

Article

Process Drama in Civic Education: Balancing Student Input and Learning Outcomes in a Playful Format

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Abstract: The purpose is to investigate process drama for teaching civics, mainly democracy and migration. Process drama implies students and teacher to take on roles, to explore a subject content collectively. The study is based on a secondary school educational initiative where a drama pedagogue was invited to address civics through process drama. Four civic lessons were video recorded and analyzed through an activity theory framework. From this perspective, process drama can be understood as two activities with different motives/objects, the educational and the fictional, where the fictional activity should have a playful format. The results show that the dialogical approach used by the drama pedagogue created a democratic opportunity and also established the playful format. The students' engagement was notably high. However, it was obvious there were no challenging or probing questions being asked by the drama pedagogue or the civics teacher, neither in nor out of role. As a consequence, the full learning potential of process drama in civics education could not be achieved. We suggest a co-teaching approach between civic teachers and drama pedagogues, to overcome challenges in using process drama in civic education for learning objectives to be attained.

Keywords: civic education; drama in education; process drama; lower secondary school; playful format; teacher-in-role

1. Introduction

Vignette: Newcomers Arriving on a Train

This vignette exemplifies a short sequence from a process drama focusing democracy, migration and critical thinking in civic education in a Swedish lower secondary school.

The students in grade nine huddle together with closed eyes on chairs symbolizing a train compartment. They are in role as refugees approaching a new country. The refugees have been dreaming about wonderful things they have heard about the new country.

The drama pedagogue narrates: *When the train journey came to an end the passengers looked forward to a pleasant reception they would get at the train station when they arrived. They would immediately fill their pockets with all the things they until now only had dreamt about.*

The drama pedagogue and the civic teacher put on hats and coats and go into role as two custom officials. With harsh voice, they speak in 'gibberish' trying to wake the sleeping refugees (students-in-role). They pull the chairs with force to make the passengers to stand up and get moving. The refugees are being sorted and then sent in different directions. The drama pedagogue, still in role as custom official, shows with gestures and gibberish talk how they should stand or sit, correcting those who do not follow orders. The students obey but some of them fool around a little and some laugh.

The drama pedagogue goes out of role and continues the narration: *The reception was not quite as what they had imagined. Where were the kindness and the chocolate fountains? Why were they not*

shown to the fine sports arenas? The passengers were both surprised and disappointed, but what could they do?

Aesthetic learning through the arts, such as process drama, is fairly uncommon in Swedish schools [1]. This small case study is based on an educational initiative in a Swedish secondary school. As part of a continuing professional development program, a social science teacher invited a drama pedagogue from a local Cultural School to teach in her classroom. The purpose was to apply process drama to civic education lessons on the theme of democracy.

The secondary school in question is located in a town characterised by heavy industry. In recent years, with increasing numbers of refugees arriving in Sweden, there have been growing tensions between Swedes and immigrants, including in this town. In this context, the civic teacher decided to use process drama to address questions of democracy and human rights. Besides, she wanted to learn more about how to integrate aesthetics, such as process drama, into her teaching. For the 15-year-old students, it was a completely new experience to participate in process drama work.

Current social problems accentuate the need to prepare all students to handle big, complex issues, such as migration and climate change, in an unpredictable future. This calls for what Biesta [2] refers to as ‘social intelligence’. However, combining the ideals of independent, critical thinking, while fostering democratic values, in a positive learning atmosphere is a challenge to any kind of teaching, this dilemma may come to the surface when using process drama for teaching social studies.

1.1. Innovative Teaching and Learning—Education through the Arts

The arts, and aesthetic subjects such as dance, drama/theatre, music and visual art, can be conceptualised in multiple ways. *Modest aesthetics* [3,4], a common approach in education, position the arts as decorative and entertaining, but lacking importance and therefore, marginalised within the school curriculum. *Radical aesthetics* [4], an opposite approach, connects the arts to curiosity and critical examination, means to explore ambiguity and contradictions which deserve a central position in education.

From a modest aesthetics perspective, education is seen as a convergent learning process which implies reaching specific goals given in advance. In contrast, radical aesthetics are characterized by divergent, innovative learning processes where outcomes cannot be predicted [5].

The radical perspective implies that the arts have the potential to challenge that which we take for granted. Artistic techniques or approaches, such as distancing and shifting perspectives, may open the way for new thoughts and revised actions. Working with the arts might provide a space where, for example, education is not only *about* democracy but is the expression of democratic actions, where, even in the classroom, freedom of speech is a human right.

Education *in* the arts can lead to different kinds of learning, such as becoming more skilled in a specific art form. Education *through* the arts, on the other hand, means working with the arts to develop an understanding of specific subjects, concept or themes, or to develop general academic skills (cf. [6]). Drama is an art form with a proven positive impact on student motivation and learning [6–8]. The potential of drama in education has been described several times (e.g., [9,10]). In some countries, including Australia and Iceland, drama is included in the national curriculum as an aesthetic subject in its own right [11]. In the national curricula of some other countries, drama is positioned as a form of teaching [12], referred to in very few school subjects (e.g., Sweden) or in nearly all subjects (e.g., Finland).

1.2. Process Drama—An Example of Divergent Learning through the Arts

Process drama is a genre within the wider spectrum of drama in education [13]. It is designed for drama work in educational settings, where both teacher and students move in and out of role to explore certain topics or themes. Interactive, embodied drama work is interwoven with individual and collective reflection, as well as with regular teaching, to incorporate academic knowledge into the

drama work. This incorporation of academic knowledge can take place, for example, in response to students being challenged and needing to find out more about the topic.

Process drama opens for a non-linear structure, allowing multiple perspectives and going back and forth in time. From a point of departure chosen by the teacher, the process aims at successively creating a collective narrative. A poem, a newspaper headline, a few significant obstacles or a painting could serve as a starting point. The resulting jointly created, collective story is not turned into a traditional performance. Instead, the purpose of the activity is the drama process itself, which serves as a way to explore curriculum content [14].

The most notable element of process drama, compared to for example role-play, is that even the teacher sometimes acts in role together with the students. When the teacher takes on a role, it allows the teacher to work from inside the drama. By choosing a role that either supports or challenges the often collective role of the students, the teacher facilitates a deeper learning process. Such teaching in role does not require the teacher to be an actor. It only requires that the teacher adopts an attitude of the role that is useful in relation to the students' roles and the current theme [13,14].

Process drama is a form of innovative teaching, which based on careful planning initiates an evolving, unfolding event. Using process drama implies a change from a more conventional educational activity to a more playful fictional activity, allowing students to become text-creators rather than text-consumers. Used wisely, it has the potential to promote divergent learning. Based on our own previous experience, we know this is possible to achieve. However, how can it be achieved in an ordinary Swedish secondary school classroom, as a part of civics education?

1.3. Social Science and Civic Education Research

In Swedish secondary schools, the social sciences may be taught as separate subjects: History, Geography, Religion, and Civics, or, they can also be organized into a cluster called Social Science Education (SSE). The focus of this paper is Civics (Samhällskunskap). Within Civics there exists a tension between multifaceted aims such as the reproduction of factual knowledge, the fostering of generally accepted social values, and the development of autonomous, critically thinking citizens [15,16]. Evans [17], in the North American context, describes the possible contradiction between socialization and emancipation as a serious conflict. However, it is possible that these do not have to be mutually exclusive.

Classroom studies show that what teachers do when they teach does not always match how they describe what they do (e.g., [17]). Lindmark [18] conducted a study of 60 Swedish SSE-pedagogues, based on the teachers' descriptions of the aim of their lesson, an analysis of their teaching and examinations. The teachers said they were teaching a lesson oriented towards active citizenship, while the researcher observed teaching and testing focused on facts and concepts. A similar disjuncture was found to exist between student teachers' ideals of participatory democracy and their more conservative teaching practice [19]. Such discrepancies reveal important foci for further research, which will help to develop and enhance teaching practice. Teachers generally have a participatory and emancipatory conception of SSE, in line with recommendations based on research (e.g., [20,21]). However, realizing these concepts in a classroom context continues to prove difficult.

Students' knowledge and understanding of subjects within the social sciences can, to a great extent, be explained by their experiences and cultural identity [22]. In a large-scale study of 14-year old students from Nordic countries, the students valued 'social justice' and demonstrated good 'citizenship knowledge and skills' [23]. However, the students' knowledge about politics and their ability to be politically analytical corresponded to their socio-economic backgrounds [23]. To counteract this, some scholars of pedagogy have suggested cross-curricular teaching, deliberative discussions and conflict perspectives. For example, Hauver et al. [24] recommend collaborative reasoning, open participation and a safe classroom environment, while Bickmore and Parker [25] put forward an inclusive classroom climate, peer dialogue and opportunities to discuss conflict issues in-depth, to improve students' academic outcomes.

Franklin [26] writes about *civic literacy* and suggests teaching that promotes student agency through democratic classroom experiences. She also emphasizes students' needs to develop a deep understanding of complexity and contradiction as part of democratic life. Englund [20] writes about a process of *socialization to citizenship*, through 'a kind of communication where different perspectives are brought into ongoing meaning-creating processes of will-formation' [20] (p. 312). Sandahl [27] highlights the difference between sense-making (scientific understanding of social concepts) and meaning-making (normative, ethical understanding of society). Both are required, but the former does not automatically lead to the latter. In order to strengthen students' meaning-making, Sandahl believes it is crucial to make a close link between teaching and the student's life-world. Sandahl [28] also suggests the concept of *civic consciousness*, which refers to a wider awareness of social and political responsibility. Vladimirov [29] argues that *civic emotions* are inherent in the concept of citizenship. She connects participatory drama work to the cultivation of civic emotions such as empathy and justice.

Based on a sample of 6000 students, Almgren [30] found that student democracy, with regard to the impact on forms of teaching, correlates negatively with political knowledge and abilities, while an open classroom atmosphere and political discussion correlates positively. Ekman [31] found that political knowledge correlates with increased political self-confidence, which is an important aspect of citizenship. Interestingly, a study by Martens and Gainous [32] found that 'activating' teaching, such as role-play, visitors to the classroom who represent sections of society and writing letters to politicians, correlated to high self-esteem but low political knowledge among students. A possible explanation for this is the high amount of teaching time consumed in activating activities. They also found that teaching which supports debates and the expression of opinions, correlated strongly with the development of democratic competence. Such teaching worked even better when combined with more traditional forms of teaching such as reading and writing [32].

One central element of SSE is critical thinking. There is some consensus that critical thinking includes the ability to interpret, analyze and conclude and to be able to shift perspective. Critical reasoning includes skills such as 'reasoning about advantages and disadvantages, pros and cons, causes and consequences, of alternative perspectives' [22] (p. 45). Critical reasoning ability is closely linked to the ability to understand relevant content [33]. To summarize, collaborative reasoning, in which the teacher actively points out or invites conflicting perspectives, appears to contribute to critical reflection among students. If such teaching is combined with traditional academic input, in an atmosphere of exploration and mutual respect, students are more likely to develop political knowledge, critical thinking, democratic competence and become self-confident citizens.

1.4. Social Science Education in the Swedish Context

In Sweden, all school units, from preschool to upper secondary school, must adopt and follow the National Curriculum (Lgr11), which lays out aims and content for all subjects. Formerly, the purpose of SSE was to foster democratic values among students. However, this has now been transferred to the general curriculum for compulsory school years and has become embedded in the teaching of all subjects—including Social Sciences.

Section one of the Swedish National Curriculum, Fundamental values and tasks of the school, states that the aim of education is the establishment of respect for human rights and to provide basic democratic values. This should be achieved with an international perspective, making it possible to understand one's reality in a global context, in order to develop both local and international solidarity. An ethical perspective should be a foundation from which pupils make personal statements and act ethically about both themselves and others [34]. In years 7–9, civic education focuses on concepts such as democratic freedom, and the legal rights and obligations of citizens in democratic societies. It explores the meaning and importance of these concepts and focuses on what constitutes discrimination. Students should also be presented with ethical and democratic dilemmas concerning, for example, freedom of speech [34] (p. 231).

An evaluation of civic education by the Swedish National School Inspection [35] showed a low degree of student stimulation in developing subject-specific abilities such as analysis, reflection, evaluation, critical investigation, interpretation, argument and reasoning, in relation to subject matter content. According to the evaluation, only a small number of students find themselves in an educational situation centered on their activity, where their questions are both valued and challenged by teachers, thereby allowing them to practice and develop competencies and skills corresponding to knowledge requirements.

According to the evaluation [35], good practice in civics education is based on posing open questions (often based on the question 'why?'), to which answers are not explicitly stated in study materials, thus, forcing pupils to draw their conclusions. This form of education should preferably be conducted via cross-curricular projects (cf. [36]). The national evaluation recommends, for example, role-play and drama as methods for presenting ethical dilemmas to help develop students' reasoning skills and increase students' abilities to create deeper arguments about morals and values [35] (p. 21).

1.5. Research on Process Drama in Education

As mentioned, process drama is a specific genre within the wider field of drama in education. It was first developed by Heathcote [37], who deliberately designed the genre for collective drama work in educational settings. Research on process drama in primary and secondary education has grown significantly in recent decades, particularly in the area of literacy and language acquisition. Studies related to other areas, like social sciences and natural sciences, are still limited. Research shows that students tend to remember more and can reflect more thoroughly after participating in process drama [38,39]. One reason for the greater development of knowledge through process drama is that it offers the possibility to pose personal questions [40]. McNaughton [41–45] has conducted multiple research projects concerning process drama in education for sustainable development. One finding is that process drama allows for the examination of values and approaches, both in role and in a reflective discussion afterwards. Drama allows children to rehearse and develop the skills they will need for active citizenship in a safe and non-threatening situation. They participate in fictional contexts, but they use real knowledge and real skills [41] (p. 152).

In an early study about drama in the social sciences, Taylor [46] found that the use of process drama significantly increased student engagement, study motivation and results. According to a study by Kana and Aitken on critical reflection and social justice, the engagement generated by interacting in role led to empathy and deeper understanding of issues such as social and cultural exclusion [47]. A one-year study of Grade 5 social science by Rosler [48], was designed based on an observation that the textbooks were too demanding for the students. By using process drama, students learned to combine information from many sources, including dialogue in role, reflective discussions in class, information from TV, the Internet and textbooks. This resulted in inter-textual competence and positive outcomes such as positive leadership and improved ability to cooperate. A similar outcome is reported [49], where the use of authentic historical texts found on the Internet led to a better understanding of the context, which in turn led to increased engagement in the drama work. According to O'Toole and Dunn [49], the participants particularly appreciated digital visualization, interactive role-play and the emotional aspects of being in role.

According to Freire [50], imagination is a crucial aspect of working towards social equality and freedom from oppression. Without imagination, people cannot envision either possibility for change or possible futures. Imagination is practiced through drama, but imagination alone is not enough. It must be combined with a critical perspective and a questioning of the status quo. Freire, therefore, encouraged teachers to continuously ask 'Why' (cf. [35]). Stinson [51] also points out the need to ask why-questions concerning 'explorations of power, of authority, relationships, and consider the driving tensions and perspectives that contribute to cause and effect' [51] (p. 71), when practicing drama.

1.6. Characteristics of Process Drama

One aspect of working with process drama is that it builds on the input of the entire group, in the present, making it to some degree unpredictable for everybody including the teacher, and demanding attentive listening from all participants so they can respond, interact and contribute. This, in turn, brings a strong sense of presence, community and pride to what has been collaboratively created (cf. [52,53]). As mentioned earlier, *teacher-in-role* is a central part of the process drama repertoire. Another approach, *mantle of the expert*, puts the student in the role of expert, sometimes facing the teacher-in-role as a person in need of assistance [54].

Role-taking implies imagining that you are someone else. It does not mean completely forgetting about oneself when in role but being aware that you are both yourself and someone else in role. The term to express this is *aesthetic doubling* [55]. In other words, the student in-role experiences the drama both as the character and as herself. This reflective space, between the role and the self, constitutes the unique, didactic potential of using role-taking as an educational tool [55]. In process drama, going out of role is as important as going into role. The re-emergence from the role creates a distance which enabling reflective analysis by looking back on what was created in role, the feelings that were experienced and the actions that were taken [14]. This reflective phase is when aesthetic doubling becomes explicit.

When going into role in a process drama, it is important to keep in mind that the activity changes from a conventional educational activity to a fictional activity with a playful format [56]. Role-taking implies a playful format where students have the opportunity to twist and turn concepts and values in a deliberative meaning-making process. The playful format of the activity has qualitative aspects, such as a high level of participation and the ability to influence what is being created, as well as enough freedom to act and to negotiate tools, rules and goals [57,58]. The biggest threat to any educational activity which takes a playful format, such as role-play, is when the teacher attempts to introduce and explain theoretical concepts into the improvised activity. This denies the student the co-creation of meaning through role-taking and role-play [57].

Another threat to such a temporal fictional activity is if the teacher-in-role becomes a teacher-in-disguise [59]. A teacher-in-disguise is a teacher who, without going out of role, demands correct answers from the students as themselves and not as those they are playing in role. If the teacher sees traces of deepening knowledge creation, this can be valued and assessed. However, if the teacher notices weaknesses in student understanding, then the teacher's task is to design new situations, angles or roles in the drama to challenge student misconceptions [56,60], or to provide teaching input outside the fictional drama activity. Stinson [51] writes that by allowing students to become text-creators rather than text-consumers, by permitting students to negotiate and explore through collaborative role-taking, new possible futures can be created.

Process drama work is usually based on a *pre-text*. A pre-text is a starting point, providing a structure with possible steps to take during the drama. It is the teacher's primary tool to create a fictional activity [56]. According to Dunn and Stinson [61], a pre-text should pose questions, provoke both intellect and emotion, include ambiguity and openings for multiple possibilities. It should include a group of people and indicate both past and futures [61]. The participants fill the frame with action and, thereby, the narrative is successively developed. By stepping in and out of role, a situation can be explored from multiple perspectives. A given pre-text can be used with many different groups but the process never turns out the same, since the content is built from the experiences and imaginations particular to each group. The person leading the process drama, therefore, must be very attentive and responsive to what participants bring to the collaborative work. Process drama based on a pre-text may well be used to create learning experiences.

1.7. Purpose

Based on the importance of civic education and challenges facing the teaching of civics, and in relation to previous research on civics and process drama, we want to investigate process drama for

teaching and learning in a Swedish secondary school context. We find this highly motivated, as drama (and other art forms, cf. learning through the arts) are almost excluded in Swedish teacher education for secondary level [12], and therefore less likely to appear in the classrooms. Research on students' experiences of drama in education frequently shows that 'drama is fun' [48]. What 'fun' means is a question which deserves to be closely examined. Is it fun because the students are challenged in a positive way which increases motivation and learning? Or do students enjoy it as a break, entertaining but not really contributing to learning? Or do they learn a lot but not what the teacher intended? Even if students do learn from drama, it can be difficult to assess. To assess more qualified educational goals such as analytic competence and complex thinking, some secondary school teachers prefer traditional means like written examinations [62].

Is drama a relevant method for teaching parts of the civic curriculum, such as democracy and critical thinking? Do teachers who incorporate drama into their teaching automatically construct a democratic classroom based on dialogue? There is evidence supporting the claim that drama can be successful in teaching the social sciences. The structure of process drama may enable explorative and democratic learning, due to the shifts between individual, group and whole class tasks, the change of perspectives by going into different roles, and the use of techniques such as *mantle of the expert* and *teacher-in-role* [59,63,64]. However, the idea that drama work *as such* is democratic must be questioned.

Research concerning social sciences and civic education indicates a request for new forms of teaching that differ from more traditional, 'transmissive' approaches. Process drama research indicates, among other things, a potential for more explorative teaching and learning. Here, we focus on process drama for teaching parts of the civic curriculum, such as democracy and critical thinking, by posing the following questions:

- How can civic subject content be approached through process drama?
- What does it take for process drama to contribute to secondary civic education?
 - Does process drama work offer any specific benefits in this teaching context?
 - What difficulties does process drama work present, and how can they be addressed?

2. Materials and Methods

In this section we present the local educational context, the process drama intervention, our theoretical perspective and strategies for data generation and analysis.

2.1. Local Context

The school is situated in a town in central Sweden, characterised by heavy industry. It is a lower secondary school situated on the outskirts of the town, next to a sports centre with a swimming pool. Everything is old and worn and, for a number of years, there have been plans to renovate or build a new school. The school has quite a large minority of students with non-Swedish ethnic backgrounds, but the proportion of these students differs significantly between classes. In the particular class (24 students) where process drama was observed only two or three students had immigrant backgrounds, and none were recent arrivals. Informed written consent was sought from both the students and their parents, as some students had not yet turned 15 years old. All students were aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time, and withdrawal would not influence their grades [65].

Almost every Swedish municipality has a Cultural School. These are publicly funded institutions offering after-school activities such as music, theatre, dance and other art forms. Attendance is voluntary, and attendance fees are small. Arts pedagogues working in local Cultural School also sometimes co-teach in local schools nearby. In the particular town where the research was conducted, the Cultural School is well established. It has a good reputation and regularly cooperates with local primary and secondary schools. In this case, the secondary school teacher invited a drama pedagogue from the Cultural School to engage in process drama teaching in civic education.

The classroom where the process drama teaching took place is designed for traditional teaching, based on lectures and group work. The pupils sit at desks directed towards a white board and the teacher is positioned behind or next to a large desk. The classroom layout reveals the kind of teaching for which the room has been designed. During the drama lessons, all of the furniture was stacked against the walls, creating an empty floor space within a circle of chairs. When not working in the middle of the circle students and teachers could sit wherever they chose.

2.2. Process Drama Intervention

This process drama, *The Newcomers*, evolved during four 60-min lessons over a period of two weeks, as part of ordinary grade 9 civic lessons. The pre-text for the process drama was designed by the drama pedagogue from the local Cultural School, based on the civic teacher's requirements. The focus of the pre-text was a fictive town which turns out to be like every other town, where citizens enjoy varying levels of power and varying possibilities and opportunities in life. During the course of the process drama students went in and out of various roles, offering different perspectives on democracy and migration, the topics of the lessons. Between each new phase of the drama, and before taking on a new role or using another drama strategy, the drama pedagogue gathered the students together for a brief period of reflection.

Lesson one: One day a train approaches the town, carrying people (students in role) from far away. They have heard about this wonderful place and, on the train, they dream about their future in this amazing new place. They share their thoughts in role, with the drama pedagogue eavesdropping. Their dreams are then turned into freeze-frames built by the students' bodies. At the train station, customs officials, played by both the drama pedagogue and the civic teacher in role, give the newcomers orders in a strange language (gibberish). Despite being treated badly, the newcomers do as they are told. They kneel on the floor, holding their hands above their heads. In the next stage in the process drama the students contextualise the town with their bodies. They step out on the floor, one at a time, and position themselves, while saying what they are, such as: *I'm the poisoned forest high upon the mountain*, or *I'm the dictator's castle*, or *OK, then I am the dictator!* A meeting then takes place between the newcomers and the townspeople. The class is divided in two groups. The two groups have difficulty understanding each other since they speak different languages (gibberish). The citizens in the town feel threatened and become aggressive.

Lesson two: The perspective shifts to the worn hospital that one of the students made with his body when contextualising the town in *Lesson one*. The students are asked to think of different occupations in a hospital and movements typical to these jobs. In groups of four, the students put their movements together into a composition to show their classmates. Quite exhausted, the hospital workers are gathered in the canteen to eat their lunch. The drama pedagogue, in role as one of the workers, eats together with the others, asking questions and feeding information into the drama about newcomers who want to work in the hospital, who are willing to work for lower wages. The hospital staff return to work, but with each person they meet, they stop and share some gossip. This ends with a new round of eavesdropping by the drama pedagogue. The gossip, it turns out, is entirely focused on the dictator (initiated by the students when they created the town), and not on the newcomers or on the threat of losing their jobs. The session ends with out-of-role prediction of what will happen next and the portrayal of this in a freeze-frame. Having observed the freeze-frames, the drama pedagogue summarises: *The dictator had ordered some kind of action, which resulted in dead and fleeing people, but there are still some people left who either worship the dictator or keep silent and work.*

Lesson three: The students stand in two lines facing each other and then meet in the middle. They talk to each other in role about different topics from different perspectives. After a while they are asked to use only gibberish, resulting in the use of movements and gestures. The drama pedagogue takes out big wooden dolls, which she places on a table to illustrate what the group created in the previous lesson, now retold as a narrative accompanied by soft music. In groups of four they make freeze-frames of the newcomers at work in the hospital, and of the resident citizens being thrown out

of their jobs at the hospital. The people in the freeze-frames are interviewed by the drama pedagogue, and it becomes obvious they have never met 'the others'. The students are then divided into two new groups, each with a leader at the front. The leader makes a movement and the group imitates the movement as they move towards each other in turn, in a rolling motion pattern where a new leader steps forward for each wave. High, heavy music accompanies the movements, which become more and more aggressive (symbolic, since they are not allowed to touch each other).

Lesson four: The drama pedagogue turns the movements from the previous lesson into a narrative and declares that the town council, or the dictator, realises something has to be done. They call for global experts in community building and facilitators of integration. The students have to decide what kind of expert they are, for example, a psychologist who is an expert in anger-management. Each of the students receives a nametag, which they fill in and wear on their shirts. In their roles as experts, they meet at a conference led by the teacher-in-role as the conference host, where they attempt to end the violence and get the people in the town to live in peace. At first, they meet in pairs, and share their previous experiences. Next, in groups of four, they make wise suggestions for the town, which they show as 'film clips' (small scenes). Finally, there is one more change of perspective, in the form of a time jump into the future. The students go into role as journalists talking to citizens one year after the conference, to find out what happened when the town followed the expert advice. This is reported back to the teacher-in-role as newspaper editor.

2.3. Theoretical Perspective

The research was guided by Leontiev's activity theory [66], in which 'activity' refers to a group of people engaged in changing phenomena in their world by changing and developing a specific object (the "raw material") [66]. When people identify opportunities to create things meeting their needs, it leads to motives to act. Many different kinds of actions aimed towards certain goals constitute an activity. It is the object, and the motive that has been risen by the object, that drives the activity but it is the actions aimed at goals that give the activity its direction [66]. An activity is a response to a societal need and for example, education is an answer to the need of society to educate people. Civic education can be regarded as a response to the need of citizens with knowledge about democracy.

Using process drama enables framing of a learning area and giving it a meaningful context in which exploration can take place [41]. Previous research by Hallgren [56] showed that process drama can be understood as two different kinds of activities with different motives/objects. One is the educational activity, with the motive/object to develop learning in a specific area and the other is the temporal fictional activity, the in-role-sequences, where the object is under construction. In the fictional activity, the motive to act is derived from the frame, the pre-text, which function as one of the main tools for the participants [56]. Understanding process drama in education as two activities implies that the overall object of the educational activity, in this case, the civic teaching activity, may not dominate, or even become visible during work in the temporary fictional activity, as it may stifle the development of the tentative and creative fiction [56].

A fictional activity is described as having a playful format [56], containing quality aspects such as a high level of participation, enough freedom to act and to negotiate tools, rules and goals, according to van Oers definition [57,58]. However, a playful format does not mean that everything has to be fun. An improvisational playful format relates more to the possibility for participants to influence what is going to happen. In improvisation, there are no right answers [56], and frequent opportunities to have an impact encourages participants to endure uncertainty, and to engage in creative solutions [58].

2.4. Data Generation and Analysis

Data for this small case study were mainly generated through observations of four 60-min drama lessons, which were video recorded using two cameras on small movable tripods [67]. These movable tripods allowed the unpredictable activity of the process drama to be captured as the action moved around the room. Interviews and informal chats with teachers and students were also conducted.

The video films were transcribed with a focus on students' and pedagogues' actions during the process drama civic education lessons to understand what they were trying to achieve. In an abductive analysis, we moved continuously between films, transcripts and theory and both the manifest visible and the latent implicit in the transcripts and films were taken into account. Here the interviews and chats are only used as illustrations.

In relation to our research questions, activity theory [66] and the concept of playful format [57,58] was applied to understand what kind of learning situations process drama may offer to civic education on democracy, critical thinking and migration. The qualitative analysis concerned three areas of interest and was conducted in three phases. The first phase focused the drama pedagogue's and teacher's pedagogical actions from an activity theory perspective (cf. Leontiev, [66]). What goals were the teachers' actions aimed at, what were they trying to achieve? The teachers' actions were then put in relation to the students' actions and a picture became visible of how and what kind of activity their actions created and enabled. In the second phase of the analysis the students' actions were in focus. The actions were considered in relation to what constitutes a playful format of an activity, like high level of participation, freedom to act and to negotiate tools, rules and goals. Finally, the process drama activity was related to the actual civic subject content. This more inductive analysis was based on a practical educational perspective trying to identify didactical difficulties and possibilities.

3. Results

This section is not strictly tied to the research questions, instead the results are organised according to the three phases of the analysis: (1) Pedagogical actions, (2) Students' actions in relation to an activity with a playful format, and finally (3) The process drama activity in relation to civic subject content.

3.1. Pedagogical Actions

Concerning the drama pedagogue's and the teacher's actions, what they were aiming for and what they were trying to achieve, three themes were distinguished: *Creating an aesthetic and democratic space*, *Applying a dialogical approach* and *Creating a fictional activity*, described below.

3.1.1. Creating an Aesthetic and Democratic Space

The drama pedagogue placed all chairs in a large circle and then used the floor as a forum for exploration, where students were allowed to use their bodies either to build a specific place or to interact with each other in improvisation or dance composition. Sometimes the atmosphere, the rhythm of the room, was accentuated by the drama pedagogue drumming or playing music in the background. All this can be understood as if the drama pedagogue deliberately opened up and invited the group into a shared aesthetic space where different meanings through different modalities could be expressed and negotiated.

The drama pedagogue's effort to re-furnish the room before the students arrived is notable. By stacking away all the tables and leaving the chairs in a circle, she created a new, open space, where all the participants were in a similar position and where the leader was not in a special position of authority relative to the students. This was a power levelling action, a starting point, which signalled the possibility that anyone in the circle could be the leader for a while. However, it was also an arrangement where no one could hide, and everyone was exposed to everyone else.

The moving of the chairs also signalled other elements. The drama pedagogue moved the furniture on her own before and after the lesson. These actions imply how unusual and insignificant similar occasions are in Swedish secondary schools. The actions also signalled to the students the degree of importance of the drama activity and indirectly revealed the school's power structure.

3.1.2. Applying a Dialogical Approach

The drama pedagogue combined her drama repertoire with a dialogical approach creating a relational and non-confrontational climate. At the start of the first lesson, she spent time getting to

know the students by name and showing them how they were going to work together. 'Working together' implied that everybody would participate but she allowed the students to opt-out when she discretely said they could sit by the side for a while if they needed. Only once, a student took this opportunity. The drama pedagogue also explained that everyone could do as much as they wanted at any given moment. When asking a question she turned to one student, or one group, at a time. Everyone was offered a space which she/he could use or decline, but all of them had been included. Not only those with the strongest voices nor the ones with the longest arms.

The drama pedagogue also assumed responsibility for dividing the students into pairs or groups whenever this was required. This meant that students continuously worked with new partners during the lessons. The drama pedagogue's intention, mentioned in a chat during a break, was to make everybody feel included and needed. The different levels of student involvement demonstrated that the students were able to make an individual choice. The drama pedagogue acknowledged their contributions, irrespective of the level of participation. Students were thanked, rather than praised, for participating. This can be understood as a sign of interdependence, as process drama work depends on students willingness to contribute. No contribution from the students means no content and no action, alas no process drama.

3.1.3. Creating a Fictional Activity

In the observed process drama lessons, the drama pedagogue first invited the students into a narrative by telling an introduction to a story, using different modalities such as different voice registers, gestures and movements. The story, designed to focus on the civic content to be covered, was initially owned by the drama pedagogue. However, a shift occurred quite quickly as she brought the students into the story and onto the train, and suddenly the story was about them. For a short time, they were the main characters within the frame created by the drama pedagogue. The following excerpt begins when the students are moving around within the circle of chairs.

Excerpt 1: On the train

The drama pedagogue guides them through a warm-up exercise and says in a narrative tone:
You are in a hurry and you have to catch a train.

The students move fast, rushing around in the empty space.

Normal voice: *Grab a chair and squeeze together as close as you can in the middle of the circle. Everyone takes a chair from the original circle and squeezes together.*

Narrative voice: *You are on the train and have been for quite some time. You are falling asleep and maybe you lean on the person sitting next to you.*

Nearly all the students close their eyes and lean on a classmate.

Narrative voice: *You are on your way to a place of your dreams. You are leaving because, where you come from, life is very difficult for several reasons.*

Normal voice: *Imagine what hardships you have been suffering from.*

The drama pedagogue is then quiet for a while.

Narrative voice: *None of you have been to this place where you are going, but everybody has heard about it and it sounds like a dream. What are you dreaming about there on the train?*

Normal voice: *Take a little time to think and then open your eyes and turn to the person sitting next to you and tell each other about your dreams.*

Everybody looks engaged and talk a great deal in their pairs.

The excerpt exemplifies how the drama pedagogue used the art form to create a fictional context by using a narrative register. The students followed her instructions without hesitation or comment.

It is uncommon for Swedish teenagers to be so physically close in a classroom setting, however, the narration created a fictional space where everything, or at least *other* things, were possible. It appeared as if the students accepted and submitted to the temporary fictional activity the pedagogue had designed for them. Or, phrased in another way, the students were able to identify motives for entering the fictional activity. The movement of their bodies suggests that they had adopted the role of a traveller on the train. Their motives to join could be anything from curiosity about the story they were invited to co-create, to not wanting to be the only one to opt-out.

3.2. Students' Actions in Relation to an Activity with a Playful Format

Regarding the student's actions within an activity with a playful format four themes were distinguished: *High activity and engagement at different levels*, *Freely exploring new tools*, *Acting in relation to vague rules*, and *Lack of explicit goals*.

3.2.1. High Activity and Engagement at Different Levels

Most notable during these lessons was the high level of activity in the room, compared to a more traditional civic education classroom. All of the participating students were engaged, each on her or his level, but everyone engaging with the tasks during the four lessons. Choosing their level of participation in a role-taking situation when working in pairs could look like this. Some students used body language to experiment with ideas in role in the middle of the circle of chairs. Some students leant lazily on chairs while talking to each other in role. One pair sat almost with their backs towards their partner, as trying to talk as someone else in role and at the same time protecting oneself by avoiding eye contact. These varying ways to engage reflects the instructions given by the drama pedagogue that the students could do as much as they chose, and acted accordingly.

3.2.2. Freely Exploring New Tools

The students had little or none previous experience of process drama since drama is not taught as a school subject in Sweden. This implies that the students did not have access to drama tools or strategies other than those provided by the drama pedagogue and were unable to suggest alternative ways to explore the civic content. To overcome this, the drama pedagogue chose a few strategies and used them repeatedly. Each time these strategies were used, something new was added or they were combined in new ways, creating new angles or frames to help the students approach the civic subject content. Often, the students started working in role in pairs, expanding in-role talk into a freeze-frame or a scene with another pair and, finally, bringing everything together by looking at each other's freeze-frames or group improvisations. This repeated, step-by-step progression reassured the students that it was safe to try, and also helped them to advance by getting to know, and becoming familiar with, the medium. As soon as the students understood the strategy they used it the way they wanted. Since the students were not familiar with the art form no pressure was put on them concerning clarity of dramatic expression. Thus, the students could not negotiate *what* tools to use, but *how* to use them. Offering both safety and challenge is a fine balancing act. The students, in this case, seemed to appreciate the non-threatening approach, as everyone participated happily. However, they did not notice the progression and some found it boring and repetitive after a while, when an almost identical strategy was used again, albeit with a new twist.

3.2.3. Acting in Relation to Vague Rules

The drama pedagogue took responsibility for the process of trust-building, which can be related to what rules are forming the activity. She tried to achieve this by using a dialogical approach to scaffold an accepting climate with vague and wide rules and with fairly low expectations concerning both the subject content and the work form. In line with this, the drama pedagogue accepted the students' contributions to the drama without any comments or questions. Consequently, the students were free to act without being evaluated, but these rules were not clearly stated.

Excerpt 2: Eavesdropping

After a while, talking in pairs about their dreams on the train, the drama pedagogue tells them she is going to move close to them as if she is eavesdropping. When she taps a pair on their shoulders the pair shall continue their conversation about their dreams. Almost every pair says something when it is their turn, but very quietly and with single words. Those who stay quiet are not prompted to say anything, instead, the drama pedagogue moves on to the next pair.

What the people on the train dream about are: *Badminton, bananas, money, no one needs to work, no threats, you get loads of money, no rules, don't have to go to school, do whatever you want, chocolate fountains everywhere, huge sports arenas and new cars.* / ... /

The next step is to create a freeze-frame of their dreams in groups of four. The students stand up from the chairs and out of their roles. In groups, they create freeze-frames using their bodies. The freeze-frames show some of the dreams mentioned before. The other students are asked to interpret each other's freeze-frames and the drama pedagogue acknowledges what they have done. She then tells the students to get back on to the train, which they do, and they huddle together again.

Even though the students in role had been involved in lively conversations when talking to the person sitting next to them, they condensed what they had said into a couple of words or nothing, when they spoke for everyone to hear. It seems as if being in role did not offer enough protection at that early stage of the drama, either concerning achievement or concerning classmates.

3.2.4. Lack of Explicit Goals

Apart from knowing they had civics, the students were never explicitly told about the learning objectives for the four lessons. When the students were asked what they thought about learning civics through process drama, many responded that it was new, different and fun, but they never got a question about what they had learnt. Students reported having fun when working in role and also appreciated the possibility of exploring different perspectives. The students experienced and valued the playful format. During a reflection-phase, some students turned to the participant-observer they were sitting next to in the circle.

Excerpt 3: This was good and fun!

Student A: It was good that everybody could do as much as they wanted and be whoever they wanted, and it became a story! That was good!

Part.Obs.: Is it possible to think it's school work too?

Student A + B: YEEES!

Student C: Everybody is allowed to do something and then it turns out different, which is fun!

As we understand it, these students experienced a process in which they all had a chance to decide, individually, how much they wanted to participate and in what way, which was emphasised as important for them. They also put forward the presence of multiple perspectives and the display of many different solutions to the same task. This clearly indicates that the drama work, to a large extent, was conducted in a playful format and that the students paid attention to and appreciated the format. Given that, maybe it is not surprising that from the perspective of these students, the goal was the creation of a story being proud of, not really learning about democracy. Nevertheless, it raises the question of whether being the co-creator of a story is enough in relation to the learning objectives of civic education, or not.

3.3. The Process Drama Activity in Relation to Civic Subject Content

Finally, the process drama activity was related to the civic subject content. Difficulties and possibilities were noticed, and two themes were distinguished: *Consequences of an open pre-text* and *Balancing student input and learning outcomes*.

3.3.1. Consequences of an Open Pre-Text

The pre-text the drama pedagogue had planned based on the civic teacher's requirements, focused on democracy and migration (see under Section 2.2 Process drama intervention). During the process drama, the drama pedagogue fed everything the students created in role into the narration when taking them from one phase of the drama to the next. In so doing, she honoured the students' input and showed them respect as co-creators with the potential to make an impact. It was also an act of showing the students they could be confident and rely on the leader.

Excerpt 4: Feeding student input into the overall narration

After having seen all the freeze-frames and the students are back on the train, the drama pedagogue says in a narrative voice:

It was exactly those pictures the people on the train had in their minds. Imagine all the sports they will be playing in the huge arenas and the amount of chocolate they will be eating when not having to go to school and all the money that could be spent on anything. | . . . |

And when the train journey was coming to an end, they were hoping to fill their empty stomachs with chocolate as soon as they got off the train. The drama pedagogue ends the narration.

One can assume these dreams, like 'don't have to go to school', 'loads of money' and so on, might be the students' ideas of teenagers dreams in general, neither the refugees' dreams nor their own specific dreams. Only one comment, 'no threats', differed from the others. When some of the words were replicated in freeze-frames the phrase 'no threat' was omitted, as it was overruled by 'chocolate fountains', 'cars', 'huge sports arenas' and 'not having to do anything'. The drama pedagogue made no comments during either the eavesdropping or the freeze-frame parts of the drama, other than to acknowledge what was said or done with an appreciative nod or smile. She did not ask any questions or probe for elaboration when answers were brief.

A key input affecting the drama, which the drama pedagogue could not have predicted, was the appearance of a dictator. This happened during the contextualising of the town when one student said he was the *Castle of the dictator*. This comment inspired the next student to step onto the floor saying: *OK, then I am the dictator!* This student stayed in that role for the main part of the remaining lessons. The drama pedagogue included this in the narrative, as it was a student contribution. However, even though dictatorship can relate to the learning about democracy, it seemed to cause problems as it diverted the focus from the primary questions about migration and integration.

Another way of understanding the introduction of the dictator could be that the drama was not enough framed, the fiction was not clearly established, thus the story became too obvious and too close to the students' reality in this specific town. That could be a reason why they chose (more or less unconsciously) to put a distance between the drama and the reality by introducing the dictator. 'We have no dictator in our town so it cannot be about us!'. It can also be interpreted as if this was a chance for the students to pose personal questions and maybe they were interested in exploring what life would be like in a dictatorship.

3.3.2. Balancing Student Input and Learning Outcomes

In the *Newcomers drama*, teacher-in-role was used a couple of times, mainly to be a role model in playfulness and to demonstrate how role-taking works. Although, when the students in role had dreamt about 'cars' and 'chocolate fountains' and re-created this through freeze-frames, the drama pedagogue and the civic teacher used teacher-in-role with higher status than usual (see *Vignette*).

In their roles as customs officials, the teachers harshly gave orders to the newcomers. This counteracting and challenging of the idyllic picture the students had painted, we understand as an attempt to help the students to widen their perspectives. The students' cowering bodies and actions in role in this situation, showed they were frightened and they behaved as told. What we do not know is what the students felt or thought, either in role or as themselves, because they were not asked about this.

Neither the drama pedagogue nor the teacher asked any probing questions after being in role. Neither were the dreams of the people on the train placed in relation to the students' own dreams, or to other people's dreams in other situations, or situations resembling those of the refugees on the train. It can be assumed that by not asking questions, the students were left on their own in the meaning-making process.

Sometimes during the process drama, students took their reflections a step further when asked if they saw any connection between the drama and the outside world. The question was posed to the whole class and those who had an answer could raise their hand. A few students mentioned refugees having to move from country to country. One student said, *'There are people who can live like this, suffer like this. Not everybody but . . . It is possible to feel like this.'* Some students also noted that the dictator, as played by the student in role, behaved quite unpredictably, and resembled, for example, the dictator of North Korea.

At the end of the process drama, the drama pedagogue used the drama strategy *mantle of the expert* [54]. The students, in role as experts on conflict resolution and migration, were asked to come up with different solutions to the problems in the fictive town. The students-as-experts suggested tightening laws to stop violence, dethroning the dictator, expanding the hospital to generate more jobs, re-educating the unemployed, and giving social welfare or social benefits to those in need. Although these were sensible suggestions for similar situations, the students did not address the complexity of the problem, which would require much more elaborate answers considering their educational level.

Summarizing our findings, teaching civics through process drama implies a different kind of educational activity. In this case the drama pedagogue's dialogical actions created an aesthetic and democratic space as point of departure. Adding a fictional frame by using a pre-text the students were invited to become co-creators in an activity with a playful format and their engagement was notably high. Since process drama and working in a playful format in the school context was new to the students, they could not consciously negotiate the rules, goals or the choice of tools. Still, such negotiations did occur, but more due to the paving for this done by the drama pedagogue. Concerning learning about democracy, migration and critical thinking, the fictional activity initiated by the pre-text created a context for subject content to be explored. Different drama strategies, but mainly role-taking, enabled embodied and sometimes emotional access to different perspectives on the subject content. However, it was obvious there were no challenging or probing questions being asked by the drama pedagogue or the civic teacher, neither in, nor out of role. As a consequence, the full learning potential of process drama in civics education could not be achieved.

4. Discussion

The discussion is presented according to the three areas of the analysis put in relation to our two main research questions.

4.1. How Can Civic Subject Content Be Approached through Process Drama?

One of our research questions concerned how civic subject content could be approached through process drama and most tangible was the creation of a fictional frame for the civic subject content but even before that a different kind of educational space was created. A drama pedagogue can be seen as an artisan who carefully selects what and how to do from a teaching repertoire of drama practice. This repertoire includes knowledge about dramatic elements like place, time, action, roles driven by dramatic tension and focus, and creating atmosphere and symbolic meaning [68]. Such knowledge is

used not only to create fictional places for learning in role but also to create pedagogical spaces for interaction and learning out of role.

By establishing an aesthetic, democratic and dialogical space, the drama pedagogue's actions show that she is consciously striving to create a certain activity. This activity resembles the safe classroom environment based on open participation and collaborative reasoning recommended by Hauver et al. [24], and the inclusive classroom climate Bickmore and Parker [25] put forward. Being part of this democratic classroom experience, most likely contributes to student agency and *civic literacy* [26] and can be seen as *socialization to citizenship* [20].

What then was added, which could be seen as an extra bonus to the educational context, was the creation of the temporary fictional activity by the use of a pre-text focusing the civic content. Through a contextualization of the topics to be studied the students had a chance to experience different perspectives on democracy and migration with their whole being, by the use of different drama strategies and role-taking. Embodied participation in a process drama, could mean these students were participating in active citizenship which according to Lindmark [18], regarded as difficult to implement in a civics classroom.

As confirmation and clarification of what the students already knew, the process drama worked well. However, to become a process drama for change of understanding, which is what one should be aiming for according to Bolton [69], the drama work has to take place at an experiential, emotional level. Bolton [69] claims there must be a cognitive act connected to an emotional experience, which expands the understanding at least a tiny bit, to be able to talk about learning. From our point of view, these students did not really get a chance to achieve this. The students' in-role work was honoured but not challenged at all, neither in the fictional activity nor out of role in the educational activity.

Despite the students did not have any previous knowledge about the work form, and only got four drama lessons, the playful format of the activity appears to be successful since all students actively participated. This is not remarkable in relation to previous research on process drama, instead it adds to the amount of studies showing high level of participation and engagement among students involved in process drama (cf. [46–48]). Apart from an apparent increased motivation and level of engagement among all students and a positive classroom climate with intense interactions and practicing of social skills, something else was also noticed. The process drama work offered a possibility to work with a delicate problem the students experience in their own lives according migration and refugees, but *as if* it was something different, something they could 'play around with' a bit. 'Playing around' is the same as exploring and can be understood as a divergent learning situation [5]. When the dictator was included the drama took another turn. Regardless of how the dictator's appearance is understood, it is an example of a more divergent learning situation where goals cannot be totally predicted. The pre-text designed by the drama pedagogue worked as a frame for the students mainly to carry out tasks but successively they also explored and filled it with their own questions and their knowledge, in line with what Dunn and Stinson recommend [61]. This is also related to what O'Connor [52] means when clarifying the differences between general role-play, which focus a single situation and process drama, which adds a context for the specific situation and more strategies and perspectives to tackle a topic which eventually creates a whole story [52]. Being a co-creator of a story can resemble the democratic right and the obligation of being a co-creator of a society.

4.2. How Can Process Drama Contribute to Civic Education?

The fictional activity was part of a civic educational activity and the students were supposed to use process drama to explore democracy and migration to expand their civic learning. The lack of the teachers probing and challenging the students both in and out of role can be questioned concerning civic education, but also in relation to the low expectations placed on the students when working in the activity with the playful format. Could these issues have been addressed without violating the rules of the playful format of the fictional activity? According to van Oers [70] the complexity of the rules and tools should increase continually in accordance to both age and knowledge when working in

an activity with a playful format. The problematic thing here is to match the quite high level of civic knowledge demanded in grade nine with the lack of drama experience among these students.

To handle this, and for process drama really to contribute to secondary civic education it either takes a teacher with subject-specific knowledge in both civic education and process drama or two teachers cooperating. In this case there were two teachers with different subject specific knowledge but since there was no real agreement of how to conduct the process drama the civics teacher became passive. She was mainly there as a learner of how to use process drama.

A key element in the process drama repertoire is the ability to deliberately shift between the two activities with different formats. When entering the fictional activity with a playful format, the students should be allowed to negotiate levels of participation, form and goals and impact to a much greater extent than in the traditional classroom setting. This is why and how the greater levels of freedom in learning through role and fiction can add to conventional teaching [56]. However, even a playful format needs challenging and probing questions, for instance, to create tension which drives the drama.

Coming out of role is a central aspect of process drama, and this also means stepping back into the educational activity with other rules, tools and goals not negotiable in the same way as when in role. This is when participants have an opportunity to pause, think and reflect, and the teacher can ask deeper and more challenging questions in relation to the civic content and learning objectives. The civics teacher is the expert, rather than the drama pedagogue, and in a position to ask probing questions from a civics perspective concerning what was co-created. The story the students created has now become an object to view from the outside, from a distance. This reflective space, between the self and the role, reality and story/fiction, holds a didactic potential mentioned earlier and is an excellent starting point for discussion [14]. What earlier experienced and felt in role, can now be explored out of role to create both cognitive and affective learning. This is also when the 'Why-question' becomes crucial, highlighted both by the Swedish School Inspection [35] and Stinson [51] referring to Freire. In the observed process drama this did not happen at all and as we understand, it had mainly to do with lack of time for the teachers to plan their co-work. This is not unusual when drama pedagogues are invited to schools to use process drama a couple of lessons. However, the question is if we can afford not to do this more consciously?

Co-teaching such as this demands a clear contract between two partners with specific knowledge and skillsets. The pair must negotiate who is in charge at different points in the process and who has the right to act. In this process drama, the drama pedagogue was there as a process drama expert, but not as a civic education expert. If two teachers are cooperating like this, time to discuss goals, methods, tasks and responsibility are crucial. The understanding of the different format of the two activities and what kind of questions you can pose in each of them is also of importance. The playful format may never be violated, but even when in role the students must be challenged.

Not only the teachers but also the students need time to get to know the methods and to understand the different formats of the two activities. The students need not only to feel, but to *know* they are entering a playful fictional activity where they can participate with freedom to negotiate the rules, tools and goals, including content [56,57]. They also need to know they are not to be assessed concerning their civic knowledge when in role, since their input is made through the role, as a playful learning tool. These rules should be explicit but the students had not been informed about what working in role meant in relation to the assessment of their civic education course. They had no knowledge about the implications of a playful format on the learning situation and they did not know that when speaking in role they could not be held responsible for the actions of their characters [14,69,71]. To avoid this, it is common to start a process drama by using a collective role-play, such as 'people on a train'. It is used to avoid participants feeling excluded or exposed in front of others. The collective role should make participants feel safe, by building a supportive atmosphere of trust, a collective 'we' [14,71]. As the process drama progresses, individual characters may take form. In this case the students did not behave as if they felt sufficiently safe in relation to their classmates. The role-taking shall be used as an explorative tool, which it probably started off as when the students were talking engaged in pairs

as refugees on the train. Thus, when they were to speak in front of their peers at this early stage in the drama, the situation for learning slipped away. The pairs long talk in role were condensed into a few words, where nuances and different perspectives could not be distinguished. It was not clear whether everybody listening understood that a pair in role was answering in character rather than as themselves. It was obvious that some students believed it was better to show off or to repeat what someone else had said to save their skin instead of taking the risk to expose themselves.

Teacher-in-role as a tool, the process drama speciality, enables the teacher to step inside the fictional frame and act in relation to the students' roles [14,71]. In this process drama, teacher-in-role was mainly used as a role model in playfulness and to support the students' role-taking. This was useful and appropriate, since going into role in the educational setting was new for the students and they got inspired. When using teacher-in-role, the teachers' normal position and status is set aside, and it is possible to play with power dynamics by choosing another role and status [56], thus encouraging the students to sharpen their arguments or reflect at a deeper level in role. This is another reason to use teacher-in-role [69,71], which hardly happened in our case. It was only at one point teacher-in-role confronted and challenged the students in role and added some complexity to the situation when in role as custom officials confronting the refugees on the train. As mentioned earlier, it is important that this strategy is not used to check student knowledge, or that the pedagogue succumbs to the temptation of becoming a teacher-in-disguise, as Berggraf Sæbø [59] puts it. This warning should be taken seriously but not to a degree where the tool becomes ineffective. A playful format of the fictional activity does not imply a situation without tension, rather the opposite since tension is the driving force for the drama. In order to deepen both the process drama and the students' knowledge, the activity with a playful format must be developed due to internal tension and needs, as van Oers puts it [70]. As a teacher one should not hesitate to use teacher-in-role due to fear of becoming teacher-in-disguise, but to avoid that risk knowledge about the art-form is crucial.

By allowing an educational activity to include a temporary fictional activity with a specific set of rules, another form of civic education is possible where playfulness and exploration guide the students' actions and object creation. This particular process drama can be described more as contextualization rather than the conceptualization of a certain civic educational content, although, it would be possible to open for the latter as well, a contextualized conceptualization of an educational content.

5. Limitations

This is a small study, focused on what was accomplished during four civics lesson in two weeks. The fact that the study was limited to these four lessons became a problem mainly concerning learning civics. Since we have no data from the following ordinary civic lessons where the possibility for deeper reflection and meaning-making could be more directly put in relation to the learning objectives, we can not say much about what the students learnt. However, observing the following lessons was not possible due to the summer holiday starting and they had no more civics. This tells us something about when during a whole school year an aesthetic implementation is conducted and the degree of its importance.

Future research: From a Swedish perspective, there is still a demand of more and longitudinal studies on this topic in educational contexts reminding of the Swedish one where drama is only an educational method.

6. Conclusions

The primary objective of this study was to investigate process drama as a way of teaching parts of the civic curriculum, such as democracy, migration and critical thinking. Research into both civic education and process drama provides support for process drama as a successful strategy [29,32,46,48]. However, we wanted to explore this further in a Swedish context.

This small case study consisted of four civic education lessons in lower secondary school taught through process drama with students with no previous drama experience. Based on our observations,

we would like to suggest what a drama pedagogue can and cannot add to civic education in a secondary school. The drama pedagogue was invited to teach as an expert on process drama, but not on civic education. She co-taught with a civics teacher, who wanted to learn about process drama to find out how she could apply it in her own civic education. For these four civic lessons, the drama pedagogue created an interactive and physical space, allowing all students to be active at their own desired level. This style of teaching, along with role-taking and debates, called 'activating teaching' and it correlates strongly with the development of democratic competence [32]. The dialogical approach used by the drama pedagogue added a democratic opportunity for everybody to have their say during the four lessons, resembling the teaching that, according to Franklin [26], promotes student agency and *civic literacy*.

Based on a pre-text, a temporary fictional activity was co-created by the students and the drama pedagogue. The playful format [58] allowed the students freedom. In order for the process to continue, the drama pedagogue gave the students as much freedom as they needed, without really negotiate rules, tools or goals. The unfolding, open-ended story generated motives for the students to engage and, at some points, explore the civic content. Their ideas were clearly valued and became the building blocks for the entire process drama, and role-taking added different perspectives to the civic content. According to the Swedish National Curriculum, civic content in year 7–9 should focus on ethical and democratic dilemmas, legal rights and obligations and what constitutes discrimination, all situated within an international perspective, to develop both local and international solidarity [35]. In the actual drama work, many of these concepts were touched upon, contextualized through the process of role-taking but not conceptualized through reflection. However, other drama strategies were also used, such as offering different modalities (e.g., body language, movement, sound/voice), as additional resources for the work. This can also be understood as part of democratic teaching or teaching democracy. Students had the possibility to experience that there is not only one correct way to express oneself. Different modalities can bring different aspects to the surface and open the way for new understanding.

The learning situations enacted by way of dramatic elements were not spaces where arts were perceived merely as decorative and nice, as in modest aesthetics [3]. In this case, the arts, and process drama, in particular, aimed to explore civic subject content, although this may not have been achieved at an in-depth level. Can the use of process drama in our case study, then, be defined as radical aesthetics (cf. [4])? Did the process drama provide a learning situation where the arts were used to explore, critically examine and investigate ambiguity and contradictions? Can role-taking, based on ethical dilemmas, deepen arguments about moral values, as the Swedish National Evaluation [36] suggests?

Given that all students actively participated, one must ask whether participating and being active always leads to a deep understanding of complexities and contradictions. The students were clearly engaged but seemed hardly emotionally touched in role, which is one of the aims of role-taking. After each phase of the drama work, the students were asked to reflect, but very little was said and neither probing nor direct questions were asked by either the drama pedagogue or the civics teacher. The important why-questions [36,51,52] were never posed. We also argue that How-questions should be added in relation to experiences in role. Both *Why?* and *How?* help students to reach a reflective dimension in-between role and self. This, what Østern [56] calls aesthetic doubling, is the didactic potential for critical examination through role-taking.

Concerning the civic subject content and learning objectives, the teacher was the expert. However, during the four lessons, the civics teacher was mainly a shadow to the drama pedagogue. Although there were good intentions for the teacher to become inspired and to learn some drama techniques, learning to teach through complex arts-methods takes a greater amount of time than these four lessons afforded. Working through the arts demands skill and the artistry to choose different strategies with delicacy, to create a certain atmosphere and to recharge dramatic tension when needed [62]. The same, of course, can be said about civics teaching and the skills and knowledge required to encourage

critical thinking, including reasoning about advantages and disadvantages, causes and consequences, and developing multiple perspectives (cf. [22]).

Based on our findings, we suggest co-teaching between civic teachers and drama pedagogues, to overcome the challenge of using process drama and role-taking in civic education to reach certain learning objectives, since individuals with knowledge in both domains are scarce. A contract between the two should be based on understanding and utilizing each other's knowledge and skills, with special attention paid to the shift between educational and fictional activity, and the special rules that apply to the latter. As Martens and Gainous [32] put forward, role-play leads to democratic competence, but even better results can be achieved when combined with more traditional teaching methods. This opens the possibility for divergent and long-term learning, based on an exploration through not only role-play but process drama. To realize such learning contexts, where different modalities and strategies are used, requires either individuals with both civic and artistic drama skills or co-teaching between civics teachers and drama pedagogues. Such co-teaching can in itself be a learning experience and an innovative adventure.

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