Drama in Education and Its Influence on Adolescents' Empathy

| George Mardas[1,*] | Kostas Magos[2] |

[1,2] *Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Thessaly, Greece*

Corresponding Email: magos@uth.gr

ABSTRACT
Drama in education can trigger feelings and provoke thoughts in the school classroom. Children are invited to use their minds and senses and get in touch with their emotions. The participants, who get engaged in such an endeavour, undergo a transformation by impersonating different characters, fictional or real-life and come up with a variety of solutions to problems in a fictional framework. Through this process the students' empathy could be developed. The present case study using qualitative research techniques analyzes the outcome of a practical implementation through drama in a Greek Secondary School. The main research question was whether and to what extent educational drama can influence in a positive way middle adolescents' empathy. The research findings showed that the use of drama supported the participants to realize the importance of a specific social situation, and helped them grasp the difference between cognitive and emotional empathy.
KEYWORDS
Drama; adolescents; empathy; secondary school students; Greece

INTRODUCTION

According to literature, empathy as well some other relevant terms, such as Empathic Concern or Compassion to mention but a few, can not only help our school students approach knowledge in an efficient way, but also give them the opportunity to get engaged in a holistic way during the learning process. The present Case study, we are going to analyze in the following pages, is the outcome of a practical implementation through drama in a Greek Secondary School in Athens, Greece. We believe that the Cognitive as well as the Emotional aspect of Empathy can play a vital role in approaching knowledge through the use of versatile and multi-sensory methods provided by Educational Drama. More specifically, Drama-in-Education can trigger feelings and provoke thoughts in the classroom. Children are invited to use their minds and senses and get in touch with their emotions. The participants, who get engaged in such an endeavour, undergo a transformation by impersonating different characters, fictional or real-life and come up with a variety of solutions to problems in a fictional framework. Educational Drama uses creatively bits of the pupils' personal experiences and creates new Learning Opportunities, thus helping them to achieve an integrated understanding of the Self and the Other. These experiences constitute the content of the learning material and the cause for reflection, an essential factor of Transformative Learning.

Despite the advanced cognitive development of adolescents between 13 and 15 years of age and according to their personal development and maturity (i.e. world perspective and moral development), emotional empathy is still struggling to find a way to 'break out'. It is by focusing on Emotional Empathy that we can have a positive and effective impact on a

healthy mental and emotional development of adolescents, as a prerequisite for their prosocial behavior.

The present research is a context-specific and within a time-limit Case Study which uses mixed methods, (Quasi-Experimental Design) putting the emphasis on qualitative research and following the appropriate protocol of data collection and analysis method. We attempted a cross-checking of the different data collection methods, as well as of the findings resulting from the two approaches (qualitative and quantitative). Our study aims to examine the two aspects of a controversial issue such as Empathy. Empathy can be defined according to the varying standpoints through which scientists understand and examine its dimensions, as well as according to the developmental stage of the cognitive and emotional status of adolescents which is characterized by intense difficulties and sudden swings in mood. Moreover, our research takes the form of an Action Research. Our purpose was to create the necessary conditions for the exposure of a closed group to an experimental procedure, and investigate the potential benefits of the drama course designed for our students. Our attempt focused on describing and analyzing in detail the various forms of empathy within this group.

The main research question was whether and to what extent Educational Drama can influence in a positive way middle adolescents' empathy, and the secondary research questions were formulated as follows:

a. in what ways empathy emerges, when students play a role or create, in common, a dramatic situation,

b. the degree to which each one of the aspects of empathy (cognitive and/or emotional) is represented, and the relationship between these two,

c. what are the impediments or the challenges in the development of adolescent empathy, and how can Educational Drama help them overcome these impediments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A definition of empathy

One could claim that Empathy is a social skill, a mental state or a human trait which can be already traced in the early years of the human beings. This phenomenon can be detected in the form of emotional reactions and cognitive functions in communication. At the same time, Empathy is a substantial component of interpersonal relationships and it is formed or influenced by the changeable social circumstances. Empathy makes us unique since it requires that we put a minor effort by placing ourselves in someone's shoes without losing our integrity. Davis (1980) referred to the two aspects of empathy:

a. as a process of a rather superficial nature (for instance, when someone imitates

b. somebody else's facial expressions depicting different emotions) and, as a result, (for instance, when someone wishes or needs to help anyone in distress). In this case, empathy can be confused with other terms such as Sympathy or

Compassion. In Literature, Empathy is often interchanged with the term of 'Sympathy'. Sympathy or Compassion is characterized by somebody's mood to be available to the needs of others and his willingness to help them.

When handling with Empathy, we come across a number of definitions of it, depending on the researchers' different points of view. The definition of Empathy is closely related to its stage of development, its aspect (i.e. emotional or cognitive) and the way it is expressed. According to the Theory of the Mind, Empathy can be interchanged with other terms such as Emotional Contagion, Empathic Understanding, or Empathic Concern in response to others' negative emotional experiences (such as agony, concern or fear). Empathy can be occasionally identical with certain conceptual constructions such as

Emotional Contagion (Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson 1993) Affective Correspondence (Feshbach and Roe 1968) and Empathic Accuracy (Ickes 1993).

A more comprehensive definition of Empathy, according to our opinion, is the one given by Eisenberg, (Eisenberg et al 2014, 2-3). We quote,

"Empathy is an empathic response (a perception or understanding) similar to the emotional state of another human being, as well as a reasonably expected empathic reaction to somebody's emotions under certain circumstances". Seen from this angle, empathy is the result of the direct exposure to someone else's feelings as well as the ability to recognize, understand and process his or her emotions".

According to social psychologists, empathy includes two different aspects:

a. Cognitive empathy, that is the ability to perceive and comprehend the psychological state of someone through the mind or imagination, including the factors which have caused this specific emotional or mental state of our fellow being (Davis 1983). The cognitive aspect of Empathy concerns man's ability to understand what somebody thinks and/or feels,

b. Emotional empathy, which manifests itself as an emotional reaction to somebody's mental state, or as a sort of 'emotional communication'. In this case, we are referring to a subject's emotional awareness of others, expressed at an initial stage through body reactions.

Empathy as a complex communication phenomenon

According to Ickes, empathy is defined as a complex interpersonal phenomenon which is a result of observation, memory, knowledge and reason (1997). It is through empathy that we can sense somebody's thoughts and emotions. More precisely, the emotional aspect of empathy is the one that helps people regulate their emotions and solve social problems. The ability to empathize with others enriches our social relationships with particular qualitative features, such as confidence and emotional proximity. Empathy is positively related to social interaction, facilitates socialization, enhances people's disposition to co-operate and contributes to the cultivation of prosocial behavior. The natural tendency of human beings to express their feelings and the ability for selfregulation are two basic criteria which help us anticipate the level of compassion and prosocial behavior that a human being can reach (Eisenberg, Fabes, Karbon et al. 1996).

Another important dimension of empathy is its relationship to the shaping of values and attitudes within specific social structures and groups of people. In other words, empathy is an important social skill in interactions among humans, as well as in action and cooperation (Decety 2002). The ability to adopt the perspective of others is closely related to interpersonal relationships and group dynamics, and functions as an indicator of understanding minor conflicts within the group (Galinsky, Kifer et al. 2013; Wang, Tai et al. 2014). Empathy is also an indicator of prejudice reduction (Galinsky and Moskowitz 2000; Galinsky, Ku and Wang 2005), and efficiency when we negotiate with others (Bazerman and Neale 1983).

Empathy and adolescence

During adolescence and its physical, cognitive and emotional changes, the pupils would learn how to accept the views of their peers and how to make close relationships with them: there is a gradual increase in their motivation and interests, reflected in their eagerness to comprehend how their peers think or feel (Fabes, Carlo et al. 1999). This is partially accomplished by the ability to distance themselves from their peers (BischofKöhler 1989). This sort of 'interaction' between peers gives adolescents the

opportunity to experiment themselves, and clarifies if and to what extent they differ in opinions or attitudes. According to the Theory of Mind, adolescents undergo a series of neurobiological changes, throughout their growth, before reaching a stable mental and emotional behavior. According to developmental psychologists, eight-year-old children have already reached the final stage of their ability to recognize or comprehend someone else's perspective. The factors which determine accordingly the successful or unsuccessful process towards adult life is the biological level of maturity of the adolescent, his/her efficiency in self-awareness, his/her ability to maintain close relationships and friendships and his/her willingness to belong to different social groups, where he or she would have the opportunity to 'rehearse' the challenges and difficulties of life.

The role of educational drama in empathy

Bolton, (1985, 155) among others, makes several references to the element of surprise one of the main principles of Brechtian Drama, underlying the importance of social reality which is reflected in the invented world of the stage: this awareness about the coexistence of two simultaneous worlds enhances spectators' ability for reflection. The same principle can be applied in Educational Drama. Dorothy Heathcote, also, (1978) took a similar view when she talked about the "Feeling of Awe" which is thoughtprovoking and triggers the imagination. According to the aforementioned pioneers of Educational Drama, taking action is of no value by itself, unless it leads to reflection. It is only when the latter takes place that the creation of an imaginary world makes sense for those involved in the process, precisely because reflection consolidates the participants' creation of an 'objective meaning', which is true and undeniable.

We should note that Drama provides the pupils with multiple benefits : it contributes to the development of critical thinking and moral judgement, to the readjustment of ethical standards and to Worldview expansion. According to Lutterbie and Blair (2011), the students who get engaged in Drama activities have the opportunity to approach and understand the thoughts and actions of the invented characters. Children and adolescents can explore their inner selves indirectly and this is due to Drama. Heathcote highlighted the importance of empathy. According to one of her major approaches, Educational Drama gives children the opportunity to discover their identities. Potentially, the human being has the ability to put himself in someone's shoes and get closer to the thoughts and feelings of others. Educational Drama is an excellent tool for fostering interpersonal skills: an ideal framework for interaction, empathy, cooperation, teamwork, a common goal and outcome.

It is our belief that Drama-in-Education contributes to the enhancement of Empathy helping our students in the quest of self-knowledge and in developing their moral attitudes. Moreover, the former gives them the opportunity to take initiatives and get into action. The aim of this research, which was done in a Music School in secondary education, was to investigate whether Educational Drama can influence adolescents' empathic behavior in a positive way. More precisely, we applied in the classroom the Process Drama according to Cecily O' Neill (1985). Our goal was to verify whether our students can engage themselves through drama in an active and creative way, producing and structuring the knowledge under the guidance of a teacher. Furthermore, it was our strong hypothesis that Educational Drama can give the students a chance to activate their minds and senses so as to reflect and think critically about themselves and the surrounding world. Our drama-group consisted of 9th graders and the teacher acting as a coordinator and participant observer. Through Drama activities, we were faced with dilemmas, we were invited to make decisions choosing among alternatives, forming, thus, step by step the dramatic context and creating different plots and characters.

Drama-in-Education can play an important role in our students' emotion regulation, can prepare the ground for building effectively solid social relationships, can eliminate conflicts and promote prosocial behavior as well as creative collaboration within the group. An effective conflict resolution helps adolescents realize and get in touch with their emotions. The above mentioned factors are vital for a useful, intelligent and 'sensitive' learning.

Participants and process drama

The drama sessions took place at the Music School of Alimos, a secondary school in the south of Athens in Greece. We decided to apply a drama-based instruction getting our inspiration from Process Drama and its tools. For this purpose, we implemented a DIE program in one of our ninth grade classes, in junior high school. Our audience were two classes of adolescents, 15 years of age. This age range is a rather challenging period for a teenager, as it is characterized by big upheavals throughout his psychosocial development. The idea, we chose to deal with in a dramatic form, came from the phenomenon of slavery in the 18th century. The parameters of this social phenomenon emerged through brainstorming in the classroom. We, also, decided to introduce certain theoretical terms and characteristics of Process Drama. During the implementation of the activities we set two targets: the first one focused on the cohesion of the group. We attempted to trigger the participants' emotions through various techniques of Process Drama. At the same time we used certain psychomotor games in order to help participants concentrate and feel members of a solid group, building up their relationships possibly with an enhanced spirit of collaboration. Furthermore, we aspired to activate their imagination and senses by using sensory exercises. Our second target was to create a dramatic world based on the basic principles pertinent to O 'Neill theories (1985). All exercises, regardless of their type, were intended to trigger empathy either directly or indirectly, and its manifestation was going to be verified by the eagerness of the members to cooperate and to experience mutual respect and acceptance: there were issues to be resolved collaboratively, as well as the necessary dramatic and fictional framework in which the participants would take initiative.

RESEARCH METHODS

During our first meeting, after a general introduction to the subject, we administered the Adolescent Measure of Empathy and Sympathy by Vossen, Piotrowski and Valkenburg, (AMES 2015) translated into Greek. The aforementioned scale was developed according to a factor analysis, which had taken into account three older scales: a) the first one, concerning affective empathy, was suggested by Mehrabrian and Epstein (1972), b) the second one, concerning cognitive empathy, was Hogan's questionnaire (1969) and, c) the third one included Clark's questionnaire (2010) and related to sympathy.
AMES is a 5-point Likert Scale which measures three different constructs :
   cognitive empathy, b) emotional empathy and c) sympathy. We chose this scale because of its reliability that was checked upon a satisfactory sample of adolescents. We also thought that this questionnaire would be reliable in terms of its validity, and that it constituted a simple and flexible tool suitable for a teenage audience, as it had been confirmed by its test and re-test reliability (having been administered and measured several times by its authors). In this questionnaire there is a clear distinction between the two components of empathy, and we noticed that the items of the subscales were reduced in order to reduce the response burden. Besides that, we opted for this scale because special emphasis was given on the difference between empathy and sympathy.

The questionnaire was completed both by the experimental and control groups under similar circumstances. The experimental group consisted of 24 pupils, whereas the control group of 23 pupils. According to Research Literature, our two groups are considered to be non-probability sampling cases, so we chose this option in order to facilitate the process of the research. We used a draw to select our control group. The completion of the questionnaire took no more than 10 minutes after clarifying certain terms of the questionnaire. We re-administered the same test after an interval of two months and a half. The analysis of the quantitative data was carried out using the program for statistical analysis in Social Sciences (SPSS). Initially, checks were performed to verify the construct validity and the reliability of the scale concerning the measurement of empathy. Subsequently, normality of the data was checked by using Shapiro-Wilk's statistical test for all items measuring the different components of empathy, and the sampling distribution appeared approximately normal. Consequently, we used the t-Student statistical test to compare the means of the variables in both experimental and control groups, as well as the items of the subscales.

We then focused on strategies for the analysis of qualitative data. As the process and analysis data of our research (a Case Study and an Action Research) borrows the Protocol form from Ethnographic Research, we turned to axial coding in order to develop our categories and themes. We decided to proceed by combing our research question with the bibliographic database, after having focused on open encoding on the texts, with the aim of reaching a definition of the concepts as accurate as possible. Following the aforementioned steps, we could observe certain categories emerging, which would subsequently constitute the network of the basic themes of the qualitative analysis. The data collection and analysis process were based on Miles and Huberman's "interactive model" (1994, 12). This model is an interactive process which follows certain steps: a) collecting and selecting data and consequently using the abstraction process so as to determine the patterns that would form meaning, b) presenting the appropriate data which would lead us to conclusions, c) drawing and verifying conclusions. This process allows for greater reliability and validity.

We used different methods to collect data. First of all, we took on the role of a co-player in the group (participant observation) through the implementation process of the drama workshop. Also for the purposes of this Action Research, we recorded our observations in the field focusing on the events themselves, on the emotional reactions of the participants, on the impact that our intervention had on the participants, and on the changing relationships among the members of the group. The combination of these data took the form of a thick descriptive text. At the same time, we created an audio and a video file by recording the sessions as well as our discussions during the focus group meetings. We relied on the concepts of empathy (cognitive and affective) and sympathy, as defined in Literature, and on the questionnaire used in the focus groups to start our coding process. The initial analysis of the data and the themes that emerged, as well as the first conclusions drawn from the implementation of Process Drama led us to reconsider our approaches and the process itself, and redesign, modify or repeat certain activities using them as variables likely to affect our pupils' empathic behavior.

Another reason why resorting to the process as described above was our intention to explore the procedures and reasons that led the students to adopt specific behaviors. We applied an inductive approach for analysis of every form of our data. After having decoded the multimodal texts that had been derived, so as to form a general but clear idea, we continued with data processing, encoding and classification, providing at the same time a short description for each set of data. The emerging categories, in accordance with the codification we used, were defined according to their similarities or differences.

Subsequently, we formed grids which contained different patterns. We then proceeded with exploring their interrelationships.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the drama activities, the testimonials of our students in the field research, on the reflective activities, on the students' diaries, as well as on the test analysis of the focus groups, we observed that our pupils showed a considerable interest in the historical events of the past, in the social framework of the specific period as well as in the characters whom they tried to depict in their acting. It was obvious that our students were made to reflect on the events and the characters, while they were in role. This fact is positively related to the emergence of cognitive empathy, since our pupils were motivated by the consciousness and the internal life of the characters, and were interested in getting to know more about their lives. We think that this awakening interest is the first step towards empathy, and it is related to the advanced stage of their cognitive development (cognitive empathy - perspective taking). The phenomenon of slavery caused a lively discussion and brought forward their subjective value judgements. This students' empathic approach created the necessary conditions for them to reflect, realize and reconsider their values.

At first, the ease of completing the questionnaire at the first meeting, its results as well as the reflexion during the discussions that followed the activities, revealed the pupils' confusion as far as Empathy is concerned. Our pupils faced difficulty in giving a definition, as well as in differentiating between cognitive and emotional empathy. Apart from that, the results of the analysis did not show a statistical significance in any of the empathy sub-scales neither for the experimental group nor for the control group. The mass preference of the participants for the highest points in most of the items of the Likert scale indicates that the specific measurement tool lacks the necessary sensitivity to make fine distinctions between emotions. Another finding was the effect that the repeat tests had on the control group. The aforementioned group had a significant drop in its performance between the first and the second measurement. This finding suggests that the adolescents were able to recall in memory the different types of empathy (TestRetest Learning) they had come into contact with during the first test, and this is the reason why they, subsequently, could evaluate themselves by using more sophisticated and realistic criteria. Nevertheless, according the results of quantitative research our experimental group showed a minimal progress, as far as Cognitive Empathy is concerned, after the implementation of Drama. The preferences of the majority for, more or less, the same points of the Scale (that is, opting for the highest points) underlines the occurrence of a Ceiling Effect. The combination of these two factors, the familiarity with test items on the one hand, and the use of a scale that lacks in sensitivity on the other may be responsible for the non-significant results of our research.

Now going back to our qualitative research, after the implementation of the drama workshop and the processing of data, our pupils seem to have taken a more holistic approach to empathic behaviour and its parameters. A significant number of our participants (almost half of them) felt that they did not manage "to be in someone's shoes", a fact which was attributed to their "inability of experiencing emotions". Nevertheless, this feeling of theirs is likely to represent an instinctive judgement that has to do with the definition of empathy. These pupils could not "put themselves in someone's place", (the slaves' in our case), because *"it seemed impossible for them to share exactly the same emotions or feelings with the characters"*. On the contrary, they admitted that they could *"understand those people better"*. We quote an excerpt from our field notes in one of our first meetings during the general introduction to the subject:

"The students were eagerly completing my missing data, coming up with additional information. They were commenting, in a vivid discussion, expressing themselves emotionally (showing surprise, resentment, objection etc.). They showed their willingness to learn about the slaves' life conditions and comprehend how those people felt like. It was obvious that they empathized with them, and that they could understand the difficulties they were going through. [...] Empathy was being manifested through different reactions : exclamations, emotional reactions or questions. For instance, they were eager to learn which were the measures taken by the traffickers to prevent the slaves from jumping off the ships."

A small percentage of the students claimed that they could not "feel" empathy, or at least "not all the time". A possible reason for this emotional blockage was the fact that students were exerting control over themselves, or that they were regulating their emotions under the heavy pressure of unpleasant feelings and difficult situations. This was probably the factor that hindered the participants from identifying with the heroes. At other times, they admitted going through strong feelings, thus contradicting themselves. A female participant stated that:

"when trying to describe what had happened to her while being in role, that very moment she was experiencing feelings she had never felt before, ... feelings ... (the student was intuitively trying to define this term according to how she felt about it) ... I would have liked to stop ... and then said to myself, gosh, this is one of those things I could hardly imagine ever existed ... I don't know ... it was a moment that really touched me and ...".

Another female participant claimed that:

" basically, I had got into the character, that's how it felt like ... I was simply holding my hand like this ... and I felt the energy flowing, I really felt very strange...".

According to our data almost half of our students experienced various emotions of different nature. Based on our data from the field observation, from the participants' diaries, and from interviews within focus groups we sorted these emotions in categories such as "sorrow" or "pity", "distress", "melancholy" or "compassion" for the slaves, as well as "anger", "rage" or "disgust" for the "villains" (the colonialists). A great number of the participants were perplexed and could not be constantly sure about the kind of emotions they were going through. We noticed, quite often, their attempts to readjust their statements. We quote from their diaries:

"I think that ... O.K. of course we felt something and ... I personally ... felt sad .... felt sad ... (changing his voice pitch) O.K ... that was the feeling, but ...", whereas another student claimed: *"Not grief, it was compassion that we went through",* and another: *"I felt regret".* Finally, a female participant stated: *"Well I obviously think that we all felt liked we wanted to do something in order to help them".*

The students were able to recognize and justify the heroes' emotions as well as comprehend the reasons why they, themselves, experienced similar or different feelings. Our participants experienced emotions being in or out of role, as recorded on our audiovisual material and registered in Field Notes. The roles, the relationship building among dramatic characters, as well as discussions during the time given for reflection demonstrated that the participants were engaged, that they were constantly trying to propose solutions to problems (by showing resistance or willingness to fight for a cause) and developed their solidarity with the people who were in a similar situation within the given dramatic framework or beyond its boundaries. We quote some of our students' recorded statements:

"I could see the pain on their faces and their eagerness to fight for freedom, and I wanted to take action and help in changing the way the oppressors thought or felt about

them". "I don't feel that I am that powerful, but I will do my best so that such a cause will spread worldwide and make people feel compassion and realize the situation".

At the same time, a great number of the participants experienced strong emotions, generating from the improvisations and the dramatic activities. Those spontaneous-like emotions are strongly related to emotional contagion, which can be characterized as more superficial when compared to empathy, or they represent cases of the participants' mere emotional projection on the dramatic characters and have nothing to do with real empathy.

Several of the students (more than one third of them) got into a dilemma when in or out of role, by adopting the characters' perspective, or demonstrated a clear moral attitude or behaviour, by expressing, at least, verbally their wish to take action, or displaying prosocial behavior for the dramatic characters. It is to be noted that there should be a clear distinction between "the viewer and the viewed" who is in need, in order for such a behavior to become obvious. In our case, the viewed constitutes a figment of one's imagination. The contact between the viewer who maintains his autonomy and the viewed led the participants to various conclusions concerning their emotions. We quote some of the participants' statements:

"When you told us that we should reverse the roles and some of us impersonated the slavers ... at that point when you said ... now you are supposed to go into negotiation ... you are not slave any more ... now you are a trafficker and you negotiate ... all of a sudden I was supposed to do something I would not wish to do ..." "I had to resort to violence and I simply couldn't do it, I had to force myself. I don't like turning to violence.
That was something I already knew.. but now I have experienced it firsthand".

The students stated that they had benefited from the improvisations in the fictional framework, because this helped them develop their argumentative abilities. According to their opinion, the dilemmas, they came up against being into role, made them think deeper and consolidate their moral attitudes despite the first moments of ambiguity.

Discussion

The implementation of Process Drama in our classroom revealed that the midadolescents' ability for cognitive empathy has already been fully developed. Process Drama with its complex form and structure, its techniques and approaches (i.e. identification vs distanciation) led a small group of adolescents to realize the importance of a specific social situation, and helped them grasp the difference between cognitive and emotional empathy. With this study we ascertained the difficulty of adolescents to express emotional empathy, despite the fact that this forms an integral part of sympathy. These results are supported by similar research findings in the field of adolescent emotional empathy.

Our main research question was formed around the idea of whether a 15-yearold adolescent could create and identify with an invented dramatic character and build relationships with other fictional characters as a member of a theatre group. Secondly, we tried to examine whether emotional empathy could emerge and be expressed in the circumstances created from a dramatic environment. It was due to the application of the Process Drama sessions that we witnessed the participants' attempts to "get into someone's shoes". At the same time, we had the opportunity to reflect on the importance of believing in an invented world as a prerequisite of an "emotional communication" between the participant/actor and the fictional character/object.

In accordance with our qualitative data, we observed that the participants could understand the perspective of the dramatis personae (88%), and experience various emotions which were created while impersonating the characters. Apart from sympathy or compassion we noticed the occurrence of the participants' pro-social behavior in and out

of role. The members of the group projected insistently their moral principles, always strongly present, and despite the fact that their views and attitudes were still in constant change or in question. For instance, the participants condemned the unjust patterns of behavior, they felt resentment towards violence and social exclusion, they took sides, they argued or showed clear evidence of prosocial behavior. The participants demonstrated their ability to take sides by identifying themselves with the heroes, and by rejecting or accepting their moral attitudes. In the second case, they kept distances judging the situations according to their point of view. These conclusions are consistent with the findings of the research conducted by Klein (1993, 5) regarding the nature of empathy in Drama. The researcher believes that the adolescents' ability to draw conclusions while impersonating characters in various dramatic situations, as well as their ability to get involved in social matters are clear indications of empathy.

The aforementioned findings suggest that there is a strong presence of cognitive empathy, which is a prerequisite to emotional empathy. This hypothesis was one of the main research sub-questions focusing on the presence and/or absence of each one of the dimensions of empathy and their interrelatedness. This finding correlates with other relevant surveys, according to which cognitive empathy can be observed and measured with greater ease. A 65 percent of our pupils expressed themselves through sympathy or compassion.

Emotional empathy, according to our results, had lower rates (a 13%) insofar the former is expressed verbally. Based on research data, we realized that the participants reacted emotionally both superficially as well as on a deeper level according to the definition of 'empathy as a result' given by Davis. We recorded the occurrence of both dimensions of empathy after analyzing the various data, that is our field notes, our diaries, photos and videos, the scenarios created by the students and their emotional involvement in dramatic situations and improvisations, their facial expressions, the expressiveness of their bodies, or their "attitude as audience". Furthermore, we recorded the participants ability to successfully recognize human affliction and to share the feelings in a dramatic environment in and out of role. These findings were, also, checked using cross validation with the data that came from the focus groups sessions. Process Drama provided the necessary framework and gave us the reference points for comprehending and evaluating different emotions, indicative of emotional empathy.

As to the variety of emotional experience, we should underline the fact that some of the participants identified themselves with the dramatic characters by resorting to their own experiences and feelings. Others projected their emotions on the characters, while some others experienced what we call emotional contagion, or mirrored strong emotions (such as anger). Some others focused on themselves expressing personal distress. Similarly, emotional empathy scored low in the results of the quantitative research. Nevertheless, there was a slight improvement both in emotional as well as in cognitive empathy after administering the questionnaire for the second time. On the contrary, sympathy which had scored higher than emotional empathy in our qualitative findings, seems to be on the decrease according to the quantitative results, a fact which is in contrast with the findings of the AMES Scale.

The last of our research sub-questions was whether there would be any obstacles or difficulties in the development of empathy in adolescents, and which would be the most suitable ways to help them overcome these obstacles using Educational Drama as a tool. The dramatic situations, the relationships in and out of drama, and the emotions of the participants reflected at a symbolic level the real life feelings, attitudes and behaviors. The participants' expression of sympathy or empathy through different emotions, attitudes and reactions, was in accordance with each one's different stage of empathy development

and/or of social skills. This finding is confirmed by the Batson and Shaw (1991) theory, according to which middle adolescents are going through a greater emotional upheaval, and are dealing with greater difficulties in regulating their emotions, a fact that can hinder their empathy development while their egocentrism impedes the growth of empathic concern.

CONCLUSION

Middle adolescents can be described as a "dissident voice", as they often dislike sticking to the rules, or find in difficult to adopt a moral attitude. Those adolescents are often characterized as 'reactive' or 'impatient' demonstrating patterns of unstable behavior. Their solidarity is constantly put to the test, and therefore accordingly adjusted. The application of some of the techniques of Educational Drama gave them the chance to concentrate more effectively, to increase their attention span and memory, to be more spontaneous, resourceful and playful. As a participant observer I noted that Drama-inEducation helped them communicate within groups and improve their argumentative techniques, leading them to an interesting and fruitful controversy. The pupils practiced their active listening skills and created substantial interpersonal ties which are indicative of the presence of empathy.

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