

Art 4 DEM research project: drama or ‘mantle of the expert method’ as a means of citizenship education + how to evaluate it¹

1. Drama or ‘mantle of the expert method’ as a means of citizenship education

Dorothy Heathcote, the creator of a.o. Mantle of the Expert, said that drama is "the best of all the arts capable of mirroring vivid social encounters" and is therefore a "suitable choice" for citizenship education: "By mirroring life, fictional social encounters can be explored and discussed and thought about within a 'no penalty zone'. Hopefully, the participants will then find direct parallels with their actual life experiences and may even better understand the choices in cultural encounters. [...] The starting point of drama work is that of exploring "what it is to be human".¹ The dramatic working methods in this brochure provide a lot of techniques and angles to highlight citizenship themes and examine them in a dynamic, challenging, but safe way. In Rehearsing our roles, a group of teachers, spurred on by the Development Education Centre in Birmingham (UK), reflected on what they believed drama in their classroom practice contributed to citizenship education. This resulted in a fascinating overview:

Citizenship theme	Contribution of drama
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to explore through character/ role • Open-ended questions (identity is not always fixed) • Recognizing the perception of others about ourselves • Already published plays about gender, refugees, historical aspects...
Group work and social skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama is impossible without group work/cooperation • The bond that can develop within groups of young people • Involvement of "hard-to-reach pupils" • Increase self-esteem (pupils are assigned a different status) • Possibilities of expression (sharing experiences/opinions in different/ different ways)
Emotional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space for exploring emotionally difficult issues in a "no penalty zone"
Teacher skills and uncertainties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opens up educational opportunities • Adults may weaken their authority role (e.g. through teacher-in-role) and strengthen students' decision-making role CONTROVERSY (Belonging or breaking out? The right to dissent) • Problem-solving approaches

¹ Research project by AP Hogeschool in Antwerp to explore drama in citizenship and use formative assessment to evaluate= <https://www.ap.be/project/art4dem>

Controversies: right to another opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama empowers children to take matters into their own hands and change things <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving skills • Drama activities develop conversational skills
Responsibility, respect, empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety to be in someone else's shoes in a 'narrative' (fictional) atmosphere • Anonymous/distancing: exploring possibilities through role-playing • Dilemmas, implications, consequences, responsibilities trying (e.g. through role play): "rehearsal for real life" RIGHTS • Children experience their own authority and equality/ equality (they may not get that chance otherwise/elsewhere maybe not) • Issues of injustice and conflict is at the heart of most dramas
Inclusion and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the realm of imagination, you dynamically create a social feeling • Drama works without exclusion - increases self-confidence • There is a variety of ways people can be actively involved. It can be playful/attractive (e.g. for children who are not as "literate" it can be a forum in which they can shine)
The world can be changes	Stories of people who have changed things (what, by whom and how?)

You don't have to be a qualified actor or actress to get started with Participatory Drama and Mantle of the Expert. After all, you will not use these drama forms to create an artistic result, you will rather use them as a learning tool. You do have to master certain (game) techniques, but your focus remains primarily on the knowledge, skills and attitudes that you wish to develop in the field of citizenship. So don't worry too much if you're nervous about practicing drama or if you don't think you have the necessary experience to do it "right." Drama is something you can start small with – with one short game activity, for example – and gradually refine and improve as you try it out.

Are we going to play? And can I just do that in my classroom?

You're going to play, work with senses and emotions, but the goal is not to make a play. However, by using drama, you will help your students to develop skills and insights that are just as important in their lives as language and arithmetic. In addition to similarities, there are also some major differences between theatre and drama: In theatre, the product is often important; drama is about the process. At theatre you usually invite outsiders to come and watch; in drama you do not play in front of an audience, but with each other. While theatre seeks interaction outwards (with an audience), Participatory Drama and Mantle of the Expert focus on the interaction inside (the group of actors).

Wat is Mantle of the Expert?

What if... your class group was a team full of experts? Scientists in a laboratory, for example? Or archaeologists excavating a tomb? Or a rescue team during a natural disaster? Suppose the team was instructed by a customer to carry out an important mission. What should the team members be able to do: perhaps work together, sometimes make difficult decisions, acquire a lot of knowledge, deal skillfully with everything that comes their way, communicate well, empathize, persevere, take responsibility ... What if you could create a fictional world in your

classroom where students can take on exactly these challenges? Then you could regularly step out of that fictional world to teach them in the real world of the classroom the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need in the fictional world to continue their story. In a nutshell², this is how the Mantle of the Expert teaching method works: the teacher, together with the students, creates a fictitious context in which they attract the 'mantle of an expert' and carry out an important assignment for a client as a team. All kinds of learning activities can be linked to this assignment that the teacher deliberately selects from the curriculum. Result: the learning becomes meaningful. It gets a purpose. The students become intrinsically motivated because what they learn is immediately usable in the fictional context

Examples in class

"The Bronze Age" in the first stage of secondary education In this practical example, the pupils are first visually stimulated by two photos of an axe and a bracelet. Afterwards, they investigate the sources that are available (such as books, internet, information sheets...) and as a teacher you ask the questions for both photos: • What do we know for sure based on what we see and have looked up here? • What do we think we know but do we need to investigate further? • What do we not know (but do we want to know)? After this start-up phase, the students are guided into the fiction: • First as a group of reporters who report on the find: a (bronze) axe and a (bronze) bracelet on a site in a forest area near the village of Tågelund in Denmark. • Afterwards, they follow in the footsteps of a team of archaeologists who investigate the site into the history of these objects, as well as other (new) finds. The team of archaeologists works for the National Museum of Denmark. It is tasked with examining, collecting and organizing the found objects.

Introducing the imaginary context introducing the fiction

The students stand in a circle. The teacher places the image of the bronze axe (and then also that of the bracelet) in the middle. Teacher: "This axe once belonged to a person from a distant past. The same goes for this bracelet. This morning they were found by two forest rangers in a forest area near the village of Tågelund in Denmark. They immediately contacted the National Museum of Denmark. The museum, excited about the discovery, contacted a team of archaeologists to travel to this site and study the find more closely." another point of view Teacher: "Along with the archaeologists, a group of reporters from different newspapers came along. They will report on the event. If you were the reporters, what questions would you ask?" Give the students time to write down some questions. interviewing the archaeologist Once the students have written down their questions, you collect them back in the circle around the axe and the bracelet. Teacher-in-role as archaeologist: "We investigated this axe and bracelet further this morning. It is very exciting, because it has been a long time since we made such a find in this area. I can imagine that you have many questions that I will answer to the best of my ability. Who wants to start?" A conversation follows between the reporters (students-in-role) and archaeologist (teacher-in-role).

Regarding citizenship several competencies are involved:

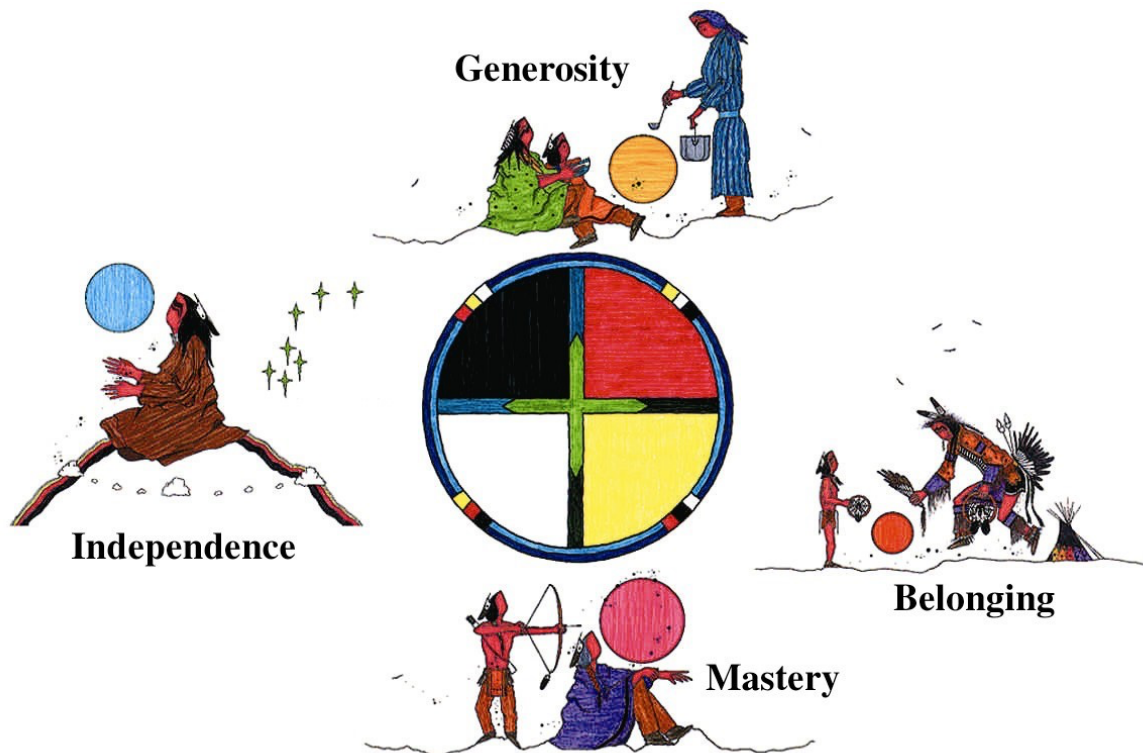
1. The students explain the layers and dynamics of identities and their possible consequences for relationships with others.
2. The students treat individuals and groups in a diverse society with respect and constructiveness. (attitudinal)

3. Students use strategies to treat individuals and groups in a diverse society with respect and constructiveness. 7.5 The students use strategies to arrive at constructive solutions for conflict situations.
4. The students substantiate their own opinion about social events, themes and trends with reliable information and valid arguments.

2. How to evaluate citizenship education?

During a small-scale case study that the researchers did in the first two years of secondary school of a Flemish secondary school (2021-2022), the teachers unanimously assessed the following forms of evaluation as relevant, practical, high-quality, feasible, flexible to use, engaging (both for themselves and for the students) and innovative for their classroom practice:

1. Continuous portfolio: collect notes, reflections, evidence (e.g. photos, drawings, audio or video recordings, self-evaluations...) throughout the school year.
2. Individual textbooks: have students reflect regularly during or at the end of a lesson about their experiences, ideas, conclusions... You can ask them at the beginning of a teaching period to formulate a goal for themselves and how they intend to achieve it. As a teacher, you can also formulate a goal for them and what they could do to achieve it. This allows the students to reflect very specifically, both in between and at the end of a series of lessons.
3. Sessions focused on meta-learning: e.g. students interact with a fictional character who does not understand how to put certain things into practice, students lead or guide visitors, students make an instructional video, etc.
4. Easy-difficult continuum: draw a horizontal line on a sheet of paper with an arrow to both sides (easy and difficult). Have the students put a cross on the line: where do they place certain skills or competences for themselves? (Incidentally, a great reason for a more in-depth conversation.)
5. Hotspot evaluations: One student voluntarily sits on a chair at the front or in the middle of the class (the 'hotspot') and evaluates or reflects on an agreed theme (a performance that the group delivered, a skill, the process that was taken...). Another student can pay him or her off by tapping his or her shoulder and continuing the evaluation or reflection. If necessary, the other students can ask questions.
6. Learning surgeries: one of the students voluntarily addresses a problem he/she encounters and the group gives tips and ideas.
7. Connections: at the end of a day or week, students brainstorm across all learning domains and make connections, between one learning area and another, or between a learning area and the world in general.
8. **The Circle of Excellence or circle of courage:** How did the students excel in a particular assignment or during a class period? Draw a large circle on the ground with chalk (or tape it with paper tape). Divide the circle into four equal parts. Place a card in each part with a competence or core quality (which you can easily find on the internet). Have the students take a place in the circle and explain their choice. You can repeat this several times with other competencies or core qualities. Alternatively, if the students were allowed to place one fellow pupil in each quadrant, who would they choose and why?



This circle of courage that is shown above can be used to discuss and reflect on

- **Belonging:** a goal for students is to feel secure and experience a sense of belonging in the classroom and school.
- **Mastery:** discussing their mastery level of certain competences and reflecting on 'masters' in their lives that inspire them: parents, grandparents, teachers, youth leaders,
- **Independence:** encouraging students to be confident and responsible leaders. You can use it to discuss whether students feel a sense of independence in their lives or if most decisions are made for them.
- **Generosity:** encouraging students to volunteer in the community or work with community service learning, creating a powerful lesson about how to contribute to society.