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A PROPOSAL FOR THE REORGANIZATION OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION VIA THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DRAMATIC METOD

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to establish the relationship between citizenship education and drama method. In this study, I propose a reorganization of the citizenship and/or democracy education by building in a component of drama method. To this end, citizenship education, as well as its applications in Europe and in Turkey, will be explained in order to provide a framework for the concept. Following this, the dramatic method and the connections between drama and citizenship education will be presented for the purpose of demonstrating the possible impact of drama on civic education.

Keywords: *drama, drama in education, citizenship education*

REFLEKSIJA O REORGANIZACIJI DRŽAVLJANSKE VZGOJE IN IZOBRAŽEVANJA Z DRAMSKO METODO - POVZETEK

Razprava analizira razmerje med državljsko vzgojo in izobraževanjem ter dramsko metodo. Predlaga, da se v izobraževalne programe za razvijanje dejavnega državljanstva in demokratičnih odnosov vključi dramska metoda kot ena od celostnih dejavnosti ter tako reorganizira izobraževanje za dejavno državljanstvo. Avtorica gradi konceptualni okvir za razmislek o drami (dramski metodi) kot delu državljskega izobraževanja s primerjavo med programi v Evropi in Turčiji. V sklepnem delu so predstavljene značilnosti dramske metode ter nakazan nadaljnji razvoj povezovanja med dramsko metodo in izobraževanjem.

Ključne besede: *drama, drama v izobraževanju, državljska vzgoja in izobraževanje*

INTRODUCTION

More than two thousand years ago, Aristotle (2009) discussed the need to guide the development of citizenship in youth. In “The Republic,” Plato proposed political education as part of a broader education for moral justice, explaining a rationale for such education in terms of universal philosophic principles rather than the demands of a particular society (Ornstein, Pajak & Ornstein, 2007). In the recent past, the terms of citizenship have been reshaped and the citizenship education has been built into youth curriculums (Ajegbo Report, 2007). Worldwide, the Renaissance and Reform movements, the French Revolution, the Enlightenment period, the Industrial Revolution and the Second World War acted as the main catalysts, which influence the concept of citizen. These historical phenomena resulted in two important events: the first being the declaration of human rights, followed by women’s rights, children’s rights and animal’s rights; and the second being the establishment of the European Union. After these key steps, the term “citizenship” was discussed more often and with greater fervor than ever before and citizenship education attempted to keep pace with the worldwide changes in social, political, and historical development. Especially after civic education had been integrated into in the curriculum, the theoreticians and educators, as well as the politicians who place weight on raising responsible and democratic citizens, began to try different approaches and methods to carry it a step further. In this paper, we present the dramatic method as an alternative and effective way to augment citizenship education courses. Rather than only integrating drama techniques such as role-play, dramatization, improvisation, and so on, into the curriculum, we propose to re-organize this curriculum using the drama method.

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

The term “citizen” derives from *citezein* (by influence of *denizen*) with the meaning of “inhabit of a city” in the early 14th century (etymology online dictionary); the accepted definition of citizen is a legally recognized subject or a national of a state or commonwealth, either native or naturalized (Oxford dictionary). Although there was a consensus in the definition of “citizen”, the term “citizenship” was described by focusing on different aspects from country to country (NECE, 2008). Likewise, the understanding of citizenship education showed diversity in the countries. For instance, while France focused on the rights of the individuals, Germany emphasized the pedagogical aspects of citizenship education in the curriculum. Additionally, Slovenia supported active citizenship by establishing a children’s parliament. Turkey also demonstrated a different understanding of civic education; the Turkish have developed a different approach, particularly as a consequence of the Republic Revolution. Both in Europe and worldwide, the post-1990s focus on citizenship education sharpened considerably, partly as a result of the efforts of the following scholars: Cogan and Derricott (1998), Kennedy (1997), Ichilov (1998), Reich (1992), and Yates and Younniss (1999). Following the conclusion of his research, Ichilov (1998) defined citizenship as a complex and multidimensional concept, namely, it consists of legal, cultural, social, and political elements and provides citizens with defined

rights and obligations, a sense of identity, and social bonds. Recently, with the influence of regulations and movements in conjunction with the studies, reports, and declarations prepared on citizenship education and human rights have presented to investigate issues in-depth and to establish a common understanding. For example, the conclusion on citizenship education reached in the Eurydice Report (2005) was that citizenship education refers to pedagogical education for young people that seeks to ensure that these young people become active and responsible citizens capable of contributing to the development and well-being of their society.

In Europe, following the establishment of the European Union, citizenship education became one of the more crucial topics of focus in tandem with rapid global changes. Consequently, important studies were conducted on both formal schooling and non-formal education. Balbis (2001) explained the role of NGOs in citizenship education by arguing that citizenship education remains very difficult to reduce into a school setting alone, because citizenship and democratic learning may require more practice as a way of life, forged connections with other subjects, and commitment to participation in real life and experience. According to Bobbitt (2004), in either case, citizenship education must train thought and judgment in connection with actual life-situations; it has the function of training every citizen, not for knowledge about citizenship, but for proficiency in citizenship. From this perspective, to create balance between school life and social life, educational sectors or schools work together with the non-formal sector and NGOs. In 1997, the council of the European Union established the Education for Democratic Citizenship Project, in which the importance of social justice and the equality of rights regarding citizenship was emphasized. Under the European Commission, the ETGACE (Education and Training for Governance and Active Citizenship) Projects (2003) and the Eurydice Project (2005) were put into place in order to support the development of active citizens. In these studies, the issues of democracy, equality, participation, solidarity, tolerance of diversity and social justice, as well as the knowledge and exercise of rights and responsibilities, were discussed. Furthermore, the European Commission supported the projects of Indicators for Monitoring Active Citizenship (2005) and Citizenship Education, and additionally the GHK Report (2007) on active citizenship education. In these studies, main focus was on active citizenship, which was linked to participation. In the GHK Report (2007), active citizenship was defined as political participation and participation in associated life characterized by tolerance, non-violence, and the acknowledgements of the rule of law and human rights. In the 2007 Ajegbo Report, published in England, the compulsory citizenship lessons were announced by explaining that youngsters would be encouraged to think critically about issues of race, ethnicity, and religion with “an explicit link” to current political debates, the news, and a sense of British values. In this report, there was no explicit emphasis on active citizenship or democracy. In 2008, the studies changed direction and research on religion and citizenship education in Europe supported by the European Commission was carried out in order to investigate the effects of religion on citizenship education. In addition to the mentioned NGOs and the present reports and studies conducted, there are other foundations working on human rights and civic

education as well. For instance, the IEA have been studying the issue, producing in the process the ICCS studies (International Civic and Citizenship Education). In 1999, focus was placed on student achievement on a test of conceptual understandings and competencies in civic and citizenship education. This UNESCO supported project was repeated in 2009 to investigate the ways in which young people are prepared to undertake their roles as citizens in a range of countries. Together with the role of the financial supporter, UNESCO has also pursued other projects, one of which was the Citizenship Education Monitoring Project (CEMP). Through this project, UNESCO produced reports of good practice of how schools were introducing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into their schools and the results thereof. In addition to UNESCO, the following NGOs can be included to the list: NECE with the report of “Making of Citizens in Europe” (2008), DARE, and Community Service Volunteers, which have promoted and supported active citizenship education programs in schools, colleges and universities.

In Turkey, the efforts spent on citizenship education can also be divided into two categories: a formal education perspective and a non-formal education perspective. On the formal side, the curriculum development process can be mentioned. Starting from the 1926 curriculum, citizenship education took place in the program both as a separate subject and as an integrated topic. Especially after becoming a candidate country to the European Union, Turkey began to apply the Copenhagen Criteria, which included democracy, the rules of law, human rights, children’s rights and the protection of minorities.

Similar to the European case, in Turkey, NGOs have supported citizenship education outside of the school context. The Education Volunteers Foundation of Turkey (TEGV) has been carrying out varieties of social responsibilities projects, one of which was “I am human, individual and citizen” (2002), with a target group of children with a low socio-economic status from underprivileged neighborhoods. İHOP (Human Rights Joint Platform) is another organization that arranged seminars, meetings, and workshops on the topic of human rights. The aim of the citizenship education seminar provided for students was to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as dedicated citizens (İHOP, 2010).

AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF EDUCATION: DRAMA

Drama is rehearsal for life!
(Heathcote, 1984)

Before establishing the connection between drama and citizenship education, it remains crucial to present background information on drama education. Drama is a method of education that gained recognition and became implemented more often at the beginning of the 20th century. Summarily, drama is whatever it seems to be doing (Bolton, 1984), that is, “thought-in-action; its purpose is the creation of meaning; its medium is the interaction between two concrete context” (Bolton, 1984, p. 21). The first definition is constructed by drama, which evokes an immediate dramatic world bounded in space and time, a

world dependent on the consensus of all those present for its existence (O'Neill, 1995). The latter definition is the real world that we experience everyday. Drama in education refers to the use of drama in pedagogy as an authentic method; it provides a "process-oriented drama" with children – "not presentation but exploration of ideas and situations through drama" (Brown & Pleydell, 1999, p. 4). In drama process, the following theories and approaches were put into practice: play theory, learning by doing, using emotions in education, learner-centered education, humanism, pragmatism and creating a dramatic context (Somers, 1997). Henry (2000) explained this process, defining it as drama that implements both cognitive and emotional aspects of the individual, a process of learning during which participants can learn through carefully structured experiences which include plays, re-organized plays, and dramatic context. Aslan (1999) discussed the key concepts of drama as "movement", the "doing or rehearsing of life," and "using dramatic activities in a purposeful action." One of the main claims is that long-lasting learning is a positive consequence of drama. Elias (2007) explained this by stating that each child has his own feelings and an educational environment should be constructed regarding these feelings, because effective and long-lasting learning can be encouraged when emotions are activated during the process.

Through the dramatic method, educators can achieve some basic aims and objectives, which come from the nature of the dramatic context (Heathcote & Herbert, 1985). These general goals, which were focused on the personal development of the participants, can only be acquired in a well-planned drama class. All professionally planned and applied drama processes have some common outcomes; drama should set the goal of achieving some authentic and specific goals rather than these common outcomes. It is a fact that a dramatic process that is conducted properly would indeed achieve some goals regarding communication, creativity, and empathy (Barnes, 1998). Drama develops critical thinking skills, supports reflective thinking, and stimulates the imagination. It also promotes creative thinking, fosters problem-solving skills, strengthens comprehension and retention, strengthens the ability to work cooperatively, facilitates the development of communication skills, increases empathy and awareness of others, and reinforces a positive sense of self (Bolton, 1984; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Neelands, 1990). As Kelner (1993) stated, the dramatic learning environment should be democratic, respectful, and enjoyable, and participants should also volunteer to be able to achieve the defined goals.

THE DRAMATIC METHOD AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Considering the context and the goals of the dramatic method, there is an evidence in support of creating a connection between citizenship education and the dramatic method. As proposed at the beginning of the paper, drama is an effective alternative to traditional education in civic courses. Although in the curriculum the course is tried to be activated through activities and interesting assignments, a curriculum based on drama method can create an original and authentic environment (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). Drama involves experience-based learning, which remains crucial for citizenship education. In

drama, students can experience some political and social issues in a dramatic context. They can discuss, improvise, and act out the situations, which they may indeed face outside of the classroom in the future. Heathcote & Herberst (1985) stated that drama was a rehearsal for life, meaning that with the help of the dramatic method, civic life can be transported to the classroom and participants can play in this safe make-believe environment. The students can improvise every aspect of life from different perspectives, which creates insight into real life.

In addition to the appropriateness of the structure of drama for citizenship education, the general goals of dramatic environment are also in the same line with civic education. The goals specified in the Eurydice Report (2005) and in the nationwide standards dovetail with the general goals of the dramatic method. The civic education standards defined by the England National Education (Ajegbo Report, 2007) were those of being able to play an effective role in society, being informed, being a thoughtful and responsible citizen aware of his or her duties and rights, raising self-confident, moral, social and communicative persons, and playing a helpful part in the life of their schools, neighborhoods and communities and the wider world (DfEE/QCA, 1999). In drama, together with the personal development, raising active citizens for a democratic society was also one of the main goals of drama theoreticians, including Heathcote (1984). From this perspective, citizenship education and dramatic method are in the same line. It is only necessary to align them more closely.

Historically, drama method and citizenship education have interacted through the medium of studies, projects, and seminars. Bolton (1984), Heathcote (1984), and O'Neill (1995) discussed the importance of raising responsible and well-developed citizens for their countries and for the world. In their books, they pointed to the issues of human rights, democratic persons, and responsible citizens. Recently, the IDEA (International Drama/Theatre Association) prepared a declaration on drama education and human rights (2010). Also, a DICE report (2010) was published to present results of the application of five key competencies through drama. This project, supported by European Commission, was derived from the Eurydice Project (2005). One of the key competencies selected from the original project was interpersonal, intercultural, and social competence. The results yielded that this goal was achieved through drama method.

Therefore, considering the construction of the dramatic context and the goals of the dramatic method, one may deduce that the dramatic method remains a likely candidate for addition to citizenship and democracy education courses.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we proposed to re-organize citizenship education courses by implementing the dramatic method, the reason for this was explained by demonstrating the similar aims and aspects of drama and citizenship education. In this study, the applications in civic education and drama education were presented in order to provide a wider framework for the concepts. Through this framework, this proposal was intended to

demonstrate that the process-oriented drama method can establish real-life environments in classes in order to explore, discuss, and experience ideas and situations in a safe environment (i.e. under the control of teacher) (Brown & Pleydell, 1999, p. 4). A citizenship curriculum constructed regarding drama can support the establishment of active, democratic, and responsible civic behaviors in children via a learning-by-doing classroom environment, where real cases can be enacted. To conclude, drama can act as an effective rehearsal for active citizenship.

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