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Drama and Citizenship – Devised Drama for Education

- This paper shows how to make meaningful drama / theatre with youth.
- The main focus within drama education framework is devised drama.
- The performance is not the core is, even though important - it is more about start asking important questions of us, of the world
- The major challenge is to understand how the teacher's drama pedagogical understanding plays a very important role: whilst drama teachers do need to develop a critical awareness of theatre practice, it must be accompanied by an informing pedagogy of Aesthetic Education.

Purpose: In this article I will give an example of a linguistic program I have been doing with sixth form college students from Finland and the Netherland and link this action research to the meaning of drama education, and of the potential of devised drama as a part of civic Education.
Method: I will explain the theory of devised drama, then I will highlight the research and finally, I will conclude the research findings. The analytical framework used in this article is well-suited for drama education with youth. I would like to characterize drama education dramaturgy not as Aristotelian nor Brechtian, but as an 'open or joint - making together - dramaturgy'.
Findings: The term 'drama' is often used to describe the process of making work that does not necessarily demand an outside audience, and 'theatre' to identify work, that is focused on performing to an outside audience. 'Devised drama' relies both on process and product. Leaning how to make devised drama is an important as learning about its processes and start thinking: 'why we came up with these ideas of us and fictional drama world?'

Keywords:
Drama education, devised drama, civic education, aesthetic learning, serious playfulness, aesthetic doubling

1 Introduction

Acting is the art which is common to all of us (everybody can act – more or less!)… also an art which can help to build human beings into something better and more understanding than they are by nature – to build then into sensitive creatures able to feel the sorrow and joys of others as their own.

Sybil Thorndike in Foreword for Peter Slade's book "Child Drama" (1954)

Teachers hold beliefs about drama which may facilitate or constrain both its practice and reflection. Drama Education practitioners have long claimed that taking part in drama results in learning. Early theorists claimed that drama engenders general, social qualities in children. Drama, dealing as it does with immediate situations in daily life, enlarges concepts of character and so deepens perceptions of oneself and others. Underlying most current theories is the belief, held also by many practitioners who teach drama, that learning takes place within both form and content. This learning place is also identified as a "place in between education and art" or "a place of possibilities", which refers to drama as a

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"learning area". This of course goes back how theatre has been explained since the time of Aristotle and Plato:" The metaphor of a 'space in between' is of interest where dramatic fiction is concerned. The Greek concept metaxu: μετα ξύ is translated into English concerning place as in the midst, betwixt and between and concerning time between whiles, meanwhile, in the intervening events."

Play is a type of activity that takes place in the space between people—what Donald Winnicott (1971/1989) called a "potential space." Here people (children first, adults later) experiment with the idea of 'otherness' in ways that are less threatening than the direct encounter with another may often be. They thus get invaluable practice in empathy and reciprocity. Winnicott often emphasized that play has an important role in shaping democratic citizenship. As we all know, our present society changes rapidly and substantially – much more rapidly than ten or twenty years ago, and beyond. People need to become responsible for change, to understand and evaluate it and when possible to initiate it by anticipating necessity. Edward Bond stressed many times, that we must educate children and youth to become competent members of a critical culture. This cannot be done by discipline, love or information alone – children and youths must be helped to find ways to express their voice.

One way to do this is by engaging in drama and theatre – and Dawson, Cawthon, Baker (2011) have stressed this from the point of drama teaching. The most important function of dramatic arts strategies that carries theories

of cultural studies and criticism is to dismantle mainstream, status quo, modern, cultural constructions that are in crisis. In Heikkinen, Lindfors (2012) we say that drama education should not be just the way to socialise people to traditions and existing culture, but that we should use drama to explore alternative future and alternative ways for co-operation and dealing with issues within society. An artistic learning process can be described as one which a person through a transformative process creates new relationship with meaning. The person gains new perspectives on himself, reality, other people, nature, and on life in general. The use of symbolic representation is at the core of Drama's learning potential. The system of representation is described, for example, by Jerome Bruner as symbolic (relating to linguistic function), iconic (relating to visual or graphic function) and expressive (relating to the active, performing function). As Nelson (2011) writes, in our work as drama and theatre practitioners we have a distinct advantage, if properly harnessed, as through the theatre form we engage people's natural curiosity and need to ask questions, a skill that should be at the core of mainstream education practice.

Playfulness (or *serious* playfulness) is one way to explain the learning potential of 'aesthetic doubling': you have to devote yourself to the construction of the fiction, you make it conditionally (not for real, 'for play' – you bracket the demands of 'reality' for a certain amount of time and then you leave it) and you are not obligated to anything else than to obey the rules of the play. The learning potential of drama is in the aesthetic doubling of role, place, time – and plot. Many drama practitioners (see Heikkinen, 2002) use the term 'serious playfulness' to describe the basic human instinct to 'play' with the relationships between symbols and their orthodox meanings in order to create or express new possibilities of meaning; in this sense 'playfulness' is a form of social interpretation. It helps us to consider the meaning of our lived experience. Playfulness occupies the same space in our lives as religion, magic and ideology - but it is 'playful' rather than 'respectful'. It is 'by choice' rather than an obligatory duty. It is visible and not masked as reality.

There is a Bachtinian polyphony in the different solutions, which develop the students' skill to change perspectives and look at a phenomenon from different angles. This is what Aristotle might have implied when using the concept of *fronesis*. This may lead, at its best, to an artistic work that is also an ethical work. Aesthetic, artistic and ethic will go together into one whole in the production of meaning. My personal interest is to follow questions such as 'how can we help children and youth to make sense of themselves and society in the rapidly changing world?' I do not believe, that factual knowledge will do it. Nor logical thinking alone. We need to harness the emotional capacities as well. The understanding and working on empathy and co-operation is an issue that is stated in many papers and documents as a crucial point of view in civic education, yet, we also have evidence, that if one sees a poor child in a picture, it triggers a potential for empathy and then also action, but if in that

picture, there are multiple protagonists, the empathy will decrease. And this is where drama education can play a part. Braverman (2002, 13) wrote:

"Playfulness motivates people through their innate sociability to participate in collective activity, whilst maintaining a focus on what's at stake. A discussion format frequently posed depersonalized questions, e.g. 'what are the results of poverty?' A playful approach, particularly within a dramatic framework, encourages a more open and experiential response, e.g. 'what would you do if you … only had a handful of coins left for the rest of the day?

Drama education is driven by ideas such as those of Dorothy Heathcote who claimed that we should work in drama from the particular to the universal, which means simply, that while we are dealing with issues that matters to us, we should give a thought to others in similar circumstances in the world around us – to step into another's shoes or to try to see the world through another person's eyes. My drama philosophy falls within the category of 'socially critical drama' which asks questions such as "why are these issues like this? ". In short, socially critical drama (see for example Errington, 1992) advocates belief in the need for individuals and society to be transformed. In order to transform circumstances (culture, society) it is necessary to encourage the students to investigate a range of individual, social, cultural, educational and political features which society may be taken for granted.

As the world becomes more complex - socially, technologically and politically - socially critical thinking becomes more important. It is a skill that will serve all of us well in virtually any profession or relationship. From the educational point of view, the general pattern is that many students fail to recognize when crucial information is missing, which information is relevant (and irrelevant) and how to operate on the information given. Thus the school of today has two major challenges: it needs to work in a way that makes a difference to the quality of the student's lives and it should provide 'tools' for the students so that they are able to actively participate in a rapidly changing society. The question for the drama teacher is: what can drama contribute in this context: what specific competencies/skills does drama education enhance in students' learning that could reinforce their actions as responsible and critical citizens with long-term vision?

In this article I will give an example of a linguistic program, called YET (Youth, Europe and Theatre) I have been doing this for some years with sixth form college students from the Netherland and Finland and I link this action research to my theoretical thinking on the meaning of drama education, and more precisely here, of the potential of devised drama as a part of civic education. I will briefly explain the theory of devised drama, then I will highlight the research and finally I will try to conclude the research project's findings within the framework of the article and the journal.

2 Theory of devised drama

As researcher I have followed the interpretation of Drama Education by Cecily O'Neill (1995); John O'Toole (1992); Allan Owens & Keith Barber (1997) and John Somers (1994): I see 'Drama Education' as an umbrella term which covers all sectors of drama activity that occur in educational settings i.e. including 'Drama in Education' and theatre made in or for educational settings – it does not therefore include professional theatre. I am aware that there is a variety of definitions of the difference between drama and theatre. The term 'drama' is often used to describe the process of making work that does not necessarily demand an outside audience, whilst 'theatre' implies work, that is focused on performing to an outside audience. "Devised Drama" or "Devised Theatre" – both terms have been used - relies both on process and product.

It is very hard to pin down exact methods for devising as every group of collaborators may have different ways of approaching the creative process. One very common method is to begin by focusing on the theme and the utilize it to make a form that makes sense, and then extract deeper thematic ideas and work with them retrospectively. What method the collaborators will use depends a lot on the style of the performance group. In our work, we used both Finnish and Dutch texts as a starting point from year to year, and then looked at the meanings those text might hold for the students. The linguistic aims of the YET- project are to promote the insight that foreign languages are an inevitable aspect within the European Union and in the world in general. YET also gives the students a chance to use their foreign language skills, especially English, to become more fluent speakers of the language. Moreover, they will learn the basics of two languages, which they have not known before. The cultural aims are to acquaint the students with one another's culture and cultural heritage. Giving them a better understanding of different cultures and a less prejudiced and more open attitude to them. Learning about different nationalities and working together will enhance their interest in cultural matters in general. Social and communicative skills will develop while functioning in a multinational group.

The Dutch and Finnish students work together in groups of mixed nationalities for two weeks in February to prepare and present a play which has been chosen by the host country and divided into two parts. Each team, directed by an art director from one of the countries, will perform a play, based on the same texts. The result will be two very different interpretations of the same play (or chosen text). Cultural differences are very obvious. As an example – in Finland we had permission to use Tove Janson's classic Moomi texts with a strict rule not to use the Moomi characters, so we did a play about an invisible child – based on Janson's novel, but played with human figures. We also did a play based on Finnish author Rosa Liksom's short stories, in which our creative teacher team – director, dramaturg, lightning designer, choreographer, visual designer, and musician – began to focus on creating our approach to Devised Drama, which then has been shaped every year for better and better both in artistic and pedagogical aspects in co-operation with the students. In the Netherland we played, for example, Tone Tellegen's children's animal stories and again, performed them as humans – in order to highlight the human interest and the societal issues which are hidden in both of the texts – that is about how to be a human in our society and what it takes, and how to survive.

I was both researcher and the dramaturg in these processes. I had 40 students to work with in a range of two years: 20 from Finland and 20 from the Netherlands. They worked in our team or the Dutch team before changing over. The whole process comprised a planning phase, then creative and artistic phase, progressing from learning to reflection. Even though the making of Devised Drama was only two intensive weeks per year, the planning of YET was an ongoing process mainly with the teacher team, but also for the students who knew they would take part in the process. I collected the data from those working in our team. With a director, the creative team and me, the group created a lot of material, from which we finalized the performance. The first part, what we call the '*creative part*' was when we – the teacher team – introduced the text and asked the group to study it's a-nd the issues they found important. The next step was, for us as teachers to compile the ideas and themes and make a storyline, which was my task as a dramaturg. We then we told the group, that here is the play, text, read it and if you are satisfied with it, with it, we will then focus on making a play based on it. After the group agreed, we started the second section, what we called the '*artistic part*', because then teacher team focus was to make as good a performance as we could based on the accepted reading of the text by the group. I would like to emphasize here, that the ownership of the play by the students played an important part of the process.

The type of drama work I espouse may be quite new to those who do theatre in traditional way. Certainly, we are concerned that the next generation of actors, directors, designers and writers are given some introduction into their craft on school. However drama, as we see it, should be more than a vocational course for the small number of students who will actually work in the profession or even pursue their interest in amateur theatre. Moreover, engaging with the process of drama offers young people much more that a rudimentary understanding and appreciation of the dramatic literature of their culture and an insight into the technicalities of performance. A great deal of learning can be gained from making, performing and responding to drama in a more immediate and creative way. Over the past ten years I have become increasingly intrigued by the educational potential of devised drama. We collectively engage through the depicted imaginary world, that we create together, a 'drama world' in which we can meet and confront one another as we examine an issue or phenolmenon from a whole range of perspectives, modify views and perhaps expand individual standpoints to incurporate those of others. We switch as dynamically as possible from thinking from within a dilemma about

possible choices, to talking objectively about the dilemma and the range of choices available. This is a far cry from badly constructed and embarrassing role-plays or traditional theatre plays in school that students and staff quite rightly do not like.

The emphasis is on exploring attitudes, values and beliefs through immediate fictional reality in order to consider long-term change. Because discussion moves between the fictional and 'real' world, participants report that they have 'the chance and confidence to say and think what they think, not what others want to hear'. And this is not just an underlying aim of the drama teacher or the project – we say it out loud as we start: it becomes a joint adventure, a cooperative dramatic research project with students and with the teacher team. This is similar process to that described by Dawson, Hill, Barlow and Weitkamp (2009) in their research on knowledge building. Taking part in an effective Drama Education process requires skills from the teacher and students. Based on Susan Bennett's (1990) theory of theatre 'production and reception' the skill all participants need is the ability to "read" dramatic texts i.e. understand them in order to act and develop them further and this is where Reader-response theory is useful- this is also what Hollands (2009) research has shown. For me "text" refers to all elements of dramatic form. My interpretation follows Bennett's work and devised drama in creative and artistic parts, to offer a brief synopsis, we could say that Bennet's theory views the text as the site for production and proliferation of meaning and is skeptical about the objective text of formalist criticism. Wolfgand Iser (1990, 1994) privileges the experience of reading literary texts as a uniquely consciousness-raising activity and stresses the centrality of consciousness in all investigations of meaning. The literary text, as Bennett reminds us, is a fixed and finished product which cannot be directly affected by its audience. By contrast in theatre every reader is involved in the making of the play. So, reading is, by and large, a private exploration – theatre and Drama Education are not, as for example Neelands (2009) and Nelson (2011) have written. The participation and the creation of the 'text' (in its widest possible definition) makes the act of reading more complicated, not less interesting. I find it particularly intriguing in Drama Education because we do urge participants to play along and create (read) the dramatic action (text) as the event proceeds.

3 Research method

In my research I have followed Joseph Maxwell's (1996) Qualitative Research Design, an interactive approach and O'Toole's (2006) Doing Drama Research. They both sets out with a clear purpose to challenge the existing qualitative research designs and by taking an innovative approach to qualitative research design he emphasizes the research design components, how these interact with each other, and how the environment in which the inquiry is situated influences the study. Research - in drama in education or in any field - is inquiry with the aim of producing knowledge. In the research field of

drama and theatre in education number of authors have emphasized the need to develop a qualitative research posture which could recognize the flexible framework in which we work. Some of the basic characteristics of a research process, such as being rigorous and systematic, have been challenged in the context of a qualitative study, but little has been written about how to replace rigorous and systematic approach. That is why Maxwell's interactive approach and O'Toole's stepping into enquiry in drama theatre ad education, are both useful.

Maxwell (1996, 1-8) sets out with a clear purpose to challenge the qualitative research designs and by taking an innovative approach to qualitative research design, he emphasizes the components of a design, how these interact with each other, and how the environment in which the inquiry is situated influences the study. Research is an inquiry to produce knowledge in the context of existing knowledge and a process of challenging existing methods. Qualitative research in general tries to provide a verbal explanation of the studied phenolmenon, its essence and nature is contrast to the typical account given in quantitative research: figures and numbers. Qualitative methods are concerned with human understanding and interpretation. In the research books many of the research processes are described either as a linear research or as a cyclical research. Linear research is a term which described a process of having one hypothesis, problem or issue and the whole investigation is planned ahead. The aim is to prove or disprove the hypothesis. In theory you identify your hypothesis, plan your research project, collect data, and do your analysis and interpretation and then your write your reflections and conclusion as a report. By contrast cyclical research involves a continuing process in which designing an investigation, carrying it out, analyzing and reflecting on it takes place on cycles. Maxwell provides another kind of a clear strategy for creating research design. His design has five basic components, which guides the research process not as linear or cyclical, but as an interactive event. These are: *purposes, context, research questions, methods and validity*.

These five components include design issues such as clarifying the purpose of your study; creating a theoretical context for the research; formulating research questions; developing a relationship with the people you are studying; making decisions about sampling, data collection, and analysis; and assessing validity threats and alternative explanations to your study's conclusions. The main issue, as Maxwell emphasizes, is how the components of a design interact with each other and with the environment in which the study is situated. If you change the content of any of the components or if the environment changes, you need to look at how it affects on the other components.

Maxwell also explains how to make the transition from the research *design* to the research *proposal*, providing an explicit model for the structure of a qualitative proposal that is based on the design of the study. The examples of the former are clear and explicit, but for me they restrict the whole process of reporting, as they tend

to be within a specified form. Nevertheless, it is very clear and some of my students have used it and found it helpful. In the field of Drama and Theatre in Education I am minded to combine ideas of reading and writing research. We could write a script as research proposal and report. Particularly in the field of drama and theatre in education and in the drama teacher education the production of the play script as a research thesis could be a step towards honoring the qualitative dimension of the Drama and Theatre in Education practice and research

Maxwell's research design includes clarifying the purpose of the study; creating a theoretical context for the research; formulating research questions; making decisions about sampling, data collection and analysis and assessing validity threats. Within the frame of Maxwell's research design I have analyzed my data based on the 'systematic analyses. To offer a brief synopsis, systematic analysis in a theoretical attempt to construct an entity (a new theory) from a case: based both on empirical and theoretical data. The researcher's interest is focused towards the content of a phenomenon (the purpose and research questions), and its analysis as a part of a system (the context). The analysis has three parts: (i) defining the problem and choosing the data (both empirical and literary); (ii) actual analysis and (iii) the discussion of the findings. In this article I will look at what emerged when I worked with students in Devised Drama Education. I have analysed the cases focusing on questions such as (i) what was your experience of the nature of the drama process? (ii) What were the important moments for you as a participant? (iii) What did you learn?

4 Findings

One of my early findings, from the first YET –programs, was that a major challenge for students whose drama experience range from none to some, was to create a balance between fiction and reality. That is why I think we need better understanding of how to create the "learning area" in between fiction and reality. Whether you start froma given text (or pretext) or you are creating your own text, the problem of creating the "as if" world and entering that world as a character still remains as I have already mentioned. That is one of the things students were learning: how to enter the "as if" world; how to participate, and act. What students have to do, is to base their work (improvisation) on something. And what do they have? They cannot base it solely on the interpretation on the text, because there is no 'pure' text, - they are *making* the text. The answer does not necessarily come from one's own experience either. It comes from something else, from much more abstract reasoning and observation of action, other people, of life, of character. This is how students described the process:

It is such a special experience, because of the way of working and the tight schedule, it's completely different than other exchange programs. You do have a real target in

this project, to make a play, and that brings you closer to each other every day. (16 year-old girl).

I think it was a good method, because we tried to make the play together and include everyone's ides on what they wanted in the play and what we want to achieve. The making of the play was a lot easier than I thought. The teamwork was effortless and I liked how the directors just made our ideas real, but they were still ours. (17 year-old girl).

Everyone could affect the play with their opinions. The play wasn't handed to us as ready, we did it ourselves. Everyone got along very well, and the scenes were made through different types of rehearsals. (17 year-old girl).

First I thought that we are not going to have a play, because everything was such a mess. But in the end our play was really good. And I liked the way we did it. (16 year-old boy).

One can explain what happened based on three well known theories: such as (1) the theory of mimesis and catharsis based on the writings of Aristotle; or (2) the theory of expression which draws its ideas from Romanticism or (3) the theory of transformation, which is based mainly on John Dewey's (1934) theories of art and education. Dewey's idea was that art experience is developmental and participatory - it is self-evident why Drama-in-Education theorists have favored Dewey's theory. I started with Dewey's theory and then I came across theories of 'reading and viewing' and got interested to see whether I could explain the dramaturgy of Drama Education within the framework of the transformation theory) by using theories of reading and viewing as a tool.

It would be rather obvious to continue by looking at Berthold Brecht's theory. His dramatic theory occupies an important place in drama studies. One can easily link socially critical drama to Brecht's epic theatre. His ideas for a theatre with the power to provoke social change, along with his attempts to reactivate stage-audience exchange, can also be seen within the theory of transformation. But, as Augusto Boal (1979) has argued, Brechtian theatre is only marginally better than Aristotelean theatre: Aristotelean theatre impose a fixed world upon the audience and in Brechtian theatre the audience is brought to consciousness, but the power to act remains with the characters. Nicholson (2009) has argued about this from a research perspective and theatre making process and for me, the whole process can be summarized as a collaborative and creative approach, from apparent mess to shaping the play and having ownership of it. Iser sees the reader as an active participant in a performance through which meaning is created. This is how the students comment on that:

I'm very proud of our end-production. It was my first time in YET and I didn't know, that such a performance was possible in a very short time. (16 year-old girl).

We worked together and everyone knew their own places in the team. I'm pleased with the end result and everyone did a good job. (16 year-old boy).

At first I was kind of desperate and not so excited. Before the first performance it felt such a mess, but in the end, I understood the plot and I think that the play was amazing. (16 year-old boy).

The first performance was okay, but after rehearsing more, it became great! (17 year-old girl).

I learned to work with each other better and listen to each other better in a team. (16 year-old girl).

We all had many ideas and I felt really creative during the rehearsals. (17 year-old boy).

During the process we could make our own scenes. It was great for me, because of that, we could really make the play ourselves. Because we were a close group everyone took responsibility for his role and others. (17 year-old girl).

So, playing a part in the process and in the play made a difference - from individual to collaborative group work. Performing was not the aim, but it gave motivation and feel of success in a group, which is of course one of the aims of doing drama. To understand the process, enjoy it, and to be brave enough to cherish the outcome and be proud of it. The students are not actors, nor there a desire to make them actors. Our aim was to give them a successful and enjoyable experience of linguistic program within a framework of drama education.

Furthermore, Iser asks us, whether we see text as a documentary record of something that exists or has existed before, or is it a reformulation of an already formulated reality, to be broken down and reassembled by the mind of the reader? For Iser there is no faith in the existence of a 'pure' text behind and the participants are free to explore their given stimulus from a variety of different angles, just as they are able to use the text in a montage with other aesthetic elements. 'Gaps' or 'blanks' stimulate the meanings which would not otherwise come into existence. It gives us, as Iser emphasizes, the chance to formulate the unformulated. This is the main issue when we (as teachers) want to let participants make meaning and seek possibilities rather than accept answers that match those which have already calcified into rules! Drama Education depends on the participant/spectators (spect-actors) ability to take an active part. In Iser's terms: it depends on the ability to go into the horizon of incompleteness - and that depends on the act of reading

A socially critical drama would assist students in coming to know how drama and 'life' are capable of transformation and to know that each person influences the other in socially constructing both drama and the world. We use a lot of 'images' in Drama Education and students know how to read these images and furthermore, they can tell their stories through these images. Theatre is not what we primarily study: we use the language of theatre to tell stories, to reflect and to learn. This is how the students reflected on that:

When you want something in a short time you have to work hard for it. And be a team. (17 year-old boy).

I learned that theatre is not that different in other countries and that you can work together with people from different backgrounds. About me I learned that I can achieve good results, when I really concentrate on it. (17 year-old boy).

I learned more that I can explain, really! My theatre skills are improved and I can easily do English conversation now. And the best thing is – my social skills are improved. I learned to speak my opinion, but I also learned how to share responsibility and make compromises. I was also fun to work in an international team! (16 year-old girl).

I learned a lot about myself and my own boundaries. I think I proved to myself and others that I'm so much more than what I have thought. It has been a beautiful journey, and still is. But I do regret something: I should not try to please other people so much, because no one wins and I'll be the one who carries my memories. (16 year-old girl).

This type of Drama Education can be labelled as a 'research drama', as Somers (1994) and O'Toole (2006) has argued, because in contains the processes of learning how to make theatre and at the same time it gives space to self-reflective action in which we see ourselves from the outside, and start asking questions as to why we produce the things we are producing. My interpretation is that socially critical drama education promotes education which is sensitive to the human condition as presented in culture, education and art. It also stresses the necessity of teaching children to reflect on their own cultural background as well as other people's cultures. This kind of drama investigates the ways by which knowledge is produced and how participants create meanings: why these issues in this way? Meanings acquired are personal, social, cultural, educational and political. As Lacey and Woolland (1992) have written, Drama Education challenges accepted theatrical notions concerning the creation and function of character, narrative and spectator-performer relationship. As a genre, Drama Education has its own dramaturgy and is dependent both on the participant's and the teacher's understanding and action. Learning is much more that making a play – it is about personal achievement in the group: we are more than me as I am part of a group. The understanding of playing a part and making a difference in the process has echoes in other aspects of society – playing an active role in the family, friendship and society and being able to stand firm, when needed are valuable lessons to all youngsters and also to their families. All performances were send online to home from Finland to the Netherlands and vice versa – the importance of family members to see their sons and daughters act was a crucial factor, that underlies the whole process of educating youth ways that they become proud of their achievements.

5 Conclusion

The ethics and the nature of the Devised Drama Education approach is said to give a space to tell stories and to increase participants' ability to construct and to communicate meaning through language and action. Reading sets in motion a whole chain of activities that depends on both the text and on the act of reading - the

text represents a potential effect, which is realized during the reading process. 'Gaps' or 'blanks' stimulate the meanings which would not otherwise come into existence. It gives us, as Iser emphasizes, the chance to formulate the unformulated. This is the main issue when we (as teachers) want to let participants make meaning and seek possibilities rather than accept answers that match those which have already calcified into rules Drama Education depends on the participant/spectators (spect-actors) ability to take an active part. In Iser's terms: it depends on the ability to go into the horizon of incompleteness - and that depends on the act of reading. Neelands (2009) has written about acting together: ensemble as a democratic process in art and life and it echoes similar features to our YET-project.

It is said, that Devised Drama Education promotes critical thinking and deepen understanding of cultural and social traditions. It is supposed to promote reflection and help to develop a sense of community. These drama-reading acts are initiated by what Iser terms the participant's (reader's) wandering viewpoints. They move through the dramatic text and are guided by the various perspectives it offers'. However, these perspectives do not present concrete text features to the reader, but rather "degrees of open possibilities" within the text and "pretext". Text provides what Iser refers to as 'blanks' or 'empty spaces' in the fabric of the text that the reader must fill on the basis of prior knowledge. This is the core of the interpretation of Iser's theory for Drama Education and Iser's and Bennet's theories can be adapted for any drama and theatre event. The understanding of the "act of reading" in Drama Education can help to 'open up' new ways of making meaning for both the teacher and students - and this is why reader-response theory could help us to explain the effect on the participants: a Drama Education process event is not an object that could exist outside its given context. Gattenhof and Radvan (2009) looked at children as researchers in a theatre production -it is not only the sum of the images in the event, but also what its participants experience and bring in.

What does Drama Education then do for participants? I believe it should give space to learn an 'emotional ability to read people' i.e. to understand people. To reflect on why we act as we do and to increase participants' understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. Drama is supposed to give participants a chance to take part, interpret and recreate, explore and experience drama and the social world. The focus is on action. The motive for reflection has two aspects: one set of actions around the production of the theatrical expressions, and another self-reflective action in which we see ourselves from the outside, and start asking questions as to why we produce the things we are producing. This is what Iser terms 'negations'. They invoke familiar or determine elements only to cancel them out. What is cancelled, however, remains in view, and thus brings modifications in the reader's attitude, who is forced to adopt a new position in relation to the text. In other words: a moment grows to be an important moment and

learning occurs or at least, a change to reflect and learn becomes explicit.

In Devised Drama there is a certain way to look at the 'dramatic frame and text'. The structures, that inform the work, rather than being 'closed' should be considered as intrinsically open to other structures. A drama process might be autonomous, but it is not a game, closed off from the world. Drama Education is not just having fun or expressing ourselves, it is an event about the aesthetic and extra aesthetic values of our time. Framing an experience in drama allows us to view it with a particular, focused frame of mind. The frame has to be somewhat incomplete - otherwise there is no need and no space to complete it. It is a play of presence and absence within the horizon of incompleteness. Thus, Drama Education's "frame" should be guided by incompleteness, driven through tension and mood, which together may help to form an individual and/or group's moment of completeness. Creating meanings in the former context could be very much an active, co-operative and democratic process.

A major aspiration of citizenship education is to develop young people's abilities to discuss and negotiate. By promoting empathy as a required value, we are also encouraging young people to engage empathetically with their peers (Heikkinen 2013). Drama is clearly a strategy that can create the circumstances to make the imaginative leap into the thought and feelings of oneself and other people, and this all happens in a playful framework. For further investigation, the one that interests me most, is the challenge and desire to generate a dramaturgy for Devised Drama Education. I would like to characterize Devised Drama Education dramaturgy not as Aristotelean nor Brechtian, but as an 'open or joint – making together- dramaturgy'. Whilst drama teachers do need to develop a critical awareness of theatre practice, it must be accompanied by a central informing drama pedagogy. Aitken (2009) has drawn attention to the status and power of the teacher and students in making theatre and the major challenge is yet to understand how the teacher's drama pedagogical understanding plays a very important role. The heart of the ' open or joint – making together- dramaturgy' could then be the play 'in between space' where the gaps and links between fiction and reality, content and form, drama and informing pedagogy as separate entities disappear and turn into poetry.

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