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Drama/Theatre Pedagogy: Bullying at School and Team Spirit Building among Teenagers

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Abstract

Our research looks into the impact of drama/theatre pedagogy practices and methodologies on teenage bullying in schools. Fifteen-year-old students from a countryside junior high school in Northern Greece participated in our mixed research model comprising a weighted questionnaire, participatory observation, reflective researcher logs and critical friend input. Our research question was whether drama/theatre pedagogy workshop participants can be empowered affectively, redefine their attitude to bullying at school, bond more closely, create synergies, and communicate more effectively in this safe setting, thus becoming more aware of themselves and their realities. Our findings show that drama/theatre pedagogy activities do create positive impact for all of the above.

Introduction—Theoretical Framework

Bullying at school is any intentional and repetitive negative behavior against one person or group of persons having difficulty defending themselves (Olweus, 2013; Smith, 2014). Bullying has negative consequences for the bullies, their victims and the school environment (Payne & Gottfredson, 2004). Its three main characteristics include an intention to cause harm, an imbalance of power, and repetitive behaviors (Olweus, 1994). Bullying at school can take place both indoors and outdoors, even if teachers are present (Elliott & Lemert, 2009). "Bullying" is different from "violence" and "aggressiveness" in that the injury caused is "voluntary" with no clear motive for the bully's behavior (Rigby, 2002).
Bullying at school is often physical and, thus, easier to perceive because of the beatings and patent violence involved. Verbal bullying includes abusive and offensive words and comments, rumor spreading, racist comments, and affronts impacting most directly on students by shattering their self-confidence (Smith et al., 2002). Tacit bullying, when victims are excluded from collective activities, there are rumors circulating about them, and their personal objects are destroyed, is hard to perceive (Coloroso, 2003). Cyberbullying against teenagers takes place on a personal and social level in and out of school (Camerini et al., 2020; Slonje et al., 2013) by means of abusive or threatening language, and possession and misuse of personal information in circumstances of anonymity (Kowalski et al., 2014; Tokunaga, 2010). Sexual bullying, finally, involves indecent comments, gestures or even sexual assault against boys and girls who are too ashamed and too afraid to speak out (Slonje et al., 2013).

Bullying in school involves student bullies, student victims, and student victims/bullies (Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2008), with bystanders playing an important role, too. Scientists are divided on the special traits for each of those three groups, and on the gender issue. Findings on the gender that is most likely to suffer bullying at school are disparate and conflicting. Carlyle and Steinman (2007), for example, find that boys are the most frequent victims due to their natural genetic characteristics; on the contrary, Merrill and Hanson (2016) consider that girls are just as much involved in physical bullying but in a more indirect way. Big-scale research in Biswas et al. (2022), shows that girls are more likely to be subject to cyber bullying, compared to boys who are more likely to fall victim to the traditional form of bullying.

School atmosphere and the feeling of belonging impact positively on bullying issues (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Johansson et al., 2022; Muijs, 2017). Teacher inaction or tacitness have been found to make bullying more frequent (Biswas et al., 2022; Marachi et al., 2007). On the contrary, students report feeling safer when teachers take adroit action and confront the problem (Crothers et al., 2006). Moreover, interventions based on a teacher's own initiative

are more effective than any other form of disseminating information (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003). When teachers take a clear stand against bullying, bullying incidents at school decrease according to many researchers (Saarento et al., 2015).

Asimopoulos et al. (2014) conducted their research on the attitude, opinions and knowledge of bullying in Greek primary schools among students, teachers and parents. Sometimes, teachers were unable to spot the phenomenon or lacked the expertise to address it. Parents seemed to totally ignore such incidents, thereby making students feel that the psychological violence they were subjected to was being belittled.

In recent years, process drama and several drama techniques, among others, are applied all over the world in an effort to address this phenomenon. This mode of teaching seems to make children feel safe and develop a multifaceted stance on bullying, when confronted with the real thing (Baer & Glasgow, 2008). Burton and O' Toole (2009), too, based their action program on drama to enable students in Australia to comprehend the motives and instincts of the bullies. Similarly, drama proved to be effective in curbing bullying in Irish schools through actions including role playing and improvisation (Donohoe & O' Sullivan, 2015).

Drama/Theatre Pedagogy

Our own drama/theatre pedagogy program has play as its basic component. Research findings confirm that play, in general, makes children more willing to learn and helps them achieve their cognitive goals by providing a space for safe expression which reduces unwanted pressure and the anxiety of failure. According to Martlew et al. (2011), active learning generates positive attitudes and enthusiasm among participants, together with self-confidence, independence, and cooperation skills. Furthermore, a playful approach makes learning accessible, inclusive, and more interesting (Lenakakis et al., 2018).

The game of embodiment is a reflection of the players' own choices and actions; their hidden/forgotten skills are updated, they reveal themselves to the rest of the group in a hypothetical, and thus safe, way, while the boundary between reality and imagination remains imprecise. Focusing and delving deeper in order to construct the role offers a new kind of insight into the players/creators themselves and into the others. Players feel the joy and safety of involvement into the magical world of play: processing information and knowledge, trying out compositions with different shapes and forms, and acquiring a holistic culture. Theatrical play symbolism guides us into the views of the group, and the group itself becomes aware of the different opinions which exist about several situations. In this way, they live their experience, and they broaden their learning and acting horizons (Andersen, 2004; Hentschel, 2010; Lenakakis, 2004; Lenakakis et al., 2019; Lenakakis & Panaghi, 2018; O' Toole, 2009).

Drama/theatre pedagogy is built on dialogue, through which children access the new reality they have created, followed by knowledge and learning (Di Palma & Carpani, 2021; Giotaki & Lenakakis, 2016). The freedom of expression enjoyed by drama/theatre pedagogy program participants enables them to have their "say"; they are no longer passive recipients, they become active. Drama/Theatre conventions and settings create a safe atmosphere of expression and creation enabling subjects to voice their personal experience, to become holistically involved, to experiment, to create, to become aware of and to grasp their own workings and those of the world around them (Bengochea et al., 2018; Kompiadou et al., 2017; Lazarus, 2013; Luton, 2021). It is an experimental learning process feeding constructively into socio-affective and academic learning (Podlozny, 2000; Walker et al., 2011). These findings about the strengths of drama/theatre pedagogy constitute the groundwork of our research.

Methodology

Research Objectives and Questions

Our research aims to examine the input of a teenage drama/theatre workshop about bullying at school. We seek to examine whether participating students are affectively empowered, whether they reconsider their approach to bullying, whether they build stronger ties and synergies, whether they communicate more effectively in the safe setting of such a workshop, and whether they can, thus, become more acutely aware of issues pertaining to themselves and their realities. We also seek to research gender-relevant aspects.

Participants

Our participants were forty-four (44) fifteen-year-old students from two classes of a countryside junior high school in Northern Greece. Twenty-one (21) of them participated in our fourteen (14) drama/theatre pedagogy interventions, and the remaining twenty-three (23) were our control group. We had (23) boys and (21) girls. Our non-random, judgmental sample entails limited generalization of research findings. We chose this particular school based on capacity and availability, following their positive response. We considered it to be a research challenge because of the frequent racial discrimination and bullying incidents, according to the school head.

Research Method

We opted for a mixed approach through triangulation, that is, co-applying at least two research methods, and combining the qualitative with the quantitative one (Christodoulou et al., 2022; Morse, 1991) in order to achieve reliable and valid research results. Qualitative tool analysis enables researching into the social dimensions of phenomena involved, and into the

thoughts, feelings, and relationships of participants, alongside indirect messages (Cohen & Manion, 1980). Quantitative tools, on the other hand, can lead to data and conclusions about the measurable part of concepts and behaviors. Our overall conclusions result from the combined use of both.

This action research comprises cycles within which its parts move successively through the stages of a) diagnosis, when information about the problem is collected, b) planning, for the action program to be planned, c) intervention, when the program is implemented, and d) feedback for the final assessment of our results (Lewin, 1948).

Measurements-Tools

We used a translation of the closed-ended questions of *The Questionnaire on School Bullying* by Margitics et al. (2019). Our two translators were bilingual, translation quality was checked prior to our research, and gender was the only demographic characteristic researched into. The main part of the questionnaire consists in seventy (70) Likert scale questions ranging from 0- Hardly Ever to 1- Sometimes, 2- Often, and 3- Almost Always. The higher the average, the more our participants had experienced bullying at school as bullies, victims or bystanders. Our qualitative data collection tools included participatory observation, our researcher's reflective log, and the critical friend. Grounded theory was used for qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 1998). Following categorization and data collection and grouping, we embarked on codification under general categories which kept evolving alongside our analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Our central research categories and strands provide the answers to our research questions.

Data Collection

Quantitative research data were collected in two stages in the form of a quasi-experimental project. The school principal authorized our research, students and their parents were informed about its content and objectives, they consented, and we provided data protection assurance. The second stage included data collection from our participants prior to the interventions in the experimental group, which was repeated after the end of our program, too. Qualitative data were collected by the researcher and the critical friend during the interventions, and by observing everyday student conduct.

Program Implementation

We offered fourteen drama/theatre pedagogy interventions (Dunn & Anderson, 2013; Gallagher, 2014; Hentschel, 2010). Actions and fields of study were continuously adapted to meet the interests and the needs of the group.

Our program did not exclude any given drama/theatre pedagogy practice or exercise duration and intensity. We kept updating our initial planning to match the needs of our group. Creating an atmosphere of trustful and safe communication was, perhaps, one of the most demanding elements of our intervention, which is why more meetings were held than initially planned. Role play proved to be a safe way of reserve mining in order to talk about the role, because participants found it easier to express themselves through their change of identity (Neelands, 2004). «It's role playing, so we can say and do things that are not our own because they belong to the role»: this convention enabled free expression on the part of those teenagers. In the beginning we had long discussions about the rules of the game, but as our meetings progressed those exhaustive discussions were replaced by bodily and non-verbal activities. Body and rhythm games and exercises together with small scenes focused on a particular object, e.g. a sceptre or a newspaper clipping being indicative of oppression, for example (image theatre) were used, which was helpful for reflection purposes following each exercise or each game, as participating teenagers subsequently expressed themselves in a more detailed, descriptive and reflective fashion.

Our program ran from October to mid-December 2022. Acceptance, trust, freedom of expression and privacy were the principles our researcher and the group agreed upon. All interventions included body and expression warm-up exercises, a main part that was commensurate with the topic, and a closing reflection/discussion.

Our interventions comprised three cycles of actions. First cycle workshops gave our participants the opportunity to introduce themselves, to build trust and a positive group atmosphere, and to follow the trail of ideas, experiences, and positions on bullying at school which guided our subsequent interventions. In the second stage of our program, students participated in devised theatre exercises cultivating self-esteem and enabling them to acknowledge the positive traits in their fellow students. The third and final cycle was about personal experience sharing, situation and conduct assessment, detecting and sorting the amount of risk and harm one can cause, empathizing with all of the groups involved, and giving solutions. Theatre of the Oppressed and Playback Theatre techniques and exercises prevailed in this program cycle.

Our drama/theatre pedagogy program was partly based on elements from Boal's theatre of the oppressed due to our topic and our target group. Several researchers (Fantus, 2020; Rivers, 2020; Sajnani et al., 2021) obtained positive results through exploring these issues via theatre-of-the-oppressed techniques for self-image empowerment, for becoming critically aware of one's rights, for changing one's attitude or behavior in the face of oppressive conduct, and for one's empowerment. Developmental (bodily and psycho-affective) changes in teenagers

(Jansen & Kiefer, 2020) provide fertile ground for self-image awareness, and for becoming aware of oppression and corporeality especially with regard to gender (Cherewick et.al., 2021); more of such positive results include Duşe & Duşe, 2021; Ventä-Olkkonen et. al., 2022; Karahasanović-Avdibegović, 2023. Another reason for using these techniques was that our participants needed to discuss their own experience of bullying and revive it, so that the group could then proceed to offer the "solution." Our drama-theatre pedagogy techniques for this program were enriched with methodological paradigms from applied theatre and drama in addition to our own theoretical paradigms (Doerger & Nickel, 2008; Nickel, 2005; Pinkert, 2011).

Research Results

Questionnaire findings were collected and evaluated with the SPSS statistical suite. The first of our three study strands related to attitude change in the experimental group and in the control group before and after our interventions on the victim, bystander and bully scales. The second strand included a comparison between the two groups, and the third one was about gender differences.

Paired-sample t-test was used for strand 1. Tables 1 and 2 contain experimental group results, and a statistically significant increase on the bystander scale for the experimental group following our intervention (p= 0,078, Table 2).

Table 1

Paired Samples Correlations experimental group

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Victim scale prior to & after the interventions	19	.050	.838
Pair 2	Bystander scale prior to & after the interventions	19	-.137	.576
Pair 3	Bully scale prior to & after the interventions	19	-.107	.664

Table 2

Paired Samples Test experimental group

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Victim scale prior to & after the interventions	.85265	.19561	-.32165	.50028	.457	18	.653	
Pair 2	Bystander scale prior to & after the interventions	.52846	.12124	-.02839	.48102	1.867	18	***.078***	
Pair 3	Bully scale prior to & after the interventions	.56452	.12951	-.20707	.33711	.502	18	.622	

Paired-sample t-test results for our control sample appear in Tables 3 and 4. There is no statistically significant difference regarding victim, bystander and bully scales before and after the intervention.

Table 3

Paired Samples Correlations control group

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Victim scale prior to & after the interventions	22	-.009	.969
Pair 2	Bystander scale prior to & after the interventions	22	-.221	.323
Pair 3	Bully scale prior to & after the interventions	22	-.035	.877

Table 4

Paired Samples Test control group

		Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Victim scale prior to & after the interventions	.10468	.68878	.14685	-.20070	.41007	.713	21	.484
Pair 2	Bystander scale prior to & after the interventions	.08561	.58455	.12463	-.17357	.34478	.687	21	.500
Pair 3	Bully scale prior to & after the interventions	-.12299	.64384	.13727	-.40846	.16247	-.896	21	.380

The Mann-Whitney test was used for second parameter data evaluation. Table 5 includes our test results with no statistically significant difference regarding victim, bystander and bully scales before and after the intervention.

Table 5

Mann-Whitney between the 2 groups after the interventions

	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Victim scale after the interventions	176.50	366.50	-0.851	0.395
Bystander scale after the interventions	193.50	446.50	-0.406	0.685
Bully scale after the interventions	149.00	339.00	-1.578	0.115

The Mann-Whitney test was also used for the analysis of our last strand, the results of which appear in Table 6. There are three statistically significant differences regarding gender (see Figures 1-3): girls score higher on the victim scale prior to the intervention, and boys score higher on the bully scale both before and after the intervention.

Table 6

Mann-Whitney regarding gender

	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Victim scale prior to the interventions	130.00	406.00	-2.622	***0.009***
Bystander scale prior to the interventions	221.00	497.00	-0.484	0.629
Bully scale prior to the interventions	121.00	352.00	-2.841	***0.004***
Victim scale after the interventions	151.00	382.00	-1.542	0.123
Bystander scale after the interventions	172.00	403.00	-0.993	0.321
Bully scale after the interventions	131.00	341.00	-2.073	***0.038***

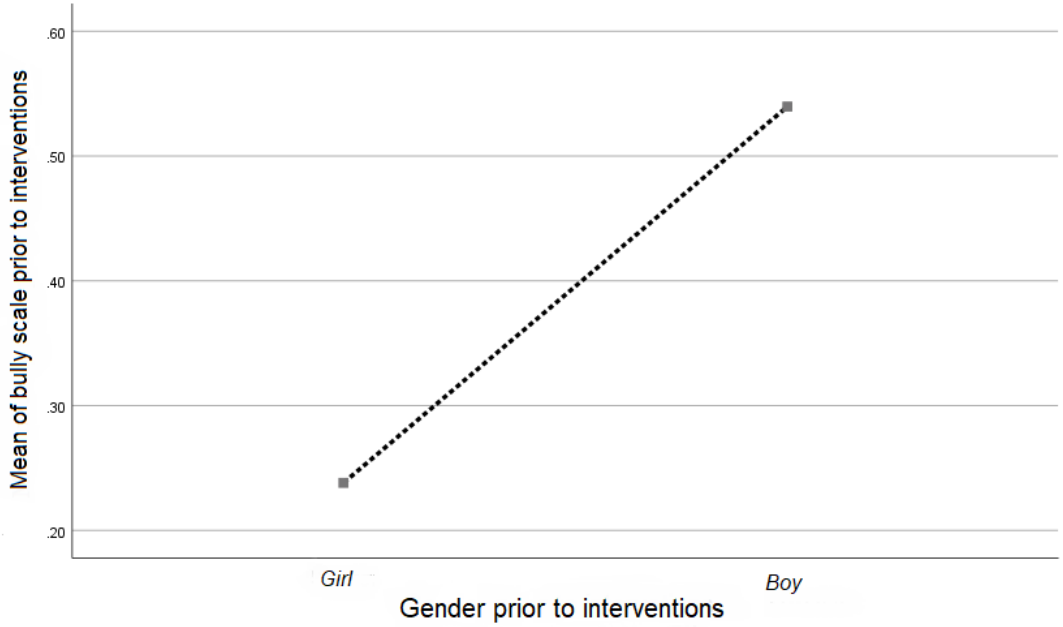

Figure 1. Mean of bully scale prior to interventions.

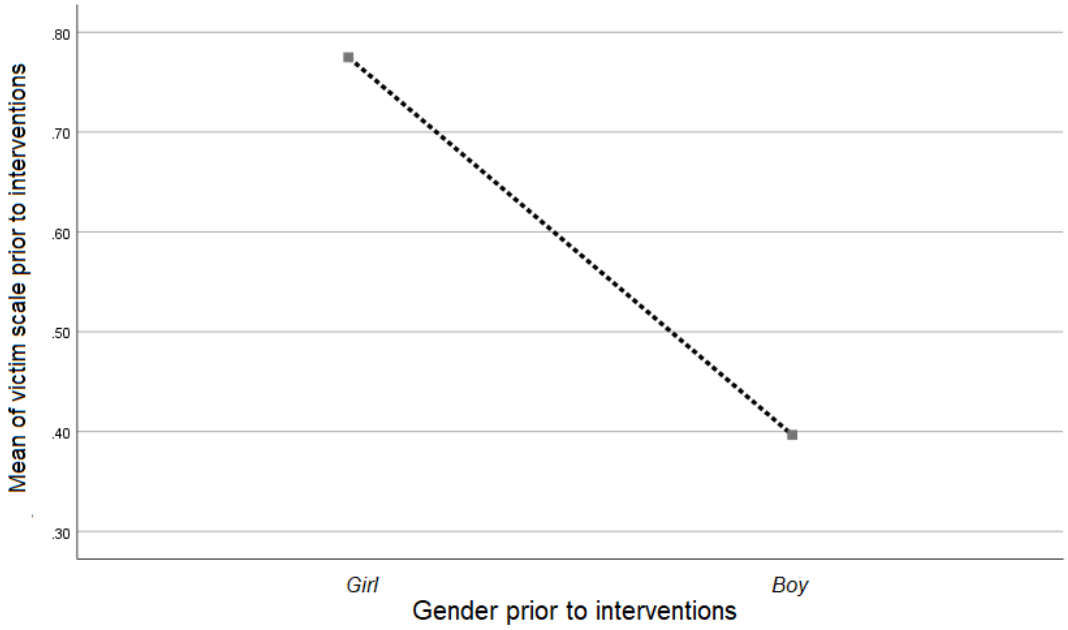

Figure 2. Mean of victim scale prior to interventions.

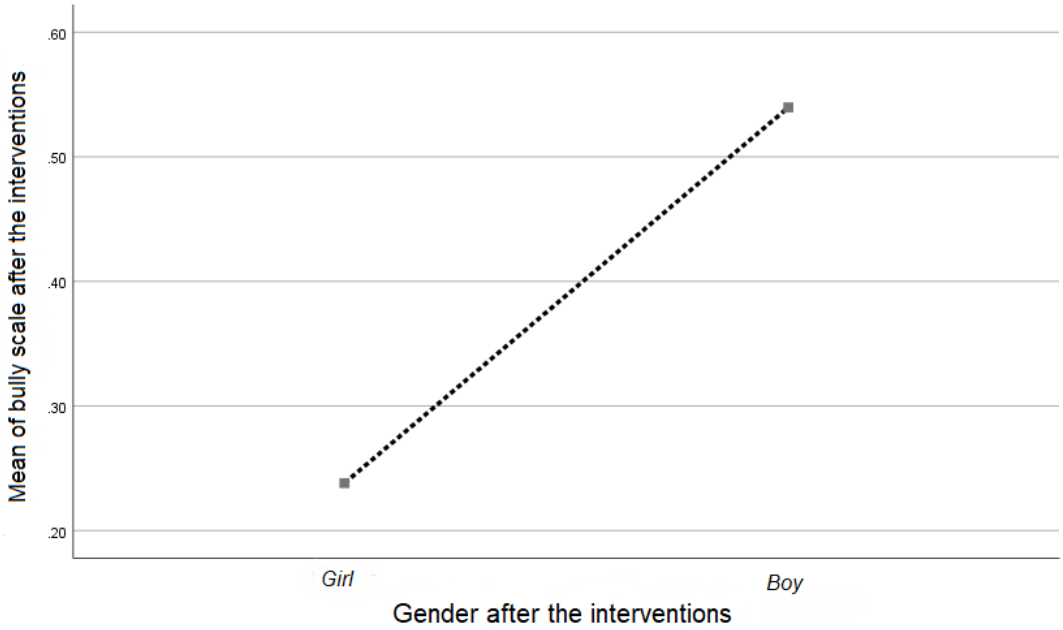

Figure 3. Mean of bully scale after the interventions.

Grounded theory was used for the analysis of qualitative data collected through observation from the researcher's log and from the critical friend. Our initial general categorization was followed by more specific, codified strands as follows: a) "the group," b) "self-esteem &

influence," c) "the victim," d) "the bully," e) "the bystander," f) "empathy & active listening," g) "the family," and h) "the program."

Our program was completely based on teamwork and partnership, hence the high number of exercises enabling us to observe this parameter. From the very start of our first intervention (Researcher's [R], 1st Meeting), we observed that some students were reticent when others made comments about their response to the question about free time *"Come on, A..., tell us what you do at home because we're curious"* (Boy [B] 4, 1st Meeting) *"I do what most people do... That's all I'm going to say because I see that they're ready to jump at me with their comments"* (B8, 1st Meeting). Things started to change communication-wise when they were asked to co-create a story together. All group members were quicker to reach an understanding this time round, and most opinions got to be heard (R, 6th Meeting). There was further improvement during the 7th Meeting, and, especially, during the 13th Meeting when they started working almost autonomously. During the 14th Meeting, they said that "*We got to know each other better"* (B10, 14th Meeting), "*I had never heard some of my classmates speak before"* (B2, 14th Meeting), *"It no longer feels like what it was in the beginning, I'm not afraid any more to say what I think because we all make mistakes"* (Girl [G] 1, 14th Meeting). The critical friend said: *"They came closer to each other. There was a case when someone spoke offensively about S…, and A… stood up for him"* (Critical Friend [CF], 13th Meeting). Those were the positive changes on the group level.

Self-esteem and empathy/active listening strands generated encouraging findings, too. Some students did not have much self-esteem to start with: (1th, 2nd, 3rd Meeting) *"I don't want to say anything so that no one is going to comment if I'm wrong"* (G4, 1th Meeting), *"I feel like I'm doing some things wrong, so I'd rather keep a low profile"* (G5, 2nd Meeting). As the interventions progressed, however, some of those students started having more self-esteem, judging from their personal discussions with the researcher during the 13th and the 14th Meeting: *"I now feel more sure of myself, and I don't care about the opinion of those who are not my friends"* (G1, 13th Meeting) , *"I see now that I'm somebody and that those who love me will never make fun of me"* (G4, 13th Meeting), *"I'm more sociable and funny now because I've met some new kids and they laughed with what I was saying when I was being humorous"* (G7, 14th Meeting). Regarding empathy, taking on roles that were different from their routine seemed to be of much help (R, 7th Meeting), for example: *"Playing the victim was a burden, and a lie, too"* (B2, 6th Meeting), *"Our class made me feel very sad, miss, because I would never like to be one of those kids that ended up being killed or killing themselves because of all this"* (B5, 9th Meeting), *"Having listened to S…, I understand why he keeps so much to himself sometimes, and it felt great giving a different end to his story, I wish it were true"* (G3, 12th Meeting). There was one student who asked the researcher why it

so happened that when it was her sharing out the roles, everyone got to play *"the opposite of what we really are"* (B1, 7th Meeting). In the last meeting, he tellingly remarked: *"I asked you, miss, but you didn't answer me, and I was slow to understand but it turns out you wanted us all to play all the roles each so that we know how it feels to act badly or to be spoken to in a nasty way, and it did help"* (B1, 14th Meeting).

Things changed, too, with regard to being involved in bullying situations as a bully, a victim or a bystander. During the 2nd and 3rd Meeting the group was split between those who said *"what can the victim do when they are about to get beat up"* (G3, 2nd Meeting) and those who commented that *"if the victim just sits there doing nothing, they are not going to stop"* (B3, 3rd Meeting). Most of them said that the victim *"is just scared"* (B5, 3rd Meeting) but, following the 11th, 12th and 13th Meeting, they came up with victim stories and characters tending to stand up for themselves in a legitimate way instead of hitting back, which was the initial suggestion (R, 2nd and 3rd Meeting). They also tend to appreciate the positive traits more than the negative ones, and they give their heroes a voice. Moving on to the category of the bully, the group remarked that, sometimes, victims turn into bullies when they are spurred on to defend themselves in a violent way (R, 3rd Meeting) because *"violence breeds violence"* (B11, 3rd Meeting). Some insisted that *"you cannot talk the bully into stopping, you have to show them what it's like"* (B9, 3rd Meeting), but then became more aware of and more inquisitive about the bully's behavior, as can be seen in the 13th Meeting when their bully character started with a monologue on stage about a *"neglected child, oppressed by the family"* (B4, 13th Meeting), as an explanation for the bullying behaviors that followed. Data from all fourteen interventions, and data collected with the help of the critical friend confirm the initial hypothesis that girls are more often the victims and boys are the bullies.

The categories of the bystander and the family were instrumental, too, for our program. Bystanders took action to curb such behaviors instead of defending the stronger party or remaining passive and jeering. In our first meetings (R, 2nd and 3rd Meeting), students said they had chosen not to get involved *"because of fear"* (G2, 2nd Meeting) or *"because they didn't care"* (G8, 3rd Meeting). During our 11th and 12th Meetings, however, bystanders became more active; they tended to side mostly with the victim without intensely attacking the bully either, having spotted and become more receptive to behaviors they did not agree with, nevertheless. In our 14th Meeting, a student said: *"I now understand that if we don't stand up to this it's like we agree with it, and if we don't want to be attacked, too, we can tell someone older or the police"* (B2, 14th Meeting).

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the present research was to examine the impact of drama/theatre pedagogy on addressing bullying at school among teenagers. Our questionnaire included the following three parameters: a) shifts regarding cases of bullying (victim) and active (bully) or outside involvement (bystander) in the experimental group and in the control group before and after the intervention, b) differences between the two groups after the intervention, and c) gender differentiation.

Based on our quantitative investigation tools, there was no statistically significant difference between the control group and the experimental group following our interventions. There was no marked shift of the victim and bully groups either, other than the increase on the bystander scale for the experimental group, and the gender variable. Girls were found to experience more bullying and more negative symptoms before our intervention, but their self-esteem did increase gradually. Similarly, boys appeared to be more actively involved before and after our drama/theatre pedagogy intervention; they identified more frequently as "bullies" and called for more aggressive behaviors in the beginning of our program, compared to the girls. This, however, does not mean that there are no girl bullies in general, given Burton's research (2010) on bullying among girls only. Bullying cases remained below the surface and were hard to perceive prior to the process drama program, which is in agreement with our statistically significant quantitative research finding. Drama/theatre pedagogy seems to make bullying visible and bystanders more involved. We know that drama/theatre can do this because of the safe setting where participants can contemplate, as a role, comprehend, encourage, grasp harsh reality and become more actively involved in learning (Asimidou et al., 2021; Fredland, 2010; Lenakakis et al., 2019). The question is whether those active involvement skills are likely to work in a way that would transform the reality in which our participants are called upon to lead their lives. In that regard, it would be interesting to conduct another research on whether our participants have maintained their changed attitudes and social conduct.

Making bullying clearly visible does not equal confronting it. It may mean, however, that participants communicate more, socialize more, and do so with more self-esteem due to the mutual respect and acceptance that formed the groundwork of our program, as evidenced by the qualitative results of our research. Drama in education has been shown to enhance social bonding among students, as well as between a student and a trainer (Joronen et al., 2012). In Joronen et al. (2011), students opted for drama techniques as a means of strengthening their relationships, their partnership, their personal development, and their self-esteem.

Regarding our research, there was a major change of attitude, acting and reacting among students. They started to strongly empathize with everyone, and to set out their arguments and their explanations for the respective behaviors.

The drama/theatre pedagogy program seemed to bring students closer to each other and to our researcher. The workshop- and game-like format of our meetings was propitious ground for building trust and communication, something that formal, teacher-centered learning cannot achieve with the same intensity. As evidenced by Lyngstad et al. (2022), too, process drama in education helps students empathize, experience different standing points about bullying, overcome their inhibitions, and opt for such programs as the most interesting and effective way of learning for everyone. Doumas and Midgett (2019) have shown how a positive student-teacher atmosphere makes students feel that they are safe at school, and that their teachers care about their academic and social success, thus curbing victimization. In a drama/theatre pedagogy workshop, students come in contact with their "ego" in a safe, illusory setting whose relation to reality is, nevertheless, a dynamic one. This is how students are empowered to discover different standing points and interpretations about the world through their own characters/roles (Kompiadou et al., 2017; Lenakakis et al., 2019). Cross et al. (2015), and Rigby (2003), look into the relationship between a student's social and affective deficit and the bulling they are subjected to; drama/theatre pedagogy can offer a rich repertoire of ego strengthening and empowering practices (Asimidou et al., 2021). As to the transforming power of drama/theatre pedagogy, we do need to take into account the short duration of our research. An important example of this is the major finding of the nine-year-long DRACON program (O'Toole & Burton, 2005) which showed that short, drama-in-education-based programs do help with investigating bullying situations, and seeking their causal chain of events; however, such programs are, maybe, not enough to confront them in real life.

To conclude, drama/theatre pedagogy and its techniques can contribute to approaching sensitive social issues in the school setting. Evidently, bullying at school requires a panoply of practices and procedures; no single method or practice can stem its multiple different causes. Research shows that intervention programs need to be applied intensively, consistently, and over the long term (Juvonen & Graham, 2014). In addition, it is important for parents to become involved in school procedures, for students to be made aware of such behaviors, and for teachers to take a clear stand against them for prevention purposes, too. Despite the limitations of our sampling mode and program duration, our data analysis shows that teaching methodologies leaving room for creative, entertaining activities, and individual expression can offset a teacher-, knowledge-, and mark-centered, competitive school system. Such a school atmosphere seems to raise student awareness, making students grasp the behavioral

complexity of those involved in bullying, with less stereotypical behaviors as a result (Goodwin et al., 2019). Drama/Theatre pedagogy programs require continuous teacher training, as well as dedicated space and time carved out of the school timetable.

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