers to act scenes out together instead of individually (e.g. a wedding proposal, riding a unicorn…). They must not be afraid of getting fired, as this is part of the game. Also, they have to move on to the next sequence of the story eventually, even if one part has not been interpreted correctly (which rarely happens anyway). When they get fired, they just leave their chair and join the audience.

As a final step the boss decides if they can accept Johnny's / Joanne's story or if Johnny / Joanne is fired as well.

As a final step, someone is allowed to tell Johnny / Joanne the original story, which is always a moment of epiphany for the player and another round of laughter for the group.

It is one of my all-time favourites and one of games most demanded by my students. Even though just one person has considerable talking time, the class usually listens with much attention as it is very funny to see how the mime is being interpreted. Also, the whole class can participate in the process of creating the story.

Another funny version of the game is the bossy bride, whose bridesmaids are writing the seating cards for the reception. They attempt to help the groom who is trying to explain why he did not come home the night before the wedding.

FINAL THOUGHTS

While playing these games I allow for almost everything to happen as long as it is theatrical and respectful. The one thing I stop immediately is people making fun of a person talking.

I would like to encourage you to try out these games and to introduce them to your classroom-routine. Feel free to adapt and change them. Above all: Have fun with your students. Laughing together builds bonds and will always help teaching. I truly believe that the games will make students associate the language with positive memories and encourage them to embrace it without fear.

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Janya is a founding member of Teater Aros in Uppsala, Sweden. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Dramapedagogy from the University of Gävle, as well as a Master's degree in international Business, and has pursued advanced studies in theatre, directing, and dramaturgy at institutions in Sweden, the U.S., and the U.K., including California State University and Stockholm University. Her focus on physical theatre and directing complements her work in integrating newcomers through theatre. Fluent in Swedish, English, and Spanish, Janya continues to blend artistic innovation with academic expertise in her career.

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From 2015 to 2023, served as a drama educator for the Volkstheater Vienna, leading theater clubs.

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Dramapädagogik-Tage 2022
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Ein herzliches Dankeschön an alle,
die zum Entstehen des Tagungsbandes
beigetragen haben!