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STUDENT LEARNING, CHILDHOOD & VOICES | REVIEW ARTICLE

The role of drama in education in counteracting bullying in schools

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Abstract: Bullying is a form of violent behavior that has a markedly negative effect on many aspects of the daily lives of thousands of children. Through a literature review, the present study investigates the term and the nature of bullying, as well as its effect on those involved, and the conditions that prevail in Greek schools. Moreover it contains information about the role of drama in education as a means of counteracting bullying in schools, and the way various experiential drama activities can equip primary school children with the social and emotional skills in order to successfully combat the phenomenon.

Subjects: Arts; Education; Humanities

Keywords: drama in education; bullying; bullies; victims; bystanders; empathy; education

1. Introduction

Drama in education provides a unique and irreplaceable educational experience involving both feelings and emotions in a way that results in a more effective form of education (Best, 1996). Through role-play, participants are given the chance to explore and discover both themselves and the wider world in a way that protects them from the consequences that would normally follow in the situations they recreate (Edmiston, 2000). Research has also ascertained the effectiveness of educational drama in improving pupils' interpersonal relations (Joronen, Konu, Rankin, & Åstedt-Kurki, 2011), in the reduction of aggression (Graves, Frabutt, & Vigliano, 2007), in the cultivation of cooperation and in improving the general climate in the classroom (Catterall, 2007; Mages, 2010), as well as in the development of self-confidence and general awareness of participants (Belliveau, 2007; Rousseau & Moneta, 2008; Santomenna, 2010). Therefore it can be argued that dramatic education provides a secure way of confirming identity and of enabling pupils to confront difficult social problems such as bullying.

Today bullying has become a serious personal, social and academic problem, which affects a large number of pupils (Laeheem, Kuning, McNeil, & Besag, 2009) and causes widespread concern owing

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This study concerns itself with the issue of bullying in primary schools and contains information about the role of drama in education as a means of counteracting the phenomenon. The study is relevant to educators and all those who participate in the educational process, and, in particular, to those who are involved in drawing up programmes to combat school intimidation. Those interested are likely to find interesting material on how various experiential drama activities can be beneficial in creating a climate in the classroom that promotes cooperation between pupils, preempts and combats intimidation and facilitates the learning process.

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to its rapid spread, which is why it needs to be combated immediately. The purpose of this present study is to show how drama in education can be used as an important tool to aid the effort to prevent and combat bullying among primary school children. In addition, the definition and nature of the phenomenon are explored as well as its effect on those involved and the conditions that prevail in Greek schools. The study is relevant to educators and all those who participate in the educational process, and, in particular, to those who are involved in drawing up programs to combat school intimidation. Those interested are likely to find interesting material on how drama in education can be beneficial in creating a climate in the classroom that promotes cooperation between pupils, pre-empts and combats intimidation and facilitates the learning process.

The research method followed was that of literature review. Evidence and information relative to the aims and purposes of the study were collected from recent books, articles, studies, publications, and the Internet, both Greek and international. *However some of the articles reviewed in the paper, were based on theories.* The choice of the literature was influenced by the authors' background and experience as teachers and educators of drama education. Therefore educational and practical texts were chosen as more helpful and relative to the educational process and everyday school practice rather than theoretical ones. Moreover, an attempt was made to select the most recent literature so that the study includes the most up to date information on the subject.

In the following chapter of the study, an attempt will be made to clarify the term and to explore the phenomenon in Greek educational reality.

2. A clarification of the term "bullying" and its nature

The term "bullying" was described by Olweus (1993, 2007) as the aggressive behavior by an individual or a group of children aimed at harming another child or group of children, which is systematically repeated. There is inequality between the bully and the victim(s) in terms of strength, power or numerical supremacy and this particular characteristic seems to be the most important in defining an aggressive act as bullying (Bauman, 2008). So neither instances of violent behavior can be isolated, nor teasing and jokes not aimed at causing harm can be considered as bullying (Farrington & Ttofi, 2010; Furlong, Soliz, Simental, & Greif, 2004).

Bullying is a form of violent behavior that can take on direct and indirect forms. Direct bullying comprises physical intimidation such as injury or the threat of it, spitting, pushing and kicking (Rigby, 2008) as well as non-physical intimidation in the instance of a child being verbally victimized (Furlong et al., 2004), including calling him/her names, insults, spiteful taunts and mockery (Giovazolias, Kourkoutas, Mitsopoulou, & Georgiadi, 2010). The indirect forms of bullying are again connected with the emotional stress of the victim, with the ultimate objective of harming his/her friendships and social relationships. In this category are included malicious gossip, spreading rumors and ostracism from the group (Bauman, 2008; Kokkinos & Kipritsi, 2012). Sexual and racial intimidation are also considered to be forms of bullying (Rigby, 2008). Due to the rapid development of technology, bullying has been extended (Smith et al., 2008) and intimidation is being exercised through chat rooms, mobile phones or emails (Bhat, 2008).

Researchers ascribe behavioral problems, such as bullying in schools, to poverty, lack of social skills, poor academic achievement, the influence of films and the media, lack of parental supervision, the general lack of morals in society (Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011). It can also be seen as a way of attracting attention and an excuse for stealing (Besag, 2006). The view has also been expressed that this phenomenon is a natural part of the evolutionary process in which dominance over the other is the main objective in order to ensure survival (Rigby, 2004). As Merrell (2004) says, what can be observed in society is a value system of dominance of one over the other, which validates violence and influences the bully, who, consciously or unconsciously, uses bullying as a means of climbing the

social ladder, or maintaining his/her status (Kolbert & Crothers, 2003). Moreover, the social structures that serve the maintenance and reinforcement of male privileges by creating a sovereign male identity, are the main factors of reinforcing the victimization of girls and boys who have not adopted features of this male identity, such as a positive attitude toward aggressiveness, a way to control others, a desire for dominance, a maximum performance in sports, etc. (Mills, 2001). The phenomenon also may represent a state of anomie in both formal and informal power structures in schools, which have become dysfunctional communities unable to deal with bullying (Yoneyama, 2015). At the same time it can be students' way of compensating their sense of alienation and disconnectedness from school (Yoneyama, 2015). Hierarchical relationships in schools focusing on corporal punishment and teacher–student bullying (Yoneyama, 2015) as well as the existence of an authoritarian and conflicted school culture, which provides intolerance for diversity, might encourage students become bullies and justify their actions by claiming that the victims are responsible for bringing bullying on themselves, as they "deserved" to be bullied (Thornberg, 2011).

Nevertheless, Farrington (1993) mentions that the most important factor which favors the development of bullying is violence in the child's own domestic environment. Social learning is a powerful process, and when children see role models (e.g. parents) use intimidation tactics, they use similar approaches to get their own needs met and solve problems (Bauman, 2008).

2.1. Bullies, victims, bystanders

Studies mention that there are three groups of children who get involved in instances of bullying: persecutors (bullies), victims and children who are sometimes victimized and sometimes victimize (Andreou, 2004). Besides, there are the rest of the children, the bystanders. Some of them, either because they are frightened or because they think it's in their own interests, are on the bully's side, without actually doing anything, regarding the phenomenon with indifference (Bakema, 2010). Others, however, actively protect victims (Bakema, 2010).

Sullivan (2000), differentiating the bullies, distinguishes those who have great confidence and belief in themselves, enjoying their popularity, and those who are insecure, ruled by anxiety and are less popular. Furlong et al. (2004) however, referring to bullies, maintain that they are children who have themselves been victimized at some time in the past and that they enjoy exercising their strength and power over others. From the other point of view, the victims can be distinguished as being either passive or aggressive, depending on how they react (Smith & Ananiadou, 2003). These children have low self-esteem, a negative self-image, lower physical, psychological and social status than their persecutors, and thus they make easier targets (Furlong et al., 2004). Boys and girls are involved in bullying with the same frequency, even though boys have more connection to direct forms and are as likely to be victims as victimizers (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Girls, now, are associated with indirect forms of the phenomenon (Gini, 2008) and it seems that they are more ready to show sympathy and understanding to victims than are boys (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Gini, 2008). It is worth mentioning that both the school environment and age can reduce direct forms of bullying, while these factors can increase the indirect forms of the phenomenon (Crick, Grotpeter, & Bigbee, 2002).

Both the victims of bullying and bullies themselves present a series of emotional and social problems in their school lives (Bauman, 2008). Child-victims suffer from symptoms of depression (Gini, 2008) and have an increased tendency toward suicide (Gini & Pozzoli, 2009; Rigby, 2005). Also evident are anxiety in social relationships, fear of negative estimation, loneliness, lack of social skills, difficulty in concentrating, while they regularly abandon school, for fear of further victimization (Rigby, 2005; Sbarbabo & Smith, 2011). The repercussions of bullying may last for a long time, stigmatizing the victim's future. In turn, the bullies also display anti-social behavior, such as vandalism, absenteeism, alcohol consumption and the use of forbidden substances, while in early adolescence, illegal behavior can be observed (Bowllan, 2011). There is also more likelihood that they will violently mistreat their own children (Janson & Hazler, 2004). The "bystanders" seem to suffer equally, presenting disturbances similar to those of post-traumatic stress (Janson & Hazler, 2004). From the

educational point of view, bullying has a negative effect on the class interacting process, creating a climate of fear in the classroom which affects children's ability to learn and the teacher's ability to teach (Tabone, 2003).

2.2. Bullying in Greek primary schools

Bullying in schools is as old as education itself (Galanaki, 2010). Therefore, proper attention has been paid to it over recent decades, internationally and studies initiated which have revealed the seriousness of the situation in many countries: according to studies, 32.9% out of 1,440 primary school students in southern Thailand reported having bullied others (Laeheem et al., 2009), in Northern Ireland 17.1% of children declare that they are victimized 2–3 times a month (Livesey et al., 2007), while in Italy the number of primary school children who mentioned experiences of victimization reached 42% (Gini, 2004).

There has been an increase in recording bullying incidents internationally during recent decades, probably due to the fact that the media, researchers, teachers, parents are now more aware of the phenomenon than in the past; as a result, students are more informed, and can thus recognize bullying incidents (Burton, 2010). Moreover, a sudden spread of cyber-bullying has been observed lately, due to the increased use of the Internet. Indentifying covert, indirect aggressiveness among adolescent girls as a form of bullying, could also be another possible interpretation of this observed increase (Burton, 2010).

The rapid spread of bullying internationally resulted in plans to systematically combat it. In Greece, however, no strong attempt was made to formulate a national plan to combat bullying at school, although a series of recent investigations indicate that the situation with regard to bullying in Greek schools is far from satisfactory (Galanaki, 2010; Karkanaki & Kaffetzi, 2009).

According to Pateraki and Houndoumadi (2001), who conducted the first extensive research on the existence and extent of bullying in a large sample of primary school students in Athens, found that 25% of the pupils were involved in instances of bullying (14.7% as victims, 6.2% perpetrators, 4.8% victim/perpetrators). Another research by Boulton, Karellou, Laniti, Manousou, and Lemoni (2001) on 664 students of the wider area of Athens, raises the percentage of involvement in bullying incidents to 58.9% for boys and 47.4% for girls. Moreover, research by Giovazolias et al. (2010) indicated a very large number of children who defined themselves as victims of school intimidation (22.8%), while similarly the results of the inter-state program "Daphne" about bullying in schools (2006–2008) indicated that 22.5% of children in primary education have experienced some form of intimidation or violence 2–3 times a month. The differences that can be noted in the research results above can be attributed to the fact that the estimated prevalence of bullying depends on the study design, definitions of bullying, methods and techniques of data collection, time of data collection and the nature itself of primary school children (Laeheem et al., 2009). Other research carried out in recent years has yielded further valuable evidence of the conditions prevailing in Greek educational actuality.

The most common form of bullying in Greek primary schools is verbal intimidation and the spreading of rumors (Karkanaki & Kaffetzi, 2009; Sapouna, 2008). The two sexes seem to be involved in the phenomenon in different ways, perhaps on account of the way the children are approached both by their families and the Greek educational system, which encourage more aggressive behavior from boys, while girls are supposed to react in a more "feminine" way (Athanasiades & Deliyanni-Kouimtzis, 2010). The perpetrators are, in most cases, boys of Greek descent (Karkanaki & Kaffetzi 2009), who are usually in the same class as the victims (Sapouna, 2008) and have a poor academic performance (Andreou & Metallidou, 2004). Most of the victimized are also boys, often of other nationalities or religions, with a developed educational culture and low self-esteem (Kalati, Psalti, & Deliyianni-Kouimtzi, 2010). Most of the victims and perpetrators tend to deny incidents of bullying (Psalti & Constantinou, 2007), while the victims believe that violence is shown to them on account of their sex, their nationality or their good academic performance. Only 28% of them have mentioned the problem to their teachers or parents (Kalati, Psalti, & Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, 2010), while foreign

students more often mention their victimization than Greek ones (Sapouna, 2008) and 30% of the students believe that neither parents nor teachers have done anything to stop the bullying (Psalti & Constantinou, 2007). Most of the bullying that is done in Greek primary schools happens in the playground (Psalti & Constantinou, 2007), in the corridors (Kalati, Psalti, & Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, 2010), but also on the way to and from school (Psalti & Constantinou, 2007).

Concern in the educational community over the occurrence of bullying in Greek schools continues to mount, while internationally there is a continuing debate about the best strategies to be adopted to combat the problem. In the next chapter we will discuss why the use of drama in education is important in order to contain and handle bullying incidents, and several instances of the application of educational drama, as part of an anti-bullying strategy, will be mentioned.

3. The role of drama in education in preventing and counteracting bullying in schools

It has come to be realized more and more over recent years that school is the vital place for the furtherance of the psychosomatic health of pupils. Even though actions taken to prevent and counteract bullying must include every area of the child's life, such as school, home, society at large (Espelage & Swearer, 2003), the basic axis of effective intervention must be the school. Firstly, because it is there that victims, bullies and bystanders and other children meet together and interact within the framework of the group, but also because the knowledge gained by children through their school lives will stay with them throughout their adult lives (Bakema, 2010; Malm & Löfgren, 2007). Apart from that, the pupils themselves appear to agree that measures to counteract bullying are most effective when taken by pupils and teachers in the area of the school (Crothers, Kolbert, & Barker, 2006). It is the view of the researchers that since there is a tendency for pupils to "legalize" such behavior (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004) as they grow up and since primary school children show greater sympathy to victims of bullying, it is at that age that programs aiming at the prevention and counteracting of the phenomenon should begin (Belliveau, 2005).

Such a program should be based on cooperative, experiential learning that gives pupils the chance to develop their cognitive, psycho-emotional and social means to a scale that furthers cooperation, acceptance, awareness, trust between children and adults and an interest in others (Parker-Roerden, Rudewick, & Gorton, 2007), basic qualities of behavior which are absent from bullies (Tabone, 2003). Dramatic education includes all of these elements which help to improve the climate in the classroom and to bring about the more effective form of learning through experience (Pecaski McLennan, 2008).

3.1. The contribution of drama in education to the development of socio-emotional skills

Experiential education involves feelings and emotions, furthering the development of the children both in these areas and with their social skills (Best, 1996), reinforcing them so as to be able to deal with difficult situations in their everyday life. Because in educational drama each child is an inseparable member of the team to which he/she belongs, his/her social skills are naturally developed through the need to work and play with other members (Ball, 2012).

Both, as part of the group effort to dramatize and reproduce a story or in the successful performance of an improvisation, each child manifests his/her knowledge, experience, personal background which has to cooperate and "communicate" with those of other children in order to complete the communal act (Catterall, 2007). Communication, listening to what the other has to say, accepting his/her suggestions and ideas, giving constructive support, are skills which are cultivated when people work together, just like those who collaborate in the dramatic activities (Stinson & Wall, 2003).

After the role-play, which is a basic activity in educational drama, the children attempt to put either themselves or others into a hypothetical situation. In order to play this role, they have to adopt the point of view of the person they are playing, try to define themselves through the role and to see the "other" in themselves. In their effort to metamorphose themselves into the person they are

playing, to persuade and converse with others, they will be obliged to activate both their critical thinking and their sensitivity (Kouretzis, 2008). The child becomes the "other" (Ball, 2012), while at the same time maintains his/her identity by acting, communicating, observing, and exploring the world through the eyes of others. The ability to see the world through the eyes of others can contribute to tempering interpersonal disagreement and leading people toward social support (Leiberg & Anders, 2006). Besides, there is a negative connection between developed empathy and anti-social behavior, such as bullying and aggression (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006). According to Neelands (2002), it is this ability to identify with others that frees the individual from prejudice and ideology, enabling him/her to see that each individual is different and that this is the source of our strength. Through role-playing, the borders between themselves and the "other" meet and merge, thus creating personalities who are able to comprehend, sympathize and empathize (Neelands, 2002; Somers, 2003).

Drama in education facilitates the sharing of experience and of open discussion to dispel myths and unfounded beliefs, the detection of attitudes and suggestions for the development of many outlooks concerning the question being tackled (Merrell, 2004). Through this process, bullies can explore through their roles how victims feel and to understand the human pain they are causing, the victims can find ways of resisting and reacting against what is being done to them, the bystanders hesitate to intervene on their own, can be informed that many others share their altruistic unease (Salas, 2005). Similarly, participants can comprehend how, in reality, bullies are themselves victims and how it is the behavior, not the child, which is bad (Merrell, 2004). According to Malm and Löfgren (2007), this kind of knowledge, gained through experience, is the best way of resolving conflict. Besides, all of this happens in complete security, since the activity can be stopped at any moment while still making a valuable impression on participants (O'Toole, 2002). Drama in education involves children physically, and *it* does so in a way that is interesting and appealing. It has the power to break everyday school routine and to lead pupils toward knowledge without the need to spend hours sitting at desks (Boal, 2002).

Consequently, drama in education can modify pupils' behavior and put a curb on aggression. Which is why interventions and programs which have been applied internationally with the aim of combating bullying, have relied on drama in education (Belliveau 2005, 2007; Burton & O'Toole, 2005; Joronen et al., 2011; Malm & Löfgren, 2007). Although theory suggests that this pedagogical tool might be effective, research findings concerning its effectiveness in fighting bullying are limited (Joronen et al., 2011). This is due to the lack of well-designed (valid and reliable) measurements and theory-based research (theory on educational drama interventions and the specific issue of the intervention) (Joronen, Rankin, & Åstedt-Kurki, 2008). The effectiveness of an intervention is also linked to observing certain basic principles; it should be continuous and longlasting (Laakso, 2010), it should incorporate a whole-school approach involving the entire school community (Joronen et al., 2011), the adults' interest (Olweus, 1993), including that of well-trained teachers in dramatic techniques (Burton & O'Toole, 2009).

Win–Win Resolution *is* one such program-research that has been based on drama in education. According to Graves et al. (2007), the survey lasted for 12 weeks, and 2,440 students from public middle and high schools in the State of North Carolina, USA took part in it. The standardized curriculum was delivered within the school and included role-playing games and collaborative trust and acceptance exercises that aimed at self-control and anger copying, self-management of feelings and interpersonal problem-solving to build conflict resolution skills. The results of the program were very encouraging. All the students showed a decrease in their relational aggression levels, while only high schools students showed a decrease in their physical aggression levels, probably because in middle school, the primary mode of aggression is relational rather than more overtly aggressive (Graves et al., 2007). In addition, participants developed effective communication skills and increased their knowledge of strategies used to cope with school bullying. As limitations of the research reported that information about program evaluation outcomes was collected only from the student, the survey did not include a control group for comparison and also the fact that it is not possible to ascertain the long-term effect of the results on the participants (Graves et al., 2007). The

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short duration of the program is also included in its weak points, and so is the fact that it focuses only on the students, without taking adults into consideration. According to Farrington and Tfofi (2010), the intensity and duration of a program as well as attempts to raise parents' awareness about the issue of school bullying through educational presentations and teacher–parent meetings are strongly related to program effectiveness.

Joronen et al. (2011) carried out a school-based drama program (with control and intervention groups) on 190 primary school students in southern Finland in order to enhance social relationships and decrease bullying at school. The drama program included classroom drama sessions, follow-up activities at home and three parents' evenings concerning issues of social well-being during the school year September 2007–May 2008. Data on social relationships in the classroom and experiences of bullying were obtained before and after the program, using self-completed questionnaire from the same students. The study resulted in improvement in social relationships and decrease in the number of bully-victims, as bullying victimization decreased 20.7% units from pretest (58.8%) to posttest (38.1%) in the intervention group ($p < 0.05$). The existence of a control group, the parents' involvement in the program and the use of a controlled study design were among the strong points of the program. Nevertheless the study did not take into account the whole school community, while the generalization of the research findings, is limited by the small sample size and the homogenous population. What is more, the information about the results was selected only from students, whereas follow-up studies are vital to detect the long-term effects (Joronen et al., 2011).

Also in Australia, in the State of Queensland, a whole-school anti-bullying program "Acting against bullying", which is part of the wider international program "Dracon" (DRAma for CONflict), was applied and it focused on the use of drama in schools to combat bullying. The survey was implemented in three phases, lasting one year each, and involved 20 featured urban and provincial schools, in primary and secondary education (Burton & O'Toole, 2009). The funded research component of the project finished in 2006, but a number of schools continued to implement the program on an annual basis. The innovative features that emerged from this research program were the development of an effective style of theater performance to address bullying (Enhanced Forum Theatre) and the integration of peer teaching and drama together as the core of the project. The results obtained with qualitative methods (questionnaires and interviews with students and teachers, extensive researcher and teacher observations), showed that participants understand better the nature and causes of bullying. Furthermore, their interest and knowledge significantly increased as well as their awareness of the consequences of the phenomenon and their own role in creating these consequences. There was also a significant positive change in attitudes and behaviors of perpetrators, victims and those attending the event-bullies, those being bullied and bystanders (Burton & O'Toole, 2009). A primary limitation of the research was the lack of reliable statistical information on incidents of bullying within individual schools, which made it difficult to measure the impact of the program on participants. Difficulty was faced during the implementation of the program in primary schools, since none of them had a drama specialist, unlike secondary schools. It was also noted that many primary teachers lacked confidence in using the drama techniques. A number were also wary of overtly addressing bullying in their classrooms, sometimes for fear of exacerbating rather than ameliorating the incidence of real bullying (Burton & O'Toole, 2009). The lack of specially trained teachers, and the wariness they often display, when it comes to this issue, seems to be factors that generally make research on drama in education harder.

3.2. A program against bullying based on drama in education

Taking international experience in view, an intervention with the aim of opposing bullying, largely based on drama in education, should be enforced in Greek schools, *because drama, as explained above has the potential to improve school environment and to develop socio-emotional skills of children. Thus, an intervention focusing on drama, is a powerful ally to combat school bullying. However such an intervention should be part of a well planned anti-bullying strategy addressed to the entire student population of the country and will be under the auspices of the State and of local authorities, in order to have the necessary institutional support. The long duration of the program (application for*

at least one school year) the engagement of parents, its embrace by special instructors, who in coop-eration with teachers, will apply and will evaluate each phase of the program and the continuous exposure of children in dramatic activities are in accordance with the international experience, necessary conditions for its success. Thorough training and education of teachers on the theory and techniques of drama in education, it is crucial for the intervention to be adopted by the entire school community and the whole project to be successful.

Some of the basic principles that should be followed during the implementation of drama activities are respect for the participants' cultural background, class and gender, as well as the creation of a safe space within the group where sensitive information about conflicts could be shared and transformed into distanced dramatic situations and explored without individuals being personally exposed (Malm & Löfgren, 2007). Such a program could include exercises in groups and pairs, cooperative exercises which create a friendly climate in the classroom, dramatic plays, role play, improvisation, exercises from the "Theatre of the Oppressed" of Boal, which aim at strengthening the pupils' investigation of the phenomenon, what causes it and its effect on those involved, as well as the prospects of opposing it.

We will now proceed to concern ourselves with particular examples of techniques used in drama in education, which could be drawn on to form part of an anti-bullying program that could be applied in primary schools.

Let's start with an example from role-play. In the first phase, it is necessary for whoever is conducting the sessions to have an initial discussion with the children about school violence and bullying (Österlind, 2011). The purpose of this discussion is to investigate and to enrich the knowledge of the participants about this subject. Questions like the following could be asked: "What is bullying and what sorts of bullying are there?", "Why do children do these things?" "What's it like to be picked on? How do you feel?" The next phase is role-play. The organizer separates the students into teams giving each of them a different example of bullying that they have to play out between them. These examples can be varied, referring to participants who are victimized for a number of different reasons (e.g. as a way of showing strength, in order to steal, religious or racial prejudice) by one or more bullies, involving bystanders, too.

One such scenario might concern a child, physically victimized because of his/her appearance (e.g. the clothes he wears), the bully's "friends", joining in and calling him/her names, while the victim cannot do anything, and neither can the victim's friends. Another group's scenario might be about the whispering of rumors that ends up with the child being chucked out of games, while a third might be about children making fun of an immigrant who cannot speak Greek, while bystanders do not do anything for fear of being victimized themselves.

The students enter discussion, share out the roles, and each group then plays out its story, finding some sort of resolution for what has occurred. O'Toole (2002), notes that this gives children the chance to learn through the models of behavior and actions they present within a secure dramatic framework. So, allocating roles to children under the set term of bullying can enable them to discover their prejudices, to explore their way of thinking and feeling, to learn through physical experience, to perceive the savagery of the phenomenon and to be challenged to take a stand (Baer & Glasgow, 2008; Malm & Löfgren, 2007). The acting-out of the role-plays is followed by a final discussion. The organizer has the chance to ask the participants what has happened, to define the phenomenon from the viewpoints of each of the roles and what might have happened in the internal world of the characters, so that the children can explore the feelings, intentions and motives of the roles through their own actions. Also, the children's views about bullying are investigated after the role-play and these are compared to the views they had at the beginning, in the first discussion. The organizer can also ask which of the roles the participants found the most sympathetic and can also ask the silent bystanders not just how they could have helped the victim, but also how the victim

could have reacted better to the situation he/she found himself in. Finally, the participants can declare how they have reacted themselves in similar situations and how they intend to react in the future (Österlind, 2011).

The exercises of the Image Theatre of Boal (a technique of the Theatre of the Oppressed) can also be employed in such a program. In Image Theatre the participants, without using words, explore situations of oppression, forming pictures with their own bodies and those of others (Boal, 2002). The organizer calls upon the children in the group to form a "sculpture" on the subject of bullying, using their bodies, immediately, without allowing time for thought to block their initial reactions. One after another, the participants form their sculptures and, when the organizer goes and touches them, they have to say out loud one word that expresses how they feel. Next, the organizer invites a child to "chisel" the bodies of his/her classmates, so as to form a group-picture on the theme of school intimidation. For example, three children are physically threatening a fellow pupil, involving supporters of the victim and the victimizers. If any of the children who are observing the construction disagree with the way in which intimidation is being presented, they can change the picture and create a new picture. The aim is to finally arrive at a sculpture that all agree is a faithful representation of the situation (real image). The next step is for the organizer to ask the students to create the ideal image in the same way; that is, how the picture-sculpture would be without intimidation—again working toward the consent of the whole group. Finally, the organizer may ask each child to show, altering the picture, how the real image can be changed into the ideal one. Then, the children who are acting as part of the sculpture, moving slowly, can take part in the formation of the desired ideal picture. Thus, while at the beginning the sculpture can represent a situation of conflict, the children, moving slowly, transform this into an ideal picture in which they are reconciled. An interesting variation of this could be, for some of the participants, to illustrate a certain kind of bullying with their bodies, while the rest of the group form their own body-sculpture on the theme of how they see themselves in relation to the representation of bullying. The organizer may ask the members of each group to communicate with each other either by slow movements or by "freezing" in position. It's necessary that such exercises should be followed by a discussion, in which the participants should be encouraged to talk about their feelings and thoughts, make suggestions and explore their attitudes and behavior, so that the phenomenon can be seen from many points of view.

Another technique, deriving from the Boal theatre, is the Forum Theatre (Boal, 2002), according to which participants are confronted with an instance of oppression, based on their experiences and points of view (Gourd & Gourd, 2011). At the start, students tell stories based on true instances of bullying which actually happened to them or were witnessed by them or their classmates. The next step is for members of the group to be given acting parts in one of these stories and then to play them out. When the first presentation has finished, a Mediator (Joker) comes on and asks the audience to intervene to help solve the problem. There are three sorts of intervention: The children-spectators can advise the one in the role of the victim how to act in order to manage the situation or for them to take over the role of an actor, contributing their own ideas for solving the problem, which can be done by taking on a new role (e.g. as an adult, such as a teacher), thus giving a new dimension to the production (Gourd & Gourd, 2011). The story has to be played over and over again, with many interventions and suggestions from the audience, all of them aiming at finding the best way of facing the problem. The Joker can at any time "freeze" the production and ask the actors what they think, how they're feeling and why they're reacting in a particular way and to ask actors to tell the audience what they intend to do. At the end, there follows a discussion to find out which of these suggested strategies is the most suitable to combat bullying and which of them would worsen the situation as well as whether the scenes presented represent a true picture (Gourd & Gourd, 2011).

Both with the Image Theatre and the Forum Theatre, Boal aimed at instituting drama as a force for change and especially to change the condition of the oppressed. Through the above-mentioned activities and discussions the aim is for the children to discover the nature of bullying and the means by which the problem can be handled, but first and foremost to free them of fear, to act against the oppression they suffer from and to put these solutions to work in their daily lives (Boal, 2002).

4. Conclusions

The basic aim of this study was to show the seriousness of school intimidation and to put forward drama in education as the main focus on which a systematic intervention against bullying in primary schools can be built. *Such an intervention to be successful should deal with the limitations of similar programs that have been implemented and are associated with the proper planning, the duration and the scope of its implementation, the institutional support of the part of the State, the preparation of the whole school community for the project.*

Through participation in drama in education children are able to study human nature in all of its manifestations (O'Toole, 2002). We actually dramatize our world in order to comprehend how it functions and to understand the how and why of our behavior (O'Toole, 2002). Just as basic values and belief in oneself are deeply centered in the subconscious, making it difficult to comprehend and change them, so are the hidden aspects of our identity, which inform us as to who we really are; these can be explored through artistic and cultural experience, such as drama (Somers, 2003). Therefore, drama in education as a basic component of an anti-bullying campaign has the capacity to confront ethical and social issues such as bullying in schools.

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