

CREATIVE DRAMA; AN ALTERNATIVE IN ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to seek ways to implement creative drama techniques in architectural education. Such an aim will be reached in the light of the experience acquired through the experiences in the creative drama training programmes.

Burgeoning body of literature has revealed the crucial role attached to visual aids, active involvement of students and receptivity to courses being taught. However, traditional approaches have failed to achieve these desired objectives. Thus, increasing productivity, capturing attention and permanence of learning have been the major tenets of educationalists and educational institutions.

Creative drama techniques used in various fields of education can be implemented in the departments of architecture and design-based programmes of other departments. For all the departments in question, educational drama techniques could be of great help to foster students' imagination, improve productivity and aesthetic awareness, make abstract concepts concrete, help individuals provide insights into new ideas and new perspectives, nurture empathy and empower imagination, stimulate curiosity and the need for exploration, assure confidence enable personal development, develop problem solving abilities, create effective speech, ensure the permanence of learning. The techniques in question are considerably significant to help students comprehend the courses, ensure participation and trigger critical thinking in the courses offered in architectural education such as design, architectural history, and arts history and so on.

Drama as a discipline could be classified into two parts: drama in arts education and drama as a teaching method. The role of drama in arts education is highly significant as it aims at improving students' personal skills, aesthetic appreciation and enhances visual abilities and creates new perspectives. This aspect of drama could be adapted to education of architecture and design. Drama as a teaching method, on the other hand, might yield fruitful in terms of long-lasting learning, individuals' establishing relationship with the outside world, catching up with the scientific and technological advancements and a growing awareness in social and cultural developments as well as arousing curiosity for the current issues.

Drama consists of four types, namely psychodrama, creative drama, educational drama, and sociodrama. This study will elaborate on educational drama or "drama in education" and its techniques since this field is much related to design education. Education in drama makes use of applied learning techniques rather than techniques based on memorization. Thus, the aim here is to provide permanent learning, establishing relationship with the previous and future subjects and personal experiences. In this manner, drama in education offers a variety in terms of method as well as new perspectives.

Creative drama involves three phases: Warm-Up (Preparation), Animation, Evaluation (Discussion, Negotiation). A variety of techniques such as unfinished materials, still images, improvisation, moment of truth, letters, rituals, ceremonies, role cards, hot sitting, interview, pantomime, holding a meeting are used in these phases.

Choosing the appropriate techniques for the course, the trainer may develop his/her own plan as s/he wishes.

Using the drama techniques, various applications in a variety of disciplines have been carried out in accordance with the educational programme attended. The studies conducted have revealed that techniques applied through creative drama could yield fruitful in architectural and design education. To this end, various method samples have been offered as an alternative approach to educational programmes in the departments of design and architecture. As a result, the study demonstrates that the topic that is to be taught could be covered making use of the drama techniques and visual materials.

Key Words: Drama, Creativity, Creative Drama, Drama in Education, Architectural Education

INTRODUCTION

“Good design is about looking at everyday things with new eyes and working out how they can be made better.”
James Dyson, 1999 (10)

One of the main goals of education is to foster creativity. It is the process of creativity that lies beneath all affective, cognitive and metacognitive activities and it is also creativity that occurs in all of the studies, (Kamaraj and Aktan, 1998). Creativity could be regarded both as a process and production. John Preeman describes it as “being able to offer multiple perspectives and a variety of ideas.” (Noyanalpan, 1993). Creative thinking is an independent, productive and dynamic process. It requires looking at a point from different angles and providing multiple solutions. The processes of Rationality, Flexibility, Originality, Enrichment, which are the four aspects of creative thinking, are highly important for mental development of the individuals. Read (9) defines creativity in arts as “bringing a form or something that has no face in life” (San, 1985). Creativity in arts refers to reaching wholeness which involves aesthetic values. The end product is a work of art. Thus, creativity is of crucial value in design-based training programs such as architecture. To this end, one of the most effective ways to boost students’ performance and creativity is drama. Drama fosters the motivation, receptivity (receptivity to both the work and course), intelligence (thinking-problem solving), communication and willingness to get engaged in the work to be done. It is creativity which leads to a good design. Thus, ensuring creative thinking leads to a good design. Therefore, boosting creativity should become the sine quo none of design training. Creating individuals who can approach a subject from various perspectives and who seek betterment is fairly significant as such an improvement would lead to originality and original products. Discrete identities and distinctive voices will pave the way for original designs.

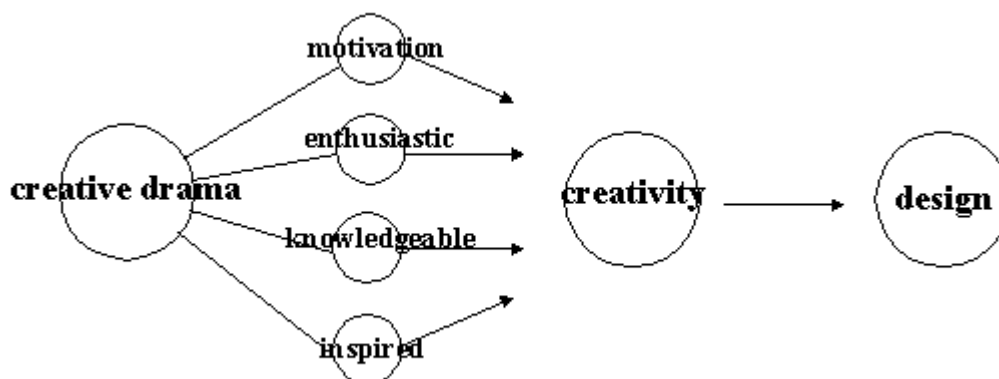


Figure 1. Drama, Creativity and Design

METHOD AND MATERIALS

1. DRAMA

The word “drama” comes from a Greek word “dran” which means “to act, to do, to make” Norman defines it as the following: “Drama means to provide an atmosphere where connotations, feelings, knowledge and experiences are emancipated.” Drama activities refer to giving a meaning to universal, social, moral and abstract concepts (1).

1.1. TYPES OF DRAMA

Drama can be grouped into four categories written below:

- Creative Drama
- Drama in Education
- Psychodrama
- Socio-drama

1.1.1. CREATIVE DRAMA

Creative drama is to represent or animate a subject, an experience, an event, a concept or behavior with a group utilizing improvisation and role play techniques and using the experiences of group members (1).

1.1.1.1. ASPECTS OF CREATIVE DRAMA

“Irrespective of the field it is used, creative drama could be referred as a learning method, a means of self-expression, or a means of art. Learning through drama promotes interaction, improves self-confidence and ensures socialization. Moreover, being member of a group, communication, improvement in problem-solving skills are some other aspects to be mentioned hereby” (2).

“Drama as a discipline could be divided into two categories:

- Drama in art education,
- Drama as a teaching method.

When drama in art education is considered, a number of activities which aims at personal development are to be highlighted. In this respect, creative motion, improvisation and creative speech are to be stressed. The participants take part in games they have devised. Moreover, being both the active participant and spectator enables them to develop various perspectives.

This approach aims at improving:

- imagination,
- creativity,
- problem-solving skills,
- social differentiation,
- language and communication skills (3).

Drama as a teaching method could be used to teach various subjects in various fields of education (Social studies, Turkish, Maths etc.). This approach differs from the others in terms of objectives. In order to meet the goals and objectives defined in the curriculum, the approach could be used as a tool in learning-teaching. Referring and interpreting various articles and workshops will be of great aid on the way to see and explore different approaches and support theoretical knowledge. Studies should be supported by group projects and research assignments”(3).

1.1.2. DRAMA IN EDUCATION

“Drama in education refers to animation of a subject with a group utilizing improvisation and role play techniques and using the experiences of group members. Drama activities take place by making use of general characteristics of games in the improvisation process. These activities are carried out in a workshop setting defined beforehand with a group of participants accompanied by a leader. The objectives of the activity to be conducted and the characteristics of the participant group shape the nature of the process in question”(4).

“It serves as a teaching method and an alternative way to education systems in which memorization, cramming knowledge and narrow-mindedness are credited while establishing associations and synthesizing correctly are doomed to failure” (5).

“In educational process, personality, attention, intelligence, and experiences are in close interaction with each another. As a result of such an interaction, objectives, knowledge, attitudes, moral criteria and social values are subject to change. Education as a process refers to an analysis of social conditions, and application and determination of principals, skills and concepts which could be integrated into teaching-learning system” (6).

1.1.2.1. ADVANTAGES OF DRAMA IN EDUCATION

- Promotes long-lasting learning
- Nurtures empathy
- Empowers imagination,
- Offers new dimensions,
- Triggers curiosity and investigation,
- Improves problem-solving and analysis-synthesis skills,
- Concretizes the abstract,
- Provokes creativity,
- Assures self-confidence and personal development,
- Enhances students’ repertoire,
- Helps students develop effective addressing strategies and improve their rhetoric.

1.1.2.2. STEPS OF DRAMA IN EDUCATION

Drama in education consists of three phases:

- Warm-up activities,
- Improvisations,
- Evaluation (7)

Warm-up Activities: These are the activities in which the participants, in the guidance of a group leader, master activation of five senses, promotion of observation, interpretation of body language and sharpening tactile acuity, meeting someone/something new, establishing communication, building trust and adapting to new social conditions.

Games: Games refer to free activities and the development of such activities which are governed by certain rules. Sometimes child games are played. Creativity and imagination are involved in these games.

Improvisation: Being a less certain process, improvisation sometimes requires abandoning a defined subject or topic or moves to a targeted point in graded steps. These are the activities in which individual and group creativities have the leading role.

Formation: This process begins with an unknown starting point such as communicating with an ordinary object, a photograph, a drawing, a statue and so on. How the process will develop or what the destination will be is not certain in advance.

Evaluation: Evaluation refers to creating a discussion after each phase or some phases and receiving feedback. Getting answers from the participants to questions such as “What have you experienced?” “How did you feel?” “What sort of difficulties have you had?” is a highly important step in drama. Arousing awareness of others’ behaviors, feelings, ideas, and experiences enables one to question his or her life critically (8).

1.1.2.3. TECHNIQUES USED IN EDUCATIONAL DRAMA

The following are the techniques used in *educational drama*:

- (Lecturing)
- (Space Between)
- (Conscience Alley)
- (Split Screen)
- (Material Use)
- (Music)
- (Visual aids)
- (Gossip Circle)
- (Still Image)
- (Improvisation)
- (Thought Tracking)
- (Forum Theater)
- (Photo moment-Still picture)
- (Moment of Truth)
- (Flash Back)
- (Inner Voice)
- (Small Group Improvisation)
- (Letters)
- (Teacher In Role)
- (Ritual-Ceremony)
- (Writing In Role)
- (Role Cards)

- (Role Play)
- (Hot Seating)
- (Reportage)
- (Pantomime)
- (Telephone Conversations)
- (Holding A Meeting)
- (Whole Group Improvisation) (4)

2. ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION AND DRAMA TECHNIQUES

Drama in education offers a diversity of perspectives and a different method for teaching. Creative drama aims at creating individuals who question life, think critically, and establish a solid reasoning between events, master problem-solving strategies (Kırıo lu, 1991).

In architectural training, creative drama techniques could be utilized for empowering students' imagination, boosting productivity, encourage aesthetic appreciation, concretizing the abstract thoughts, providing insights into new perspectives, helping them build self-esteem and trust, aiding them improve effective speech and ensuring long-lasting learning. Since students will be able to establish relationship between the courses and real-life experiences and actively involve in the courses, their motivation will be relatively high thanks to the techniques employed in classes. They nurture their empathy, improve problem-solving skills and enhance viewpoints.

1. sensitive	18. ingenious
2. motivated	19. energetic
3. adaptable	20. sense of humor
4. observant	21. self-actualizing
5. perceive world differently	22. self-discipline
6. see possibilities	23. self-knowledgeable
7. question asker	24. specific interests
8. can synthesize correctly,	25. divergent thinker
9. often intuitively	26. curious
10. able to fantasize	27. open-ended (don't fix on a single idea, keep looking for many different ideas or ways to do thing)
11. flexible	28. independent
12. fluent	29. severely critical
13. imaginative	30. non-conforming
14. intuitive	31. persistent
15. original	
16. confident	
17. risk taker	

Figure 2. Traits of Creative People (Black, 1990)

Everybody has the potential to be creative. Drama enables self-recognition and discovery of the creative potential one is equipped with. Thus, integrating drama into the design-based departments, particularly architecture, would yield pretty fruitful to foster creativity (4). Cultivating creative spirit, drama education boosts one's yearning for creativity.

The traits of creative people demonstrated in Figure 2 are the much desired goals of drama in education. As indicated in Figure 2 drama in education triggers people to become adaptable, observant, imaginative, original, ingenious, curious, confident, question asker, divergent thinker, or become the ones who can synthesize correctly, perceive differently and have a sense humor.

Different ways of expression based on creativity could be turned into a variety of art products. Therefore, in the departments offering design and art based training, drama techniques and educational drama are of significant value. The aim of the study is to improve the creativity of students studying architecture, develop their aesthetic appreciation, encourage cooperation, promote their decision-making skills, thereby obtaining original pieces of art.

2.1. SAMPLE ACTIVITIES ABOUT THE USE OF DRAMA TECHNIQUES IN ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

The sample activities presented hereby can be diversified into various forms and techniques. Moreover, duration of class hours was not taken into account in the examples. Considering the curriculum of the institution where the study will be carried out, the activities could be employed in separate lessons in a graded fashion. Creative drama could be used both as a technique in education and as a separate course through which creativity is fostered.

2.1.1. SAMPLE ACTIVITIES TO BE INTEGRATED INTO THE PRESENT CURRICULUM

The sample activities presented below have been developed in order to enable students to turn their thoughts about a topic or a concept studied in “Basic Design” classes into creative designs by making use of drama techniques.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY 1

Subject: Rhythm

Techniques Used: Material Use, (Visual Aids and Music), Rituals-Ceremonies

Material Use: It refers to participants’ use of visual and auditory materials.

Rituals and Ceremonies: For certain anniversaries, special days and celebrations, students arrange rituals and ceremonies in accordance with their belief system(O’Neill and Lambert, 1984; Neelands, 1990; Somers, 1994) (4).

Step 1: The teacher hangs some pictures about rhythm on the wall and asks students to look at the pictures as if they were in an art gallery. Some music accompanies them while they are looking at the pictures. Then, s/he asks them to write down what they feel in one word.

Step 2: Students are asked to prepare a ritual by establishing silent rhythms of feelings they have.

Step 3: After performing the ritual, students are asked to develop a design about the concept of “Rhythm”.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY 2

Subject: Permeability

Techniques Used: Material Use, (Visual Aids and Music), Games, Silent Improvisation

***Game:** These are the activities developed sometimes according to some rules and sometimes according to creativity. Six principals of the games are: Freedom, Inner Eternity, Acting As If, Duality, Closed Integrity, and Here and Now.*

Silent Improvisation: This technique enables the participants to become a better observer by focusing on an activity as well as familiarizing with the body and body language. Silent improvisation stands for the expression of ideas and feelings without words (4).

Step 1: Depending on the teacher’s choice, the lesson might start with a comprehension task or game which is about the subject. For instance, “Find your house”. Students are split into groups of three. Then, two students are asked to form a circle meeting their hands. The third person is in the middle of the two. The aim of the third person who is in the middle is to find his/her home when there is an exchange of houses. However, the teacher gives some instructions when there is an exchange such as from the outside from inside. When s/he says “from the inside” the hands overlooking the inner part are detached, so the person in the middle is supposed to find a new shelter. When “from the outside” instruction is heard, the couples wait for a new guest. If a person is out of shelter, he becomes IT. Closed hands are obstacles in the game and they represent impermeability while the open hands refer the opposite.

Step 2: Students are asked to write a short poem regarding permeability and then animate it without using words.

Step 3: Students are asked to develop a concrete design out of the poem they have written.

The activities below are developed to ensure a long-lasting learning in some subjects of History of Architecture and Arts History courses through drama techniques.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY 3

Subject: Modernism

Techniques Used: Material Use, (Visual Aids), Writing in Role, Still Image.

***Writing in Role:** Participants are asked to write a letter, report, story, postcard and so on about the relevant topic.*

***Still Image-Table:** Groups are asked to make a still image. It might be the steps of an event (e.g. beginning-final part). Since it will be a still image, everybody in the group is asked to*

stand still. Sometimes a moment of truth might become a sculpture or the other participants might be asked to become a chain for the image (4).

Step 1: The teacher asks the students to split into groups 3-4. S/he distributes different examples from the followers of the Modernist Movement to each group and then the students are asked to write a paragraph about the examples distributed. Then, they are asked to choose 3 concepts about the examples.

Step 2: Everybody reads their paragraph aloud. Then, the teacher asks students to choose an example paragraph read in the classroom and the 3 concepts chosen, and act them as a still image.

Step 3: Students are asked to design a threading of the paragraph, concepts and still image they have heard or seen.

Step 4: It is lecture time, and the movement is studied illustrating with the examples given to each group.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY 4

Subject: Hellenistic Art

Techniques Used: material use (visual icons in the works), role cards, role-play

Role cards: *Role cards provide information about the conditions of the role players and clues for improvisation.*

Role play: *It makes it easier to act by speaking out the things they can't in real life and it is the basis of all elements of theatre and drama. Developing language and motion, role play also increases sensitivity towards different viewpoints. One should avoid getting out of his/her role unless there's an exception and also avoid exaggeration and repetition (4).*

Step 1: The instructor teaches the students

Step 2: They are divided into groups and distributed samples belonging to Hellenistic Era. The students are then asked to make role cards after observing the samples and by taking into account the number of people needed. The content of the samples should include depiction of the specific era, clothes, setting, and characteristics.

Step 3: The cards formed by the students are once more distributed randomly regardless of their groups and asked to make up a story out of the depictions in the cards and act out.

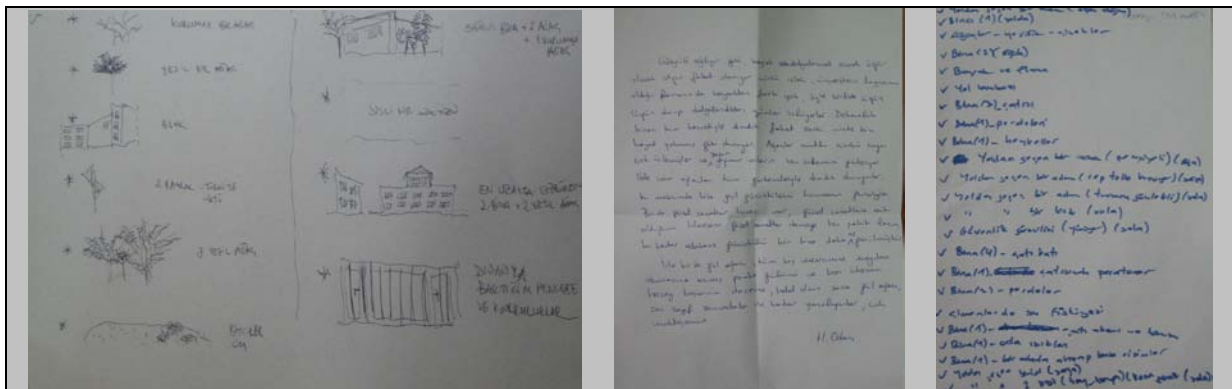
2.1.2 SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR CREATIVE DRAMA AS A LESSON

In spite of being an alternative method, drama is a lesson in itself which is fundamental for students in terms of the development of creativity. In this respect, the two practices which were formed by benefiting from "Contemporary Drama Group Leadership 1. and 2. Step Program" are invaluable examples of why drama can be a primary course in

architecture, design and artistic education. The sample study below is based on Nejat Akfirat and H.Omer Adiguzel's works attended by a group of 27 participants on 29.01.2008 at Trabzon KTU Fatih Faculty of Education Drama Hall.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY 5

In the drama tasks that have been carried out, information about the individual's observation talent, characteristic features and even psychological situation can be obtained. In the study below, the participants have been asked to note down what they see out of the window and the results have either been drawn, written or systematically classified into groups. It is seen that some individuals' attention were drawn on the details while others only mentioned the general outline. Furthermore, there has been a difference in the focus point of the participants: some of them focused on the objects close to them whereas others to the objects farther, therefore missing the details. It can be said that as a result of this study, the individual features, points of view, talents and emotions of the participants are important concerns revealing them. In parallel, it has been seen that personal values, interests, backgrounds, education and perception are also equally valuable.



Figures 3. Individual's observations

A study related to observation and personality features. The sample studies below are based on Seda Pakkan's two works "Dance-Motion and Mask" and "Museum" which were attended by 20 participants on 9.3.2008 at Trabzon KTU Fatih Faculty of Education and St. Sophie Museum Trabzon.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY 6 – Dance, Motion and Mask Study

Step 1: In the mask study, the instructor leads a rhythm exercise as gestures are more important than mimics so as to use body language. Compositions of dance, walking and motion are formed along with music in different directions with 8 steps. The instructor asks the individuals to prepare a choreography that involves different emotional situations.

Step 2: The students are divided into two groups of A's and B's. A's are hunters and B's are hunts. The movements begin along with music while A's look for B's in a field. The instructor asks the feeling of "terror" in this context. The partners are dangerous for each other and without making any physical contact, they are asked to communicate the feeling. In addition, they are supposed to stop at certain times through music and look at each other to give the feeling.

Step 3: The room is decorated with pictures from different cultures and tribes. The group observes these masks and thinks about why and how they are put on the wall. The aim is to observe, act and sound according to the pictures.

Step 4: The next step involves the teacher's speech about the session subject on *Maks and Rituals*, their history, culture and use.

Step 5: The individuals are divided into groups, each group with a certain concept. They are asked to act out without words accordingly. The use of mask in the improvisation is also needed. For this, masks are prepared with paper, paint and different materials to be used in the acting along with music.



Figures 4. Sample Masks from the Mask Work

SAMPLE ACTIVITY 7 -The Museum

Step 1: A museum is selected by the instructor and he/she pictures the icons and designs these pictures to be printed as colored puzzle pieces.

Step 2: The puzzles are distributed to the individuals in groups and they are asked to put the pieces of the puzzle together. Later on, they search for the icons in the pictures as they walk and explore the place-the museum. Historical and mythological information related to the pictures are later read.

Step 3: The instructor asks the individuals to prepare a quartet by using the pieces of the puzzle and exhibit them in the museum with using still image.

Step 4: The instructor gives information about the history and structure of the museum.

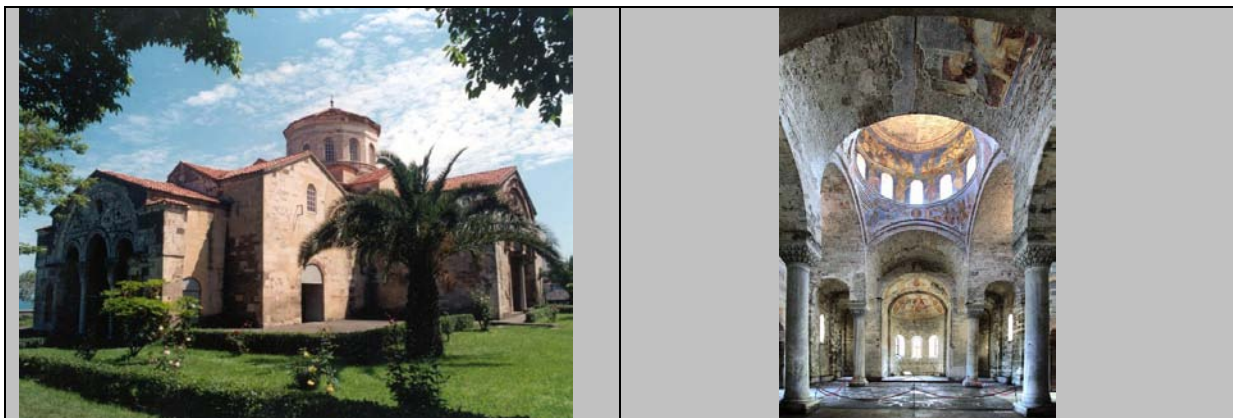




Figure 5. Ayasofya Museum –Exterior View	Figure 6. Ayasofya Museum –Interior View
	
Figure 7. Icons in Ayasofya Museum	Figure 8. Still image work about icons in Ayasofya Museum

SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

As a technique, drama serves as a catalyst in catching the students' attention and interest to the lesson and is also a crucial factor in enhancing their creativity, their artistic and aesthetical point of view. In fact, creativity is both a method that could be used in class and a lesson that must be taught as one of the primary subjects in architecture, urban design and industrial design. Drama, as a whole, seeks for answers to questions such as who, what, where, how and develops the skills of thinking, design and practice in obstacle-aim-solution theory. It also helps increase pupils' self-confidence and the ability to adapt to new environments. For this reason, drama is presented as a methodology and a lesson suggestion introducing us an alternative.

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