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Mapping Out Dramatic Forms

Abstract

This paper examines the understanding of the use of dramatic activities and conventions in the field of education and social action, differentiating between the constructs of theatre and drama in education. In order to help reflect on the practices of teachers and educators who use these didactic strategies in their profession, three diagrams are used as models to illustrate mapping techniques. The first is sketched from the process/product, play/performance and participation/non-participation variable; the second is based on the variables of verbal/non-verbal, open/closed and small scale/large scale; and the third diagram represents drama/theatre, collective/individual and change-centered/not change-centered practices. All theatrical forms in the three diagrams are concisely, but not wholly, characterized.

Introduction

A variety of theatrical terms are used in literature when referring to dramatic activities: conventions, strategic forms, and theatrical models. These are what are used in the day-to-day academic language of teachers and instructors of dramatherapy. According to Farmer (2015), these terms facilitate the development of research skills and foment negotiation, comprehension and creativity. They have also been proven to enhance performance skills, such as the development of a character and the narration of a story, and can be used in the curriculum of mainstream classes to more actively involve drama students in their own learning. For Neelands and Goode (2015:3), these academic terms are "indicators of a form in which time, space and physical presence can interact and create an imaginary dimension that creates a variety of meanings in the theatre."

Dramatic activities meet under the wide umbrella of the Applied Theater (AT). This type of theatre differs from conventional theater because of its purpose. It includes a series of forms of action concerned with personal, social and organizational change, that is to say, the "drama's power to go beyond its mere aesthetic form" (Motos, 2015:16) and "to change things throughout life" (Taylor, 2006: 93). AT comprises four major territories: first that it is focused on education, in the curricular and extracurricular space; second, in social change, in individuals and communities participation and empowerment; third in the space of psychotherapy as socio-emotional learning; and fourth, in corporate change and training in organizations (Motos, 2015: 29). AT contains the meanings suggested in the etymologies of theater and drama, vision and action. It is as much as seeing, participating, reflecting and acting.

Some terms used in drama studies, have been coined with the express purpose of identifying specific theatrical activities. For instance, Anglo-Saxon countries use *drama in education* and *theatre in education* (Great Britain); *drama process* (USA and Australia); French speakers use *dramatic expression* and *dramatic play*; while Spanish speakers tend to use *dramatization* and *theatre for the young people*.

When used by educators, many of these terms can become interchangeable; however, researchers and professionals in the field of drama education often make distinctions among them, insisting on the importance of maintaining divisions, even though one could posit that the distinctions all fall on the same continuum.

Theatre/drama education has two foci, both of which are valid. The determining factor is whether the object is to dramatize texts or to improvise. The names given to these practices are different according to the qualification mentioned above: *dramatization of dramatic play, improvisation, dramatic improvisation, creative drama, acting, drama, mime, role play, drama therapy, mantel of the expert*, etc. The list of theatrical activities used in drama education, the social action and/or drama therapy, is extensive. Nevertheless, as asserts Tselikas (2009:26), "What we are doing is using the power of transformational art in the most consistent manner possible."

Review of literature

The boundaries of Applied Theatre are surprisingly undefined and permeable, even to the extent that many concepts are superimposed. In general, this field of knowledge is influenced by psychology, sociology, pedagogy and performance arts. Moreover, the content is fluid as, "The practices are interconnected, the experts can be interchangeable, and the participants are different" (Motos, 2013). For those who most value clear differentiations, the work in the future is to systemize this area.

The forms, conventions and theatrical/dramatic activities, have been characterized and classified through diverse criteria according to a plethora of authors, including Barret, 1991; Boal, 2008; Farmer, 2007,2014; Jackson and Vine, 2013; McKnight and Scruggs, 2008; Motos, Navarro, Palanca and Tejedo, 2008; Motos, Navarro and Palanca, 2018; Neelands, 2013; Neelands and Goode, 2015; Predergast and Saxton, 2010; Prentki, 2013.

Each one of the authors mentioned above has presented different criteria. Neelands (2013: 93-98), for example, identifies 43 different dramatic conventions in an alphabetic glossary of terms (from A-Z). Before this, Neelands and Good (2015) published a compilation of 100 dramatic conventions, grouped with the following headings: construction of content, narrative, poetic action and reflection.

Barret (1991) divided the activities of dramatic expression into four categories that correspond to the four parts of the dramatization: implementation, relaxation, communication-expression and feedback.

Motos, Navarro and Palanca (2018: 6-7) categorize them in relation to the four phases of the process of expression and the structure of a theatre workshop: perceive, feel, do and reflect. These categories correspond to the following forms: initial play, sensory perception, body language, voice exercises, theatricality and choreography, and feedback. Prendergast and Saxton (2010) use the

criteria of the forms of applied theatre and propose the following terms: *theatre in education, popular theatre, theatre of the oppressed, theatre in health education, theatre for development, prison theatre, community -based theatre, museum theatre,* and *reminiscence theatre.* To these, Landy and Montegomery (2012: 130) add: *action theatre, bibliodrama, ethnodrama, grassroots theatre, playback theatre, social theatre* and *sociodrama.*

Boal (2008: 139) divides the terms into five categories with the objective of "de-specialization" and the "de-robatization of the body": reduce the distance between "feel" and "touch"; reduce the distance between "listen" and "hear"; "develop different senses at the same time"; "see everything or be seen"; and "senses have memory". Gilbert (2014) classifies dramatic terms into five categories as well, using the following variables: short/long; verbal/non-verbal; open/closed; oriented toward the final product/oriented toward the process.

Focusing on improvisation and using Viola Spolin's definitions (1963) as the foundation, McKnight and Scruggs (2008:7-8), classify dramatic activities in accordance with the competences that are developed: *listening*, *directions, focus, oral communication, team building, empathy, self-awareness, self-efficacy, self-confidence, critical and creative problem solving,* and *idea generation*.

On the other hand, Mages (2016) focuses on some of the most prominent forms of drama and theatre, including: creative drama, drama in education, (*process drama*), theatre in education, *readers theatre* (theatre of/for readers), theatre (*playbuilding, ethnodrama* and *ethnotheatre*). Beatby Beat Press groups the terms with the following labels: *warmups, ensemble building, break out of shell, focus, creativity, improv* and *theatre basic*.

In relation to examples of drama activities used in teaching a foreign language (Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)), there are yet other classifications. Boquete (2014) cites: dramatization, improvisation, mime, role play, staging. In the same sense, Beaven and Álvarez (2015) have labeled them: *play, role play, simulation, storytelling, text analysis, development of memorization, improvisation, elocution* and *critical thinking.*

Considering the existing terminological variety we raise a question: Could we have a classification based on the main variables that reflect the nature of the different dramatic forms used in AT? The term that addresses this article is "dramatic forms" (conventions, strategies, activities or theatrical modalities), applied in the different territories covered by the Applied Theater.

In general, the criteria used to classify these terms are theatrical and didactic, meaning that they are focused, principally, on the different points of organization that are involved in a workshop geared toward creative dramatic expression, including the activities that are included in each of the steps. The main underlying techniques are the competences and forms of Applied Theatre. It is, in any case, necessary to see the field with an epistemological foundation. This can more optimally be seen through different geometric organizers and with different variables.

The classifications above are based on only one or two variables that obviously do not cover all the significant specificity of terms. Nevertheless, given the rich educational field of theatre, it is convenient to clarify that more variables can be used. In the case of this paper, considering the specialized literature and in order to more faithfully map out drama activities, we suggest nine variables.

Criteria to Classify Dramatic Strategies

To classify activities for applied theatre, three diagrams (cubes) have been created to make the dynamic more visual. The first cube reflects three variables that are not bipolar but rather continuous: process/product, play/performance and participation/non-participation. The second includes: verbal/non-verbal, open/closed, small scale/large scale. In the third cube, the variables are: drama/theatre, individual/collective, with a focus on change/no focus on change.

These three cubes, each designed on three variables, are graphic resources that can be useful to understand the epistemological nature of the dramatic forms that they included. Each one of the dramatic forms mapped in the first cube could be mapped in the second or third cube and vice versa. This fact indicates that chosen variables are those that represent the main aspects of the nature of the dramatic forms. They have been distributed in three diagrams, as it is not possible to graphically represent a six-dimensional figure.

The location of the different dramatic forms at the poles or in the center of the cube is not accidental. For example, "warming up" is characterized by being an activity focused on the process and participation; "conventional theater" would be just the opposite; and "drama process" is located in the center, between play and performance, and closer to product than "improvisation" or "dramatic play".

First Diagram

The three variables (process, play, participation) meet at the vortex located in the lower left corner of the cube. Each vector, then, emerges from this point, toward a different finality: product, performance and non-participation. This diagramming can be used to map out dramatic activities concisely, but not exhaustively.

The following is a brief description of the three variables represented in the different points of this cube that define drama activities.

- *Process/product*. In the initial activities, the orientation is focused on results and how they may affect the audience, the direction of the process, and/or the experience of the participants (Fleming 2006). Activities focused on the process are more creative than those introduced later on. (Kao and O'Neill 1998) and are liberating outlets for the participants. Nevertheless, the process and the product are often interchangeable in a theatrical project, For example, the activities used to delve into specific subjects (improvization, hot seat, monolog, interiorization, dual-work, etc.), can become the foundation of a theatrical script, with the profile and finality of what is ultimately seen by the public.
- *Play/performance*. Symbolic play – a spontaneous manifestation of a person's internal process that appears during the second year of life, when a child's imagination becomes vivid and begins to conform to the general norms of play and socialization. Games involving both expression and drama are equally evolved during this time. "Performance" implies the inclusion of theatrical elements and resources, such as improvisation, what is understood as global staging of a production, and the interaction with the audience. Dramatization/body language is included in the understanding of performance and visual art, meaning that the audiences are exclusively observers, also indicating that this is ultimately a production.
- *Participation/non-participation*. The highest forms of participation are related to drama or *theatre for learning;* however, when the fundamental question has to do with the role of the audience, lower forms are linked to *theatre for performance*.

Using the above definitions, each drama activity can be categorized according to a cross-section, but not exclusive, range of variables with which instructors can identify specific activities used in

their lesson. The main purpose of the cube is that it be used as an educational tool (see figure 1), and, according to Piazzoli (2018: 197), that it reflects the expansive field of theatre. However, it is important to note that it is not intended as a precise mapping for all applied theatre or social action settings. The following, therefore, is a judicious, but not exhaustive, description of each drama technique that appears in the first diagram.

- o *Warming up*. Activities that help participants warm up in the beginning of a session. The purpose is to break the ice on many levels. These techniques are energetic, create an openness for what is to come, help participants lose inhibitions and prepare them for the next phase of dramatization.
- o *Games of expression*. These are games that have different layers of meaning and are structured around the creative initiative of "what if…?" Participants use their imagination to give a targeted reality a fictitious quality, that go beyond the normal technical abilities of an individual and the functionality of any object. The expressions produced in this dynamic are usually objective and make sense only for those who are implicated in the activity from the outset; furthermore, they are, for the most part, playful and fanciful.
- o *Dramatic play*. This is a collective dynamic that has the objective of uniting the members of a group, establishing roles within that group, and, without a written script, helping participants to collaborate, using improvisation based on whichever subject had been decided upon beforehand or required by the situation. In this activity, there is no separation between the audience and actors: all the participants perform within their respective roles.
- o *Improvisation.* Participants represent an impromptu topic -one that had not been prepared or rehearsed in advance. Normally, the basis of the dramatization is based on an interpretation of a given script.
- o *Think Tank.* This technique consists of the creation of a situation in which the participants teach each other. They put themselves in "departments" in order to explore and/or learn about a different aspect of whatever subject had been chosen. They then form new groups which consist of one person from each of the original "departments"; their job is to report to the other members of the new grouping what they had learned in the other areas.

Figure 1.
First diagram (cube) to classify dramatic activities. Original design.
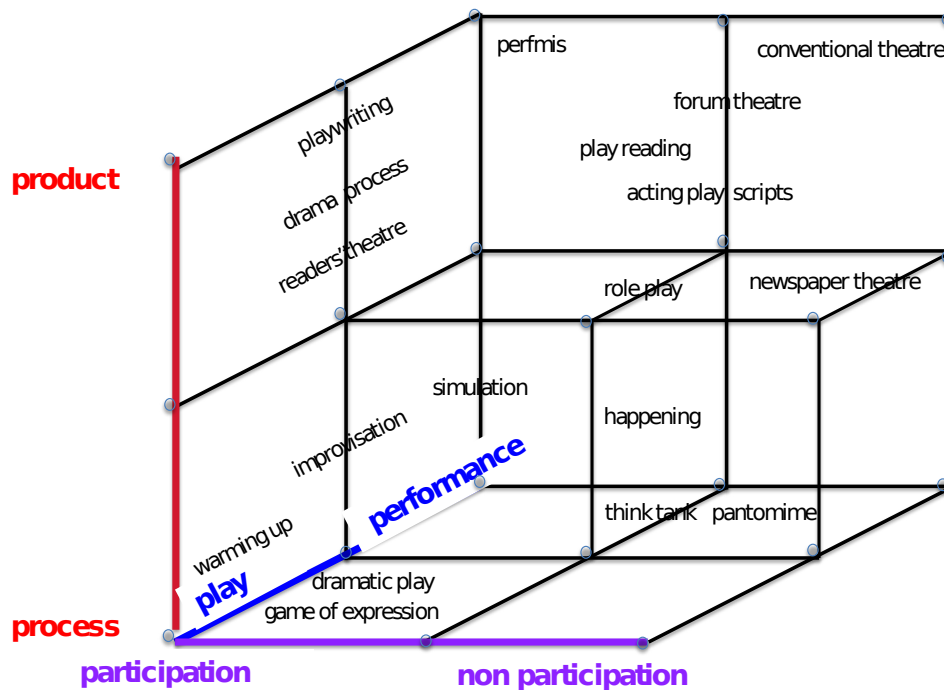
- o *Role play.* This dramatic activity is referred to as an educational framework. The participants ask either one or various members of their group to imagine themselves in a situation that has been outlined beforehand by the teacher/instructor. They then act either as themselves or as a character they have previously created. While one group performs, the other participants act as the audience.
- o *Simulation.* This is role play on a large scale. The intention is to create a complete "world", (a television program, election of a representative, mediation situation, etc.). Students can either play themselves or interpret another person or character.
- o *Play reading.* A recitation of theatrical texts.
- o *Reader's theatre.* Participants use written texts and/or literary fragments or a true fact or a subject from virtually any curricular subject matter and transform them into theatrical dialogue. They then give a dramatic reading of the dialog in front of the rest of the group.
- o *Playwriting.* Written dramatic texts are used as the literary devise for this activity.
- o *Drama process.* Under the tutelage of a teacher/instructor - suggesting action, maintaining the focus of the activity,

establishing limits on situations and interactions, and identifying and selecting aspects of the work to develop in the future - a theatrical text is explored by a group of students. "This is a powerful way to explore all the dramatic elements, in an experiential manner. The focus gives form to the energy emitted from mind, body, emotions and memory and deepens the learning" (Haseman and O'Tool, 2017).

- o *Acting play scripts*. Dramatization of dialog or short scenes performed by a group.
- o *Perfmis.* Theatre and drama education are complementary modules, and because of this, Pavis (2008) coined the term *perfmis*, meaning a hybridization and a more sophisticated, model of *performance* and *mise en scene*. Through the basic structure presented by the teacher/instructor (a script, scene, theatrical text that has been modified, etc.), the participants take charge of directing the dramatization. The result is a work in progress, a collective leading character, and a plot that is open to modifications.
- o *Theatre forum.* This is a theatrical module, created by Boal (2009), and consistent with a dramatization of short scenes that deal with problems that produce dissatisfaction, marginalization and oppression of a social group or community. The actors prepare a scene that lasts for 10-15 minutes in length that relates the oppression and in which the lead character makes a grave error. After the scene is presented the first time, it is repeated, and then participants who were not part of the dramatization are invited onto the set and asked to take over the roles of characters of their choice that they had been observing. The scene is then dramatized once more as the new actors interpret it.
- o *Newspaper theatre*. This is a model of the Theatre of the Oppressed, (Boal, 1975, 2008). To create this dramatization, participants use daily newspapers, magazines, brochures, television recordings, podcasts, or other media sources. The material is collected, and the news is studied for its sociopolitical implications. The resulting script becomes a montage of authentic speeches, editorials, interviews, testimonials, photographs, videos, brochures, or other such products.
- o *Happening*. A collective work that includes interdisciplinary artistic manifestations of music, dance, theatre, and art crafts, this technique requires the active participation of the public. The process is just as important as the final result and entails

using provocation, participation and improvization. The performance is more spontaneous than planned and does not have a definitive plot. Although it has been linked to pop-art and the hippy movement, the *happening* is tied more closely with performance art (Motos, Navarro and Palanca, 2018).

o *Pantomime*. A performance without dialog or words, participants use expression, gestures and body movements to present their message.

o *Conventional theatre*. The overriding element of this technique is that the actors are separate from the audience. The esthetic product has been carefully rehearsed, and the resulting performance may be catharsis, diversion, reflection and/or moralization.
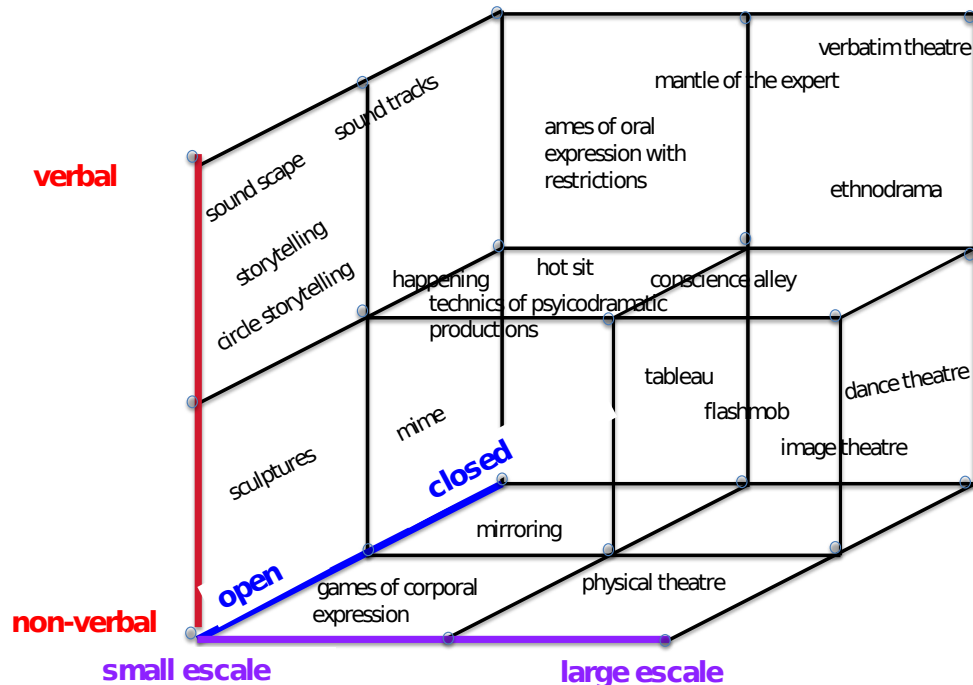
Second Diagram

This cube presents another way to classify dramatic techniques through the following three variables: non-verbal/verbal, open/closed, small-scale/large-scale. The three extremes, non-verbal, open and small-scale, can be seen on the vertex located at the bottom left-hand corner of the diagram. Each of these lead to a different vector representing the polarity of that variable: verbal, closed, large-scale. (See figure 2.)

o *Small-scale/large scale.* Dramatic plays last for a definitive period of time (usually fewer than three hours), while the *dramatic process* can last for several months prior to production. This variable, therefore, has to do with time, not production.

o *Verbal/non-verbal*. The activities can be centered on oral or corporal expression. For those dramatic techniques used in the framework of learning languages (CLIL), the benefits of the verbal activities covered by this variable are unquestionable; however, non-verbal activities also have many benefits when the end results are to break the ice, reduce anxiety, or establish discussion points.

o *Open/Closed*. Kao and O'Neill (1998: 5-18), suggest that there is a fluidity that arises in drama activities that tout the "closed/controlled" profile. On the other hand, the dramatic process known as "open communication" highlights the opposite extremes of this variable. Open forms are those characterized by flexible instructions whose result will be unexpected, free and divergent. Examples of open dramatic activities would be: sound landscape, storytelling or collective plastic figures (sculptures or frozen images). Close forms are

highly influenced by the rigid proposals of the animator and lead to convergent results.

Figure 2.
Second diagram (cube) to classify dramatic activities. Original design.

Just as with the first diagram, the following is a specific, but not all inclusive ,breakdown of the elements of the second cube. Original design.

o *Games of corporal expression*. Through movements, gestures, and action, participants express their internal responses to external provocations. The structure is the same as stimulation-answer. The external stimulation could take the form of sounds, words, visual facts or other sensory stimuli, such as smells, taste, texture, etc. The manifestation of these provocateurs, and the tone of the expressions, are usually lyrical and at times symbolic.

o *Sculptures*. The participants, independently, individually, and in quick succession, use their bodies to create a frozen figure that represents a character, feeling, or idea. When referring to a group involved in this dynamic, the term *collective plastic sculptures* is used, with which the participants combine poses, body forms and the surrounding spatial areas.

- o *Circle storytelling*. The participants form a circle, and the facilitator directs one person to begin a story. Clockwise or counterclockwise, each successive participant then adds a word or phrase to the emerging story. A variant of this activity is *telephone*, in which the participant sitting to the right of the instructor whispers the beginning of a story to the person on her/his right, and each participant passes on the progressively growing story, in whispers, to each successive participant in the circle.
- o *Storytelling*. A drama centered around language. It has to do with retelling a story using storytellers as resources.
- o *Soundscape*. This involves using the sounds of the voice, the body and other materials, as a way of creating a type of human collage of resonance. This technique is especially appropriate when the objective is to establish an environment that promotes dramatization and to create a desired mood. It works best with large groups and is normally performed with eyes closed.
- o *Soundtrack*. The participants using this technique verbalize a written text or recite it using various forms of expression. These could include a variety of sounds that emphasize the inner meaning of the reading. Participants create a soundtrack with the voice and accompany that part of the performance with body movements and other forms of expression to promote and highlight the underlying meaning. The vocal soundtrack is created by using physical properties of volume, tone, timber and duration.
- o *Mime*. A dramatic form that molds together a character, action, meaning and emotion, all communicated through gestures, body movements and facial expressions, without the use of speech or sound. This is an art in which silence reigns.
- o *Mirroring*. A dramatic form that uses body language to develop listening and attention skills. The participants, divided into pairs, decide who is "A" and "B", and thus begin the activity. The person who has adopted "A" initiates a movement, and "B" mirrors it as exactly as possible. When the first movement is completed, "B" then initiates the next pattern of movement.
- o *Techniques of dramatic production*. Created by the psychiatrist, psychologists and educator, Jacob Levy Moreno (1966), the motivating force of this technique is a recognition of differentiation of states of consciousness that encourage the emergence of new ideas and consciousness> The implication is that, during a normal cycle of consciousness, these epiphanies

do not normally appear. Theoretically, through participation of this activity, people experience an increase in spontaneity and creativity. The five techniques used are: soliloquy, asides, duplicating, changing roles, and mirroring.

o *Hot seat*. One person sits in a vacant seat in front of the group. That person tells the other participants who or what was sitting in the seat beforehand and gives details (an emotion, abstraction, object, imaginary character, historic person). Next, the participant asks someone from the group to interact with the person or object that has been described.

o *Games of oral expression with restrictions*. The teacher/instructor uses slogans or suggestions to motivate participants to become actively involved in a task. Each slogan has determined parameters or goals embedded in it and an obstacle that the person has to overcome. An example could be to create a dialog in which all the words used contain only the vowel "a", or to write a narrative between two people in which each one can say only one word at a time.

o *Consciousness ally*. Also called *thought tunnel*, this technique is used to explore dilemmas faced by a character, or to analyze a critical dramatic moment in more detail. The group is divided into two groups that stand in parallel lines facing each other. The participant who represents the character or the person faced with a conflictive situation walks between the two lines, and, one by one, members of both groups give their opinions. The activity could also be designed so that the division of the groups on both sides have two opposing ideas about the situation (pros and cons, for instance).

o *Mantle of the expert*. This is a variant of *role playing* in which participants adopt the role of an expert, first in researching a specific subject, and, later passing on key information to the other participants. Developed by Dorothy Heathcote (1984), this technique involves the creation of a fictional reality in which the participants assume the role of specialists in different fields. It directs the responsibility to the participants and can be an effective means of interactive learning.

o *Tableau.* A dramatic form in which the participants freeze and become silent during a scene, as if in a photograph. Afterwards, they can continue or not. These scenes take at least five elements into account: the focus of the participants' gazes, their facial expressions, body language, and the state or relationship among the characters.

o *Flash mob.* This is a public and spontaneous event, involving an organized scene in which a group of participants come together in a fixed and specific moment to perform a scene. Afterwards, they quickly disperse. Because of the wide range of uses this technique has been used for, there are many variants. Among these: *smart mobs*, with a social or political objective; *absurd mobs,* including a considerable number of participants with ambiguous or unidentifiable objectives; *freeze mobs*, in which the participants adopt a frozen pose for an undetermined period of time; *kiss mobs*, identified by participants kissing or hugging each other; *flash mob*, a technique that includes a choreographed dance ensemble including participants who have practiced, and/or agreed to, certain dance movements, either in person or through social networks; *fake flash mobs*, events that at first seem spontaneous, but that are, in actuality, rehearsed, usually with professionals, and traditionally have commercial objectives (Motos, Navarro and Palanca, 2018).

o *Image theatre.* This theatrical technique was developed by Boal (2008), which normally has as one of its objectives the development of communication without words, in order to foment other means of communication and perception: body poses, facial expressions, varying distance among actors during a scene, colors and objects, and the use of non-verbal language. The participants sculpt their own bodies, or those of their fellow actors, to express attitudes, situations and emotions. Once created, the images created by these means are set side-by-side and come to life. This is used mostly when the object is to explore internal or external oppression and/or unconscious thoughts and feelings.

o *Dance theatre.* This refers to scenes performed by experienced dancers, who combine dance, recitation, song, and conventional theatrical techniques, with the use of props, scenery, costumes and vocal screams and laughter. These dances do not necessarily tell a story, but relate dramatic scenes of human conflict and reflection on different situations to which the audience can relate (Motos, Navarro and Palanca, 2018).

o *Physical theatre.* An interdisciplinary representation known as "total theatre" that includes and values all production elements equally: movement, words, paralinguistics, images, sounds, lighting, visual arts. The technique pivots around a central theme: human conflict. Through a series of gestures, attitudes and actions, this technique focuses on exploring the

relationship among characters who affect each other, their state of mind, their feelings, passions and ideas.

- o *Verbatim theatre.* Created by Salvatore (2018), this is a type of theatrical documentary in which the script is constructed through an intentionally chosen line of inquiry, used to interview a character about an event or a subject specifically chosen by a group that has researched a subject and presented it through selected audio clips. These clips are later distributed amongst the cast who meticulously reproduce them
- o *Ethnodrama.* For Given (2008:610), this is an ethnographic technique that has been accepted as a means of involving audiences - of varying distinguishing factors of diversity - to become at the same time empathetic, emotional, intellectual, and, above all, present. A theatrical performance using ethnography is developed through analysis and facts gathered from interviews and other notes taken from other forms of research. Alexander (2013: 115), suggests that the atmosphere created by an ethnographic performance has at least two distinguishing factors: an ethnographic drama in which the person who researched and developed the scene embodies a secondary role, without becoming involved in the main action, and one in which the scriptwriter plays the main character, presenting what then becomes an autoethnography (Saldaña, 21016)

Third Diagram

A third way of classifying dramatic techniques is through the following variables: *Drama/theatre, individual/collective,* and *focused on change/not focused on change.* The three polarities of these variables – drama, individual and focused on change, are shown by the vertices located on the bottom left part of the cube. From this point, each vortex is directed to a different endpoint: theatre, collective, not focused on change. This is similar to both the first and second diagrams above; moreover, as in the previous explanations, the activities are transversal, each polarity identifiable according to its use by the teacher/instructor or the drama therapist. See figure 3.

- *Drama/theatre*. Participants in drama use techniques that are more spontaneous and improvised than in theatre (Way, 1967: 2-3). This activity clarifies the distinction between theatre and drama by specifying that theatre, for the most part, refers to communication between the actors and the audience, while

drama attests to the experience of the participants, regardless of the interaction it may have with the audience.

- *Individual/collective*. Although by nature, theatre is an art, and therefore, by default, functions in a collective, it paradoxically uses activities focused on the individual. Consequentially, these techniques require both individual and collective participation.
- *Centered on change/not focused on change*. There is often the assumption that theatre, and the techniques that arise from that art form, have a vast potential to provoke changes in the lives of individuals and communities. There exists one type of theatre that encourages a stimulant and change agent – either through formal training or without - through social action and psychotherapy. This is found under the umbrella of Applied Theatre. Conventional theatre, on the other hand, focuses on the dramatization of a theatrical work whose finality is to entertain and be a type of catharsis.

Just as with the previous diagrams, the following is a concise, but not exhaustive description of each of the dramatic techniques found in figure 3 below.

- *Relaxation-concentration*. Depending on the goal desired, different techniques can be used as relaxation activities (Prado and Charaf, 2000), such as: massage, self-massage, breathing exercises, progressive relaxation (tension-relaxation), relaxation through autogenous concentration, relaxation through passive movements, relaxation through unusual movements, imaginative relaxation, etc.
- *Gibberish*. This is a type of communication that involves using words that do not transmit a specific thought, are invented, non-verbal, or present entire sentences that make no sense. The goals of this activity are to improve listening, concentration, empathy, self-confidence, critical thinking and creative problem solving skills.
- *Retroaction*. Using commentaries and values delineated by the group, this activity usually has a transformational effect on the participants through reflection using the following formats: interiorization; simple verbalization (each participant takes a turn at commenting on the activity); transposition of various expressional forms (writing, drawing, collage, body expression, etc.) of the images, emotions, feelings or ideas that arise during the different stages of perception; exploration and performance. T final product, performed in front of the other participants, is then evaluated by the team.

- *Psychodrama*. A method developed by Jacob Levy Moreno, who defines it as "deeply enlightening group therapy." He further states that the technique "touches the depths of the soul through participation" (Moreno: 108-109). Psychodrama is carried out through dramatization of a significant event in the participants' lives. The protagonist of the dramatization is usually the person who has proposed the main idea of the scene and is supported by other actors. At the conclusion of the dramatization, the participants reflect on past occurrences, what has arisen in the present, fantasies, deliriums, dreams, and what might be expected in the future.

Figure 3:
Third diagram that classifies dramatic activities. Original design
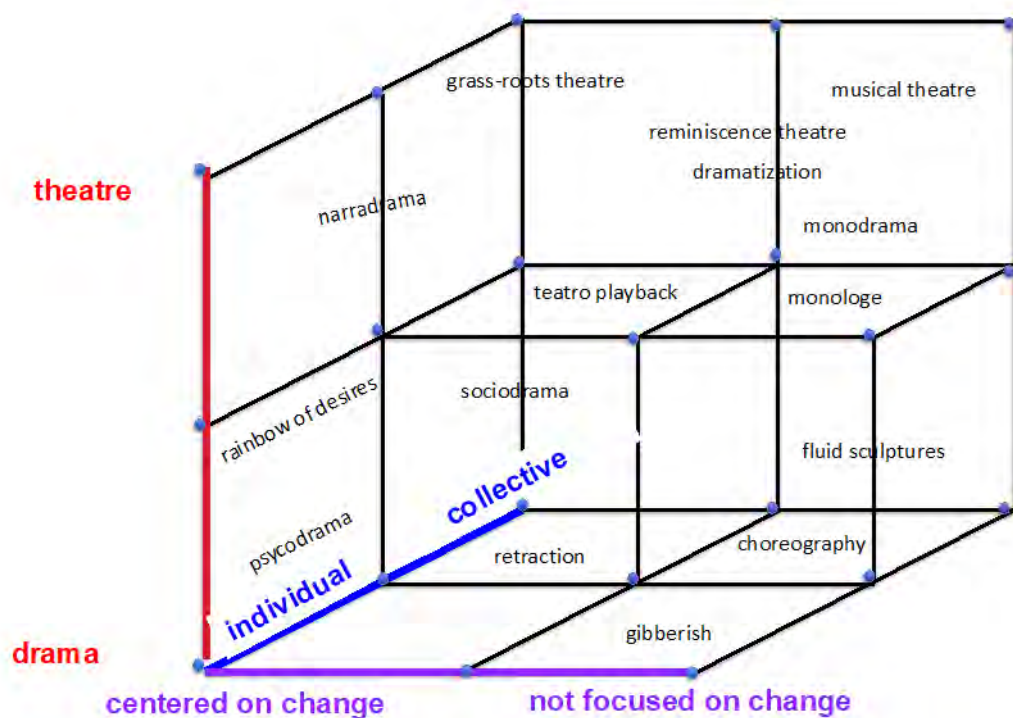
- *Rainbow of desires*. This is a hybrid between theatre and therapy that consists of theatrical techniques used as curative (not esthetic) tools, in a personal and social setting. Developed by Boal (2004), participants are involved in a series of central strategies that encourage them to reflect on themselves as their own subject.

- *Invisible theatre.* A theatrical module that involves representing scenes outside of the theatre, and in front of people who do not know they could be considered an audience (Boal, 2009). Participants use a public space that could be the back of a truck or train car, a commercial gallery, a shopping center, etc. The scene needs to seem improvised to the extent that, until the very end, the audience is unaware that they have witnessed a drama. The scenes represented normally portray a social injustice and are performed with the goal of generating a discussion and reflection on the part of the spectators.
- *Sociodrama.* Created by Moreno (1966), the purpose of this technique is to draw out and make visible the problems that affect a community. The participants dramatize common problems that are part of a collective. One of the goals is to come to an agreement about what is actually happening and find solutions to overcome whatever conflicts, oppression or marginalization the community might be facing. The psychodramatization is part of a social drama that is shared with psychodrama.
- *Narradrama.* This is a combination of narrative therapy, drama therapy and artistic expressional therapy, with an end goal of helping participants become conscious of their own stories. Participants are invited to use this technique to recover a part of their lives that has been blocking them from the path they desire for their own future. Narradrama is a compilation of different artistic outlets, borrowing strategies and activities from psychology, sociology, anthropology, experimental theatre, music, dance and poetry. The therapist/facilitator does not adopt a hierarchal or authoritative position, but interacts collaboratively with the individual or group of participants.
- *Playback theatre.* An interactive practice, based on spontaneity and improvisation, without a set script and with the principle goal of emotionally uniting the audience. Created in the 1970s by Jonathan Fox (1994) and Jo Salas (2005), Playback Theatre is generated by stories offered by audience members. The Director is responsible for transforming these stories into dramatic scenarios through actors and music. The stories can be memories, fantasies, conflicts or feelings.
- *Reminiscence Theatre.* Designed for and with older audiences, memories of the audience members are the impetus for this dramatic technique. Participants talk about their past, elucidating stories that the actors then dramatize (Schweitzer, 2006). This is a creative and powerful art form that has been

proven to improve the quality of life for the elderly and to narrow the gap among generations and cultures.

- *Musical theatre.* This module fuses music, song, dialog and dance. It is normally enacted in large stage settings.
- *Fluid sculptures.* In this improvisational technique, a group of actors present the answer given by an audience member to a previously posed question,such as, "How do you feel about the fact that 13 million Spaniards experience poverty and social exclusion?" through a moveable sculpture with their bodies. Afterwards, they add sound and dialog (a talking wall), and finally, movement.
- *Monologue.* This is an extended dramatization in which the actors speak alone, or they direct the conversation to the audience without expectation of answers or response. The dynamic is one of an oral stream of consciousness, sharing feelings and thoughts on a subject that is otherwise hidden or repressed. When used in psychodrama, this technique is called *soliloquy* and in literature called *inner monologue.*
- *Dramatization.* A form of theatre that bestows a level of drama to something that theretofore has had no inherent theatrical component -a poem, song, narrative, story, proverb, etc. The very act of dramatization creates a dynamic that causes a modification of the original text, adapting it to the unique characteristics of the dramatic structure (characters, conflict, action, space, time, plot, etc.).
- *Choreography.* A technique that is a combination of movement that follows the rhythm of the accompanying music. A choreographed scene incorporates the creation, design and coordination of a joint vision, a series of steps and postures that are inspired by a piece of music and interpreted by one or more dancers using their bodies as their artistic expression.
- *Grass-roots theatre*. A shared experience that involves artists who focus their activities in selected communities with a combined goal of using theatre to express their values, interests and concerns of specific issue.

Discussion and Final Considerations

As pointed out in the introduction, the number and variety of dramatic forms (conventions, strategies, activities or theatrical modalities) are numerous. Many professionals (teachers, sociocultural animators, social educators and psychologists) conceive them as just a series of exercises extracted from some manual and feel confused by the different names they receive according to the different

authors. Above all, they do not know the reasons and criteria followed for its systematization. This fact can make their professional practice uncritical and sometimes unreflective. For this reason, this article proposes a classification based on the nine variables that determine the nature of the dramatic activities, which are grouped under the umbrella of the Applied Theater.

This classification aims to clarify the field and to offer an instrument that helps create more thoughtful professionals (Schöm, 1987). This work tries to cover that need, introducing the design of three diagrams to map the different drama activities used in the fields of education, social action and drama therapy. Each of them is designed by applying three variables as criteria. Three cubes have been provided in which the different methodological strategies or theatrical modalities can be inserted. They will allow professionals to become more aware of the field richness and epistemological foundation of these strategies, and hopefully, motivate them toward a more reflective professional practice.

While each of the above strategies has its own value, none of them are, in and of themselves, complete, perfect, universal or explicitly appropriate for all circumstances, either in relation to educational teams, facilitators or drama therapists, or having to do with any context, project or subject. For this reason, the different expectations and goals, objectives and needs of the participants must be taken into account. The teacher/facilitator/drama therapist, is a professional who gives credence to the value of different experiences and must ask questions like, "What does what I do mean?" "Why do I do what I do?" "How do I do it?" and "how could I improve it?". Through this reflection, the instructor can then choose the most appropriate drama technique that will help those involved reach their goals.

The three diagrams presented, based on nine variables, serve to proffer the missing element in each of the classifications. They are designed to aid in offering answers to the above mentioned questions and to improve professional practice. The activities, therefore, focus on training the participants, so that they can take more responsibility for their own personal development and training.

While this article offers a brief description and explanation of each of the forms and/or theatrical conventions diagrammed in the cubes above, there are other theatrical forms not included in the cubes. In conforming to restrictions of article length, the inclusion of the full breadth of techniques and activities has had to be abbreviated.

Nevertheless, it should still allow for a basic foundation and systemization of the epistemology of each activity, such as drama/theatre in education and social action and psychotherapy that serve to awaken interest from educators and other professionals, with an end to raising their consciousness of the need to include these dramatic strategies in educational curricula, sociocultural platforms and psychotherapy.

In essence, drama activities promote significant learning, commitment and development in both individuals and groups.

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