Sociodrama in the Training of Social Educators

An Exploratory Research

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The object of this study is sociodrama as a training method in the Social Education degree. Using a qualitative research methodology, the aim was to understand how this method contributed, over two academic years, to promoting the personal, social, and professional development of students. In the four groups studied, the sociodrama method enables openness to multiple perspectives upon reality, sharing of feelings, and creative search of solutions to solve problems and difficulties, generating conditions toward the development of flexibility and spontaneity essential in professional practice.

KEYWORDS: Sociodrama; social education; personal, social and professional training.

INTRODUCTION

The use of psychodrama in an educative context was initiated by Jacob Levy Moreno (1946/1997) as early as the 1920s. Considering that the main school task is to activate students' creativity and spontaneity, he asserted:

> Every primary, secondary, and higher education school must have a stage for psychodrama as a guidance laboratory to outline guidelines for everyday problems. Many of the problems that cannot be solved in the classroom, can be presented and adjusted in a psychodrama forum especially designed for such tasks. (p. 197)

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Since that time, many other experiments have been addressed, in both formal and informal educational settings (e.g., Bustos, Espinosa, Rimoli, & Sangiácomo, 1982; Liske, 2004; Puttini, 1997). In higher education, psychodrama and sociodrama have been integrated into the curricula of various degrees and postgraduate trainings. In several articles or shared experiences (e.g. Bertão & Moita, 1988; Blatner, 2007; Drew, 1990; Guldner, 1990; Kaufman, 1998; Lima, 2004; Monteiro & Carvalho, 1990; Remer, 1990; Veiga, 2008b; Veiga, Bertão, & Franco, 2010; Verhofstadt-Denève, 2004), it seems consensual that the main purpose of using these methods in education is not to address private issues of students but to broaden and deepen self-awareness, the awareness of others, as well as of the group and of the world. These active methods enhance a more lively and creative teaching–learning process, favouring the overall involvement and training of students. More specifically, they allow the achievement of several objectives: (a) deconstruct stereotypical conceptions and behaviours; (b) develop new roles and social skills and expand others; (c) share views and discover new perspectives; (d) foster interpersonal, intra and intergroup relationships; and (e) contribute to building up a professional identity.

Due to their structural characteristics and dynamics—including the experience of the three sequential phases, the emphasis in the relationship, and in the staging-action, without neglecting the reflection, the appreciation of intersubjectivity, and the mobilization of multiple forms of expression, among other aspects—the Moreno approaches seem to enhance learning and transformation through a here-and-now living encounter.

Due to development in a group, with a focus on the group and on the individuals, psychodrama and sociodrama invite people to: (a) share questions, concerns, and individual or collective experiences; (b) acquire knowledge and co-constructed know-how; (c) create and develop multiple roles; (d) experience multiple relationships; (e) open themselves to multiple perspectives, ways of feeling and acting; (f) construct new symbols and meanings; (g) (re)define personal and group projects; (h) search more reflective and creative alternatives to manage or solve problems, following a logic of co-responsibility and co-authorship; (h) promote the personal or group change, using individual and collective resources; and (i) stimulate autonomy and critical, creative, and spontaneous thinking.

In the School of Education of the Polytechnic Institute of Porto (ESEP) in Portugal, sociodrama[1] is used in the Social Education degree program in the context of two subjects: one in the second year of this degree (40 teaching hours) and another in the third year (35 teaching hours). Although there is a practical experience of more than 10 years (see Bertão & Moita, 1998; Veiga, 2008a), a detailed and prolonged study to assess its validity and pertinence when training social educators was never carried out until now. This was the purpose of this research (Veiga, 2009).

[1] Like Blatner (2007), we consider that in the context of education, intervention should focus on the discovery and development of common roles and should avoid a more private-oriented exploration, with a psychodramatic tendency, which may expose students too much.

Objectives

In this exploratory research, the aim was to understand how the sociodrama method contributes to the personal and social development of students, as well as to the construction of their professional identity. Specifically, it was intended to understand how sociodrama may foster development at the level of:

1. personal development, self-knowledge and internal change of students.
2. social development, social skills to facilitate interpersonal, intra- and intergroup relationships.
3. professional development, discovery, and fulfilling of the role of social educator and, more specifically, the construction and development of a professional identity.

Methodological Options

The first methodological option focused on the choice of the research paradigm. Since we tried to get an intersubjective, descriptive, and comprehensive understanding of reality, we decided to follow a qualitative research approach. Action-research is the best suited method for the dual purpose of research: the production of change and knowledge construction.

Since we considered the depth and relevance of object and knowledge more relevant than their scope, we decided to use a multiple case study. While this research mode is particularly useful in the evaluation of intervention methods, its subjectivity can undermine the credibility—which includes external and internal validity, as well as reliability—of the research work and of the conclusions to which it leads. To increase the credibility of the study, an accurate, detailed, and abundant description of the entire research process was done.

Methodological Procedures

Intervention Context: The sessions took place in large and adapted classrooms.

The professional team (Director and Auxiliary Ego) was formed by the researcher and the co-advisor of this study, both psychodramatists and teachers at ESEP who know the institutional dynamics, as well as the principles and working mode of the degree.

In the present study, we took into account the deontology principles of the American Psychological Association (APA) (2002), namely, the importance of participants' informed consent.

Participants: Four groups were intensively studied, for three consecutive school years: two second-year groups (A and C) and two third-year groups (B and D). *Group* A had 19 students; *group* B 20 students, integrating 12 of group A; *group* C was formed by 21 students; and *group* D had 20 students, integrating eight of group C.

The groups were mainly comprised of individuals between 18 and 23 years old, female, single, and white. Most were born in the city or district of Porto and, at that moment, lived with their nuclear family. For most students, Social Education was the first degree they attended and their first choice of entry into higher education.

Materials Collection and Analysis: The empirical material was derived from sociodrama sessions of the four groups. After each session, a specific descriptive report was written, based on the field notes and on the audio recording. After that, there were content analyses of the sessions and of the sociodrama process of each group. Later, there was a general discussion in which the coincident or different results in the analyzed groups were shown, based on the objectives and theoretical references that guided the investigation.

Three instruments were used to complement the knowledge about development of individuals and groups: the Sociometric Questionnaire, used at the beginning and end of each academic year; the Assessment Questionnaire used at the end of each sociodramatic process; the Follow-Up Questionnaire, used one year and eight months after the end of the sociodrama experience.

The Sociometric Questionnaire is used to describe the state of interpersonal relationships in a group, and it is a very simple tool. The development of the Questionnaire followed the methodological rules defined by Treadwell, Kuman, Stein, and Prosnick (1997). Taking into account the level of maturity of the students of higher education and the activities in which they are usually engaged, three criteria were defined—Weekend, Cinema, and Work Group—that allowed the appearance of different groupings. To rigorously assess the degree of expansiveness or social isolation of individuals, an unlimited number of appointments were allowed. Later, for each criterion, Sociograms for each group were developed and used in the two moments. To generate the Matrices and Sociograms, *SociometryPro* (version 2.3) was used.[2]

The other two Questionnaires were constructed for this study to assess the impact of sociodramatic experiences and were completed anonymously.

The Assessment Questionnaire consists of a set of open and closed questions to investigate the perceptions of participants about the importance of the two subjects in the degree and, more specifically, in their personal and professional training. It also aimed to understand how students saw and felt about these training spaces, the group, and their personal evolution.

The Follow-Up Questionnaire has five open questions and sought to explore the perceptions of participants about the impact of sociodrama lessons, their positive and negative aspects, and also the most remarkable situations.

For the treatment of collected information, the content analysis method was used.

[2] Software developed by Le Dis Group and available at http://sociometrypro.lastdownload.com/

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The content analysis of the sociodrama sessions and processes of the four groups, as well as of the Assessment Questionnaire (see Appendix A) and the Follow-up Questionnaire, showed that the dialogues, dramatic performances, the techniques used, and the shared feedbacks provided each student with: (a) an increase in self-knowledge; (b) the opportunity to confront, assess, and validate their own opinions, perceptions, emotions, and personal skills among their peers; (c) awareness of some relational, communication, and conflict dynamics; (e) insight into some internal changes that were necessary for a more harmonious experience of their roles.

In spontaneous speeches and actions, students found practices, convictions, beliefs, and personal and collective representations that allowed each to define him or herself as an individual, simultaneously unique and similar to peers. This knowledge was happening as they were feeling (more) accepted and respected by their peers, and trust and tolerance in this space occurred. From the analysis of the studied groups, we observed that participants of groups B and D exposed themselves more and from the beginning, than did participants of groups A and C. In comparison to the second-year students, those from the third year (a) seemed more capable, secure, and available to discuss a wider variety of themes; (b) to look at and be looked at through the eyes of others; (c) to look at and analyse the behaviour of others; (d) to experience unusual or less developed roles; and (e) do more internal work.

In all the groups, participants who were more exposed had more opportunities to: (a) reveal themselves; (b) experience their conflicts and questions; (c) receive more *feedback*, particularly regarding suitability and adaptability of their verbal and nonverbal behaviours; (d) consider changes that were relevant and opportune to their well-being and personal and professional growth; and (e) improve interpersonal relationships. The more quiet and passive participants also benefitted from the sociodrama classes. In the Questionnaires and in the assessment in class, most of them reported a personal transformation. This seems to support the idea that the mere observation of lived dramatizations of others can also help more inhibited individuals (see Abreu & Oliveira, 1996).

Although in the sociodrama context, many wrinkles still have to be "straightened out" to enable a more appropriate adjustment of every individual personality to the professional role; that is not the aim of classes, and there is no space or time to make deep and structural changes. Nevertheless, several students among the four groups said that the sociodrama experience was formative and therapeutic, which seems to reinforce the idea of Bertão (2004) that, in this context, often diffuse the boundaries between education and therapy; private and collective; the personal, the social, and the professional self; psychodrama and sociodrama. We thus come to the conclusion that, in these classes, what Zuretti (2001) calls a "sociopsychodrama" seems to take place.

In both years, some common development tasks emerged naturally and were worked on. In groups A and C, discussions about the transition to higher education and the process of autonomy in relation to their families—particularly from the displaced students—were highly connected to the pain of separation from attachment figures and to the demand of new responsibilities. In groups B

and D, a qualitative and maturation leap was visible. The discussions around the issues presented in the previous year were almost absent, which revealed a healthy resolution of such developmental tasks. The narratives of the participants focused then on the needs of autonomy and independence—economic and affective—and on issues related to the end of the degree and career. The themes about the continuity of training and initiation to professional activity (in the training area or another area) were problematized, considering the skills, weaknesses and personal and professional ambitions of students. The sharing of various future alternatives, along with the evaluation of their advantages and disadvantages, facilitated the analysis of personal choices and decision making.

In the final experience evaluation, in the Assessment Questionnaire and in the Follow-Up Questionnaire, participants recognized the advantage of sociodrama to develop a set of social skills that are essential for the role of students, as part of their group learning process, and as future professionals, who will perform activities in conjunction with other people. Some of those social skills are: active listening and empathy; negotiation and conflict management. For example, when participants were asked to make a sculpture, they had to think creatively about different proposals, express and defend their ideas, listen and analyse the ideas of others, negotiate, and make choices and decisions for one common task. When they had to take on a new role or do role reversal, students needed to learn how to put themselves in the others' position, developing empathy and learning how to imagine situations from different perspectives. That promotes their mental flexibility as a basis for spontaneity and creativity. When they were training for an educator's role in a helping relationship, they tried to accommodate the requests of their partners, listening to them, considering the meaning of their searches and desires, reading the signs of their inner lives, outlining possible scenarios and intervention resources, and preparing themselves for professional purposes.

During the sociodrama processes, there were a number of situations that revealed interpersonal and group conflicts. Conflicts were often perceived as something negative for their development and performance. Therefore, some of them feared such an approach, denying or downplaying their presence. Others, despite the discomfort, understood that the open discussion of past, present, or feared conflicts was important to allow a creative solution for such problems. To manage the presented conflicts, different scenarios were created and various techniques were used. Whenever possible, the intention was to encourage those involved in conflicts to communicate, so that they could share and confront perceptions and points of view, clarify misunderstandings, understand the role of each person in the conflict situation, and find common goals to its resolution. When a party was absent, through role reversal or the use of sculptures, the intention was that the protagonist would perform that task.

The individual or collective challenges and the different sociodrama techniques—in particular, role reversal and group games—allowed everyone not only to develop various social skills but also to know others better and to promote the group's formation and the development of new or deeper relationship ties.

With regard to group A, at an early stage, participants showed some inhibition, distrust, and anxiety due to the fact that they did not know the

sociodramatic method, the professional staff or some of his peers. However, they gradually gave way to a feeling of well-being and complicity shared by all. In the last session, dedicated to the assessment of the sociodramatic process, students showed that they saw this class as a space for sharing, hosting, and knowledge, which was possible due to the feeling of acceptance, trust, and cohesion created and cemented throughout the year. In the Sociometric Questionnaires, also noticeable, from the first to the second use, was a greater integration of all the participants and the extension of relational webs. Although there were many subgroups present, several choices were made beyond those groups. In all the criteria, we observed an increase in the choices made, an increase in the number of participants who made no rejection, and a decrease in the number of rejections.

In groups B and D, throughout the school year, the commitment and involvement of the majority of students in these classes was visible and allowed the group to grow. Group cohesion and trust were happening gradually and consistently. In the Assessment Questionnaires, most of the participants expressed a strong sense of belonging and a liking by the group. While different subgroups were visible (consisting generally of members of each Internship group), their existence did not confine students to their limits. On the contrary, mobility was observed in the context of the same group and, above all, the Sociometric Questionnaire allowed us to understand that the social networks of each member permeated these limits. A deeper reading of the results of this instrument allow us to say that, in both moments and for the three criteria, the majority of participants chose and was the subject of multiple choices. These took place between members of the same Internship group and widened to other peers, which seems to show a certain relational openness of students. The fact that there have been several participants who did not reject others, nor were subject to rejection, and that the number of rejections made and suffered was considerably smaller than the number of choices made or obtained, corroborates the previous view. However, we observed some differences in the data obtained for the three criteria. The criterion "Cinema" was one in which more choices were made, with the majority of participants being the target of four or more choices beyond their Internship group. The criterion "Work Group" was one in which the choices and rejections were more thoughtful and intentionally targeted. Participants who showed a smaller investment in the school activities were, at the end of the year, subject to fewer choices and more rejections in this field. In group C, the little availability shown by some students to reveal themselves and develop alongside with others, their closure within subgroups and deepening the knowledge of some personal and group characteristics that were less appreciated, curbed the creation of trust and cohesion that were necessary for a meaningful, genuine interaction and interpersonal communication. It is thus possible to understand the recurrent moments of silence, the deep consideration of proposals and the contention of opinions and positions. There were even situations in which everything seemed to be controlled, in which the opinions and feelings of the majority seemed to gain a significant force, hindering individual and differentiated expressions (see Leyens & Yzerbyt, 1997). It is therefore no surprise that from the first to the second

submission of the Sociometric Questionnaire, the subgroups remained unchanged and that some choice and rejection relationships became more evident.

Since all participants shared the role of students of the Social Education degree program in the same school, which was the most significant point of convergence and identification among them, issues of identity and professional practice emerged naturally, raised by students or stimulated by the professional team. The approach of such issues was sometimes limited by brief but significant notes during the warming-up or comments phases, enabling the deepening, widening, deconstruction, and (re)construction of certain perspectives, ideas, or (pre)concepts. In other situations, such an approach was deeper and constituted the core of one or more sessions.

In groups A and C, participants had many doubts and questions concerning professional practice and identity. Thus, they welcomed enthusiastically proposals for action that involved experiencing a desired role in the "as if" situation, although they were somehow afraid of doing anything unsuitable, such as not being empathetic in a helping relationship or revealing stereotypes and prejudices against certain groups. In this process, it was essential (according to Navarro [1976]), to help the student–protagonist to realize that their faults were not the most important but instead the opportunity to train essential skills for their future profession. Because of the formative character of the sessions, sometimes there were experiential opportunities to convey more appropriate attitudes to each circumstance. In the final phase, group members shared what they saw and felt concerning the dramatization of the protagonist, as well as the difficulties they felt in similar experiences and the way they managed those situations, thus extending the interpretation of such a reality and also the attitudes and intervention strategies. In addition to the training of the professional role, in groups A and C, there were opportunities for some reflection on the interests, strengths, and weaknesses of every student and also of others, so that each would consider and assess their own options in terms of groups and intervention contexts for the ensuing internship. In groups B and D, participants made use of the sociodrama space with several aims: (a) to share their achievements in the professional field; (b) put in practice their difficulties, doubts, and uncertainties; (c) listen and observe the feelings and experiences of others; (d) experience unusual or little developed roles; (e) test and validate their technical and scientific competence; and, thus, (f) enhance their knowledge and level of security.

The participants of the four groups stated that the dramatic proposals were particularly important to know the principles, values, and fundaments that underlie the social education practice and to develop professional roles. The role-playing proposals were especially valued by students, which is similar to what had happened in the experiences of many psychodramatist teachers (e.g., Blatner, 2007; Kaufman, 1998; Lima, 2004) since those experiences (re)created multiple contexts and areas of action in Social Education. Although they are artificially constructed, these situations are very close to real situations and may enable the training of the professional role and also the development of a spontaneous and flexible practice (Remer, 1990). Simulating the dreaded reality and experiencing ways of dealing with it (without the risk of facing serious negative consequences) allowed the

protagonists to have more flexible attitudes and express their feelings, opening paths for effective changes.

The training of the professional role also enabled students to reflect on their own personal characteristics that could benefit or hinder professional performance, increasing their awareness of aspects that needed to be developed, altered, or inhibited. Thus, the areas of emotional management, awareness of personal values and stereotypes, communication capacity, and affective distancing—essential in the practice of the social educator—were specifically addressed.

The (re)cognition and understanding of different emotions, individual and from others, were continuously worked upon during the sociodramatic processes of all the groups; in any of the three phases a great importance was awarded to the expression and meaning of affect. Many of the verbal interactions, scenes, and techniques used—namely, when in the soliloquy it was asked, "Say it out loud, what you're feeling"—enabled students to become aware of some emotions and of the (in)adequacy of their expression in terms of shape, intensity, or direction. The sharing of different feelings, the recognition that one's concerns are shared by others, and the experience and observation of several strategies to deal emotionally with a particular problem or situation made participants feel that they were better understood and also served to broaden their emotional and relational palette and to reconsider new relational attitudes. Some of the contents that were tackled included: the anguish aroused by their insecurities (internal and external); the comfort felt with the recognition of their security; the anger and jealousy connected to competitiveness and rivalry with their peers; the pain connected to separation; and the fear because of not knowing "how to be", "how to relate" or "how to do".

Axiological issues were also continuously worked over and enabled students to become aware of some personal values, beliefs, and stereotypes that conditioned or could condition their future relationship behaviours, as well as their interpretations of reality and their attitudes as professionals. They recognized the importance of making an internal job, inside the group and throughout their academic training, that would enable them to deconstruct their various stereotypes and change discourses and practices as citizens and future social educators. Throughout the sociodrama processes, some participants revealed subtle changes in their speech and behaviour. Others began to understand the rigidity of their views, after having realized that their stereotyped view of certain people or groups could compromise the performance of their professional roles. Because they were aware that the educational act calls for the educator to trust the resources of people and their possibility of change and development, some students were careful in their choice of intervention contexts. They recognised that they should perform a work of personal transformation before involving themselves in a professional experience in more challenging contexts. In groups A and C, the work on the axiological issues was primarily focused on issues of citizenship (e.g., gender equality; social justice; human rights). In groups B and D, it was mainly connected to the professional practice of Social Education and to recognize the importance of learning how to deal with diversity, freedom of choice, and individual options (whether of a sexual, religious, or political nature, among others). In group B, the specific situation of a blind female student and of a student coming from an Asian

country gave participants the opportunity of jointly observing, experiencing, and reflecting on how we can learn and grow in—and with—difference. It should not be forgotten that when students develop respect and tolerance for difference and diversity, they are more able to deal with realities that are gradually more complex, multifaceted, and unpredictable, supporting, as Blatner (2007) says, their interventions on the spontaneity–creativity binomial.

Regarding communication skills, the ability to listen actively was promoted: When participants heard the proposals and views of their colleagues and of the professional team in the warm-up phase, when they listened to the problem of their partner(s) in a professional relationship or to the arguments of others in a debate, and when they paid attention to the shared comments. Students who were aware of their communication skills and weaknesses—particularly during contacts with people in intervention contexts, with authority figures, and with their own peers—initiated a process of personal change. As far as affective distance is concerned, besides the theoretical exploration of the concept during the warm-up phase, participants had the opportunity to experience some challenges in the sociodrama processes that required the development of this capacity, namely, when attending (as protagonists) simulations of helping relationships that implied their ability to emotionally manage their own emotions and also the emotions of others.

The theme of Social Education and the professional profile of social educators has emerged naturally, and it was seen differently in the groups: either as a positive and constructive challenge or as a distressing and threatening task. This mainly occurred when students were challenged to think concretely and directly on the profession and on the profile of social educators. Because they were insecure, some students felt safer when adopting a silent stance and thus avoiding issues related to their own identity and career choice, as well as avoiding showing their ignorance concerning a theme they felt they should know. This situation was particularly clear in group C. Nevertheless, in the final assessments, participants of all the groups recognized the importance of working and reflecting upon issues related to their degree and professional identity that enabled them to clarify some doubts or unknown issues and find real meaning in their profession.

Almost all the students evaluated the experiences and their personal journey in such moments in a positive way, considering them important for the promotion of their personal development, for interpersonal relationships, and for their future profession, which seems to validate that these groups were (using the nomenclature of Rogers [1970/1986]), "successful". Only one participant of groups C and D assigned a relative importance to these classes due to having gone through the sociodramatic experience without feeling touched and not experiencing any significant change. The failure to identify with this type of classes and the assumption of a not-always-adequate individual stance were the reasons listed in the Assessment Questionnaire and in the Follow-Up Questionnaire by those students less affected by the sociodramatic experience.

CONCLUSIONS

In the action-research carried out, we could see, according to the objectives of the research, that the sociodrama method contributed to the personal and social

development of students and to building their professional identities. However, the group constitution and the way each individual and class invested in lessons influenced relational and formative dynamics, as well as individual and group growth.

Regarding personal development, the method under study enhanced:

1. awareness of the characteristics, fragilities, and internal resources.
2. knowledge and comprehension of different emotions, values, stereotypes, and personal projects.
3. promotion of necessary movements toward the achievement of important changes in personal well-being.

On interpersonal relationships, the sociodrama method enabled participants to:

1. know the group members more intimately.
2. develop social skills.
3. enlarge or strengthen the relationship networks.

This broadening and deepening depended, however, on the group constitution and on the degree of trust and cohesion during the sociodrama process, as well as on personal traits.

Finally, sociodrama contributed to the development of professional competences and the construction of a professional identity by:

1. enlarging the knowledge about values and fundaments of the future profession, as well as their intervention scopes and strategies.
2. smoothing the awareness of weaknesses and professional skills.
3. training professional competences aiming to a spontaneous, flexible, and creative exercise of roles as a social educator.

Concerning the limitations to the use of this method in the school context, we highlight the following aspects:

1. Students' attendance of these subjects is not optional but compulsory. Although most of them recognize and value the use of this method in the two years of training, there are those who do not appreciate it or fear it. Thus, they do not get involved in classes and do not act with a view to the common good, what affects their personal growth, the growth of their peers, and also of the whole class;
2. The experience of living multiple relationships in various contexts makes the sociodrama space experience not always relaxed and leaving aside a defensive "self" shell proves sometimes difficult, particularly during the warm-up phase.
3. The freedom and autonomy allowed by the method, although desirable, are also feared, particularly because it requires involvement and accountability (to which students are little used), sometimes generating inhibitions, suspicion, and resistance.

In spite of the limitations, the use of sociodrama in this educational context seems to be relevant toward the development of an education focused on the students and in the training of participatory, supportive, reflective, and flexible professionals because sociodrama:

1. is sensitive to characteristics, needs, and problems of each participant and of the group.
2. creates conditions for the students to be able to assume their roles as actors and authors and as resources in the group, according to their individual timing and processes.
3. enables the reshaping of a plurality of situations and problems about school path, interpersonal relationships, and professional practice.
4. encourages the acquisition and implementation of a more outspoken attitude inside the group.
5. promotes active participation and reflection, as well as undertaking both individual and collective decisions.
6. stimulates creative and spontaneous actions to solve individual and common problems.
7. enhances the awareness of values and professional principles and the exercise of practices in accord to them.

This work does not intend to crystallize the acquired knowledge but rather to reflect on the use of active strategies and student involvement in their training process. As with any other investigation, it has some limitations. For example, other instruments and quantitative analyses that allow for assessing and comparing participants at the beginning and at the end of the group could have been used, increasing the credibility of the investigation. It would be important to extend the investigation to the impact of this training on the performance of a professional role in a real work situation.

In the future, it would be relevant to investigate various degrees and contexts of higher education in Portugal and in other countries to identify the common denominators and differences among the several experiences and to assess the relevance of the sociodramatic method for the training of students at this level of education.

At the meeting point of different perspectives, it may become possible to discover new readings, (re)invent ways, (re)create projects, and produce knowledge on a continuous search for new answers to old questions and new questions for new situations.

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Appendix A. Assessment Questionnaire Analysis.

	A	B	C	D
Importance of the course in the Social Education degree				
Important				
As professionals: training the role of social educator; enlargement of perspectives, techniques, and strategies; greater knowledge of the personal characteristics; sharing experiences	100%	100%	100%	100%
As person: increased self-knowledge; development of personal competences; enlargement of perspectives; development of the capacity for reflection and critical thinking; increased problem-solving ability	100%	100%	100%	100%
Understanding of social and group dynamics; improvement of interpersonal relationships	20%	15%	15%	25%
Contribution of the subject for training				
Important while social educator				
Training the professional role and extension of intervention strategies	60%	55%	60%	60%
Discussion and deepening of relevant topics in social education	20%	25%	15%	30%
Awareness of personal limits and weaknesses and development of professional skills	45%	55%	40%	70%
Important as person				
Self-awareness; development of personal skills (respect, broadening of perspectives, problem solving capacity...); changes identification	80%	95%	75%	90%
Knowledge of others; approximation to others	30%	35%	30%	20%
Relatively important as person	0%	5%	0%	0%

Appendix A. Continued.

	A	B	C	D
Characteristics of the sociodrama classes				
Freedom	60%	55%	75%	55%
Dialogue	80%	80%	80%	80%
Listening	65%	65%	65%	70%
Sharing	90%	95%	85%	80%
Reflection	80%	80%	90%	90%
Therapy	15%	20%	15%	15%
Tension	15%	20%	5%	25%
Conflict	5%	5%	5%	10%
Function and dynamic of classes				
Function				
Positive (defined and negotiated rules; dynamic classes and profitable)	75%	80%	55%	75%
Variable (depending on the subjects, vary the enthusiasm, profitability and dynamism)	25%	20%	40%	25%
Negative	0%	0%	5%	0%
Dynamic				
Positive	95%	100%	60%	75%
Variable / neutral	5%	0%	40%	25%
Orientation				
Positive	95%	100%	90%	100%
Variable	5%	0%	10%	0%

Appendix A. Continued.

	A	B	C	D
Relationship with the group				
Sense of belonging				
Existing and of positive character	80%	80%	80%	75%
Nonexistent or of negative character	20%	20%	20%	25%
Satisfaction in the group				
Positive	95%	100%	80%	75%
Nonexistent or of negative character	5%	0%	20%	25%
Group cohesion				
Good	75%	75%	55%	75%
Reasonable	25%	25%	0%	25%
Insufficient or inexistent	0%	0%	25%	0%
Group dynamics				
Positive	80%	85%	55%	65%
Variable	20%	15%	0%	35%
Insufficient	0%	0%	45%	0%
Group growth				
Positive	80%	100%	55%	70%
Neutral/insufficient	20%	0%	45%	30%

Appendix A. Continued.

	A	B	C	D
Atmosphere of the group				
Positive	75%	75%	75%	75%
Variable/negative	25%	25%	25%	25%
Personal pathway in the class and in the group				
Positive	70%	70%	75%	70%
Variable or insufficient	30%	30%	25%	30%
Performance of the functional unit				
Positive	95%	100%	95%	95%
Unsatisfactory	5%	0%	5%	5%

Suggestions

Few students have any suggestions. Those who did so indicated the above categories: Discuss more variety of topics (A: 10%, C: 5%, C: 20%); more individualized sessions (A: 10%; D: 5%); some sessions directed by students (A: 10%); lesson length (B: 5%), More frequent training of the social educator role (B: 10%), greater flexibility in session structure (B: 5%; C: 10%); Space of greater freedom (B: 5%); Background music (B: 5%); more weekly classes (C: 5%); More directive functional unit (C: 5%); Work more topics related to social education (C: 20%); Work fewer issues related to social education (C: 5%); Predefined themes (C: 5%); More group dynamics (D: 10%); Reducing the number of participants per group (D: 15%).