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REDEFINING THE TEACHER AS A PERFORMER

– Analysis of the experience with a community

without previous theatrical experience

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REDEFINOVÁNÍ ROLE UČITELE JAKO PERFORMERA

- Analýza zkušeností s komunitou

bez divadelního povědomí

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Declaration

I declare that I have prepared my Bachelor's Thesis/Master's Thesis, Dissertation independently on the following topic:

REDEFINING THE TEACHER AS A PERFORMER – Analysis of the experience with a community without previous theatrical experience

under the expert guidance of my thesis advisor and with the use of the cited literature and sources.

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Abstract

Redefining the role of the teacher in a community without exposure to arts on a daily basis, by using theatre workshops founded on the psychosomatic approach, permitted the participants to recognize and explore their personal creative resources, enriching their creativity and awareness of their physicality and responsibility in creating a safe and fruitful environment for teaching. This dissertation analyzed an international experiment that put to test the training of a six-member team from the Department of Authorial Creativity and Pedagogy, and offers a case of the current applicability of the psychosomatic approach.

Abstrakt

Redefinování role učitele použitím divadelních dílen založených na psychosomatickém přístupu v komunitě bez divadelního povědomí umožnilo účastníkům ocenit a prozkoumat své vlastní kreativní schopnosti, vedlo k rozšíření jejich kreativity a uvědomění si své tělesnosti a zodpovědnosti za tvorbu bezpečného a plodného prostředí k učení. Tato dizertační práce analyzovala mezinárodní experiment, který testoval trénink šestičlenného týmu z Katedry autorské tvorby a pedagogiky a nabídl možnost aplikace psychosomatického přístupu.

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Introduction

After one year as a student of the Master Program of Acting with the focus on authorial creation and pedagogy¹, I asked myself the question that motivated this study: *Whether it is possible to apply what we have learned and carry out a training in a community, where there is no exposure to arts on their daily basis, led by international instructors, based on the psychosomatic approach.*

In order to answer the question, I created the project *Mravenčení*², which redefined the question as “How to do authorial theater in a community without previous theatrical knowledge?”

With the goal of redefining the role of the teacher as a performer, we created an artistic-educational-social project to be applied in the municipality of Guadalupe, Santander in Colombia, which involved a series of five workshops and the creation and performance of a group authorial play called *Caza Casasueños*³.

The project had three phases: The planning and preparation phase that lasted 11 months, the realization phase that took one month in Colombia and the evaluation and presentation of results phase that was done in four months.

The present dissertation will only address the themes related to the evaluation of the main goal and the three objectives that framed the workshops in Guadalupe, Colombia. The other aspects of the project *Mravenčení*, such as the creation, performance and tour of the authorial play *Caza casasueños*, the documentary about

¹ A loose translation of the name “Herectví se zaměřením na autorskou tvorbu a pedagogiku” in the Czech language.

² A Czech word that refers to the tingling sensation. The project was presented in Spanish as *Hormiguelo* that has the same meaning. In the Czech and in the Spanish version of the term (*Mravenčení* and *Hormiguelo*), there is the allusion to the word “ant” (*mravenec* and *hormiga*, respectively), which is the emblematic animal of the region of Santander, in Colombia; where the project took place.

³ A translation of the name would be *hunting house-dreams*.

the project, the internal matters of organization and dynamics of the Team of professionals that carried out the project and the in-depth analysis of all the workshops, are beyond the limits of this thesis.

1. The Context

1.1. The Team

In September 2015, Oskar Bábek and I decided to begin the project. After one month, we had 11 team members. The following four team members were not part of the Department of Authorial Creativity and Pedagogy (further on as DACP⁴): Jan Burik, Dominika Lipertová, Alžběta Tichá and Tamara Allina. The seven people from our department included Oskar Bábek, Olga Mikulska, Václav Wortner, Tereza Koláčková, Dorota Krátká, Petra Oswaldová, PhD. and me.

The members of the team, who were students of DACP, oversaw their own workshop and had the responsibility to co-create and act in the theatrical play that we would bring to Colombia. Petra Oswaldová was in charge of her workshop but was not going to take part in the play.

After a few months, the size of the team changed drastically due to marriages, education abroad, lack of certainty of funds, unaccomplished responsibilities towards the team and the menace of Zika and Chikungunya viruses in Colombia. In the middle of April 2016, we reached our final formation, and ended up with a group of six: five lecturers and one person in charge of filming the experience for a documentary.

From now on, when I make a reference to “the Team”, I am referring to the final group, who led the project in Colombia:

⁴ For its acronym in the English language “Department of Authorial Creativity and Pedagogy”, the department of our studies at the Performing Arts University of the Czech Republic – AMU.

Member	Task in the workshops	Task in the play
BcA Tamara Allina	Cameraman	Cameraman / light design
MA Oskar Bábek	Cofounder of the project/ leader of principles of acting	Actor / co-creator
BcA Isabel Cristina Mendoza Piedrahita	Cofounder of the project and director of the group / leader of body - inner space, place - exterior space	Actor / co-creator
BcA Olga Mikulska	Leader of voice and soundscape	Actor / co-creator
MA Petra Oswaldová, Ph.D	Leader of Feldenkrais and movement	*Once in Colombia, scene advisor
MA Václav Wortner	Leader of theater improvisation	Actor / co-creator

1.2. The Location

1.2.1. Guadalupe, Santander, Colombia

As the security situation in Colombia is unstable and the crime rates are very high, it was important for me to choose the perfect place to develop our project in order to avoid potential dangers. I chose a town called Guadalupe, located in the region of Santander, a municipality with no presence of any armed group outside the law. It is a safe, small town that I know closely, because my father originated from here. This familiarity would also facilitate matters like hosting, meeting the authorities of the town, gaining trust of the community and accessing the schools.

The municipality of Guadalupe is located in the South of Santander, which lays in the Eastern mountain range of Colombia, 320km North of the capital, Bogotá. The urban settlement of Guadalupe is 1395 meters above sea level and the main economic activities are agriculture and livestock (Alcaldía de Guadalupe Santander).

According to the projections from the Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, DANE (English translation - National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia), the population of Guadalupe, Santander is 4,682 inhabitants (DANE), from which 68.5% live in the rural area.



Map of the Municipality of Guadalupe in the department of Santander, Colombia (Alcaldía de Guadalupe Santander)

The numbers provided by the Official Mayor's Office state that 32.08% (2013) of the total population of Guadalupe live in poverty as evaluated by the Unsatisfied Basic Necessities (UBN) indicator⁵.

1.3. ENSMA

In Guadalupe, there are two schools: one is the Instituto Técnico Agropecuario and the other one is the Escuela Normal Superior María Auxiliadora (ENSMA). The latter belongs to the Salesian community and is the biggest institution in Guadalupe. It has two urban headquarters (primary and secondary schools), nine rural primary schools, a female boarding school and also offers a special educational program for those students interested in becoming teachers, called Complementary Training

⁵ This is a widely spread indicator for demographical studies in Latin-America. In Spanish is referred as Necesidades Básicas Insatisfechas (NBI). This index identifies the proportion of people and households that have one or more unsatisfied basic needs to subsist in the society to which the household belongs. It combines infrastructure conditions, indicators of economic dependence and school attendance (DANE, 2016).

Program (for its acronym in Spanish, PFC Programa de Formación Complementaria)
(Alcaldía de Guadalupe Santander)

The rural schools have the dynamic of “Escuela Nueva”, which is an education model that places the students of three or more grades in the same classroom (around 20 students between the ages of five and ten) and assigns only one teacher to lead their whole learning process (Ministerio de Educación Colombia). The urban schools have the traditional dynamic of having the students placed in different classrooms, divided by grades, where they receive the lessons with one teacher at a time.

2. Closer Look and Approach

2.1. Social relevance of the project

In the summer of 2015, I went to Guadalupe to do an intake of the community and to see if it would be possible to do an international project there. During my visit to ENSMA, I met with the director of the school, Sister Gloria Arbeláez, who showed strong interest in the creation of the project. At my first visit to the school, two 16-year-old girls, who were in their last year of high school, approached me and asked if I really believed that there was another option for women besides getting pregnant when they finish high school. They explained to me that their families, as most of the families of Guadalupe, did not have enough economic resources to send them to the university. Therefore, they could not see another way to focus their personal development.

I have a Bachelor's Degree in Anthropology, and as such, I am aware of the relationship between the cycle of poverty and teenage pregnancies: most teenage mothers end up raising their child without a partner. They also tend to drop out of school and divide their time between work and the care of their child. Usually, these teenagers are unable to provide a healthy and safe environment. The lack of opportunities and the difficulty to foresee a better future are some motivating factors of teenage pregnancy. In Colombia, the percentage of teenage pregnancies in rural areas makes up 26% of the population (De cero a siempre). This means that one in four women between the ages of 15 and 19 years old, is already a mother or is expecting a child.

The question from these two teenagers had a big impact on me. I decided to create the project to show the teenagers of the town that there are other opportunities

and possibilities in life once you graduate from high school besides becoming a mother at such an early age. Nevertheless, I had to speak to the director of the school to see what we would need in order to create a project that would have a significant impact on the population.

2.1.2. Common problems with social programs in rural areas in Colombia

Because Guadalupe is not a municipality in high risk of violent attacks, the government does not designate a significant amount of resources nor programs for the social and artistic development. The town has a cultural house and an open space sports hall, where for six weeks twice a year, they receive a government appointed teacher, who offers free lessons in traditional dance and aerobics. Sister Gloria explained to me that those are the only extracurricular activities available for the teenagers there and that the quality of instructions is quite questionable. For example, the dance teacher rarely stands up from her chair while giving her lessons.

The community also named other difficulties with the social programs in Guadalupe. Besides the well-known corruption that eats up most of the economic resources assigned for the region, the people of Guadalupe confirmed that many programs are not sustainable. For example, the government may send a teacher who would lead sewing and dressmaking classes, but leave in the middle of the project due to lack of funding. Another common issue is that the lecturers come from other places in the country, so they stay in Guadalupe for very short periods of time and then return to their homes, leaving this town without an instructor who could continue with the process they started.

In order to create a project avoiding these same mistakes, Sister Gloria suggested that I focus on working with the adult population to try to increase the probabilities of continuity of this endeavor. If we involved the teachers of the town in the project, we would increase the chances of having someone in the region who could continue with what we had started.

In my country, the educational system prioritizes large groups over individual assistance and hence, ENSMA wanted us to integrate 150 students as participants of the project. In Prague, we decided that we would not be able to do meaningful work if we enrolled so many participants; therefore, we directed our efforts towards the teachers of the school and the two groups of PFC students, since we expected them to implement what they learned with us in their lessons.

For the Team, ENSMA assumed the responsibilities of providing the place for teaching the workshops, convening the participants, providing two simultaneous Spanish interpreters and the three daily meals. The Team was hosted by my family in Guadalupe.

2.2. Who were the participants

We had in total 61 participants: 22 students of the Complementary Training Program, for its acronym in Spanish, PFC, and 39 teachers.

In the group of 22 PFC students, there were four men and 18 women between the ages of 16 and 25 years old. All of them had completed a high school education and were trainee teachers in the urban school of ENSMA. Most of them (77.6%) were single, 13.3% were in common law marriage, and 9% were nuns. Some of these

participants also had children. Eighty percent of the students were born in the region of Santander and one-half of that percentage was born in Guadalupe.

The PFC students received regular classes from Monday to Friday at the urban headquarters of ENSMA and twice a year they had supervised monthly or bimonthly practices in one of the rural schools. As almost one-half of the students live in the rural area of Guadalupe, the government arranged free buses for the students. These buses were offered both early in the morning and the end of the school day, for if they missed it, they would have to walk home, as there is no regular public transport to connect the rural areas of the zone.

In the group of 39 teachers, there were four men and 35 women. Eleven percent of the group was under the age of 40 years old, with the oldest person being 58 years old. All of them had completed university education and some of them had specializations and master's degrees as well. One-half (51%) of them were married, 19% single, 12.4% in common law marriage, 10% widows or widowers, and 7.6% nuns. Only a few of these participants did not have children. Most of the teachers (70%) were born and raised in Guadalupe and 30% of them moved there because of job opportunity or safety. Nine of those 39 teachers worked in rural primary schools and the rest in the urban headquarters. Some of the teachers of the rural schools lived in Guadalupe but others travelled to Guadalupe every day to take our workshops and returned to their homes after 5pm.

3. Methodology

3.1. Doing authorial theater in a community without previous theatrical knowledge

The team discussed the approach of how to introduce theater to a community that had never seen any theatrical play before. At that time, we knew that we would only have two weeks to carry out the project in Guadalupe. Therefore, we were conscious that the creation of a local theater group would be impossible and we decided that the aim of the project would be teaching and training teachers. I felt that if we approached theater from the main activity of the school, they could appreciate the relevance of it and they would feel more comfortable to continue exploring it.

3.1.2. Redefine the role of the teacher as a performer

Caroline Heim, in her analysis of the performance, stated that “a phenomenon occurs in the theater that does not happen in private (...) making the audience performance unique: the encounter between actor and audience members” (Audience as performer: the changing role of theatre audiences in the twenty-first century 4). She drew attention towards the fact that when an action was done in the presence of others, where both parties (the “doer” and the “observer”) were aware of the conscious acts of observing and being observed, the manner in which the person does the action was affected by the tension created between the audience and himself.

I discussed this phenomenon several times with Professor Jana Pilátová⁶. During one of the sessions in the Seminar of Theater Anthropology, in the Summer Semester of 2016/2017, she gave us the task to imagine ourselves doing a futile action, such as planting tomatoes alone in our garden, and later on, realizing that the neighbor was watching us. She asked us, if we could notice a difference in our body. I did. I knew that I was being observed, I was more aware of the posture of my body and the way I moved. Therefore, I tried to observe my body in a more stylized manner, giving more energy to my physicality.

In a consultation on the 11th of March 2016, with Professor Pilátová about our project, we talked about the similarities of a theater performance and a *mise-en-scene* of a traditional school class at ENSMA. In a traditional class at ENSMA, the space of the classroom was divided in two by an imaginary line, separating the space for the teacher, located in the front of the classroom facing the students, and the space for the students. The teacher played the most active role - he or she was the only one allowed to walk freely through the space while he or she led the class, which was mainly based on an unidirectional communication “where the teacher imparts knowledge”⁷ while the students listen and do the activities that the teacher gives them. Professor Pilátová agreed with me that this dynamic, framed the class as a *performance* given by the teacher to the students.

⁶ Jana Pilátová was born in 1945 in the former Czechoslovakia. She studied Psychology and Theater Studies at Charles University in Prague. In 1968, she did an internship in the Laboratory Theatre of Jerzy Grotowski in Wrocław, she is an active write and has made an important contribution to the analysis of Grotowski’s work and its translation to the Czech language. She works as a dramaturg for the company Farm in the cave and since 1990 she is a professor in the Theatre Department of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (DAMU). To know more, visit: <https://www.damu.cz/cs/katedry/katedra-autorske-tvorby-a-pedagogiky/pedagogove/prof-phdr-pilatova-jana>

⁷ During the first visit to ENSMA in the summer 2015, the headmaster of the school, sister Gloria Arbeláez described in that manner the usual happenings in the classes of her school.

Eugenio Barba described that “the way we use our bodies in daily life is substantially different from the way we use them in performance” (A dictionary of theatre anthropology : the secret art of the performer 7). To this extent, it seemed to me that the teachers of ENSMA could benefit from having workshops based on a psychosomatic approach, as it supports the holistic understanding of oneself, “embracing the organic connection between the body and mind” (Slavíková, Čunderle and Hančil 61), and cultivating awareness⁸.

The Team decided to frame our project under the goal of **redefining the teacher as a performer**. For carrying out with that task, we created five different workshops using the psychosomatic approach, as it was the fundamental line of our training during our studies in the DACP, and we strongly believed that this approach would enhance the creative possibilities of the teachers and trainee teachers in their lessons.

3.1.3 Redefining the teacher as a performer and not as an actor

According to the definition given by Patrice Pavis in the Dictionary of the theatre: terms, concepts and analysis, the terms actor and performer are not equivalent:

More specifically, a performer is someone who speaks and acts on his own behalf (as an artist and as a person) and thus addresses the audience, while the actor represents his character and pretends not to know he is only a theater actor. The performer stages his own self, while the actor plays the role of another. (261-262)

⁸ For more visit <https://www.damu.cz/cs/umeni-veda-vyzkum/ustavy/ustav-pro-vyzkum-a-studium-autorskeho-herectvi>

The teachers do not play a fictitious role while teaching and do not lose their identity during their lessons. The teachers, as the performers, do not simulate that they are somebody else, “they perform their own inadequacies, absences, and multiplicities” (Pavis, *Analyzing Performance: Theater, Dance, and Film* 62). Therefore, the use of this term seemed more adequate for our project.

3.2. Methodology of the Workshops

All the members of the Team who were lecturers, were either graduates or current students of DACP, therefore all of us underwent the training in *psychosomatic disciplines*. The department recognizes three key psychosomatic disciplines: Dialogical Acting with the Inner Partner, Authorial Reading and Authorial Presentation⁹.

In DACP, psychosomatic disciplines are defined as the group of disciplines that help the person to “assess his own existence as a unity of his body and soul” (Hančil, 1997). The psychosomatic disciplines are focused on helping the participants to acquire *psychosomatic fitness*¹⁰. Professor Ivan Vyskočil¹¹, the creator of the DACP, describes the process of learning psychosomatic disciplines as a journey “to be fit”, and explains that “*to be fit* activates the imagination, intuition, authorial

⁹For more see <https://www.damu.cz/en/m-a-degree-programs/authorial-acting-1/department-of-authorial-creativity-and-pedagogy>

¹⁰ I use the term “psychosomatic fitness” for what in Czech we call “psychosomatická kondice”, as Alexander Komlosi does it in his paper “A Discussion with Ivan Vyskočil about (Inter)acting with the Inner “ (Komlosi). For more see <http://www.ivanvyskocil.cz/>

¹¹ Professor Ivan Vyskočil was born in Prague in 1929. He is an actor, writer, psychologist, performer and educator, whose contribution to Czech alternative culture and arts has been invaluable. Between the years of 1968 and 1990, Professor Vyskočil had to keep his research and artistic production underground, due to the repression of the communist regime in the Czech Republic. In 1992, he founded the Department of Authorial Creativity and Pedagogy in DAMU. More information can be found in the following links: https://www.damu.cz/en/m-a-degree-programs/authorial-acting-1/guarantors-and-pedagogues-1/prof-ivan-vyskocil?set_language=en or <http://www.ivanvyskocil.cz/>

approach and creativity” (Vyskočil 7). He affirms that the psychosomatic fitness arises autonomously, after three or four years of studying these disciplines, and “it is a way or ‘readiness’ it is sometimes an inner need or push to show something publicly, to act or to share something creatively freely and responsibly” (7).

The ***psychosomatic disciplines*** are not a method, but a pedagogical approach that aims to provide the student an experience that helps him to understand what he does, and the way in which he behaves, in order for him to look for his own authenticity in what he produces. The task of the pedagogue in these sort of disciplines is to support the student in his or her process of reflection and acknowledgment of his or her own personal impulses, reactions and subjects, and for the student to be able to direct his production in a more truthful manner (Vyskočil 8).

In the DACP, the *reflections* are a structural aspect of the training process of the student. Usually after the exercises, the students receive a concrete feedback from the teacher and from his classmates, focused on the content and the form of what they presented (the *what* and *how*)¹². At the end of each semester, the students have to write their individual reflections about their process and findings during the months of training in the different subjects, as a way to make the most of the experience and to improve their awareness about themselves. As the Team recognized the importance of the reflections, the sessions of the workshops in Guadalupe always finished with a space to share them with the group.

¹² For example, in the classes of Authorial Reading, the students are supposed to bring a text of their authorship, sit next to the teacher and read it out loud to his classmates. When he finishes, the teacher asks the question to “what have we heard and how?”, which invites the audience to reflect on the text of the author based on its content and the manner that the author used to delivered the text, as the narrative style, as well as the tone of the voice, the pace, the eye contact with the audience, the pauses he made, etc. When the students do not have more comments, the teacher summarizes the reflections and gives his input, trying to give specific examples, to help the student to acknowledge his work.

3.2.1. The realization

Each lecturer was free to choose what to teach and how to organize their lesson as they see fit to the needs of the group of participants. The only two rules we implemented were: to base our workshop on the psychosomatic approach and to follow our project goal of redefining the teacher as a performer. The lecturers prioritized learning through experience over theoretical traditional learning. Therefore, we asked the participants to come to the workshops with comfortable clothes and requested the school to provide us with space where we could use the floor, move the chairs and the tables, and also for us to have permission to take the students outside of the school to do sound explorations.

During the morning block, the lecturers were divided into pairs and trios for teaching the students, where one of the fluent Spanish speakers of the Team (Václav and I) served as a translator. For some sessions, we had the support of one bilingual student from the 11th grade or an English teacher from ENSMA. During the afternoon block, each Team member was in charge of their own group of teachers. Because Olga and Oskar had some previous knowledge of Spanish, the priority of the use of our interpreter was always given to Petra.

The structure of all the workshops was similar. They started with a variety of warm-up exercises, followed by core activities that would prioritize experiential learning through games and physical exercises. The workshops always finished with closing reflections with the participants, where the lecturers worked with the intention to capitalize on the experience and have an open conversation with the participants about their approaches and findings.

The participants underwent ten days¹³ of intensive workshops and devoted the last Saturday to train and perform a public closing presentation. During the first week, the participants explored all the workshops that we offered and at the beginning of the second week, they had the chance to choose individually which workshop they wanted to further explore during the second week. The PFC students could choose two workshops and participate in them for four days, while the teachers could choose only one and explore it during the last two days. The difference of conditions was due to the teachers' request of having Friday off and also because there were more of them. Because of this, we had one hour less daily to spend with the teachers than with the students and we had in rotation three groups instead of two. Hence, the teachers already finished the first exploration of the workshops during the second week. Eventually, this had an impact in the creation of the closing presentation, because the students had more time to create and train what they were going to present, whereas the teachers had a slower process. Unfortunately, it was clear from the beginning that most of the teachers did not have intentions of participating in the closing presentation for the public.

3.3. Methodology of analysis

The data for this project was collected during the months of September 2015 and July 2017, and I used qualitative and quantitative methods for analysis. The techniques employed for this matter were the followings:

- Ethnographic field diary.

¹³ The students of PFC had ten days and the teachers nine days of workshops and one day of closing presentation opened to the public.

- Participant and nonparticipant observation.
- Polls and demographic census.
- Structured questionnaires.
- Individual structured and semi structured interviews.
- Focus groups.

Since the very first meeting of the project, I kept a field diary, where I registered the most relevant information of the meetings, observations, time schedules, reflections, Team insights, etc. The participant and nonparticipant observation were conducted mainly during the workshops (live), but we also relied on the film recordings that Tamara took and the voice recordings I did during all the reflections I attended with the participants and the Team. The study also includes the polls and census of Guadalupe and the social indicators that seemed relevant for our endeavor. The Team created an evaluation form with 27 questions, that was administered to the 61 participants; we received 25 completed forms. I also created an evaluation form with 19 questions for the Team members to complete. In Guadalupe, we chose six participants and did individual in-depth interviews with them. We did three focus groups, two with students and one with the teachers, to speak about Theater, the theatrical play we performed in Colombia, and aspects related to pedagogy.

4. Limitations of The Study

We faced certain obstacles during the project and some of them stood in the way to gather, analyze and evaluate the data from a different perspective than the one I present. Those hurdles are: the lack of awareness and inexperience to plan, structure and develop an educational-artistic-social project, the very limited time we had to work with the community in Guadalupe, the ambivalent and complicated communication from the administrative staff of ENSMA, and the constant changing conditions of the school towards the project's agreements. Additionally, the difficulty of the participants to meet the appointments or to participate in the international calls needed to do the follow-ups, prevented us from doing an evaluation of the current use of what was learned during our trainings over the past year.

4.1. Lack of experience

The lack of experience in the formulation and development of this type of project played an important role, as the Team embarked on a task without the possibility to measure the magnitude of what we were aiming to do. As the director of the project, a crucial and complicated role, I was very naïve in taking this position. For example, it never crossed my mind to check what characteristics the director of this sort of project would need, nor if I was truly fit for all the responsibilities that I was assuming. I was unable to foresee the types of problems that we could face, therefore making it very difficult for me to delegate tasks to the other Team members and to be a better strong leader.

4.2. Ambiguous communication

After keeping communication with the school for an entire year before the realization phase, when the Team arrived at Guadalupe, the teachers nor the students of ENSMA were given any information about the Team coming from Czech Republic, nor about the aim and type of instruction of the training. At the beginning, the teachers were unmotivated and some refused to attend the workshops. This was just the first in a series of setbacks that the Team members had to sort out due to the changing conditions and ambiguous communication in Colombia, and which in some cases, inhibited the development of the project.

5. Analysis of The Main Goal and Objectives

The project had one main goal and three specific objectives.

GOAL: Redefining the role of the teacher as a performer.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Recognize and explore the creative resources and abilities, at a personal and group level.
2. Enrich the creativity of the participants.
3. Create a closing public presentation of the workshops.

When we were planning the project, we set an ambitious goal, one that we realized we would not accomplish during the workshops in Guadalupe, but that would work as a long-term goal or follow up after the project was complete. In this dissertation, I examine the steps that took us closer towards reaching this goal along with the limitations of this path. In contrast to the goal, the objectives are more concrete and allow us to take a closer look at the processes that were set in motion at the workshops. This allows me to evaluate the project by analyzing each one of them.

5.1. Analysis of the main goal: Redefine the role of the teacher as a performer

5.1.1. Presenting play as a tool for teaching

After arriving at ENSMA, we faced the challenge of working with participants whose preconception of theatrical exercises were that they were useful only with

small children or in Physical Education classes. On the second day of workshops, the 27th of July one of the teachers, Jacqueline Useda, stated:

I find the activity interesting, it is not easy because one is not used to do it. It seems to you as a teacher that if you apply something like this, you are losing your time ... but when you do it yourself, one is able to see that the activity makes more sense (...)

In a conversation after the first lesson, on the 28th of July, another teacher, Nubia Pulido, commented as such:

During your activities, I was thinking when to apply what you did with us and I thought that maybe at the Physical Education class or when the children are tired and need to relax, or with those problematic children, who disturb the class (...)

It was visible to me that the participants were not giving any relevance to play in their endeavor. They did not seem to understand the power of its value in adult life. Eugene Fink remarked, in our culture, play is only “acceptable as an element of childhood” (Oasis of Happiness: Thoughts toward an Ontology of Play 24). With the games we were offering, we helped the participants realize that they were much more useful than they had originally perceived. They were given the chance to redefine traditional notions through the practice. Fink, in Oasis of Happiness, explained this as it follows:

Play is not a marginal manifestation in the landscape of human life, nor a contingent phenomenon only surfacing at times. Play essentially belongs to the ontological constitution of human existence; it is an existential, fundamental phenomenon. Certainly not the only one, but nevertheless a peculiar and independent one, one that cannot be derived from the other manifestations of life. (24)

The members of the Team used games as more than just a tool to motivate the participants in our sessions. From Václav's, Olga's and Oskar's evaluation forms, we

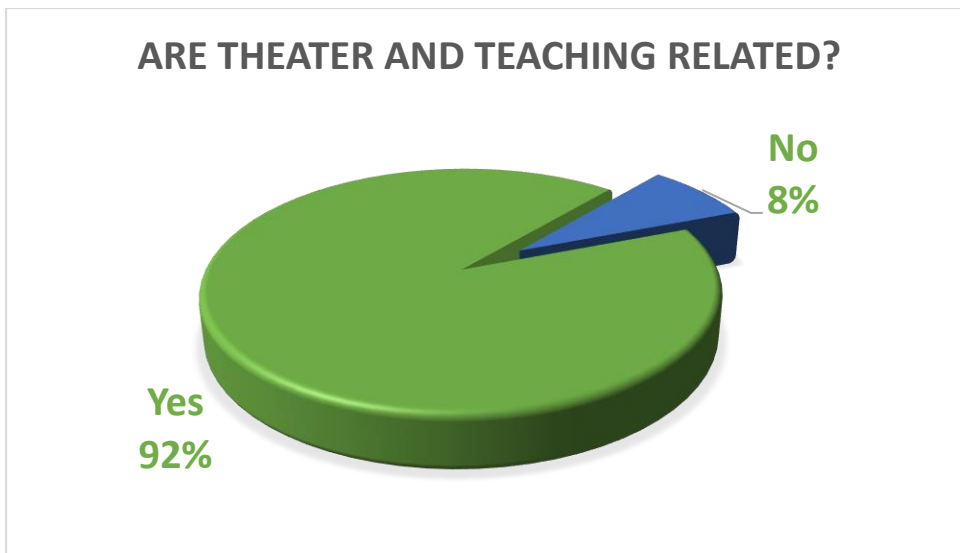
learned that they used the games as a vehicle to achieve different goals, to create the sense of community, to raise the level of energy and to give the participants the possibility to experience for themselves that the games can be used to approach an education goal in any subject e.g. chemistry, grammar, etc.

Oskar highlighted an event that the nuns shared with us at the end of our work in Guadalupe. For the past two years, the school had been dealing with a feud between two students of PFC. Without directly addressing this matter, and due to the work in the workshops, the two classmates were able to speak to each other again respectfully. A common result shared by participants (both teachers and students), was the sense of community that resulted because of these workshops and interventions.

Johan Huizinga stated:

A play-community generally tends to become permanent even after the game is over. Of course, not every game of marbles or every bridge-party leads to the founding of a club. But the feeling of being "apart together" in an exceptional situation, of sharing something important, of mutually withdrawing from the rest of the world and rejecting the usual norms, retains its magic beyond the duration of the individual game. (Homo Ludens 12)

After one week of training with the participants, we asked them to complete a survey about various topics and asked if they recognized any relationship between theater and teaching. The results are presented in the following graphic:



Nearly all the participants (92%) affirmed that theater and teaching are related. One 55-year-old female teacher wrote that “[while teaching] we act all day with the children, with gestures, words, exercises, songs, dances, sports, etc. to invite them and motivate them to learn (...)”.

5.1.2. Reflections, not as an exam, but as a way of acknowledging my findings

We introduced reflections to the participants and explained that the goal was to find advantages of this exercise and to share their experience with the group. To prevent the students from viewing these reflections as a test or a space for them to please the teacher with what she “wanted to hear”, I offered them the following questions. They could choose one or two of them to formulate their reflection:

- What was useful for me during this experience?
- What made the experience difficult for me?
- What had the biggest impact on me?
- What did I like (or did not like) and want (or did not want) to have again in this class?

- How can I use something I found in class in my personal or professional life?

During the first week of the workshops, the PFC students agreed that dialogue between the teachers and the students is rare in the education they receive. Lorena Useda further elaborated on the session of the 29th of July:

The teachers do ask us for our reflections after an activity but they don't respect our opinion, nor they give it the transcendency to our analysis as you do it during your workshops (...) we feel that you [the Team] do listen to us.

The Team was aware of this situation and tried to focus their efforts on creating awareness about the importance of redefining the manner of treating the space for reflections, the voice and insights of others, and the limitations that the group had for accepting contrary opinions. Additionally, we focused on habits that prevented the interlocutor to truly share his insights with the group.

The subject of the reflection forced our Team to analyze the way we were giving feedback to the participants. Because Václav had the experience of this with his colleagues¹⁴, he recommended us to avoid the use of expressions that qualify or judge the performance of the participant, but to instead focus on the description to help the person to recognize their strengths. He encouraged us to give as much positive reinforcement as we could¹⁵.

¹⁴ Václav has a background of Psychology and works as a Trainer and chief instructor in Česká cesta, spol. s r.o. For more see <http://www.ceskacesta.cz/>

¹⁵ That session was very opportune to all the Team, as it is not common to speak about the best way to give feedback and we saw the need to do it in a more conscious manner. Petra mentioned that for her, the discussion had a tremendous impact, as she had never received tutoring in her endeavor as a teacher and lecturer and even when she does her best, the suggestions of Václav and having the possibility to share and hear the way the other team members do it, was very fruitful.

One of the limitations that the group of participants had from the beginning was that it was difficult for them not to judge and disapprove the situations and ideas that contradict their system of beliefs (in this case, beliefs related to education and pedagogy). The Team worked strongly with the notion of “*saying yes to the game*” to raise the participants’ awareness about their input in creating a safe, fertile environment, where the group would feel at ease to be creative.

5.2. Analysis of the first objective: Recognize and explore the creative resources and abilities, at a personal and group level

According to the data we collected from the questionnaire, 80% of the sample of the participants consider themselves creative. This provided a very fruitful starting point for accomplishing our objective.

The participants explored and acknowledged their skills such as elasticity, expressiveness, coordination, spontaneity, sense of rhythm, voice strength, capacity of association, ability to imitate, physical strength, intellectual curiosity, and enthusiasm for learning. They also had the opportunity to test their braveness when facing a new learning experience, their wide imagination, and their capacity to follow instructions and to lead a group, among others.

Another aspect that is important to take in mind when analyzing this objective, is participants’ comfort levels during the workshops. When we asked this question, 88% of the sample felt at ease, 8% did not answer the question, 4% affirmed that they felt sort of comfortable and none of them said they felt uncomfortable during our training. Therefore, I can state that the Team, was able to create a safe and comfortable environment for the participants to explore their creativity.

It is important to make a distinction between the characteristics of the PFC students and the teachers. Throughout this whole experience, the concentration level and the motor skills of the students were higher than the teachers'. Also, their commitment, attitude and how quickly they learned was superior. On the other hand, the level of the reflections from the teachers was sometimes deeper than the students. We cannot undermine the fact that the teachers face more challenges in their workshops, as their training session took place after their workday and right after lunch, in a place where the temperatures usually were between the 27°C and the 35°C. Additionally, most of them were raised and schooled within a conservative education system and are were no longer used to being in the role of a student anymore. Another challenge for them was their lack of mobility; most of them did not participate in physical activities such as sports, movement classes, martial arts, etc., and therefore they were not as fit as the students.

Because the three groups of teachers each had different levels of energy, but very similar characteristics among them, it is not relevant to differentiate them. On the contrary, it became visible to the Team members after the first couple of days of workshops, that the two groups of PFC students were different from each other. The group of students with the most advanced level of education was more responsible, were very focused and approached the exercises in a more mature manner. The other group demanded more energy from the Team because they usually acted very childishly, were very talkative, constantly interrupted the exercises, it took them longer to reach an optimal level of concentration and their insights during the reflections

lacked depth. These characteristics listed above are relevant, since they might hinder or facilitate the path towards psychosomatic fitness.

When I inquired about the participants' personal creativity and individual resources, the majority talked about their ability to improvise in different situations and to make use of their imagination. When I wanted to delve into the subject of their ability to improvise, it was nice to see that the participants were aware its importance. This was crucial, because when working in an environment like ENSMA, unexpected events are common¹⁶ and they need to react immediately.

Most of the participants confirmed that through the workshops, they discovered talents and skills that they have not had the chance to explore before. For example, one 17-year-old female PFC student stated that she realized her skills when doing basic floor movement exercises and that she had never been exposed to this sort of possibility before in an educational environment¹⁷. During the reflection sessions I led with the students and the teachers, as part of their findings, they discovered skills such as good coordination, flexibility, sense of rhythm, level of concentration and body expressiveness.

In the participant reflections, it was interesting to find that this group of teachers, who were used to leading their classes alone, noted that they were well suited to work as part of a group and that the students reflected that they were happily surprised to see their ability to have a leading role in the Team. In the exercises we did, we systematically rotated the leading role amongst participants. This shows that the

¹⁶ As in change in routines: lack of electricity during the day, eventual lack of water, flooded classrooms, unexpected visits of regional representatives that stop the lessons, lack of materials for the classes, etc.

¹⁷ The students also she says that she will try to implement more games that allow her students to do these level explorations of the space.

workshops gave them the opportunity to explore their performance by fulfilling a different role than the one they are used to. In this case, this experiment also gave them the confidence to lead a group and improved their self-confidence.

5.2.1. Living inside a large group

The participants discovered an interesting dynamic during the workshops: they were group oriented. They felt more comfortable in the group work and felt much shyer in the individual exercises. They also tended to speak in plural and to focus on the work of the partner instead of on their own. The questionnaire revealed that most of the participants were aware of this characteristic, and in the majority of forms, they stated that in the workshops they saw their ability to work in groups and to prioritize the wellbeing of the group over their own. An interesting group dynamic that I witnessed during my workshop was within a group of teachers with big personal differences. These differences never hindered their ability to work together, nor generated a particular tension that held back the development of the workshop. Another example of this, is the case of the shyest student in our workshop. She did not have many friends in the group, but her classmates supported her and took care of her duties when she was not able to accomplish them, to ensure that the group fulfilled the exercises.

Being group oriented had both positive and negative aspects. On one hand, because the participants were used to working in groups, they were able to overlook any personal differences and even their own tiredness to carry out an exercise. On the negative side, they were not very aware of their own individuality, personal process, or used to feeling their own rhythm and needs.

The participants spent most of their day in groups of 11 – 13 persons. According to our survey, on a daily basis, the size of the groups of students at ENSMA in the urban headquarters is on average 29 people. These groups are led by only one teacher, except in cases when PFC students do their practices, where sessions are led by pairs or a group of 7 or 8 classmates. The fact that the teachers took care of such large groups was seen by all the participants as a large challenge when doing their pedagogical work in the best way possible. This was because large groups demanded a lot of energy from them while completing their tasks. Teacher Delfina Garzón reflected during one session the 25th of July:

One as a teacher takes care of a large group and one sometimes says "but why am I tired? Why am I stressed? I just went to work, I did nothing special" there is the point, I have to take time for myself, to take care of myself and spoil me.

When looking at the topic of attention, in the context out of school, we observed that most participants were used to spending their time in the company of other people and had little or no time alone. In two in-depth interviews, some relevant information came up about this matter: one of the female participants explained that even in the shower, she did not have alone time, because her family enters the bathroom while she is there and that sometimes, she showers with her children to speed up their morning routine. The other participant told me that she had never had her own room; she has always shared it with her siblings. The survey revealed that only a few of the youngest students had one or two siblings but that the majority of the students had on average four siblings. The teachers had an average of 6 siblings, including at least one participant that had 11 siblings. The study had no further information about the students' family configuration, therefore it was not possible to

know if all of them were raised in the same household with their siblings, nor if they were currently living together. Nevertheless, this data is relevant for contextualization.

During the Team discussion of the 29th of July 2016, Petra had a personal question after the first days of the workshops: of the lessons she led, which dynamic makes a Colombian more comfortable during these exercises? She explained that from her point of view, it is the opposite dynamic that works for the average Czech person. During a movement practice, the Colombians we worked with tended to feel brave and at ease while hidden in a group but Czechs enjoyed the freedom of their individuality during a movement practice.

During my first workshop with the teachers on the 25th of July, I noticed that they were too focused on how the others were doing the exercise. They were trying to correct their partners and it was difficult to draw attention to themselves. Also, they reacted too quickly and did not wait for their impulse to do the exercise I presented. Because I wanted them draw attention to themselves and help them to contact their own readiness, I simplified the exercise and requested them to focus on their breathing. When we reflected on the experience that day, teacher *Ciro Bautista* said the following:

(...) I think that sometimes one fills up the students with knowledge, of stress... it's not even knowledge, it's stress, because one wants to go forward fast, and this is more important, because it is to breath, and in breathing we allow many things to come in... it was magnificent to me.

It was important to note that the narrative form used by *Ciro*, where he frames his reflection in relation to his task as a teacher, happened very often. The teachers were inclined to focus the conversation on what they do with the students, instead of

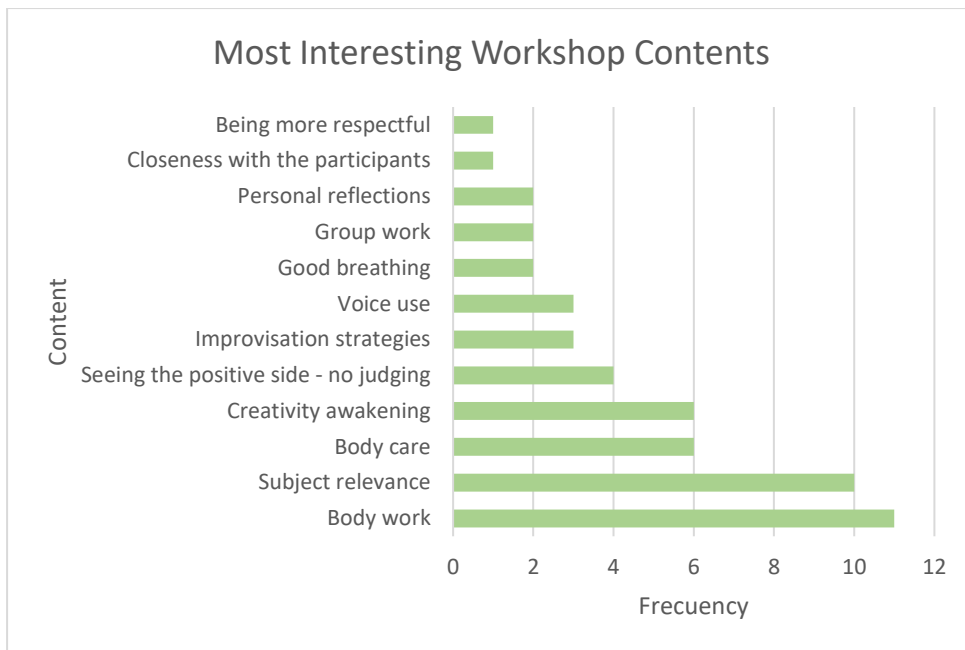
narrowing their analysis to their personal experiences. After I pointed out that these workshops were focused on giving attention to the personal process of the teacher and not focused on the immediate application of the content with the students, another teacher shared the following the 28th of July:

I felt surprised by what you just mentioned (...) the three days I have been in the workshops, all the time I'm thinking "I can apply this with that group, or in that other class I can make the students do this or that", but honestly, I have never thought of doing it myself (...)

I assumed this was an example of the difficulty to focus their attention on their individuality and their personal process, for they focused more on what happens in relation to the other person and not to themselves. I am very pleased to have had the possibility to draw the attention to this matter and see that the participants also had interest in working on this.

5.3. Analysis of the second objective: Enrich the creativity of the participants

When we asked the participants to list the most interesting aspects and contents of the workshops we found the following:



We defined “body work” as all contents related to physical skills, such as expressiveness, elasticity, etc. and excluding the ones related to the voice. “Body care” was considered a different category and related to the conscious action of guarding it.

This graphic shows that the contents associated to the physical abilities were the most interesting ones to the sample of participants. This was visible not only in the survey, but also in the daily reflections of the participants. Very early in the process, they started to comment on their interest to further explore how to use their bodies. During one of the reflections of my workshop from the first week, the 27th of July, Sister Luz Estella Olano expressed her happiness to see that her body was more skillful than she thought:

I thought that I wasn’t going to be able to do the exercise because I know that I am not flexible and my knee hurts (...) but during the task I didn’t even know how, but I was going to the floor and moving fast and enjoying what my body was doing. It has been so long since the last time I moved my body like this and

without shoes. I'm really looking forward to the next session to see what else can I do.

In Guadalupe, there are no movement classes, dance groups, nor other spaces different to the municipal football league. Not surprising, movement classes are not included in the curriculum at ENSMA, except in Physical Education. This especially deprives the female population, for at least the men have possibility to join the football matches regardless of their age, but this not deemed socially acceptable for women. Because football is perceived as a masculine and rude activity, not many women are willing to take part of it, especially the older ones. Therefore, the female adult population has little to no possibility to awaken and train their physical skills. Workshops such as the ones we offered, gave these women the opportunity to reconnect with themselves and value their physicality from another angle than just from the esthetic point of view. In the questionnaire, one 50-year-old woman wrote:

[the workshops taught us to] value our body, because it offers us infinite possibilities. [We have learned] the importance to know each other in the inside and outside, we are a whole, we are not divided (...) the body is a heap of expressions that we can manifest, [we can] acquire elasticity through continuous work, we can never neglect our body, the most valuable thing we have (...)

The teacher Flor Naranjo shared with the group the following reflection from the 26th of July:

I take with me the message to love oneself and devote some time to observe how you are, not to improve from the physical point of view, but to love yourself, to love the different parts of your body. (...) you feel something only when you

hit yourself... unless you hit your pinky toe with the edge of the bed, you don't remember it exists (...)

The younger participants were no strangers to this subject either. During the second sessions of a movement exercise I did with the PFC students, I instructed them to explore the movement with their chest and hips, placing one pointer finger in front of each nipple, as if they had two pencils and then “to draw” in different directions with their ribcage and later on, to place the fingers as pencils on the top of their iliac crests and repeat the task. I will transcribe the recording of the conversation we had during that reflection the 27th of July:

Isabel: How did you feel during the activity?

Student A: Well I felt good. These are the kind of things we never do. You don't even know how to move it, if they ask you to move “just this part of the body” -*points her chest*- you move something else (...)

Isabel: Why don't we move this -*points her chest*-?

Student B: Because we are ashamed. Because they tell us that the intimate parts, are private and you don't touch them (...) so you work the head, the hands, the feet, but those other parts... no way!

Isabel: How did you feel working with those parts that you never work with, then?

Student C: It is like realizing that they exist... and that it is possible to move them too – *nervous laughter*.

Isabel: Did you feel obscene?

All the students: no, no.

I was very pleased with the bravery of these students when facing the risk of doing the exercise explained above, because I knew that they might feel uncomfortable. I was very much aware of the taboo of this region in relation to the chest and the pelvis, but I conducted the exercise as an instrument to open up this

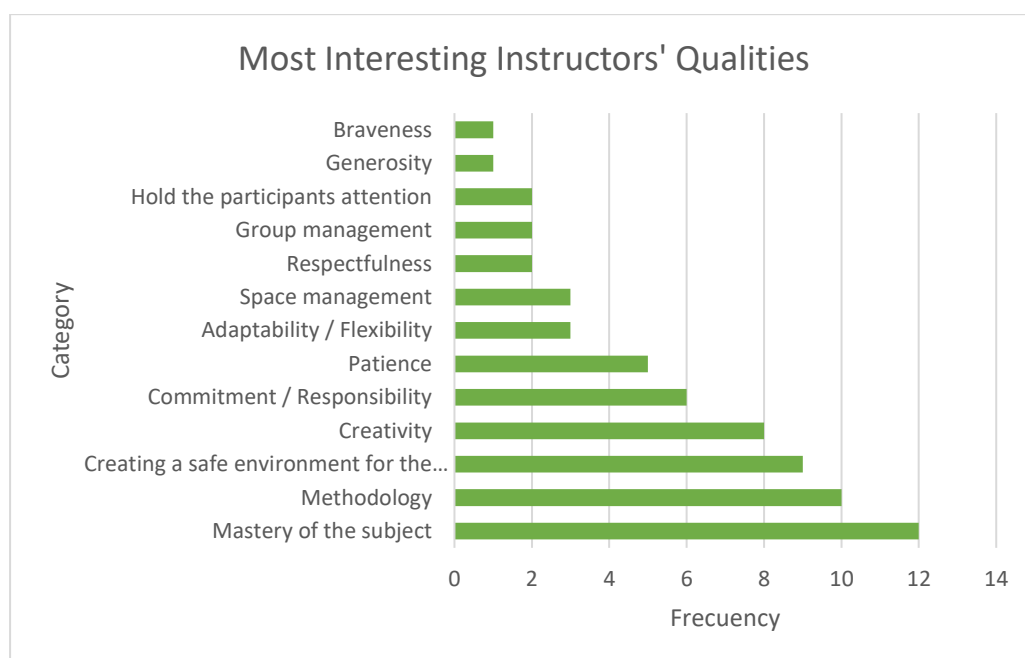
topic for conversation and was fortunate to have gained the trust of the students. In doing so, they were able to talk about a normally taboo topic and to explore a banned movement, in an environment that framed the experience as something playful, respectful and interesting.

The second category that was very popular among the sample was the relevance of the subject of our sessions in relation to their endeavor as teachers. In some ways, our workshops proved to be successful because participants were able to connect their experiences in the training with real life experiences. It was common to hear the students talk in a happy tone, saying that they will implement the games in their classrooms and to find different ways to get their attention, instead of screaming, for example. Shortly after we finished the project, Václav received a video of two of our PFC participants applying the games they learned with him and Oskar. He also shared with us that Sister Trinidad Urrea was taking notes and asking him for advice on how to implement improv games and poetry in the Spanish lessons.

Taking into consideration that the workshops brought participants closer to a greater perception of their body, I believe that this was a very opportune time to draw attention to the importance of “body care” (self-care), and concrete actions and activities that can be done to keep it fit and healthy. In the objectives of the three workshops devoted to body work, Petra, Olga and I, ad hoc, decided to spend time dedicated to the care and hygiene of tension and bad habits that would affect the body as a work instrument. The three of us, in the evaluation form, stated that at our arrival to the workshops, the group of participants lacked even the basic awareness of physical care related to their teaching, such as “voice hygiene”, tension release, functional mobility, relaxation exercises, etc.

“Creativity awakening” was the following category in the field of the most interesting contents. In the interaction with the students, it was evident that they were surprised and content whenever we redefined any stable aspects of traditional teaching. Examples of stable aspects that we redefined included: removing the seats and tables from the classroom, using a rhythm exercise instead of screaming to get their attention, and asking them to focus their attention on the experience and not on writing down what we were doing. These simple actions had a big impact on them because they were perceived as risky, for traditional education did not leave much space to redefine the stable aspects of teaching. Pushing the boundaries and giving participants the confidence to be bold in a safe environment, allowed them to have a taste of their capabilities.

When we inquired about the most interesting qualities they perceived in the instructors, they mentioned the following:



For most of the participants, “mastery of the subject” was the most interesting aspect, followed by the “methodology” and the fact that we created a safe environment

for them during our workshops. Not only during the reflections but also outside of the working hours, the participants commented on their appreciation for the workshop dynamics we used and how surprised they were when they noticed that we did not have a distant relationship with them but at the same time we demanded lots of discipline and were very committed to our duty. In regard to the student-teacher relationship, I am inclined to believe that they were used to the traditional definition where a good teacher was considered strict, distant or responsible, and a teacher was considered bad if he or she was relaxed, irresponsible and has a close relation with his pupils.

I make jokes and have fun with my group of friends... but with the students... I don't know... It is really hard for me to approach them with confidence. Sometimes I would like to be closer to them (...) but when I've tried to do it, I say to myself "with them *not close and not far*"¹⁸, so better far from them (...) in order to take care of myself, because as the grandmothers say, "if I don't take care of myself, who will?"

These were reflections from one of the female teachers during the session of the 2nd of August. I bring attention to this comment because I perceived that the teachers feared of losing their position as a leader if they had a closer or more familiar relationship with their student, which could also be related to creativity in the classroom. These teachers may not be willing to risk jeopardizing their commanding position by trying something different from what they know works for them. In the evaluation questionnaire of the Team, Oskar addressed this topic, stating that one new element that the project provided was exercises that "reminded the teachers that they

¹⁸ I translated "Ni cerca ni lejos" as "not close not far". It is a Colombian phrase that we use to say that it does not matter if you stay close or take distance, the relationship is always difficult.

co-work with their students”, for sometimes the distance between the two seemed non-negotiable. Petra also perceived that her workshop introduced the possibility of a safe environment for both teacher and student, where respect for both parties was not lost during interactions.

In terms of the methodology we used, participants mentioned that they liked our didactics. A 21-year-old female wrote, “They are very dynamic, extroverts and are very patient (...) the way they orient us, motivate us to keep doing the activities with enthusiasm. They are trustworthy.”. Afterwards she stated “[they have taught me to] respect the turn of the other and most of all, to value the effort of the classmate and not telling him at once «that is wrong! »”.

The Team also discovered an important characteristic in the population with whom we were working: they were prone to emit judgements. At our Team meeting on the 28th of July 2016, Václav shared with us that during an improvisation exercise, when he asked the teachers to come up with adjectives, they named only ones that were useful to qualify the substantive in terms of positive or negative. For example, good, bad, smart, lazy, disrespectful, among others, instead of bringing up other adjectives that were useful to describe, for instance, shape and color. That day we discussed the narrative form that the participants were using during the reflection and we noticed two things: 1) they understood the reflection as if the instructor was testing them and 2) they did not elaborate on the process lived during the exercise, but centered their reflection on the judgment of their performance. For example, we heard reflections with no deep insights and that only reaffirmed what the instructor said, instead of debating it or questioning it. Participants also said things such as “I didn’t

do good in the task because I couldn't touch my feet with my hand" instead of not evaluating it as a negative thing. This was seen in their impulse to use reflections to judge the performance of their peers during the exercise.

As the director of the Team, I asked everyone to pay close attention to the reflections of the participants and to lead the discussion in a way that supported a safe environment that would allow for open discussion and also so they could embrace this experience and enrich the learning process. The impulse to redefine the reflections' dynamic was productive and in the following days the participants had the courage to share deeper views about their own process and raise questions about our methodology.

Because we acknowledged and worked on eliminating the impulse to judge, we created a more relaxed environment where the participants redirected their focus of attention, and started to breakdown the experience and be aware of its integral potential. They also realized their own lack of ability to rephrase their speech in a positive manner when speaking about their performance.

On the subject of enriching their creativity, most of the population with whom we worked dealt with the same challenge: a lack of free time. In one in-depth interview to the teacher Cecilia García, she narrated her daily routine showing a very eventful life with her extended family that left her with no time for herself¹⁹. This seemed to be

¹⁹ She described the following: "At 5:15 in the morning I wake up and organize the breakfast for my family, I arrive to the school at 6:30. I start the workday at 6:45, depending on the schedule I work with the students until 10am that is the half an hour school break, there we accompany the students, but we also rest a bit. Then from 10:30am to 1:30pm we work again and at that time we go home to have lunch. At 2:45pm I go back to the school during the days when we have to work also in the afternoon hours, when we have to arrange institutional matters as planning, evaluation from 3 to 5pm (...) that is usually how the first week of each month looks like, the other weeks, I go home and one does his tasks in an independent way, it is up to you how you organize your time. I usually watch TV for a while, but mostly I like to read and to be updated by internet on the events that had happened (...) around 7 or 8 pm I cook dinner for my family, watch the news and usually go to sleep around 10pm.

the common factor for most of the female teachers we had in the groups. Some of them also had animals and farms to take care of daily, while others assumed the care of their children, grandchildren, their parents or their in-laws. With this kind of schedule and load of responsibilities, it was very unlikely that the participants could work on their creativity, because their energy was focused elsewhere.

5.4. Analysis of the third objective: Create a closing public presentation of the workshops

When starting the workshops, three groups of teachers made it clear that they had no interest in taking part in the closing public presentation, therefore the Team focused its efforts on the PFC students, but teachers always had an open invitation to join them. After the first week, the participants had to choose two workshops to further explore and be in their performance. For four days, the instructors worked on the creation and training of their performance pieces along with their students and were free to decide the theme and structure of their presentation.

Petra worked with five students and presented individual and group exercises related to the work of transforming into animals and clownery, Olga also took care of five students, with whom she presented an improvised story carried out by rhythm and sounds created with their own bodies. Václav presented an open improvisation exercise with 13 students and two teachers²⁰ and Oskar and I, decided to unite the

²⁰ Those two teachers were the only ones who voluntarily decided to participate in the closing presentation, they also happened to be two of the youngest of the pool of teachers.

presentation of the workshop of body (inner space, place - exterior space) with the workshop of the principles of acting, creating a theatrical scene where 14 students participated as co-creators and actors.

On the 6th of August of 2016, at 2:30pm, the PFC students and the Team dressed up in colorful clothes and with a megaphone in the hands of sister Maira Alzate, sang and went all over the town, inviting the community to see both the free theatrical play *Caza Casasueños* on the main town square and closing presentation of the workshops at the theater of the school ENSMA. We had the support of the Police of Guadalupe, who closed the streets of the main square for us to play there, the support of the priest, who allowed us to play in the front façade of the church, the mayor, who promoted the closing presentation through the municipal radio station, and also huge support of the community who came to see and support the participants. The community responded positively to our endeavor and supported the initiative as cheerful spectators.

6. Evaluation and Conclusions

6.1. Evaluation of the first objective

According to me, the objective *to recognize and explore the creative resources and abilities, at a personal and group level*, was fully met. During the training, the participants gained awareness in their physical and mental skills related to creativity. When the participants showed difficulty to recognize their strong points during the session, the lecturers played an important role, because the participants believed that it was through the session leaders, that they acknowledged their personal abilities.

The lecturers also encouraged the students and teachers to reflect on their weaknesses during the different tasks, in order to open the discussion about what steps can be taken to overcome them. I encouraged the participants to focus their reflections on their personal experiences and on their internal processes instead of elaborating on what happened in the group dynamics, as this was one of their weaknesses. At the end of our work together, I was very pleased to hear how more aware they became of themselves. They were able to name the specific parts of the body where they saw changes, they reflected more about their own individual work, and inquired about their own personal experiences lived through a specific exercise.

6.2. Evaluation of the second objective

I also believe that the objective of *enriching the creativity of the participants* was fully completed. According to the individual evaluation that the Team members completed, the instructors recognized that all or almost all of the elements and exercises presented during our workshops were new to the participants. Both the

teachers and students stated that the instructors showed them the importance to establish a safe environment for the group or person to explore their creativity.

It is possible that due to the short time we had with the participants, the experience we shared was not enough to create habits that would result in a change of behavior towards their creativity or communicative manner. Nonetheless, the Team introduced them to unfamiliar topics, such as personal skills, their weaknesses, the need to do team building activities with their peers, the way they address the distance with their students and within a group of teachers, and the difficulty to touch their own body and the body of the other during the exercise, etc. We also encouraged them to question their doubts about redefining their environment, in order to encourage the creative process.

As teachers, they lacked feedback and the opportunity to grow. Most of these teachers taught alone and they never had any peers or superiors observe their lessons. Usually the teachers only met their peers to talk about organizational and academic topics, and not to discuss their pedagogical approaches or exchange of experiences. The Team spoke with the participants about the importance of peer support and feedback, which is integral in helping each teacher to reach their optimal work.

6.3. Evaluating the third objective

The Team succeeded in meeting the objective of *creating a closing public presentation of the workshops*. It was surprising for the instructors to see the roles of some of the shyest, yet courageous and dedicated participants. We had four remarkable cases: two male students and two young nuns. The men were usually

quiet and tried not to draw much attention to themselves. One of them was from a rural area and the other from the urban zone of Guadalupe. On the day of the presentation, without any reservations, one of them decided to do his clownery dressed up as a female character and flirted with the public, while the other performed an important character in the theater scene. The latter man's stage presence, as well as his tone of voice and body engagement, were something that we would not have guessed to see from this performer.

The nuns usually wore a habit, and during some movement sessions, they changed their clothes to sweatpants and t-shirts, but they tried not to let people outside our workshop see them in street clothes and with their hair uncovered. They asked me what clothes they needed for the presentation, and I told them that it was their choice, but they should feel comfortable. On the day of the public presentation, both performed without the habit and revealed their hair. One of them created a very extroverted clown, who went into the public to have a close interaction with them and the other nun ended up replacing one of the main characters of the theatrical scene who was absent. That nun had to dance reggaetón and flirt with one of her classmates on stage. She overcame her fears by needing to act immediately and not overthinking it, despite of being observed by her church community superiors.

The students from all the workshop presentations thanked the Team for being next to them on the stage, for giving them the confidence to perform and for cheering for them the entire time. All the Team members were satisfied with the outcome of the performances that day and with the support we had from the public.

6.4. Conclusions

My findings were that *it is possible to apply what we have learned in a different continent, regardless of the language barriers, the cultural differences and the professional education of the participants. We could carry out a training in a community, where there is no exposure to arts in their daily basis, led by international instructors, based on the psychosomatic approach.*

The Team had very little time to carry out their training with the 61 participants. Given that the objective of the project aimed for a profound change in the notions reaffirmed daily in teaching, and the fact that we had a short time to accomplish this with the community of Guadalupe, the impact of our work was limited. In order to move towards reaching the main goal, it would be important to ensure the continuity of training, with longer or more frequent workshops. The sustainability and impact of a project of such magnitude can be put at risk by the lack of continuity.

When the Team was asked if the project fulfilled their personal expectations, on average on a scale of 1-10, the Team averaged an 8.8, meaning that their professional expectations were fulfilled. According to the Team, we successfully developed an international project that laid the foundations for redefining the teacher as a performer in Guadalupe, Santander, Colombia.

The redefinition of the traditional notions and the implementation of new pedagogical dynamics strengthened and gained momentum during our time in Guadalupe. However, in comparing the questionnaires administered during the workshops and the follow up phone calls done one year later to the teachers, there was no notable change in data. In the survey we used in the middle of our training in ENSMA, the participants, both teachers and students, felt they perceived a clear

relation and relevance of the content and dynamics of the workshops for their professional task. When asked this same question a year after the experience, from the group of teachers, only a few participants replied and most of them gave the same responses as they did before taking our training, stating that the dynamics of the workshops were merely applicable to the class of Physical Education or extracurricular spaces outside the classroom. It was important to note that when asking the students this same question, they all agreed that theater was a great support to teaching and they had great interest in it being more widely used in the classroom.

None of this social-artistic-pedagogical contribution to the community of Guadalupe, would have been possible without the support of the DACP. I recognize the support of DACP while doing this project, as it provided us with a very integral and cutting-edge theater training based on the psychosomatic approach (proposed by Professor Ivan Vyskočil), that now I know is applicable and effective even in communities outside the artistic sphere. The department also gave me the possibility to consult with the teachers at any time I had methodological and theoretical doubts. I also acknowledge the very important role that the director of the department, Docent Michal Čunderle, played in the attainment of the grant for producing this project, and I am very thankful for all his efforts.

I believe that the creation of projects of this sort have an enormous potential for actively sharing with the community what we have learned and also for giving the students of DACP the opportunity to prove him or herself in the field, while having the support of his or her peers and of a more experienced superior²¹ to explore the

²¹ Having the support of Petra during the whole process was substantial: she was the guarantor for the grant, she kept her role as my teacher, even when I was the director of the Team, e.g. she stood by me when I ran out of resources to deal with the changing conditions of the headmaster of ENSMA, she opportunely called my attention

relevance and possible uses of our knowledge in the productive sector. I hope that this is just a stepping stone for a very fruitful creation and documentation of transdisciplinary projects in different communities, while using the psychosomatic approach.

when I was disrupting the team dynamics, she restructured and complemented the evaluation form I created, among other things.

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