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Performance and Performativity

Catherine Morel
Philippe Mairesse
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Research in
Higher Education
Practices Series

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*The Pedagogy of the Moment: Building
Artistic Time-Spaces for Critical-Creative
Learning in Higher Education*

Performance and Performativity

Edited by Tatiana Chemi and Alison
Neilson

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Series Preface

The collection of four booklets 'The Pedagogy of the Moment: Building Artistic Time-Spaces for Critical-Creative Learning in Higher Education' is part of the Artist-Led Learning in Higher Education project, led by Aalborg University and funded by Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships. Our intention with the series is to produce a timely synthesis and creative rethinking of research on higher education topics of national and international relevance.

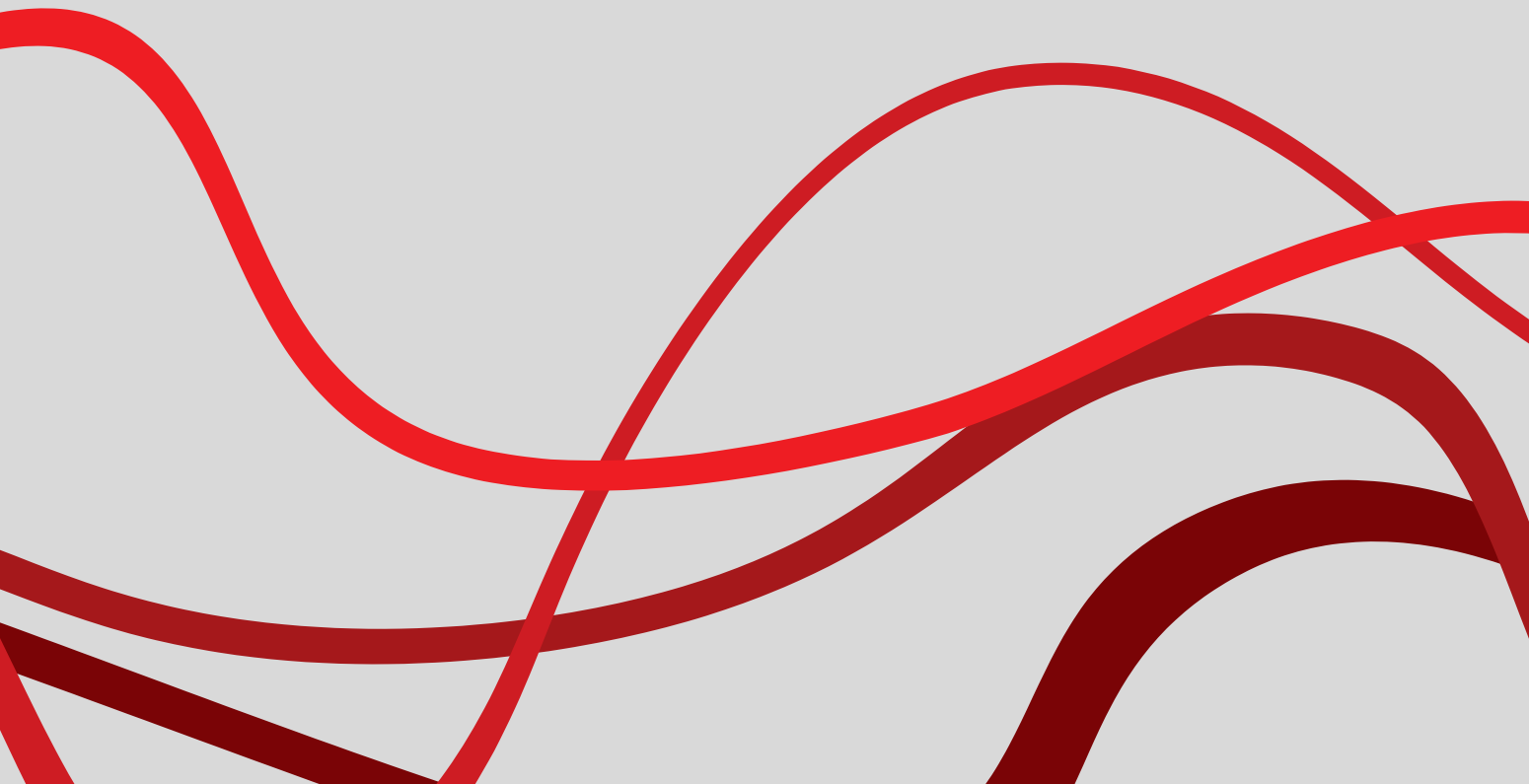
This book series provides knowledge, inspiration and hands-on tools on research in higher education, with a special interest in problem-based learning (PBL) approaches. We

discuss, investigate and provide argumentative analysis for the ways in which specific approaches to higher education are relevant and how educators can use them in their contexts. We appreciate original, relevant and resonant research based on sound theory and on meaningful, creative, transformative practices. We encourage our authors to formulate recommendations with concrete examples of how to practice them in different contexts in higher education, and to critically address the ways in which specific practices are or become relevant to higher educational contexts.

Lone Krogh, Antonia Scholkmann & Tatiana Chemi, Series editors

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The pedagogy of the moment

Building artistic time-spaces for critical-creative learning

Tatiana Chemi and Alison Laurie Neilson

Darkness in our Time

We came together by way of the Erasmus+ project, *Artist-Led Learning in Higher Education (ALL)* but, in 2020, much deeper connections burgeoned with the namesake of this programme than anyone would have ever imagined when we first encountered in 2018.. We are colleagues from eight partnering educational institutions from Italy, Denmark, Norway, UK, Finland, Portugal, France and Iceland. Our shared interest is the critical-creative introduction of the arts in non-arts programmes in higher education. More than 500 years after Erasmus of Rotterdam lost his mother to the Plague, the Covid-19 virus has given us a window into past and present horrors. The isolation, the sicknesses, the deaths and all the multiple impacts to our daily lives have caused deep reflections on our personal, and social lives. We cannot ignore the inequities of today, the differences between people in terms of vulnerability and ability to recover, but we can offer reflections on the hierarchies

of education that are implicated in these inequities. In exploring artist-led learning in higher education, we must acknowledge the “subaltern” voices who

... speak hundreds of languages and communicate in song, oral storytelling, dance, poetry, and rituals. Such voices use performative styles, reflecting an array of indigenous epistemologies that go far beyond prevailing Western academic styles and venues for dissemination, resisting external definitions of what is of worth, and often reflecting relational versus individualistic constructions of human beings and other creatures.

(Swadener & Mutua, 2008, p. 39)

We cannot claim that we were engaging in decolonizing practices as we initiated our project, but pandemic crises and complex

responses to them led us towards unexpected investigations around “the pedagogy of the moment” that unfolds in the present and shapes critical-creative learning environments. The concept of the “pedagogy of the moment” is part of the transformational educational discourse by scholars such as Ibrahim and Glithero, (2012) and Koepke (2015), but we use it here primarily as a metaphor to capture both the possibilities and perils of being present in, but also locked inescapably into, the present moment.

One hand holding another

While we honour artist-led and arts-based learning, we invite a critical self-reflection to illuminate the hypercomplex reality that we inhabit. Artistic practices can take us to places that we might not want to explore, but that lead us critically and gently to “the end of the world as we know it” (R.E.M). These encounters are important: sensing, feeling and bodying are fundamental in our practices. How does my life touch yours and yours mine?

ALL project outcomes aim for cultural understandings to flow without being colonised or appropriated, but just cherished and loved. For instance, the linguistic loan of “the red thread” enriches us across our countries as we create a shared vocabulary. This is fundamental in intercultural projects, especially as we seek bodily and sensory communications. To co-construct knowledge

appropriate to creative learning, communication and knowledge-production must be challenged away from what is already known. To innovate educational practices that are often left out (bodies, affects, experiences), working with the arts and professional artists have opened up new ways of doing so, but also new dilemmas. The experimentation carried out in the ALL project went through the same process that the expression “the red thread” went through: from diversity to sharing. The artistic activities and the embodied language that is proper to them insinuated a pedagogy of the moment (here and now) at higher educational institutions, bringing forth new opportunities for creative interactions across disciplines.

The red thread

The expression “the red thread” speaks to the relational exchanges within the ALL project. The saying “the red thread” may not make much sense in English. In several European languages “the red thread” is an expression that indicates a coherent common thread, a discursive line of thought, a clear commonality. As common to most European exchanges, this metaphorical expression, once non-existent in English, has been adopted in British cultural and scholarly contexts, with the consequence of shaping shared cultural and linguistic references, a common ground of comprehension, and reciprocal learning, a red thread of cultural fellowship, a shared

le fil rouge

den røde tråd

il filo rosso

punainen lanka

rauður Þráður

den røde tråden

o fio vermelho



feeling of ownership and community that respects differences, rather than conflict or normalisations. This metaphor constructs our collection of booklets, with each booklet as a thread that is autonomous but also entangled with the other threads. Each thread builds around two contributions that share similar colours and that are expanded in a “red thread”. The red thread is a comment that each colleague in the ALL project has crafted in resonance to a chapter by another. This poetic strategy emerged as means for performing the collective character of our work, and in order to shape a thread of commonalities throughout the four booklets.

Practice-based chapters hand-crocheted together as a book

The first piece of *Thread One* uses a provocative approach to explore the day-to-day practices of higher education, highlighting artist/practitioner collaborations and challenging norms of time and space. The second piece arises from musical connections to educational practice. It invites the reader to experience “lumen in tenebris” (light in darkness, or happiness in darkness) through their emotions evoked by Gothic rock music.

The first writing in *Thread Two* is a crocheting together of personal history and the ALL project online meetings, including how Covid-19 made a mess of it all. The second,

a presentation of theatre-based activities, is an invitation into a military leadership programme which goes way beyond the norm and engages our deepest experiences, in body and spirit, of life and death.

Thread 3 includes a case study of a long-term collaboration between a creative learning centre which supports arts and artist collaborations with a university, the university practitioners and musicians from Turtle Key Arts. This case study suggests trusting processes and explores the ethics of practice as a continuing process. The second piece focuses on an artist-led workshop on palmistry, and explores the way that a postgraduate class questioned and created broader understandings of being a community.

Thread 4 describes experiences with art-led teaching that evokes ethical questions about using powerful methods which have the potential for unpredictable impacts beyond our ability to know or control. The second piece focuses on theatre and the magic it makes, highlighting the embodied learning and communications from learners, and looks at artists/educators’ practice as research and research as practice.

With our collection of different, but related, artist-led practices, we wish to bring a creative criticality to the work of educators and artists who are curious about or engaged in each other’s work.

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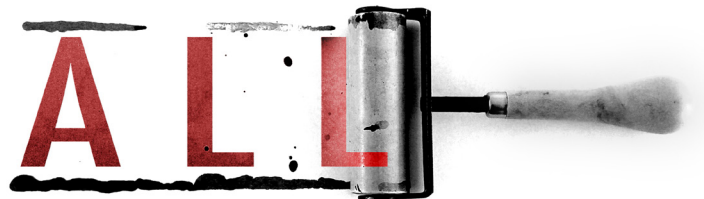
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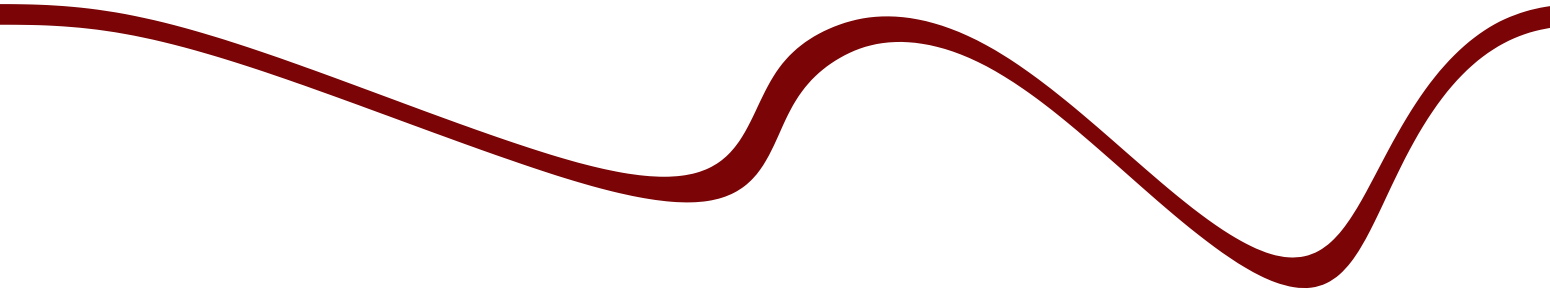
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Artist-Led Learning in Higher Education



From simulation to dissimulation

Addressing the dark side of marketing through art and fiction

Catherine Morel
Philippe Mairesse

Introduction

Business schools are places where traditionally reason and logic have been opposed to emotion and feeling, despite the fact that both are valuable sources of knowledge. In their quest for being recognised as a hard science, management studies have privileged cognition, intellect and logic as a source of knowledge whereas sensory-based and embodied ways of knowing have been marginalised.

Fortunately, a call for exploring the aesthetic side of organisational life and adopting a more aesthetic perspective on leadership studies (Hansen et al, 2007) has gained momentum in organisation and management studies (Strati, 1999; Strati & De Montoux, 2002). Indeed, aesthetics provides a welcome alternative to

the paradigm that puts emphasis on the logical, rational and linear nature of management and leadership (Ropo et al, 2002). As Hansen et al (2007) remind us:

Aesthetics involves meanings we construct based on feelings about what we experience via our senses, as opposed to the meanings we can deduce in the absence of experience, such as mathematics or other realist ways of knowing. (Hansen et al, 2007, p. 545).

Artistic interventions in organisations come in various shapes (Johannson Sköldberg et al, 2016) and their potential transformative powers

have been used with the hope of attaining an array of organisational objectives (Darso, 2004), from the development of employees' collective creativity to the reaching of a better understanding of one's role as a leader.

Engaging with art-creation has potential to be a transformative process through which managers can form new simulations, i.e., perceptual shapes in which the manager grounds key concepts, such as "management", "ethics", "power", "service", and "self as leader." (Springborg & Ladkin, 2018, p. 538)

In the wake of the development of a more aesthetic dimension of management, new ways of teaching and training have emerged. According to Mack (2013) "the challenge for organisational aesthetics is to continue efforts to bring aesthetic ways of knowing into management education practices" (2013, p. 301). Arts-based methods of enquiry, or more generally Arts Based Interventions (ABIs), have slowly made a foray into higher education and business schools (Chemi & Wu, 2018). ABIs in management education cover a broad range of learning interventions that use elements traditionally associated with art, such as artistic media, artistic processes (see Lee et al, 2018 on artist residencies on campuses, for instance) or works of art created by artists (Springborg,

2015). Such interventions are increasingly used to develop particular skills (making) or capacities (critical thinking). In an effort to systematise art processes and apply them to entrepreneurship, Bureau (2019) developed the concept of "art thinking". These are constructivist learning interventions as they provide a space within which the participants may explore and learn about a relevant topic without rigidly defined learning outcomes (Springborg & Ladkin, 2018). According to Mack (2013) "the challenge for organisational aesthetics is to continue efforts to bring aesthetic ways of knowing into management education practices" (2013, p. 301).

This chapter will document and reflect on the design and implementation of an artist-led intervention through which the authors wished to support management students in the development of their critical skills and in their understanding of potential ethical issues attached to certain marketing practices. This intervention corresponded to a pedagogical commitment to create spaces in which students could reflect and construct meaning for themselves, rather than just rely primarily on the teachers' expertise. To that aim, and with the help of a visual artist and professional actors, the teaching team used the immersive power of fiction and designed a fake case study about a start-up (AffinCity) and its founder whose seemingly good intentions had potentially disastrous social outcomes. Inspired by a

recently published book by acclaimed French sci-fi SF author¹ offering a dystopian view of cities of the future, the team anchored the fiction in the self-proclaimed smart city of Nantes. The embeddedness in reality was crucial to crafting a convincing story. As nicely expressed by Fournout (2021, p. 46): “fiction clings to reality by tearing out bits of it” (author’s translation).

The teaching team, through a structured scenario, immersed students in the start-up fiction. We put students in a familiar frame (a real-life case study in which they were asked to act as consultants for a real-life company), which they interpreted as being real. The case study was offered within the frame of a strategic marketing module for group 1 and a critical marketing module for group 2. After two weeks, we carefully revealed the truth: the start-up and its founder did not exist. Our teaching team helped students to reflect on their experience, actions and thoughts during the preceding weeks, before inviting them to co-design the rest of the AffinCity story and “sell” it to other unwitting students and audiences.

The artist-led learning fiction did raise the anticipated ethical issues amongst participants and led to critical reflexivity. At times, it also challenged our practice as educators. We found ourselves engaged in reflexivity over the “uncomfortableness” we sometimes felt at being “game masters” in the fiction we had created. Moving from simulation to dissimulation, had we become tricksters?

The chapter is organised as follows: first, we review some fundamental concepts which underpin our work starting with experiential learning and arts-based interventions in management education. A detailed description of the AffinCity artist-led project and the issues it raised is offered, followed by an account of our developing research agenda and protocol.

Tools for experiential and action learning in management education

On the role of case studies, simulations and role-plays

Management and entrepreneurship theories can be challenging to teach and meaningless to students who do not possess significant business experience. Furthermore, putting the student at the centre of the learning process, which is recognised as a potentially fruitful learning process, is contradictory to delivering theory in a descending mode. In addition, theory is useful only if it helps solving wicked problems, which is a challenge faced by future managers and entrepreneurs.

Criticisms of the case-based method persist although it remains popular in many business schools around the world today. Specifically, critics point to the inability of case studies to compensate for “real world” experiential learning. They may even “convey a distorted sense of reality which may jeopardise learning and problem-solving abilities” (Dutta, 2018). Although increasingly based on real-life

business organisations, when working with paper/digital case studies students seem to be there only mentally (Fisher, 1978), lacking the experiential access to the case. Although experiential knowledge is central in learning and reflecting about management, few experiential teaching methods are used in higher education. Immersion in real firms through internships or apprenticeships is providing the experiential part of the curriculum with the potential disadvantage of disconnecting theory, analysis and reflexivity from experience.

Experiential learning models (e.g., Kolb, Rubin, & McIntyre, 1984) incorporate experience, reflection and conceptualization to enhance learning and better engrain key concepts in students. John Dewey's claim that direct, practical experience is what creates knowledge is at the core of experience-based learning approaches (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Experiential learning is defined as "a process whereby knowledge is created and learning is promoted through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). Experienced-based tools of learning aim to simulate real-world experiences: case studies, computer-assisted simulations, role plays, to name the most popular.

In the same vein, action learning is an approach in which participants work in teams to tackle real organisational problems and learn from their attempts at addressing them. Action

learning was developed by Revans (1982) as an approach to management education that would challenge traditional case-based teaching methods imported from the USA. It was also a criticism of business schools that had remained insufficiently focused on practical, actionable knowledge and problem solving (McMillan & Overall, 2016, quoted in Brook & Pedler, 2020). Action learning is a tool to educate *for* practice, not just *about* practice (Brook & Pedler, 2020). Some of the core principles of action learning are: action as the source of learning; learning from reflection upon action and addressing problems that resist simple solution. Through our AffinCity fiction, we wished to "tick" all three specific boxes.

Computerised simulation case studies are commonly and increasingly used to enhance learning in project management education at undergraduate and graduate levels in business schools. Their role is to mimic real-life project management situations and to offer a low-risk environment where students must choose and apply the appropriate project management tools. They allow students to use newly learned concepts and develop critical thinking whilst receiving immediate feedback. When students enter such simulations, they do so in complete knowledge of the artificiality of the situation.

The degree and impact of the experiential project's reality has been little investigated. However, according to Maher and Hughner (2005) students do not seem to make a big

difference between a real or virtual case study; their experience and meanings do not differ. To a certain extent, our artist-based intervention blurred the lines between “real-life” case studies and virtual ones.

In role play, students usually assume roles that have been assigned to them and try to project themselves in a scenario designed by the teaching team. Students are usually asked to debrief about what they observed (if they did not take part in the role play) or comment on the behaviour they adopted during the performance (if they took part). This experiential learning activity has proved efficient particularly in sales or entrepreneurship courses (Johnson et al, 2021). The major issue with role-play in class is realism, even though it can be mitigated by the involvement of sponsors or professionals coming to play their own organisational role. Students, although gripped by the immersive experience, still think this does not entirely mirror the reality of the business world.

On the role of ABIs and fiction

The aims of arts-based interventions echo those of action learning and experiential learning. “ABIs have the potential to be used for the purpose of generating new simulations managers can use to think about managerial tasks and challenges. This approach to ABIs in management education seems best suited to deal with situations the managers perceive

as puzzling, paradoxical, incomprehensible, or unsolvable, i.e., situations managers are not already able to deal with in a satisfactory way” (Springborg & Ladkin, 2018, p. 538).

ABIs provide a means of accessing and developing a fundamentally different way of approaching the world; a form of knowing that comes through senses rather than being based in logic and rational thinking (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009). More specifically, arts-based methods are underpinned by four distinctive processes that can be combined to contribute to the development of managers: the acquisition of artistic skills and their application to organizational settings, the fostering of reflection and personal sense-making through projection, the illustration of the essence of concepts and making (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009).

With the making of AffinCity, we focused on a specificity of art i.e., fiction. In their discussion on the use of fiction in organisation and management studies, Holt and Zundel (2018) try to establish what fiction is and how it differs from scientific facts and accounts. They argue that the boundaries between “soft fiction” and “hard fact” are rather blurred: after all, many stories begin as factual accounts and some fiction writers embed their stories in well and scientifically researched facts. Fictions also form the fabric of much organisational life and appear in business school case studies. To the authors, the binary truth/non-truth relationship between science and fiction is artificial and

fiction can play a major part in generating insights into aspects of organisational and social life. Holt and Zundel themselves (2018) used the TV series “The Wire” to unveil and teach the playing out of organisational affairs. They also point to management authors who have used works of fiction to induce organisational scholars to engage in theory construction as a process of imagination (Weick, 1989). Fiction can certainly help investigate deeply how makers (and in our case, future makers) of an organisation create its meaning through their making – and possibly help them critically reflect on it.

Description of the fictional case and the protocol followed

Building the fiction

At the end of August 2019, the teaching team designed the action research protocol: a fictitious company (start-up), called AffinCity was to be offered as a real-life case study to two distinct groups of students in marketing (Group 1: Bachelor students and Group 2: Master students). This fictitious company and its artist-impersonated owner would offer concierge-type services (baby sitting, gardening, space renting) to the population of the Ile de Nantes (a former no man’s land earmarked as the future heart of the smart city), supplemented by services to reinforce personal security and facilitate travel to and from the increasingly congested city centre of Nantes. It

relied on location-based technologies, personal data and interactive smartphone applications. While, on the surface, the intentions behind the project seemed laudable (who would not want to improve traffic in congested cities and improve urban dwellers’ daily life?) a closer look at some of the services would reveal more morally questionable intentions (privatising a public space to organise the children’s parties of AffinCity customers, or spotting and reporting “strange” looking passers-by through the use of AffinCity drones). These services (most of which are based on already existing technologies) were deliberately made ambiguous and blurred the lines between enhancing the consumers’ city life experience and involving them in the increased control and surveillance of their environment. AffinCity would offer a tiered subscription scheme with various levels of services attached to each type of subscription. The most expensive package would offer sophisticated surveillance tools to protect one’s property and family, together with private access to public places and infrastructures. The targeted customer groups would include both full-time residents of the island and professionals coming to work there. The concept was presented as being supported by the Nantes local authorities, which welcome solutions that address pollution issues and present a potential new source of revenues. On the surface, the ultimate goal of the project was to create a “good life” together in a “smarter” city. According to its (fictitious) founder,

AffinCity would “give back the keys of the city to its residents”.

The project would consist of two phases repeated with two distinct groups of management students.

Phase 1: Bachelor students were introduced to AffinCity by its (fake) founder who explained that his start-up was supported by local authorities (in particular the Société d’Aménagement de la Métropole Ouest Atlantique or SAMOA, a major local public-private development agency) and supported by a reputable Business School incubator (Audencia Incubator). After a presentation that took place at SAMOA’s showcase pavilion (this was staged by the teaching team to reinforce credibility), they were invited to help him refine his marketing positioning in order to attract further funding.

Phase 2: after a couple of weeks during which students designed an initial marketing plan, the fictional dimension of the company was revealed to them. A feedback session with the actor playing the start-up founder and the professors was organised to reflect on the process and dilemma of communicating and promoting an organisation offering ethically questionable services. Students were then invited to continue to elaborate the marketing plan of the fictitious start-up, with the objective of presenting it to the next group of students. Thus, they became co-designers of the fiction with the teaching team.

The same protocol (minus the visit to SAMOA) was followed with the students of group 2 whose mission, this time, was to take the AffinCity story a step further by designing and managing its official public launch event. They used, fine-tuned and developed the start-up’s initial marketing plan and further built the story-telling around its founder and his reasons for launching AffinCity.

The artistic dimension of the project

Contemporary visual arts are often about building fictional plausible worlds that immerse visitors into environments, installations, documentation, virtual reality, or displays of objects and images supposedly extracted from the future or from outer worlds. We worked with Jérôme Fihey, an artist who creates plausible fictional worlds presented as real in public spaces or cultural venues. In a make-believe perspective, such fictitious universes are often represented through realistic artworks that look like ordinary things. The more casual the artificial objects look, the more credible the fiction. Such art seeks to blur the frontiers of reality without the usual characteristics of art: beauty, dreamlike, fantasy, idealistic. These approaches criticize the real world; deconstruct the taken-for-granted; question acceptance of the real; explore possible futures; ironically mystify the audience; question judgement and perception; or extend literary works into

a kind of hypertextual narrative in line with the cinematographic culture of our times. Aesthetics do not reside in the appearance and formal quality of the work, but in the perceptual and conceptual position toward the world that the work tries to express.

In this work, we created the character of Marc then Isabelle Grandpierre, the founder of the fictional company. Two comedic artists successively played the role, following a precise script, improvising during interactions with audiences or repeating their story to the media. A team of artists (graphic and digital designers, visual artists, musician) created artefacts for the visual identity of the fictional company, similar to the usual marketing material: a logo, promotional leaflets, subscription cards, advertisement video, display material for commercial shows, and social media. The comedian playing the role of the founder was trained with rehearsals supervised by the team of researchers and artist. Everything looked quite ordinary and non-artistic, but it was carefully conceived to immerse the visitor into the feelings and perceptions of the world that we imagined: a city where the quality of life experienced depends on wealth and where personal data are used to protect the privileged via an environment of control.

The ethical dimension of the project

At the time of the design of the project, there was no specific ethical committee dedicated

to research-led learning in our institution. Each department managed collectively all the initiatives that were offered to their students and the teachers-researchers would discuss projects in a collegiate way, challenging their feasibility, their pedagogical interest, their research potential and their deontology. In our case, these discussions took place in two distinct departments: the Marketing department and the Communication and Culture department.

In both departments, the focus of discussions was the use of fiction in teaching and the dissimulation of the truth to students for the first two weeks of the project. In fiction (as in films or plays) a convention is accepted from the start by audiences: the place where they confront the artwork is clearly off the stage of their daily life. It is a safe space, an isolated scene, a protected area where crimes are not punished because they did not happen, where laughter and tears result from the similarity between experienced real-life situations and imaginary ones. The “fourth wall” in theatre or the screen at the cinema materialise this clear limit between fiction and reality. What is important for the ethics of fiction is that it is clearly stated to be fiction, otherwise it is simply a lie, purposefully manipulating the audience or not.

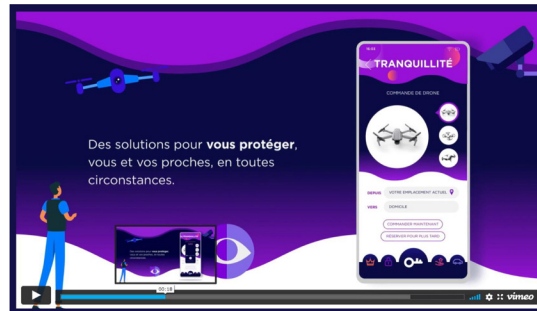
But what happens when the limit between reality and fiction yields to the artist’s creativity (Burstow, 2008)? Many books in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries started with: “I found

this manuscript in an old abandoned loft” or “was given the writing by a soldier before he died” ... or other such “lies” used to build up the fiction, without ever being revealed as fabrication by the author. The reverse is also true. Documentaries often pretend to be fictional when they tackle tricky issues. Or they offer a mix of fiction and documentation, in order to give better access to reality. Films, plays, books, art in general obviously search for similarity with what is real whilst escaping from it. The frontier between what is ethical and what is not seems to depend on the extent to which the border between reality and fiction is drawn at the same time as it is questioned.

In our case, the decision was made to reveal to students that the case was a fiction after a couple of weeks of working with the fictitious client. This enabled us to keep both the immersive quality and the reality-revelatory quality of fiction. After being told that they had been drawn into a fiction, students would be invited to reflect about their role and responsibilities in co-designing the rest of the fiction with the teaching team. The team agreed that carefully revealing the truth to the students quite soon after the beginning of the project would enable us to reduce the risks of unsettling them ².

The other challenging element in our fiction was the nature of the services offered by AffinCity. One of the main aims of the artist-led project was to bring students to reflect about

their (individual and collective) acceptance of promoting services that introduced control, discrimination and misuse of personal data in everyday life.



Those services are still fictional for the time being but anchored in existing technologies. Such services, which can lead to unethical behaviours and a two-tiered society, will probably be offered in a not-so-distant future (surveillance drones to “protect” our surroundings, ranking individuals on their health or social behaviour...). Would our students make the difference between a fiction that (we hope) will never come true and a reality that allows such fictions to be attractive? The ethical dimension in our experiment was echoing the ethical question behind the marketing of certain technologies: do we (as consumers, marketers, trainers, students) draw the line clearly enough between the acceptable and the unacceptable nature of the products and services we offer or are being offered? Do we purposely blur the line? The use of art and its artefacts highlights the issue, as art simultaneously draws and blurs the limit. Do we use films (and fiction) in the classroom to give voice to the excluded, or to reinforce our own power (Mairesse & Debenedetti, 2019)?

Research project, data collection and initial findings

The question on which our initial research project was based is the following: can the passage through an artist-led action (here, the creation and realisation of a fiction) contribute to the development of future marketing professionals’ critical skills? And if so, how?

This theme unfolds in a series of questions that were submitted to the students during and after their involvement in the case study. Some of them can be found in Appendix 1.

Data collection and initial findings

The “revelation” session with Group 1 (Bachelor students) took place in a classroom where both the artist and members of the teaching team announced that the real-life case study on which students had been asked to work was a fiction. Assembled in the familiar setting of a classroom, they found out that the start-up and its creator did not exist and the whole experience had been as part of a larger EU project on artist-led learning. This session was recorded and transcribed in full to capture the students’ reactions and comments.

Students in Group 2 (Master students) were observed during the revelation session and their reactions were recorded. In addition, they were asked to collectively write critical reflection essays in their respective group at the end of the experience. All of these notes were compiled and analysed. An ex-post questionnaire was sent to evaluate and qualify their perceptions.

Our initial exploration of the data collected was split in three streams corresponding to the major questions raised by the AffinCity fiction:

Stream 1: The traditional method of training management students is based on documented studies of real company cases. This approach does not allow students to “really” experience

the situations studied, whereas experiential learning is increasingly considered as an important part of professional training. A fictional “real-life” case study activates indirect but vicarious experience. The fictional case study allows one to model the experience one wishes to have, in this case the experience of designing a marketing strategy for a somewhat questionable suite of services. Is the vicarious experience resulting from the immersion in a fiction more engaging than more traditional case study teaching methods?

Stream 2: The fictional proposal allows us to accumulate in a single case several potentially dystopian services that for the time being have not been bundled into a real corporate offer. Although they do not exist as services yet, they are extensions of already existing technologies. The realistic aspect of these services makes the fiction all the more plausible. Will students (as future marketers) agree to put their skills and knowledge at the service of a potentially dystopian enterprise project? By doing so, will they keep, or even develop, a distanced and critical view of their practice?

Stream 3: When we reveal the entire fictional nature of the case study designed by an artist and the teaching team, and ask students to join us in refining the fiction, and to propose it to other groups (students and the general public) as if it were real, we are also asking them to dissimulate the truth about AffinCity. They join us in “inviting” audiences to familiarise

themselves, accept and eventually buy AffinCity’s services. Will students develop a critical reflection on the risk of manipulating users through the design of a fiction and immersive marketing experiences?

Some initial research findings

The analysis that follows is solely based on the reflexive essays written by the group of master students (Group 2) whose specific mission was to develop and promote the AffinCity public launch, which took place during the Nantes Digital Week in September 2020.

The following verbatim extracts are from their reactions as consigned in reflective and critical essays.

Stream 1: The fictional experience has more power to engage than traditional methods and to increase students’ awareness and critical thinking.

Without making straight references to or making comparisons with other methods of learning, students did acknowledge that this unusual case study helped them understand much better the mechanisms at play when wanting to influence audiences:

“Working on an assignment like this has helped us understand how manipulation in communication really works”. (Group 2 master students)

The group of master students was very articulate when it came to describing how they

Flyers and pins developed by the second group of students for the official launch of AffinCity in September 2020.



used various tools to reassure diverse audiences as to the existence of the “fake” company (their words) and its economic soundness. They mention how manipulating figures and stats were important to reassure and convince investors and demonstrated some political acumen when thinking of their message towards the public authorities.

The challenge of making this company and its owner real to unwitting audiences involved an extra layer of difficulty that students embraced as a challenge. They found themselves treading carefully and skilfully on the line between reality and fiction in order to make sure that audiences would be tricked:

“It was also an eye-opening experience as it proved to us how easy it is to deceive people with the right choice of words and right choice of media”. (Group 2 master students)

Again, students explained how, in their teams, they had carefully crafted a nice story concerning the founder, making sure that audiences would find it endearing (see Appendix 2 for details). Their creativity found an interesting outlet: they were effectively writing a fiction and giving it a 3D dimension through social media and other media they used (they crafted fake interviews with the start-up founder). The creation of fictitious content captured their imagination. Even the music used in videos was carefully selected to reinforce what was being presented to the audience. The amount of detail into which

students went to run a convincing campaign was indeed very impressive.

Commenting on the ways some students, during group work, managed to convince others of the potential usefulness of certain services offered by AffinCity, group 2 realised that they had also been successfully using some of the manipulative tools amongst themselves. They were now able to recognise them:

“It was interesting to see in action the exact same principle and trick we want to apply work among us”. (Group 2 master students)

Stream 2: Will students (as future marketers) agree to put their skills and knowledge at the service of a potentially dystopian enterprise project? By doing so, will they keep, or even develop, a distanced and critical view of their practice?

“This project was for us a very interesting opportunity to take a step back and think about all the marketing discourses that we hear all the time around us”. (Group 2 master students)

The comment, here, followed students’ acute understanding of businesses’ constant need to sell more of their products at any cost (capitalism) and how marketing contributes to this. Students found themselves at odds: although keen to perform well and design an effective marketing strategy (“it was more important / exciting / pleasing to have our mission properly executed” group 2 master

students), they were also very conscious that if their strategy and communication did work, then it would confirm that with the right discourse and influence techniques, they could sell anything, even unethical products. Students also lamented the fact that few people (students and members of the public) seemed to notice how the services offered by AffinCity would eventually lead to a social divide, in other words they regretted the consumers' lack of critical thinking:

“There is a heavy emphasis on the benefits which lead up to a social divide, however this unfortunate outcome is not highlighted anywhere and people don't question the motives behind such projects from a critical perspective”. (Group 2 master students)

Similarly, students regretted the lack of cautiousness shown by consumers (themselves included) when it came to indiscriminately sharing personal data. The case study made this even more obvious.

“We are all aware of the fact that our data is basically collected everywhere and most of the time we even consciously give it to companies”. (Group 2 master students)

So, students not only reflected on their duties as marketers but also on their behaviours as consumers. We had not completely anticipated that aspect of critical thinking. Because we had led them to believe in the existence of AffinCity in the first instance, they could empathise with what

could happen to audiences also seduced by the organisation they had helped us bring to life. It might have been difficult for them to admit that they, too, had not fully used their critical skills when we had presented the (fake) start-up to them.

Students (in both groups) embraced their role of marketing consultants even if a number of them felt increasingly at odds with some of the AffinCity founder's ideas. As students, though, they did not feel comfortable in fully expressing their doubts to the teaching team. Those only came to the surface when we revealed the true nature of the project to them and entered into a critical discussion.

Stream 3: Will students develop a critical reflection on the risk of manipulating users through the design of a fiction and immersive marketing experiences?

Some of the comments made by students in their reflexive sessions showed their level of uneasiness with the process of misleading audiences.

Students in both groups used strong words to explain that the project, at times, had made them feel uncomfortable mainly because they would manipulate (their word) people into believing in a fake and rather unethical company. While they wanted their tricks to work, they were also wishing that audiences would find out the truth. The following comments show the uneasiness experienced by students:

“Globally, the exercise of manipulation did not feel very comfortable for us on various levels”. (Group 2, master students).

“We felt uncomfortable while crossing intentionally the line of morality and had the feeling of abusing people’s innocence with aggressive marketing techniques”. (Group 2, master students)

When describing the marketing and communication techniques they used: “These kinds of action truly correspond to the definition of manipulating: to control or influence (a person or situation) cleverly or unscrupulously”. (Group 2, master students)

“Some of us were really afraid that the prospects wouldn’t be blinded by our work. A terrible thought we had was: if we succeed in our mission and really convince them, it means that 23-year-old marketing students are able to manipulate people’s minds deeply”. (Group 2, master students)

These comments underline the ethical dilemma faced by students which came with the realisation that they had gradually become tricksters and that with the right tools, they could lead consumers to buy potentially unethical products. The dark side of marketing (Daunt & Greer, 2017) was clearly experienced and expressed through students’ reflective essays.

Moreover, the master student group was also quite vocal about the uncomfortable feeling they had of being part of something bigger that

had not been completely explained to them. After being told that AffinCity was part of a European project concerning art-based methods of teaching, they thought that they had been made part of an immersive experiment whose objectives they did not completely grasp. This led to comments such as the following:

“AffinCity manages to plunge us in an immersion too. If we are capable of creating an immersive experience for clients, is AffinCity doing the same to us? We fear being part of a bigger experiment (...) Are we unconsciously part of a sort of Milgram Experiment?” (Group 2, master students)

Although this comment certainly challenged our team and made us reflect on the way we had explained and discussed the ethos of the whole project, we also thought it demonstrated the students’ realisation of the potential risks of immersive experiences and the power of a good fiction.

Concluding remarks and lessons to be learnt

Through AffinCity, our teaching team pushed back the limits of real-life case studies. Whereas most published case studies indicate that the story - although based on real figures and primary data - was actually fictionalised, we purposefully did not send that warning to the students. We wrote a fiction that, like any fiction, was anchored in students’ reality. However, when students came to the staged

presentation of AffinCity for the first time, they did not realise they were entering a fiction. Through experiential learning, we wished to deepen students' reflection on the dark side of marketing strategies: selling controversial but convenient technology-based services or numbing customers' critical faculties by crafting a good story and designing immersive experiences.

As illustrated in the previous part, students did develop and express a critical sense towards marketing/communication tools, and voiced their wish to avoid the manipulative effects of these techniques. We believe that being asked to co-design the AffinCity story we had initially led them to believe in had an impact on their reflection. Students had the nagging suspicion that their critical faculties had not been sharp enough when we had presented them with the fake case study. They expressed empathy for consumers who could be led to believe in the illusionary utility of AffinCity's services. In fact, students did not only reflect on their duties as marketers but also as customers. Are customers being critical enough during their purchasing journey? Can they actually see what businesses are trying to make them do (in this case, buying controversial services and creating social inequalities)? At this point, it is worth noting that members of the general public at the official AffinCity launch event expressed little criticism towards the services it offered; a few visitors were almost ready to subscribe

the promotional offer. The fictional immersive experience created and staged by the students certainly facilitated the public's acceptance.

This created internal conflicting feelings for students: as the next generation of professional marketers, students wanted to perform well and design a successful strategy and launching event (one which would convince consumers to buy AffinCity's debatable services) but, at the same time, they were wishing to be found out thanks to critically aware customers. In our experience, it is quite rare for business students to feel so responsible for the impact of strategies they offer to their business clients and to consider the final end-consumer.

An unforeseen effect of the experiment was the challenging by some students of the legitimacy of the project in which the AffinCity art-based experience was embedded. They wished they had been given more information on the whole ALL programme from the start. Being part of an art-based experience that was, ultimately, designed to demonstrate the benefits of ABI in business schools was questioned by some students.

Although, the AffinCity fictitious case study achieved the main teaching and learning objective we had set at the start (i.e., to develop the students' critical skills), this result comes with some caveats. None of us, as strong believers in the power of artist-led interventions, should assume that students share this enthusiasm. Art can take them into

places that they might not wish to explore and out of their comfort zone. When designing a protocol for an ABI, we must therefore ensure that there are spaces for discussions of these methods with students and for adult learners to freely express their doubts and perhaps give them the possibility to opt out (Burstow, 2008).

For more details on the fictitious AffinCity media campaign created by students, please check <https://www.affincity.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/AffinCity/>

Notes

- 1 Damasio, A (2019) *Les furtifs*, Paris: Gallimard
- 2 It is interesting to note that traditional case studies in business schools do not question the fictionalisation of their content. The amount of fiction in case studies is never really communicated to students. Although the data is collected from various sources and can be heavily based on primary data, the fictionalisation process which serves specific learning objectives is seldom revealed.

Instructions and questions given to students

All economic actors must comply with social and legal responsibility and ensure that their offers are ethically, legally, commercially and socially positive. Only the urgency of the current situation has led to limitations and controls of private lives that would not be acceptable in normal times. Since March 2020, for reasons of public health of the utmost urgency, we are witnessing a drastic limitation of fundamental individual freedoms (movement, activities, meetings, discrimination). In normal times, these limitations would be unbearable: public and private services should not represent a threat to elementary individual or collective rights.

The company AffinCity emphasizes traffic regulation on the island of Nantes as its main mission, thus attempting to legitimize the other and most problematic part of its offer. This fictional company is deliberately dystopian in its objectives and means. Some of the services offered are situated on purpose at the border between service and constraint, and violate the principles of respect for personal data, freedom of movement or equal access to public spaces for example. Its selling arguments and value creation are based on the valorisation of the user experience, and its monetisation.

It raises a set of questions that you should try to answer as a preliminary step to your project.

- To what extent does the emergency of a situation justify the limitation of individual freedom?
- Your mission is to trigger a critical issue on questions such as personalised services leading to discrimination or social breakdown. How will you play with the limits of what is acceptable? What will your limits be?
- Whether a company or a public policy can justify its action by the necessities of the situation is debatable ('the end justifies the means'). Questions of information, risk limitation, dissent, and the balance between tyranny and democracy quickly arise. What could legitimise AffinCity's action before the citizens?
- The turning point of acceptability lies in the regulation of traffic supposedly carried out by AffinCity's services. How will you argue, describe, legitimise and improve the traffic situation on the island of Nantes, with the help of which actors?
- The project has many facets and several sub-groups, which will have to work separately and, at the same time, coordinate their actions. How will you manage the collective work, especially at a time when no physical meetings are allowed?

- The AffinCity fiction seems rather benign compared to the real situation we are currently experiencing (i.e. Covid 19 and lockdown). Reality has surpassed fiction. How will you improve the project so that it is still able to question this situation of destruction of freedom beneath the mask of legitimate and necessary action?
- Immersive marketing is about storytelling and experience; AffinCity, as a fake company, has no story. You have to create it with its founder's past. What are the characteristics that a story should foster to capture the visitor and at the same time make them more aware and critical?
- What examples of captivating (famous) stories that produce such critical immersion can you think of?

Marc Grandpierre comes to life!

Here is an abstract of a document written by the second group of students responsible for 'selling AffinCity' to customers. One of their first missions was to tell the story of the founder and make it endearing to the public.

Founder's identity

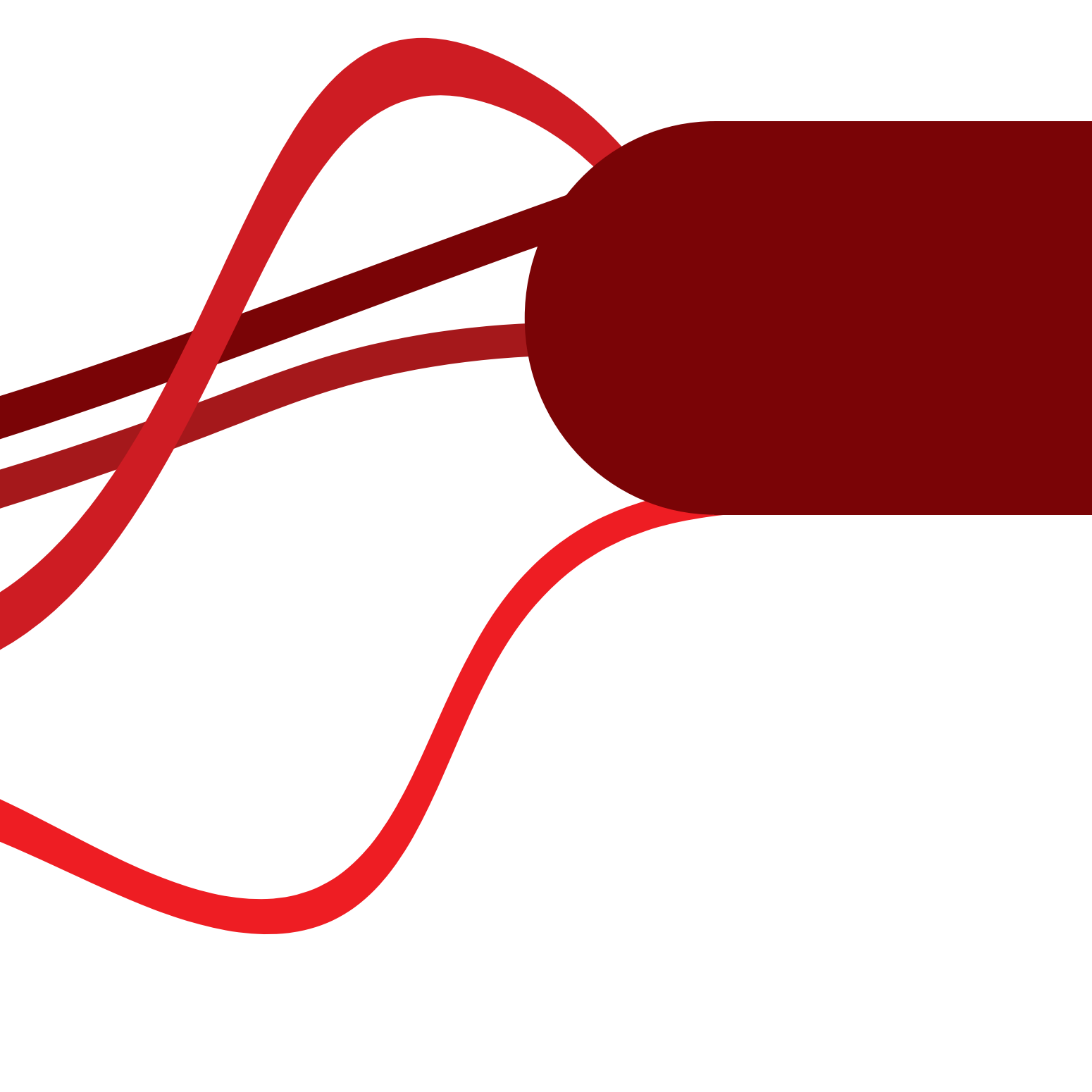
"I'm Marc Grandpierre. I was born in Nantes in 1987. I have 1 older sister and 1 older brother. When I was young, I was passionate about building games and video games. I wanted to become an architect and decided to begin the scientific section. "Classe Préparatoire" in order to enter an engineering school. ESTP (École Spéciale Travaux Publics) based in Cachan. I was part of the EOLE association, a humanitarian association to increase awareness on the ecological cause in the cities. I was hired as a consultant by Vinci to work on the amelioration of crossroads in cities. I first worked in a start-up called Atmotrack in Nantes that developed some tools to measure air quality. It can become a very important tool for smart cities. Then, I was hired by the city of Nantes as a consultant. I spent 3 years working for the city and then decided to create my start-up AffinCity".

Founder's background

"I always liked to party with my friends in bars or in night clubs. When I came back to Nantes during summer holidays when I was in my engineering school, I liked to go out with my friends. One of our favourite places was Nantes Island, with Les Terrasses de l'île and Le Hangar à Bananes, because it is very cool place to drink and to have fun. One day (a Friday night), I was there, with a few friends. We were drinking beer, playing games like every student would do. But I had to go back in my parents' house quite early (before midnight because we had to go to a wedding the next day), so I left my friends and I decided to go back alone. I had just to cross the Île de Nantes. But once I got halfway there, three men decided to attack me in order to steal my wallet and my phone. I was hit many times and I ended up in hospital. What a great evening!"

"I had never realised that security in the Île de Nantes was so bad until that day and I already knew I would like to do something to improve it. "

"That night I had a vision about a city where everyone can live without fear. A city that is good for all citizens, allows them to earn money, makes them feel good..."



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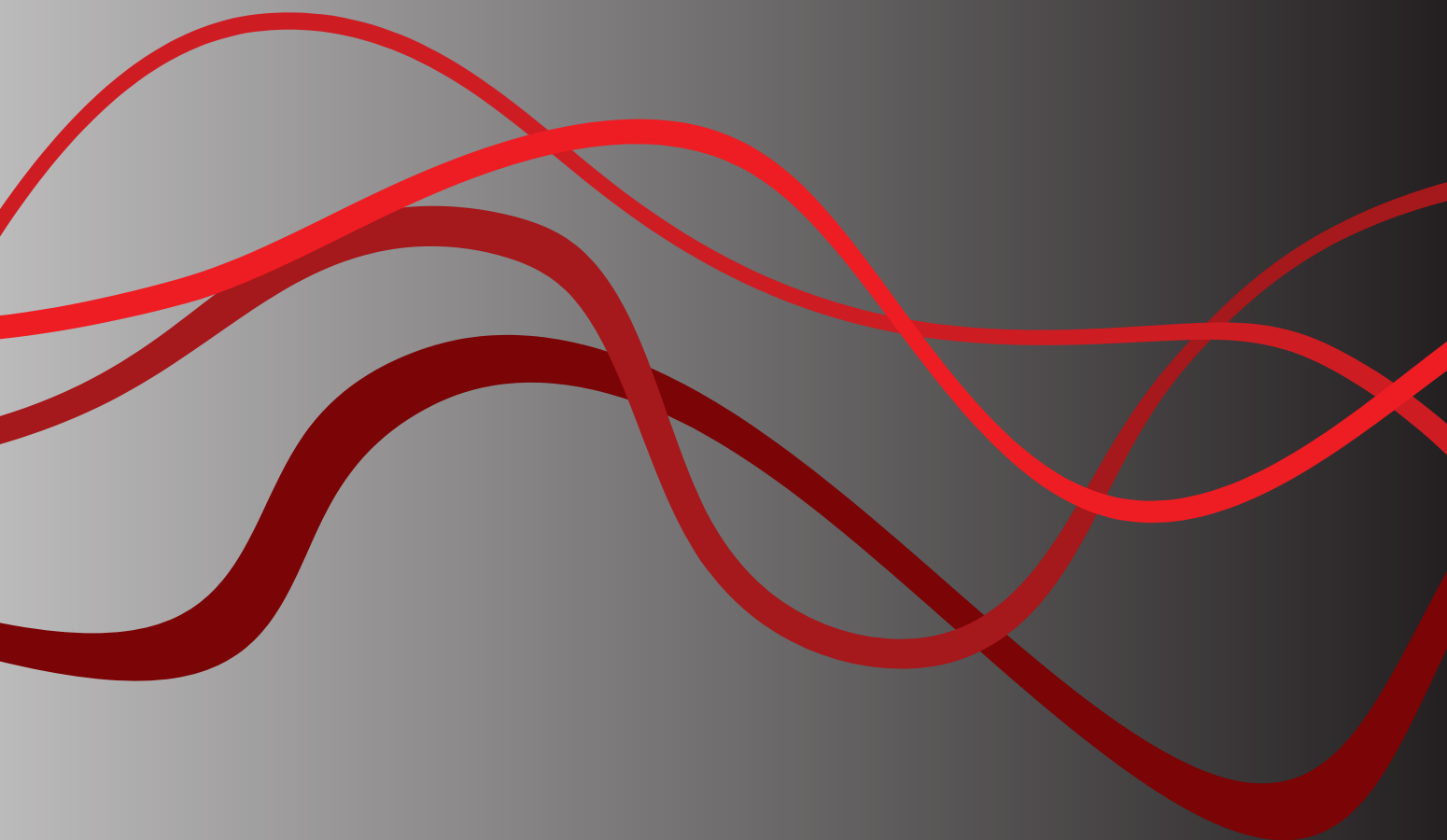
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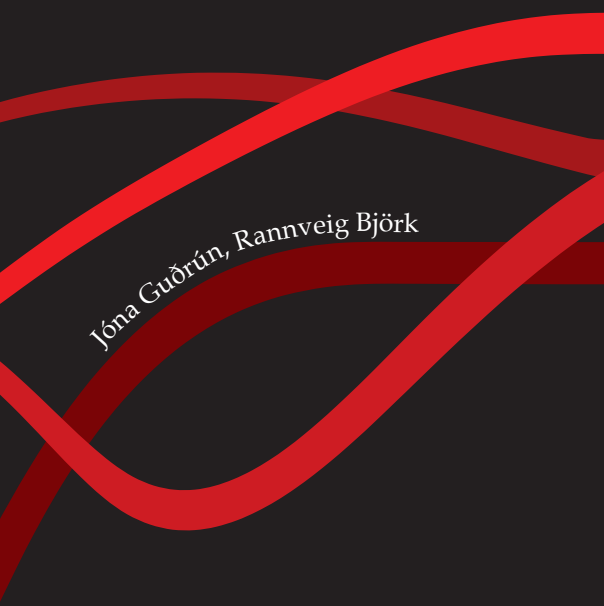
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Red thread to From simulation to dissimulation



Thank you for bringing our attention to the dark side of artist-led learning. As researcher-practitioners, artists and drama teachers we find the simulation or (dis) simulation fascinating. We are in the business of the world of “what ifs”, the make-believe world where anything can happen. Theatre is an art of imagination so we offer a red-thread from the theatre, especially from children’s theatre.

The first memory of theatre.

Jóna Guðrún, Rannveig Björk

Jóna Guðrún's memory

My first memory of going to the theatre was when I went with my family to see an Icelandic play called the Golden Gate by Davíð Stefánsson, which was performed at the National Theatre in Reykjavík. I was maybe 12 years old and I remember how excited I was because I thought going to the theatre was something very special. I didn't know what to expect but in my mind it was something of a mystery world and I thought the theatre building was old and graceful, like a castle. Everyone was dressed up in a solemn mood. I remember clearly the main actors whom I felt had great power and the story which affected me deeply. I also remember the lights. It was like they had their own life and colours, exchanging all the time to create a new atmosphere every time. It was magic!



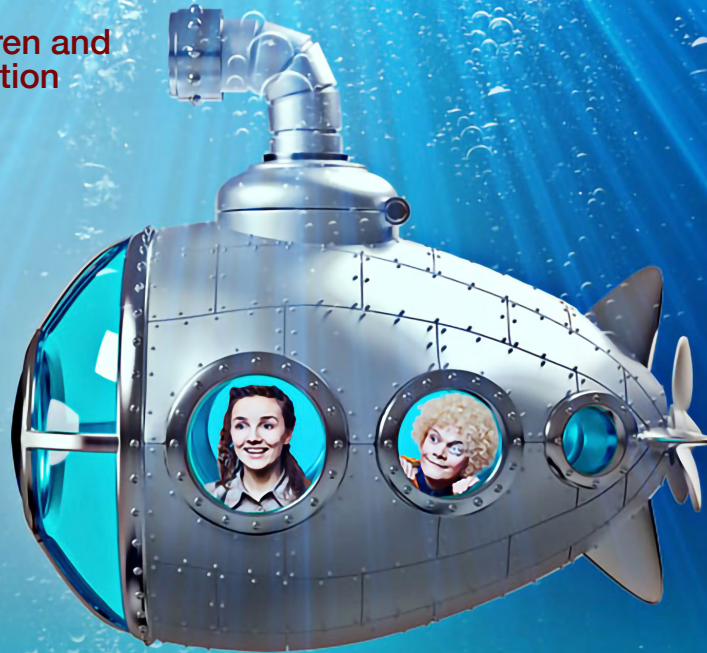
Stuðlaberg



Rannveig Björk's memory

My first memory of theatre was going to the National Theatre of Iceland. I don't remember how old I was, probably around four or five years old, and I don't remember the play or what it was about but I do remember the magic. The magic about going to the theatre. I remember the smell, the silence, the excitement, the music, the red carpet and the red curtains. I remember the crystal chandelier in the crystal hall. I was mesmerized. It was like I could not breathe because if I did, the magic would disappear. The house itself looked like an álfaborg (elf city) or castle with its black rock (stuðlaberg) rising from the ground all the way to the sky. It was like it was calling me to come in here where the magic happens. It was magic!

Theatre for children and Theatre in Education



The Submarine by Gunnar Eiriksson, National Theatre, Iceland.

Theatre for children or children's theatre can consist of a regular play, often a simple storyline or fairy tale like *When the Robbers Came to Cardamom Town*, *Ronja the Robbers Daughter*, *Karius and Bactus*, where children don't participate in the story. In Theatre in

Education the child is an active participant. Theatre in Education comprises a prepared performance (often by professional actors, or drama students) supported by active audience participation, often in the form of interactive drama workshops. These are facilitated

by the actors/teachers using a variety of methods in drama. The performance can build upon a fictitious story, or a historical or contemporary problem. This offers young people performance practices that have the potential to disrupt fixed polarities between art and instrumentalism, education and entertainment, populism and elitism, process and product, activity and passivity, participation and spectatorship" (Nicholson, 2009, p. 80). The theatre becomes a medium for action, for reflection, but most importantly for transformation. But what about children as spectators? Do they learn by watching a performance, and if so, what do they learn? Can theatre help them create their own ideas and develop new skills? The question we would like to raise is: is there a **Dark Side** of theatre in education? When you tell or show young people, in a performance, that the world as you know it is going to disappear, or you need to recycle to save the planet, are we manipulating the audience? Should we have a code of ethics when working in theatre in education? Is it ok to lecture the audience

about the danger? Is it ok to scare them? There is a greater risk that by both scaring them and by lecturing them they will turn against the idea. What needs to happen is as in other performances - you need to affect them.

An Icelandic children's play called *The Submarine* by Gunnar Eiríksson is a good example. The play talks about the environment and the story is about a young girl, Argentina, living in a submarine because the world is no longer habitable. The young audience are being educated by watching the play. They know that the world is not submerged, and Argentina does not live in a submarine, but for a short time they believe and at the same time accept the message. Children are smart and they know when they are being manipulated. We need to give them the freedom to experience and evaluate themselves. It comes with a great responsibility to create good Theatre for children.

It's the end of the world as we know it
It's the end of the world as we know it
It's the end of the world as we know it and I feel fine
(Lyrics by R.E.M.)

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Performative inquiry

To enhance language learning

Rannveig Björk Thorkelsdóttir
Jóna Guðrún Jónsdóttir

Introduction

There is something special about going to the theatre and the magic it makes. To bring a child to a theatre is potentially a life-changing experience, as well as an opportunity for a unique kind of learning. The theatre is a world of “what ifs”. The child is transported to a make-believe world where anything can happen. The theatre can also be a place of learning. Through theatrical literacy and the story telling and the ability to sit and watch a performance without distraction, learning can occur. The benefit of children going to the theatre is that it encourages empathy and cultural awareness; it develops critical thinking skills, promotes wellbeing, and is fun. But not all children have the opportunity to go

to the theatre. They do not have the habitus. Pierre Bourdieu (2012) argues that there are three kinds of capital in society that determine social power and inequality: economic capital, social capital and cultural capital. He has developed concepts that can be transferred to different research areas. Field, habitus and cultural capital are some of the most used. Smith and Riley (2009) quote Bourdieu when saying that family and school play a crucial role in the different allocations of habitus: “These institutions work to give people from affluent backgrounds an unfair advantage over those from the working class” (p. 131). To fully understand Bourdieu’s theory of power, we must understand his explanations of ‘symbolic violence.’ Symbolic violence

occurs in the school system. The school system maintains, promotes and distributes the values of the middle class. The children of the lower classes are made to accept the ethos that the culture and values of the middle class are worthier than their own, and recognised by all parties, including subordinates (Bourdieu, 2012). Therefore, drama and theatre education are important in schools, giving all students the opportunity to take part in a “What if” world regardless of the social class they belong to. In a constantly changing world where technology is developing rapidly, drama has something to offer that other subjects do not have, because it gives us the opportunity to imagine and enact futures and try out ideas. It also has a unique place in the curriculum because drama enhances intellectual, creative and embodied education where teachers have a powerful tool for transforming students through teaching (Anderson, 2012). In the Icelandic national curriculum (2013), drama is presented both as subject and as a method of instruction. In the curriculum guide, drama is an arts subject aiming at the method of the theatre but also as a pedagogy supporting the students’ learning processes in other subjects, for example language learning. Drama works both as a template for learning in general, and as a subject in its own right. Through drama the pupils can learn to interact with one another in a safe space, try out different social roles and through role-playing they have

the opportunity to explore aspects of what it means to be human (Thorkelsdóttir, 2018). Through drama, pupils may develop their self-expression, they can build the confidence and the skills needed to work with others, and drama may also enhance creativity. Learning can be seen as something “that emerges during performative exploration” where the learners “interpret the actions, events, responses” and “engage with empathy and conviction in the performative spaces” (Fels & Belliveau, 2008, p. 49). The focus in this article is on fifteen teacher trainees becoming drama teacher specialists, in their second year of education, and the potential they see in using drama for language learning. The focus is also on the two drama teachers teaching them and their learning experience.

The project – *The space between*

As researcher-practitioners, we conceptualise our research and practice in such a way that the two are continuously informing each other. Given that we understand practice as research and research as practice, we invited our students to engage in the project called *The space between* during the autumn semester of 2020. The project had two aims; the first was to find out whether and how we can conceptualise drama or performance as a meaningful way of language learning. The second aim was to look at and to reflect on our own practices to build bridges between pedagogical and theoretical

aspects of teaching and learning, to explore the space between, which is what we expect of our teacher trainees. Hence the research questions for this article are: *How do drama teachers' students experience the possibilities of using chamber theatre performance for language learning? How can artists/educators build bridges between pedagogy and theoretical aspects of teaching and learning in and through drama?* According to John O'Toole and Joanne O'Mara (2007, p. 207), there are four "paradigms of purpose" in using and teaching drama. They are *cognitive/procedural*, which means gaining knowledge and skill in drama; *expressive/developmental*, meaning growing through drama; *social/pedagogical*, meaning learning through drama; and *functional/learning*, learning what people do in drama. In many texts about drama in education these purposes are interwoven. In this article the focus is on *expressive/developmental* and *social/pedagogical* learning through chamber theatre. Learning and understanding takes place when the students explore various roles, investigate different aspects of human relations, and make independent decisions while in the role-play setting. Cecily O'Neill (1985) stresses that the most important task in drama education is the creation of a shared dramatic context, a fictional world, in which it is possible to explore and examine ideas, issues, relationships and content areas. It is both real and unreal at the same time (O'Neill,

1985). In making and staging drama / theatre, they learn how to be focused, innovative and resourceful, and collaborate and take responsibility through drama presentation. Through this, students develop creativity, imagination, aesthetic understanding and critical thinking, but they also learn to speak and listen. When students take part in a play, they are performing with and for others in a theatrical space; when the students stop to observe one another's work and change from "actor" to "spectator", they become percipients of their own work. Trust and understanding are shared in the theatrical space of drama education. It is at that moment that learning can happen both for the "actor" and "spectator" as they both learn by doing, listening and seeing. James Yarker (2001) describes the relationship between performers and audiences as a partnership, intended to challenge audiences intellectually and emotionally.

Short overview of the literature Contemporary cultural studies of the body

Michael Anderson (2015) claims that in many classrooms the body and mind seem to be separated in learning. One of the unique claims of the arts, especially dance and drama, is the use of embodiment in the process of creation (p. 239). In drama, embodied learning is often discussed based on the

body philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962/2002), George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1999), and Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (2009). Chris Shilling (2007, p. 200) states that many contemporary cultural studies of the body are under-theorised and rely too heavily on empirical descriptions. Smith and Riley (2009, p. 270) comment on this critique and state that focus on description is part and parcel of the move to the body itself; that is, the very desire to materialise cultural theory in rooting in the body is a de facto move away from the cultural in the form of norms, beliefs, discourses and narratives. This perspective on the body as an under-theorised cultural perspective can also be of great interest for drama education, but also a challenge. Lynn Fels (2009) argues that "... in arts education, it is understood that embodied learning opens the possibility for new ways of understanding and engagement" (p. 127). She also describes the complexity of embodied learning:

Embodied within my own understanding of complexity in education and performative inquiry is the interplay of breath, presence, and absence within the intimacy of relationship, time, engagement, inquiry, language, and location. (p. 140)

She goes on to ask,

We know that we learn through drama. But how do we conceptualise drama or performance as an action site of learning?(Fels, 2009, p. 140).

Language learning through drama

Drama challenges students to use language in a diverse style and for a wider purpose than ordinary conversations, as they use imaginary activity in the whole context. According to Lai-wa, Yuk-lan, Yin, and Shuk-kuen (2014) drama generated dialogue between students and teachers, which made the teachers aware of the importance of creating a non-threatening atmosphere in the classroom. It also made the students' needs more visible since they were no longer seen as mere pieces of homework or test papers, but human beings with feelings and emotions, where everyone expressed themselves in an individual way. Learning and teaching through drama is important to achieve positive results in improved spontaneity, articulation, fluency and greater use of language (Wagner, 1998). Students increase their vocabulary and improve their grammar and narrative structure when working through drama with body and mind working together (Wagner, 1998). Jun Liu (2002) reveals that drama offers new dimensions of learning foreign languages. She points out that there are two approaches to teaching foreign languages. The traditional approach of teaching focuses on dividing teaching into



Drama

Teaching



Performative
inquiry

segments like words, collocations and so on. The other approach focuses on meaning where the spotlight is on the learner and the learning process. Drama gives the opportunity to focus on meaning instead of form where body, mind and language come together, and students have to stretch their imagination beyond their linguistic boundaries. Ása Ragnarsdóttir and Rannveig Björk Thorkelsdóttir (2013), agree, adding that, when students are involved and take control of their own study and situations through drama, they learn language and use dialogue in and according to the situation they are in and whom they are talking to and they become more responsible for their own learning. Betty Wagner (1998) and Rannveig Björk Thorkelsdóttir and Ása Ragnarsdóttir (2019) presumed that drama in education created an experience through which students might come to interpret human interactions, empathise with others, develop understanding and expand perspectives and learning.

According to Erica Piazzoli (2014) the main focus in additional language teaching since the 1980s has been on creating a relaxing atmosphere to lower the strain and minimise the barrier when learning a new language. Heidi Haraldsen and Siri Ingul (2017) agree and add that using drama in language teaching provides the students with an opportunity to use the language in a spontaneous and realistic way in fictional scenarios. It also enables students to digest their

language learning process in an interesting and different way. Piazzoli (2014) adds that drama gives students the opportunity to enhance fluency, participation and motivation on many levels of learning languages. According to Piazzoli's research (2014), when students learned language through drama, they experienced that they were not being judged and could be more relaxed in all approaches to the study material. Students felt that learning by means of drama gave them the opportunity to study language through a cognitive and physical experience, which made the learning real and memorable for them and situated the language more firmly in a cultural context (Piazzoli, 2014).

Theoretical Perspective Performative inquiry in drama as a site of learning

Lynn Fels (2012) identifies performative inquiry in four key areas: to listen deeply, to be present in the moment, to identify stops that interrupt or illuminate our practice or understanding, and to reflect on those stops, in terms of their significance, implications and why they matter (Fels, 2012, p. 53). Performative inquiry (Fels & McGiven, 2002) is also the exploration of a topic or issue through performance (p. 27). It "opens spaces of intertextual play within which social responsibility and individual and

communal response may be investigated that provides a momentary entrance into ‘other’ worlds embodied in play and reflection” (p. 32) and “is a research methodology that recognizes and honours the absences, journey-landscapes, and space-moments of learning”. Fels and George Belliveau (2008) define learning as something “that emerges during performative exploration” where the learners “interpret the actions, events, responses” and “engage with empathy and conviction in the performative spaces” (Fels & Belliveau, 2008, p. 49). Learning is thus seen as a performative inquiry. Performative inquiry recognises performance, creative engagement and emergent creation as an action site of inquiry and learning. Researchers, through arts practise, investigate creative, critical and, in collaborative engagements, communal, embodied action and reflection. Performative inquiry introduces to education research what artists know and practise, that the arts embody research in order to create, engage, express and query (Fels, 2015). According to Fels (2012), performative inquiry is a way of being engaged in research on stage, in the classroom, in relationships to each other and the environments within which we find ourselves, collectively and individually. With this in mind we created a chamber theatre performance with our teacher trainees at the University of Iceland aiming at performance as an action site of learning languages.

Chamber theatre as a site of learning

Chamber theatre, story theatre or narrative theatre fills an important gap between narration and theatre performance. This method of the theatre is about adopting literary works, using extracts from the original text in minimal settings (Breen, 1986). Chamber theatre illuminates text by linking *telling* with *showing*. According to Robert Breen, who introduced the technique of chamber theatre, the technique is for dramatising points of view in narrative fiction. The narrator is encouraged to talk to the audience in a voice from the characters’ world and take the audience into that world. He invites them to see for themselves. The narrator also has the freedom to move in time and space. The students are encouraged to study the story or novel for the unique or individual perspective presented (Breen, 1986). The method uses all the elements of theatre such as sound, movement, stillness, plot and character. It uses light and shadows and the presence of actors in a symbiotic relationship with the written accounts that guide the process. By keeping sets simple and making the production more theatrical and intimate, chamber theatre forces the actors and audiences to focus on the story and the performance rather than the spectacle. By performing through chamber theatre, the focus is on the text, the narrative. No effort is made

to eliminate the narrative points of view which characterize fiction; indeed, the storyteller's angle of vision is emphasised through physical representation on stage (O'Neill, 1985). Because of the 'tell and show' element, both the spoken word and physical activity have to be made very clear. The performance is *show me a story*, making both actors on stage and spectators explore the literature or the topic through performance. The text can be fiction, fairy tales or poems, but not originally written for performance. Chamber theatre requires a narrator who, as the central character, delivers his or her own thoughts, feelings and actions while others in the group act out what the narrator is saying (Neelands & Goode, 2015).

In the beginning, the group explores the text they will be working on to better understand the plot and structure of the story. A script must be written and the discussion is about allowing students to participate in the writing. This is a method of adapting literary works to the stage using a maximal amount of the work's original text and often minimal and suggestive settings. Through drama the students use body, gestures, facial expressions and voice, as they work on expressive/developmental and social/development learning. In chamber theatre the narrator can break the fourth wall of theatre and speak directly to the audience, explaining what is going on in the story. All the actors can become the narrator. Students are given time

to rehearse the play where each participant is a character and/or a narrator. The whole setting of the play is very simple and there is no need to have any scenario or stage configurations. Chamber theatre can be performed almost anywhere. It has more realistic costuming and actual movement around the stage, but is not complete stage acting and typically has pantomimed props rather than real ones. The uniqueness of chamber theatre lies in the dual role of each member in the cast - as actor as well as narrator speaking and explaining what is going on to an audience. Through that process, learning can occur for both parties.

The design of the development project and data collection

In this research project we chose a qualitative approach in order to catch the fine-grained and subtle aspects of drama teachers' learning trajectories as well as looking into our own teaching practice. The project is based on a socio-cultural understanding of learning, and on the basic assumption that we are social and cultural individuals who interact and think together with others, and that we always learn. Knowledge is constructed and it is based on the societal and cultural context (see Säljö 2016; Vygotsky 1978). The aim of the project is to explore and understand whether drama or performance can be interpreted as a way of learning a language, since learning can be seen as something "that emerges during

performative exploration” where the learners “interpret the actions, events, responses” and “engage with empathy and conviction in the performative spaces” (Fels & Belliveau, 2008, p. 49). Learning is thus seen as a performative inquiry. Hence the first research question for this article is: *How do drama teachers’ students experience the possibilities of using chamber theatre performance for language learning?* The main focus is on the 15 teacher’s students, aiming at becoming drama teacher specialists, in their second year of education. The data was collected over a five-month period in the autumn of 2020 through class observation, field notes and video observation. The students met four times in the classroom and four times on Zoom. They were given a story (Cap-o’-Rushes, 1890) to work on. The main method was observation in the classroom, supported by video observations and photographs of certain situations and group interviews. Given that we understand practice as research and research as practice we reflect on our own teaching by writing logs and by reflecting on our teaching practices we endeavour to make them more meaningful. The aim is to build bridges between pedagogical and theoretical aspects of teaching and learning, to explore the space between, which is what we expect of our teacher trainees. The second research question: *How can artists/educators build bridges between pedagogy and theoretical aspects of teaching and learning in and through*

drama? After each class, we, the teachers, met to explore key experiences and interaction. We wrote together and responded to one another’s writing to better understand our practice for the benefit of our students. And we wrote reflective logs. When using reflective logs, the researcher is recording his and her learning experience; that is, feelings and reflections on what the researcher is seeing and learning at the site. Jack Mezirow (1981) argues that reflection is vital to ensure that the researcher’s perspective is transformed, and it is part of an emancipatory process of becoming aware of how and why social and cultural assumptions have constrained researchers’ views of themselves. We positioned ourselves as interpretive researchers with hermeneutic inspiration. The research project was based on studies of practice in a school context. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim (Lichtman, 2013). All data was analysed by open coding and repeatedly read in search of patterns and aspects. Data analysis was based on induction, a process during which the examiner forms expectations of potential results. Thus he/she reads and analyses the data acquired, revealing patterns or themes on which conclusions are based and presented as final results (Lichtman, 2013).

Findings

To set the stage we began with a narrative from our logs as reflective practitioners as our

logs had a transformative effect on the student work. By writing a reflective log we did more than just reflect on our learning experience, what we saw and learned at the site. By being a reflective practitioner, we managed to change our teaching methods for the benefit of our students. After teachers' reflection we turned to the students where the focus was on expressive/developmental and social/pedagogical learning through chamber theatre. The task was to find a way to work at language learning through chamber theatre.

Teachers' reflection

By writing a reflective log we hoped to better comprehend our choices in teaching and by reflecting on our practice we sought to understand our practice by exploring how we embody the theoretical and pedagogic frames through which we invite our teacher candidates to learn. After each class we met to explore key experiences and interaction. We wrote together and responded to one another's writing to better understand our practice for the benefit of our students.

We set out to give our students the opportunity to work with something new in drama. We had never taught chamber theatre as a technique for language learning. The students were supplied with the story of Cap-o'-Rushes to work on and lectures about chamber theatre, and had enough time to write, prepare and rehearse, but it still

appeared as if they had not fully understood their task - or they did not take enough time to sufficiently study the frame and/or the rules of the technique.

Why are the students doing it like this? They are not doing it as we taught them to do. Why? What was wrong? They are not telling with showing. They are only telling with one narrator. Why don't they take turns as narrator? Maybe we didn't explain it right. We need to teach how to do it in a different way. But how? Should we stop them and ask them to start over? (Researcher reflective log).

Part of using performative inquiry is to listen deeply and define learning as something "that emerges during performative exploration." What happened with the students is that they just did the performance as a short play with one actor telling the story throughout. Almost with no text.

/.../ I just realised that they might need more teaching or training in drama. Maybe chamber theatre is too difficult for the students as the aim of the project is to explore and understand whether drama or performance can be interpreted as a way of learning a language. They

are only in their second year of becoming drama teacher specialists (Researcher reflective log).

As the reflective log indicates the product did turn out less performative than expected. That said, one wonders if students need a greater challenge to take a project more seriously, for example, being presented with a real audience they can build an actual conversation with. This could make the project more vivid, and the students would experience acting out through the technique of the chamber theatre.

We need to do it with them. But can we, do this? From an ethical point of view? We need to be on stage with them, not as teachers but as researchers, to build the bridge between them and us for the educational context to achieve a creative learning process for all.

What we learned was that when we did “show and tell” the students understood the technique of chamber theatre. It was not until we put ourselves on stage and physically showed them the framing of the theatre that they fully understood its technique. The learning that took place in that show-and-tell opened the discussion later on. So, in a way we did build a bridge between the researcher and the teachers, as well as between teachers

and students, by inviting them to engage in our research, which turned out to be a learning process for all participants.

While teaching something new, such as chamber theatre, focusing on language learning, we did ask ourselves whether we should have provided the teacher trainees with more time to assist the pupils. This might have given them the role of a critical friend, which could lead to a stronger process without actually directing or demonstrating, thus strengthening the foundation of the project. Chamber theatre clearly challenges students to use language in a wide range of registers, styles and purposes and provides a lot of possibilities. The communication that takes place between the narrator, the actors and the audience is an extremely good learning process, where students exchange words and sentences and engage in discussions. They are also exposed to the structure and the communicative meaning of language where new words and sentences can be discovered. It was of particular interest, even if the project did not go as we anticipated, that our trainees saw the opportunity of using chamber theatre with their pupils. They learned that through chamber theatre, language learning in compulsory education can take place on many levels, since pupils have to both write and understand the script and perform the play, building their voice, expressive/development and social competence.

Language learning through chamber theatre

In the beginning the teacher trainees were given a story to work on and time to write, prepare and rehearse. They also had to rehearse the play and perform on stage where they had to fully learn and embody the text through communication with the other actors. They had to communicate with the audience through the narrator where further language learning took place. At the same time, they had to keep in mind how and whether their pupils were learning. The teacher trainees met, and we met them both in classes at the university but also online. In addition, the trainees were able to meet to work on the task by themselves. In the interviews three aspects were visible, *talking and expression, developing the pupils' social skills and useful pedagogy through language learning.*

Training for pupils in talking and expression

Our findings indicate that working in and through chamber theatre had an impact on the students. Many of the students said it was an impressive way of teaching:

/ ... / I like working like this and I think it will increase their (the pupils) vocabulary. The pupils have the chance to decide which words to use and which not. And they can

use their own ideas and stories, for example, when the narrator says something.

They also talk about how chamber theatre can create freedom for their pupils to learn stories and narratives in a different way. As one student explains: "They (the pupils) have to create their own sentences and come up with multiple ideas, for example, when the narrator says something". The students agreed that this was very important in language learning. Being able to talk and to express oneself to the audience and explain what is going on in the performance is unique. Breaking through the fourth wall intentionally lends more opportunities to language learning. When an actor (pupil) steps out of his or her role and becomes the narrator, magic can happen.

When a character switches roles and becomes the narrator, he can break through the fourth wall and talk to the audience, which gives him the opportunity to, for example, translate the text by asking the audience if they understand. In that way every pupil, no matter which language they speak, can understand the play.

He continues: "The pupil can explain the whole play to the audience. He can ask questions like:

“Do you know what is going on here?” He can translate the text for every pupil where both he as the narrator and the audience have to use a second language. He can ask the actors to repeat what they just did or said, so that everybody can understand what is going on.” This way both the actor/ narrator and the audience can learn, through communication. Learning and teaching through drama is important to give positive results in improved spontaneity, articulation, fluency and wider use of language (Wagner, 1998). Pupils can increase their vocabulary and improve their grammar and narrative structure when working through drama where body and mind work together (Wagner, 1998).

Pupils develop their social skills

The students thought it was interesting to look at the possibilities that chamber theatre can offer for inclusive education. As this student explains: “Pupils who are usually taken out of class for special education can now stay in the classroom, as chamber theatre gives all the students a possibility of taking part. Rather than getting a book or asking to attend some special education classes, they can learn more through drama”. Another student pointed out that chamber theatre gives pupils the opportunity to develop their social skills.

Pupils that need additional support in their study are usually

taken out of the class in special education learning classes but through chamber theatre they get the opportunity to be a part of the whole group where they can enhance their social skills. Many of the pupils do not have sufficient skills in their own mother tongue.

Through chamber theatre students can deepen their understanding of their mother language and it can also be a good way of teaching children who have Icelandic as their second language. “It is also very good to use chamber theatre to teach Icelandic as a second language, for example for immigrants. They, like other pupils, have to be able to use their own language.” Drama provides the opportunity to look upon meaning instead of form, where body, mind and language come together, and students have to stretch their imagination beyond their linguistic boundaries (Liu, 2002). They can do this through chamber theatre. The students added that they found it interesting how the performers could mix languages during the play. The narrator might speak in one language and the actors in another language. Another actor again might speak in a third language and so on, giving the narrator the role of translator for the audience. In this way all the pupils/actors can speak in a mixed language, which can help foreign pupils to speak their own languages, because they do

not have enough knowledge of or practice in speaking their mother tongue. They also added that despite the pupils being at different levels of language learning, they can learn from each other. "They can for example take the script home to study it further at their own pace, to be then ready to follow the process on an equal basis with the group". As it is not an obligation to become a narrator, the pupil who is not as confident in speaking the language can participate in other ways, for instance, in acting and telling during the show.

/.../and it can also be useful to mix students together; that is to say, pupils that speak different languages where they can speak their mother tongue or their second language. By doing so all the pupils can have a voice and truly take part in the performance.

Asking all the pupils to learn the text at home helps them to take part in the performance. The pupils have to understand the text to be able to perform it. The pupils have to translate the text into their mother tongue and learn their lines. They have to have a deep understanding in order to be able to show and tell. Another student pointed out that it is really important for pupils to take part who usually do not have voices in the classroom because they do not speak the

language. Participating and speaking their own language in a school performance can be empowering for the pupils that do not speak the native language. By taking part they can be seen and heard and by doing so they become members of the school culture and hopefully bring their own culture and value to the school (Bourdieu, 2012). By being involved in school productions, they can even influence the community they live in.

Useful pedagogy

All the students agreed that impressive learning occurred during the chamber theatre. By using the performative approaches they felt more relaxed and thought it was a fun process. As this student describes:

/.../ I think that it could be both useful and more relaxed for pupils to learn in this way. By taking the pressure off performing a whole show, as chamber theatre is more like show-and-tell, the learning is made more fun. Even if it is a performance, it is just a different kind of performance.

When rehearsing for the performance the students use their body and their physicality for creating characters and trying out different roles.

The students also believed that, if given the opportunity to try out chamber theatre in

compulsory education, they would do it. As one student pointed out:

Pupils love to act so you can presume that while students are 'playing' they are deepening their learning at the same time. And everyone gets the chance to blossom on his or her own terms. By writing a script with fellow pupils, chamber theatre enhances the pupils' vocabulary and spelling while they also learn about the structure and meaning of the language they embody on stage.

Another student noted that when working as a group through chamber theatre; "we believe that pupils not only develop their language learning but also their social skills, teamwork and their voice technique through physical activity, and when they get the opportunity to build a character they are learning." As Fels and Belliveau, (2008) point out, "learning can be seen as something that emerges during performative exploration" where the learners "interpret the actions, events, responses" and "engage with empathy and conviction in the performative spaces." Chamber theatre is the theatre of embodiment and narrative. It is a performance of ensemble. No one is the main actor or leader; everyone is working together as a team and everyone has a role to play. Everybody is important. That is truly showing

and telling. Teachers play an important role by transforming the pupils' learning, for example, by using drama (Anderson, 2012).

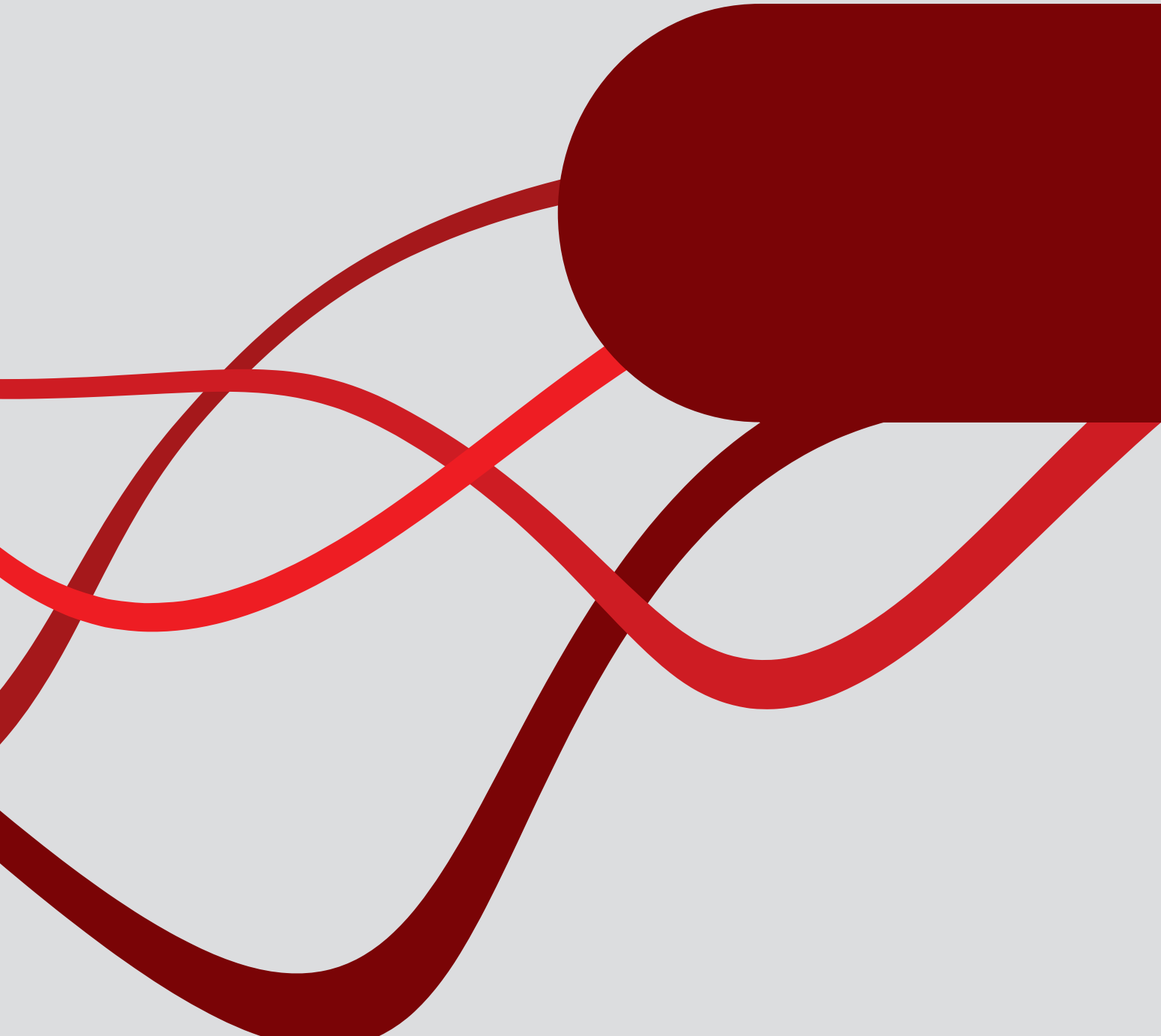
Conclusion.

Our findings conclude that chamber theatre can have a wide-ranging appeal when learning languages. Our students believe that pupils can develop socially acceptable speech and manners and a means of self-expression, and they develop empathy and self-control (*social/pedagogical*) (O'Toole & O'Mara, 2007) by taking part in performance. Through physical presence and response, as both actors and spectators, the pupils learn to be recipients of their own work and they can create games with each other (*expressive/developmental*) (O'Toole & O'Mara, 2007). The pupil has direct contact with the audience, both actors and spectators. They have the opportunity to examine the language through communication and activities that take place. The narrator has the power to reach out to the audience to explain actions or meaning and ask questions to shed light on words or actions. Students learn to listen and talk, as pointed out by O'Neill (1985). The students felt they were not being judged and could be more relaxed in all approaches to the study material through drama (Piazolli, 2014). In creating a play/theatre, the students believe that pupils learn appropriate manners at a performance. Through the making of a play, aesthetic knowledge via the art subject of

drama is met through the methods of theatre. Finding also show, as Wagner (2018) and Ragnarsdóttir and Thorkelsdóttir (2013) agree, that chamber theatre can be an influential way of learning languages where pupils, through imagination and creativity can increase their vocabulary when they are allowed to choose words, sentences and actions on their own terms, where they take responsibility. Through drama, pupils can also discover possibilities in language learning beyond traditional subject boundaries where body and mind are interwoven and embodied learning opens new ways of understanding just as Fels (2009) stresses. Our findings also show, as Neelands and Goode (2015) indicate, that the narrator has many functions by telling and showing, where the narrator can communicate through their feelings and thoughts. The findings reveal that the teacher trainees become aware of what they do in drama and understand what they learn in drama. They also learn that combining drama and language learning offers the possibility of developing practical skills and knowledge of mutual benefit to both teachers and pupils, making language learning memorable through direct experience. Chamber theatre is an effective way to instil in students a deeper understanding of the elements of a story: character development, plot, and fictional environments through narrative fiction. The concept of chamber theatre is not new, but working with its technique to enhance language

learning is. If the technique of chamber theatre can develop pupils' ability to empathize with others and become better communicators perhaps a new scope and new horizons in learning and teaching praxis can be revealed.

We also recognize the parallels between the needs and supports shared by teacher trainees and teacher educators. By writing reflective logs and by reflecting on our own practice we can hopefully bridge the pedagogical and theoretical aspects of teaching and learning, which is what we expect of teacher trainees.



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Comic book by Philippe Mairesse.

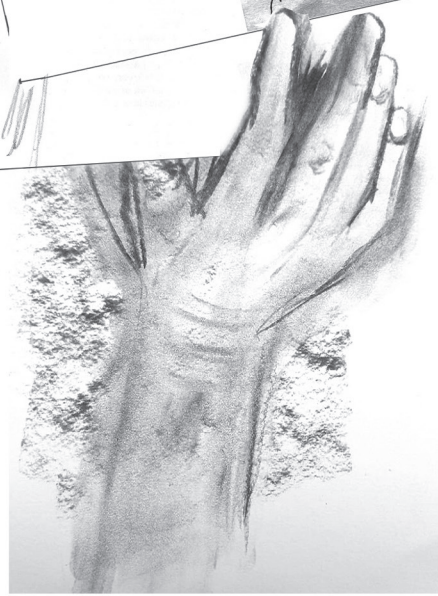
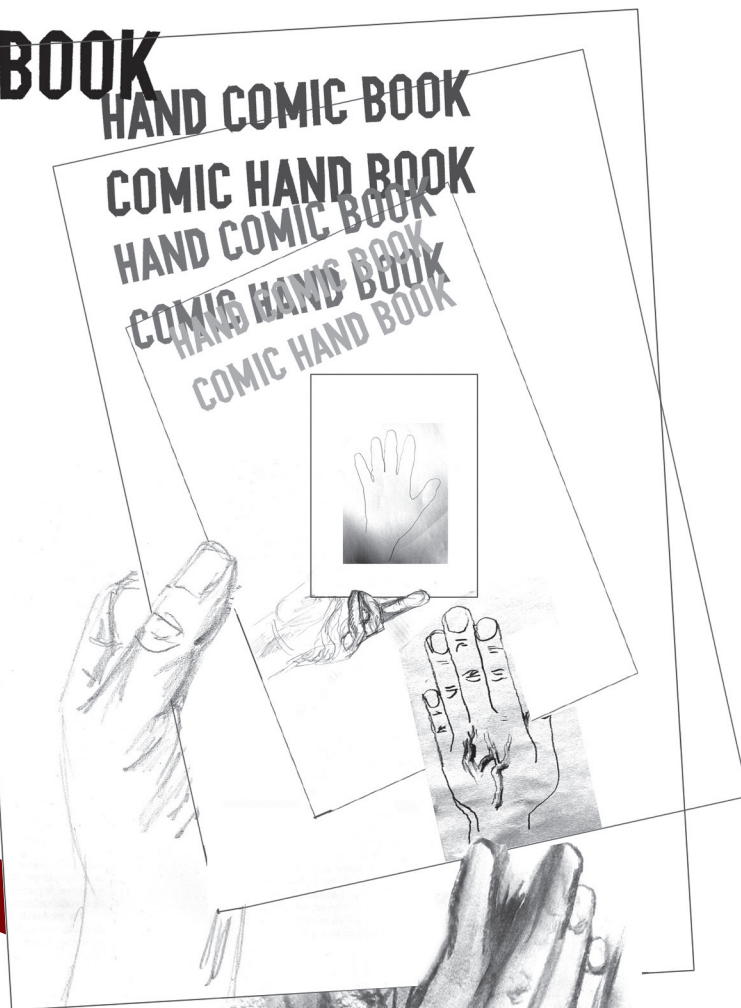
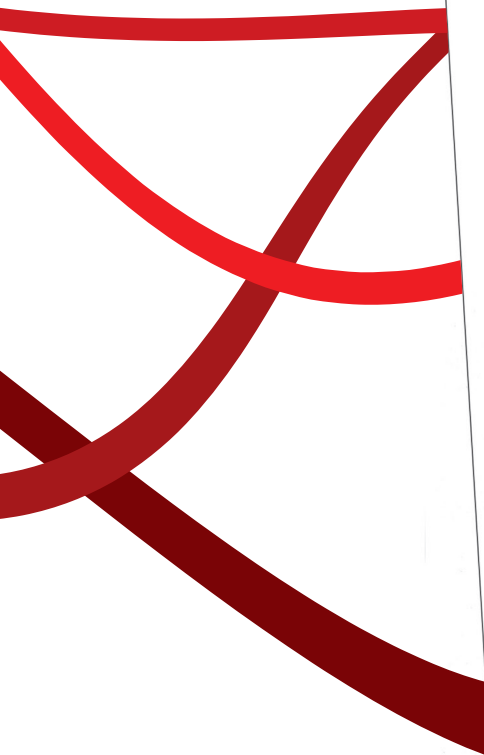
Red thread to Performative inquiry to enhance language learning

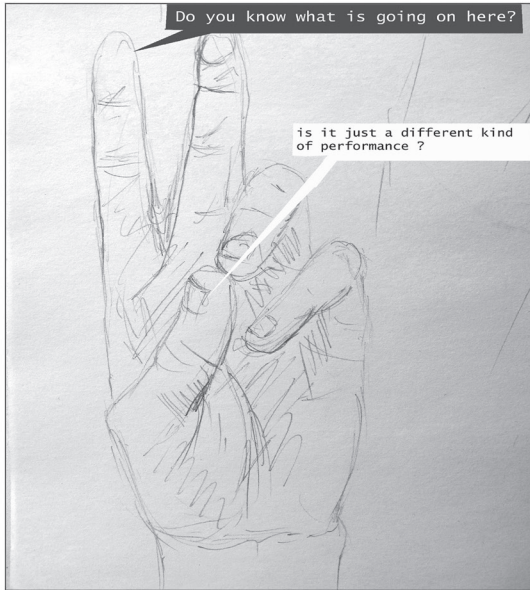
“Theatre is an art of illusion. Language is based on conventions, not easily changeable. Representing ourselves within language does not escape conventions, illusion and delusion. Are we masters of illusion? Tricksters and jesters?”

The drawings used in this comic are from an individual activity led by Andrea Inocêncio during the virtual visit to Portugal for the ALL Transnational Meeting in May 27 & 28, 2021 (Part of this drawing activity is shown in booklet 1, page 17). These are the hands of some of the researchers in ALL group, drawn by themselves. Hands-on, hand in hand, handable, a handful bunch of friends argue about what they do. The texts are excerpts from the two parts in chapter, dialoguing together.

HAND COMIC BOOK

COMIC HAND BOOK





Do you know what is going on here?

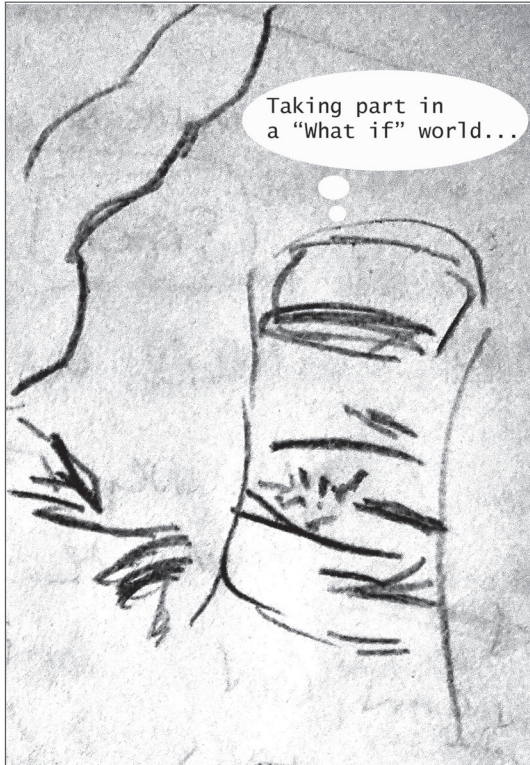
is it just a different kind of performance?

The Narrator as the Central Character, delivers his or her own thoughts, feeling and actions, while others in the group act out what the Narrator is saying... but it still appeared as if they had not fully understood their task - or they did not take enough time to sufficiently study the frame and/or the rules ...

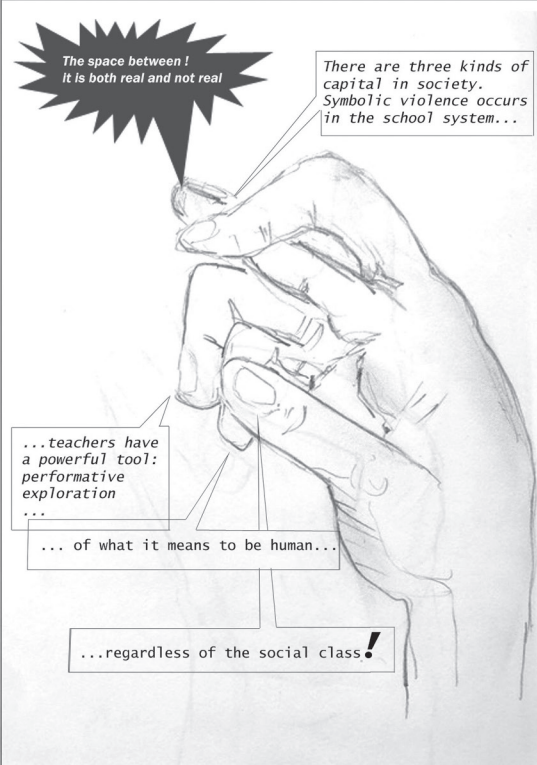
THIS IS ABOUT USING CHAMBER THEATRE PERFORMANCE FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

To build bridges, the most important task...

...is the creation of a shared dramatic context, a fictional universe



Taking part in a "what if" world...



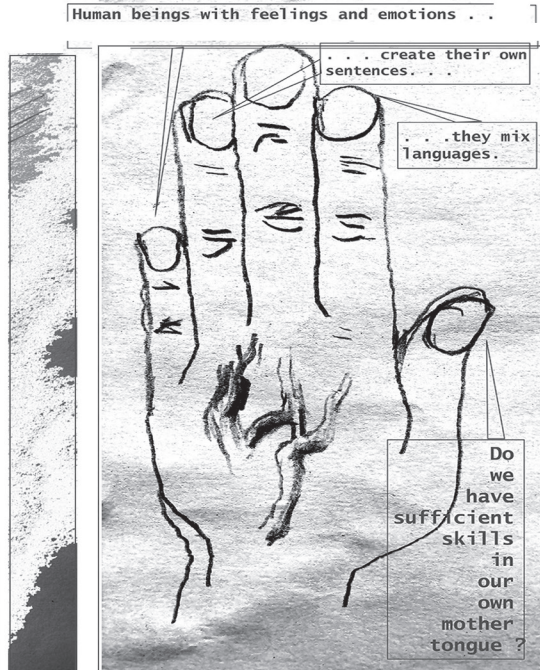
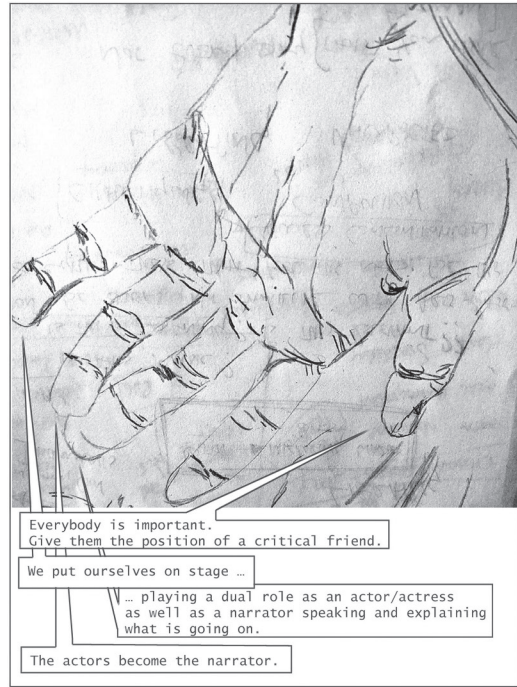
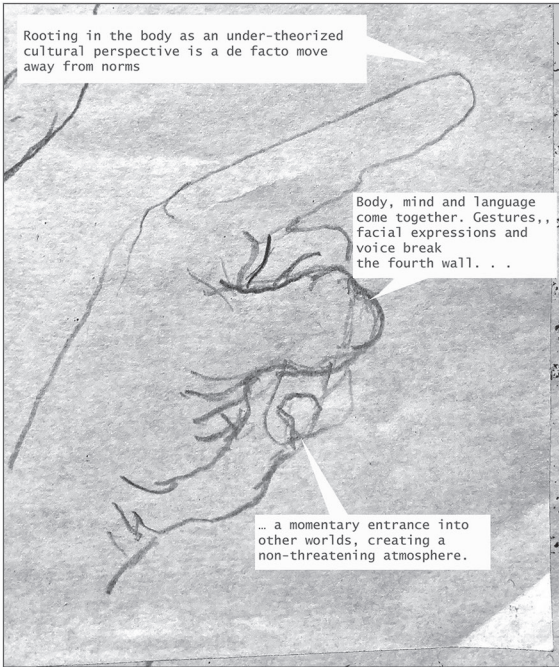
The space between!
It is both real and not real

There are three kinds of capital in society. Symbolic violence occurs in the school system...

...teachers have a powerful tool: performative exploration ...

... of what it means to be human...

...regardless of the social class!



Show me a story !

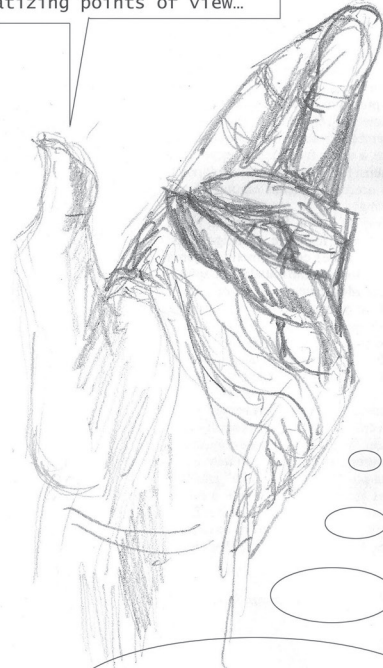
Focus on the performance rather than the spectacle

Become percipients of your own work

Identify stops that illuminate our understanding



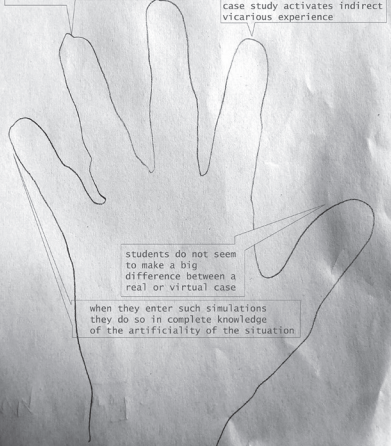
Linking telling with showing, dramatizing points of view...



...open freedom to move in time and space.

In role plays students try to project themselves in a scenario designed by the teaching team

a fictional 'real-life' case study activates indirect vicarious experience

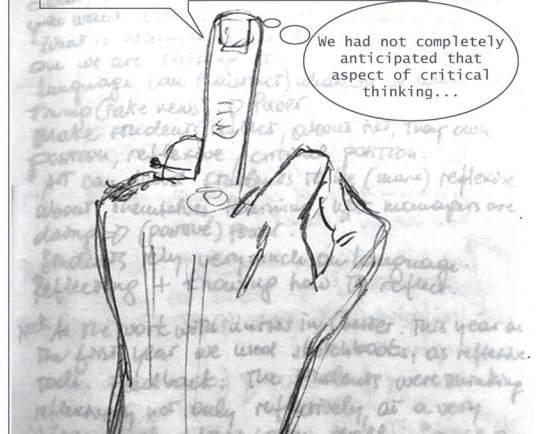


students do not seem to make a big difference between a real or virtual case

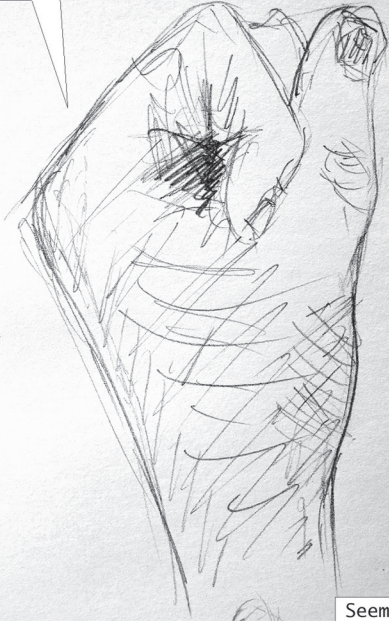
when they enter such simulations they do so in complete knowledge of the artificiality of the situation

These kinds of actions truly correspond to the definition of manipulating: control or influence a person or situation cleverly or unscrupulously

We had not completely anticipated that aspect of critical thinking...

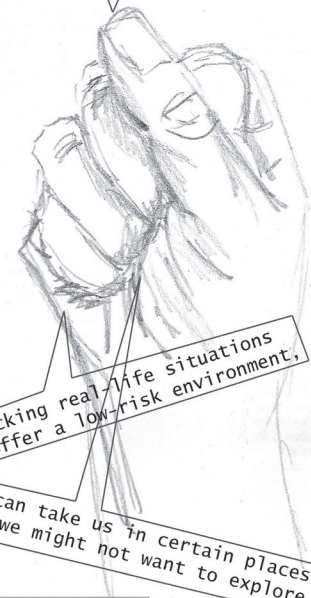


As educators, we want our tricks to work, we also wish that the audiences would find out the truth ...



...WE USE
various
tools to
reassure
diverse
audiences
as to the
existence
of the
'fake'

Makers of organizations create its meaning through their making.

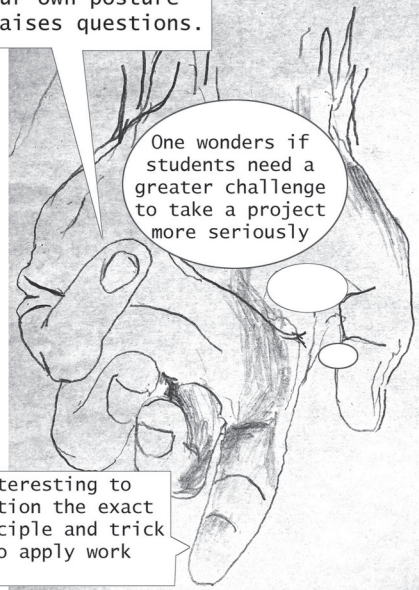


Mimicking real-life situations to offer a low-risk environment,

art can take us in certain places that we might not want to explore...

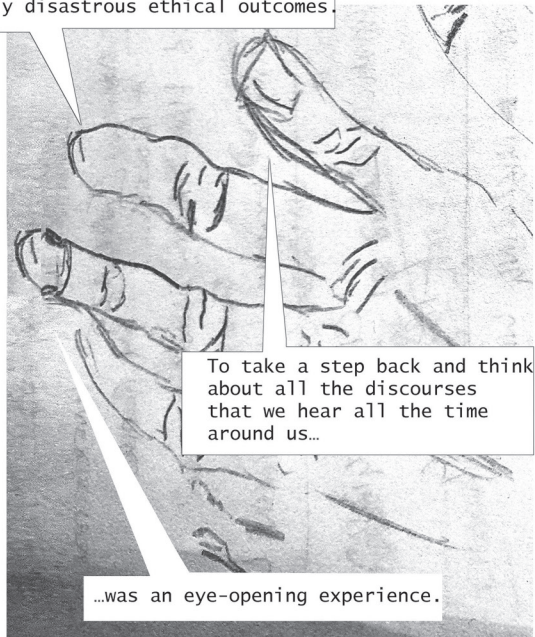
Seemingly good societal intentions have potentially disastrous ethical outcomes.

Our own posture raises questions.



One wonders if students need a greater challenge to take a project more seriously

It was interesting to see in action the exact same principle and trick we want to apply work among us...



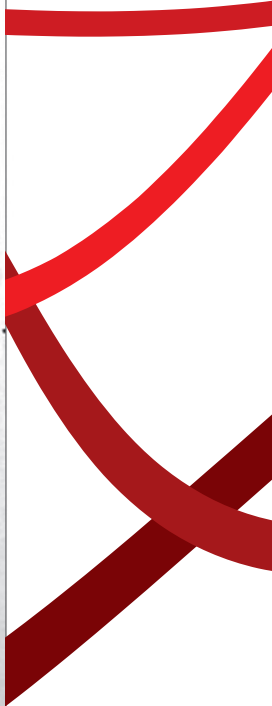
To take a step back and think about all the discourses that we hear all the time around us...

...was an eye-opening experience.

It proved to us how easy it is to deceive people
with the right choice of words and media.

Have we become treacherous
tricksters?

Game masters ?





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Performance and Performativity

Catherine Morel
Philippe Mairesse
Rannveig Björk Thorkelsdóttir
Jóna Guðrún Jónsdóttir

Research in
Higher Education
Practices Series