

## Research articles

# Communicating vessels: Drama and human rights education in in-service teacher training

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## Abstract

This paper supports the contention that the methodologies of human rights education and educational drama share a common ground and that the three fundamental dimensions of human rights education (HRE) (learning about, through and for human rights) can be addressed through drama. Our quantitative research is focused on an educational drama workshop for in-service teachers that dealt with human rights and refugees. The data was collected through questionnaires and analysed with reference to six hypotheses. These hypotheses were about how highly motivated teachers assessed their knowledge of human rights and their readiness for teaching human rights by using educational drama methodologies. The data showed statistically significant increase on all of the above hypotheses after the teachers had been trained. Their levels of readiness were also found to be significantly higher after the end of the school year. This indicates that the drama training had an impact on teachers' human rights education.

## Keywords

Educational drama, classroom methodologies, in-service training, quantitative research, Greece

## **Introduction**

Following global tendencies, in Greek schools there is a demand for a holistic education which takes into account the body and mind, as well as the spirit of every student. Such education, which addresses wider societal issues, is not only desirable but a prerequisite. Greece has been recently challenged by a great wave of refugees, and there have been violations of refugee rights (Albawaba, 2021; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2021), as well as the rise of a neo-Nazi, alt-right pseudo-political party which the courts have found to be a criminal organisation (Smith, 2020). These developments have brought back to the forefront of education key concerns—such as the inclusion of all students and respect for democracy and human rights.

At the same time, it has gradually become more difficult for teachers to address social issues or include a social angle in the subjects they teach. They face multiple challenges: neoliberal approaches in the Greek education system; the abolition of subjects like the arts and sociology in upper secondary education according to an educational law—one voted on during the pandemic lockdown, no less (Government Gazette [Greece], 2020); their restricted presence in high schools and their fragmented presence in primary education. Furthermore, human rights education (HRE) is largely absent from Greek curricula; the only traces to be found are in the remaining social studies subjects (Pantazis & Papageorgiou, 2013). As in many other countries, Greek teachers are forced to serve a suffocating curriculum, which is assessment-orientated with little regard for critical thought, creative expression and inter-disciplinary approaches.

Within all these constraints, adjacent fields of education which have proposed more holistic, interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge must meet and be given space to function. Educational drama pedagogy and HRE are both based on experiential, participatory and active learning. For this reason, the present study proposes there can be a positive interplay between these two fields, on the in-service training of teachers who work in formal education.

## **Theoretical background**

### ***Human rights education and educational drama: communicating vessels***

According to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education, HRE shall contain learning ‘about’, ‘through’ and ‘for’ human rights (United Nations [UN], 2011, Article 2). It is also considered a ‘lifelong process that concerns all ages’, which shall ‘use languages and methods suited to target groups, taking into account their specific needs and conditions’ (Article 3). The document defines the states’ responsibility for training teachers in human rights (Article 7), and specifically mentions the arts as a desirable and suitable language of training and raising awareness, which should be encouraged for use (Article 6). Over the last

25 years scholars have experimented with, observed and defined the fundamental elements of HRE. There is much agreement that this is a flexible field which can take different shapes and forms in different circumstances in order to serve its purposes, which are knowledge, democratic procedures, and emancipation (Bajaj, 2018; Flowers, 2017; Tibbitts, 2002, 2017).

Educational drama (also often referred to as drama in education, creative drama, process drama, drama method, or simply drama, for the purpose of this paper) can serve all three mandatory dimensions of human rights education. It is a distinct educational field, separate from professional theatre or acting education and, as far as this paper is concerned, by no means related to it. It combines aesthetic and artistic elements from the practice of theatre, specifically within an educational framework and through pedagogical procedures (Neelands & Goode, 2015). Drama draws from pedagogies that are student-centered, arts-based, and experiential. It enforces inquiry-based learning, active learning and critical thinking. Its roots can be traced in the pedagogies of educators such as Piaget, Dewey, Vygotsky, Bruner, as well as Freire.

Drama can be found in formal education as a subject in its own right or as a general methodology for teaching any other subject. It is applicable to students of all ages, and its primary aim is not the artistic outcome but rather the process of collaborative work. At the same time as their aesthetic sense, imaginations and creativity are cultivated, students can explore a vast variety of real issues through imaginary given frameworks (e.g., social, artistic, historic, and subject-related ones). Through the use of theatrical methodologies and techniques, a number of skills can be exercised: empathy; communication; active participation; multiple perspectives; critical thinking; expression of feelings, thoughts, and fears; negotiation of ideas; group dynamics; dialogue through speech, body or creation, collaboration, etc (Lenakakis & Paroussi, 2019). By definition, the educational drama workshop offers an opportunity for ideas to be tested without censorship (the respect of team members is always protected, of course) and there are no real consequences for the participants, other than reflection and re-negotiation (Neelands 2004). The drama workshop allows for real, intercultural dialogue, where diversity and polyphony are not obstacles, but rather constitute a request and a treasure (Kondoyianni, Lenakakis, & Tsiotsos, 2013; Pammenter, 2008; Sting, Köhler, Hoffmann, Weiße, & Grießbach, 2010).

In this democratic, inclusive and intercultural pedagogical approach, the role of the teacher is quite crucial: he/she is a democratic facilitator, as opposed to a decisive figure, such as a theatre director. He/she is responsible for ensuring there is space and safety for all voices to be heard and for encouraging students' individual and collective growth, at their own pace (Gallagher & Ntelioglou 2013; Lenakakis, 2004; *Übereinkommen (internationales) über das Verhalten und zur Ethik von Theaterpädagoginnen und Theaterpädagogen [ÜVET]*, 2011). In

this sense, the drama workshop can function as a field of exercise of human rights, of trial and apprenticeship in democratic values and procedures, an ideal model for education through human rights in school.

Furthermore, it has long been established that, through a holistic involvement (body, mind and feeling), drama/theatre pedagogy can be a very useful methodology for bringing about a deeper, more critical understanding of a variety of subjects and a more active commitment to the betterment of our world (DICE Consortium, 2010; Giotaki & Lenakakis, 2016; Hentschel, 2010; Kompiadou, Lenakakis, & Tsokalidou, 2017; Pigkou-Repousi, 2020). In this way, educational drama can serve education about human rights, enabling participants to make critical, insightful, tangible connections between the vague, symbolic and rigid language used in UN documents and the human suffering and real stories of oppressed peoples (Zembylas, 2017).

Finally, the cultivation of values and knowledge within the drama class encourages participants to actively claim human rights, and they can be empowered to apply these values to their own lives (Boal, 1979; Pigkou-Repousi, 2012). Freire's suggestions of codification and decodification in order to read the world (1970) have been transferred to the language of theatre by his student Augusto Boal and his Theatre of the Oppressed (1979). In Boal's Image Theatre, body images constitute the Freirean 'word', and provide procedures of theatrical decodifications; interpretations; non-verbal communications; and collective creations; in a life rehearsal procedure (Boal, 1992). Forum and Image Theatre are common pedagogical vehicles in educational drama, where social conditions can be addressed through an artistic lens which also has a strong societal focus. In this sense, an active, participatory educational drama workshop may be the model that most closely resonates with Freire's ideas of empowerment, emancipation and social action; in other words, education for human rights.

The common ground that drama education and HRE share has led to various pedagogical experimentations, with different combinations of their elements. Empowering students through HRE, through theatre, performance arts and educational drama, has been the focus of numerous studies (Cahill, 2014; Gallagher & Rivière, 2007; Pigkou-Repousi, 2016; Upton & Grossman, 2019; Winston, 2007). They have also been documented based on long term educational projects, state or independent, such as 'The world as it could be' in the United States (Katz & Spero, 2015) and 'It could be me; it could be you' in Greece (Govas, Savvopoulou, & Dionysopoulou, 2021). As far as prospective and in-service teachers are concerned, pedagogical methods that utilise drama, the theatre of the oppressed and applied theatre have been related to a number of topics: human rights knowledge (Marin, 2014; McGaughey et al., 2019); democratic teaching that respects human rights (Choleva, Lenakakis, & Pigkou-Repousi, 2021; Desai, 2017; Ulubey & Aykaç, 2016); human rights exploration and

deeper understanding as a prerequisite for action (Banki, Valiente-Riedland, & Duffill, 2013; Choleva & Lenakakis, 2021; Szasz, 2017; Tuncel & İçen, 2016; Ulubey & Gözütok, 2015). Although these studies are only part of the existing discourse, there is room for more research on this common ground.

### ***The Greek educational context***

In Greece, human rights are currently only part of subjects such as citizenship and democracy, in upper primary school. Drama has only been on the curriculum for the last two decades, and is only taught in four primary school grades. In the recent educational law of Spring 2020 (Government Gazette, 2020) subjects such as sociology and theatre were completely taken out of upper high secondary education (lyceum). Content-wise, these subjects certainly have a lot to offer but although they had the acceptance and interest of the educational community (teachers, parents and certainly students) official educational policy does not seem to have a corresponding respect (Pantazis & Papageorgiou, 2013; Paroussi & Tselfes, 2018).

As for tertiary education, there are four theatre/drama university departments that offer bachelor studies as well as postgraduate programmes that focus on theatre/drama and education. There is also an early childhood studies department that offers a postgraduate course in HRE. Some early childhood education and primary education departments have started to include drama and/or human rights courses in the last decade.

### ***Teachers and in-service teacher training***

Teachers around the world are expected to grapple with fragmented educational frameworks, and Greece is no exception to this. These frameworks frequently overlook the role of emotion and ethics in the processes of teaching and learning. Experiential, active learning is seen as a luxury or even a waste of time in a system of exam-centered approaches, assessment restrictions and limited time for real communication and the expression of views, fears and opinions. And, of course, there is little space for debate or productive, creative dialogue. If Greece is to have a robust HRE curriculum, based on human rights knowledge, (Osler, 2016; Parker, 2018), it should have an adequate time frame; at present this is non-existent and difficult to implement (Parker, 2018; Sirota, 2017).

Moreover, like their colleagues in the rest of the world, Greek teachers of all disciplines and educational levels lack a solid grasp of the specifics of human rights education (Sirota, 2017). Neither do they have knowledge about drama education and facilitation skills. On the one hand, they were never specifically taught these subjects (Flowers, 2017). On the other hand, any in-service training often has a limited impact on teachers' practice (as opposed to subjects or topics taught at university). Teachers express hesitation in including paradigm-shifting practices such as experiential learning, the inclusion of body and feelings in education, and

human rights in their teaching (Jerome, 2018; Rinaldi, 2017).

Greek teachers lack state-initiated, thorough, systematic in-service training. Educators who wish to fill these gaps and pursue professional growth must individually search for ways of acquiring in-depth training. Much in-service training is offered by a number of private sector agencies, scientific associations or NGOs. It takes place after school hours, usually with a fee that must come out of the participants' own pockets. Given these circumstances, many teachers regard their ongoing training as a shift from a state of just teaching a subject to developing a more intellectual, critical approach of their role (Lenakakis & Paroussi, 2019). They are personally motivated to create opportunities to communicate with colleagues, challenge their practice, seek new paths, and create communities through which they can develop professionally and personally (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1986).

A degree of personal exposure is expected of participants in a drama training workshop, and they are also required to challenge assumptions about their teaching practice. They are also committed to exploring ways of implementing drama and human rights elements in their teaching, even though there is minimal time or no time at all for this. They are often willing to work simultaneously on different levels (serving the official curriculum while working critically on human rights issues). There is no doubt that these educators can be defined as 'heroic teachers' (Jerome, 2018). And the very action of including HRE elements in teaching (any of its three dimensions), let alone drama methodology, can be considered as actual human rights activism on the part of the teacher.

In an attempt to contribute some quantitative data to international research on teachers' in-service training, this study focuses on drama training in HRE and its impact on teachers' knowledge and readiness for action. The paper tests six research hypotheses (these are assessed by the participants themselves):

H1) The drama training helps teachers to acquire an increased knowledge of human rights.

H2) The drama training helps teachers to acquire an increased knowledge of drama methodologies.

H3) The drama training empowers the participant teachers to practice human rights-related teaching.

H4) The drama training empowers the participant teachers to adopt drama methodologies in human rights-related teaching.

H5) The resulting level of participants' empowerment, in terms of human rights related teaching, remains high after the completion of the school year.

H6) The resulting level of participants' empowerment, in terms of adopting drama methodologies in human rights-related teaching, remains high after the completion of the school year.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

The research was conducted on a group of in-service teachers in Greece who were motivated to address human rights in their teaching through using drama pedagogy. The sample was selected through a convenience sampling technique. The sample consisted of 170 teachers, the vast majority of whom were females (88.3%). Just under half of the group (41.3%) were between 45-54 years old, with the group of 35-44-year-olds being the second largest one (24.6%). Less than 20% belonged to younger or older age groups. Over half of the sample (53.9%) had already taught for over 15 years at the time of the research, and 20.6% had taught for 10-15 years. Over one third of the sample (36.2%) were primary school teachers, 19% were high school teachers, 15.3% were kindergarten teachers, while 11.7% taught in upper secondary education (lyceum), and 10.4% in a combination of education levels. There were also participants who taught in tertiary or adult education (3.1%) or worked as school advisors (4.3%).

### ***Research design***

The one-group pre-test/post-test design was chosen as a starting point for our research. This design model allows for observation and measurement of a target group before and after the implementation of the experiment (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). The research team, however, proceeded with an enriched research design, where time would also be a moderator, in an additional third phase of testing ('post-test plus'). Moreover, the research team proceeded with multiple applications of the experiment on eight different occasions, in different cities and with different groups of participants. The above procedures produced an enriched research design (pre-test/post-test/post-test plus) with added built-in controls for possible threats to the internal validity of the collected data.

### ***The research framework***

The research was built around a 20-hour educational drama workshop on human rights, focusing mainly on refugees. The workshop was created in 2015 by the scientific, non-profit association Hellenic Theatre/Drama and Education Network, under the mandate of the Greek office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It is the core element of a joint project of the two institutions, entitled 'It could be me; it could be you' (Govas et al., 2021). The workshop training was offered for free, outside school hours (Friday, Saturday and Sunday). Participation in our research was voluntary and anonymous, and teachers were not required to take part in order to undergo training. The research took place in eight different

Greek cities (namely: Thessaloniki, Athens, Livadia, Zante, Agrinio, Larissa, Serres, Crete) between October 2019 and February 2020.

Our research was co-financed by Greece and the European Union (European Social Fund - ESF) through the operational programme 'Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020' in the context of the project 'Education with Theatre/Drama Teachers, Students and Human Rights' (MIS 5047891).

### ***Description of the intervention***

The drama workshop was based on experiential and learner-centred learning pedagogies (Blake & Pope, 2008; Dewey, 1933), critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970), structure of knowledge (Bruner, 1963), and intercultural education (Cummins, 2001). The participants engaged in team-building activities and were gradually initiated in the training's theme through games, narrations and improvisations. Through a series of Image Theatre techniques (Boal, 1992) they were divided into subgroups and given documents such as photographs, folk songs, and statistical charts on global refugee flows. They proceeded with Freirian codifications and decodifications through the creation of short stories. A repetitive spiral procedure of creation then followed: plenary sharing, feedback, recreation, resharing, etc. (Bruner, 1963). Theatrical elements (mainly body work, but also speech, sound, movement, props) were combined with educational drama techniques (role playing, hotseating, alley of consciousness, etc.) and Boal's games (still images, cop in the head, etc.). Through working with these activities, participants gradually deepened their understandings (Choleva, Karaviti, & Govas, 2021).

The participants also engaged in a series of specialised educational activities on the theme, such as the roleplay game 'Passages' (UNHCR, 1995). The narratives that arose from this game's fictional characters led to in-depth discussions about respect, support or violation of human rights under different circumstances, and these were related to a close examination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR] (UN, 1948). Thorough discussions also took place between the teachers and experts in human rights and refugee rights, as well as staff from asylum centers in Greece (lawyers, educators, coordinators). Participants were given information about the historical background and global context and took part in a discussion about the UN, the UDHR, legal commitments in relation to refugees, as well as data about the current situation of refugees in Greece.

In the final part of the training, teachers made attempts to design schemes of work on human rights that used drama methodologies, for which they received feedback. The workshop ended with group reflection circles and winding-down activities.

### ***Measurement and data collection***

Our research is based upon three questionnaires that were used to collect data from the in-

service teachers. The first two questionnaires were distributed and filled in by hand, both before and after the drama workshop training, by (N) 170 participants. A third, online questionnaire was distributed automatically to the participants after the end of the school year and was filled in by (N) 122 of them. The questionnaires contained demographic questions, as well as closed-ended ones where respondents could answer on a five-point Likert scale. This paper focuses on three scales, concerning the participants' motivation to participate (before training), sense of their knowledge of human rights (before and after training); and their sense of readiness for teaching human rights and drama methodologies (before and after training; after the end of the school year).

The reliability of the three scales was tested by using Cronbach's A coefficient, and this gave satisfactory results (table 1).

**Table 1**

Scale	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Motivation to participate – 8 items	.82
Knowledge levels (pre-test) – 4 items	.70
Knowledge levels (post-test)	.83
Readiness for action (pre-test) – 5 items	.86
Readiness for action (post-test)	.87
Readiness for action (post-test plus)	.82

*Reliability control*

### ***Data analysis plan***

The above scales constitute the variables of the research analysis. They are dependent on the experiment (drama training workshop), as well as the factor of time, and are thus measured and tested between three research stages (Fraenkel et al., 2012). The data collected were analysed by SPSS 23 software.

The data analysis report given below follows two steps. Firstly, a descriptive statistical analysis of the scales is performed for the three research phases. Secondly, the six research hypotheses are tested. Additional correlation tests are applied in relation to the participants' sex, age, years of teaching experience and teaching level.

Due to the non-normal distribution of the collected data, a series of non-parametric tests was selected (namely: Wilcoxon, Mann-Whitney, Spearman coefficient). The general null

hypotheses (H<sub>0</sub>) are that measurements of different phases of the same group or different subgroups do not show statistically significant variance; the alternative hypotheses (H<sub>1</sub>) are that measurements do show statistically significant variance. The confidence interval for the hypothesis tests was set at 95%.

## Results

### *Descriptive statistics*

In the 5-point Likert scales, the possible answers were: 1: not at all, 2: a little/ limited/not enough, 3: so and so/average, 4: much/enough, 5: very much/a lot /very high.

*The ‘motivation to participate’ scale:* A high motivation was mentioned by the majority of the participants for the entire list of items, with ‘to find suitable resources for drama activities about human rights’, ‘to train in drama methodologies and ‘training in human rights/refugees’ being the items for which there was strongest motivation.

**Table 2**

*The ‘participation motivations’ scale (percentages and means)*

<b>Participation motivations</b>	<b>1 (%)</b>	<b>2 (%)</b>	<b>3 (%)</b>	<b>4 (%)</b>	<b>5 (%)</b>	<b>Mean</b>
To find suitable resources for drama methodologies about human rights	-	06	2.4	21.7	<b>75.3</b>	<b>4.72</b>
To train in drama methodologies	-	1.2	2.4	25.7	<b>70.7</b>	<b>4.66</b>
Training in human rights/refugees	-	1.2	4.2	25.9	<b>68.7</b>	<b>4.62</b>
To integrate elements of training in my teaching subject	-	1.2	4.2	26.3	<b>68.3</b>	<b>4.62</b>
To enhance human rights actions in my school	1.9	2.4	6.6	34.9	<b>54.2</b>	<b>4.37</b>
To communicate with peer colleagues on drama methodologies	0.6	2.4	11.4	38.3	<b>47.3</b>	<b>4.29</b>
To communicate with other colleagues on HR and refugees	-	3	18	35.3	<b>43.7</b>	<b>4.20</b>
To organise a human rights-related school project	1.8	3.6	21	34.7	<b>38.9</b>	<b>4.05</b>

*The 'sense of knowledge' scale.* Before training: When they assessed their knowledge before training, the vast majority of the subjects responded that they had an adequate ('enough') (43.4%) or average (38.6%) level of knowledge of human rights, with only 11.4% saying they had a higher level of knowledge. The majority considered they had average (40.4%) or enough (33.2%) knowledge about the UDHR, while 13.2% of them considered their knowledge non-existent or limited. When it came to refugee-related issues, about half of the sample (48.2%) considered they had an average knowledge, 32.5% considered they had enough knowledge, and only 9.6% considered they had a very high level of knowledge. Finally, 38.6% responded that they had an average knowledge of how to incorporate drama methodologies in their teaching, with an additional 29.5% saying they had enough knowledge; 3.6% said they had no knowledge whatsoever, while 16.9% reported that they had limited knowledge (see Table 3).

After training: When it came to their self-assessment of knowledge levels after training, more specifically their knowledge of human rights, the vast majority of participants ranged well above average. Over half of the sample felt they had acquired enough knowledge (55.6%) and over a third (34.6%) reported they had a very high knowledge. This meant that under 1% said they only had a limited knowledge. The subjects demonstrated similar tendencies when it came to the UDHR, with 49.4% saying their knowledge was 'enough' and 36.9% saying they had a 'very high' level of knowledge. When it came to refugees' national and global conditions, more than half of teachers assessed their knowledge as 'enough' (53.1%) while another 30.2% rated it as 'very high', with less than 1% reporting a limited level of knowledge. Finally, when it came to their knowledge of 'drama methodologies in teaching', half of the subjects' (50.9%) responses were at the highest level, while another 37.4% responded 'enough'. No respondents assessed themselves as having no or limited knowledge (Table 3).

**Table 3**

*The ‘sense of knowledge’ scale (percentages and means)*

Knowledge levels	Before training (t <sub>1</sub> )						After training (t <sub>2</sub> )					
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean
Human rights	0.6	6	38.6	<b>43.4</b>	11.4	<b>3.57</b>	0.6	-	9.3	<b>55.6</b>	34.6	<b>4.23</b>
UN Declaration of Human Rights	1.8	11,4	<b>40.4</b>	33.1	13.3	<b>3.45</b>	-	1.3	12.5	<b>49.4</b>	36.9	<b>4.22</b>
Refugees’ conditions (Greece, globally)	1.2	8,4	<b>48.2</b>	32.5	9.6	<b>3.41</b>	0.6	0.6	15.4	<b>53.1</b>	30.2	<b>4.12</b>
Use of drama methodologies in teaching	3.6	16.9	<b>38.6</b>	29.5	11.4	<b>3.28</b>	-	-	11.7	37.4	<b>50.9</b>	<b>4.39</b>

*The ‘sense of readiness’ scale:* As far as the sense of readiness of teachers to teach (about, through, for) human rights, the same sequence of tests was applied and we received data from three phases of the research: before training, after training, and after the end of the school year. Participants responded to five items about their readiness to incorporate human rights-related activities in their teaching and to adopt drama pedagogies.

Before training: When it came to their pre-training (phase a) readiness to engage in teaching related to HR, about half of the responding teachers (46.4%) mentioned an average sense of preparedness while only 23.5% expressed they felt well-enough prepared and only 6% expressed a very high sense of preparedness. Similarly, almost half of the participant teachers said they had an average sense of preparedness in approaching refugee-related issues with their students (43.7%), with an additional 22.2% feeling strong enough to do so, and 9% feeling a very high sense of readiness. However, 40.4% said they felt prepared enough to encourage their students to actively participate in human rights-supporting actions while 28.1% mentioned an average level of readiness and 17.4% a very high sense of readiness.

As far as drama was concerned, 72.3% of the teachers mentioned an average to adequate sense of preparedness in finding drama/experiential resources for human rights education, while an additional 15.7% of participants mentioned a very high sense of readiness. In terms of their preparedness in employing drama methodologies in human rights-related teaching, 36.7% of participants stated an average sense of preparedness, while another 26.5% stated an adequate sense. Only 15.1% responded they felt a high level of preparedness (see Table 4).

After training: Following the same order of items for phase (b), that is after the training session was completed, just under half of the participant teachers (48.2%) stated a strong enough sense of preparedness to teach human rights, while another 28.7% had a very high sense of

preparedness. The 'not at all ready' level was completely eliminated and the 'not enough' level was as little as 1.8%. Just under half of the sample (49.4%) stated a strong enough sense of preparedness in approaching refugee-related issues with their students, and another 31.1% stated a very high level of preparedness. Again, the 'not at all' level of readiness was completely eliminated. In addition, the majority of teachers (47.9%) declared a very high sense of preparedness in encouraging their students to actively participate in human rights-supporting actions, with another 39.9% having a high enough sense of preparedness. The majority of the sample (60.7%) mentioned a very high sense of preparedness when it came to finding drama/experiential resources for human rights education, with another 35.6% stating a strong enough level of preparedness, completely eliminating levels of 'not at all' and 'not enough'. Lastly, when it came to employing drama methodologies in human rights-related teaching, the vast majority appeared to have a very high sense of preparedness (46.3%) or a high enough (42.1%) sense of preparedness (see Table 4).

After the end of the school year: Again, after the school year was completed, the sample answered the same scale. When it came to their sense of readiness to teach human rights, 43.3% stated a high enough level, while another 37.5% mentioned an average level. In approaching refugee-related issues with their students, over a third of the sample felt they were well enough prepared (39.3%) and another 37.7% mentioned an average level of readiness. However, when it came to encouraging their students to actively participate in human rights-supporting actions, the majority (45.1%) mentioned a high enough sense of preparedness, and another 26.2% mentioned a very high level.

Finding drama resources and activities for teaching human rights did not seem to be a great difficulty for most participants, as 45.9% stated they were well enough prepared to do so, and another 36.1% stated a very high sense of preparedness. Additionally, the majority (46.7%) felt prepared enough to employ drama methodologies in human rights-related teaching while another 27.5% mentioned average levels of preparedness. There were no 'not at all prepared' responses (see Table 4, which shows the most popular values and means in boldface).

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the question 'Have you managed to actually apply elements of the training to your work this year?' was answered positively by a good 74.6% of participant teachers.

**Table 4**

*The ‘sense of readiness’ scale (percentages and means)*

Readiness for action	Before training (t <sub>1</sub> )						After training (t <sub>2</sub> )						After the end of school year (t <sub>3</sub> )					
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean
Teaching human rights- related units	7.8	16.3	46.4	23.5	6	3.04	-	1.8	21.3	48.2	28.7	4.23	-	3.3	37.5	43.3	15.8	3.72
Approaching refugee -related issues with my students	5.4	19.8	43.7	22.2	9	3.10	-	1.2	18.3	49.4	31.1	4.22	-	4.9	37.7	39.3	18	3.70
Encouraging my students’ human rights-supporting actions through my teaching	1.8	11.4	28.1	40.7	17.4	3.62	-	1.8	10.4	39.9	47.9	4.12	-	3.3	25.4	45.1	26.2	3.94
Finding drama resources for teaching human rights	2.4	9.6	41	31.3	15.7	3.48	-	-	3.7	35.6	60.7	4.19	-	1.6	16.4	45.9	36.1	4.16
Utilising drama methodologies and activities in my teaching	3.6	18.1	36.7	26.5	15.1	3.31	-	0.6	11	42.1	46.3	4.39	-	3.3	25.4	45.1	26.2	3.88

**Hypotheses tests**

Sense of knowledge- before and after training: The same sample Wilcoxon test was used in order to test the variance of the values between two phases of the same sample. As far as research hypothesis 1 is concerned, the rank test shows that the mean score of the sample regarding knowledge of human rights is (t<sub>1</sub>) 3.48 before training, and (t<sub>2</sub>) 4.19 after training. The Wilcoxon test (p <.001%) confirms the rejection of the null hypothesis, showing a statistically significant increase in the sample’s knowledge level between before and after training. This result confirms research hypothesis 1.

Regarding the second research hypothesis, the rank test shows that the mean score of the sample regarding knowledge of drama methodologies in teaching is (t<sub>1</sub>) 3.28 before training and (t<sub>2</sub>) 4.39 after training. The Wilcoxon test (p <.001%) confirms the rejection of the null hypothesis, showing a statistically significant variance in the sample’s knowledge level between before and after training. This result confirms research hypothesis 2.

Sense of readiness before and after training, as well as after the end of school year: Research hypotheses 3 and 4 study possible shifts in the sense of readiness teachers have when it comes to teaching human rights and in using drama methodologies for this purpose. In order to test these hypotheses, the Wilcoxon test was again applied. As far as research hypothesis 3 is concerned, the rank test shows that the mean score of the sample when it comes to a sense of preparedness in teaching human rights is (t<sub>1</sub>) 3.253 before training and (t<sub>2</sub>) 4.155 after training. The Wilcoxon test (p <.001%) rejects the null hypothesis, showing a statistically

significant variance in the sample's sense of preparedness, favouring the case of 'after the training'. Research hypothesis 3 is thus confirmed, as the sample clearly shows an increased readiness to teach human rights after training.

As far as research hypothesis 4 is concerned, the rank test shows that the mean score of the sample regarding a sense of readiness to employ drama methodologies and resources is ( $t_1$ ) 3.406 before training and ( $t_2$ ) 4.454 after training. The Wilcoxon test ( $p < .001\%$ ) rejects the null hypothesis, showing a statistically significant variance in the sample's sense of preparedness, favouring the case of 'after training'. Research hypothesis 4 is thus confirmed, as the sample shows a clear increase of preparedness in employing drama methodologies in teaching human rights after training.

Research hypotheses 5 & 6 focus on the time factor, and possible shifts in the sample's sense of readiness in teaching human rights and in employing drama methodologies in doing so after the school year has ended. In order to examine this aspect, the mean scores of the sample were submitted to two comparison tests: i) before training ( $t_1$ ) and after the end of the school year ( $t_3$ ); and ii) after training ( $t_2$ ) and after the end of the school year ( $t_3$ ).

When it comes to research hypothesis 5, the rank test shows that the mean score of the sample regarding a sense of preparedness in employing drama methodologies and resources is ( $t_1$ ) 3.253 before training and ( $t_3$ ) 3.786 after the end of the school year. The Wilcoxon test ( $p < .001\%$ ) rejects the null hypothesis, showing a statistically significant increase in levels of workshop participants' sense of preparedness in teaching human rights after the end of the school year. For the second part of the test, the mean score of the sample after training ( $t_2$ ) 4.155 and the mean score ( $t_3$ ) 3.786 after the end of school year were compared. The Wilcoxon test result ( $p < .001\%$ ) showed a statistically significant difference between the two, in favour of ( $t_2$ ); in other words, the sense of preparedness the teachers showed after training seems to drop significantly by the end of the school year. The two tests reveal that the high levels of empowerment teachers feel in teaching human rights after training, seem to drop significantly by the end of the school year. They do, however, remain significantly high in comparison with where they were before training took place. Research hypothesis 5 is thus confirmed.

As far as research hypothesis 6 is concerned, the rank test shows that the mean score of the sample regarding sense of preparedness in employing drama methodologies and resources is ( $t_1$ ) 3.406 before training and ( $t_3$ ) 4.025 after the end of the school year. The Wilcoxon test ( $p < .001\%$ ) rejects the null hypothesis, showing a statistically significant increase in the levels of drama workshop participants' sense of preparedness in adopting drama methodologies in human rights-related teaching after the end of the school year. For the second part of the test, the mean score of the sample after training ( $t_2$ ) 4.454 and the mean score ( $t_3$ ) 4.025 after the

end of school year were compared. The Wilcoxon test result ( $p < .001\%$ ) showed a statistically significant difference between the two, in favour of ( $t_2$ ); in other words, the sense of preparedness the teachers showed after training seems to drop significantly by the end of the school year. The two tests reveal that the high levels of empowerment teachers feel in adopting drama methodologies in human rights-related teaching after training seem to drop significantly by the end of the school year. They do, however, remain significantly high in comparison with their state before training took place. Research hypothesis 6 is thus confirmed.

The variables of knowledge and sense of readiness were additionally tested for possible correlations with the participants' sex, age, years of teaching experience and teaching level. For the moderator of sex, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney test was used. Knowledge levels before training were a 103.18 mean rank for men and 78.62 for women. The Mann-Whitney test result ( $p=2.9\%$ ) rejected the null hypothesis, showing that men had significantly higher knowledge levels about human rights than women. All other applications of the test (knowledge levels after training; sense of readiness in the three phases of the research) resulted in  $p>5\%$ , showing there were no significant variances between male and female participants.

The Spearman coefficient  $\rho$  was explored for the moderators of participants' age, experience and teaching level. All applications of the coefficient resulted in  $p>5\%$  values in tests between subgroups, showing no evidence of correlation between the tested variables and these moderators.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

In our main body of research we tried to measure the impact that drama training can have on in-service teachers, in terms of knowledge and readiness to actively engage with HRE. The teachers participated in a 20-hour drama workshop that addressed human rights and the situation of refugees. This training was implemented in eight cities in Greece with different groups, during the 2019-2020 school year. From these groups, a sample of 170 teachers was taken. The participants were mainly female and the vast majority was over 35 years of age with solid working experience of well over 10 years. All educational levels were represented in the research. Participating teachers were very strongly motivated to receive drama training that was related to human rights and refugees. Their motivations were related to the wish to communicate with their peers, but their main motivations were related to the methodologies and theme of the training. They signed up voluntarily, and their participation was not related to any professional accreditation. The high level of participants' motivation should be the filter through which the research results are interpreted.

The statistical analysis of our research highlights that prior to training the teachers had average levels of knowledge about both human rights and drama methodologies. This comes as no surprise, as these fields are not well established in Greek education (Pantazis & Papageorgiou, 2013; Paroussi & Tselfes, 2018), as is the case in many other countries (Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences in Education [DICE] Consortium, 2010; Flowers, 2017; Sirota, 2017; Ulubey & Gözütok, 2015). Our research pinpoints that, according to the participants, levels of knowledge about both human rights and drama methodologies increased significantly after training, thus strongly confirming our 1st and 2nd research hypotheses. These results are consonant with other recent findings (Banki et al., 2013; Marin, 2014; McGaughey et al., 2019), as well as with a large-scale meta-analysis study conducted by Ulubey (2018). Additional tests showed that men showed a statistically significant variance of increased knowledge about human rights compared to women before training took place. However, knowledge levels do not seem to vary between them after training. Furthermore, no evidence of variances was found when knowledge levels were related to participants' ages, years of teaching experience or the teaching level at any stage of the research.

Similarly, participant teachers report an initial fear about applying experiential, drama methodologies in their teaching, and an even greater reluctance to work with HRE elements. This hesitation is noted by numerous researchers (Choleva, Lenakakis et al., 2021; Jerome, 2018; Parker, 2018; Rinaldi, 2017). The participants do, however, consider it easier to encourage their students to participate in actions that support human rights. The statistical analysis shows that levels of readiness increase significantly after they have received training. The teachers appear much more confident in all indicators after having experimented with new pedagogical approaches and the procedures which educational drama offers for the expression of ideas, negotiation of inputs and collective creation. These findings confirm research hypotheses 3 & 4, and are in accordance with recent small- and large-scale research (Banki et al., 2013; Choleva & Lenakakis, 2019, 2021; Desai, 2017; Tuncel & İcen, 2016; Ulubey, 2018). Although these levels of confidence drop significantly by the end of the school year, the increase in teachers' sense of preparedness for action for human rights, as well as for undertaking drama methodologies, remains statistically substantially high, even 8 months after training. The research results confirm research hypotheses 5 & 6. Additional tests showed no variances in sense of readiness between men and women, or variance related to participants' age, level of service or teaching experience.

The results of this research are related to a more general study group of educators with a high motivation to deal with human rights in their teaching, no matter their subject, and who wish to embed experiential, arts-based (drama) methodologies in doing so. As the selected research design was exclusively quantitative, no deeper information could be given in the respondents' answers. And as research findings were based on a convenience sample of

teachers who voluntarily participated in both training and the research, the results cannot be generalised to educators who do not have these characteristics. However, the size of the sample, as well as the fact it accords with international research, give the encouraging message that other motivated, restless and heroic teachers who wish to tackle human rights issues in their class could benefit from a drama training workshop.

Additional, qualitative data on the participants' views, shifts, experience and actual experimentations would certainly provide fruitful, in-depth information. There should be more thorough follow-up research, particularly that which utilises qualitative designs and measures. Results could then be combined and compared, in order to highlight elements and parameters of the findings that are impossible for the current study to grasp. The authors would certainly support such a direction being taken.

In conclusion, the experiment and results of our research suggest that drama training of in-service teachers can contribute to their competence in three essential dimensions of human rights education: their level of education about human rights; their exploration of procedures respecting human rights (through human rights) with drama methodologies; and their preparedness to empower their students through HRE (for human rights). We would therefore strongly suggest that more extensive research is conducted into this common ground, so that we gain more systematic qualitative and quantitative evidence.

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