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***Theatre of the Oppressed* in the EFL Classroom: a Method for Individual
Liberation and Union between Teachers and Students**

Seminario de Tesis para optar al Título de Profesor en Comunicación en Lengua
Inglesa y al Grado de Licenciado en Educación

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Valdivia – Chile
2013

Acknowledgments

Above all I would like to thank my dearest family who has supported my aspirations; each member of this family has taught me how to become a better person.

Also, I would like to thank my friends Karin, Alexia and Helena for always being there.

I thank my teachers who I consider my friends because they have inspired me at a personal and social level. Especially Amalia, Úrsula, Sergio and Otto who have showed me that one teaches through love and spontaneity.

At last but not least, I would like to thank two people who have been by my side this challenging last year of university. Leonel for always giving me a hand and Bernadette for being the best partner along our research and in my life.

I love you all

Maritza Burgos Bertín

Acknowledgments

First of all, I would like to thank my mother for being such a strong woman, if it were not for her I would not be where and who I am today. Also, I would like to thank my entire family for being my joy of everyday and my support each step of the way.

I thank my teachers for encouraging my personal process of learning and my inner individual development.

I would like to thank my boyfriend Hernán for always being there, for teaching me everything he knows and for showing me that we are all made of stars. Finally, Maritza, this investigation would not have been the same without her knowledge and persistence. Likewise, I thank her for being a sincere friend and partner in life.

I am grateful to all of you and love you tremendously.

Bernadette Bilbao Caruana

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Abstract

The current status of the coexistence in the school communities is a matter of concern for the Chilean Ministry of Education and the society as a whole. For this reason, the national curriculum exposes the cross-curricular objectives to be dealt in class in a transversal way, the “development of democracy” being one the most important. Unfortunately, there is still a clear need to enhance the relationship between teachers and students. That is the reason why this research aims at investigating how EFL teachers of 12th grade in at risk contexts feel when dealing with complex value issues since the effective inclusion of the cross-curricular objectives will eventually strengthen the relationship within the school community. Consequently, the educational environment will become healthier if there is an honest communication among teachers, students and all the educational community. Thus, this research gathers information from a review of specialized literature and interviews to experts in order to come up with a pedagogical proposal based on the Theatre of the Oppressed and the Pedagogy of the Oppressed in relation to the cross-curricular objective of the development of democracy.

Keywords: cross-curricular objectives, Theatre of the Oppressed, Pedagogy of the oppressed, honest communication, democracy.

Introduction

The educational community is a complex environment that brings together different perspectives, tempers and tastes. Therefore, the affinity between every member of this community positively or negatively converges in diverse points. In this sense, the cross-curricular objectives are a branch of the national curriculum that deals with affective value issues. Thus, the Ministry of Education provides a set of five main groups of cross-curricular objectives to be dealt in class. Through this research, there is a discussion about the cross-curricular objective of ‘the person and his/her environment’, in specific, the development of democracy.

The researchers carry out an analysis of the Theatre of the Oppressed (T.O.) proposed by Augusto Boal (1985) in relation to the cross-curricular objective of the development of democracy. This type of theatre was created as a method to address complex value issues in at risk contexts in Brazil. Nowadays it has been used in several countries around the world and previous research has been done, linking this type of theatre to its application in schools. However, there is little research on this technique in relation to the Valdivian context, therefore; this investigation leads to new findings in connection to at risk contexts in the south of Chile.

Throughout this paper, there is an analysis of the main concepts that are dictated by the Chilean Ministry of Education. Firstly, the researchers investigate the cross-curricular objective of ‘the person and his/her environment’, basically, the development of democracy and how this cross-curricular objective is meant to be implemented in the EFL classroom. Afterwards, there is a comparison with the perspective of the Chilean Ministry of Education in

relation to other authors. In this part there is a description of some main concepts that are strongly related to democracy such as managing complex value issues, honest communication, the anti-emotional school and democracy itself, linking it to education. Secondly, the researchers present the Theatre of the Oppressed and the relation it has with the Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Freire, 1970). There is a description on how both work together, the T.O. works with theatrical techniques that are closely related to Popular and Community Theatre, while the P.O. works through pedagogy. Accordingly, the information is connected to at risk contexts to refer to Valdivia in order to present some tools to teach in these circumstances. Also, this research includes five interviews to experts so as to contextualize the literature review to the Valdivian reality. Therefore, this research comes up to a discussion by mixing the two types of data collected. Finally, the researchers adapt a set of activities taken from the Forum Theatre section of the Theatre of the Oppressed to generate a teaching proposal in the shape of a workshop, directed to EFL teachers who are currently working in at risk contexts in Valdivia. These activities are carefully selected and adapted so as to be apt for the future participants of this workshop.

Antecedents and Justification

1. Research Question

What activities from the Theatre of the Oppressed can be applied in at risk contexts EFL classrooms in Valdivia in order to include the development of democracy as a cross-curricular objective?

2. Objectives

2.1. General Objective

To design a teaching proposal for teachers of at risk contexts EFL classrooms in Valdivia to effectively apply the cross-curricular objective of the development of democracy through activities of the Theatre of the Oppressed.

2.1.2 Specific Objectives

1. To analyze the elements of the cross-curricular objectives that can be related to the Theatre of the Oppressed.
2. To create a workshop based on the Forum Theatre section of the Theatre of the Oppressed.

3. Hypothesis

The activities of the Theatre of the Oppressed are an effective way for EFL teachers at risk contexts in Valdivia to enhance the development of democracy as a cross-curricular objective.

4. Justification

This research is relevant because the quality of education is a current Chilean problem according to the demands of thousands of Chilean students and teachers. Also, there is a need for a change in the methodologies and strategies teachers have been using in relation to the cross-curricular objectives. The researchers believe that through the reinforcement of the

cross-curricular objectives the environment in the classroom will be much more honest and relaxed which is the ideal environment for the learning process.

In this sense, this research is significant because in Chile there is a necessity to work with civic education. The Chilean history has shown a breaking point between the perspectives of education before, during and post dictatorship. After dictatorship, the country has led to a democratic transition that needs to be constructed from its educational basis. Nowadays, education is a human right and the most important instance for social development of human beings. Therefore, the Theatre of the Oppressed works as an overarching element this research will investigate to suggest a way to regain freedom of expression, communication and dialogue in the Valdivian classrooms. Although there is little known about the relationship between cross curricular objectives and the Theatre of the Oppressed in Chile, this research will collect information from experts that have experience on the topics. As a result, a teaching proposal for EFL teachers of 12th grade in at risk context will be designed including a set of activities of the Theatre of the Oppressed to develop democracy as cross curricular objective.

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1. State of the Art

1.1.1 Cross-curricular Objectives

In order to give a broader vision of how values are dealt in class in other settings it is important to refer to other countries' reality in cross-curricular terms. Therefore, the researchers overviewed the curricula of three countries which are Venezuela, Finland and India. The researchers chose Venezuela to present another South American vision, Finland because it is considered to be one of the best educational systems of the world and India to portray an educational system in which the cross-curricular objectives are immersed in a transversal way throughout the educational process.

In reference to the National Curriculum of Education of Venezuela (2007), the cross-curricular objectives are called fundamental objectives, which are applied throughout the entire learning process. First, the educational policies must be oriented in relation to the historical, political and national idiosyncrasy for the formation of new citizens with a clear sociocultural identity, committed to their motherland. Second, for the Venezuelan educational authorities it is necessary to provide new experiences, principles, attitudes, virtues and values of freedom, cooperation and solidarity. Finally, the solidarity of one's actions must generate the conditions to engage in relations of justice, equity, equality and commitment of the students and other participants of the educational process (p. 55-56).

The cross-curricular themes as called in Finland are "educational challenges with social significance. . . . [They] deal with issues concerning the way of life as a whole" (Finnish National Board of Education, 2004, p.26). These themes are divided into six concepts. The

one that is related to this research paper is “active citizenship and entrepreneurship” which mainly refers to:

Educate students to become contributing, responsible and critical citizens. . .

- consolidate their knowledge of human rights and the operating principles of democratic society. . .
- be able to form their own justified opinions and discuss these with respect for other people’s opinions;
- be familiar with various participation systems in society and their procedures;
- be ready to participate in the creation of common good for their local community . . . (FNBE, 2004, p.27)

As stated above, the Finnish National Board of Education desires to educate people to be treated as equals and thus, reinforcing this process by practicing it in real life contexts. This purpose is also pointed out by the Chilean Ministry of Education and by the Indian one.

According to the Central Board of Secondary Education (2013), what is most important in India is to make connections with knowledge and experiences. These “connections are essentially required for being able to make sense of our world and foster learning capacity. Making links between subjects also helps learner [*sic*] more effectively apply and embed skills and knowledge in meaningful and purposeful contexts” (p. 10). The Indian Educational Curriculum refers to the cross-curricular objectives as a way to embrace all courses through the reflection of their learning process. For this, the “[teachers] should involve

learners in cross-curricular projects thus helping learners recognise these underpinning skills and how to use them in a variety of contexts” (p. 10).

Lastly in Chile, the cross-curricular objectives are a branch included in the national curriculum and they were determined by the Ministry of Education with the intention to unify and direct the contents towards the task of forming values in the schools. According to Valoras UC (2003), the cross-curricular objectives in general refer to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviors that the students are expected to develop in a personal, intellectual, moral and social way. Valoras UC remarked that the policies proposed by the Ministry of Education conceive the school as an educational community that promotes participation. In order to achieve a democratic coexistence, this must be based on daily practices. This means that the students must develop more comprehension on the necessity to live in diversity, everyone equal in dignity, respectful of the differences, united for the common goal of learning (2003, p.3).

This organization stated a relation with the Chilean national context regarding the political, economic, and social regime, which is democracy. They said that to manage a democratic community in Chile implies a complex challenge because people are accustomed to reaching goals with authoritarian styles and practices. Hence, the democratic and communitarian management has a peculiarity that everybody must learn; this includes different perspectives, values, strategies and specific skills (Valoras UC, 2008, p.3).

Furthermore, Valoras UC proposed three main values that should be included in a democratic classroom; these are respect, participation and dialogue. The first one means that everyone should be treated as an equal in human dignity. Therefore, one has the right to think, to have reasoning, to be greeted, to take responsibility, to be legitimated and trusted in one's

word. Respect towards diversity allows the different participants to feel confident that they are being accepted. The second one refers to the participation one should have in this educational community. In Chile this is complex because people are not committed to participating, also because they are culturally individualist. This means that they often despise common welfare and are not interested in participating unless it is for personal benefit. Third, to dialogue is the most important tool that allows us to listen, express, reflect, converse and come up with a common agreement (Valoras UC, 2008, p. 3- 4).

In short, the four countries find values as important as the contents viewed in class. That is why cross-curricular objectives (CCOs) should be dealt along with them in a transversal way. One can say that these four countries take into account a broader sense of human development such as one's critical and creative thinking, and one's individual and collective values, such as citizenship and democratic coexistence in which one can possibly find the roots of education. Finally, it is relevant to mention that the CCOs meet the objectives imparted by each country's social, cultural and political background. Consequently, each one of them will have its own way of reaching those objectives according to their reality.

In this sense, it is believed that in Chile, these objectives should be developed as a whole, taking into account each one of them. Therefore, the researchers used 'the person and his/her environment' as a premise to follow during this research. According to the Chilean Ministry of Education (2009), this cross- curricular objective refers to the improvement of the personal, familiar, working, social and civic interaction, contexts in which values such as respect, active citizenship, national identity and democratic coexistence should prevail (p. 25).

1.1.2 Theatre of the Oppressed

According to Tânia Baraúna & Tomás Motos (2009), the Theatre of the Oppressed (T.O.) was first created and developed by Augusto Boal, a Brazilian actor and writer who carried out workshops in the slums in *Rio de Janeiro*. He developed this technique during his political exile between the years 1971 and 1986. This technique has its origin in at risk contexts, working with people with poor socioeconomic status and who are marginalized in one way or another. The main goal of the T.O. is “to grant a voice for the oppressed class and to everyone who is oppressed in the interior of this [class]”¹ (2009, p.56).

Moreover, the same authors mentioned that the T.O. is a movement of scenic-pedagogical theatrical practice that possesses militant characteristics and is destined for the public mobilization. The fundament vision of this approach is mankind and the world in permanent interaction, since in the plot of everyday relationships; mankind has conditions to recreate themselves through the transformation of him/herself and his/her environment (Baraúna & Motos, 2009, p. 62). In order to refer to the methodologies and techniques of the T.O. one has to understand that the

Theatre of the Oppressed is an esthetical method, according to Boal, who works through diverse art forms and not only with theatre. He joins exercises, games and theatrical techniques that aim at physical and intellectual demechanization of its practitioners and the democratization of theatre.² (2009, p. 64)

¹ “Para otorgar la palabra a las clases oprimidas y a todos aquellos quienes son oprimidos en el interior de estas”. All Translations from Spanish into English of this research paper were carried out by the authors.

² El Teatro del Oprimido es un método estético, según, Boal, que trabaja mediante diversas formas de arte y no sólo con el teatro. Reúne ejercicios, juegos y técnicas teatrales que objetivan la desmecanización física e intelectual de sus practicantes y la democratización del teatro.

In order to make a brief reference to the paths that the T.O. has been developing, the researchers can mention some of the most important situations in which this technique has been used in Latin America. The International Theatre of the Oppressed Organization (2004) remarked that the origin of this theatre was as itself, developed underground to be disguised from the dictator regime in Brazil. Therefore, it was called *Newspaper Theatre* with the goals of dealing with local problems from *Rio du Janeiro*. Then, it was used through all the country of Brazil. Along with this, the T.O. was carried out as Forum Theatre in Peru, in 1973. From then on, it was used in more than 70 countries including Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela, among others. In all these countries the technique's aim was to work as a political activity, to establish a dialogue among Indigenous Nations and Spanish descendants, etc. As the T.O.'s main objective is to give voice to people that feel oppressed, it has been used "by peasants and workers; later, by teachers and students; now, also by artists, social workers, psychotherapists, NGOs... At first, in small, almost clandestine places. Now in the streets, schools, churches, trade-unions, regular theatres, prisons..." (International Theatre of the Oppressed Organization, 2004).

Regarding the Chilean context, this type of theatre has been developed by the *Theatre Company French-Chilean LA OBRA*. In this sense, the company expressed a brief summary of what they do, which is:

A theatre of social nature. We work in Chile and in France. In Chile we have made several workshops in different NGOs and in the juvenile prisons. In France our work has focused on the defense and re-appropriation of Breton, Celtic language of the region of Brittany, France. Soon we will part to Guatemala, Ixcán with the purpose of opening a socio cultural community that will be in charge of supporting and enhancing

the culture and the language of the region. Our artistic basis: Theatre of the Oppressed.³ (International Theatre of the Oppressed Organization, 2004)

The data collected proves that the T.O. has had its roots in the objective of improving education and so, it has a direct influence on educating people to be more understanding by practicing active citizenship, respecting one another and communicating one's worries in real-life contexts. In addition, this technique has been broadly practiced in at risk contexts with the intention to reintegrate prisoners to society and demarginalizing people from poverty.

In order to implement the cross-curricular objective of the 'person and his/her environment', the researchers explored the Theatre of the Oppressed and the relation it has with education in general. Tomás Motos-Teruel & Antoni Navarro-Amorós (2011) developed a research relating the Theatre of the Oppressed to the formation of educators and they came to the conclusion that the Theatre of the Oppressed encourages the reflection on the teaching practice and in the quest for alternatives in unsatisfactory situations.

1.2. Cross-curricular Objective: The Person and his/her Environment

The Ministry of Education divided the cross-curricular objectives into five main groups which are: "*Crecimiento y autoafirmación personal*", "*Desarrollo del pensamiento*", "*Formación ética*", "*La persona y su entorno*" y "*Tecnologías de información y comunicación*" (MINEDUC, 2009, p. 23-25).

³Teatro de carácter [sic] social. Trabajamos en Chile y Francia. En Chile hemos realizado varios talleres en distintas ONG y en la prision [sic] de menores, en Francia nuestro trabajo se ha centrado en la defensa y reapropiacion [sic] de el breton [sic], lengua celta de la region [sic] de Bretana [sic], Francia. Proximamente [sic] partiremos a Guatemala, Ixcán, a fin de abrir un centro socio cultural que se ocupe de apoyar y valorizar la cultura y lengua de la region. Nuestra base artistica [sic]: Teatro de Oprimido.

According to the perspective of this investigation, the objective of ‘the person and his/her environment’ is relevant due to the fact that it refers to the improvement of personal, family, working, social and civic interaction, contexts in which values should reign. For example, mutual respect, active citizenship, national identity and democratic coexistence (MINEDUC, 2009, p. 25). Thus, from this point on the researchers analyzed the perspective given by the Ministry of Education towards the concept of developing democracy, citizenship and civic duties.

In depth, what this national department understands by the area of ‘the person and his/her environment’ is:

a citizen in a democratic scenery, committed with his/ her environment, with a high sense of social responsibility, capable of favoring styles of social coexistence based on the respect for one another and in the pacific resolution of conflicts; it promotes that the students should know, value and care for their social environment – such as personal and family –, like nature and social groups in which they develop.⁴

(MINEDUC, 2003, p.26)

In addition to this, they affirmed that these practices should be reflected outside the school as the students are citizens too. Taking into account that they are in a state of citizens, the development of democracy in school will reflect upon them as future agents of change.

⁴ Sitúa a la persona como ciudadano en un escenario democrático, comprometido con su entorno, con un alto sentido de responsabilidad social; capaz de favorecer estilos de convivencia social basadas en el respeto por el otro, en la resolución pacífica de conflictos; promueve que los y las estudiantes conozcan, valoren y cuiden su entorno social, tanto personal –familiar, como el medio ambiente y los grupos sociales en que se desenvuelven.

1.2.1 Cross-curricular Objective of ‘the Person and his/her Environment’ in the EFL Classroom

The Chilean Ministry of Education also made some specifications for the CCOs to be treated differently in each subject. Particularly, the CCO of ‘the person and his/her environment’ is expected to develop some specific values by the students. This department declared that if a person has the opportunity to have contact with other countries and cultures from where a language comes and it is spoken, the students can appreciate other lifestyles, traditions and ways of thinking that can broaden the idea of a growing globalized and interdependent world. Hence, the contact with people and institutions from other countries and cultures within the Chilean context, allows expanding the knowledge of cultural heritage, its diversity and the integration of Chile to the process of globalization, analyzing the tensions that it generates. The study of a foreign language allows the young ones to develop tools to perform and actively participate in the social life, in the working world or in the higher education because this amplifies their possibilities to access information, knowledge and techs as well as other lifestyles, traditions and ways of thinking (MINEDUC, 2003, p.104).

Even though the expected positive attitudes from the students towards another culture and its language is beneficial to accept diversity, to respect the other and to legitimate this person in his/her differences; there is a crucial understanding that is not being taken into account in the CCO of ‘the person and his/her environment’ for the EFL classroom; this is to first know, value and care about the Chilean culture and traditions. Therefore, the students can construct their own perspective and be able to compare differences, similarities and any other factor that could help them to develop an interest to learn a second language. The acceptance of the diversity of other cultures, as mentioned above, has a link to the development of

democracy. In order to accept other cultures students must be respectful towards these different ways of thinking and acting.

1.3. Managing Complex Value Issues

Values are expected to be cultivated in class by teachers and students. Regarding this, the CCOs have a strict relation with values; therefore, with the person itself. The educational communities bring together different types of people, with different beliefs and values that will come together in these institutions. This is why the CCOs play an important role to deal with diversity. In this sense, Carl Rogers (2004) affirmed that if a person experiences a relationship where he/ she is fully accepted and in that acceptance there is no judgment but compassion and sympathy the individual could engage in a battle with one self, develop the sufficient courage in order to abandon his/her defenses and confront his or her true self (p. 267).

Taking into account the time students and teachers spend at school, there has to exist an amount of this time where people can develop their cultural and community values. This means being educated according to human rights and duties using, among others, the vision conveyed by the Chilean Ministry of Education. Dealing with complex value issues is not an easy task for teachers, many of them are part of what Alasdair MacIntyre (as cit. in Wylie, 2005, p. 14) referred to as an 'emotivist culture' where values are perceived to be a matter of individual development and therefore not something for teachers to impose on pupils.

While many teachers 'agreed that values were inherent in education, they expressed feelings of discomfort, confusion and self-doubt in dealing with values-related issues'. Some of the teachers' reservations stemmed from a perceived lack of professional

training to deal with complex value issues but many of the comments seemed to indicate a more fundamental concern about the nature of values. (Montgomery and Smith as cit. in Wylie, 2005, p. 13)

1.3.1 Honest Communication: a Genuine Relationship between the Teacher and the Student

The concept of 'honest communication' has been used by a Valdivian writer and teacher whose name is Rodrigo Gaínza. He stated that the foundation of honest communication is the strong commitment to establish a dialogue and face problems, avoiding or exposing any form of double standard manipulation (2004, p. 14). This means that honesty should be the basis of a 'real' interaction among people, embracing this type of dialogue to show one's intentions in an explicit way when engaging in conversation (p. 11).

The educational system and coexistence is a daily routine which demands a positive and healthy environment for both, teacher and student. This means, that this relationship should be developed in a way that the students and teachers feel comfortable with one another and themselves. Therefore, this constant relationship may be affected by several behaviors from teachers and students in class, whom are not feeling respected or accepted the way they are. In this respect Gaínza (2004) said

If we ask for the opinion of the students, the problem is the incoherence among action and speech, the dishonest way the facts are addressed. The educational institution

rhetorically uses the form of dialogue and collaboration to justify the directional power that is used among the children but this power is never discussed.⁵ (p. 11)

Therefore, the coherence, in terms of action and speech, is fundamental in order to create a bond to a profound relationship of respect which could lead to trust. Nevertheless, Gaínza stated that the children perceive in this institutional behavior an abusive attitude because they are unreasonably attributed the incapacity of understanding and responding to a dialogue in which what would be fair for them is knowing what they would be discussing; though, this hardly ever happens. This is why they feel deceived each time they find out that the dialogue proposed by the educational institution is part of a mechanism of control. This author mentioned that without taking into account the opinion of the students they are sometimes invalidated by a prejudiced procedure that considers they lack the necessary criteria to respond coherently, when they are far beyond the point of understanding their position in the world (2004, p. 11).

As mentioned before, there are some behaviors from teachers and students that can negatively interfere in order to create an honest communication among each other. Some teachers are authoritarian and use mechanisms that make students refuse a friendly relationship with them, as teachers and as an individual person. Furthermore, these attitudes impact on students' self-esteem, depriving them from their right to make choices, solve problems and be aware about their own learning process.

⁵ Si consultamos la opinión de los escolares, el problema es la incoherencia entre prácticas y discursos, la forma deshonestas en que los hechos son abordados. La institución escolar usa retóricamente la figura del diálogo y la colaboración para justificar el poder direccional que ejerce sobre los menores, pero dicho poder no es puesto jamás en discusión.

According to Gaínza (2004) “The legitimacy towards the other should not be assumed as a value a priori, independent from their actions. It is their actions or ours which demand legitimacy and not their human condition as a metaphysic substance”⁶ (p. 13). Consequently, the acceptance towards the other should be based on their actions and not on their words. One can refer to this as an ‘action communication’ which will show the true nature of one’s thoughts and intentions. This is not a natural state of human beings per se but a daily construction for respecting one another and listening to each other in one’s interaction with society.

Hence, the basis to create a better understanding among teachers and students is reinforcing honest communication in order to truly develop the cross-curricular objective of ‘the person and his/her environment’. Therefore, there has to be a commitment between the teacher and student to start creating a favorable environment.

Gaínza affirmed (2004) that ‘Honest Communication’ among these two roles (student-teacher) emerges as a source for the teaching/learning process inside and outside school. In order to legitimate the other it is necessary to know him/her. This means, to know his/her own actions, intentions or motivations. This does not mean that people should legitimate one another just because they are afraid to express their true feelings (p.13-14).

Regarding the point of view of the researchers, this fact does not usually occur in the schools. It is said beforehand that the staff should maintain a healthy relationship among each other, towards the students and with the school authorities. However, in the pursuit of generating a healthy type of relationship it is possible that one will try to evade personal

⁶ “La legitimidad del otro no debería ser asumida como un a priori valórico independiente de sus acciones. Son sus acciones o las nuestras las que demandan legitimación y no su condición humana tomada como una sustancia metafísica.”

concerns and worries. In order to create a democratic coexistence, it is not necessary to hide one's true feelings; on the contrary, to pose one's personal reflections, though, it may bring problems in the educational community. However, it is important to highlight the relevance of sharing these feelings in order to create an honest environment, taking into account the idea of solving problems instead of avoiding them.

1.3.2 The Anti-emotional School

Juan Casassus (2007) referred to the 'anti-emotional school' as an instrument to dominate students to the will of the authorities. These authorities are not necessarily focused on the integral development of the students but on molding their minds. The students that do not fit into the mold of 'normality' are rapidly judged as 'troubled' or 'emotionally unstable' students. In the anti-emotional school the fundamental question is '¿What can I do in order to make students do what I want?' This is why; the anti-emotional schools are schools of submission and domination (p. 236). Consequently, the prejudiced statements and actions on behalf of teachers and authorities can lead to an unhealthy relationship and a deplorable environment.

Furthermore, Casassus (2007) stated that in an unhealthy environment children tend to simulate what they are feeling and thinking in order to fit in. They do not feel accepted for who they are. This lack of recognition produces a loss of identity and the students are likely to cut bonds with the teachers. The students' frustration triggers opposite emotions and they see the teachers and authorities as enemies as they step in a relationship of war, resentment and anger (p. 236). As discouraging as this may sound, the educational reality must be acknowledged in order to develop a solution. Especially, when the educational patterns offered

in schools will be the education reproduced in the society when the students become working citizens.

On the contrary, Casassus (2007) mentioned that the emotional school is the organization of a system of relationships that is structured around the learning process understanding that this process has a strict emotional function. Also, the relationship between teachers and students is by definition emotional. The interaction among these two roles (teacher/student) can spur learning (p. 238). According to Casassus “. . . a school is fundamentally a community of relationships and interactions oriented towards the learning process. This learning process mainly depends on the type of relationships to be established in the school and in the classroom”⁷ (p. 239, 2007). So, as one can infer, the type of relationship between teachers and students, whether it is healthy or unhealthy, is decisive for the learning process of the students, and determines the teachers’ satisfaction with their professions.

Regarding the teachers’ attitudes, Casassus (2007) detailed that teachers frequently show emotional conducts that are not one hundred percent spontaneous but are generated by how the culture defines the role of teachers. This role has culturally been defined almost exclusively in rationalist terms (p. 242). Meaning that the teachers must fit in the role society has created for them being repeatedly deprived from their true self. The teachers must mold themselves – just as students do – into a limited being, whether it is for the sake of the curriculum, the regulations, the authorities, professionalism, etc. Teachers must be impeccable when it comes to emotions and ways of thinking, since they are always being watched under a magnifying glass.

⁷“...una escuela es fundamentalmente una comunidad de relaciones y de interacciones orientadas al aprendizaje, donde el aprendizaje depende principalmente del tipo de relaciones que se establezcan en la escuela y en el aula.”

Concerning the students, Casassus said that “the students have the urge to be accepted in their legitimacy, they want to be heard, they need to be respected, they need to feel they belong to a community of equals, they need to play and they need autonomy”⁸ (p. 245, 2007). All these values must be promoted by the educational institutions, the authorities, the teachers and the students. Each one composing this community must be proactive in order to achieve these goals. Teachers and students are agents of change; only when they feel satisfied and happy with what they are doing can the learning process really take place.

Casassus affirmed that the working conditions for the teachers are very tough. He thinks that having thirty or forty or more children in each class for several hours a day, every day, generates tensions that are difficult to see for those who do not have to live them. Working in an anti-emotional system and school is very frustrating and makes the teachers feel guilty because they see the denial of the dreams they had when they started the teaching major. The majority of the teachers would like to work in an emotional school where they could devote the necessary attention to each child (p. 247-248).

1.4. Democracy

Democracy, whether from a national view or an individual perspective, is a concept that can be understood in many different ways. Though democracy has been considered to be part of the society for many years; the truth is that the world one lives in demonstrates attitudes of discrimination, hatred and violence. So, it is certain to say that if a country has a democratic regime it does not mean that the society has democratic citizens. José Rubio, José Rosales and Manuel Toscano (2009) expressed that becoming a democratic citizen often

⁸ “Los alumnos tienen necesidades de ser reconocidos en su legitimidad, quieren ser escuchados, necesitan ser respetados, necesitan pertenecer a una comunidad de pares, necesitan jugar, necesitan autonomía.”

means to oppose one's natural trend; to dedicate time and effort to construct one's own political opinion; to pay attention to the problems of one's community and to accept that everything that is common interest has to go through the debate and the decision of all people (p. 23).

Democracy is a concept that is not only understood as a political system but also as a human value. Actually, this term is used to talk about democratic people, procedures, methods or institutions. Its foundation lays on constantly promoting and respecting the opinion of people and collective decision. According to the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) "[the] falling turnout at elections, dissatisfaction with politics and politicians, the strength of new populist movements demonstrate that democracy is never permanently anchored anywhere, but requires constant nurturing and development" (p.1, 2003).

Furthermore, the educational process every human experiences is a vast part of one's life; therefore, the educational institutions that provide guidance throughout the first periods of this process should develop the necessary tools to apply democracy in all its forms in real-life contexts. As it was mentioned before, democracy can have many meanings so the perspectives of different authors on the subject are described below.

1.4.1 Morin: a Perspective from UNESCO

Edgar Morin is a French philosopher and sociologist. He worked with UNESCO writing his book 'Seven Complex Lessons in Education for the Future'. In relation to his work, he stated that

Democracy assumes and feeds the diversity of interests and ideas. The respect of diversity means that democracy cannot be identified as the dictatorship of the majority over the minority. Democracy must include the rights of the minorities and non-conformist . . . and must allow the expression of heretical and marginalized ideas.⁹ (2001, p. 107-108)

The coexistence of every form of life in a democratic world is a way of being, a way of seeing one another and a way of acting in order to improve living standards. In a democratic world everybody has a voice, an opinion and a concern that must be respected. In connection with this, Morin (2001) affirmed that “. . . democracy is more than a political regime, it's the continue regeneration of a complex and retroactive loop: the citizens produce the democracy that produces the citizens”¹⁰ (p. 107). Developing democracy in every possible instance is a way of transforming the citizens to show democratic attitudes towards life and other citizens.

Furthermore, the educational institutions should be the place for argued debate for every person to be aware of the necessities and concerns of listening in respect of the marginalized and minorities' voices. That way, the learning for comprehension must play a fundamental role in the learning of democracy (Morin, 2001, p. 113). One should not only learn to be democratic but to really understand where one comes from. In this sense, everyone will know his/her identity feeling part of a social group, an organization, a nationality, etc. Also, in order to understand each other it is important to understand the roots of the personal identity, where people come from and which are their intentions to move forward to.

⁹La democracia supone y alimenta la diversidad de los intereses así como la diversidad de las ideas. El respeto de la diversidad significa que la democracia no se puede identificar con la dictadura de la mayoría sobre las minorías; ella debe incluir el derecho de las minorías y contestatarios a la existencia y a la expresión, y debe permitir la expresión de las ideas heréticas y marginadas.

¹⁰“ . . . la democracia es, más que un régimen político, la regeneración continua de un bucle complejo y retroactivo: los ciudadanos producen la democracia que produce los ciudadanos.”

Developing democracy in the classroom makes sense because today's society develops in a political, social and economic democratic regime. It is pertinent to develop democracy in the classroom so the students can enforce their right to it, create spaces to obtain it and accept diversity as a point of union. Moreover, civic education is tremendously important when it comes to teaching or working on the development of democracy. Though, it is not the only space where this type of interactions can take place, especially when democracy should be transversal.

1.4.2 Democracy and Education

Emma Salas (2001) referred to the foundation of democracy as

In the case of the occidental culture to which we belong, values in general are based on a Judeo-Christian origin widespread by history: freedom, respect of the human being and the harmonic coexistence of the social group. This shows the values that integrate the concept of democracy as a way of life. . . .The well-known and understood expression of democracy by people in general is regarding the political dimension of representative democracy. Nevertheless, the concept of democracy as a way of life involves other aspects that are related to the respect towards the human being, for example, the equality of them, the individual liberties and what today we denominate 'human rights'.¹¹ (2001, p. 47)

¹¹ En el caso de la cultura occidental a la pertenecemos, los Valores general se centran básicamente en aquellos de origen judeo-cristiano, mediatizados por la historia: libertad y respeto por el ser humano y la convivencia armónica del grupo social. De allí que derivan los valores que integran el concepto de Democracia como forma de vida. . . .La expresión de la democracia es más conocida y comprendida por la gente en general es la dimensión política que se expresa en la democracia representativa. No obstante, el concepto de democracia como forma de vida abarca otros aspectos que están relacionados con el respeto al ser humano, como por ejemplo, la igualdad de éstos, las libertades individuales y todo aquello que hoy denominamos "derechos humanos."

Hence, to have a number of common values, each member of the group has to hold an equal opportunity to receive and take from others. There must be a great diversity of initiatives and shared experiences. Otherwise, the influences that educate some people to be ‘gentlemen’ will be educating others to be slaves (John Dewey, 2004, p. 79).

In a more strict relation to education, James Beane and Michael Apple (2000) stated that there are some conditions –regarding democracy – that need to be treated in schools: the free circulation of ideas that allow people to be informed; faith in individual and collective capacities to create the possibilities to resolve problems; the use of critical thinking and analysis to value other ways of understanding; the concern of the welfare of others; the concern of the rights and the dignity of minorities. Finally, it must be understood that the promotion and expansion of democratic life is not a model that should be pursued using a mixture of idealized values and the organization of social institutions (p. 21).

Moreover, when referring to real democratic practices in educational communities from the U. S., the authors mentioned that these are brimming enthusiastic centers, even in depressing and difficult times. These are schools where students and teachers are committed to a serious job that derives in rich and vital learning experiences for all the personnel (Beane & Apple, 2000, p.16). Considering what has been said before, democratic schools should have an instance for students and personnel to develop democracy to its fullest. In this sense, John Dewey (1916) indicated that for people to obtain and maintain a democratic life, it is necessary to have opportunities of learning what this form of life means and how it can be practiced (cit. in Beane & Apple, 2000, p. 21).

Regarding the teachers leadership, Emma Salas (2001) pointed out three types of leadership: authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire. Regarding the attitudes of a democratic leadership, Salas mentioned that the environment in class must be based on a horizontal relationship between teachers and students. Also, the teacher maintains a fluid dialogue with the students that contribute to a relaxed setting. The teacher encourages the students to question in order to dissipate their doubts, to give their opinions and to actively participate in class. The teacher shows respect towards the students' opinions and if these seem controversial, the teacher will encourage them to discuss them thoroughly (p. 40). Furthermore, Maxine Greene (1985) asserted that in a living democracy, it is the education requirement to empower the adolescents to become active members of their community, to participate and play articular roles in the public space (as cit. in Beane & Apple, 2000, p, 22).

Though there are civic understandings of democracy, -elections, human rights, equal opportunities, among others- some of the defenders of democratic schools realize the importance of 'trivial' certainties from life. These circumstances remind the experts that the most profound meaning of democracy is not formed in the brilliant political rhetoric, but in the details of daily living (Beane & Apple, 2000, p. 158). Therefore, it is important to highlight the power that education has in the students' lives. Education can turn out to be the tool and situation to change society through democratic and pro-active students. Likewise, democracy is the extension in the number of individuals in the space where they participate for an interest. This way, each person has to act taking into account the other person's actions. It is equivalent to the suppression of barriers of class, race and national territory that prevent the man to perceive the full meaning of his/her activity (Dewey, 2004, p.82).

1.5. From Pedagogy of the Oppressed to Theatre of the Oppressed

The Pedagogy of the Oppressed (P.O.) by Paulo Freire and the Theatre of the Oppressed (T.O.) by Augusto Boal were first developed in Brazil; the first one fed the second one to create its basis. These two types of expression maintain a strict relation when it comes to their objectives. Both, the Pedagogy and the Theatre aim at liberating the oppressed class from its oppression. Freire (1970) said that the oppressed are those that are dehumanized, ravished by the oppressors who want to impose their conscious on the oppressed. Also, the oppressed are overturned by the system and society, transforming themselves into objects ready to serve being deprived from their rights.

Paulo Freire developed the P.O. as a way of meeting this objective, while Augusto Boal developed the T.O. to meet this liberation through drama techniques. In relation to this, Augusto Boal (2005) stated that the Theatre of the Oppressed incorporates the following features from Freire's methodology: the proposal that each person has to construct his/her knowledge with autonomy and with an open method that can allow each one to construct his/her own path...¹² (cit. in Baraúna & Motos, 2009, p.80). Both methodologies intend to develop critical thinking among the oppressed class to give them strategies to change their reality, being dialogue the basis for shaping this critical personality. According to Baraúna & Motos (2009), Freire and Boal thought that there is no communication, education nor intervention without dialogue. Indeed, Freire (1993) emphasized that dialogue is a humanization process; "... dialogue is an amorous relationship between the people who, through the world, proclaim this very world. They transform the world and, by transforming it,

¹² "...el Teatro del Oprimido incorpora de la metodología de Freire la propuesta de que cada persona construya su conocimiento con libertad, con autonomía y con un método abierto que permita a cada uno poder construir su camino..."

they humanize it for every person in the world”¹³. Accordingly, Augusto Boal worked on the development of dialogue through Forum Theatre; one of his techniques from the Theatre of the Oppressed in which the members put into practice the participatory and dialogic procedures that were previously proposed by Freire. For both Theatre of the Oppressed and Pedagogy of the Oppressed, education is based on democracy, dialogue and transitivity, and intervention is based on thinking that everybody can teach and everybody can learn from every person (Baraúna & Motos, 2009, p. 81).

According to the experience of these two authors, the main objectives of the methodologies of the T.O. and the P.O. cover the lines of social justice, rights (human, social, political, etc.), liberty, equality, democracy, no discrimination and social marginalization and cultural dispute (Baraúna & Motos, 2009, p. 92). Both authors and methodologies are separately described below in order to approach these techniques to the Chilean context.

1.5.1 Paulo Freire: Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Paulo Freire was a Brazilian writer and teacher. He has been well known for his contribution to international education and pedagogy. Paulo Freire developed the P.O. as a path for the liberation of the oppressed class. Freire (1970) said that “the pedagogy of the oppressed, in the end, has its roots in the pedagogy of men who persist in their fight for freedom. The P.O. must have, the own oppressed that know, or begin to know themselves critically as oppressed, as one of its subjects”¹⁴ (p. 49). Consequently, there has to be a period for the acceptance of the condition of being the oppressed class. Therefore, education is an

¹³ “...el diálogo es una relación amorosa entre las personas que, mediadas por el mundo, proclaman ese mundo. Ellas transforman el mundo y, al transformarlo, lo humanizan para todas las personas.”

¹⁴ “La pedagogía del oprimido que, en el fondo, es la pedagogía de los hombres que se empeñan en la lucha por su liberación, tiene sus raíces ahí. Y debe tener, en los propios oprimidos que se saben o empiezan a conocerse críticamente como oprimidos, uno de sus sujetos.”

instance to understand and assume what to be oppressed means and how one can gain the tools to break free from that state.

In relation to what has been stated above, the education leaders – teachers – play an important role in the liberation process of the oppressed. In addition, Freire (1970) stated that . . . the path to the fulfillment of a liberating work carried out by the revolutionary leadership is not the “liberating propaganda”. This work does not lie in the mere act of depositing the belief of freedom in the oppressed, thinking, thus, of gaining their confidence, but it does in the fact of dialoguing with them. It is imperative to convince oneself that the conviction of the oppressed in relation to their duty of fighting for their liberation is not a donation made by the revolutionary leadership but the result of the awareness of the being oppressed.¹⁵ (p. 65)

Furthermore, Freire mentioned the type of relationships that teacher-student have during class and within the educational community in general. Freire (1970) added that, “. . . these relationships present a special and determining character – the one of being relationships of a fundamentally *narrative, discursive and lecturing nature*”¹⁶ (p. 71). Also, these types of relationships lack communication and instead of communicating, the teacher makes speeches for the students to memorize and repeat. Such is the conception of the “bank-like” education in which the only thing that is offered to the students is receiving stockpiles, saving them and filing them (p. 72). There is a lack of pro-activeness in the schools, where students could take control of their knowledge and actions. There is a lack of spaces where students can manifest

¹⁵ . . . el camino para la realización de un trabajo liberador ejecutado por el liderazgo revolucionario no es la «propaganda liberadora». Éste no radica en el mero acto de depositar la creencia de la libertad en los oprimidos, pensando conquistar así su confianza, sino en el hecho de dialogar con ellos. Es preciso convencerse de que el convencimiento de los oprimidos sobre el deber de luchar por su liberación no es una donación hecha por el liderazgo revolucionario sino resultado de su concientización.

¹⁶ “. . . estas relaciones presentan un carácter especial y determinante –el de ser relaciones de naturaleza fundamentalmente *narrativa, discursiva, disertante*.”

their worries and concerns about social, political and individual issues. Also, it is not enough to have these spaces but there has to be a reciprocal human concern among teachers and students, where both can speak about their feelings, criticize the system and give sincere advice.

1.5.2 Augusto Boal: Theatre of the Oppressed

Augusto Boal was a well-known actor and writer who developed the Theatre of the Oppressed (T.O.) in the slums of Brazil. In relation to theatre, Baraúna & Motos (2009) mentioned that theatrical techniques underscore the necessity of a new way of teaching and learning. They said that it is important to focus on the affective bonds, on ludic strategies, on the daily experiences of the participants and on the construction of knowledge between teachers and students. The didactic democratic strategies are those that do not solve problems for the partakers but create an adequate environment for them to find solutions. Also, the opinions, ideas, stories and knowledge of the subjects involved are listened to, commented and confronted by the other attendants in a constant dialogue. In this way, the knowledge and the paths of life are shared and valued (p. 89). Regarding the T.O., Baraúna & Motos (2009) affirmed that

for Boal a session of the T.O. should never end because everything that happens in it must be extrapolated to everyday life. The spectators actively participate and maintain a collective dialogue between the actors and the environment. Later, the roles are inverted in a space of horizontal and educational relationships.¹⁷ (p. 91)

¹⁷Para Boal, una sesión de Teatro del Oprimido no debe terminar nunca, porque todo lo que en ella acontece debe ser extrapolado a la propia vida cotidiana. Los espectadores participan activamente, manteniendo un diálogo colectivo entre los actores y la sala y, a continuación, invierten sus papeles, en un espacio de relaciones horizontales y educativas.

In addition, the T.O. seeks to make a change in every participant so, this change can be brought in daily routines and in the interactions with other people.

1.5.3 Forum Theatre

Forum Theatre, as well as image theatre, is the basis of the T.O. which then leads to subdivisions. Forum Theatre is “a sort of fight or game, and like all forms of game or fight there are rules. They can be modified, but they still exist, to ensure that all the players are involved in the same enterprise, and to facilitate the generation of serious and fruitful discussion” (Boal, 2002, p. 242). Also, this type of theatre is “pedagogical in the sense that we all learn together, actors and audience. The original play – the model – must present a mistake, a failure, so that the spect-actors will be spurred into finding solutions and inventing new ways of confronting oppression” (*ibid*). This means that both actors and audience participate in a given situation which can be discrimination towards homosexuals, workers, women, among many others. The idea is that any person in the audience can intervene in a scene of oppression and change the course of it.

Moreover, Boal (2002) stated that “spect-actors, by acting out their ideas, train for ‘real life’ action; and actors and audience alike, by playing, learn the possible consequences of their actions. They learn the arsenal of the oppressors and the possible tactics and strategies of the oppressed” (p. 244). Furthermore, this type of theatre can give the audience the tools to be applied in everyday situations and to become aware of their actions and words. Sometimes one is not aware of the power one has to love or hurt somebody. This is why, it is necessary to learn about oneself and one’s reactions because these can be positive or negative. Additionally, after the performance a forum is held in order to exchange ideas and emotions and to look for possible solutions to the given situation.

1.5.4 Popular and Community Theatre

Popular theatre has relation to the T.O. in the sense that it is used by and for people, especially people who live in low socio-economic backgrounds. According to Roberto Vega (1989) popular theatre functions as a “transforming tool that contributes to the popular sectors that recognize and appropriate their capacities of auto-expression, that disposes themselves from the dominant culture through the seeking of their identity, that encourages their practices and reflect upon them in order to grow through interaction”¹⁸ (as cit. in Yamila Heram, 2005, p. 9). Moreover, popular theatre has its own ideological stance in relation to popular culture and it stands for human dignity through certain social codes (Heram, 2005, p. 9).

Regarding community theatre, Heram (2005) said that the most important characteristic of this type of theatre is that it is developed by and for the community. Consequently, “community theatre emerges from the community that will gather, organize and communicate through theatrical art; its members are from a community that visualize art as a social transformer and that are protagonists of the artistic work”¹⁹ (Heram, 2005, p. 11). Also, Heram (2005) mentioned that the participants of this type of theatre are people who want to contribute as a volunteer. These groups are generally numerous and work in open spaces (p. 11). This type of theatre is very ideological in the sense that it is aimed at people that do not have the resources to attend theatre. Likewise, it uses social themes like discrimination, oppression and poor working conditions, among others. Furthermore, Heram (2005) pointed

¹⁸ “como una herramienta transformadora que contribuye a que los sectores populares reconozcan y se apropien de sus capacidades de auto-expresión; se despojen de la cultura dominante en la búsqueda de su propia identidad, potencien sus prácticas y reflexionen sobre ellas para crecer por la interacción.”

¹⁹ “El teatro comunitario nace de la voluntad comunitaria de reunirse, organizarse y comunicarse a través del arte teatral. Integrantes de una comunidad que visualizan el arte como transformador social a partir de ser protagonistas del hecho artístico.”

out that this type of theatre tries to reach out the forgotten public and offers theatrical representations as a path to follow in order to develop the expressive capacity of people (p. 13). Additionally, the director of the community theatre 'Boedo Antiguo' Hernán Peña (2005), said that one of the biggest transformation of those that work with community theatre consist in learning to share, to debate, to reconcile and to work with the differences (as cit. in Heram, 2005, p. 37).

Finally, it is important to emphasize that both types of theatre want to denounce social problems such as: discrimination, oppression, poor working conditions, poor living conditions and injustice, among others. Though, popular and community theatre are slightly different, they do not exclude one another. Also, the foundations of these types of theatre are people, their problems and needs. Similarly, it is important to work on one's different points of view, debate with an open mind and express love to whom one is working with and to what one is doing.

1.6. At Risk Contexts

At Risk contexts refer to people who live in marginalized sectors and have poor living conditions in the world. These people are vulnerable in social, educational, working and health terms. Consequently, they are people whom Freire would have called oppressed because none of their human rights are really insured. According to Kristin Anderson (2006), the term "at risk" has been vastly used but it can take several meanings. The most suitable for this research is the one that relates the children and the environment they live in (p.1). The environment or community where they grow up will define whether the children are at risk or not. And so, being 'at risk' is a state of humans who have the characteristics of living in low socioeconomic

sectors. Anderson mentioned that these people are at risk of failing school, economical dependencies or incarceration and dying. Although she said some programs do have more specific goals for 'at risk' children such as to work in improving grades in school, delaying sexual initiation, or developing conflict resolution skills. Also, Anderson (2006) indicated that some measures of community risk might include rates of poverty, crime, unemployment, or teen parenthood in the Community (p.2).

Children who are considered to be at risk carry these negative factors to school and the consequences are not always the most optimal. These children have the right to be educated as every other child but should not be forced to behave or act the same as the other children if the school community is aware of the environment these students come from. The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory stated that most of the time "children of low socioeconomic status may begin school with significantly different experiences and skills than their middle-class peers" (NCREL, n.d., para. 2). Though these children can catch up with the average or highlight from their classmates, there has to be appropriate support for them to cope with their background. Thus, the school community may approach these students according to each of their circumstances in these terms. In this sense, Knapp & Shields (1990) assured that "children from families of low socioeconomic status often attend schools facing other problems attributed to at-risk students. These schools typically have many students with high mobility rates, severe behavioral and emotional problems, and limited [language] proficiency" (NCREL, n.d., para. 3).

1.6.1 The Chilean Context

The School Vulnerability Rate (SVR) was determined by an annual survey developed by the School Aid board (JUNAEB) until the year 2006. From 2007 onwards, the way of determining the SVR has been carried out through an individual measurement developed by the Research and Planning Department. The SVR measures the conditions of socioeconomic risk of the students in schools. In relation to the SVR, Cuitiño & Acosta (2013) stated that “when the school has 80% of vulnerability is because the students from the educational institution come from low socioeconomic backgrounds” (as cit. in JUNAEB, 2012, p. 14). Consequently, Anderson (2006) mentioned that a student could enroll in a target program depending on the current or historical information about the students or his/her parents. Also, the students might develop a low socioeconomic background because of pregnancy, school dropout, arrest and drug abuse (p. 2).

According to SVR (2013), there are six schools in Valdivia with a vulnerability rate of 80% or more. These schools are: Santa María La Blanca School with 81,5%, Industrial Valdivia School with 83,7%, Tecnico Valdivia School with 87,3%, Polivalente los Avellanos School with 88,9%, Deportivo Municipal of Valdivia School with 95,7% and Politecnico Benjamín Vicuña Makenna School with 96,0%. In connection with this, not all the students are considered to be at risk in a socioeconomic vulnerable school. Cuitiño & Acosta (2013) said that

the school vulnerability rate measures the socio-economic status of the students’ families. It is associated to the educational level of the head of the household, average level of education of the parents, students’ access to healthcare services and students’ oral health access. Consequently, this rate categorizes socioeconomic levels within

educational institutions, and depicts high, middle and low socioeconomic groups considering variables such as parents' educational levels, economic vulnerability and administrative dependence of the schools. (p. 14)

Furthermore, the 'family factor' is highly important when it comes to learning with a relaxed attitude and in a problem free environment. Thus, there are many reasons for students to have a hard time during their learning process; students will reflect their socioeconomic and affective problems in the classroom. Therefore, there are many programs emanated by the Ministry of Education that aim at helping these students with school materials and nutritional, economic and health issues so as to improve their learning process.

1.6.2 Teaching at Risk Students

Family plays a crucial role in children education because it is in these small communities where every person finds his/her roots. Every person is primarily educated according to one's family points of view on how the child should grow up as a person. Once immersed in the educational system, it is possible to say that each child is molded from the type of education received at home. The school –as an institution– is the place where students –as future citizens– can develop the tools they will need to value and acquire knowledge to evolve as a human being.

Paul Leseman (2002) related some cultural belief systems regarding developmental outcomes and school achievement that are forecasted expected from the families to be reached by their children at some stage. These general ideas refer to the learning of young children and what is expected from them to master in cognitive, emotional or social terms. Therefore, he said, there are “important socialization goals, as well as more specific ideas and values concerning the importance of literacy, schooling and achieving in school” (p. 16).

Going further, Ana McDonald (2002), stated that “we can safely say that at riskness is most frequently manifested by poor academic and social skills that promote a general disconnection with the school culture” (para. 3). This means that it is not only determined by the family background –which is the most important factor– but by other factors that lead to low academic success, such as learning disabilities, psychological issues, etc. Additionally, it was said that “alienation from school” is caused by some of these factors: “low self-esteem, limited language proficiency and lack of positive adult role models” (Guerin and Denti as cit. in McDonald, 2002, para. 7). Likewise, Susan Bickford (2001) located detachment between “disruption in the classroom” and “youth violence” (as cit. in McDonald, 2002, *ibid*).

In order to work on these factors, so as to improve the students learning process, the educational institutions should provide programs that include “strict discipline, activities that build self-esteem and social skills, and ‘a positive peer culture’ or ‘a caring, disciplined community that honors civility, service, and diversity and that fosters moral and ethical attitudes and behavior’” (Guerin and Denti as cit. in McDonald, 2002, para. 16). This implies that the educational community must create a suitable environment for all of these strategies to occur for the sake of developing successful academic and social skills.

Throughout this Theoretical Framework, the researchers have developed the foundations for this research paper, which are the concepts of: cross-curricular objectives, complex value issues, democracy, Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed and certain features of at risk contexts. It is relevant to say that this investigation aims at the development of democracy but this cannot be explained without referring to complex value issues which are inherent to human beings. As this teaching proposal is directed to educational improvement, the researchers have chosen the P.O. as an ideological tool for developing it. In addition, the T.O. has a strict relation with the P.O., but it is developed through drama techniques;

therefore, the mixture of these concepts, theories and techniques appeals as suitable for developing democracy in the classroom. Finally, the information collected for this Theoretical Framework will allow the researchers to carry out the discussion and the teaching proposal relating these topics with the Chilean context.

2. Methodology, Results and Discussion

2.1. Procedures and Methods: Teaching Proposal

This research followed the structure of a literature review in order to accomplish the main objective which was to design a teaching proposal for teachers of at risk contexts EFL classrooms in Valdivia as a way to effectively apply the cross-curricular objective of the development of democracy through activities of the Theatre of the Oppressed. Through this type of investigation, it was possible to explore the topic deeply and illustrate the contents with the experiences taken from other contexts. According to David Nunan (1992), “the function of the literature review is to provide background information on the research question, and to identify what others have said and/or discovered about the question” (p. 216). Also, as there was little information about the main area of this investigation regarding the Valdivian context, five interviews were carried out to experts on the topics. Therefore, this scheme helped to collect the necessary information in order to connect it with the Chilean context for suggesting the teaching proposal previous mentioned.

2.1.1 Subjects of the Study

This research carried out five interviews to experts from the educational area. Each expert has a direct relation to democracy, theatre and at risk contexts in Valdivia. The age range of the experts is between 40 to 60 years old. All of them are Chileans who come from the generation that grew up under the conditions of dictatorship and the transition towards democracy in the country. From this point of view, their thoughts regarding today’s living conditions in terms of the development of democracy were critically described.

The experts were the following: Rodrigo Gaínza is a writer, visual artist and art teacher from Valdivia. He has written several books like “*Dirigir y Corregir: la escuela como cautiverio*” (2004) which mostly criticizes the current Chilean educational system and brings up suggestions to change this reality by developing the concept of honest communication and dismantling concepts that have authoritarian notions. He worked in the first Montessori School in Valdivia from the start to its end in 1999 and he has carried out workshops with people who live in at risk contexts.

Roberto Matamala is a writer, language professor and theatre person at Universidad Austral de Chile (UACH). He has been working as a theatre person and director for more than 50 years gaining great experience and knowledge regarding theatre. He has also taught children in low socio economic contexts and he has been collaborating with students of pedagogy at UACH to improve their communication skills.

Iván Oliva is a researcher, writer and professor at UACH. He has a PhD. In Educational Sciences and through his investigations, he has deeply analyzed the concept of democracy taking into account important authors such as Edgar Morin. His interests as a researcher are mostly epistemology and transdisciplinarity in educational terms.

Claudia Rosales is an actress who develops spontaneous and social theatre. She studied theatre with teachers that have had the experience of taking workshops with Augusto Boal so she has been acquainted with the T.O. She currently belongs to two theatrical companies in Valdivia with whom she develops workshops in different cities of the country for people who belong to low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Finally, Sergio Toro is a physical education professor at UACH who has worked with popular theatre. He has a PhD. in Educational Sciences major in didactics. He understands the Theatre of the Oppressed as his way of living so he applies it at an academic, personal and social level.

2.1.2 Data Collection Methods

According to Burns (1997), “an interview is a verbal interchange, often face to face . . . in which an interviewer tries to elicit information, beliefs or opinions from another person” (as cited in Kumar, 2011, p. 144). In this instance, the interviews were face to face and were recorded with previous approval from the experts interviewed. Both researchers carried out interviews to five experts that are related to the topic of this research project. These interviews were based on five questions that were held according to each area of expertise (see appendix A). As these interviews intended to recall the experts’ experiences on the topics of this research, the questions varied depending on their answers.

The type of interview chosen was focused interviews. These interviews were conducted through a relaxed conversation with the experts in order to elicit their research, experiences and emotions on the topic. According to C. R. Kothari,

[a] focussed interview is meant to focus attention on the given experience of the respondent and its effects. Under it the interviewer has the freedom to decide the manner and sequence in which the questions would be asked and has also the freedom to explore reasons and motives. The main task of the interviewer in case of a focussed interview is to confine the respondent to a discussion of issues with which he seeks conversance. (2004, p. 98)

In this sense, the research dwelled in the statements of the experts if they thought that they could be developed more profoundly in relation to the contents of this investigation. Thus, the interviews were intentionally focused on comprehending each experts' point of view.

2.1.3 Patterns of Analysis

In order to classify the information collected from the experts, three patterns of analysis: democracy, theatre and at risk contexts were described. It was more accurate to follow the outline developed in the Theoretical Framework in order to connect the interviews to this rationale; therefore, the questions developed in the interviews also had a strict relation with these three concepts. In addition, the questions answered by the interviewed were according to their experiences and points of view in relation to these three concepts. Also, the questions were asked in a broader way so the experts were allowed to answer from general thoughts on the patterns towards their specific experiences when working with them.

According to the Theoretical Framework, socio cultural theatre is very similar to Theatre of the Oppressed when referring to their objectives and methodologies. Regarding this research, developing theatre in a social way means to transmit certain theatrical techniques to people that live in low socioeconomic backgrounds. In relation to the cultural aspect, the researchers developed democracy through drama techniques.

2.2. Results

The results revealed that the experts interviewed have more empirical knowledge in one pattern than the others according to their professional experience. That is to say, some of them have collected more experience through theory regarding democracy than with theatre in

practice, or vice versa. The most relevant information collected from the experts is what they have shared from their understanding of the patterns of analysis and some suggestions they provided to work with the patterns mentioned. Through these interviews, this research suggests a more suitable and accurate teaching proposal regarding the Valdivian reality. In order to have a holistic view of the results, see the table below.

Table 1

Holistic View of Results

PATTERN OF ANALYSIS/ INTERVIEWEE	CLAUDIA ROSALES	ROBERTO MATAMALA	IVAN OLIVA	SERGIO TORO	RODRIGO GAINZA
DEMOCRACY	EMPATHY, CURRENT POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SITUATION	THEATRE AFFECTED RELIGIOUSLY THE DEMOCRATIC GREEK STATE	SCHOOLS ARE ANTI-DEMOCRATIC	DIFFERENT CONTEXTS, DIALOGUE	POWER & CONTROL
THEATRE	THEATRICAL TECHNIQUES STIMULATE ANY CONTEXT	OCCIDENTAL THEATRE HAS ITS ROOTS IN ATHENIAN DEMOCRACY, THEATRICAL TECHNIQUES HELP TEACHERS	TO ASSUME TEACHER ROLE	SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS	CRITICAL COMPONENT
AT RISK CONTEXTS	THESE GROUPS SUPPORT EACH OTHER	COMPLICATED ENVIRONMENT	DEMONSTRATIVE OF AFFECTION TOWARDS TEACHERS	OPEN & HONEST COMMUNITY	LIVING NOWADAYS, GENERATE CODES & TRUST

2.2.1 Democracy

The concept of democracy was developed by the experts in various ways, for example in relation to theatre and its history, Roberto Matamala said that the “occidental theatre has its roots in the Athenian democracy and the Athenian theatre was tremendously political, in the sense that it affected religiously the democratic Greek state”²⁰ (Personal Communication²¹, Oct 17, 2013). So, according to this teacher, theatre and democracy have always been meant to be developed together. When relating the concept of democracy to the educational community, Rodrigo Gaínza commented that “democracy in the schools has to do with the way the power is distributed and it has by purpose to oblige the learning process of the students”²² (PC, Oct 17, 2013). In this sense, Iván Oliva stated that “the coexistence matrixes or the construction of knowledge are deeply anti-democratic”²³. This means that in the educational community somebody decides what the students have to learn, how they have to learn it and how they have to legitimate what they have learned. In those three levels there is a profound cognitive dictatorship (PC, Oct 17, 2013). According to Sergio Toro, democracy is understood by people depending on their contexts. That is to say, democracy is considered differently by people with high socioeconomic status than by people with low socioeconomic status. He said that these interpretations are different, not because of a syntactic capacity but because of the contexts these people live in (PC, Oct 16, 2013).

Gaínza affirmed that as the power to administrate the knowledge is in the hands of adults and authorities, this power diminishes as the age range decreases; therefore, it is

²⁰ “El teatro occidental tiene sus raíces en la democracia Ateniense y el teatro Ateniense era terriblemente político, en el sentido que incidía religiosamente en el estado democrático griego.”

²¹ PC will be used as an abbreviation of Personal Communication from now onwards.

²² “Democracia en el aula tiene que ver con la manera en que se distribuye el poder y con el fin de la obligatoriedad del proceso de aprendizaje.”

²³ “Las matrices de convivencia o de construcción de aprendizaje son profundamente antidemocráticas.”

important to establish an alternative dialogue with the students in order to democratize this power. He stated that the adults withhold the power because they consider preschoolers to be unstable, incapable of making decisions, irresponsible by nature, etc. (PC, Oct 17, 2003). Accordingly, Gaínza expressed that the previous asserts have nothing to do with the experiences of the children. These types of relationships allow the adults to make decisions for them without taking their opinion into account. In this sense, the teacher should act as a facilitator so the children can explore their knowledge and be able to organize themselves autonomously (*ibid*). In addition, Gaínza replied that there has to exist a permanent cognitive effervescence for students to question and develop critical thinking. He said that if a teacher can do that, then the students will be motivated in their learning process (*ibid*). Furthermore, Toro expressed that “a democratic regime must be managed and generated through relationships of dialogue and not by imposition. And, what we have nowadays are relations imposed by a type of absolutism of the market”²⁴ (PC, Oct 16, 2013). While Claudia Rosales mentioned that “yet today there is too much fear of saying what one really thinks, to say what ones really wants, to transform the spaces; people are afraid because we have gone through cruel processes a long time”²⁵ (PC, Oct 17, 2013). According to the actress there is a necessity to work with empathy because today’s generation is having conflicts and all sorts of contradictions with past generations. Unfortunately, those very generations are their teachers (*ibid*). This is the main reason why the theatrical company with whom she works, has been scheduled to make some interventions in schools to improve the relationship between students and teachers.

²⁴ “un modelo social, en términos democráticos, debe ser gestionado, debe ser generado en las relaciones de dialogo, no en las relaciones de imposición y lo que hoy día tenemos son relaciones de imposición, en base a una especie de absolutismo del mercado.”

²⁵ “Aun hoy día todavía hay un miedo impresionante a poder decir lo que estamos pensando, a decir lo que realmente quiere, a transformar los espacios, la gente tiene miedo. Porque hemos vivido cosas brutales a través del tiempo.”

The experts mentioned agreed on the importance of working with democracy constantly through daily actions and not only consider it as a political state. Also, the authors stated that in order to work with democracy it is important to eliminate hierarchies in the schools. Similarly, there is a need to consider the contexts and goals of each person.

2.2.2 Theatre

Theatre in general has great relation to democracy, especially when one knows its history. According to Roberto Matamala theatre nowadays has not changed that much when it comes to its objectives. Theatre entertains, teaches, gives way to expression, liberation, demonstration, etc. but not many people use or resort to this type of expression (PC, Oct 17, 2013). Matamala said that “in Valdivia not even 1% of the population attends the theatre –and I am being generous–”²⁶ (*ibid*). In relation to its meaning of expression, Rodrigo Gaínza affirmed that “theatre has always had a critical component which is to show situations that demonstrate how the society is structured. This component allowed people to talk about this structure through theatre”²⁷ (PC, Oct 17, 2013). Similarly, Sergio Toro confirmed that “theatre is an agent or an opportunity to deploy the social consciousness that is generated in a determined group”²⁸ (PC, Oct 16, 2013). This is why; theatre can represent the current situation of an individual and the future situation this individual would like to be in. This means that, theatre provides the instance to imagine, fantasize and yearn for a change. In this sense, he mentioned that theatre is a possibility and an environment that allows people to show

²⁶ “La mayoría de la población en Chile no asiste al teatro. Yo diría que en Valdivia no más allá del 1% de la población (estoy siendo generoso) va al teatro”.

²⁷ “El teatro siempre ha tenido un componente crítico, hay un elemento crítico que tiene que ver con cómo esas sociedad que eran muy estructuradas y rígidas fue permitiendo que se pudiesen hablar esas cosas, mostrar las cosas a través del teatro.”

²⁸ “El teatro es un agente u oportunidad de desplegar la conciencia social que se genera en un determinado grupo.”

who they are and who they want to be (*ibid*). Furthermore, Toro expressed that theatre affirms, confirms and gives possibilities to understand other realities. Likewise, these instances generate debate, controversy and discussion; situations that do not occur in everyday life (*ibid*). Claudia Rosales said that she has always had in mind that theatre is made for people to think and reflect on what is happening nowadays. The actress assured that for theatre to transform society, this one has to rouse the audience to the current political and social situation they are living (PC, Oct 17, 2013).

Regarding theatrical techniques, Matamala stated that teachers have natural aptitudes when it comes to theatre. Unconsciously, teachers use their voice intonation, voice projection, body language or have to deal with their breathing. In this sense he pointed out that theatrical techniques help teachers when it comes to voice projection, taking care of one's voice, body language, facial expression, and interpersonal communication. He added that "great teachers are always great actors"²⁹ (PC, Oct 17, 2013). Therefore, Iván Oliva mentioned that "assuming the role of teacher in a way is assuming a role and it requires being an actor inside a scene of relationships"³⁰ (PC, Oct 17, 2013). Thus, Matamala affirmed that in theatre everyone has a part to play, if someone does not like to act, that one can put the lights, work with production, publicity, etc. There are many tasks to help with. He said that the process is more important than the product and everyone should participate in the process; every participant has that same importance in this process (PC, Oct 17, 2013). Moreover Toro, replied that any type of performance requires a previous training, in this sense; he uses basic techniques in his classes in order to express oneself through other channels. He uses exercises like breathing techniques and methods to manage oneself (PC, Oct 16, 2013).

²⁹ "los grandes profesores son siempre grandes actores."

³⁰ "Asumir el rol de profesor en cierta forma es asumir un rol y ser actor dentro de un escenario de relaciones."

Claudia Rosales specified that both the Theatre of the Oppressed and Spontaneous Theatre maintain a direct dialogue and more or less have the same function which is to give people strategies to make the changes they want to make. According to her experience, through Spontaneous Theatre one generates the space to start with a warming up activity that must be strong enough for people to feel confident, to unlock themselves and relax. During this methodology, the function of the actor is to facilitate the stories that will be brought up by the participants. It is such the fraternity created through these activities that it is possible to see how it will modify this person so he/she will learn to look at him or herself from a different perspective (PC, Oct 17, 2013). Claudia Rosales stated that “it is very important to work on oneself first before working with other people in order to be aware of significant changes”³¹ (*ibid*). In this sense, the root of confidence is a starting point for believing in one another. With theatrical techniques, she said, one can simulate any context. Therefore, one can make the students play different roles and use different spaces; one can make them be the teachers and vice versa, etc. (*ibid*).

The experts commented that theatre is used as an instrument to develop values, critical thinking and expression. Also, theatre can allow people to overcome and modify their reality. Unfortunately, teachers in general believe that theatre is used only by professional actors and that it is difficult to implement these techniques in the classroom. In this sense, the experts consider that drama techniques can be used by teachers through simple activities like practicing their voice projection, their body language, among others.

³¹ “Es muy importante trabajarse uno antes para poder trabajar con otro y apreciar cambios significativos.”

2.2.3 At Risk Contexts

Regarding at risk contexts, Matamala expressed that “it is complicated to work with them, there are children that are hungry, there are children that are sick, children that do not have enough clothes, that skip class and children whose parents are illiterate or drunkards”³² (PC, Oct 17, 2013). At the same time, Rodrigo Gaínza stated that these children are very intelligent; they have an upper level of intelligence than the children who have a more stable background. This is because they have gone through extreme situations throughout their lives. Therefore, according to this writer, they are in permanent alert. These children start from the basis that the teacher is prejudiced against them thinking that they are torn, so they will not get close to the teachers. There are a set of barriers and codes teachers have to go through in order to finally start communicating with them (PC, Oct 17, 2013). Gaínza affirmed that once teachers get to communicate with students, they accomplish complete confidence with them (*ibid*). Likewise, Claudia Rosales mentioned that it is amazing to see how they [at risk people] engage in an activity. Once she did Spontaneous Theatre in Angachilla School with the students’ dreams. She indicated that it was very powerful and that it was a difficult experience which sometimes generated helplessness but for the children it was an unforgettable experience. Ultimately, “one teaches the group to back up each other. One cannot change the world but one can change small spaces”³³ (PC, Oct 17, 2013).

According to Gaínza, there is no social reason to establish that these children are less capable than others. He commented that it is mistaken to assume how these children’s actions really work. In this sense, he reaffirmed that one has to value their acts of solidarity, loyalty,

³² “Es super complicado trabajar con ellos, hay niños que tienen hambre, hay niños que están enfermos, niños que vienen con unas pilchitas encima, mojados muchas veces, niños que faltaban, padres analfabetos, padres borrachos, madres borrachas.”

³³ “tú enseñas a que la grupalidad también se contenga. No se puede cambiar el mundo pero si se pueden cambiar pequeños espacios.”

silence and sharing. The first social necessity for them is to share; precisely what is missing in the other social groups. In the other social groups, they talk about sharing as an ideology but they do not practice it; children in at risk contexts do not have the discourse but they do have the practice (PC, Oct 17, 2013). Gaínza and Matamala suggested that it is important for people to compromise, to know how significant their role as teachers is because for these children it is important to feel affection and that their opinion is taken into account. Then again, one can see how relevant affection and feelings are in the relationships between students and teachers (PC, Oct 17, 2013).

In addition, Rodrigo Gaínza considered that the teacher who works with children in at risk contexts must know their world and their codes. For example, the teacher needs to take into account that if the students care about their physical appearance is because it is the only thing they rely on. It is on their aspects where they put their entire effort because they do not have a family to feel proud of, they do not have any belongings, and no future to think of. So, they live one day at a time because that is all they have (PC, Oct 17, 2013). Moreover, Gaínza believed that “the key is telling the truth and posing things as they are. One as a teacher has to distribute the power; give the students the power. The children will never give trust to adults if they continue witnessing that their role is full of contradictions”³⁴ (*ibid*).

Regarding what Iván Oliva commented about working in at risk contexts, he mentioned that in the [at risk school] several things happened with boys and girls. The girls gave him things like hearts, letters and poems and the boys would talk with him during recess about music. He said he felt that it was a way for the students to show their affection. He

³⁴ “la clave es decir la verdad y plantear las cosas como son. Como profesor, distribuir el poder, darle el poder a ellos. Los chicos no van a confiar en los adultos, porque los niños no nos creen, nos ven llenos de contradicciones.”

added that “in the other school [better socioeconomic status] they were also very respectful but more formatted”³⁵ (PC, Oct 17, 2013).

Regarding this topic, Sergio Toro said that if you teach somebody to move from the oppression towards liberation one must be willing to accept that people can think differently from oneself. These thoughts can be constructed in the collective of people, so one has to be awake and open to the possibility that these thoughts may go against what one thinks. Thus, it is oppressive to think that one will liberate people instead of liberating oneself first and then the rest (PC, Oct 16 2013). Sergio Toro mentioned that what has happened with the P.O. is that it has become in an instrument of ‘libertarian domestication’. When dealing with this technique, one should generate an atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable. This will probably imply that one can realize that people that use this type of pedagogy have certain signs of oppression. Moreover, this teacher said that he has realized that the P.O. cannot be used in an instrumental sense of the word. The P.O. has to become a disposition, a way of living, of understanding a situation. Furthermore, the liberation is not a specific fact but a permanent conquer of the community. He replied that what one learns with the P.O. is to expose one’s feelings and to remember that people are emotional beings (*ibid*).

Regarding the personal experience Sergio Toro has gained when living and working in at risk contexts, he stated that

in the end, at risk contexts are more open and honest once one has passed the first test.

It is easier to touch the fiber in at risk contexts if one is good, in the sense that one

³⁵ “en el colegio [de buena situación socioeconómica] en contraste fue distinto, también hubo mucho respeto pero estaban más formateados.”

speaks the truth. If one goes with the intention of manipulating they will be suspicious but if one is honest they will receive you.³⁶ (PC, Oct 16, 2013)

All experts considered that the students who are at risk go through more difficult circumstances and the teachers have to consider this fact as a fundamental reason for their behavior. In addition, it is important to understand the student's background from their perspective in order to approach them in the best way possible. Also, the teacher has to show him/herself as he/she truly is as a way of getting the students' trust.

2.3. Discussion

According to the experts' comments, it is possible to say that for developing democracy in an effective way in the classroom there is a need to change how people consider theatre. Teachers should feel free to engage with drama techniques in the classroom because these will facilitate the students' positive expectations of the class. Besides, theatre finds its roots in democracy so this technique is a possibility to develop this value in the educational community.

According to the first specific objective of this research, to analyze the elements of the cross-curricular objectives (CCOs) that can be related to the Theatre of the Oppressed (T.O.) and in order to examine the findings in relation to the Theoretical Framework and the results of the interviews with the experts, two main themes are developed. The first one describes the relation between the cross curricular objective of the development of democracy and the Theatre of the Oppressed and the second one refers to the Theatre of the Oppressed and its

³⁶ al final, los sectores vulnerables son más abiertos una vez que tú has pasados la primera prueba son más abiertos y más honestos. Es más fácil tocar la fibra en un sector vulnerable, si eres bueno, en el sentido que vas con verdad si vas a manipular de cachan de una, pero si eres honesto generalmente te acogen.

relation to at risk contexts. Both themes, derived from the patterns of analysis exposed in the results, lead to bring up the design of a teaching proposal for teachers of EFL classrooms in Valdivia, as a way to effectively apply the cross-curricular objective of the development of democracy through activities of the Theatre of the Oppressed in at risk contexts.

2.3.1 Cross-curricular Objective of the Development of Democracy and the Theatre of the Oppressed

In order to recapitulate, the CCO of the development of democracy is conceived by the MINEDUC as a way to improve one's life through values such as mutual respect, active citizenship, national identity, and democratic coexistence (MINEDUC, 2009). Moreover, in the EFL classroom this CCO has by purpose to develop understanding of other cultures and languages. This means to value the Chilean culture as much as any other and to accept diversity. Furthermore, Valoras UC (2003) mentions that the CCOs are useful to enhance human conditions such as the right to live in diversity, equality, same in dignity and respectful of the differences.

With regard to the CCO of the development of democracy, the experts relate this concept to a wide variety of topics such as different contexts, a lack of democracy in the schools, use of power and control by the education authorities and teachers and the nurturing of empathy. Firstly, UNESCO (2003) states that democracy is never permanently anchored anywhere, but requires constant nurturing and development. Furthermore, Morin (2001) affirms that democracy feeds diversity and different interests and ideas. In a democratic school everyone should have an opinion and the freedom to express it. In this sense, Toro assures that democracy is understood and practiced differently by people depending on their contexts (PC, Oct 16, 2013). Also, the schools lack democracy because of hierarchies and vertical dialogue

among authorities, teachers and students. In relation to this, Salas (2001), states that in a democratic classroom there should be a horizontal relationship between teachers and students in order to create a relaxed environment. Furthermore, John Dewey (1916) says that people should know the meaning of democracy and what it means to live in a democratic state, so the educational community can develop relationships of honesty and understanding. Also, Greene (1985) mentions education should empower the students to become active members of their community (cit. in Beane & Apple, 2000, p, 22).

Moreover, the educational institutions do not take into account the students' opinions when making decisions regarding their learning process. In relation to the Theoretical Framework, Gaínza (2004) says that in the educational communities one has to avoid any type of double standard manipulation. Therefore, there has to be an honest dialogue between teachers and students and the disposition to face problems in order to solve them. Additionally, Casassus (2007), states that the schools are centers of submission and domination and the teachers are seen as enemies by the students. On the contrary, democracy goes hand in hand with empathy, which means that it is necessary to understand what the other people are going through. Regarding this, democracy is mainly understood as a political regime but it is important to remember that democracy has effects on everyday life. Meaning that, the educational communities that are democratic should accept diversity, different points of view, take into account the opinion of their students and become conscious about the importance of a relaxed environment.

Accordingly, democracy and the T.O. are related when it comes to its foundations. Baraúna and Motos (2009) state that didactic democratic strategies are those that do not solve the problems of the participants but which are able to create an environment for them to find the appropriate solutions. Likewise, the T.O. is committed to covering the lines of social

justice, human rights, liberty, democracy, no discrimination and social marginalization (Baraúna and Motos, 2009). Lastly, one can reflect on the strict relation there is between democracy and the T.O. in the sense that this type of theatre was created as a way of demanding social justice in all its terms.

Finally, if the schools were democratic and accepted diversity, different perspectives, feelings, etc., there would not be the necessity to control the students. Also, teachers and students would feel free to be who they are and would not be afraid of stepping out of their social role. In addition, as there is a need to work on reconstructing the relationship between students and teachers to make it more honest, friendlier and more horizontal, theatre has to be used as a tool from the start. This is because theatrical techniques help people to become aware of who they are and what their aptitudes are so, from this point on, everyone can work from his/herself towards the sense of community that theatre brings together. In order to accomplish the sense of the schools as real communities, the path to do so has to be in constant evaluation and promotion. This means that every member of the school community should make an effort so this profound process does not decay and fail.

2.3.2 Theatre of the Oppressed in at Risk Contexts

As mentioned in the Theoretical Framework, the T.O. aims at liberating people from their subjugation. In this sense, this technique works as a facilitator to conduct people to set them free from oppression. When working with the T.O. one has to know that this strategy starts from the acceptance of the condition of being part of the oppressed class. Education is an instance to understand and assume what to be oppressed means, and how one can gain the tools to break free from that state. According to this research, in most of the cases, people who are considered to be at risk are the ones who belong to the oppressed class too. These people live in marginalized sectors and have poor living conditions; they are vulnerable in social,

educational, working and health terms. Therefore, The T.O., as well as the Popular and Community Theatre, become a transforming tool that contributes to the marginalized sectors to recognize themselves and to be able to auto-express, to dispose themselves from the dominant culture through the seeking of their identity, and to encourage their social practices reflecting upon them in order to grow through daily life interactions (Roberto Vega 1989 as cit. in Yamila Hiram, 2005, p. 9).

Hence, the first step stimulated by the T.O. is to know if one is oppressed by becoming conscious about the oppressive state and what this means. Then, the T.O. provides the instances to develop certain skills to act upon circumstances such as, oppression, violence, hatred, etc. Thus, these tools and techniques are developed for the sake of liberating people that feel oppressed and want to change their state of life. The final stage of people that use these techniques is to become satisfied with their way of living. In case they are not, the T.O. provides them with tools to try to change their reality in order to be joyful with their path. Finally, it is important to mention that people who truly want to change their way of living, that reflect upon their inner selves, their actions and their goals, will be able to consciously make a worthy change.

Therefore, the T.O.'s first task starts from the individual towards the construction and appreciation of the community in order to work as a group to make the changes that are needed to improve their lives. As it was cited in the Theoretical Framework, for both P.O. (Pedagogy of the Oppressed) and T.O. education is based on democracy, dialogue and transitivity, and intervention is based on thinking that everybody can teach and everybody can learn from every person (Baraúna & Motos, 2009). This means that hierarchies of power do not longer exist and everybody values the other person's ideals, thoughts and reflections. For this process to work in the best way possible, facilitators must keep a positive and relaxed

attitude, not pushing anybody to do anything he/she does not want to do, moreover if the participant does not feel comfortable in doing so. This is relevant because, as this process develops critical thinking, dialogue is the main basis for shaping this critical personality.

In order to summarize the experts' comments, it is possible to mention that working in at risk contexts can be more complex and difficult but more rewarding as long as the students feel they are in a healthy and honest environment. This fact is essential because at risk people support each other and live within their own codes and actions so the facilitator is the one who has to adjust and stand from their perspective of life if significant changes are to be obtained throughout this process. In addition, as this research aims at the improvement in educational terms in at risk contexts, the workshop proposal of this investigation gives the teachers and students an opportunity to get to know each other, to improve their communication and to help them overcome the given conditions of high rates of poverty, crime, unemployment, or teen parenthood (Anderson, 2006) that cause low self-esteem, limited language proficiency and lack of positive adult role models (Guerin and Denti cit. in McDonald, 2002).

3. Teaching Proposal

3.1. Workshop Proposal Description

3.1.1 General Information

This teaching proposal suggests a set of activities for enhancing the relationship between teachers and students in at risk contexts. This initiative emerges from the troubling distant relationship that teachers are having with their students and vice versa. As exposed in the Theoretical Framework, working with complex value issues such as developing democracy in the classroom may be avoided by teachers for preventing problems at schools. That is why this research brings up a proposal for suggesting a set of activities to work with the person and the sense of community. Besides, it is relevant to mention that the activities proposed can be adapted to the different class singularities or to be developed in other areas rather than in the EFL classroom. It is up on the teacher's view how to best apply them taking in mind his/her circumstances. As this research aims at improving the teacher-student relationship, this objective is accomplished by adapting a set of activities based on the Forum Theatre section of Theatre of the Oppressed to the Valdivian reality in the shape of a workshop.

3.1.2 Audience Description

The audience is EFL teachers of 12th grade who are teaching in at risk contexts in Valdivia. As stated in the section 1.6.1. of the Theoretical Framework, there are six schools in the city of Valdivia that have high percentage of vulnerability (SVR, 2013). The information collected says that teaching in these contexts could become a very challenging job for teachers, but rewarding in the end. Teachers in this area must take into account the background these children have which is usually characterized by family violence, crime, drug trafficking, school dropouts, teenage pregnancy, among other factors.

In addition, this research is directed to teachers that work with 12th grade students because at this level the students are at a crucial stage in their lives. Adolescents between 16 and 18 years old are in a period of questioning life and its purposes. They become more conscious of whom they are or want to be and start doubting in a more profound level. That is why this is the most appropriate level for the teachers to take advantage of the given circumstances and use classroom time to dialogue by applying the techniques of the Theatre of the Oppressed to develop democracy.

3.1.3 Workshop Description

This workshop proposal lasts one day from 10:00 am to 13:00 and from 15:00 to 18:00 pm. It has 13 activities which are thought to develop a gradual progress of consciousness-raising through the entire course. It is meant to be applicable in classrooms, or bigger spaces such as gyms, playgrounds or parks depending on the facilities available.

This day begins with respiration and relaxation exercises (introduction or presentation) to become aware of one's own control of breathing and as a warm up for the following activities. Then, it continues with exercises for developing sensations (development) to work with oneself and inside a given community. This stage includes image games, mask and ritual, the creation of a character, emotions and reconnecting memoirs. The workshop ends with exercises for preparing a Forum Theatre (round up and reflection) in order to develop collaborative effort among the participants so as to solve specific situations in the school environment. Eventually, all these activities will help teachers to build up a greater understanding of their selves in relation to their roles, to gain some tools to apply in their classroom and to become more conscious about the students' needs and feelings. These types

of activities require an internal process of distension and reflection so every person will have the freedom to express themselves according to their own inner time and rhythms.

As mentioned above, the lesson plan of this workshop begins with a sequence of exercises of relaxation and respiration. These activities were chosen to allow the participants to become aware of their breathing, to control their respiration and to manage it for them to use these techniques in their daily working routines. As it was stated in the Theoretical Framework, it is important that teachers work on this matter for improving communication at an individual, social and professional level. Furthermore, these types of activities provide some tools for the participants to improve their teaching performance in real circumstances, for example, to maintain a smooth flow of air during classes so they do not damage their vocal chords. The relaxation part sets the atmosphere to allow the participants to calm down and prepare their entire bodies for the following activities. Starting with breathing and relaxation simultaneously permits the participants to disconnect from their realities, to lower their tempo, to connect with their inner selves and to become conscious about their own respiration cycle.

After breathing and relaxing activities, the participants continue with two activities to introduce themselves, which are Good day and the Circle of Knots. Both activities grant the partakers the instance to get to know each other in an uncommon manner. These activities incorporate more body language than utterances. This means that knowing one another strengthens the group so each participant feels comfortable, important and essential for the growth of the community. As mentioned in the Theoretical Framework, teachers, students and the school community in general need a chance to get to know each other in a more natural manner. This can be done by detaching from social rules in order to communicate honestly. The first part of the introduction or presentation exercises start with the Good Day activity

which introduces physical interaction little by little. This means that the participants start touching their hands getting closer progressively so they can trust one another. Through this activity each person of the group appreciates the importance of the other and the progress of the group depends on each one of them as individuals. The second part of this presentation follows the same motive as the past activity and it also includes body movements in a ludic way. For the Circle of Knots, collaborative work is very important due to the fact that after partakers have created a knot they will have to undo it without letting their hands go. Therefore, the entire group has to solve this situation together. Without talking, they have to express their desire to undo the knot by body movements and visual contact.

After the first stage of the workshop, the members have a coffee break to get to know each other and lower the flow of energies liberated throughout the first stage. During the break, they have to approach someone they do not know so as to continue with the process of the workshop. The objective of this break is to reinforce the group's consolidation through pair interaction. The exercises that follow are developmental activities which have to do with the expression of the senses. The first exercise of this stage is How many 'A's in one 'A'? which function is to work with body expression and sounds. Through this exercise the participants identify and perceive how they actually act when feeling a determined emotion, for example, how one expresses hate through non-verbal communication. The second exercise is Difficulties which is meant to handle consciousness on the body parts. The participants are asked to experience life without one of their body parts. This is to create responsiveness of the importance of their bodies, its limitlessness and its boundaries. The third exercise is Modelling Clay which main objective is to reflect upon the perception one has about one's own body. This activity makes the participants diagnose how they see their exterior and how this exterior

shows who and how they are feeling inside through body language. In this exercise the members model the clay with their eyes closed, shaping their bodies so as to get to a more profound reflection of their selves. At the end of the morning, and in order to make a closure for the six activities and make the participants reflect upon the process of the workshop, a discussion is prompted. During this activity, the participants are asked to share their ideas, apprehensions, suggestions, questions, or anything they would like to say about what they have experienced during the morning. For example, instructors may lead the conversation towards beliefs on what the participants think about the activities carried out and how they can be applied in their classrooms. In relation to the Theoretical Framework, this part is important because there is a need to change how the schools are thought, to make them inclusive communities where every person is allowed to be him/herself without the current hierarchies of power and control within these institutions.

Before the second stage of this workshop, the participants have a lunch break and come back at 15:00 hrs. In order to bring back the emotions arouse in the group community during the first part of the workshop after the lunch break, the participants carry out the activity called the French Telephone. During this activity, the members are required to look at one partner directly in the eye for a few minutes. As this exercise is not usually done in daily circumstances, this instance gives them the opportunity to communicate with each other through their gaze. Sometimes, for some people it is difficult to express feelings using verbal communication, so by means of this activity the participants can use another method to convey their state of mind. The main objective of this activity is to mirror oneself in the eye of the partner becoming conscious of one's feelings and the feelings of the other and comprehending his/her situation.

The activity that follows is Remembering an Actual Oppression and it seeks to work with empathy and honest communication. The participants are asked to form groups of three unknown people. In order to develop the activity the best way possible, it is important that the participants can recall the progress they have done during the whole workshop from an individual and group viewpoint. This is because this exercise needs them to feel comfortable, listened and trusted within the group. Each participant has to discharge from his/her own oppression in order to communicate it to the rest of the group, who listen carefully and try to comprehend the situation to the fullest so they can actually experience it. When reaching this final objective, the group of three people feel in the same tune and suggest a way to overcome the situation this person is undergoing. This activity is carried out at the last stage to make them become aware of the fact that the circumstances that are causing them troubles can be changed by accepting the problem, letting it go and taking in suggestions from people that will give a sincere and humble opinion on this matter. Also, as it was previously stated in the Theoretical Framework and discussion of this research, in order to develop democracy in the schools every person needs to work with his/her inner self before intending to do it with other person for getting to know his/herself and comprehend how he/she is to really make a valuable and profound change.

The previous exercise may lead to a dense state of mind within each member, therefore; a break is given so as to take some air and relax. The instructions for this break are to remain silent and reflect about the individual process throughout this workshop. Also, this break helps the participants to regain energies to end up with the afternoon. For the final stage of this workshop it has been chosen the Game of Complementary Roles, this exercise compiles all the activities that have been developed during the day. The Game of

Complementary Roles is contextualized to the reality of each participant due to the fact that it has to be related to everyday school situations. The partakers choose a topic connected to school circumstances and they have to perform it; this activity is interesting in the sense that the members, which are teachers, have to represent their roles and the students' role. This allows the participants to reflect on their everyday actions within the educational community and their treatment towards the students. Moreover, this exercise permits the members recognize their oppression inside their own schools and put themselves in the students' position. According to the Theoretical Background, this type of activity can benefit teachers so as to understand and unleash their true feelings and thoughts. Also, the participants can use this activity in their classrooms so the students can show their own ideas and oppressions. Furthermore, this exercise allows the participants to be spontaneous, to become aware of one's actions and to raise consciousness of the one's feelings that are constantly suppressed because of the social standards of the role of teachers.

A final discussion is held in order to exchange suggestions, comments and emotions, to ask questions, etc. about the entire workshop. In addition, the participants can analyse their individual process and the collective work. Consequently, at the moment of the discussion, it is important to converse about the possibility of applying these activities in the schools. Also, the participants share their comments on how do they feel with their role as teachers and how they would like the educational system to be improved. The partakers should also reflect on the expansion and progress of liberty, diversity, equality and communication, all of them concepts that lead to the development of democracy, not only in the classroom but in every day actions.

Table 2*Workshop Proposal for EFL Teachers of 12th Grade in at Risk Contexts Overall View*

The workshop proposal described above is summarized in the table below for having a holistic view of the set of activities. Finally, in order to get a deep understanding and description of the workshop and its development, see appendix B.

<u>Time:</u>	<u>Activity:</u>	<u>Rationale:</u>
Morning 30 min	1. The Rhythm of Respiration	To become aware of breathing, to be able to control respiration and to manage both of them. To connect with the inner self and to become conscious about one's own respiration cycle.
10 min	2. Good Day	To introduce physical interaction little by little. The participants start touching their hands getting closer progressively so, the members can feel in confidence with one another.
20 min	3. The Circle of Knots	To feel the importance of the other since the progress of the group depends on each of one of them to resolve a situation as a whole.
10 min	BREAK	To distend emotions by approaching someone they do not know so as to continue with the course of the workshop.
30 min	4. How Many 'A's in one 'A'?	To identify and perceive how one actually acts when feeling a determined emotion.
30 min	5. Difficulties	To work out body parts consciousness and awareness of the importance of one's body, its limitlessness and its boundaries.
45 min	6. Modelling Clay	To reflect upon the perception one has about one's own body and how this affects the way one sees oneself.
15 min	7. Discussion	To reflect upon the exercises carried out during the morning and share comments about what the participants have felt doing them.
Afternoon 20 min	8. The French Telephone	To mirror oneself in the eye of another becoming conscious of one's feelings and the feelings of the other and comprehending how his/her situation is.
60 min	9. Remembering an Actual Oppression.	To become aware that the circumstances that are causing troubles to them can be changed by first accepting the problem, letting it go and accepting suggestions from people that will give a sincere and humble perspective on this one.
10 min	BREAK	To take some air and relax in order to reflect internally about the process throughout the workshop. Also, to regain energies to finalize the afternoon. This break is carried out in silence.
70 min	10. The Game of Complementary Roles	To reflect upon everyday actions in the schools in relation to the educational community. Likewise, this exercise develops further understanding of the social role of teachers and helps to unleash the participants' true feelings and thoughts.
20 min	11. Discussion	To express feelings, emotions, ideas, suggestions, etc. about the workshop. Also, to analyze the internal process and the collective work. Finally, to question how these activities can be applied in the schools.

Conclusions

The general area of this research suggests making a connection among the cross-curricular objectives and the Theatre of the Oppressed to begin working on the creation of a favorable and positive affective relationship between teachers and students. This technique helps teachers and students to set themselves free from what has been depraving them to liberate their true inner thoughts and feelings. This research has helped to support the conclusion that the development of democracy consists of being accepted for whom one is, legitimated by one's actions and being considered regardless of the differences one may have with the rest of the society. This is why the cross-curricular objective of the 'person and his/her environment' is a starting point for rising consciousness and educate agents of change. Therefore, this research aims at giving teachers and students an opportunity to grow together through the development of democracy in daily situations at either in their schools or/and their every day actions. In order to accomplish this, the school community, understood as a real community, has to work together via honest communication; respecting the other person's ways of being and thinking; and, finally, leaving aside the hierarchies and the structures of power and control. Furthermore, and according to the results of this research, teachers that work in at risk contexts have to consider that these students go through more difficult circumstances so it is important to understand their background for approaching them from a way that could fits them better. In relation to this, the activities selected from the section of Forum Theatre of the T.O. are appropriate to be applied in these contexts because this type of theatre helps feelings and thoughts flourish in order to share one's internal sentiments with others. The findings of this research say that the best relationships between teachers and students start from the basis of trust and communication. That is why both teachers and students have to show themselves as they truly are.

Nowadays, the educational institutions lack the instances to develop oneself through real interaction and exchange of emotions and ideas. Also, teachers may feel repressed when it comes to fitting into their social roles of teachers instead of being true to their persona.

This workshop has been adapted from the T.O. and it is directed to teachers because they are constantly working with students, parents and colleagues. In order to be able to develop trust and confidence with the students, teachers must work on an individual level before working with the students. This workshop helps teachers to understand their oppressions, their content or discontent with their roles and how they can change this situation if it is negative. In addition, this set of activities is the starting point of a continuous reflection on behalf of the teachers about their own state to make them realize if they are oppressed, which is the first step of the T.O. and the seed of this workshop. Eventually, it would be much more valuable that they could continue with this process so as to work on what is depriving them to change this situation in their lives and become active upon their own decisions.

Additionally, the researchers believe that addressing at risk students using this type of technique will be the path to get to their true self. Currently, the Chilean education is suffering many adjustments. The students need a different type of education, a quality education. The only way of doing this in a near future is from the basis of human relationships and collective work. The T.O. activities fit best this future way of education in the sense that they are directed to develop one's feelings and consciousness instead of barely teaching contents and structures.

Furthermore, it is possible to say that the objectives of this investigation were met because the researchers were able to connect the elements of the CCO of the development of democracy with the T.O. Also, with the information collected from the Theoretical

Framework and with the interviews, it was possible to come up with a teaching proposal in the shape of a workshop for EFL teachers who work in at risk contexts in the city of Valdivia.

Finally, further research is needed in the area of cross-curricular objectives. The CCO have not been fully developed because of the lack of a systematic application and a follow up of these objectives throughout the school years. Also, it is important to further investigate value issues in the class from the perspective of both teachers and students and its impact on the learning process. Likewise, a case study could be developed in order to apply the teaching proposal arose from this research in order to evaluate its effectiveness in the Valdivian at risk contexts. It has become clear during this investigation that people are made up of feelings, emotions, ideals and conscience. Therefore, during one of the most important processes of a person's life, which is education, this one should be developed on the basis of affection and appreciation. That is why the Chilean context needs to work on reinforcing the concept of education towards its meaningful objective which is instructing in life for life itself.

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Annex A: Interviews Guideline

1. ¿Cuál es tu nombre? y ¿a qué te dedicas?
2. ¿Qué experiencia tienes en relación a: el teatro en general, el Teatro del Oprimido y/o la Pedagogía del Oprimido?
3. ¿Crees que el teatro puede incidir en el desarrollo de la democracia? Si es así, ¿De qué forma?
4. ¿Cómo has logrado insertar estas técnicas en el aula? ¿Podrías dar un ejemplo de actividad que pueda desarrollar la democracia en el aula?
5. ¿Has realizado teatro con personas en riesgo social? ¿Cuál ha sido tu experiencia en este ámbito?

Annex B: Set of Activities***“The Rhythm of Respiration”*****Level:** all**Age:** all**Organization:** whole group in a circle**Time:** 30 min.**Materials:**

- *Speakers*
- *Relaxing music*

Procedures:

The participants form a circle looking at each other. They are asked to stand up firmly, with their feet, backs and head well straight without pushing their bodies. The participants start following the instructions below.

1. Put your hands on your stomach and exhale the air you have in your lungs. Inhale deeply and slowly, filling your thorax with air little by little. Exhale again and repeat this cycle three times.
2. Now start again but this time, put your hands at the base of your thoracic cage, inhale and try to expand your chest the most you can in order to fill your lungs completely. Exhale and repeat this cycle three times.
3. Raise your hands and arms up in the air and try to fill your lungs following this same breathing pattern. Repeat this three times.
4. Now it is time to connect these three types of breathing following the same order. Inhale and start with your hands on your stomach and so on. Your muscles are holding tight during in-breaths. The cycle of respiration should feel as an activity of the whole-body. You must do this always keeping in mind your own breathing cycle; without pushing your body. Repeat this three times.

5. Inhale deeply again through the right nostril and exhale through the left nostril and vice versa. Repeat this three times.
6. Breathe in deeply taking as much possible air as you can and then exhale it all in one go, through the mouth, in a powerful way. Repeat this again but this time discharging the air through your nose. Repeat this three times.
7. Now start breathing in slowly and deeply while raising your arms as much as you can. Stand on tiptoe as you continue inhaling. When there is no more space in your lungs to inhale start going down little by little while exhaling slowly. Start getting down your arms, following up with your head, back and so on until your body occupies the littlest space possible. As soon as you listen to the instructions, start going up slowly again. Repeat this three times.
8. Now that you are back upright to the normal position, inhale deeply taking the air from your thoracic cage and pinch together your nostrils and close your mouth to maintain the air inside. As soon as you cannot longer stand the air inside, exhale and express your relief. Repeat this three times.
9. Correct your position and inhale as quickly as you can and immediately let it go as fast as possible. Repeat this three times.
10. The whole group gets closer until they can feel their upper arms touching their neighbour's. The instructor counts up to three and the group inhales deeply. When breathing out, they have to make an 'A' sound all together. The same is repeated with the sound 'E', 'I', 'O' and 'U'.

Comments and Suggestions:

It is important to develop this activity without pushing anybody to do so in a specific rhythm since each person has a different one. Each participant should follow his/her own tune in order to be able to relax and make him/herself aware of how his/her cycle of respiration is. This activity can be carried out with eyes closed or opened.

References:

Boal, A. (2002). Games for Actors and Non-Actors. (2nd ed.) New York: Routledge.

“Good Day”**Level:** all**Age:** all**Organization:** whole group in a circle**Time:** 10 min.**Procedures:**

1. Each participant approaches an unknown person and both shake hands exchanging their names.
2. Grabbing their hands together, they have to exchange names with another person.
3. As soon as they get another hand, they can let the other hand go and so on.

Comments and Suggestions:

Music can be included to this exercise to make it faster and more ludic. Also, this activity needs to be carried out in a bigger space when having more people.

References:

Boal, A. (2002). Games for Actors and Non-Actors. (2nd ed.) New York: Routledge.

“The Circle of Knots”**Level:** all**Age:** all**Organization:** whole group in a circle**Time:** 20 min.**Procedures:**

1. The participants make a circle by joining hands to make a ring.
2. They move backwards until they are only touching their fingers.
3. After this, they do exactly the opposite and cluster together in the middle of the circle, trying to occupy the littlest space possible.
4. They come back to the circle they had when they started holding hands.
5. One person moves forward to come across another person by jumping over or walking under him/her without letting hands off.
6. A second person repeats the same action always holding hands for making a knot.
7. Every participant has to come across over or under another person until everybody has done his/her part for creating the knot.
8. The entire group is so tangled that they cannot longer move.
9. After this, the group as a whole starts working to untangle this big knot without talking or producing any utterance. They just have to communicate using body language.
10. Each participant gets back to his/her original position.

Comments and Suggestions:

Getting back to the initial position is sometimes not achieved which is totally fine. It defines how the group communicates with each other. The most important objective when developing this activity is to create confidence among the group.

References:

Boal, A. (2002). Games for Actors and Non-Actors. (2nd ed.) New York: Routledge.

“First Break”**Level:** all**Age:** all**Organization:** pairs**Time:** 10 min.**Materials:**

- *Food and drinks*

Procedures:

1. The participants are invited to have a short break.
2. Each member has to approach one unknown person in order to talk about something related to the workshop or any other topic they would like to comment on.

Comments and Suggestions:

If some of the participants are having a difficult time approaching somebody, the instructor can get close to them in order to start a conversation. They could also create groups of three people if this helps them feel more comfortable.

“How Many ‘A’s in one ‘A’”**Level:** all**Age:** all**Organization:** whole group in a circle**Time:** 30 min.**Procedures:**

1. The participants gather in a circle.
2. One person goes to the center of the circle and expresses a feeling, emotion, or an idea using the sound of the letter ‘A’. This should be accompanied by movements, gestures and facial expressions.
3. Consequently, the entire group repeats what their partner did in the center of the circle three times.
4. Another participant goes to the center and utters a different feeling or emotion with the letter ‘E’ and the group must repeat this sound three times and so on.
5. The same pattern is repeated until everybody has expressed an emotion with one of the five vocals.

Comments and Suggestions:

The main objective of this activity is that everyone expresses a feeling. If some of them do not feel comfortable going to the center of the circle to do so, he or she can utter the sound from his or her position in the circle. If the participants are not volunteering themselves to start this activity, the instructor can begin performing for the partakers to see an example and lower their affective filter.

References:

Boal, A. (1992). Games for Actors and Non-Actors. (1st ed.) London: Routledge.

“Difficulties”**Level:** all**Age:** all**Organization:** whole group**Time:** 20 min.**Procedures:**

1. The participants sit on the floor.
2. They are asked to imagine themselves without one part of their bodies. They will have a few minutes to choose which one.
3. After this, they stand up from the floor and start doing daily actions they would do but now without the chosen part of the body.
4. They will walk around, jump, kneel or whichever action taking body movement to the limit in order to experience their life without one of their body parts.
5. Ask them to feel free to sit down on the floor again when they feel they are ready to reflect upon this experience.

Comments and Suggestions:

Some of the participants may find it difficult to think of missing one of their body parts or how to move taking into account this fact. If so, help them with ideas to develop this exercise the best way possible. If one of the partakers happen to have a visual impairment or physical disability, this person can share what he or she feels on this matter with the rest of the group.

References:

Boal, A. (2002). Games for Actors and Non-Actors. (2nd ed.) New York: Routledge.

“Modelling Clay”**Level:** all**Age:** all**Organization:** whole group lying on the ground**Time:** 45 min.**Materials:**

- *Clay*
- *Paper*
- *Neckerchiefs*

Procedures:

1. The members receive neckerchiefs to cover their eyes.
2. The participants lie on the floor and concentrate on their bodies becoming conscious of their body parts (head, arms, hands, legs, feet, stomach, etc.).
3. After the members reflect upon their bodies they sit up and are given clay and a piece of paper. The participants model their own body on top of a paper with their eyes closed.
4. The participants take out the neckerchiefs.
5. Finally, the partakers reflect upon their creation and share their experiences. For example, if a person made his/her legs longer in relation to his/her body, why is that?

Comments and Suggestions:

It is important for the participants to know that it is fine if somebody does not have the skills to manage clay in an experienced way. The importance of this activity is that each person expresses their perception of their body through modelling clay.

References:

Boal, A. (1992). *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. (1st ed.) London: Routledge.

“First Discussion”**Level:** all**Age:** all**Organization:** whole group**Time:** 15 min.**Procedures:**

1. This time all participants sit on the floor forming a circle.
2. They are asked to exchange comments, suggestions, and questions, among others. Each person shares a reflection upon the activities developed and what they have felt within the group up to now.

Comments and Suggestions:

The instructor might dwell on certain comments that arise from the partakers to make a more profound reflection on their thoughts or questions. Also, the instructor may ask questions to the participants if some topics have not been discussed.

“The French Telephone”**Level:** all**Age:** all**Organization:** whole class in a circle**Time:** 20 min.**Procedures:**

1. The participants are numbered and form a circle.
2. Later, the members look at each other in this order:
3. number 1 looks at number 4
4. number 2 looks at number 5
5. number 3 looks at number 6
6. number 4 looks at number 7
7. number 5 looks at number 8
8. number 6 looks at number 9
9. number 7 looks at number 10
10. number 8 looks at number 11
11. number 9 looks at number 12
12. number 10 looks at number 13
13. number 11 looks at number 14
14. The participants look carefully at their partners. If their partners move a little bit they have to move a little bit and, as somebody else is looking at him/her, the other person must move too and so on.
15. At end of this activity, everyone has moved and the participants will realize that their positions are different than when they started the activity.

Comments and Suggestions:

The participants might not be used to looking at a person in the eyes and this can lead to strong emotions which should flow in a natural way.

References:

Boal, A. (1992). Games for Actors and Non-Actors. (1st ed.) London: Routledge.

“Remembering an Actual Oppression”**Level:** all**Age:** all**Organization:** groups of three people**Time:** 60 min.**Procedures:**

1. The instructor gives the topics each group will reflect upon. For example, one group has to reflect on an oppression related to an institution: public hospital, church, school.
2. Once in their groups, the members decide who starts sharing the story.
3. It is important that the person that is telling the story and the ones who are listening to him/her can imagine the story.
4. The other two participants listen attentively and ask for as much details as possible in order to actually feel what their partner feels about this memoir.
5. If the person telling the story is frustrated because of her/his job, family, etc. he/she needs to transmit this feeling to their partners so they can empathize with him/her.
6. Afterwards, the rest of the group will give possible suggestions to break from the oppression this person is undergoing.
7. Then, it is the time for another person within the group to repeat this same exercise and so on.

Comments and Suggestions:

This activity can lead to a dense state of mind; this is why a break is given afterwards so the participants can lower their tempo and reflect upon this activity. One adaptation that could be done to this activity is that each group could share one of the stories to the rest of the participants, and/or act it out. Also, this activity can be contextualized if the instructor wants to direct it to something more specific depending on the main goal he/she has in mind.

References:

Boal, A. (1992). Games for Actors and Non-Actors. (1st ed.) London: Routledge.

“Second Break”**Level:** all**Age:** all**Organization:** whole group**Time:** 10 min.**Materials:**

- *Food and drinks*

Procedures:

1. The participants are invited to take a break.
2. There is food and drinks for them.
3. The members are asked not to talk to any participant during the entire break but just take some fresh air and reflect upon the previous activity.

Comments and Suggestions:

This break should be used to reflect upon the activities the participants have been developing throughout the workshop. Each participant can take this break to make a more profound reflection on their lives and personal issues.

“The Game of Complementary Roles”**Level:** all**Age:** all**Organization:** groups of four people**Time:** 70 min.**Procedures:**

1. The instructor prompts a brainstorm to write a list of topics related to everyday situations in the school.
2. Depending on what topic each participant chooses, groups of four people are formed.
3. The participants discuss the situation, reflect on it and decide the roles (teachers, students, or any other) each member of the group will take in order to perform the situation later on.
4. All the groups act out their situations.
5. After all the groups have acted out their situations, they gather in a circle and share their feelings, thoughts, emotions, etc. with the rest of the group.

Comments and Suggestions:

If many groups choose the same topic, they have to perform it differently from the others and discuss how they are going to conduct the activity. In order to carry out this activity the best way possible, the instructor may check on the progress of each group and clarify doubts about the activity.

References:

Boal, A. (1992). Games for Actors and Non-Actors. (1st ed.) London: Routledge.

“Second Discussion”**Level:** all**Age:** all**Organization:** whole group sitting on the floor in a circle**Time:** 30 min.**Procedures:**

1. The participants are asked to sit in a circle.
2. The entire group discusses their experience throughout the workshop.
3. The members share feelings, emotions, ideas, suggestions, comments, etc. in relation to the workshop.
4. They are asked to discuss the applicability of the activities to their classrooms in order to relate these to their own circumstances.

Comments and Suggestions:

So as to facilitate the discussion, the instructor can ask some questions to the participants in relation to the group work in the workshop. Did they feel comfortable? Was it difficult to feel part of a community? Also, Can they apply these activities to their classroom? In what ways?