

Intergenerational Community Theatre –Process Diary (03 april-30 june)

Intergenerational Community Theatre -*Age Against The Machine*

European Network of Cities CERV, Funding ID: 101138625 (2024-26)

1. SESSION 6, "A train's journey" (Uma viagem de comboio)

Place: Sede do Sport Lisboa e Évora, Évora, PT **Date:** 22/05/2024 **Hour:** (14:00-16:00)

Group:

Members of the team present: 3 coordinators (Ana Moya, Isabel Bezelga e Teresa Furtado), 1 expert from CM Évora and 3 assistants (Diana Oliveira, Isabel Guedes, Daniela Salazar)

Participants: 4 students from U Évora (Performative Studies), 2 Pedro Silva Interns and 8 Senior persons

Structure of participants: all women

(It is a homogeneous group all coming from Alentejo region)

Total number of participants: 14 persons

Total number of team members: 7 persons



Topics session and goals:

This session introduced theatrical improvisation techniques and simulation of fictional situations where we travelled with our imagination and took our body to that place. We chose the theme of travel (train travel) because it represents both a literal and a symbolic journey that allowed us to discover stories from the past and a personal interpretation of those memories.

Keywords: gear group assembly, travel, fiction/simulation, fable-image



Methods, techniques and exercises:

We introduced a “gear group assembly” method and dramaturgy creation through improvisation with fictitious (imaginary) scenarios. We introduced an exercise of dialogue and sharing between the performers who show the story and the spectator who observes it and gives it meaning.

Summary of the artistic activities developed:

We started with a warming-up exercise in a circle. Then, we simulated a fictitious situation where we built two trains with movement, sound, and loop repetition of these same elements (gear group assembly method). First, we worked on the concept of the train as a machine in motion, and then some components of the train became passengers. We added complexity

when the two trains started interacting with each other (exchange of passengers, crossing of lines, derailment).

After this exercise, we shared experiences about what we felt on the trip, what we saw, what we did, where we stopped, and why. Another exercise was to divide the group into five smaller groups, where each group had to create three images of situations experienced within the group related to the universe of the trip (what happens inside and outside the train). We continued with a performance presentation by each group. Later, we asked the audience to explain their interpretation of the images observed, and each of the five performance groups could answer back, completing the fable and explaining the real story behind the origin of the images created. Therefore, we brought together both viewpoints' perspectives, that one who embodies the story and the one who sees and interprets it.

Report of the participants responses and evolution:

The senior participants showed ease in imagining and creating the requested simulations. They showed great ability to integrate into the group's theatrical "group gear assemblies", to form part of the fictional stories, and to construct images and pictures with complex theatrical narratives. The senior participants seemed comfortable in the creative dialogue with the young participants.



Team impressions, comments and observations:

Participants continue to be motivated to share personal stories with the group: in this session, train journeys. These trips take us to places and landscapes in the present and in the past, mainly in São Bento do Mato (Azaruja), where many participants lived in the past and still have families living there. They shared personal anecdotes about pleasant moments but also dangers on their travels. At their current age, in this senior stage, they share the difficulty of getting on and off the train and carrying their suitcases.

We were impressed by the participants' adaptability to interact with a complex theatrical structure. We witnessed how well they blended with new groups of young people (a group of theater students).

Sharing intergenerational and intercultural experiences:

We had an intergenerational connection about what can happen on a train journey with contemporary (current) stories mixed with stories and memories from the past. The stories were represented in theatrical images and intergenerational groups.

Unexpected results and challenges during the implementation:

Nothing to report.

Results at the level of the self, the community, and the regional-cultural social context:

At an individual level, each individual story shared ended up forming a historical memory.

At a social level, within the senior group, we found similar memories, such as their relationship with the rural environment during their childhood and youth, and their stories about trains. They were very different trains than we know now because they were so slow that it was possible to do as many things as eat from lunch boxes, crochet, prepare the dowry, and pick up fruit from the trees. It was possible to jump out of the train and return with oranges stolen from the fields. Even the engine driver could heat his lunch from the coal machine.

At the group level, they shared a concern about the difficulty, at a certain age of travelling by train. They agreed that there is always uncertainty as to whether other passengers will help them or whether they will have to find their way out alone. The most significant difficulty is transporting luggage and getting on and off the train, which can be dangerous.

Problems with the topics by participants:

Nothing to report in this session.



Dialogue among different topics (intersectoriality) and transversality in the themes:

Caring, cooking, traveling, family relationships, friendship

Evaluation of the workshop by participants (statements):

The participants showed and expressed their comfort within the group, friendship and confidence in our activities.

Ideas for upgrading exercises or continuing next session:

We will continue in this line of fictional creation through improvisation with simulated scenarios and tables using themes and content covered in previous sessions.

Ideas for a dramaturgy:

We observed that the train journey symbolizes the seniors' desire for a sense of vital independence and the desire to experience new things for themselves. Do not let age be a limitation.