



## REIMAGINED Pedagogic Methodology based on a cross-curricular approach and Arts-integrated practices

Authors: Dóra Vera Halász, Despoina Kardogerou  
Edited by: Valentina Ciarpaglini

### **Brief elaboration of pedagogical content and methodological aspects of drama, play, and art therapy related methods.**

Arts-integrated practices by definition are education practices in which arts serve as a path and are connected organically to other fields in the educational processes. Integrating arts into the curriculum not only means that we use specific artistic methods for teaching our subjects. Integration through arts is when the artistic process is not a tool for teaching, but arts in itself is a way of approaching other subjects. The distinction is important, because for arts-integration, pedagogues must be willing to cooperate with each other, think together and build their interdisciplinary curriculum, instead of only using one of two tools in the classroom.

One can combine art-integrated methods in different ways.

### **Drama and play**

Drama is structured or facilitated by an adult, whilst play will, and often does, occur without an adult present. However there are some similarities that highlight links between children's intrinsically motivated play and children's ability to engage in drama. These can be seen when comparing Hughes (2006) Play Types, such as Social Play, Dramatic Play and Socio-Dramatic Play with specific drama approaches such as Improvisation and Role Play. Children when playing sometimes take on roles, play out situations from home and use their experiences to enrich their play and test out morals, ethics, behaviours and relationships. Most children are therefore naturally inclined to drama skills which can be supported through pedagogical approaches using drama



methods and techniques. Skilled observations of children and young people playing and knowledge of the play process can provide the practitioner with an understanding of underlying issues or specific interests of children and young people. Certain pedagogical approaches in using drama, such as Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert, offer a dramatic enquiry based approach to learning where children and young people are endowed with the expertise. The approach guides learning through ownership and emotional engagement in the drama that unfolds with the participants.

**Theater based on Community:** Theater of Community is made up of adult members of the community and differs from a traditional theatre company as it not only devises the play to be performed, but the play is also about the community itself, whose members will see the performance. Thus, working from the beginning of the year, using mostly the toolkit of Theatre of the Oppressed and of Devised Theatre, the participants were led to recall personal experiences and stories about life in the neighborhood. All were residents of the neighborhood and almost of all had lived most of their lives in the kolonos area. Starting from memories of earlier times, they were inevitably led to the present and this brought a comparison of the "then and now" of the neighborhood. Once the phase of frustration was overcome, then the whole process gave birth to the need to "get the neighborhood back to the way it used to be." All this created the play, which was performed on Kolonos Hill, which in earlier years was a magnet for visitors from other neighborhoods. The performance mobilized the shared memories of the audience and after the performance ended, a spontaneous discussion ensued about how the neighborhood can become welcoming and inclusive for all again.



**Theatrical game for children of primary school:** Art Education's main program is theater. For young children (first grades of primary school) the approach and techniques of theatre play are followed, using the tools of puppetry. As many of the children have an immigrant background the theatre has been liberating in terms of language and how the children of immigrants and refugees have started to use it with more confidence. In many games they needed to speak very little or not at all, this created a positive energy and a climate of confidence. Gradually speech started to come in and this seemed like a natural process and progression. At the end of the workshops, the children came out more empowered not only in their use of language but more confident in general.



**Newspaper:** An idea based on Freinet’s theory of the role of the newspaper in the school and educational process. The educators and facilitators of all age groups first proposed and then coordinated the groups in order to produce a newspaper with 2 issues, one in the middle of the year and one at the end. The newspaper’s subject matter was to inform the public about the activities and events of the ActionAid Community Centre groups and also to write freely and share thoughts and emotions about a member of the group. The Theatrical Games team (first-grade primary school age groups) came up with the title of the newspaper and "wrote" in the newspaper the story they created after improvising in the game. The children who attend computer lessons made the cover of the newspaper and a crossword puzzle, the Theatre of the Community group wrote about their experience of dealing with the theatre practice and this approach. The visual arts group wrote about the 3-dimensional paper sculptures they created for the public space; the adult group, who are learning Greek, wrote traditional fairy tales from their countries. Teens from the woodworking team wrote about their last creation, which was a table. Copies of the newspaper were distributed by the newspaper creators in the neighborhood and in their friendly environments.

**Folk Tale methodology:** In the folk-tale method we work on ourselves through a story. In a fairy tale, order is restored at the end, the hero of the tale makes the journey and grows through it. This is our task too - to interpret the twists and turns of the tale and its "codes" for our own lives, to find the steps that help us to become better and find our gold medal. When we begin to engage with ourselves through the story "If you will, take me", we should first listen to or read the story, then sit back and let the mood of the story wash over us. Even with our eyes closed, we can find a taste, a smell, an image from the story. What would we take from the story if we could? Where are we in the story and what part do we play? When telling the folk tales to youth as a teacher, first read the story to yourself, in the way presented above. Examine yourself, what kind of thoughts and emotions the story evokes in you and then read the story to the children with all those background information about yourself.

**Remedial teaching lessons and “creative studies”:** Both Athens and the North Evia Community Centre provide remedial teaching lessons and creative study classes for primary school children. The goal of this service is not to imitate or replace the work of the school, nor to create excellent and competitive students. The aim is to holistically support children who are facing economic and social issues but also to cultivate skills, attitudes and behaviors through a creative learning process. A key tool in this process is art. Language, maths, and science are taught by integrating the arts and utilizing techniques of these: theatre, music, cooking, creative writing, painting. But Art Integration is being utilized as more than just another learning tool. It is utilized with the goal of



holistic development of the individual by cultivating critical thinking, critical reflection, empathy, and free expression and creativity.

**Use of public space and nature (workshops, events, summer schools):** We use public space, small and large parks, pedestrian streets, squares, hills, forests, beaches where we carry out activities, events, celebrations for children, teenagers and adults. In addition to defending the public character of the natural landscape, actions in neighborhood spaces bring people into contact with nature, both inside and outside the urban fabric, and are a place where people in the neighborhood meet, socialize, appropriate the space and learn to care for it.

**Body awareness, somatic methods and movement improvisation on stage:** Somatic work puts an emphasis on the connection between the mind and body. In this way it strengthens the awareness of the body and through that awareness the feeling of wholeness as a person. The methodology is vague but every kind of method places this body-mind connection and the awareness-raising of physical senses in front. Methods usually incorporate anatomic knowledge, improvisation, and a certain kind of language which is necessarily non-judgmental and uses phrases that wouldn't specify how the participant should sense, but lets them live their experience in a free way.

**Mobile Foret School:** The Mobile Forest School is an educational van, which travels to 18 villages of North Evia, filled with participatory activities and actions, based on Freinet and Gardner, through which the history and memories of the place unfold. Indicatively the actions addressed to the whole community (young and old):

- participation in educational activities,
- contact with nature through activities on the environment and its protection
- Art education through visual arts and puppetry
- activities for the whole family
- mini-Library for kids and teens

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### **Elaboration of the connections between different subjects with emphasis on science learning**

In recent years there has been an increasing number of voices of modern educators and scientists claiming that we need to move from STEM to STEAM. The A in STEAM means Art and STEAM education promotes the integration between science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and the arts. The demand for soft skills, teamwork, cooperation, creativity and adaptation to change, has led to the creation of new curricula to help prepare those aspiring to enter the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) to meet the evolving needs of today's workforce. Moreover, as we have already mentioned, the involvement of a person with art, either as a recipient or as a creator, has many benefits for his all-around growth as a human being and as an active citizen.

In many cases, teaching math, science, technology, and engineering with a traditional way is something that does not match all intelligences and does not address to all student's minds in the



class. Teaching science through arts creates a safe and non-judgmental space to approach the abstract concept of science and promotes science as an object of discovery and creation.

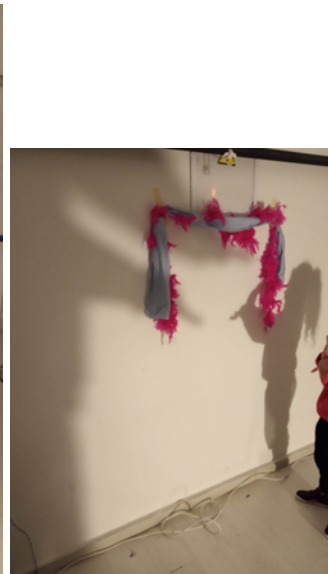
Drama pedagogy can be used related to a variety of subjects, and there are a number of tools that do not require drama teacher qualification. Related to school subjects involving arts and social sciences, such as history, literature and art history, the connection is easy to see. Acting out a historical situation or forming a historical character, showing a scene from the life of a poet, a writer or a visual artist are both a creative artistic work and a work related to the certain subject.

Drama pedagogy is also an excellent tool for teaching sciences, for example, when teaching the history of science, the discoveries of scientists can be presented in the form of stage scenes, and the achievements of the disciplines can be explored through expert drama games. In the case of expert drama, we also contribute to the mastery of the academic material. To read more about the “mantle of the expert

Related to geography for example: we can visualise geographic discoveries in space, play the role of the explorers or even the colonists, discuss their motivations, learn about the culture and economy of the time. The possibilities are endless.

Naturally, all this requires teachers with the right skills and creative mind.

In the theatre workshop, primary school children discovered the rules of optics through shadow theatre techniques. They experimented with where to place the light source to make their shadows look like giants and where to make them look like dwarves. What cloth (paint, weave) to put in front of the flashlight to change the scene and how close so that we don't get lights? Again through theatrical game with some children, who it is worth noting have migrant background and are struggling in school, we understood the mathematical concepts: Straight Line and Curve, by playing the robots and dragonflies. The former move on straight lines, the latter on curves.





Storytelling is integrated into Hungarian education in many ways. Literature education, uses folktales and fairy tales. It is also used in art education, through visualizing the characters in any different ways. (drawing, pottery, painting). While doing these artistic processes the actors partly place themselves into the place of the characters, live through their suffering and challenges. Talking through all these with the children make their feelings more accessible for themselves.

Storytelling and related activities are an excellent way to reach the 11-15 age group. Fairy tales, which can be folk tales or fiction, are classified by storytellers according to the age group for which they are most suitable from a developmental and psychological point of view.

Animal tales provide an opportunity for a personal connection with animals and can be used to reinforce science knowledge. The same is true for the connection with plants, which is less obvious, but it is important that the emotional connection, for example through stories, has a sensitising effect on the listener and, not least, strengthens environmental awareness and value consciousness.

We can also work with stories and fairy tales in science education and in language (whether in the mother tongue or in a foreign language) by working with texts written in different genres on specific topics. Examples might include a scientific description of a species of animal, a lyrical literary work, and a practical professional text on animal husbandry.

Somatic work and movement improvisation:

Through somatic work we can teach the awareness of the body, which relates to physical and health education but also anatomy in biology. With the awareness through touch of our whole system, the bones, the muscles, the fascial tissue, and to some extent even our organs can be mapped and through this mapping on biology class we can teach how our body parts and organs work. This experience-based learning makes the knowledge much more deeper but also more accessible to the learner.

With movement improvisation in a certain space we can make a cognitive map of a room, for example of the classroom. Spatial shaping exercises can be done in a mathematics classroom, where pupils follow a set of rules and move parallel, perpendicular, diagonally, for example, observing the shapes they create with their movements. They became more aware of both their body, their movements and their immediate surroundings, while also making connections with each other.

It is extremely important to build up a safe space for the participants who participate in somatic work and improvisation because these activities may evoke strong feelings and sensitive earlier age experiments. It is advisable to lead all these activities with care and high empathy.

### **Elaboration of how the methodology can enhance social emotional learning in formal and informal learning contexts -**

In the best scenario the development of social-emotional skills through arts and arts integrated practices is a luckily positive consequence of this approach. Since practicing artistic processes in



itself develops observational skills, sensitivity to the environment, sensitivity to ourselves, openness to new experiments, it is already in itself is a self-development process.

When artistic processes, such as visual arts, dance (including free, improvisation movements and authentic movements), drama play and music are carried out in a group they necessarily involve communication between group members, opening up ourselves to the others, building trust towards each other and being open to others' outputs.

It is important to understand that when these processes are introduced in the classroom or as extracurricular activities a well-trained mentor or facilitator is always needed to facilitate all processes. Empathetic view and the ability to build up sensitivity in the students towards each other is a necessity. Being involved in artistic activities makes the participants vulnerable through showing parts of their inner world to the others. Students with less experience can get involved into situations where they hurt each other by criticizing each other's work of feelings or judging each other's personality unintentionally or deliberately. These situations have to be handled by professional facilitators, with empathy and care. Nevertheless, these situations are also ways to learn about ourselves and are platforms for a talk about topics like equalities, inequalities, the concept of talent, empathy, respect and self-respect, etc.

When talking about different kinds of activities such as drama, dance, music and play in relation to other subjects, interrelationships can easily be seen. Teaching history through dramatic processes, will create a platform to talk about how people relate to each other, why different groups of people start fighting against each other, how tension develops between different groups in society etc. The artistic approach can bring those, not so much into sciences, closer to the world of natural sciences by introducing people behind scientific rules and inventions, showing the human side of these often inaccessible knowledge. All these non-traditional approaches help students form a more holistic view of the world where natural sciences, humanities and arts are not separated, instead different and interconnected fields of life.

Art-therapy: As expressed in its name is aiming at helping people reach a better mental health through the practice of art-making. Several studies proved that art therapy is a favourable tool for maintaining and improving social and emotional development. "The participation of special educational needs students with neuro-psycho-motor deficiencies in a group art therapy program, held in the school environment, leads to a significant decrease in their anxiety levels and a significant increase in their empathy and prosocial behaviour level."(M. Lavric, C. Soponaru)

The way art-making can be used for emotional development is through the complete acceptance of artistic processes as they are. Children who are offered several artistic tools, such as pens, pencils, pastels, paint, and paper scraps start making their own creations. As long as they are not criticized, directed to any directions, or intimidated by adults they put their very own artwork on the paper, originated from their state of mind reflecting their actual emotional and mental state which is very deliberating and helps self-acceptance, while in a group also develops the acceptance of their peers when moderated by an adult who pays attention on maintaining an accepting and non-judging atmosphere in the group. The key aspect for using artistic processes for self empowerment and group building is the right approach of the teacher, who should themselves be accepting, inclusive and inspiring for the children.



Arts integrated practices are also very good means of handling certain school related issues such as bullying or smaller conflicts between peers.

These methods are usually carried out in groups, with the interaction of participants. Therefore they develop self-awareness through body awareness and self-awareness through connection and social skills. These methods are suitable for learning about geometric shapes, for example, and can be more deeply embedded in the mind through movement and creation than if they were taught using traditional teaching methods that only require cognitive functions.

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