

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 7, “A family day” (“Um dia em família”)

Place: Sede do Sport Lisboa e Évora, Évora, PT **Date:** 29/05/2024 **Hour:** (14:00-16:00)

Group:

Members of the team present: 2 coordinators (Ana Moya, Isabel Bezelga), 1 expert from CM Évora and 2 assistants (Diana Oliveira and Daniela Salazar)

Participants: 4 students from U Évora (Performative Studies) and 8 Senior persons

Structure of participants: all women

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

Total number of participants: 12 persons

Total number of team members: 5 persons



Topics session and goals:

We continue with improvisation techniques. The difference between this session and the previous one was that the participants created everyday life situations that developed over time and not in frozen images. They could choose among three space locations (a hospital, a rural landscape, and the interior of a house), allowing participants to continuously re-adapt to changing environments and improvise life situations by choice.

Keywords: fiction simulation, spatial abstraction, space-time dynamics, imagination, comic-tragic situations



Methods, techniques and exercises:

We introduce a method of instantaneous action and reaction to situations created or proposed by the participants. Combine personal experiences with fictional situations. The exercise was to create three scenic tables that worked in parallel and let the stories develop based on what the participants brought with them from life experiences.

Summary of the artistic activities developed:

We began our session with a collaborative warm-up through singing, where each of us proposed an action, and the others repeated it. Next, we worked on improvisation with three focuses (or scenic frames): a family reunion, a rural harvest and a hospital emergency. We had several types of harvest: olives, rice, blackberries, and flowers. In the hospital, we had patients with stomach problems, fainting, knee problems, smoke intoxication and even a lady who gave birth. In the family, we had a family lunch with various issues such as an unplanned pregnancy of a girl, preparing a cake, making a salad, making a fireplace, and giving advice. At the end, we shared what the participants felt during the session. A description of the session impressions was requested to the participants.

Report of the participants responses and evolution:

The participants show a facility for performative creation through improvisation. We noticed that they use their personal memory, as a resource, for creation and interpretation.



Team impressions, comments and observations:

We observed that silence is uncomfortable for them. They show the need to express what they are representing/interpreting verbally. With their intuitive creativity, the participants demonstrate the ability to transform dramatic life situations into comical and light ones. At the family meeting, the participants interpreted different ages in their lives (young, adult,

actual age) and different social roles (for example, the role of daughter, mother, aunt, cousin, among others). During the harvest, the participants were always young people or children. They were always adults in the hospital, playing as mothers or their actual age. They lost track of their role as a daughter to be cared for long ago. They always take on their role as caregivers. A “dramatic reality” was set within the group, which marked a difference between pretending to be doing something and believing they are in that fictional reality. In other words, they left their present reality and joined another fictional one.

Sharing intergenerational and intercultural experiences:

By imitating movements, the younger participants learn traditions from the past that no longer are present today, such as picking olives by hand, collecting rice and fruits from trees, and cooking traditional recipes.

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:

From the beginning of the session, we focus on looking at each other and our responses. In this session, we focus on building community, mutual help, concern for each other's health, helping when life changes and a child is born, and contributing to doing things for each other – “we are here to help”. We created a happy and dynamic coexistence, chaotic at times, always friendly, joking, and taking the weight off each other's problems (“It is nothing. Everything can be solved”).

In the regional-cultural context, they spoke of large families with many members. Most of them are from the region and find it easy to get together with most of their family members. They talked about their youth and shared memories of working anecdotes in the rural fields. Working in the fields was also a form of family support. From a family lunch, we travelled to the rural fields as an agreed-upon and loving family.

Problems with the topics by participants:

Nothing to report in this session.



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

In the scenic frame of the “Family”, we had conversations about women's sexuality and the women's presence in a comradeship gender force to support each other's problems. At the same time, the man figure is absent, or he left. Among all the different generations of women present in the group, it was surprising how common it is to forget the responsibility and role of the male figure in crisis situations – only one participant spoke of the father's responsibility in an unwanted pregnancy.

Evaluation of the workshop by participants (statements):

In the group evaluation, participants expressed that they identified themselves with the images that emerged from the stories created. Their memories appeared throughout the improvised dramatic construction.

Ideas for upgrading exercises or continuing next session:

We will continue with improvised games to stabilize ideas in pre-scenes, and we will review them. We will also explore the concept of the three age stages (childhood, youth and senior age). We want to look at the relationship between age and their social role in specific time-space situations. We aim to avoid romanticizing the past, leaving the place of memories and bringing them back to the present and this moment in their lives because the present is also rich in information.

Ideas for a dramaturgy:

We will consider the scenario where a woman assume she is alone, relying solely on the female group and not on the other male parent/partner. This dynamic, where men are not trusted, and women assume the helplessness of the male figure, is a crucial aspect of our narrative analysis, highlighting the complex gender dynamics at play. We observed how the female participants do not hold the man responsible for his acts.

When talking about the uncle, the answer was “the uncle grabbed the motorbike and left”. And when there was talk of the uncle returning “don’t say anything to him, he stays between us”. It is interesting to follow this “tragic-comic” statement of facts in their lives.