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## THEATRE AND EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS FOR ARTS

Abstract

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The defense will take place at an open meeting of the Scientific Jury on 30.06.2021. from 14.00 In the Conference Hall of the New Building of the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski". Scientific jury:

- Prof. Klavdia Vasileva Sapundjieva (Sofia University, Kliment Ohridski)
- Prof. Dr. Galin Tsokov (Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv)
- Prof. Dr. Penka Kostova Todorova (University, "St. St. Cyril and Methodius")
- Prof. Dr. Gergana Dyankova (SWU "Neofit Rilski")
- Prof. Plamen Radev (PU "Paisii Hilendarski")
- Prof. Nikolay Kolishev (University of Sofia "Ep. Konstantin Preslavski")
- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Sabeva (PU "Paisii Hilendarski")

The dissertation consists of 187 pages, of which 181 pages of main paper and 6 pages of bibliography, including 150 sources, of which 139 sources in Cyrillic and 11 sources in Latin.

The structure of the dissertation includes: introduction (demarcation of the scientific problem, definition of object, subject, goals and tasks of the research), four chapters, conclusions, recommendations, conclusion. 84 tables are included in the comparative analysis.

The protection materials are made available to the library of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

I express my sincere gratitude to all who supported me and helped me cope with this responsible and difficult task!

Author: Zoya Nedelcheva Capon

Title: Theatrical-educational strategies in secondary specialized schools of arts

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#### I. General characteristics of the dissertation

In the history and theory of pedagogy, educational and theatrical activities have more than once been considered in conjunction. The questions of whether the school and the theater can be arranged together, whether the teaching and learning can be carried out with the help of theatrical-dramatic methods and means, are answered with the origin of art itself, as well as in the history of pedagogy, in its classical stage. Later, in different schools and directions of pedagogical reform, it is described how the theatrical activity to be educational and the educational activity - theater.

What do theatrical-dramatic means need to be elements of the educational activity? How to develop the relationship between school and theater in order to prepare students in secondary specialized education for acting and dramatic roles, and theater and educational technologies to be the main tools in general education - these are the issues that underlie scientific research in the dissertation.

The present study is devoted to theatrical-educational strategies in specialized secondary art schools. The analysis of the topic, the definition of the strategies and their effectiveness in the learning process stem from the idea that the effectiveness can be assessed if it is placed in the context of the goals to be achieved. These goals are related to two main sub-goals - on the one hand, the specialized school of arts to provide competencies necessary for acting and effective participation in theatrical activities, on the other hand, these strategies to provide more general competencies that would give opportunity for children to develop certain strengths and competencies that they will need later in life, in various activities, in communication. It can be said that the activities in the discipline of acting for drama theater at school are related to two fundamental goals:

- formation of specific competencies necessary for theatrical activity;

- formation of competencies that go beyond the theatrical activity and affect the overall development of the child, his future self-determination and self-realization.

Remaining in this context, these strategies are tied to an approach that in modern pedagogy is referred to as a competency approach. This means that in school everyday practice the main goal is to form a certain set of competencies. The competencies themselves already define the relevant strategies that will be used to achieve the goals in an effective way. The topic of competencies in this paper is based on the idea of social competencies and in particular - empathy.

The choice of empathy is usually related to the fact that in modern literature the presence of empathy is found on the one hand in the context of social interactions and activities - a very long set of research clearly outlines the importance of empathy for social development and functioning. On the other hand, in a, albeit brief, analysis of the history of theater, it shows that empathy under different terms appears as a specific competence or skill, attitude, or as a character trait necessary for theatrical activity - for the reproduction of roles. The choice of empathy as a key competence is related to the possibility for it to be the basis and prerequisite for the quality of theatrical activity and, at the same time, for the social development of children. From this point of view, when we talk about strategies, the choice of strategies in this study is subject to the idea that they be selected to ensure the formation and development of empathy as one of the fundamental human attitudes and abilities, which is present in the theater. activity, and outside theatrical activity.

Strategies are a way, an approach, a tool. Any strategy can only be meaningful if we know what it is aimed at. What is important is what a strategy aims at - it makes sense and reveals its effectiveness if it achieves the goal being pursued. Generally speaking, in the secondary specialized school of arts, the goal is on the one hand to form an attitude to the theater and theatrical activity, which is related to the aesthetic, and on the other hand to form certain abilities, competencies or skills to recreate roles and construction of theatrical productions. The goal may also be related to the creation of a value system and attitude towards art as a means of self-knowledge. When it comes to a secondary specialized school of arts and theater, it is known that it is not necessary for graduates to continue their realization in professional and non-professional theaters. But training can also develop other abilities, attitudes and values that go beyond theatrical activities and can be useful for the development of adolescents and building their identity and moral foundations in their lives and professional realization. From this point of view, specialized secondary art schools face a very specific task - to be able to combine these two trajectories of development - one that goes along the lines of theater, theatrical activity and attitudes towards this art, and the other - that goes beyond theatrical activity and is designed for life. This good combination and intertwining, which is inseparable, poses a challenge - what should be these competencies that can simultaneously serve the theatrical activity, to go beyond it and to go beyond the theatrical activity.

To meet this challenge, one of the modern approaches can be used, which is designated as competency-based. Competence approach is understood as the formation of certain abilities that open the possibility for effective coping with these activities - theatrical and non-theatrical. Can abilities be found that are present in an equally significant way in both theatrical and non-theatrical activities? The thorough analysis of the theatrical activity and the derived ones for theatrical activity and acting, although implicitly and under different terms, always show the essential importance of empathy. Will it be recognized in emotional terms such as empathy, distance from the role, distinguishing personal position from the role, or will it be contained in cognitive terms such as distinguishing from the character / to stand next to the character, to see the character from the inside, not to confuse him that "I" is not "he" /, has always been present in the research and observations of all theatrical figures - theorists and practitioners.

Stanislavski presents his understanding of the true art that people need as the "art of experience". He emphasizes the great importance of common culture and education for all theater actors, and the main requirements for the practical training of the actor is the emotional incarnation. He has repeatedly emphasized that "in order to be able to convey theatrical success, you must be a very, very enlightened person." The performer should be able to empathize with his character, to break this in front of his inner emotional world and to express his condition through his experience and the means of the actor's incarnation. The way of "enlightenment" of the actor is realized through education, in which the means for artistic empathy of the dramatic text are mastered, as a condition for expression through the actor's incarnation.

The analysis shows that empathy is one of the main constructs, one of the main abilities needed for theatrical activity. On the other hand, the analyzes in the psychological and pedagogical literature also show the importance of empathy for social interaction, for prosocial behavior, for limiting violence, for becoming a motive for apolitical actions. All this is unambiguous and does not raise doubts. These two types of analysis, in these two spheres, give grounds, as a core in the activities of theatrical activity and beyond, to separate empathy. There is a third group of studies that show that empathy is at the heart of emotional competence, which, as a separate type of competence, is one of the most important competencies, along with linguistic, computer, mathematical. In this sense, when we highlight empathy, then the problem arises how to form and whether effective strategies can be found.

Theatrical art can be considered from the point of view of the possibilities for interpretation of texts, or from the point of view of the director, the actor, the artist, it can be discussed as art, different from other art forms - there are different approaches. In this case, theater is seen primarily as an activity.

In the program of the secondary specialized schools of arts it is set to consider the theater as an activity and the students get acquainted with the theater not as a history, theory or as an abstract activity, but as a theatrical activity. Theatrical activity contains a fundamental distinction - on the one hand as an aesthetic activity, which aims to aesthetically recreate the content of a text, on the other hand as a learning activity. When the theatrical activity is considered as educational, then the goal is not to achieve an aesthetic impact, but to form certain abilities, qualities, character traits of the participating performers in this activity. These two distinctions are intertwined, and for a bystander they may even be indistinguishable.

When a play is staged in a school theater, viewers can have expectations for aesthetic experiences, which is perfectly fine. But at the same time, the teachers who stage the play are not so much guided by this effect. For them, the priority is the learners - what they have achieved, what is their progress. Of course, aesthetic values can be taken into account because they are objective, this is in the context of development. Externally, aesthetic activity and educational activity may be similar and as a result be found as an aesthetic perception, from the point of view of the audience, but in their essence they are fundamentally different because they pursue completely different goals. In this sense, educational theater is a unique activity, giving the rare opportunity for students and teachers to pursue two different goals at the same time - on the one hand the formation of abilities for continuous participation in theatrical activities as art, and on the other hand building skills that can be useful for the full life of each student. Teachers are guided by the maxim that the pursuit of art, of aesthetics, gives man and the world a better life. The educational theater carries this meaning and provides opportunities for the

development of the trajectories of movement - in the direction of art and in the direction of going beyond art, to the person.

Educational theater is a vast field for educational systems applicable to teaching in theater and life. The work in the educational theater should be focused on the search and study of the deep meaning and the unifying psychological cores, such as compassion and empathy, because they are organically connected with the theatrical activity. At the same time, one should become more moral, more dignified, which is one of the fundamental challenges for education and upbringing. In this sense, the educational theatrical activity is particularly sensitive to social competencies. Social competence is charged with another meaning, with the meaning of morality, the high order of values in human relations. At the core of social competence, empathy is considered key because it is the bridge between people, an expression of kindness, the most human thing that a person has - the ability to sympathize, to love. This feature of empathy lies in the way it serves both activities at the same time and provides them with transitions, complements a child's overall attitude, not only to art but also to morality. Art only makes sense if it produces morality, morality, a value order. The deep meaning of art is to make a person better, to transform him not only as a spectator, but also as a person. We do not use the aesthetic approach to theatrical art, but we consider it as principles, practices, phenomena, activity, occupation. The very conventionality of art presupposes a view from different perspectives. Aesthetic perception of compassion is not possible if it is not understood and recreated correctly. The re-creation of life is not life itself, but it shows what life should or should not look like. Art is also a teaching about life. It shows something that is not there, but is more real than what is visible. The invisible is stronger than the visible.

## II. General statement of the research in the dissertation

The present work is dedicated to this - to develop a model, to outline the relevant strategies that could be used to form empathy. Preparation of a pedagogical program for inducing empathy within the framework of social competence, through theatrical means and methods, as one of the theatrical-educational strategies.

#### **Purpose:**

Formation of empathy in students through certain strategies of educational and theatrical activities in secondary specialized art schools.

To propose and test a practical model for provoking and developing artistic empathy in education, as a condition for emotional expression in the acting incarnation, both in terms of content and personality - the development of empathy as a core in social competence.

## Hypothesis:

It is assumed that the educational theatrical activity has sufficient opportunities for the development of empathy and it is assumed that it can help the formation of empathy.

### **Thesis:**

Use of theatrical activity as a learning activity and the positive results for the learning process and the personality of the students.

#### Subject:

Creating a didactic model for the development of empathy in terms of content, as one of the main components of social competence, through educational and theatrical activities.

## **Object:**

Theatrical-educational activity of children from 8-12 grades in NGSEI - specialized school of arts, with intensive study of "Acting for dramatic theater".

#### Tasks:

The tasks follow from the goal - formation of empathy through educational and theatrical activities:

1. Building a model for the development of empathy on the basis of theoretical analysis of the first and second chapters.

- 2. Evaluation of the model in a real learning environment.
- 3. Development of criteria for assessing the change in empathy.

### Scope:

The study was conducted at the National High School of Performing and Screen Arts / NGSEI / - Plovdiv and covers 3 (three) age groups of students (8th, 9th and 11th grade), which are divided into approximately - 40% boys and 60% girls and 3 (three) age groups of students (8.9 and 11th grade) who do not participate directly in the study. Each of the groups consists of 15 students, or a total of 45 students in the group undergoing the Model training and 45 students in the control group. In the first main group, which goes through the training on the Model, there are 16 boys and 29 girls, and in the second control group, which does not participate in the training, there are 19 boys and 26 girls.

## Methods:

Phenomenological, theoretical analysis and synthesis, historical-pedagogical description and review, analysis of good practices, modification and reconstruction of methods from other fields, observation, analysis of personal experience, didactic "natural" experiment, diagnostic tools and instruments, methods of processing and data analysis, descriptive statistics, etc.

## III. Structure and content of the dissertation

The dissertation includes an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a list of references and is illustrated with tables and diagrams.

The work consists of two interrelated parts - one theoretical and one empirical part. The theoretical part is related to a more in-depth analysis of empathy, the importance of empathy for theatrical and non-theatrical activities. The theoretical analysis also includes a description of empathy and its content, which is laid as a basis for building a model and for differentiating individual exercises of strategies, interventions for formation. The second, the empirical part, actually verifies the model that is theoretically constructed.

The first chapter discusses and analyzes basic terms in the dissertation such as learning, teaching, theater and theater, competence approach, competencies, strategies. A distinction is made between learning and learning activities in the direction of their purposeful and volitional nature. Of great interest is the conditional division of theatrical activity as an aesthetic and theatrical activity as an educational activity and the potential contained in this point of view. The first chapter contains four paragraphs:

## I. 1. Learning. Learning activity. Theatrical activity.

Here we look for the intersection of educational and theatrical activities, we trace the dynamics of convergence and distance between them, and especially how theatrical activity as an educational activity can create positive attitudes for learning and living. The real action of education is understood as an inner change, a manifestation of deep knowledge and self-knowledge. Life increasingly imposes school as the only place to replenish children's emotional and social skills. Expanding the scope of schools and making them a social tool for life lessons is a very difficult and difficult task. The inclusion of creative theatrical activity in moral and ethical education can be very useful.

The two main approaches to learning are:

- informal learning, which takes place throughout the life of the individual and is learning from life situations (here everyone can be your teacher - and Dostoevsky with his books, and the saleswoman in the vegetable store). In the case of non-formal learning, learning appears as a more general category, and in principle the learning activity proceeds more purposefully. Books are read for pleasure, but something new is also learned.

- formal education, or learning, is the learning and education that is carried out and received in educational institutions.

Learning activity precedes creative activity. Creative activity is impossible without learning activity.

Contemporary theatrical activity is primarily artistic, for aesthetic impact, for enjoyment and relaxation, for recreating and building artistic images from living life. But it can provide much more if used as a learning activity. Viewed in the context of development, theatrical activity

can be presented in two forms - as a specific artistic activity that belongs to the categories of art, and as a specific educational activity.

In the field of education, theatrical activity as a specific form of educational activity is aimed at mastering certain abilities or social competencies and developing certain character traits and virtues. Thus, the theatrical educational activity is charged with a double focus: to the theatrical activity as an artistic activity and to the educational activity, which traditionally organizes the educational process.

## Theatrical activity as an artistic activity

Theatrical activity is one of the manifestations of artistic activity, which has a very long history. Theatrical activity, as a cultural phenomenon, is aimed at transforming the world and building the personality. [Schiller, F., The Birth of Tragedy]. Theatrical activity is dynamic and offers various creative ways and forms for recreating the inner world of man. The main purpose of theatrical activity is to provoke artistic experiences and make people better and more responsible for the world.

## Theatrical activity and educational activity

As a specific form of educational activity, theatrical educational activity can be considered as a subcategory of educational activity and can be understood in terms describing educational activity as such.

In the pedagogical discourse, the learning activity is considered as a special activity that has a certain structure and goals.

Before presenting the specifics of the learning activity, it must be distinguished from learning. Despite the closeness, there are significant differences between learning and learning.

Learning can be seen as a by-product of any activity performed. Attending a theatrical performance may be motivated by the search for aesthetic experiences, evoke aesthetic emotions and thoughts that deeply affect the self, but at the same time can lead to enrichment of knowledge about the play, artistic decisions, images recreated by actors... Along with aesthetic experiences, a concomitant enrichment is discovered, which affects knowledge, experience, abilities. Many of the learning processes take place in an unconscious form and are related to the various activities in which the adolescent is engaged. What is characteristic of

learning is that it is an unconscious process, and is not related to the strict intention to learn something.

Viewed in the context of theatrical activity, the educational activity as a theatrical activity aims to support the development of abilities, knowledge, character traits and virtues that are specific to the developed theatrical activity as an artistic activity. The artistic and creative reproduction of the verbal texts and the author's idea presupposes the presence of abilities that are formed in the educational theatrical activity. The main difference between theatrical activity as an artistic activity and the educational activity is in the very direction and the goals that are pursued / although in both cases the same play is staged /.

#### I. 2. Analysis of theatrical activity as an aesthetic, artistic activity

In this part of the first chapter, a thorough analysis of theatrical activity as an artistic activity aimed at recreating an idea through which to provoke aesthetic experiences is made. In this process, all the experience gained from the educational theatrical activity is laid in the reproduction of the idea. This activity is not aimed at improving the abilities, but at using the abilities to solve the artistic task. If, however, experience is expanded and capabilities improved, it is a by-product and not a leader.

Theatrical activity, in the context of culture, is precisely the mastery of the historical experience that has been accumulated in cultural history. The language in which the conversation is held about the price of tomatoes on the market stall should be distinguished from the language in which the dialogue is presented in the theatrical performance. Theater, in its historical development, has established itself as one of the oldest arts with many examples. In order to be able to enjoy, to rejoice, to recreate, the cultural experience of society must be mastered. Theatrical activity is a activity of reproduction. The purpose of the learning activity is to focus on mastering this experience. To become part of man. Then he becomes a spectator, not a present. To become a spectator and participant, a minimum level of preparation is required.

Acting is a knowledge of dialectical opposites, where the social and artistic position of the actor are refracted through the subjective angle of a worldview and emotional-image perception, which draws the unique properties of the creative personality of the actor. Everyone aestheticizes in his own way the real object of his observation. The magic of the theater stems from the possible combinations of the written word and the ways of its transformation on the stage, which determine its stage meaning. Theatrical art exists due to the ability of actors to interpret meaning differently, according to the way of interpretation and the different point of view.

On stage, ordinary human emotions become a poetic reflection of life's emotions. Conflicts are constantly raging in man and in the theater he seeks the echo of his experiences, the pursuit of self-knowledge (through others), the answer to countless troubling questions! He is perhaps looking for the ideal world that he lacks in life. As a kind of refuge.

Theater, as an artistic activity, is influenced by many subjective and objective factors, which are interconnected, complementary or influence each other directly or indirectly. It is a complex, delicate and dynamic system, transforming life visually, spiritually, energetically.

The next paragraph discusses the two main focuses of theater as a learning activity, namely:

- formation of specific abilities that will relate to the artistic theatrical activity

- formation of general abilities - they go beyond theatrical activity (virtues, qualities, abilities), can be useful both professionally and for life, for the development of the potential personality. This makes theatrical activity as an educational activity valuable.

A thorough historical review of the use of the theatrical-pedagogical approach in education has been made.

The development of the theatrical pedagogical system from antiquity to the present is traced.

#### I. 3. Theater as an educational activity

Why is theatrical educational activity special and unique?

• Theatrical activity as an educational activity provides opportunities, has the potential to develop.

• Theatrical activity as an educational activity has a specific place that cannot be occupied by another type of activity.

• In its essence, the theatrical activity itself gives the deep meaning of the educational theatrical activity - through special experiences and motivations to develop abilities that are either impossible or very difficult to develop through other activities.

How to develop empathy as a learning activity in physics class through the lesson "Solid State Physics". Diffusion ", or in math class...? Within the theatrical educational activity, images of characters are recreated, who enter different circumstances and situations, loaded with concentrated experiences, which the specialists have perceived and identified as key in the theatrical educational activity for the specific opportunities it provides in the context of culture.

The purpose of the educational activity is to master the historical experience gained in cultural history. When the child goes to a puppet show, he remembers that there are stories with puppets. And he never forgets that fact again. This is due to the educational theatrical activity, which can form a cultural experience and much more general human virtues.

Theatrical activity as an educational activity is purposeful. Rehearsals improve skills purposefully, consciously. In order to be creative, the learner must have cultural accumulations and mastered experience.

Learning, unlike learning, is always a by-product. You can learn and have a result from each activity.

Theatrical activity as a learning activity is not just learning. The educational activity is purposefully researched and this gives meaning to the theatrical educational activity. Because only theatrical activity as an educational activity creates opportunities in two directions:

- to master experience (qualities, value virtues, morals),

- to master the theatrical activity itself as an artistic activity.

In educational theater, where these specific abilities are still mastered, progress is assessed in their development - does the future actor master the technique of speech, the ability to listen and hear, to present the text organically and authentically, to understand conventionality, to develop imagination and other abilities.

An advantage of theatrical activity as an educational activity is that in the theater one can experiment by creating a space of security. On the stage you can play, partner, repeat one or another situation and observe the result, without a real threat to self-esteem and the life of the individual. In real life, this may not always happen. The great advantage of the theater is its acting character. The effects of what is being experimented on are not destructive to learners.

## Part of the motivation to learn is related to overcoming fear.

Theatrical activity as a learning activity directly affects the motivation to learn and overcome the fear of failure - through the positive emotions it creates. It has been proven that positive emotions are a very good motivator for a person to continue doing something because he feels joy and pleasure. At school, if a student experiences boredom, boredom, fear, anxiety about whether or not he or she will cope with the activity he or she is doing, his or her motivation drops to zero. The advantages are in favor of theatrical activity as an educational activity.

#### We work with artistic texts, and this leads to concentration.

In the educational theatrical activity we work with artistic texts. There are collected the most valuable complicated human emotions and achievements, the main conflicts and collisions that a person faces in life. Within the theater, through the texts that are recreated, one sees life in its ideal form, in all its fullness. And this fullness is greater and richer than in real life. This provides opportunities for richer reproduction. In real life, everything is much more scattered, not so concentrated. A great tragedy in real life does not have to be encountered in all its complexity and depth, but on the stage, in a performance, one can meet it, experience it. Unlike the real tragedy in life, in the theater the tragedy can be experienced. To touch depths and to feel the responses in others. An experience is created that is different from the real tragedy in life.

# I. 3. 4. Strategies for development of competencies in the context of theatrical educational activity

In this subsection the concepts are analyzed in detail: strategy and theatrical-educational strategy and their role for the development of competencies in students.

In modern pedagogical research, the understanding of learning strategy is formulated as follows: "Learning strategy is an individual way to organize and use a set of skills or competencies in order to more rationally master certain information or solve one or another problem. In this context of understanding, the strategy is linked to skills that are used in different learning situations "[Tsvetanska, 2006: 36].

There is a lot of talk and writing about the theater's entry into education. But ... he - the theater, continues to stand in the waiting room of extracurricular activities, especially in middle school.

To what extent has it entered and to what class has the theater reached in the Bulgarian school ?! The essence and peculiarities of theatrical-pedagogical strategies derive from the nature of the phenomena combined in the concept such as art, science, skill and set of scientific knowledge: theater is the art to present on stage dramatic works to reflect the life of specially prepared persons; pedagogy is the science of the methods of upbringing, training and education; and strategy is a skill, an art, and a body of scientific knowledge for waging war with a view to winning it once and for all. It is not a military, but an educational pedagogical strategy, with the active participation of the theater as a methodology and philosophy.

The use of a variety of formats, strategies and tools from areas close to the interests of modern students encourages the development of numerous practices designed to make the school an attractive and desirable place. For modern students it is very important to participate and be involved in various activities, the dynamics of school life. They need to feel, experience, see and touch the educational process. They need "learning that takes place against the background of activities that require doing, discussing, experiencing", "more diverse forms of activity" [Nikolaeva 2008: 115-122]. "The quality of the form through which teaching is carried out and the overall learning process becomes increasingly dependent on the attractiveness, rhetoric, vitality and everything that brings teaching closer to true pedagogical mastery, associating it with art" [Vasileva 2005: 31]. As a result, art (and especially theater) plays a major role in creating innovative school practices based on constructivist theories of learning, according to which knowledge is not passively taught to students but is actively constructed by each learner in the process. They are based on the idea of "knowledge", seen not as an element within the capabilities of the individual teacher, but a process distributed between the learners, the environment and the activity in which the learner participates. In this sense, theater in education is considered by many authors as one of the most effective practices that have found their indisputable application in school education. This is because it is adaptable to different learning content, suitable for different educational units.

By introducing children to the world of imaginary space, through the language of metaphors and allegories, specific symbols and the ritual language of theater, students could develop a different kind of intelligence. The arts make people feel connected to each other and less isolated. Through the art of theater, they share with others their thoughts, emotions and desires. They look for and find their identity, they see their problems.

Introduced into life through the context of theater education, students explore ideas and feelings, understand different from their own point of view, acquire knowledge of different

perspectives. A very important cooperating prerequisite is the age peculiarity of the students in the secondary course of education. They have already formed basic knowledge, sufficiently rich life experience, are in the stage of the most rapid sexual maturation and active search for themselves and their perspective in life. At this point, the intervention of the theater turns out to be useful, timely, preventive and unlocking beautiful horizons.

The last paragraph summarizes the conclusions from the analysis of theatrical activity, both artistic and educational, and marks the directions of future empirical research.

## I. 4. Generalization

Unlike artistic, theatrical educational activity is subordinated to the mastery of experience, to the development of abilities, strong character traits, which are necessary for the normal functioning of artistic activity. The artistic effects of the educational theatrical activity are not of leading importance, the evaluation of this activity is in the context of the measure of mastering and developing the abilities.

Second, theatrical educational activity can support the development of abilities and qualities that are fundamental for the effective course of educational activity in its various manifestations in the field of other subject disciplines. Thus, theatrical learning activities can support learning activities by creating conditions for mastering the skills needed for other activities and the overall development of the adolescent, and at the same time, to influence the motivation to learn.

Viewed in this context, theatrical learning activities have opportunities for:

- $\Box$  strengthening the motivation to learn;
- $\Box$  strengthening self-esteem and self-regulation;
- □ development of social and cognitive abilities;
- □ development of certain qualities and virtues;

□ development of specific abilities related to the creative reproduction of artistic texts with the means of performing arts;

 $\Box$  development of social relations and acceptance and recognition by peers;

□ organizing free time to create connections between the various activities with which the adolescent engages and asserts himself.

Research in the field of educational activity notes the presence of several components that represent its content. Following D. Elkonin and V. Davidov, the following content components can be distinguished:

 $\Box$  learning motivation;

 $\Box$  learning tasks;

 $\Box$  learning activities;

 $\Box$  control.

Considered in this space, theatrical learning activities can also be represented through these components.

#### Learning tasks

The learning task is usually defined as a goal given in certain conditions. The educational tasks in the field of theatrical educational activity are related to mastering the theatrical experience - text analysis, transformation of the verbal text with the means of theatrical art, work on the role, movements on the stage. Learning tasks can be aimed at developing not only specific abilities, but also more general abilities that go beyond theatrical activity - empathy, empathy, recognition of internal states - thoughts and emotions, self-control, regulation of impulses, persistence...

#### Learning motivation

Motivation reveals the importance of the activity performed and the dedication to solving the learning tasks. In the context of Desi and Ryan's theory of motivation, it could be assumed that educational theatrical activity is much closer to intrinsic motivation, which is a guarantee for effective coping and overcoming boredom and anxiety. The motivation of the educational theatrical activity creates a space of security in which one can experiment and look for solutions, without the worry caused by failure.

#### Learning activities

These are the actions through which the subject content is mastered, normatively established actions through which the experience is mastered. For example, a learning action is an analysis of a text, revealing a basic idea, or making a costume.

#### Control

The control in the learning activity is related to monitoring the effects of coping with the learning activities. Initially, control can be set externally and over time can be internalized and become self-control.

In the context of the present study, several characteristics of theatrical educational activity can be noted, which create conditions for the optimal functioning and development of the adolescent:

□ Theatrical learning activity opens opportunities for mastering abilities that are not always possible to master in the "traditional" learning activity, although their participation in its regulation is irreplaceable. In particular, theatrical learning activities create opportunities for the development of skills that make up the content of social competence.

□ Theatrical learning activity creates opportunities for experiencing the importance of social competence in a real and imaginary / stage / social context.

□ Theatrical learning activity creates motivation for mastering social competence and its use in various social relations.

□ Theatrical learning activity creates a specific space in which social abilities can be exercised and their application in various activities - including artistic activity.

□ The educational theatrical activity has a very great potential for the optimal functioning and development of the child - abilities, qualities, virtues, strengths of character are developed.

□ Theatrical activity as an artistic and educational activity are interconnected and intertwined.

□ Theatrical educational activity is the foundation for the later development of artistic theatrical activity.

As a learning activity, theatrical activity provides the development of abilities, character traits, virtues:

- Abilities that are developed through theatrical learning activities can be specific, characteristic only for this activity - the theater (correct, fine speech, good physical shape and plasticity, ability for organic, adequate action and communication on stage, developed imagination, etc. .n.).

- General abilities - which concern the optimal functioning of the person, as a regulation of each activity. His behavior in real life and his relationship with others.

- As specific forms of educational activity, theatrical activity is related to other forms of educational activity, within the school or the educational system. It can be seen as a form of entertainment, of creative performances, of mastering specific content that is woven into other subjects.

- The importance of theatrical activity as a learning activity is expressed in the fact that it creates positive experiences and positive motivation for developing abilities that do not necessarily occur in other forms of learning activities. For example, developing memory. If there is a competition with a doll - "Who will learn the poem faster?", It is much more motivating and interesting than the teacher just saying "Learn the poem faster!" One of the most important components of learning activities is motivation .

- Theatrical activity as a learning activity creates good motivation and positive experiences that strengthen it, ie. make it more durable over time. They give it greater significance, dedication, longevity and duration of interest. It's more fun.

- Creates a space of security to experiment without having negative consequences on the learners. ("I love you", as a line within the performance, does not bother the actor, he can follow the reaction of the partner. While in life a person is afraid of being rejected, ridiculed...). In theatrical educational activities there is no concern for one's own dignity and self-esteem. You can experiment.

- Theatrical learning activity is always a group activity - working in a group has many advantages, unlike learning as an individual process.

Within the theatrical activity as an educational activity, the subject content that is worked with is very dense, basic human problems, conflicts and experiences are concentrated. This allows for a deeper penetration. In art so far, one is immersed in an artistic reality that shows in a deep, "folded" way what you can see in real life.

- Theatrical learning activities to be naturally woven into the learning activities of the school. If it is accepted that the school provides an opportunity not only for learning, but also for communication, for joint development and well-being of children, theatrical learning activities can form social qualities. In theatrical educational activity positive emotions are experienced, which are the basis of subjective well-being and happiness.

- As a group activity, theatrical learning activities expand the possibility of building friendly relations - students spend a long time together, have similar common interests.

The second chapter of the dissertation is devoted to a theoretical analysis of empathy and its connection with theatrical learning. This chapter consists of four paragraphs.

#### **II.** Theoretical analysis of empathy

#### **II. 1. Empathy in theatrical activity.**

The great benefit of the realization of theatrical activity as a school, in the context of modern views and understandings of the transformation of the learning environment, is in the direction of its innovation. The educational theatrical activity has great opportunities for the development of any competencies useful for the personal development of the child, especially the social competence.

Theatrical learning activity opens up opportunities for mastering abilities that are not always possible to master in "traditional" learning activities, although their participation in its regulation is irreplaceable. In particular, theatrical learning activities create opportunities for the development of the skills that make up the content of social competence. It creates opportunities for experiencing the importance of social competence in a real and imaginary / stage / social context and motivation for mastering social competence and its use in various social relations. Theatrical learning activity builds a specific space in which social abilities can be exercised and their application in various activities - including artistic activity.

The connection between the theater and the competencies is direct, natural, harmonious. By practicing theatrical learning activities, thousands of situations can be checked and prevented, mental and emotional skills can be built in the most fun way, moral lessons can be learned.

First of all, the expression of emotions: "... the creation of the right type of emotion is a constant problem of the actor" [Strasberg, L., 2016, 105].

Another parallel can be made between active listening as a social skill and active listening carefully to the partner on stage. This listening is studied in acting training - without listening and hearing on stage, no organic, truly authentic dialogue can take place. Theatrical art is interested in and deeply studies the monologue of the character, his inner life, motives for action, his attitude to the world around him.

"How many people say monologues in real life; how much they engage in imaginary encounters with other people, with a liveliness that they could not restore to people in real circumstances... These techniques are usually considered theatrical, but are in fact a real revelation of human feelings that we experience in private. "[Strasberg, L., The development of the method. p.158]

# II. 2. The essence of empathy. The importance of empathy for the child's development.

Empathy is considered as one of the main components that make up social competence and a basic component in social competence.

The first term for empathy, used in the 1920s by the American psychologist EB Tichaner, was "motor mimicry." Later, aesthetic theorists began to use the Greek word "empathy" - literally "feeling" - as a term for the ability to perceive another person's subjective experience. M. Scheler and W. McDougall consider empathy as the basis of all positive social relationships [Encyclopedia, 1998: 290], from which one can derive its humane and personal orientation, because it represents a deep level of empathy. Empathy is a real, sincere desire to help a suffering person.

Empathy is the emotional response of the self to the emotions experienced by the other (Batson, 1991; Staub, 1979; Fultz, Batson, Fortenbach, McCarty, & Varney, 1986). [Boyadzhieva, N. 2020]

Empathy is:

- Emotional and cognitive phenomenon;
- Emotion;
- Emotional reaction;
- Empathic experience;
- Emotional response;

- Affective response;
- Affective reaction;
- Emotional sharing;
- Emotional response.

There are various attempts and nuances to determine the understanding, reasoning, and empathy of a particular state, but of the other, always in relation to the other. Empathy presupposes a certain rationalization of the situation in which the other finds himself. There must be a distinction between the "I" and the other. Somehow one enters into another's situation in order to have an affective response. The psychological situation of the "I" is identical to that of the theatrical educational activity, when a character, an image of the stage, has to be built. What matters and is a major difficulty, according to Stanislavsky, when he begins to consciously turn his attention to the inner feelings of the character and the correspondence of the actor's passion and empathy, is to feel and believe. And his follower Lee Strasberg, who continues, develops and complements Stanislavsky's ideas, creating "The Method", where the main theme is sensations, senses, emotional memory, says: "The fuller the actor's commitment to recreate life and experiences. of the hero, the more he will face the problem of controlling his own human tools "[Strasberg, L., 2016, 117]. This journey to the image becomes a journey to oneself and a journey to the other. This is how self-awareness develops, from which a high level of empathy germinates. The better we recognize our own emotions, the more skillfully we will read the feelings - both our own and others'.

The main functions of empathy are:

- her participation in interpersonal relations;
- her participation in the development of knowledge about the other;
- her participation in the development of knowledge about her own "I";

Empathy is also seen as an element of emotional and new social intelligence combined with self-awareness, self-control skills, motivation and social skills [Golman, 2000]. It is expressed as a skill and attitude to understand the feelings of others, to take their position and respect for different points of view. [Boyadzhieva, N., 2020] Empathy is also deeply associated with mercy and justice in the situation. Participates and helps to overcome some difficulties in their application in various situations. It also provides clarity in difficulties when mercy and justice are opposed.

There are many different perceptions and interpretations of empathy, but what unites in the understandings of it is the statement about its obligatory presence and interference in the movement of the relations between the Self and the other. It participates in the space of togetherness - where the Self really lives. Its presence is everywhere in the construction and development of the Self - self-determination, self-realization, the meaning of life, conscience, morality. which is. How to understand the other, how to experience his feelings and respond to them? How is it possible to experience feelings that are a response to the feelings experienced by the other?

In the third paragraph the questions about the types of empathy are developed and the way to create such exercises in the practical model for application of the theatrical-educational strategy is sought, which would open most to the affective, cognitive, artistic, behavioral ... empathy.

## **II. 3. Types of empathy (affective and cognitive)**

The unifying idea in the understanding of empathy is its inalienable existence in the relation I - the Other. Thus it is present in the real life of the community, of the community. The self becomes what it is in experiencing relationships with others. This is the deep meaning of empathy for the Self. It is constantly present in the process of building the Self - of morality, conscience, self-discovery, self-realization. It gives meaning to life. Even very immature forms of empathy are a guarantee of morality.

In the focus of empathy in historical discourse, there is always the theme of the other understanding and joining the inner world of the other. These two varieties are presented as cognitive and affective empathy.

Almost all attempts to make sense of empathy usually point to the presence of both understanding and experience. The cognitive definition emphasizes understanding, the conscious placing of the other; the affective - to the response of the other's emotion with the same emotion [Gladstein, 1983].

Both experience and understanding are ways of empathy. Through them the forms of the empathic response are realized - direct and indirect touch to the experiences of the other. The form of the empathic response depends on the means of empathic arousal.

Apart from the ways and features of empathy, understanding and experience can also be seen as its forms, as two different ways of penetrating the world of the other. These forms of affective and cognitive empathy can be independent, but also interdependent. Sometimes cognitive processes are not only the basis of understanding, but also support the emotional experience of another's situation.

"Empathy is found as an affective-cognitive continuum that can be described genetically, structurally and functionally." [Stamatov, 2001, 2004]

We define empathy as emotional when it manifests as an adequate, affective response derived from an understanding of the other's emotional state. Empathy becomes an emotion of the Self, caused by the compassionate, tender touch, immersion in another's emotion. Every art requires increased human sensitivity and emotionality. And theatrical art, as art for the human soul - even higher. In determining emotional empathy through the closeness between the experienced emotions of the couple (I and the Other), Eisenberg (1991) summarizes it as three different emotional reactions:

- Through empathy (the same emotions are experienced as the other);

- Through sympathy (a more developed form of empathy; experiencing emotions that are not the same as the other person experiences);

- Sympathetic distress (experiences emotions that close him to himself - anxiety, fear ..).

Cognitive empathy puts understanding first. Understanding the emotion that the other person is experiencing, the reasons that gave rise to it, understanding even the thoughts of the other person. Understanding is present from the birth of empathic responsiveness, through the development of empathy in all its fullness and its transformation into sympathy, and as a consequence of it. Recognizing emotions already implies part of an empathic reaction. Understanding the emotions experienced by the other is the basis for building prosocial actions and all kinds of relationships of community and community activities. In reality, the other's emotions are not experienced. The cognitive processes of understanding thoughts and emotions are common, so cognitive empathy is also defined as understanding and the ability to stand on someone else's point of view.

#### - Emotional response

There are various attempts and tints to determine the understanding, reasoning and empathy of a particular state, but of the other, always in relation to the other. Empathy suggests certain perception of the situation, in which the others are standing. There must be a differentiation of "the Self" from other. There is a way to enter someone else's situation in order to have an effective response. The psychological situation of the Self is similar to the one in the theatrical educational acting when a character or an image must be built. The objective that matters is a major difficulty, according to Stanislavsky, when he consciously begins to direct his attention to the inner feelings of the character and the correspondence of the actor's passion and empathy, is to feel and believe. Stanislavsky's follower, Lee Strasberg who continues, develops and complements his ideas by creating "the Method", where a main topic are the feelings, senses and emotional memory. He says "The fuller the actor's commitment to recreate the life and experiences of the character, the more he will face the problem of controlling his own human tools" [Strasberg, L., 2016, 117]. The journey to the image turns into a journey to the self and a journey to the other.

The main functions of the empathy are:

- Its participation in interpersonal relations;
- Its participation in the development of knowledge about the others
- Its participation in the development of knowledge about the Self

The empathy is also considered as an element of the emotional and new social intelligence combined with self-awareness, self-control skills, motivation and social skills [Golman, 2000]. It is expressed as a skill and perspective to understand the feeling of the others, to put themselves in their position and to respect their points of view [Boyadzhieva, N., 2020].

The empathy is also deeply associated to the mercy and justice in a situation. It engages and helps to overcome some of the difficulties in their implementation in the various situations. It also provides clarity when mercy and justice are opposed.

There are a lot of different perceptions and interpretations of empathy, but what unites in the understandings of it is the statements about the obligation of its presence and interference of the movement of the relations between the Self and the others. It participates in the space of togetherness – where the self really lives. Its presence is everywhere in the building and development of the Self – self-determination, self – realization, the meaning of life, conscience,

moral... But the main meaning still remains, the subject of the others, the attitude of the others, in which the Self is what it is. How to comprehend the others, how to experience their feelings and how to respond to them? How is it possible to experience feelings that are a response to the feelings experienced by another person?

The issues of the types of empathy are considered in the third paragraph. The way to develop a practical model for enforcing the theatrical – educational strategy, that must exactly meet the efficiency, the cognitive, artistic, behaviorally... empathy.

#### **II. 3. Types of empathy (affective and cognitive)**

The unifying idea of comprehension of empathy is its permanent existence in the relation between the Self and the other. Thus, it is present in the real life of the community, of the togetherness. The Self becomes what it is experiencing its relations with others. This is the deep meaning of the empathy about the Self. It is constantly there in the process of building the Self – of morality, self – conscience, discovering the Self, self – realization. It gives meaning to life. Even the completely immature forms of empathy guarantee morality. In the focus of the empathy in a historical discourse, there always stands the point of the other – comprehension and inclusion towards the inner world of the other. These two kinds are presented as cognitive and affective empathy.

Almost all the attempts for making sense of empathy usually point to the presence of both comprehension and experience. The cognitive definition emphasizes the understanding, consciously being in someone else's shoes. The affective – the response of the emotion of the other with the same emotion [Gladstein, 1983].

Both, understanding and experience are manners of empathy. The forms of the empathic response are accomplished through them – direct and indirect touch of the other's experience. The shape of the empathic response depends on the tools of the empathic excitement.

Apart from being features and ways of the empathy, comprehension and experiencing can be considered as its forms, like to different ways of implementing in the others' world. These forms of affective and cognitive empathy can be independent as well as mutually dependent. Sometimes, the cognitive processes are not only in the fundament of comprehension but they also help the emotional experience of the situation of the others.

"Empathy is found as an affective – cognitive continuum which can also be genetically described, structurally and functionally." [Stamatov, 2001, 2004]

Empathy is defined as emotional when it reveals itself as an adequate, affective response, derived from the comprehension of the emotional state of the other. Empathy turns into an emotion of the Self caused from compassion, tender touch, immersion of the other's emotion. All kinds of art require increased human sensitivity and emotionality. The theatrical art, as an art of the human soul – even higher. In order to determine the emotional empathy through closeness of the couple (the Self and the other), Eisenberg (1991) summarizes them as three different emotional reactions.

- Through empathy (experiencing the same emotions as the other);
- Through sympathy (it is a more developed form of empathy, experiences emotions which are not the same as the other's emotions);
- Sympathetic distress (experiences emotions that locks him towards himself anxiety, fear...).

The cognitive empathy put understanding into first place. Comprehension of the empathy which is experiences by the other, the reasons that generated it, comprehension of the thoughts of the other. Understanding is present at the rise of the empathetic responsiveness, through the development of the empathy in its fullness and turning it into sympathy, as a consequence of it. Recognizing emotions implies a part of the empathic reaction. Understanding emotions, which the other feels is the basis of building prosocial actions and other relations of togetherness and social activities. Actually, the emotions of the other are not experienced. The cognitive processes of understanding thoughts and emotions are common, which means that the cognitive empathy can also be defined as comprehension and ability to stand on someone else's point of view.

We must immediately draw a parallel of the main goal when teaching a child through educational theatrical activities. That means: the goal of the student is to learn the best way of "getting into the character's skin", so that the implantation is more persuading. This is done by freeing the affective memory and the naturality of the improvisation or multifarious thinking. The development of any other skills and abilities is for the purpose of attractiveness. In fact, the most important quality which the student must learn through theatrical activities is to see the world from a different point of view, different of his/her own, the one of his/her character. This is the root of the problems of human communication. Empathy provides not only, in this case, the best conditions as well as it helps developing more professional skills and abilities, but also helps achieving relations full of security, trust, joy, relationships that meet both the professional environment and the basic needs and expectations of the adolescent. It is the empathy that supports the ability to except the role of another person, and not only a real one, but also imaginary one – a character of a art work. "The actor is wrong when they think that they can act with their own feelings. He doesn't always realize that his personal feelings only tell about him and nothing about his character. Only compassion can puncture in another person's soul. Even in everyday life you could notice that you really penetrate in another person's soul, only when your empathy is aroused. The same situation happens in the moments of creativity." [Chehov, M., 2016, 121]

Empathy gives the Self the following benefits:

- To experience and understand the other and through the other himself;
- To change himself; to explore the possibility to shape himself to overcome himself which is a requirement for the togetherness and mutual comprehension;
- To explore a point of view (external to his own), with which to comprehend the significance of certain features, qualities, properties, which would define himself "understanding ourselves requires the Self, to become different for himself, to see himself from a different point of view". [Lewis, 1992].

The third chapter of this dissertation is dedicated to the development of a model for building empathy trough theatrical learning activities, its application and testing in a real school environment.

This chapter also has four paragraphs:

#### III. 1. Research of the objectives:

The first one indicates the specific tasks of the study though this model.

The tasks that the research sets itself are:

- 1. Building a model for the development of empathy on the basis of theoretical analysis of the first and second chapters.
- 2. Evaluation of the model in a real learning environment.
- 3. Development of criteria for assessing the change in empathy.

#### III. 2. A program for developing the empathy through theatrical educational activity

The second part reveals the content of the program for developing the empathy.

The presented model is in the form of a program that includes 15 meetings. Each meeting is held once a week at the hours set by the curriculum. The meetings are in groups with 15 participants each.

The program covers the following content:

- 1. Introduction to the program, which introduces the participants to empathy and its importance in life and art.
- 2. Introduction to the rules for working together, which are related to certain principles and values.
- 3. Development of rules for communication, work style and common language of communication. The rules are developed together.

This section provides sample exercises for preparation and adjustment, for greater sensitivity, and bringing peace and confidence in the environment, and creating a good atmosphere with exercises for confidence, creativity, spontaneity, ease, joy, security.

#### III. 3. Exercises for developing emotional empathy

And

## **III. 4.** Exercises for the development of cognitive empathy and activities for involvement in altruistic behavior on stage, and off stage - in the lives of the participants

Here are the content and structure of the exercises:

- title;

- purpose;

- tasks;

- instruments and materials;

- content (sequence of implementation);

- conclusion (covers both sharing of the experiences and homework. The given homework creates conditions of an extended exercise of what is learned from one session to the next.)

The materials that are incorporated in the exercises are artistic and exemplary in most cases. They can be replaced, but the criterion must be their importance for the essence of the exercises, greater freedom and creativity in managing the exercises. Both groups of exercises for building emotional and cognitive empathy are arranged in a certain sequence.

In the beginning, there are exercises that aim awareness, followed by exercises related to practice and tracking the effects of the practice itself. The practice itself is also carried out in a certain movement from working with artistic texts to working with non-artistic texts, to practicing what is learned in real life.

It is made a detailed description of 25 (twenty-five) exercises and their additional variants. The description reveals the name of the exercise, its purpose, tasks, necessary conditions and materials for its implementation, content of the specific exercise and conclusions.

The last **fourth chapter** is the approbation and evaluation of the efficiency of the model.

A subject of the theatrical-educational strategy is to create a didactic model for the development of empathy through educational-theatrical activity as one of the main components of social competence.

The aim is to test the developed and based on theatrical-educational strategy, practical model for provoking and developing of the artistic empathy in education, as a condition for emotional expression in the acting incarnation (in terms of content), and personally – the development of empathy as basic root in social competence.

Our hypothesis is that the educational theatrical activity has enough opportunities for developing the empathy and it is assumed that it can help the formation of empathy.

The thesis is - theatrical activities can be used as educational and it can provide positive results for the learning process and the personality of students.

The tasks are:

1. Assessment of the model in a real learning environment.

2. Development of criteria for assessing the change in empathy.

The study took place at the National High School of Performing and Screen Arts / NHSPSA / - Plovdiv and it covers 3 (three) age groups of students (8th, 9th and 11th grades), which are divided into approximately 40 % boys and 60% girls and 3 (three) age groups of students (8th, 9th and 11th grades) who do not participate directly in the study. Each of the groups consists of 15 students, a total of 45 students in the group receiving the Model training and 45 students in the control group. In the first main group, which goes through the training

of the Model, there are 16 boys and 29 girls, and in the second control group, which does not participate in the training, there are 19 boys and 26 girls.

During the study of empathy, are used a phenomenological approach, theoretical analysis and synthesis, historical and pedagogical description and review, analysis of good practices, modification and reconstruction of the methods taken from other fields, observation, analysis of personal experience, didactic "natural" experiment, diagnostic tools and tools, methods for data processing and analysis, descriptive statistics, etc.

Children should record their experiences in two stories that are emotionally charged and a third related to a popular fiction text.

Empathy is assessed by students' responses and affects both cognitive and emotional empathy.

Children from both groups answer the same questions before the beginning of the study and after that.

#### **IV** Comparative analysis

This chapter contains 84 comparative charts and diagrams, the chapter consists of four paragraphs:

## IV. 1. Analisis of the results based on the answers of the students in the two groups before the beginning of the education

The answeres to the questions are observed in accordance with each of the stories. A thourough analisis and comparison of the answers given by both groups, and the differences in display of emphaty (based on gender) has been made .

The children in the focus group and the control group both groups begin the approbation phase of the model with similar empathic levels, this was a conclusion based on the juxtaposition of the results of both groups. The differences are barely visible. Girls show a higher empathic predisposition. In both groups empathy arises from feeling of sorrow, pity, suffering and grief. There are also models which show a probable personal feeling of distress, caused as a result of worry, confusion and anxiety.

#### IV. 2. Analisis on the answers given by the students who have passed the education

A drastic change is shown in the answers. There is an abrupt decline in numbers of students who show fear and helplessness. The decline is around 70%. This gives us reason to assume that not only do the levels of empathy rise, but also the degree of destress is overcome.

There is an increase of the students who display pity and sorrow, but there is also an increase in understanding and sympathy

It is of utmost interest that in the beginning there was only one person who had shown suspicion of guilt in the victim, but now there were six. This speaks of a development in the ability to change the view-point and putting oneself in the others shows, instead of reacting emotionally.

A change occurs in the relations between the answers of the boys and the girls. The differences between the boys aren't as grand, unlike those in the girls' answers. The percent of those who feel pity towards the victim has doubled. Those who are afraid or feel helpless has declined threefold. These differences are of extremely important, because they show weakening in the tendencies where boys show stronger emotional reaction and empathic predisposition. A higher number of girls show signs of anger and contempt, whilst boys are more likely to show compassion and friendliness.

#### IV. 3. Answers given by the control group

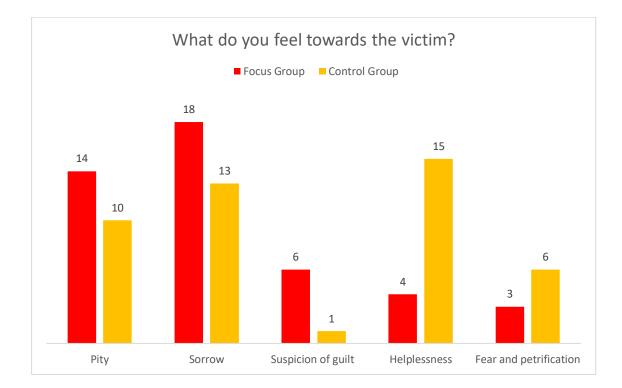
There is a slight change in answers compared to the initial given, however it is not substantial.

A minor increase in the numbers of children who experience warm feeling and understanding is seen, and a minor increase in those who feel anger and alienation. The quantities of those who are indifferent remain almost unchanged.

Girls continue to be extensively more emotional in their reactions opposed to the boys. The tendency, in girls being more prone to an expression of contempt and anger and the boys – good behavior or indifference, remains unchanged.

#### **IV. 4. Comparative analisis of both groups**

#### **First story:**



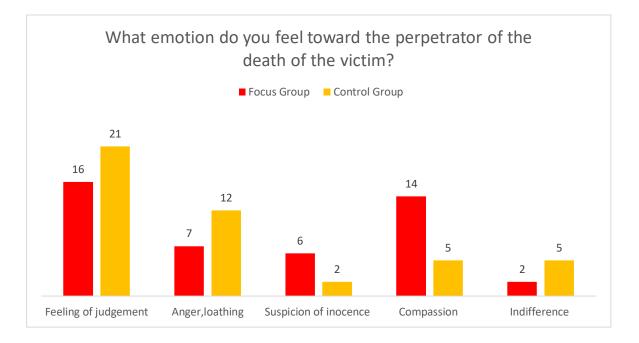
As seen in the comparative chartq the students who have passed their education based on the model, show a large increase in the levels of empathy, compared to the students from the control group. The bigges differences are in accordance to the levels is helplessnessq fear and petrification. The numbers of those who have passed training is three times smaller.

The difference in the number of children who show suspicion is very remarkable: six from the focus group agains only one from the control group.. This definatly shows a growing tendency in the development of the ability to understand the inner world of the other, to fanthom the others emotions and to show sensitivity towards those feeings. Whats more, a concious decision to put oneself in the others shoes, and a readiness to look from his point of view.

These differences are again proven from the answers gives to the second question. Again we see that 6 students, who have finished training on the model, are ready to assume that the murderer is inocent. This shoes that the empathic reactions are not just based on emotional response. They are formed from the ability to think in variables. The possitioning of oneself in the others situation gives a much more indebt empathic experience.

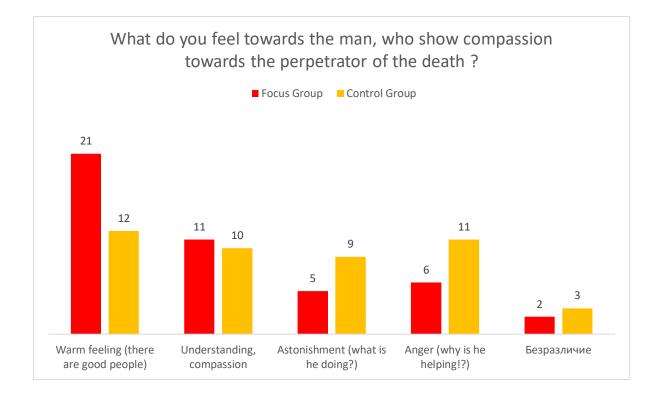
Putting onself in the viepoint of the other affects the prosocial behaviour by:

- changes in felt emotions;
- changes in understanding of the reasons of why the other is in the situation;
- changes in the causative attributes and overcoming the different variables in the evaluation of the occurrences;

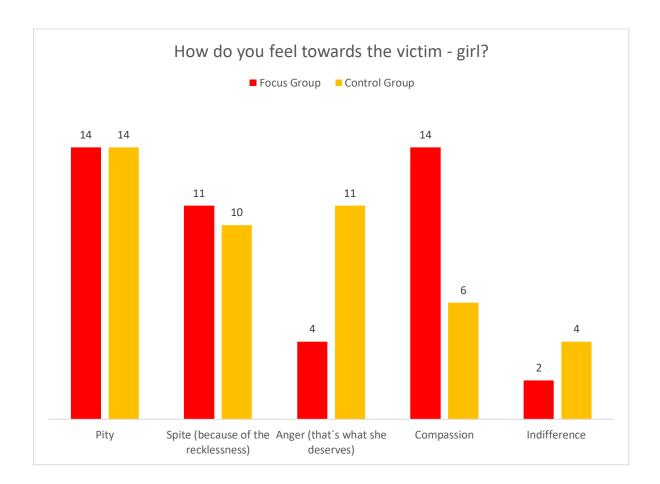


The group, which has passed training, has less students who feel anger, loathing or some sort of judging emotion. Those who show indifference are twice as little that the ones in the control group.

The answers to the third question don't show distinct differences, but what is clear is that the students who show warm feeling towards the person who shows compassion towards the perpetrator of the death are twenty-one in the Focus Group and only twelve in the Control Group



# Second story:



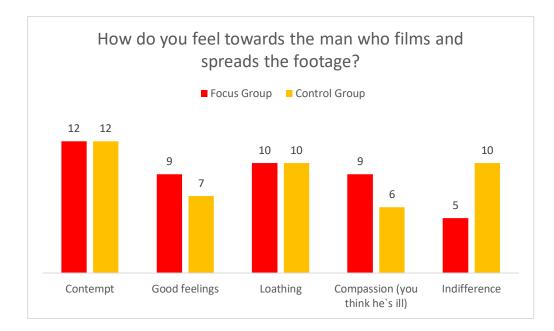
. In accordance to the answers to the first question from the story, the most impressive differences are those in the expression of anger and compassion. The students, who have completed the training on the Model, who show anger because of the girls recklessness are twice as less that those who show the same feelings, but are from the control group. It is clear that in the focus group, empathy is a feeling of compassion and concern, which the ME feels in accordance to being a witness to the suffering of the other.

What do you feel towards the three boys? Focus Group Control Group 13 12 11 11 10 10 9 8 5 1 Justification Loathing Anger Judgement Indifference

Empathy develops from sorrow, worry, unease, suffering, grief and slightly from anger.

The most intriguing thing in this comparison of the answers to the question towards the three boys and the man who spreads the filmed event is the very high difference in the numbers of students who remain indifferent.

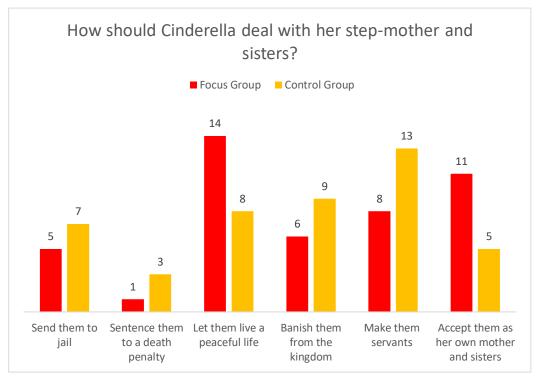
In the control group they are 30%, while in the focus group, who is trained in the Model, they are hardly 13%. This gives us reason to believe that in the focuse group the empathy shown, isn`t just an emotional reaction, but a desire to show an active position and action in response to the empathic feeling.



## **Third Story:**

There are obvious differences in the response on how should Cinderella act. In the control group 71% which for the step-mother and two sisters to receive some sort of punishment, three of them continue to demand a death sentence.

In the group, which has gone through theatrical training, the percent is only 44%. This once again proves that implementing the theatrical teaching method for actor training develops the ability of a person to put himself in the position of another, to change his view-point, which greatly increases the levels of empathy. Empathy can be a reason to show forgiveness.



The comparison of the answers clearly show, that the students who have undergone training have significantly increased their empathy levels compared to those in the control group.

Looked at from the context of available empirical data (the Eisenberg and Stamtov review), the following research again proves the trajectory in which the empathic development is viewed. Together with thisq the results of the empirical research show, that the cognitive and emotional empathy can be developed in the context of the training.

The activities and exercises shown in the model can be used as a leverage to increase the ability of examining viewpoints, which helps understand what the others are experiencing, and gives a much more in-depth compassion. This compassion is expressed through various emotions, which are part of empathy and with that distancing from indifference and judgement behaviors. The research confirms that the expression of empathy is different based on gender,

#### **Outcome**

- After training with the various exercises based on the model, the student pass from underdeveloped to developed forms of empath They manage to turn the initial emotional anxiety, empathy and sympathy into a more developed form of affective response, requiring the participation of cognitive abilities, such as:
- - distinguishing the Self the Other to understand one's own Self as different from the other, one's own mental world as different from the other's
- the presence of cognitive processes that shape the empathic response, by understanding the inner state of the other - understanding the point of view of the other, attributing the causes of the state of the other.
- ✓ The empathy that students show, whether presented in cognitive or affective terms, involves a response that is expressed in different actions. Empathy is manifested in actions by which students respond to the condition of the other usually these are prosocial actions in various forms.
- $\checkmark$  The empathic response becomes much more conscious and thoughtful.

- ✓ The empathic response is expressed through emotions that do not coincide with the emotions experienced by the other. The situation of the other is revealed in a much broader aspect in the horizon of life and destiny.
- ✓ The emotions that make up the empathic response are transformed: empathy into sympathy, empathic anger into empathic reflections on the injustice and fate of the other.
- ✓ he empathic response provokes reflection not only on the other's, but also on one's own destiny, a space of meaning and experiences are created, which are common for the Self and for the other.
- ✓ Unintentional empathy is complemented by intentional empathy, which is due to the more complex cognitive understanding of the other's situation it involves more complex cognitive processes, such as looking at the other's point of view.
- ✓ The empathic attitude is already entering the inner world of the other, "temporarily walking in the shoes" of the other, without losing the feeling that this world is different from your own world.

## **Conclusion**

- ✓ The model of theatrical-pedagogical strategy is an effective form of educating students in the art of acting in secondary art schools.
- ✓ The content of the Exercise Model is presented clearly and understandably for the students.
- ✓ The theoretical knowledge about communication and its immanent forms are expanded through the training, they are systematized, concretized and strengthened.
- ✓ At the end of the training the observation shows progress in mastering the communicating skills of the students. They become freer and more expressive, and create a corresponding vision of their positive change.
- ✓ Adequate use of this theatrical-pedagogical strategy can improve the motivation of the students for active and independent acquisition of knowledge and improvement of their social competencies.

- ✓ The training model brings to the students a stable relationship between the theory studied and the upcoming practice of future specialists in "Drama Theater Acting".
- ✓ Provides an opportunity for students to get to know each other in an informal environment.
- ✓ It creates opportunities for students for creativity by experimenting or correcting different patterns of behavior and communication.

### **Recommendations**

The psychological-pedagogical and educational potential of the observed theatrical educational strategies gives us reasons for the following recommendations to the institutions involved in educational politics.

- ✓ The dissertation covers up-to-date topics and problems that can be studied independently and in more deeply.
- ✓ Work can aggravate the conduct of practical and theoretical research to enrich the knowledge and skills of both students and professionals in pedagogical, social and other fields.
- The developed model of exercises can be applied in the education of students majoring in "Acting for Drama Theater" at the university.
- ✓ The approbation and verification of the future models related to the application of theatrical educational strategies could include a larger number of observed students from different cities and schools.
- ✓ The data from such research should be taken into consideration by the interested organizations and institutions, which could organize trainings and programs for students, as well as trainings for teachers to master theatrical and educational techniques and exercises related to the development of various social competencies among students.
- ✓ The ideas which originate this model can be used in the development of entirely new topics related to the competencies for introducing theatre as an art in education and finding its place among the disciplines of the aesthetic cycle taught in the Bulgarian school due to its unique ability to affect the overall personal development of the students.

#### **Contribution**

Theatrical educational strategies for training are studied as an element of the professional preparation of students in secondary art education in acting.

The analyzed relations between theatrical activity as artistic and as educational activity are considered from a new, original point of view and the possibilities of the educational theatrical activity for the professional preparation of the students in acting.

A theoretical analysis of the empathy in the context of educational theatrical activity as one of the key competencies for the development of social relations and self-improvement of students' personality.

A new, integrated didactic model for the development of empathy through theatricaleducational strategies in the context of the competence and effective approach to learning has been created, tested and verified for the purposes of the pedagogical research.

The model has been tested in a school environment with students from 8th, 9th and 11<sup>th</sup> grades, which makes it possible to track the personal and age development of empathy, as well as differences in its manifestations on the basis of gender.

The possibilities of the created model for the development of empathy have been empirically confirmed as a key characteristic of the social competence necessary for the formation of the personality and the acting skills.

The positive results of the application of the model on the basis of the selected theatricaleducational strategies are proved in the educational theatrical activity for the preparation and development of the students in the High School of Acting.

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