



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](#)

The Teacher in Role can allow herself or himself to know very little about the Marathon story and about Greek vases, or 'Amphorae' and ask her "colleagues" about what they know.

The meeting can end with collecting what they need to find out to be able to design the vase.

Collecting information: The list of what needs to be found out will surely include getting to know more about Greek vases and the story of the Marathon runner, but also possibly many other questions. After stepping out of the fictional meeting and out of the role, the teacher can help students create working groups that try to find answers to the questions collected. Different groups can research different questions. The teacher can also offer resources like books or encyclopaedias, or computers and the possibility to search online.

The teacher can also offer a rubric to document the findings of the research:

- ☐ facts found out,
- ☐ information that will be especially useful for the designers,
- ☐ inspiring ideas or images found.

Sharing the findings: The findings can be shared after stepping back into role of the company staff in a meeting. The Teacher in Role can ask questions concerning the significance of different information, and make sure that each group can contribute to the discussion.

It might be useful to discuss before stepping into role that they will be presenting their findings in a different way than they collected them, i.e. in the role of the company staff.

The Teacher in Role can soon start connecting the information brought by the "staff" to specifics about the vase: *"So based on what you say there were different amphorae, some to carry oil or wine, and others were ornamented and awarded as trophies. The one we will be creating must be the later then?" "Do you mean one of the images on the vase could be a ... ?"*

It is useful that by the end of the meeting, the most important things are agreed on concerning the vase, particularly the elements of the Marathon runner's story that should be told.

Creating the most important images: Stepping out of role, the facilitator asks the class to make some of the most important images from the story that will surely be depicted on the vase. The class can do this in smaller groups, each choosing a moment. When the groups are ready they share their images with each other.

Presenting the plan to the director: The lesson can finish with the teacher discussing with the class how they think the staff of the company presented their findings to the director of the film to win the bid.

Post workshop ideas:

If the group enjoys the frame offer by the fictional company then the teacher can think of new "commissions" the company receives that enhance learning in other areas such as human geography.

3.1e Migrating Memories (Flavia Gallo)

Workshop summary:

Starting from the word 'memory' in participants' mother tongue, and from other words connected with 'memory', the facilitator proposes a 'mimetic exploration' aimed to trace a common history of migration. The facilitator builds a shared drama through Mimesis in Education methodology.

The starting point of the workshop is to explore words related to journeys in the participants' home language. The students then build a story through movement and mime based on the connection of the key words. Students work collaboratively to interpret and understand each other's story.



Figure 16- Teachers sharing the word 'memory' in their home language- Marathonas 2018

This is then built on to create oral stories told by students which could be in their own mother tongue. This can result in them transcribing the story they have created or observed being shown by another member of the group, or creating a letter or text related to the journey portrayed.

What are the aims/overall goals of the workshop?

Drama aims	Democratic aims
To create democratic spaces in which community can recognize different cultures and languages	Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, worldviews and practices Valuing cultural diversity
To explore how stories can be built with action and words.	Autonomous learning skills Analytical and critical thinking skills Skills of listening and observing Tolerance of ambiguity
To promote inference skills / encourage interaction between learners.	Co-operation skills Knowledge and critical understanding of the self
To support the exploration of poetry and written word	Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication Autonomous learning skills

What are the objectives/stages of the workshop?

- ☐ Reducing linguistic and cultural barriers between participants with varied backgrounds
- ☐ Widening intercultural competences starting from the enhancement of each person's mother tongue;
- ☐ Reducing the tendency to stereotype foreign students as people with a language deficit; and making the best use of their expressive, linguistic and biographical resources for the purposes of a multicultural democratic political co-existence.

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

This workshop is important as we can see evidence of listening capabilities disappearing from civic life. What if we enhance the capabilities to perceive and to appreciate similarities and distances amongst

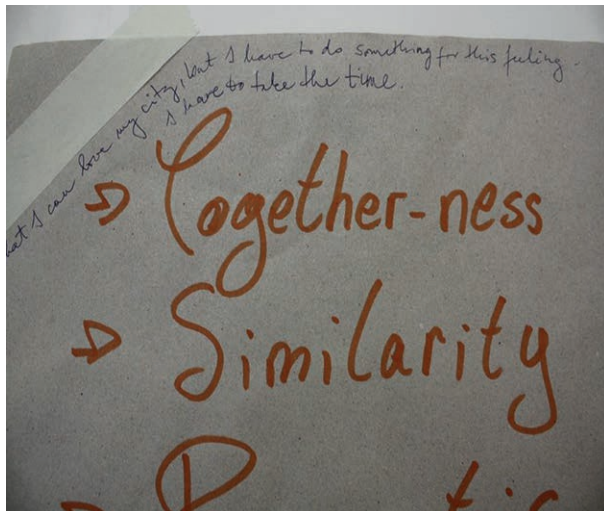


Figure 17- An example of associated words to memory

languages? We believe that strengthening the links between language, culture and democracy are important.

Starting from linguistic and cultural differences, participants create a **poetic score**¹³: this workshop is important as it provides an experience for young people to meet other cultures by working within a frame. It is therefore intended that the participants live the concept of the 'other' in order to come to an understanding of themselves through watching and listening.

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

Mimesis of the word: To start the workshop each participant is invited to write down the word 'memory' in his/her mother tongue on a large sheet of paper. Participants can write this word as large as they like. Following this, the participants are then invited to make the **mimesis** of the word in response to hearing the sound of the word. In essence, the mimesis at this stage is a movement of the hand that the sound of the word makes them feel.

Once each mimesis has been both seen and heard, each participant is then invited to make the mimesis of the words of the others. Firstly, copying the mimesis that the other has done, then proposing an adapted, or new, mimesis in response. For example, an English speaking participant might have a different mimetic physical response to hearing the word memory in Italian than an Italian speaking participant. By doing this the group can begin to share their understanding of the words through mimesis and movement.



Figure 18- Flavia Gallo shares her approach to exploring migration through mimesis- Rome, 2018

This process should then enable participants to begin to select other participant's words that they like the sound of and/or that sound interesting. Once the group is re-formed into pairs based upon their liking of the words, each participant should then choose two words from their partner's list and explores those words through mimesis and movement.

Working individually, the participants should then aim to create a small physical score using the mimesis of 'memory' and the mimesis of the other two words explored. The participants should look to link together the individual movements into a longer mimesis. Each physical score can be shown to others in the group. However, this is optional at this stage.

Creating the migration story- For the next stage, pairs are required to work together in order to respond to their partner's score and should label themselves A and B. In turn, each partner should be asked to observe the score of the other. Partner A should share their score with partner B and repeat the

¹³ Here we define a 'poetic score' as a sequence of movements that represent an idea.

movement sequence. Whilst the movement sequence is taking place, partner B should write a short monologue about a migration story in their home language. This should be based upon the movements observed and in response to how the sequences makes them feel. This process should then be repeated with partner B sharing their movement sequence and partner 'A' responding in writing. Eventually the pair should have two movement pieces and two monologues.

Each pair should then share their stories with the whole group. The whole group in terms of their experience should then respond to the sharing of both spoken word and movement.

Post workshop ideas:

The whole group might be tasked with creating a performance of all the stories. As part of this, the group might experiment and play with juxtaposed voices and bodies carrying stories in sequence, placing them temporally and spatially.

Alternatively, the group might be encouraged to explore their stories with each other verbally.