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Abstract

The pilot study presented in this article illustrates how drama-in-education might be used to foster historical empathy in first year secondary school students in Greece. For the purposes of this study, four scenarios based on drama-in-education techniques were designed and applied on a sample of twenty-two students. The analysis of the findings showed that the students' understanding of historical contexts and different viewpoints on the past, both of which comprise important aspects of historical empathy, was encouraged by drama-based instruction, as long as the students became engaged in activities that allowed them to delve into a specific historical era, thus propelling them towards the study of historical sources.

Keywords: Historical Empathy, Drama-in-education, Secondary School, Role Playing, Teacher in Role, Mantle of the Expert, Teaching Scenarios

Introduction

The last decades have seen a rise in new quests for teaching history, which urge us to redefine the effectiveness of media and the interpretations we use in approaching the past. Drama as a pedagogical tool offers the student a bridge from the experiential stage to a proper understanding of historical conditions through a recreation of the past (Tsaftaridis 2011). In this regard, drama can greatly enhance historical learning: the appreciation of history within the framework of educational entertainment (also referred to as 'edutainment') with a strong emphasis on cooperation and participation, as well as the provision of equal opportunities for both a personalized acquisition of knowledge and a critical interpretation of the past, are effective factors on the cultivation of historical empathy. These factors might be a great challenge for educators in Greece, since empathy is a fundamental aim of history learning, where all conventional textbooks and teaching methods hardly seem to bear any significant results.

This article proposes a framework of history didactics which is based on the principles of drama-in-education and focused on empathetic reconstruction and creative imagination. The framework in question concerns students of secondary school in Greek context, where hitherto there has been no extended research, exploring the connection between drama-in-education and history teaching.

Historical Empathy

The epistemology of history presents a long tradition of debates on the concept of understanding the causes of individual action and the role of wider social practices in the historical process (Lee et al. 1997). The concept of this understanding is known as 'empathy', a term closely linked to the modern perceptions of history, being based on the assumption that the past is refutable (Repousi 2004; Nakou 2000).

The concept of historical empathy has been variously approached. Lee and Ashby (2001) have suggested that empathy does not pertain solely to the awareness that important historical factors or societies fostered epoch-relevant viewpoints, but has mainly to do with the ability to trace the specific connections among circumstances, goals, and ideas of the historical actors. Summarizing the definitions that have been proposed from time to time by various scholars, we could define historical empathy as the ability to place one's self in the shoes of another person within a specific historical context, with the aim of understanding the actions of the person in that context (Yilmaz 2007; Portal 1987).

The concept of historical empathy as an element of historical thought (Foster 2001; Barton and Levstik 2008) has exerted an important influence on the theory and teaching of history in school, which aims at an understanding and interpretation of historical reality (Harris and Foreman-Peck 2004; Moniot 2002; VanSledright 2001). And despite some existing opinions that empathy is hard to achieve in the context of the classroom (SREB 1986; Cairns 1989), research has shown that the students can

indeed achieve satisfactory levels of empathy, if provided with a wide range of activities (Shemilt 1984; Kourgiantakis 2005).

In fact, after years of research (Kalogiratou 1999; Shemilt 1984), Lee, Dickinson and Ashby (Lee and Ashby 2001; Lee et al. 1997; Ashby and Lee 1987) have developed a descriptive system that encompasses the stages of empathy primary- and secondary education students go through; the present analysis will be based on these five stages, because it is the most noted and widely used (Rantala 2011):

1. 'The Divi Past'. At this initial stage students see the past as incomprehensible and essentially view people from the past as 'stupid' or 'thick' because they did things much differently from people in nowadays.
2. 'Generalized Stereotypes'. Here past actions are evaluated generically in terms of conventional stereotyped roles.
3. 'Everyday Empathy'. Past actions are set against the cultural contexts of today's world, without consistently distinguishing between the older and the modern views and values.
4. 'Restricted Historical Empathy'. The recognition is established that people in the past had a different than ours level of knowledge, different views and values, but no depth is reached in their representation and interpretation.
5. 'Contextual Historical Empathy'. Past actions are eventually viewed as integrated in a wider context of views and values, and it is recognized that they form a network of goals reaching far beyond any appearances.

The Cultivation of Historical Empathy in the Classroom

According to Ashby and Lee (1987), the cultivation of historical empathy in students is closely connected to the direction they receive from the teacher, who should be encouraging them to discuss amongst themselves, dealing with historical issues on the cooperative basis of either small groups or the classroom at large, rather than strictly imposing on them a direct teacher-to-student approach. The teacher should be showing high tolerance of mistakes, evaluating the contributions of all students while resisting the tendency to instantly provide any corrections or 'right' answers.

According to Davis (2001), the cultivation of empathy is based on a number of factors, including a sufficient historical knowledge both from the teacher and the students, the didactic competence of the teacher, the sources provided, the development of students' historical thought and their familiarity with the processing of historical evidence. Davis suggests that the application of the proper approach should not involve rejecting errors, ignoring plausibility or accepting untenable interpretations. In all cases, imagination must be held in check by evidence.

Historical Empathy and Drama: Literature Review

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According to Davis (2001), the cultivation of empathy is based on a number of factors, including a sufficient historical knowledge both from the teacher and the students, the didactic competence of the teacher, the sources provided, the development of students' historical thought and their familiarity with drama-in-education seems to provide a par excellence didactic context for the cultivation of historical empathy, as described above. The use of drama in the classroom is characterized by cooperative learning, a teacher's supportive role and the gradual process of the students' understanding (Kondoyianni 2012; Papadopoulos 2010; Alkistis 2008; Papadopoulos 2007; Avdi and Chatzigeorgiou 2007).

This is why the relationship between drama-in-education and historical empathy is apparently very strong (Goalen 1995; Fairclough 1994, Fleming 1992; Wilson and Woodhouse 1999; Childs and Pond 1990; May and Williams 1987), especially since history is no more considered as a stacking up of events. As Fines and Verrier (1974) have emphasized, the target skills of this approach of school history are searching for, comparing among and working with sources, extracting conclusions in accordance with these sources, as well as recognizing that people from the past may have had different thoughts and beliefs (Goalen 1995; Goalen and Hendy 1994).

From the field of historians, although Shemilt (1984) states that drama is a very occasional method for history classroom, Thompson (1983) asserts that the skill of historical empathy can be optimally developed through the experiential approach which involves the application of drama, provided that the students are able to evaluate the information and possess a basic social awareness. Little (1983a), also, asserted that drama is valuable for the teaching of school history, in that it convinces students of the reality of the past and offers them opportunities to reflect on it through guided use of their imagination and sessions of action and discussion. Moving along the same lines, Goalen and Hendy (1993), working with a sample of forty-nine students, twenty of whom were the control group and twenty-nine the experimental group, have experimentally proven that the historical thinking of average-performance students develops when they approach the historical material through drama-in-education techniques.

In Greece, Professor Leontsinis (1999) has argued that 'history far surpasses geography and the other social sciences in its suitability for dramatization, theatrical

play and imitation', while Smyrnaioi (2008) and Avgeri (2011) have linked role-playing and dramatization with historical empathy. Kavalierou (2006) has also pointed out that the success of history dramatization requires a simple approach, the acting out of small historical episodes, a respect for all characters and events, a high degree of accuracy and objectivity, an emphasis on the meaning of conflicts and the encouragement of students to arrive at conclusions. However, despite these theoretical arguments, there is not enough research evidence in Greece, certifying the close relationship between empathy and drama-in-education in secondary school students.

Founded on the above assumptions, the present study focuses on the use of specifically structured drama-in-education techniques (see below) in dealing with historical persons, proposing an alternative form of fostering historical empathy in the first year secondary school students in Greek context.

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Methodology

This article presents findings from a pilot *study in the form of teacher research, which consisted of four instructional interventions* (UC DAVIS 2014). The research took place three years ago in a secondary school in West Attica, a region in Greece. It concerns a series of small-scale research projects in real classroom situations which aimed at investigating their influence on the cultivation of historical empathy in greek secondary school students (cf. Robson 2010; Cohen and Manion 1994). The study in question is part of a PhD preliminary research, during which problems and hypotheses were sought out for further research investigation (Cohen and Manion 1994). Consequently, the findings presented below, along with the presentation of the action itself, cannot be generalized, as they only present proposals that were implemented on a limited number of students and evaluated through the viewpoint of the teacher-researcher.

The pilot study was conducted on a sample of 22 first-graders in an urban area secondary school in West Attica. This class was made up of 12 boys and 10 girls, 21 of which were Greek, and 1 was of Albanian origin. None of the students was known to have any specific learning difficulties, although many of them found it difficult to comprehend the texts, to critically read them and to express themselves with the written word. The particular class was randomly chosen between the first graders of the specific school, where the teacher-researcher was working. The students were all aged about 12 years and had no previous experience of drama-based instruction.

This research project ran for 4 teaching sessions on ancient history lasting between 45 and 90 minutes and the project purpose was:

(a) to investigate the feasibility of structured instructional interventions based on the application of the drama-in-education principles on the teaching of history with the aim of fostering historical empathy, and (b) to evaluate how far the proposed learning environment promotes the development of the historical empathy of the students, based on their comprehension of the historical context and their recognition of the different perspectives on the past.

A fundamental requirement for the development of the teaching scenarios (Gika 2002; Belliveau et al. 2008; Heinig 1988) that were applied was their incorporation in a didactic framework based on the principles of constructivist theory, investigative learning and sociocultural theory (Tsakiri and Kapetanidou 2007). The activities used were constructed on the basis of drama-in-education techniques, such as the 'hot chair', the 'meetings', the 'mantle of the expert', the 'role on the wall', the 'role playing' of the students, the 'teacher in role', the 'objects of the character', 'creative writing' through the role of the historical character, the 'gossip circle', all suitably adapted in the context of historical learning (Heathcote 2008; Verrier 2008; Neelands and Goode 2000; Heathcote and Herbert 1985).

The data collection was carried out as required by the qualitative research principles (Mertler 2012). The following tools were specifically used:

- (a) observation and a detailed written recording of the process of every instructional intervention by teacher-researcher;
- (b) worksheets including questions for the students to answer, in order to assess their ability to empathize with people from the past, and
- (c) texts and presentations describing the students' activities and their creative expression in the classroom.

The answered worksheets, texts and presentations of students were held in portfolios, one for each student, which were kept in the classroom throughout the course of the research program. The findings were analyzed according to the system of the historical empathy stages of Ashby, Lee and Dickinson (see above). This means that the stages were used as a starting point for identification of levels of historical empathy presented by the students. The integration of students' answers at the specific stages was based on content analysis of the written texts, as well as overall analysis of drama activities they presented.

First Instructional Intervention: The Bronze Age

Duration: 45 minutes

Baseline knowledge: The lesson was a review of 'Bronze Age', which students had been taught for four weeks.

Description: The first instructional intervention was dealing with the Bronze Age, which lasted from 3000 to 1100 B.C. Three distinct and yet similar civilizations flourished in the Hellenic world during that period: the Cycladic on the homonymous

group of islands in the Southern Aegean, that of the Minoans in Crete, and the Mycenaean civilization in the Peloponnese (Christopoulos et al. 1970). As part of the introduction, the students were presented with three large cardboards, on each of which was drawn a natural-human-size contour representing an islander from the Cyclades, a Minoan and a Mycenaean, respectively, following the 'role on the wall' technique. The students were divided into three groups and were asked to wear the 'mantle of the expert' for the role they chose. Their mission was to assist a hypothetical filmmaker who intended to prepare a documentary on Greek prehistory and proto-history.

During the elaboration phase, after the students had chosen their role and era, they went on to get involved with 'group painting' and to draw the facial features and the body of the role they had taken up. Around his contour they painted various objects that could have belonged to him, and on his body they jotted down all sorts of pieces of knowledge, thoughts and worries he could have had. Among his belongings they also recorded some thoughts of their own or other people of our time about their historical figure.

The scenario was completed with the students composing a short documentation of their role and with a presentation thereof to the 'teacher-filmmaker'.

Second Instructional Intervention: The 2nd Hellenic Colonization

Duration: 90 minutes

Baseline knowledge: The students were familiar with the concept of Hellenic Colonization, which they had been taught for a didactic hour (45 minutes) one week before the 2nd instructional intervention.

Description: The subject of the second instructional intervention was the Second Hellenic Colonization, which took place in the period spanning between the 8th and the 6th centuries B.C., during which the ancient Greeks targeted locations and flooded coastlines further and further into the Mediterranean Sea (Christopoulos et al. 1971). The introduction involved first a narration of when, why and how the ancient Greeks were drawn to so many new destinations, and then a demonstrative type of activity (Govas 2002) that resulted in the formation of four teams with a leader for each group, the colony founder (Christopoulos et al. 1971).

During the elaboration phase, the teams of the to-be colonists were asked to choose their relocation sites. What could have been their motives? What reasons might have led them to depart from their native territories? Equipped with a map of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea denoting the regions rich in natural resources during the Archaic period, the students take counsel together and present their decisions, thoughts and concerns.

The closing stage calls for the students to express themselves as colonists with a piece of 'creative writing' reflecting on their experience: *Twenty years later, in a second homeland... Was it worth it? Has my life really changed for the better?*

Third Instructional Intervention: The Legislation of Solon

Duration: 90 minutes

Baseline knowledge: Students had been taught the 'Draconian measures' for a didactic hour (45 minutes) one week before the 3rd instructional intervention.

Description: The third instructional intervention was dealing with the legislation of Solon, who was an important Athenian statesman and legislator, a poet and one of the seven wise men of ancient Greece (Christopoulos et al. 1971). An improvisation was employed as a 'warm up' (Alkistis 1998): the students as poor and debt-ridden Athenians thirty years after the establishment of Draco's code of laws are discussing amongst themselves on the destructive consequences of the measures; Draco's laws are legendary for their cruel punishments to such an extent, that the Greek phrase 'Draconian measures' survives to this day to denote the epitome of harshness (Christopoulos et al. 1971).

Through the use of a 'role-play' students present one scene per team. There follows a whole-class debate about what course of action should be followed and the proceedings are presented narratively. A student-herald reads out the laws and the teacher-Solon addresses the students-citizens and offers to answer their questions regarding this legislation.

In the closing stage, the students are asked to assess the situation from the multiple perspectives of three different roles: *If you were poor peasants, if you were aristocrats, and if you were people who do not wish to get too much involved in the public affairs, what would you tell Solon?* After the assessment of this intervention, there followed a number of additional activities, during which the students did some creative writing from the viewpoint of their historical role, commenting on the legislation of Solon using the indicated sources.

Fourth Instructional Intervention: From Peisistratus to Cleisthenes

Duration: 90 minutes

Baseline knowledge: The fourth teaching intervention was developed one week after the third one.

Description: The fourth instructional intervention had to do with Peisistratus, who was a tyrant of Athens for about twenty years until his death in 527 B.C. (Christopoulos et al. 1971), and the reforms of Cleisthenes, who introduced democratic government to ancient Athens (ibid). The introduction included a demonstrative type of activity in order for the students to gain some spatiotemporal perspective on the antique city of Athens of 520 B.C.

The students-Athenians of this era had to weigh the positive and the negative points of the policy of Peisistratus. Those who assumed the role of the conspirators, read the record of proceedings (I.M.E. 2001), that had been kept by the hypothetical registrar of their conspiratory team and they were asked to discuss amongst themselves and meet a decision: to overturn or not to overturn Peisistratus? The students presented their arguments and their decisions, and through their narration presented the actual historical developments. A student-herald read out the reforms of Cleisthenes, and then, while the students participating in the ‘gossip circle’ were discussing the new measures, the teacher-Athenian woman intervened, circulating the rumour that Cleisthenes is a descendant of tyrants and other ‘spicy’ information about his ancestry, based on a source from the *History* of Herodotus (Herodotus VI.126-131). On the occasion of this intervention, the students expressed their opinions on the role of personality in history.

The intervention ended with the students creating a piece of writing from the viewpoint of their historical role, evaluating the reforms of Cleisthenes.

Data Analysis

We have to stress that the ‘data’ reported here are only some selected examples, just a fraction of the total findings we gathered. During **the first instructional intervention** students were struggling to adequately cope and critically apply their knowledge, and they obviously tended to project their thoughts and attitudes of our time onto this period. Only in one case did they demonstrate some ‘restricted historical empathy’, according to empathy stages of Ashby, Lee and Dickinson, attuning with the historical conditions of the time even without going too deep:

“We chose this woman, because society at that time was probably matriarchal and because they thought childbearing was a mysterious procedure. This is why they had so many female figurines during that period.”
(Male student - 1st Instructional Intervention: The Bronze Age – Cyclades)

They generally did not depart from the ‘generalized stereotypes’:

“Women at that time dressed very simply and stayed home all day to take care for their family.”
(Female student -1st Instructional Intervention: The Bronze Age – Cyclades)

“We chose the character of the Anax because he was an important person at that time. He was strict, he was the one who decided for the people, big enough to frighten the enemies and impressive overall.”
(Female student -1st Instructional Intervention: The Bronze Age – Mycenae)

In one case the students exhibited a complete lack of empathy with the past, reproducing some information from the textbook, showing no effort whatsoever to connect with each other or with the role:

“She is the Snake Goddess, the main goddess of the Minoan civilization associated with life and the earth. The Minoan civilization was noted for the development of the arts and the olive tree was its sacred symbol. People of that civilization used to make various artefacts out of gold, silver, copper, clay, ivory and other easy to shape materials.”
(Male student - 1st Instructional Intervention: The Bronze Age – Minoan civilization)

Despite the observed low levels of empathy, students reported that the activities were a lot of fun:

“We felt like we were real experts... we combined facts and we could better understand what we had learned.”
(Male student -1st Instructional Intervention: The Bronze Age)

They also realized that the historical past has a real dimension, a realization of fundamental importance for any examination of the development of empathy in the classroom (cf. Little 1983a, 1983b):

“We realized that these people actually lived back then, that they do not exist only in books as little stories... they are not mythical creatures.”
(Male student -1st Instructional Intervention: The Bronze Age)

Given, then, that historical empathy is a skill that takes time and consistent effort to develop, we arrived at the conclusion that the students’ performance could be improved through more rigorously structured practice.

Indeed, during the **second instructional intervention**, the students reached a higher and very satisfying, for their age, level of ‘restricted historical empathy’, possibly due to the nature of the activities that placed them among the decision-makers of the Second Hellenic Colonization:

“The area on which we settled is rich in natural resources. Fishing, metals and the rich soil of our area helped us develop various professions. Also, all these natural resources helped us to develop trade. We became a very well-known people. Our economy grew.”
(Female student - 2nd Instructional Intervention: The 2nd Hellenic Colonization)

“In our old homeland, the economy had collapsed. Many people started changing territories, and so we too were forced to look for better lands, with richer natural resources.”
(Male student - 2nd Instructional Intervention: The 2nd Hellenic Colonization)

“The new colonies changed my life more than I expected, because now I work as a merchant and I make more money than when I used to be a small dealer, and so now I can offer my family more, thanks to the merchandise I sell. Sometimes I do miss my old country, though, and I feel like giving it all up and going back.”
(Male student - 2nd Instructional Intervention: The 2nd Hellenic Colonization)

With this second intervention, the students showed a clear understanding of the specific aims and aspirations of the people from the past, and that their decisions and actions are parts of complex procedures:

“It is amazing how difficult it was life at those years. Past was so hard, and it worths for us to learn some more details about it. It’s not about dead people, it’s about human life... it’s not just a book”.
(Male student - 2nd Instructional Intervention: The 2nd Hellenic Colonization)

“I understand that people in the past had to do with a lot of things, complex things, and their decisions were not simple and easy”.
(Male student - 2nd Instructional Intervention: The 2nd Hellenic Colonization)

They elaborated on the circumstances of the actors of history through the lens of their own time, fostered co-operation and trust and were led to logical constructs in accordance with the standards of the period they examined, all of which are essential steps towards the cultivation of historical empathy:

“It was like we were ancient Greeks and we had to decide something so important for us. It was amazing... We didn’t play, we worked together, we made decisions and it was like reality”.
(Male student - 2nd Instructional Intervention: The 2nd Hellenic Colonization)

During the **third instructional intervention**, all of the students reached the stage of the ‘restricted historical empathy’, focusing on a very important element of the era they were dealing with, though rather exclusively on it, maybe due to the fact that it is presented in the textbook as the reason that led to seisachtheia, which was a set of laws instituted by the Athenian lawmaker Solon in order to rectify by debt relief the widespread serfdom and slaves that had run rampant in Athens by the 6th century B.C. (Christopoulos et al. 1971):

*“- What happened to your neighbour?
- What, you haven’t heard? He was so deep in debt, he lost his personal freedom; and not only he, his whole family have lost their freedom, too! It’s insane...”*

- *I'm not that far from being kicked into slavery myself, you know.*
- *Same here. He wants his money back, or I'm a slave in no time, too.*
- *There's got to be something we can do".*

(Dialogue between two male students - 3rd Instructional Intervention: The Legislation of Solon)

Moreover, the students' reports revealed that they understood how the same historical event can trigger off different reactions to people who have different roles and positions in a given society, thus fulfilling a prerequisite for understanding the action of people in the past:

Farmer: "Well done! Congratulations! You've made the right decisions; you've freed us from the yoke of the aristocrats who have been oppressing us for so long".

(Male student as farmer - 3rd Instructional Intervention: The Legislation of Solon)

Nobleman: "I am very unhappy and angry at the measures you have adopted; you have lessened and weakened our social class".

(Female student as nobleman - 3rd Instructional Intervention: The Legislation of Solon)

Additional activities brought forth another factor conducive to the cultivation of historical empathy: the integration in drama-in-education activities of primary or secondary historical sources:

"It's so boring for us to read texts and just try to understand their content. Today we had to do something more interesting: We read the sources as if we were in a play, and we had to play our roles. It was very amusing".

(Female student - 3rd Instructional Intervention: The Legislation of Solon)

"I understand the text better this way, by playing and working together with my schoolmates".

(Male student - 3rd Instructional Intervention: The Legislation of Solon)

The **fourth instructional intervention** brought the students very close to the realization of a 'contextual historical empathy', as they combined facts and reached decisions that could be valid in the historical episodes they were acting out:

"Peisistatus offered relief to the poor with loans and land redistributions. However, we believe he did it only to trick them into giving him their votes. We are against this course of action. We want our leaders [...] to tell us the truth and to respect us. [...] This is our firm belief and we intend to overthrow him."

(Male student as Athenian - 4th Instructional Intervention: From Peisistratus to Cleisthenes)

“Peisistratus is a man with power. He offered facilities to the poor people of Athens, but he is an enemy of fatherland; he fought his own country just for political benefit. I acknowledge that he established great festivals of theater in Athens and did land distribution. Okay... Can we, however, forget his irretrievable political mistakes? He is a tyrant”.
(Female student as Athenian - 4th Instructional Intervention: From Peisistratus to Cleisthenes)

Students showed enriched understanding and multiple perspectives within the specific historical context, both components of historical empathy:

“Cleisthenes is a great leader for Athens. He opened the road for equality between citizens. I don't know if this change will be stable and positive for people in the future, but it seems to be like that. It depends on the noblemen's reactions. I'm optimistic”.

(Male student as citizen in Athens - 4th Instructional Intervention: From Peisistratus to Cleisthenes)

“Cleisthenes is risking. It's too dangerous to acknowledge so many rights to poor citizens. If they gain power, who knows what they are going to do with us. We are the noblemen and we have the power. They are ignorants”.

(Male student as citizen in Athens - 4th Instructional Intervention: From Peisistratus to Cleisthenes)

Another interesting point was brought forth by the debate on the role of the reforming leaders' personality in history, when the students concluded that Cleisthenes was not just the product of the life circumstances he was nurtured on, but also of the city's broad political landscape:

“Yes, but with his father being who he was, and if there hadn't been for Pisistratus and the Athenians had been oblivious to the evil tyranny does, then Cleisthenes might very well have not proceeded to any such actions.”

(Female student - 4th Instructional Intervention: From Peisistratus to Cleisthenes)

Very characteristic, also, was the confidence with which students made their conclusions – especially those with poor school performance:

“It's fun and nice. I'm not afraid whether I'm wrong, because my classmates help me. We talk to prepare the scenes and our roles and finally we have a very good result and correct answers. It's amazing how easily we understand history this way”.

(Male student of poor school performance – 4th Instructional Intervention: From Peisistratus to Cleisthenes)

Conclusions

The aim of this article is to argue that drama-in-education can present an effective method of enhancing the historical empathy for secondary school students in Greek context. As previously reported, the findings presented here are limited, as the study is a small-scale qualitative research on a very small sample. Hence the conclusions listed below can be seen as merely indicative and cannot be generalized.

Although the levels of historical empathy observed were not the highest during every instructional intervention, students demonstrated a development in their empathetic approach to the past, which seems to mean that despite all existing difficulties in the achievement of this skill, the repeated interventions are of paramount importance for the gradual progress towards this direction. Students became increasingly active in the processing of historical sources and could edit historical material with more and more self-motivation. Furthermore, the use of historical sources showed that the cultivation of empathy seems to become more efficient when the use of drama is coupled with the study of sources, a combination that encourages students to approach any historical information critically and constructively, 'harnessing' imagination with evidence.

At the same time, the instructional interventions have shown that the activities structured according to the drama-in-education principles had a potential of awakening the students to the real dimension of the past, an awakening fundamental to the cultivation of historical empathy. Moreover, the instructional interventions have demonstrated the cooperative nature of the development of empathetic thinking, as drama offered students the opportunity to exchange thoughts and ideas in a climate of trust and cooperation either in small groups or in the whole classroom.

Another interesting note is that the instructional interventions, thanks to the application of drama techniques, seem to have created a learner-centered environment where all students, regardless of their individual academic performance, felt free to express their opinions without fearing to be inaccurate in their analyses of the past, a fundamental prerequisite for the development of historical empathy.

Finally, the effectiveness of interventions showed that the teaching scenarios constructed on the base of drama-in-education principles need to be simply structured and carefully organized by the teacher, in order to have an effective influence on the historical empathy of students.

Perhaps the most important of all conclusions drawn from these four instructional interventions reviewed succinctly in this study, is that the students embraced the drama techniques with enthusiasm, and responded satisfactorily to the challenges they were presented with. This enthusiasm led to a more involved approach of the history lesson on their part, disclosing for them new horizons for critical thought and historical empathy. These findings could be regarded as a very important starting

point for educational research in Greece, on the purpose of possible proposals for inclusion of drama-in-education techniques in the reshaping of secondary school history curriculum.

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