



EUCRITE

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR REFUGEE
INTEGRATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Forum Theatre Workshop

Guidelines for Facilitators

Co-funded by the
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Time: 60-90 Minutes

Material:

- Scripts
- Table and chairs

Outline:

- I. Introduction**
- II. Instructions**
 - a. The Rules**
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Introduction

Forum Theatre Workshops (FTW) can help participants reflect on real-life problems while engaging with refugee students in the course of their work at the University.

Augusto Boal believed that, in the same way that in traditional pedagogy can be passed from teacher to student without critical consideration, so ideas could be passed from actor to audience in theatre (Boal, 1998, p19). Forum Theatre is one of set of tools that emerged from his vision. Forum Theatre revolves around the presentation of a short scene by actors, in which audience members are invited to replace the protagonists. This interaction encourages the audience to explore the different ways of dealing with situations. The scenes portray real-life challenges in our partner universities.

In the examples below, we explore University staff dealing with refugee students in two settings: student administrative registration, the teacher-student interview for admission. This interactive workshop gives the participants the opportunity to experiment, discuss and assess different behaviors and actions which could potentially be applied to these real-life situations.

In short, an FTW workshop can:

- raise awareness among staff members on the causes and effects of stress in dealing with the refugees in the University system
- ideate realistic scenarios to manage problem situations, thus relieving stress of not knowing what to do



- provide opportunities to discuss and exchange best practices
- share cultural representations of these situations

Adapting the Forum Theatre Workshop

Brainstorm scenes that actually happened in your universities that the actors involved viewed as “problematic” and write with them scripts that reflect at least three identifiable problems.

Then, find one facilitator to lead the workshop and volunteers to perform the scene(s) (or professional actors) that have had time to rehearse the scene before performing.

To get a feel for how a workshop like this can be created and facilitated, please read through the following instructions and example scenes.

Instructions

The Rules	Number of participants: all
Duration: 5 min	Material: None

The facilitator explains the three rules of Forum Theatre:

1. Freedom of speech (everyone is allowed to speak, and everyone can say everything- no censorship)
2. Equality in speech (everyone’s utterance is equal- no matter what your position is, gender, etc.)
3. Shared responsibility (everyone is responsible for what is said- and what is not being said)

Introduce the Scene	Number of participants: all
Duration: 5 min	Material: None

The facilitator introduces the scene, see examples for scenes starting on page 4.

An example of how the facilitator can convey the guidelines to the participants: “Watch this scene attentively and then you will be asked about it. Is this scene realistic? Are there any details you think are strange? What did you see the characters do? What did you hear the characters say?”

Performance	Number of participants: all
Duration: 5 - 10 min	Material: Scripts, tables and chairs

The actors perform the scene according to the script. (See examples starting on page 4)



Discussion	Number of participants: all
Duration: 15- 20 min	Material: Scripts, tables and chairs

The facilitator asks questions and discusses the scene with the audience.

Some example questions: “Is this scene realistic? Are there any details you think are strange? What did you see the characters do? What did you hear the characters say?”

Change the Scene	Number of participants: all
Duration: 20 - 40 min	Material: Scripts, tables and chairs

When an audience member suggests a proposal, ask them to come and perform it. The new set of actors perform the scene again with the proposal and the facilitator asks again for comments and feedback (see questions above).

This can be done as many times as necessary-until the scene becomes “acceptable” to the audience.

Summarize	Number of participants: all
Duration: 10 - 20 min	Material: None

The facilitator summarizes actions that can be taken to resolve the problem, based on unfolding of the forum (this can be a brainstorming session).

Example Scenes

Scene 1: How can we successfully enroll and welcome a student refugee inside our universities?	Themes: Original documents, Recognition of diploma, Refugee status
Characters: prospective student and admission officer	

Prospective Student (PS): I am here to register to the Master of Science program. Here’s my paperwork.

Admission Officer (AO): Did you pass the admission test for the Master of Science?

PS: Yes, I did.

AO: Great. Now all you need to finalize your registration is to provide me with the following documents (hands her the list)

PS, reading the list AO handed to them: my degree certificates, the transcript of records and relevant translations, a declaration of value of the Bachelor degree, and an Italian/English language certificate...well, I have a copy of my transcripts and my Bachelor’s degree here.

AO: I’m sorry but we can only accept the original certificate, not a copy.

PS: Well, I don’t have it.



AO: I am sorry but we cannot accept that.

PS: I left my country without my documents. All I had was this copy I had by email. I printed it for today.

AO: I am truly sorry but there is no way we accept that.

PS: Can't you make an exception?

AO: No, I am sorry.

PS: Well, I can't get back a document from my country. I don't think you understand. I had to flee. I couldn't take these documents with me. The university building no longer exists and all my documents have been lost during the journey across the Mediterranean sea.

AO: Well we could give you extra time but you cannot be fully enrolled until you provide them.

PS: But what can I do? You realize I can't get them back. I don't have any family left and I can't reach my University.

AO: We can put you in touch with a local association that might be able to help. That's the best we can do. Sorry.

PS: Ok. I don't know if it's worth it. I worked for years to become an engineer. I have worked hard. My family has had to put up with that. And everything is in the way. The war, the exile, and now you.

AO: Look, we can enroll you under condition you provide all these documents. We'll give you some extra time to collect the missing documents. How about a couple of months? I'll let you know once we contacted your embassy (.). So now, do you have the paperwork that testifies you have obtained international protection or the subsidiary protection from the state?

PS: What?

AO: Do you have the paperwork that testifies you have obtained international protection or the subsidiary protection from the state?

PS: Well, no, not yet.

AO: You need that to complete your application.

PS: But I was told it could take up to 3 years...

AO: Well, we need proof your refugee status have been recognized.

PS: So you mean... I have to wait 3 years to register at the university?

AO: I am sorry but there is no other way. We can't accept your registration before.

PS: Do you have any idea what I've been through to get here? Do you?

AO: Look, I am sorry, there is nothing I can do...

PS: There is something! You could bend the rules and sign me up!

AO: Look, you could take the entry test, fill out the online application form, and as soon as the Territorial Commission grants you the refugee status, you can sign up to your program. It's the best I can do.

PS: It's not enough. I need to get my university degree. I need to start my new life here. I have a family: and my family's been through enough. Are you telling me you want me to wait 3 whole years? 3 years to have a chance here?

AO: Look. If I could do something I would. There is just nothing more I can do.

PS: It's not worth it. I just will never be able to make it back to university.

End Scene



Scene 2: How can we best support a refugee student at the university?

Themes: The human factor, student autonomy: refugee status, taking chances: the university's role

Characters: prospective student (female), prospective student's undefined companion (male), professor, unnamed auditor

Prospective Student (PS): Hello

Professor (Prof): Hello.

Undefined Companion (UC): Hello.

Prof: I am sorry, but who are you?

UC: I am her guardian.

Prof: I am afraid we cannot have you in here during the interview. We need to speak with the candidate alone.

UC: Well I am not leaving. She wants me here.

Prof: I am sorry sir, but we cannot accept this candidate if she doesn't do the interview alone.

PS: No, don't leave!

UC: See? She doesn't want me to leave.

Prof: Get out.

UC: I won't.

Prof: We just cannot work under these conditions. We need to speak to her alone. Otherwise, we are cancelling the interview (long pause)

UC: Ok, I'll be waiting just outside the door. How long?

Prof: 10 minutes.

UC: Ok. (He leaves)

Prof: Sorry about that, but we felt like we needed to do this interview with you only so that you can speak freely.

PS: That's alright. I understand.

Prof: How did you get here?

PS: I fled Abu Dhabi four months ago.

Prof: Why did you choose to come here?

PS: My family wanted me to marry and quit my studies. I wanted to become an engineer so I came here. I know you have very good universities that train engineer here.

Prof: And who is this man?

PS: He is taking care of me here. He took me in.

Prof: Is he your husband?

PS: No. (Pause)

Prof: Why do you want to join our program?

PS: I would like to become a qualified engineer.

Prof: Why?

PS: In order to find a job here. In order to start my new life here.

Prof: What program did you follow?



PS: I studied mathematics and physics at the Model School, one of the top high schools in Abu Dhabi. I took courses in numeral systems, algebra, coordinate geometry, statistics and probability. I scored top of my class. This is my diploma.

Prof: This is a Secondary School Leaving Certificate? It's the diploma you are given at the end of high school?

PS: Yes.

Prof: What do these grades correspond to then?

PS: See, my grades in science are all As; A is like in the American system, it's the best grade you can have.

Prof: Ok. Have you looked up what classes we have in our program?

PS: Yes.

Prof: Our program is very challenging, even for very good students. It requires a lot of work. Do you think you can succeed?

PS: Yes, I am sure I can. This is my dream: to become an engineer. I fled my country and my family to pursue that dream. I will do everything I can to succeed.

Prof: Our classes are all in English Do you think you can follow science classes in that language?

PS: Yes, I am sure it. I have had a lot of classes in English at school, and I am studying English online as well.

Prof: I see you live about an hour away. Will you manage to get here and attend all classes?

PS: Yes, of course I will. My friend will take me. I could also take the train if I can.

Prof: Ok. Could you please leave the room so we can discuss this?

PS: Yes

(PS leaves – Prof and Unnamed Auditor talk – PS is called back by Prof)

Prof: All right. We will grant you entry into first year. You will receive a written notification within the next two weeks. We look forward to having you join our school.

PS: Thank you! Thank you!

End Scene