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# Drama Games Textbook for Elementary School

Dana Rotaru

UNATC PRESS

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# **DRAMA GAMES**

**TEXTBOOK FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**UNATC Press**

**2017**

# DRAMA GAMES TEXTBOOK FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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*Book published within the UNATC JUNIOR Project*  
*Project implemented by the Master Degree in Theatre Pedagogy UNATC*  
*Financed by the Ministry of National Education through FSS 2017*  
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## **CIP Description of the National Library of Romania**

**Rotaru, Dana**

**Drama games textbook for elementary school / Dana Rotaru. - București :**

U.N.A.T.C. Press, 2017

Conține bibliografie

ISBN 978-606-8757-27-8

792

## **UNATC Press 2017**

*Head of the Publishing House: Dr. Dan Vasiliu, Professor*

*Cover: Victor Bădoi*

*Printing House: Publicitaria*

## FOREWORD

### *Art education – the link between school and community*

We often hear the phrase — school — educational services provider. Usually our first reaction is to reject it as a typical example of *wooden language*. But what do we miss when we simply reject it?

First of all, we lose the privilege of observing that the main mistake comes from the implicit gap between school and community, between school and the families of elementary school children, between school and people in the community, most of whom are statistically former students of the same neighbourhood school. But is there still a community or are we deluding ourselves?

Secondly, we miss the opportunity to ask the real question. How can school become again the core of the community, of the entire society as a whole?

The answer seems to be simple: by redefining school as a cultural centre, with education being the main task, but also nourishing the entire community through a complex of cultural activities. Institutional development should follow three directions: pedagogical, social and artistic. Two of the areas of the current curricular structure, *Man and society* and *Arts respectively*, should be applied to the entire community. Cultural/artistic activity with educational purposes does not undermine the pedagogical aspect, but it makes the community responsible for it, too. In this approach we should consider art and culture in the widest possible definitions, including the anthropological and sociological perspective.

The controversy over schooling and un-schooling is nowadays under public scrutiny. Some accuse the school education system as a whole of being out-dated and inadequate. Aside from turning school into a “provider of educational services” and home-schooling there are, however, many other solutions.

One solution is to encourage people to be more involved in the community.

What can school learn from culture and art? First of all, how to rediscover the cheerfulness, joy and pleasure in a privileged place where learning and beauty, play and fiction, fictional worlds and the real world can

come together. School is also the place where we learn to find meaning through role playing games, where we can imagine the future as any fantasy world.

Moreover, bringing drama in school means the discovery of the *child as a creator* and *as a spectator*. Too often the creative aspect is obscured by normative planning, especially when we talk about social skills. Drama and dance develop the sociable, empathic person, opened to relationships, to dialogue, skilled and competent in solving complex problems through participation and group strategies. Current education must find a balance between the spectator-child and the creator-child, for the benefit of the future adult and the society.

UNATC Junior is part of this effort; our demonstrative workshops are laboratories where we test teaching strategies in order to be able to bring drama to school. The pressure does not come from us, but from schools, including students and teachers. It is the result of a vivid phenomenon and the awareness of a necessity. Before we consider the difficulty, we should keep in mind that school must be a celebration of joy.

Dr. Nicolae Manda, Associate Professor  
Rector of "I.L. Caragiale" National University of  
Theatre and Film Bucharest

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## INTRODUCTION

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Based on play, acting is undoubtedly one of the most enjoyable ways to develop social skills. We all know that children who like what they do have the greatest achievements. Casual communication and the establishment of appropriate and harmonious relationships among peers are essential. That is why our proposal for drama education - the drama textbook - targets and covers these needs. In a constantly - technological, economic - changing world social dynamics are very important. The way a child (future adult) chooses his/her relationships and social groups can be guided and educated from childhood. Deciding “what I want to do/be when I grow up” will be easier if the child has the opportunity to know himself, express, experience situations or professions, as is the case with the complex play of acting.

*Drama Games Textbook for Elementary School* is designed to train and improve attention, observation skills, teamwork, creative thinking, active imagination, language and vocabulary, physicalization as well as rhythm, voice (singing and talking), public speaking, (communication), according to their age and interests/skills.

The acting courses proposed in this textbook harmoniously combine many arts and skills, such as: movement (sport and dance), speech (diction, language and literature), singing (vocalisation and music) and image (drawing, painting and handwork). Through games and exercises proposed during acting classes, we want to encourage children to respect and enjoy their own work and others'. The work during the course/workshop consists of the games created together, the decors and masks handmade together, the performances staged together, the songs and the dances created and practiced together. Teamwork, training and individuality development of each team member are essential to our educational program and our proposal.

The *Drama Games Textbook for Elementary School* is the result of two decades of efforts in the children and youth communities, where I worked as: elementary school teacher, actress, university instructor - in the Acting and Speaking Department, Assistant Professor, University Lecturer - Art of Acting, PhD in Theatre, Acting and Speech Trainer.

This work is designed for all those who want to be an active part of the drama education process (kindergarten teachers, elementary school teachers, trainers), and it is addressed especially to those working with children aged between 6 and 10 years old. Drama education is a 100% practical activity, and this textbook is a useful tool for actor's art workshop trainers; it develops not only the philosophical, sociological and psychological principles, but also the theoretical, pedagogical, methodological principles included.

At the end of the day, the success of an actor's class (or any class) depends very much on the grace with which the professor (professionally) coordinates the learning activity (experimentation) and the harmony that is created between its members (the students of the art workshop actor).

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# TEAMWORK

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Theatre has always existed. It has existed since time immemorial, and so far, it has followed its own path, living through and among people, reaching the crowds. It is a social form of art. Theatre and society have developed together. From the society described by Plato in the *Republic* and up to the present human civilisation, theatre has been part of people's life. Its contribution to the development of society and civilisation lies in the very fact that the theatre still exists today.

Theatre involves common interests and needs, put into practice as a team. Teamwork is the basis of any activity in the theatre, it is defining for its proper functioning, and *only* this type of work ensures its existence, continuity.

Whether we are talking about an institution or about schools, groups and amateur bands, teamwork is what makes the wheels spin this complex mechanism generically named THEATRE, build by its members: specialists and trainees. So, we are talking about an organised group of people strengthened in time, and which through specific actions develops, transforms, changes the needs of a society offering drama products. The theatre had been the place where philosophical, sociological, political ideas of all times have flown as performances. The *key to success* in theatre is teamwork. Promoted, implemented and developed in all socio-professional environments, teamwork is the most social way to effectively function within human, socio-professional macro-groups.

Theatre is a social art. Through his techniques, it leads toward one of the most effective forms of education: drama in education. This kind of education offers the direct, immediate way to introduce right now, right here the individual into the community - especially during the educational initiation - to support and train them in the spirit of respect for their peers, the team work efficiency, the benefits of belonging to a socio-educational or professional group.

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