teaching human rights through educational drama; how difficult can it be?

a quantitative research with in-service teachers in Greece

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Key words

human rights

education

Greece

refugees

teachers

educational drama workshop

in-service training

quantitative research

Photos by Yannis Bechrakis

Theoretical background

Human Rights Education

- learning *about*, *through* and *for* human rights (article 2)

- lifelong process that concerns **all** ages, use of languages and methods suited to target groups, taking into accounts their specific needs and conditions (article 3)

- responsibility of training **teachers** in human rights (article 7)

- the **arts** as a desirable and suitable language of training and raising awareness, which should be encouraged for use (article 6)

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United Nations, 2011
Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training

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Educational Drama

✓ separate educational field: artistic/aesthetic elements + educational purposes

✓ used as **methodology** process > outcome

✓ **collaborative**, creative work

✓ exploration of different angles in **social issues**

✓ Imaginary and safe environment for experimentations

✓ social skills and procedures exercised in a **democratic** manner:
   (empathy; communication; active participation; expression of feelings, thoughts and fears; negotiation of ideas; group dynamics; dialogue culture through speech, body or creation, etc.)

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Neelands & Goode, 2015
Lenakakis et al., 2019

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Research questions

➢ Can a drama training enable in-service teachers undertake issues of human rights through an experiential teaching approach?

➢ Which training elements are more applicable?

➢ What are the factors that enable or discourage in-service teachers in implementing elements of their training in their everyday teaching life?

The research

Experiment

20 hours of drama training

The research sample

170 teachers of different disciplines and levels

(8 different cities in Greece)

Data collection
Questionnaires
(3 phases: before the training, after the training, after the end of school year)

Closed questions, 5-point Likert scales and multiple choices

Data analysis

SPSS23

Drama training

Activities

warm ups

team building

image theatre (A. Boal)

theatre & educational drama

simulation game (*Passages*)

* Work in groups and plenary
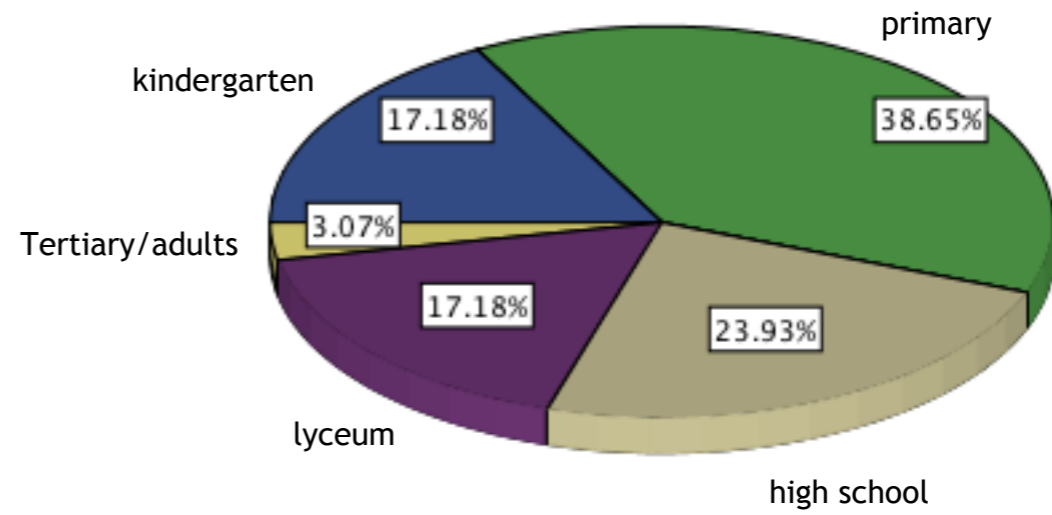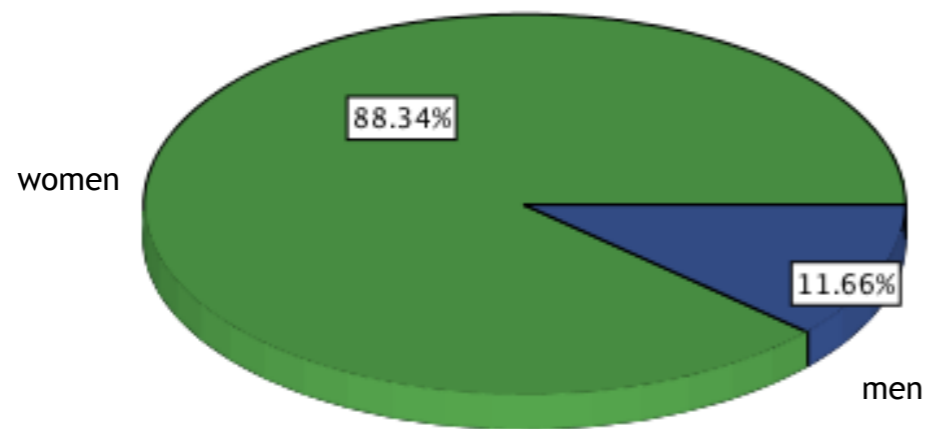
* Invited specialized inputs

* Reflections

* Creation – sharing - feedback

Research sample profile

N= 170 teachers of all educational levels

Teaching challenges & training assessment

Challenge	Mean*	mean
Lack of human rights educational **material**	3.64	4.24
Lack of drama educational **material**	3.33	4.34
Lack of **space**, suitable for a drama workshop	3.33	3.86
Stereotypical/racist **attitudes** by students' parents	3.27	3.78
Stereotypical/racist **attitudes** by students	3.1	4.11
Stereotypical/racist **attitudes** by peer teachers	2.61	3.83
Lack of **time** to deal with human rights within my subject	2.6	3.77
Lack of **interest** of human rights related actions, by colleagues	2.58	3.69
Lack of **equipment** (computer, screen, speaker phones etc)	2.53	3.83
Lack of **time** to employ drama methodologies within my subject	2.5	3.93
Lack of **support** by school authority	2.13	3.7

"the training helped me deal with:"

*5-point Likert scale

Data analysis

applicable practices

Training element	score – after training (mean)*	score – after school year (mean)*	actually applied (%)
Warm up and wind down games	4.7	4.47	44
Team building activities	4.47	4.45	41,8
Activities/games for initiating human rights	4.47	4.53	30,6
Activities for initiating/establishing dialogue culture	4.45	4.39	25,9
Still/dynamic images (Boal)	4.42	4.16	22,9
Educational drama techniques	4.24	4.10	21,8
Theatre techniques	4.26	4.11	17,1
Relative documents (testimonies, UDHR, graphs, photos)	4.18	3.98	12,4
Educational materials for initiating human rights	4.11	4.07	13,5
Invited guests from the field for information	4.02	3.98	6,5
Simulation game (Passages)	3.68	3.80	4,7

*5-point Likert scale

Enabling factors for implementation

N=91

factor	%
Possibility of implementation within my teaching hours/school timetable	**37,6**
Students' motivation	**34,1**
Positive attitude/culture of school for similar activities	21,2
Cooperation with peer colleagues	20,6
Supportive school principal	20,6
Suitable space for such activities	20
Existing framework for similar activities (events/projects as a school tradition)	8,2
Suitable equipment for similar activities	4,7

Limiting factors

(N=31)

factor	%
I had planned activities but Covid-19 lockdown did not allow me to forego	64.5
I did not have the time	45.2
I did not have a consistent student group throughout the year	25.8
The school culture was not positive for similar activities	12.9
I did not feel confident enough in order to facilitate myself such activities	12.9
There was no collaboration with peer colleagues	9.7
The school principal was unsupportive	6.5
There was no suitable space/equipment available	6.5
I did not find anything useful/applicable by me in the training	0

Research findings

✓ Can a drama training enable in-service teachers undertake issues of human rights through an experiential teaching approach?

   YES. The participant teachers answered positively and assessed the training highly, in relation to their expressed challenges.

✓ Which training elements are more applicable by teachers themselves?

   The teachers gave information on the practices they preferred (progressive order from simple to more complex techniques).

   Data showed that this sense of preference remains as high even after 8 months.

   Data showed that the order of preference is almost identical to the order of practices actually applied by teachers (75%).

✓ What are the factors that enable or discourage in-service teachers in implementing elements of their training in their everyday teaching life?

   Time and applicability within strict framework

   Human factor (students -motivation and presence)

   Culture of the school

Research limitations

Focus only on in-service teachers in Greece, in 2019-20

Explore the immediate impact of a 20-hour drama training in teaching of human rights, as a process (through human rights)

Suggestions for future research

Additional hypotheses tests concerning the trainings' impact in knowledge levels

More in-depth research with qualitative data and insight

Similar research on larger-scale samples (outside Greece or international attempts)

Thank you!

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