

Theatrical Education at School: “Marriage Proposal”

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Abstract: This exertion is part of an environmental education and training program offered at our school. Our team consisted of 29 students stemming from all three grades and three teachers, of different fields. The team conducted educational visits in locations related to the program’s theme. Our students used information acquired from those visits and also from the informal interview with our local priest and Professor at the AUTH, Vassileios Kalliakmanis, in order to prepare the first part of our team’s work. The second part of our exertion was formulated by three students belonging to this team, in collaboration with the eruditor in charge and regarded the theatrical rendering of A. Chekhov’s play “Marriage Proposal”. The essence of this labour regarded the presentation of the sacrament of the orthodox marriage and the theatrical play on an event open to the school and local community. The students comprehended the dynamical relation between Art and Education through the utilization of sustainable development in every aspect of human life. Our work belongs to the theme where cutting edge actions regarding the spreading of the arts through environmental education and erudition programs are referenced.

Key words: marriage, lore, environment, environmental education and training program

1. Introduction

The sustainable development targets the molding of active citizens through education. Active citizens are considered those who will interfere with a meaningful way and with responsibility in the morphing of the social/environmental reality (Phermely et al., 2009). The quintessential meaning of sustainable development is used in the same context as “Sustainability”, term used first in German forest’s bibliography in the early 18th century as “Nachhaltigkeit”. As an official term, integrated with the forest’s affairs, was established in the early 19th century by Hartig, Karsthofer, etc. and aimed for the perpetual and summa materialistic and non offering by the forest. In the Greek language, the term was delivered as “sic semper fruar” or as “sustainability” and also “sustainable reaping of the fruits”. In contemporary era the meaning of sustainability is not strictly used in the forest’s affairs and has mutated in keyword for the environment protection movement, while it is used in the field of economics, and also this of politics’ (in perpetuum planning etc.) (Katsakiori et al., 1994).

The students who participated the program stemmed from all three grades of the high school, but those who took on the theatrical roles were seniors during the school year 2018-19 and the event’s preparation began in March and lasted to May.

The goals and aspirations of the implementation of the program were the students to recognize marriage as an institution in tradition and religion and to incorporate culture and civilization in their lives through the

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preparation of school's theatrical play. Furthermore, the utilization of previous knowledge regarding the Technologies of Data and Communications by students, in order to complete the program's tasks was also sought after by the program's core values. The program, and its individual sections, served as a challenge for a holistic, interdisciplinary approach of the foretold subject with the aid of Literature, Theological studies and Biology. Thus, the students were able to familiarize themselves with interdisciplinary work (Panagiotidou, 2010). As for the ways of life, the exertion done about matrimony and forms of cohabitation in general, through the eras man has lived, aimed at the morphing of active citizens interested into merging the rights and obligations that those in wedlock have, with our rights and obligations to environment, through the prism of sustainability. Furthermore, in our goals was for students to practice team spirit and to be able to communicate their knowledge to their audience by presenting work done by subgroups to group plenary and to the sum of our school's students.

2. Methodology

The theme of our project (marriage, lore and environment) was selected by the students who chose to participate in environmental education and training. The work in groups is an active educational principle, applied in environmental education, and pursues the development of interdisciplinary relations, and the conquering educational goals in a cooperating and not competitive system. The man who first supported and applied work in groups, in Greek schools, was Delmouzos, during the 1930s (Photiou, 1998).

When students work in group, the project method is frequently used aiming for the soon to be taught subject and the students, accompanied by the teachers sign a "moral contract" in order to achieve the goal they undertook. In this case we refer to the examination of the Orthodox sacrament of marriage and the aspects of family life in marriage. When the project method is utilized, attention is put in cooperative work and team spirit, with emphasis in the participant's initiative and in the acquiring and cultivating of social education (Xatzidimou D. & Taratori E., 2001). We, both the students and the teachers expressed theses and remarks about the institution of marriage and the couple's relations, and also those of the parents and children. Initially, various teams of students, supervised by the teachers, researched on their own topic through bibliographical reports, the internet, and the orthodox sacrament of marriage, or/and through observations done in their social dome/environment.

According to Kokkos (no date), source of education can equally be an expert or an experienced person that is invited to join the curriculum, in order to transfer their knowledge to the students. In that case, the educational technique of (an expert being interviewed) is utilized. In the preparation of that interview: a) we specify the interview's goals and the expected results (why to invite this exact expert, how the students will be benefited, the topics that the interview will cover etc.) b) The teacher gives to the students information about the invited expert. c) The questions that the invitee will be asked are prepared, and a person selected to ask the questions. d) The teacher teaches the students how to interview someone (one student interviews the other, in order to accumulate experience). e) The points that the students will record and observe during the interview are specified. The thing that the invited expert will tell, their reactions and body language bare interest. All the participants of the subgroups added up their questions/opinions and then interview our local priest father Vasileios Kalliakmanis, Professor of Ethics and Sociology at the Theological school, where we discussed about the spiritual dimension and symbolical meanings that the orthodox sacrament of marriage bears, later we wrote the questions and the answers that occurred. Our initial view about some topics started to morph into others, of more orthodox and theological orientation, especially after the interview, where every participant of the environmental education

program was present.

Also field work was conducted (in Hellenism’s Refugee Museum of Neapolis and VAENI winery), so that information about wine will be gathered, for example about its use in the orthodox sacrament of marriage, and its role in our lives, relationships in general, and emphasis was put on the institution of family in wedlock. Traditional texts and lore and wedding attires were approached too.

The theatrical workshop started operating after the subgroups conducted some meetings, preparing the theatrical play. The teacher in charge of the selections of students participating in the play and their training was program’s team philologist. The theatrical play of Anton Chekhov “Marriage Proposal” (Chekhov, 1889) was utilized. The play went up at the municipal theatre of Kordelio-Evosmos, where every invited student and their parents/guardian were welcomed.

All the techniques utilized in this course by the subgroups and by the team in general, in the context of environmental education and training, strengthen the active participation of the trainees (Kokkos, n.d.).

3. Activities

At first, relevant bibliography was revised. Each subgroup should produce one or two of the following things (due to the limited time available):

- A poster presenting family life was made utilizing shells of nuts.
- Bride and groom marionettes were made by reused materials (plastic and textile).
- A video was prepared according to our teams visits and filed work.
- Power Point presentation was prepared referring to Orthodox wedding.
- Some students wrote down small texts concerning relationships like those on Monasteries (Monks).
- A collection of pictures presenting traditional wedding cloths of all over Greece was accumulated.
- Lore from all over Greece, affiliated to traditional Orthodox wedding, were presenting, as well as the new couple’s domicile.

4. Assessment

During the project, emphasis was put to formalistic and final assessment. An obstacle occurred, utilizing heavily restricted available time, due to the school’s preexisting curriculum and the extracurricular activities of the students. As observed, the quest for free time for voluntary activity by the teachers and the students alike is often an obstacle to the environmental education and training (Panagiotidou, 2010).

The educational sojourns served as motivation for students to accomplish their given tasks, with nice impact over all. The students gained greater awareness about the sacrament of orthodox wedding, and about the topics of their choice, from our local priest father Vasileios Kalliakmanis, Professor of Ethics and Sociology of the Aristotle’s University Theology School, during our visit at the Theology School. The presentation of our theatrical play had a great impact on raising awareness about our project’s end results to students and guardians alike.

We both teachers and students gained positive feedback through our collaboration. As remarked by the in-officio persona about the Theatrical education as a tool for the Environmental education and erudition, art work is prioritized in the activities selection pool (Vlachos, 2007). Furthermore, we must stress that in our school emphasis is put in meeting the standards of efficient work and efficient free leisure time for our students, while they are educated (UNO-UNICEF, 1959). We can also remark that in our school, a theatrical workshop is

operating, as an integrated part of the environmental education and training curriculum, so that knowledge about cyclic economy and sustainable development can be conquered with the help of art and civil acts.

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