

All (?) about *Forum Theatre*

Erasmus+ 2019
Theatre around and inside us



Meeting in Rhodes, October 2019



“Theatre is the art of looking at ourselves”

Augusto Boal

Theatre of the oppressed

A vast international movement which seeks to transform **audiences into active participants** in the theatrical experience, founded and developed by Augusto Boal, a Brazilian teacher, theatre practitioner, writer and director. In the 1960s, Boal began to experiment with new forms of theatre to try and break down the barriers between actors and the audience.



*"Theatre of the Oppressed is about ...
questioning rather than giving answers,
analysing rather than accepting..."*

Augusto Boal, Games for Actors and Non-actors

Theatre of the oppressed



Image theatre

Invisible theatre

Forum theatre

Image theatre

Is a series of exercises and games where the participants make still images of their lives, feelings, experiences, oppressions.



Invisible theatre

Is a public theatre which involves the public as participants in the action without their knowing it.



Forum theatre

In forum theatre **audience members can stop a performance**, often a short scene in which a character is being **oppressed** in some way. Then spectator replaces actor to determine the solution to a given problem presented by the actor. This makes it possible to bring the audience members into the performance, to have an input into the dramatic action they were watching.



“Anyone can do theater, even actors.

And, theater can be done everywhere, even in a theatre”

Augusto Boal

Terminology

Joker

Protagonist

Spectator to Specta**C**tor

Joker

The teacher or facilitator of the group who runs the session. The joker acts as an intermediary, ensures smooth running of the theatre and teaches the audience the 'rules'



Protagonist

The central character who is experiencing difficulties in the scene.



Spectator

to

SpectaCtor

When the **spectator** jumps into the scenario to take part in the scene, they become a **spect-actor**.

actor + *spectator* = **SPECTACTOR**

We are all actors: being a citizen is not living in society, it is changing it

Augusto Boal

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A step-by-step guide to forum theatre



Start with a scene or short play that the young people have devised or improvised.

It should focus on a problem or contentious issue.

Play out the scene or play in full. Discuss the situation with the group: what was happening, and what were the issues or problems being raised?



Run through the scene again. This time, the **joker** invites **spectators** to pause the action at any point by shouting ‘**Stop!**’ The audience member who stops the scene, the **spectator**, then **replaces the central character or protagonist** and tries to change the situation to achieve a positive conclusion.



All other actors in the scene should continue in their roles as before. For example, if someone is in character as a bully they cannot suddenly become a best friend.



Once the spect-actor has tried to resolve the situation, then others may stop the action and try a different strategy. The scene is replayed numerous times with different interventions by various spect-actors.





The interventions should reflect **reality and be achievable**. This means that no magic or super heroes are allowed, and spect-actors cannot make the protagonist invisible or fly. Nor can they change the motivation of the protagonist. For example, if s/he wants to be in the football team s/he is being excluded from, s/he cannot suddenly take up a different sport.



Finish on a **positive note** by running through the scene again and change the ending to a one. However, at the end of the session, it may not have been possible to reach a resolution. What is important is that young people recognise points of intervention in a conflict situation and learn strategies to achieve a more positive outcome, which they may employ in real life situations.