

THE FORGOTTEN YARD GAMES: PEDAGOGICAL DIMENSIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

In the context of environmental education, the students of the 5th grade of a primary school in Greece, a total of 25 students, implemented from December 2017 to June 2018 the program: "The forgotten games of the yard". The design of school spaces and cities expresses the dominant social perception of the quality of the space that suits the education of children. The choice of the theme was made by the children themselves on the occasion that our school has a yard with limited space. So we wanted to find ways to make the most of this small space for games that do not require special equipment and space. The groups searched for material for the yard games, forgotten, ancient and new, through books, interviews, the internet and in the final phase of the program the students performed the toys and photographed them.

Key Words: Game, pedagogical utilization, environmental education.

1. INTRODUCTION

The neighborhoods resounded with the voices of children playing. They ran and laughed all day. The appetite for play was stopped only by the darkness, when it became dense and they could not see each other. Then they gathered back in their homes tired from the constant movement of the day. Then the mothers complained again about the chores of the day and the lessons that were left half done.

Today's children seem like they have no group voices. One by one you hear them talking slowly. They will play board and virtual games on their computers. They will exchange information about them and talk about the points they got and the tracks they achieved. If it happens and they find an alley, they no longer know what to do with it. They will play football between the apartment buildings and soon the crane will come to eat this space too, to build another building.

In the needs of the new reality, the students of the 5th grade of a Primary School in Greece, a total of 25 students undertook to implement this Environmental Education program, with the theme: "The forgotten yard games".

The purpose of this initiative is for students to acquire the appropriate knowledge that will enable them to realize environmental problems and the importance of the environment in human life and on the other hand to develop the values, attitudes and skills needed for mature management of the environment on their part and their awareness of what is called 'environment'.

Through this program children will have the opportunity to learn forgotten games that were played in the yards and neighborhoods, to participate in role-playing games, to learn, to discover, to play, to create. The issue was approached distributively, as shown in Figure 1.

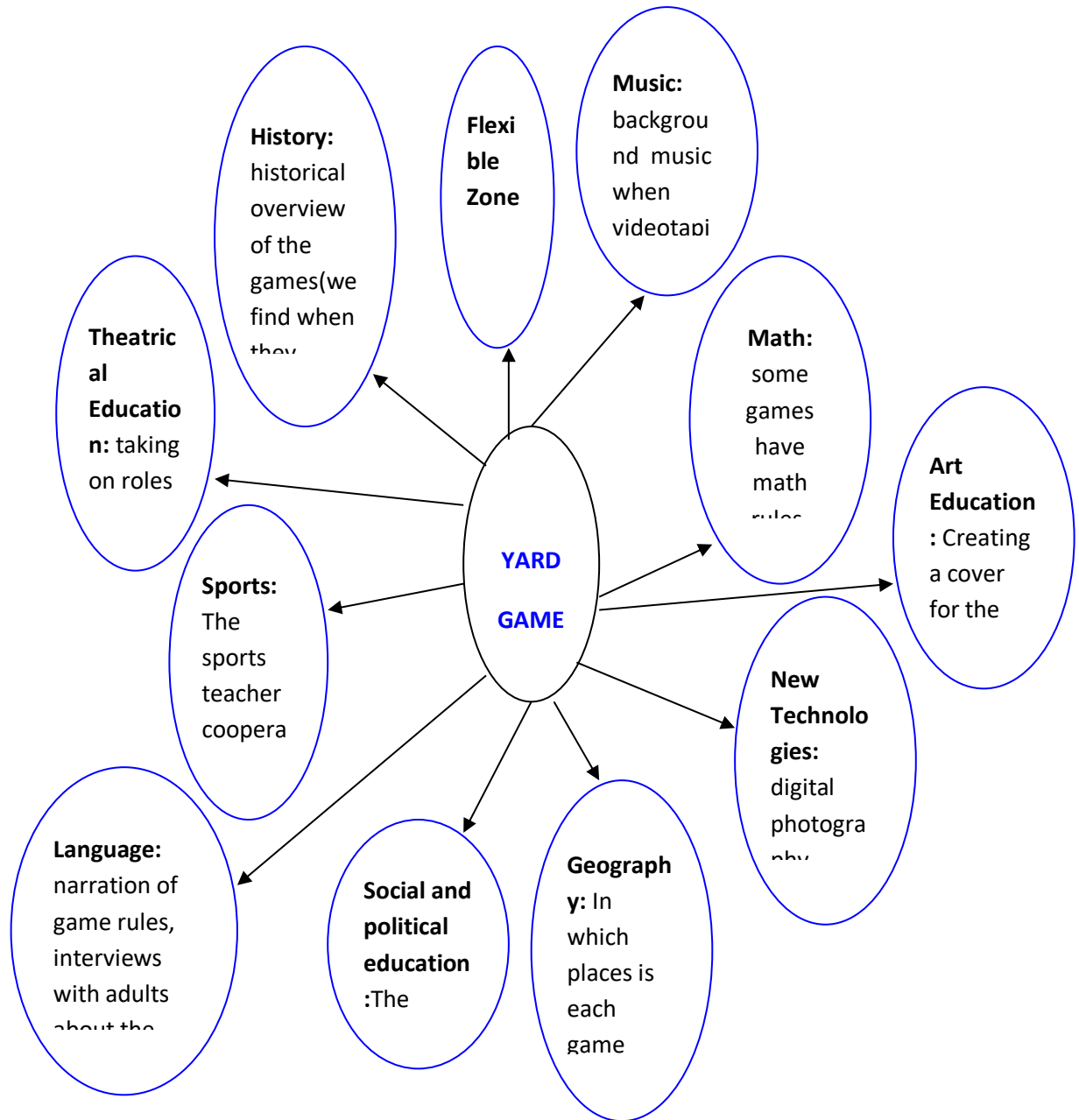


Figure 1: The interdisciplinary approach of the program "The forgotten yard games "

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In every living organism there is an innate need for movement. The primary stimulus for the child's movement is, among other things, playing games. The purpose of the games is to relieve and prepare the child so that it develops into an autonomous personality, while setting in motion all

the physical and mental functions of the child. The educational purpose of the game is also very important, as it is one of the most basic educational principles. It affects the spirit, the emotions and especially, the body of the child. For the child itself, the game is the main content of his existence and the most important means for his effortless physical, mental and emotional development (Antoniadis, 1994).

"Play and learning are two concepts of fundamental importance for the science of education and especially for the "pedagogy" of playing games. There is no publication that is related to the games and does not support the view that playing games is learning at the same time (Pantazis, 1997). The pedagogical quality of the game, as it has been recognized, makes its process great, developing holistically the personality of the students. Its pedagogical and functional value for the comprehensive and balanced development of the child is indisputable. It is an inexhaustible source of learning and the means by which the child progressively reaches maturity. Its importance in child development has been researched for over a century, by thinkers and scientists in a wide range of scientific fields (Whitebread et al, 2012).

Leading researchers from various scientific fields emphasize the value of play in the pedagogical process, correlating it with the overall development of the child, supporting the view that playing is for children the natural way of learning, harmonized with the developmental level of each child, in ways that are developmental. suitable (Avgitidou, 2001). Piaget (1976) and Vygotsky (1981) have established this pedagogical practice by supporting that playing games has all the properties of a learning tool. Typically, Piaget (1962) considers playing, as an adaptive behavior that helps in the development of thinking, while Vygotsky (1978) states that playing is an opportunity for children to learn more about their world, to discover new ideas and to strengthen their imagination (Avgitidou, 2001).

Germanos (1998), from his point of view, supports that playing integrated into an educational environment, can work both at the level of the pedagogical relationship and at the level of the pedagogical process:

- At the level of the pedagogical relationship, the game can be used as a communications tool between children as well as between children and teachers. It can also function as a way out of relationship problems and co-operation difficulties that arise. Finally, the game playing can become a tool for understanding and knowing the child.
- At the level of the pedagogical process: The child through playing has the opportunity to develop its skills (physical, verbal, emotional). In addition, it is introduced to various adult roles and behaviors. This is why playing can be an excellent means of conveying the pedagogical message and a field where its creativity can develop. Numerous studies indicate that playing is an important teaching tool and support the view that children learn mainly through it (Weisberg et al., 2015; Hyvonen, 2011).

Playing is a fun process where children, while having fun, manage to learn, socialize and develop physically and mentally. Children during playing games move inside the classroom, but also outside it, depending on their personal needs, desires and other influences they receive from the environment. It is associated with creativity, problem solving, language learning, the development of social roles and a number of cognitive and social phenomena (Geros, 1984). At the same time, it functions as a means of communication and social education, social adaptation and participation

but also improving the child's behavior through learning to respect and obey the rules of the game. Finally, the child is exercised in the process of social control and in situations that occur during the process of interaction with others (Giddens, 2002).

It has been proven that playing has a lot of cognitive and social benefits. Through group playing the framework, in which children are led to their socialization, is set (Plumb, 1975). As they engage in playful activities, they learn basic social skills, such as sharing, collaborating, taking on the role of listener and speaker, understanding the feelings and views of others, waiting their turn, taking responsibility, become self-sufficient and autonomous (Ginsburg, 2007; Lester & Russell, 2010). The process of play presupposes existing relationships between the participants (Avgitidou, 2001), which offer children the opportunity to learn to cooperate, to behave carefully, to accept others, but also to follow the rules of the game (Tsapakidou, 1997). Also, the role of collaboration helps to address personal problems and insecurities (Kennedy & Barblett, 2010).

Playing is the highest form of interaction, offering the opportunity of cooperation, negotiation, contact and communication, and alternation of roles. Roles that form a fictional framework of real-world activity that is a form of real-life practice and re-examination of choices and facts in order to improve them (Reilley & Jones, 2016).

3. METHODS MATERIALS

Aims

- To help students realize the importance of the school yard and the importance of playing.
- To gain a variety of experiences as well as basic knowledge regarding yard games.
- To form values and develop an interest in forgotten games.
- To acquire the necessary skills to identify and compare ancient and modern toys.
- To take the initiative to action and actively participate in the dramatization-revival of games.

Participants

The Environmental Teams of the program were five (5), the Little Explorers, the Little Scientists, the Terrible, the Greeks and the Nikardalia. The students themselves chose the names of the teams, as well as their composition. In such programs as environmental educational programs, it is important to have communication and a positive attitude between team members for their proper and more constructive cooperation. The achievement of the above goal is achieved with the initiative of the students to form their teams.

The program was attended by the 5th grade students of a primary school in Greece, a total of 25 students. The implementation of the program took place in Rhodes from December 2017 to June 2018.

Tools

Prior to the start of the activities for the implementation of the program, an initial evaluation was made, regarding the perceptions and knowledge that the environmental teams had about the yard games. The method chosen for the above purpose is the method of review through team discussion. The teaching methods that were selected and applied during the implementation of the program are the following:

The most common method used was the project method with the help of interdisciplinary approaches and interdisciplinary functions. In particular, the techniques used were the following :

- Method of analysis and study of a typical case.
- Experimental method.
- Field study
- Team discussion.
- Dramatization.
- Simulation
- Games
- Mapping concepts

The evaluation of the program was done by the method of collecting information with the help of a questionnaire. Questionnaires were given to the 25 trainees and 1 teacher. The questionnaire was on a five-point scale and had five evaluation axes: 1. Organization of the program, 2. Practical value of the program for the future, 3. Presentation of new ideas, methods, views, 4. To what extent the program met the expectations of the participants and 5. To what extent did he achieve his goals. The analysis of the questionnaire data was done with the software program Excel MS office XP with the help of tables and graphs.

4. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM

Activity 1: View video

The environmental groups watched a short video on "games from our homelands". Specifically, they watched the video with various games from different countries that were sent to us by the educational magazine "Bridges". With this screening, the students formed a perception of how the program will evolve, what a project means and what the environmental program we will implement is. The screening was followed by a discussion with the environmental groups and they were formulated

Activity 2: Search for information in literature and on the internet

Environmental groups have sought information about backyard games from both literature and internet. The information concerned both the historical evolution of the forms of the various games and the types that exist. Specifically, the students referred to our school library for the first information. Then they browsed the internet, we visited the Public Library of Rhodes and finally they worked individually regarding information that each one of them could find on his/her own at home or in a library.

After the information gathering process, the environmental teams categorized their data and presented it to the class to create an overview of the material collected and the yard games.

Activity 3: Publication in the school newspaper

The groups found information about yard games and about various current environmental issues and after writing a text in the form of an article they published it in the school newspaper.

Activity 4: The games and their dramatization

4.1. Coarse salt, fine salt

This game is played by many children who gather and draw the "mother". Then they all make a circle together and sit down cross-legged with their hands behind their backs, palms open.

(Figure 2). The 'mother' stands outside the circle and holds a handkerchief. She /he walks around the circle singing:

“Coarse salt, fine salt,

I lost my mother and I'm looking for her,
she did not buy me shoes to go to the dance”

As he/she sings around the circle, she/he throws the handkerchief behind a child and continues until they realize he is no longer holding the handkerchief. The child who took the handkerchief gets up and starts chasing the 'mother'. When he catches her, the mother sits in his seat with the other children. The child who took the handkerchief becomes a 'mother' and starts singing around the circle. The game goes on like this until they get bored.



Figure 2: The "Coarse salt, fine salt" game

4.2. Barrels

The game is simple. But it needs a maximum of 5 players. The 4 players bend in a row but sparsely from each other. The 5th jumps over them putting his/her hands on the back of his front, then spreads hi/her legs and passes over (Figure 3). When he/she jumps over everyone (one after the other), the last player jumps over the others. The one who loses his/her balance is the loser.

stand to his/her left and one of them approaches him, slaps his open palm and then walks away near the others. Everyone jumps around the guard and move their finger in circles shouting "Bizzzz!" like bees. The guard must guess who hit him. If he/she discovers who did it, then that child takes the guards place and the game continues. If the guard can't guess the game continues the same way.



Figure 5: The Bizzzzzz game

4.5. The papula game or the hide and seek

A point is defined as an end. There the leader of the game closes her eyes until the players hide (Figure 6). When they hide, the leader opens his/her eyes and seeks to find them. If someone reaches the finish line before the leader, spits it out and wins, if the leader catches up and spits first, the player loses and stands aside. The papula is the todays hide and seek or the 'cryptinda game' of ancient times.



Figure 6: The "The papula game or the hide and seek" game

4.6. The tsamua game

In a limited space, one kid is defined as the tsamoua, his/her eyes are blindfolded and she/he tries to catch one of the players (Figure 7). Whoever the tsamoua catches first, he/she becomes the tsamoua. The players are allowed to touch the tsamoua for a while. The tsamoua is the well-known blind fly.



Figure 7: The "The Tsamua" game

4.7. The tiles

The children stack a few stones on top of each other building a stone pile. They stand in a row five steps away and each kid tries to destroy the pile by throwing a stone at it (Figure 8). Whoever throws the most stones from the pile is the winner. The game lasts until the whole pile of stones falls.



Figure 8: The "The tiles" game

4.8. The conductor

One child hides while the other children decide which one will be the "conductor" and which "instrument" they will all imitate playing. After forming a circle, the child who had been hiding

comes and observes the others trying to guess the conductor. All the children imitate playing the same instrument as the conductor (Figure 9) and they sing:

“You cannot find out who the conductor is.

Who is the conductor you cannot find!

What a fool you are! What a fool you are!

Here is the conductor, Here is the conductor!”

The child understands who the conductor is when he/she changes instrument. Then he/she hides and the game continues in the same way. If he/she makes a mistake and does not find the conductor, the game is repeated by changing both the conductor and the instrument.



Figure 9: The "The conductor" game

4.9. The King

The children draw who the king will be. The king sits somewhere, while the others walk away to choose which profession they will represent and with which moves (Figure 10). When they are done, they visit the king and the following dialogue follows:

Children: King, king with the 12 swords, what is the job?

King: Laziness!

Children: And what about our change?

King: Ice creams.

Children: Grandma told you to do us a job.

King: What job;

Then the children make the moves of the profession they have chosen. If the king guesses the profession, he shouts and chases the children in order to catch one who becomes the king. If he/she does not guess right, he/she sits down again and the children imitate another profession.



Figure 10: The "King" game

4.10. The donkeys tail

The game is for children older than 6 years old. You need at least 2 players, a piece of paper, a handkerchief and a pencil.

The children first draw a donkey without tail on a piece of paper (Figure 11). A child closes his eyes with a scarf. He takes the pencil and tries to make the tail. He opens his eyes and sees where he made the tail. Then another child begins the same process. The game ends when all the children have drawn a tail and the winner is the one who has made the tail closest to the right point.



Figure 11: The "Donkeys Tail" game

4.11. The blind monk

This game can be played with many children. They all decide with a lottery which child will make the blind monk. They tie his eyes with a dark colored scarf and give him a cane.

The monk turns around and forms a circle with the cane and says loud and clear:

“Crooked monk,
he stands alone
and has no sin
for whomever he hits”

Then the children run all around him and tease him (Figure 12). If he succeeds to touch someone with the cane he/she becomes the blind monk and the game starts again.



Figure 12: The "The blind monk" game

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As shown in Figure 13, 66% of the participants considered the program as very well organized and 28% of them as well organized, that is, in total 96% of the participants showed satisfaction with the program organization axis.

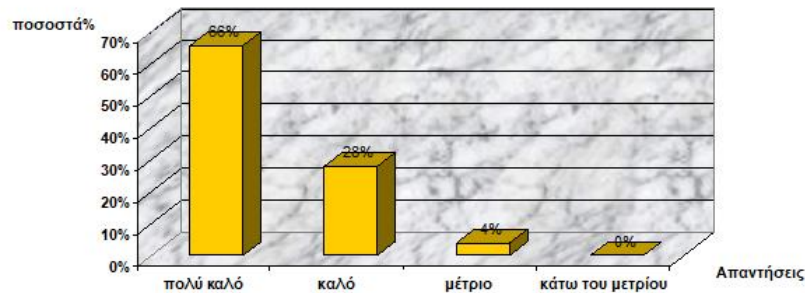


Figure 13: Response rates in the "Program Organization" axis

Regarding the axis that concerned the practical value of the program for the future (Figure 14), which is also one of the most important axes, 72% of the participants found it very useful for the future and 26% useful. Overall, that is, 98% of the sample showed the practical value of the program for the future.

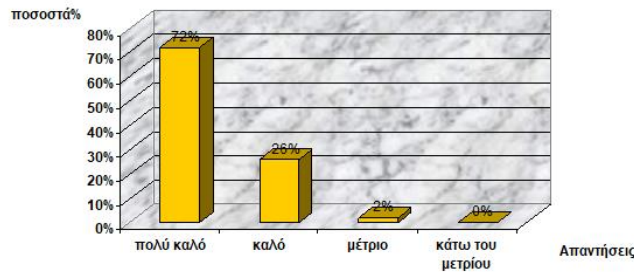


Figure 14: Response rates in the "Practical value of the program for the future" axis

Regarding the axis regarding the about the emergence of new ideas, methods and views (Figure 15), 98% of the sample answered that through the implementation of the program new ideas and methods emerged.

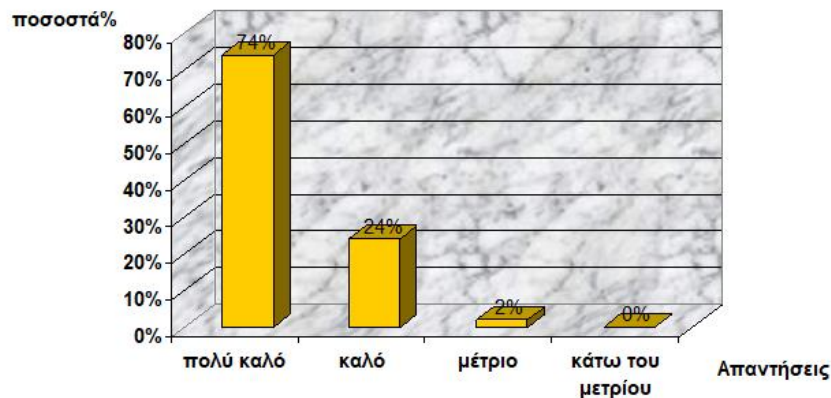


Figure 15: Percentage of responses regarding the axis " Emergence of new ideas, methods, views"

In Figure 16 we observe the responses of the participants to the axis concerning whether the program met the expectations of the sample. According to that, 78% of the sample said they were very satisfied, while 20% were satisfied. There was also a percentage of 2% of the sample, who stated that the program was mediocre in terms of this axis.

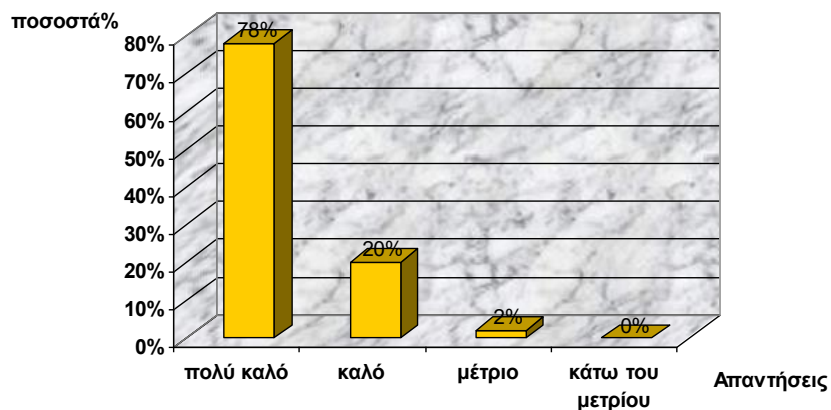


Figure 16: Percentage of responses in the "Program response to expectations" axis

In Figure 17 we observe the responses of the participants to the axis concerning the achievement of the objectives of the program based on the initial objectives set. According to that, 70% of the sample stated that the objectives were largely achieved, while 28% stated that they were achieved. There was also a percentage of 2% of the sample, who stated that the program was mediocre in terms of this axis.

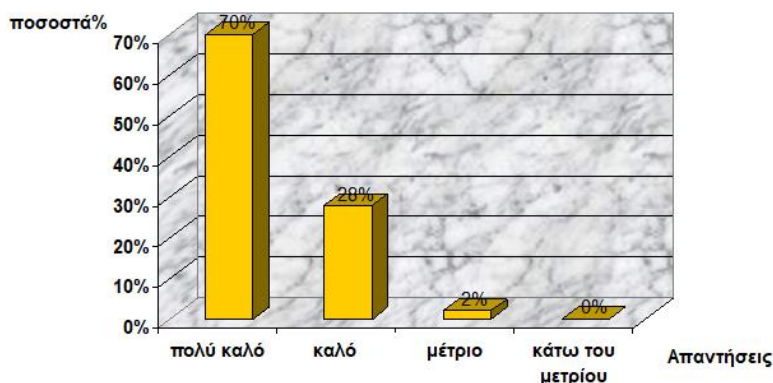


Figure 17: Response rates in the axis "Achieving the objectives of the program"

6. CONCLUSION

Bibliography states that the pedagogical value of the game is great as it is the highest form of interaction, offering opportunities of cooperation, negotiation, contact and communication and alternation of roles (Reilly & Jones, 2016). Its pedagogical and functional value for the comprehensive and balanced development of the child is indisputable. It is an inexhaustible source of learning and the vehicle for the child to progressively reach maturity (Whitebread et al, 2012). For the child, the game is the main content of its existence and the most important means for its effortless, physical, mental and emotional development (Antoniadis, 1994).

Based on the above reports, during the school year 2017-2018, an environmental program was implemented for 25 students of the 5th grade of elementary school in a school in Greece, with the theme: "Yard games".

The purpose of the program was for the students to get familiar with the forgotten yard games, in order to realize the importance of the school yard and the importance of playing, to gain a variety of experiences, to form values and to acquire the necessary skills for identification and comparison of ancient and modern games and for students to take the initiative to act and participate in the dramatization-revival of games. The results showed how the students gained new ideas and values through the implementation of the program. The practical value of the program for the future also emerged as expected. After all, playing is one of the fastest ways to pass on to students values and attitudes, as it is a great teaching tool and children learn mainly through it (Weisberg et al., 2015; Hyvonen, 2011).

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