



Democracy through Drama:

Open Education Resources



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1 Introduction

The *Open Education Resources of the Democracy through Drama* project offer examples of how drama has been used to support teaching in the humanities, languages and the arts through practical explorations of curricula within the classroom. It is intended that this document provides a usable resource for teachers so that they can implement drama in their classrooms to enhance their practice.

Within our Conceptual and Pedagogical Framework¹, we have suggested that both drama in education and mimesis in education can be important enhancers of democratic education for the following main reasons:

- ❑ They are both media / methods that create contexts of connection for young people with the most important issues, problems and situations
- ❑ Offer possibilities for young people to form their understanding and points of view concerning the explored content
- ❑ They both create spaces for young people to define the content they want to engage in and explore that through the framework of the story created collectively
- ❑ The focus on ‘the other’ offers possibilities for developing empathy and understanding from various perspectives
- ❑ Both Drama and Mimesis fuel the imagination and empower agency, the possibility of creating change in the personal and social lives of young people
- ❑ These approaches aim to move beyond the solely cognitive understanding of issues, problems, and concepts towards creating a physical or a social experience and a felt understanding.

The workshops and resources contained within this document seek to provide practical examples of how this is achieved. In addition, the suggested activities are open for use, adaptation, editing and re-working, as we understand that many teachers and practitioners will be working in a range of different educational contexts.

Following this introduction, the second section provides teachers with guidance on how to use the resources provided, which is further supported in section three with a guide to practise and some of the practical considerations needed. This builds upon our Methodological Framework² by moving some concepts within our framework into a practical setting.

Section four is split into two sub-sections, which are based upon the work developed for and during our two Demo:Dram summer schools in Marathonas (2018) and Budapest (2019). The first sub-section workshops were themed around “*Ancient Greek Journeys*” and outline eight practical workshops that were developed with teachers across Europe through our teachers’ advisory groups. It is intended that these descriptions of the workshops capture both the content and form of the drama in various contexts. To hear commentary from our workshop leaders speaking about their workshops please visit [here](#) or to see how the workshops were developed please visit [here](#).

The ‘Other’

By imagining oneself as an ‘other’ person or by taking on different roles, it enables people to consider alternative points of view. By doing this, people can then begin to understand different perspectives and empathise with those perspectives.

As a result of this process, people can then consider their own position in terms of their thinking and feeling about a particular person, their situation or story.

As Neelands (2002 in O’Connor, 2010: 122) usefully points out “Students can learn and un-learn through the processes of constructing ‘others’” and in doing so “the boundaries between ‘self’ and ‘other’ meet and merge”, which allow spaces for someone taking part in drama to “find oneself in the other and in so doing to recognise the other in oneself”.

¹ To view and read our Conceptual and Pedagogical Framework please visit our [website](#)

² To view and read out Methodological Framework please visit our [website](#)



Figure 53- Gilberto Scaramuzzo introducing elements of mimesis

4.11 Building civic coexistence through body and movement (Gilberto Scaramuzzo)

This workshop explores elements of co-operation through movement. As a result of this participants are asked to reflect on their feelings of co-operating in movement with each other and how similarities and diversities open up through the experiences. The participants are also asked to consider how the quality of their relationship with each other is deepened. Gradually we extend this quality to a whole group experience.

What are the aims/overall goals of the workshop?

Drama aims	Democratic aims
To build the foundations for civic coexistence by focusing on the quality of the relationship between one person and another	Valuing human dignity and human rights Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, worldviews and practices Respect Empathy Knowledge and critical understanding of the self
To reflect upon the difficulties and challenges we may face when interacting with others, as well as how we can enhance trust and harmony within the class community	Civic-mindedness Tolerance of ambiguity Flexibility and adaptability Co-operation skills Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication
To consider how this exploration of relationships can be transferred into everyday life	Valuing cultural diversity Responsibility Skills of listening and observing

What are the objectives/stages of the workshop?

- ❑ To develop a sense of appreciation of another person through physical connection
- ❑ To explore elements of shared movement with hand to hand contact

Why this workshop; what is the rationale for democratic values?

In order for democracy to function it is important that people communicate honestly with each other. As a result of communicating honestly people living in a democracy can see, feel, and enjoy the other. Taken in this sense, mimesis brings people closer and creates a space for honest communication. This is particularly important before starting a teaching and learning process. Additionally, this workshop is important for democratic values as it helps participants to consider the body and physical encounters as part of an educational process where human nature is fully taken into account.

Description of workshop process: what we did and how we did it;

The facilitator should ask the participants to walk around the space. As the participants are walking they should be asked to make eye-contact with each other. As the process continues, the participants should then be asked to find a partner, without discussion, and stand in front of each other. Once in a pair, the participants should find something beautiful in their partner (a part of the body, a movement, an expression) and smile to the other once this has taken place. The process should then be repeated partner to partner and with other members of the group as appropriate to the time and engagement of the participants.

The facilitator should then ask the participants to pause and reflect upon their experience with each other. The facilitator might ask, what did it feel like to make eye contact? Did you know what the other saw as beautiful in you?

The participants should then be asked to repeat the process. However, this time when they form a pair they should place the hands in front of one another without touching. Once this has happened, the facilitator should instruct the pairs to close their eyes and move the hands towards each other until they touch. The pairs should then move hands simultaneously and feel how this touch evolves in a relationship where there is movement without a leadership.

The facilitator should then inform the participants that they need to find together, in silence, a way to finish the movement and open their eyes. Upon doing so, the pairs should share their thoughts and feeling with each other about the experience. To support this, the facilitator might ask the participants to think about how it felt, was it a challenge and if so why, did the movement process reveal something new about their partner or themselves? The process can then be repeated.



Figure 54- Demo:Dram participants exploring mimesis

Following the same instructions for the previous task, the participants are then asked to work in a group of three, paying attention to relate with both partners. Again, this might be challenging, but the facilitator should allow space for the groups of three to reflect upon their experience.

Following the same pattern and process as the previous exercises, the participants should then be tasked with engaging in a more dynamic experience with eyes open. By doing this, the participants will be asked to explore notions of force, respecting and challenging the movement of each other.

The final task of the workshop involves pairs of participants positioning themselves on opposite sides of the space. Once the participants are opposite to their partner they should then walk slowly towards each other. As they do so, the partners should maintain eye-contact and look into each other's eyes at all times. Once the partners meet in the centre of the space they should retain their eye contact and decide, without speaking, whether or not to give each other a hug. Upon repeating this process a couple of times, the participants should be asked to share their thoughts and feelings with the rest of the group.



Figure 55- Demo:Dram participants exploring force and relationship

Finally, the facilitator should ask the group what they have experienced through the workshop and link their reflections to the aims of creating more honest and closer relationships.