

# EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP: THEORY AND TEACHING PRACTICE

Session 7/8 (1st): Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights  
Education: Cross-curricular implementation

Collaboration in Informatics Lessons

Activity 1: Transformative learning through art: the case of collaboration  
in Informatics lessons

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## **Educational Framework**

In the context of the school education process, students are invited to participate in collaborative activities of two or more persons. Collaboration is proposed in the curriculum of informatics courses at all grades. Due to the nature and conditions of the course, the students are usually invited to work together in pairs in front of a computer and using a computer.

Groups may be formed on the basis of students' preferences or according to the teacher's selection criteria. The characteristics of each student, the relationship between them and the use of the computer shape the climate and the outcome of the collaboration. Students' attitudes that one may observe while they collaborate in front of the computer involve

- one member is passive while the other has the control of mouse/keyboard-controlled and working
- one member is going to laze and attempts to chat with other groups
- members argue with each other about the process and the outcome of the work
- one member attempts to control the mouse/keyboard and "drive" the job

Smooth and fruitful collaboration is a major objective of both the educational process in general and the informatics courses in particular.

## **Identification of the need for critical investigation of the issue**

The above-mentioned behaviors are often observed in informatics lessons. The students' attitude and their emerging beliefs converge



towards the opinion that these behaviors are normal, acceptable and effective. Students' beliefs are expressed as follows:

"My classmate thinks that she is know-it-all and always complains. She says that I'm not helping, but she doesn't let me to do so. I'm terribly bored. I work only when I'm alone."

"My classmate is so bored. He doesn't even know how to open a computer, and all he does is copy-paste. He is a very good friend of mine as he doesn't bother me. He knows nothing ... "

### **Specification of the critical questions**

The majority of students recognize that the collaboration is important and that all members should actively participate and contribute. However, it seems that some students can't easily accept their partner and prefer to work on their own.

Given the situation, two subtopics were raised for investigation:

- members communicate in front of the computer
- contribution of the members of the group

Critical questions:

1st. Why and how does the computer affect the communication of group members when they "collaborate"?

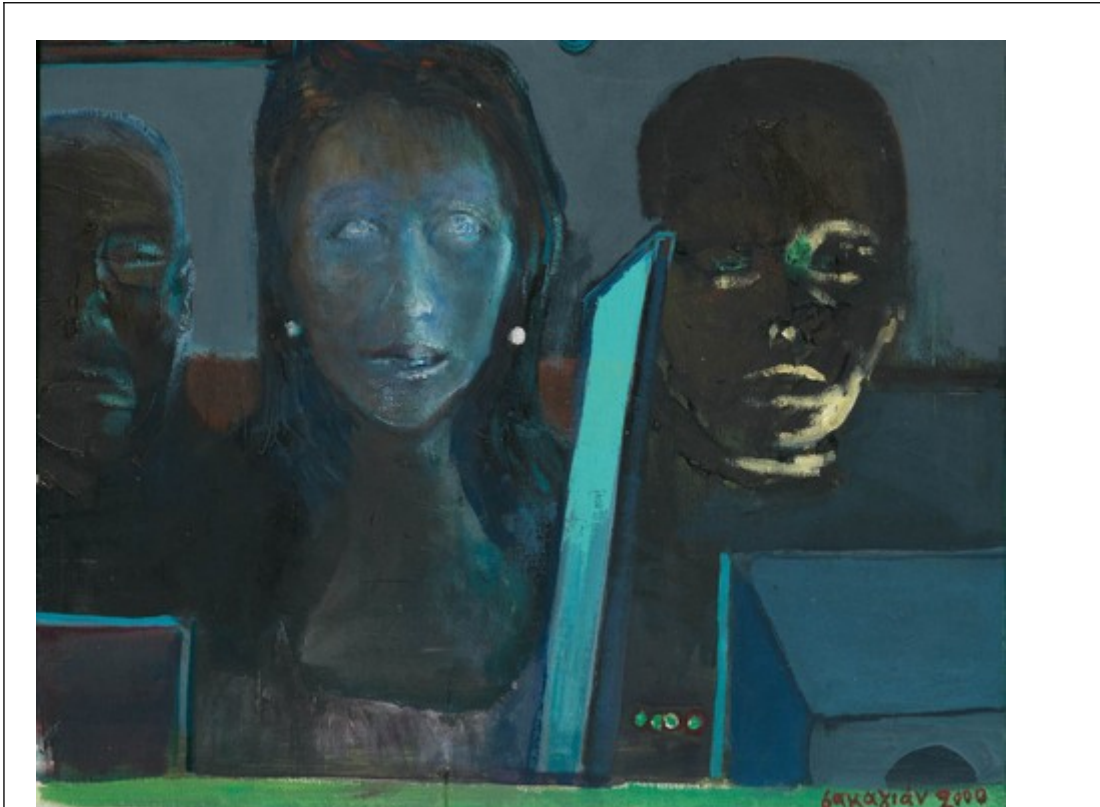
2nd. How do I act and how do I consider my involvement in group's work?

### **Selection of works of art and correlation with critical questions**

In order to process the two question, two visual works and a movie were chosen as appropriate to address the above issues of collaboration.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> artwork

Type	Painting
Title	Working at computers
Artist	Edouard Sacaïlan
Characteristics	Oil on canvas (40.2 x 47 cm)
Year	2000
Source	<a href="https://felioscollection.gr/en/collection/ergazomeni-stous-ipologistes/">https://felioscollection.gr/en/collection/ergazomeni-stous-ipologistes/</a>
Museum	



The painting is mainly related to the first critical questions. The teacher should guide the students to focus on the three faces, to comment on the gender of the three persons and on their look and express their feelings.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> artwork

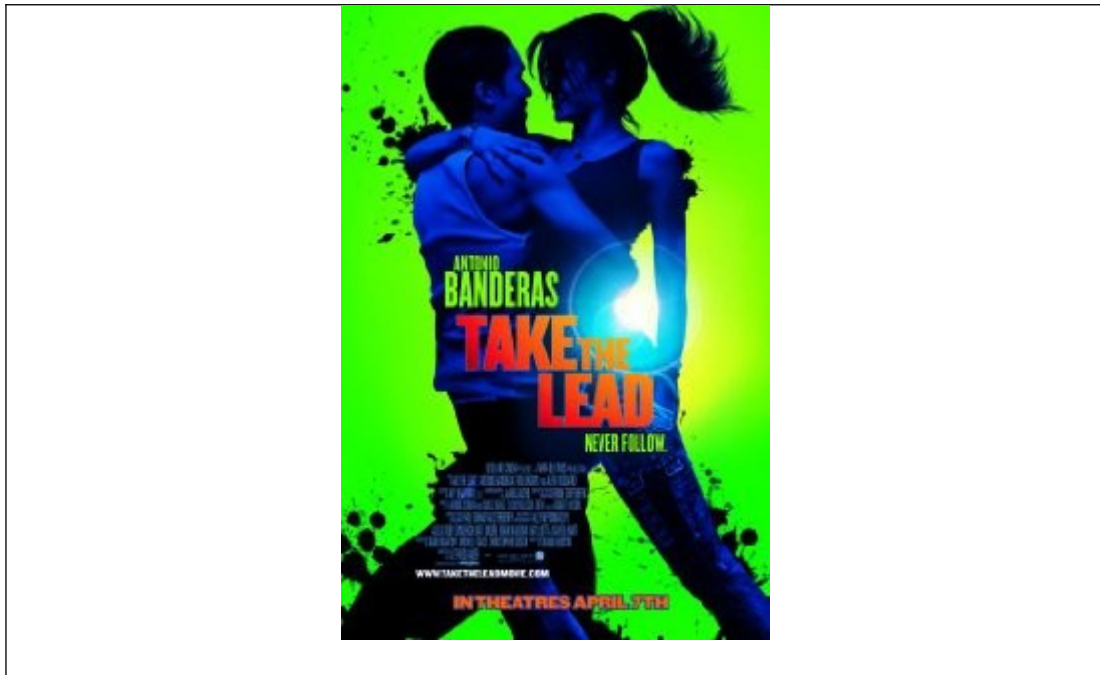
Type	Painting
Title	Two Girls Reading
Artist	Pablo Picasso
Characteristics	Oil on canvas (81.8 x 65.3 cm)
Year	1934
Source	<a href="http://www.wikiart.org/en/pablo-picasso/two-figures-1934">http://www.wikiart.org/en/pablo-picasso/two-figures-1934</a>
Museum	University of Michigan Museum of Art



The painting is related to both critical questions. The teacher should guide the students to focus on the two figures, to comment on their characteristics, to observe their way they approach and page through the book.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> art wok

Type	Film
Title	Take the lead
<i>Director</i>	Liz Friedlander
<i>Year</i>	2006
Country	USA
Πηγή	
Excerpt of the film	The end of the movie



The movie is mainly related to the 2<sup>nd</sup> critical question. The story concerns a tango-teacher in New York. He decides to work in a disreputable schools with high degree of juvenile delinquency. The students behave in a derogatory manner and they don't care for learning to dance. The teacher keeps trying to stimulate them and eventually he managed to prepare them for taking part in a dance contest. The excerpt chosen focuses on the different characteristics of the students, on their collaboration, and how they impressed the rest participants and the organizing committee.

The teacher should guide the students to focus on the students' different physical characteristics and how they collaborated and formed their pairs, by exceeding the stereotypes of the two genders and the dancers' shapely bodies.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> artwork

Type	Painting
Title	Double Tent
Artist	Paul Klee
Characteristics	
Year	1923
Source	<a href="http://newabstraction.net/2012/11/13/modernist-method/">http://newabstraction.net/2012/11/13/modernist-method/</a>
Museum	Museum Sammlung Rosengart, Luzern



The artwork is related to the 2<sup>nd</sup> critical question. It is focused on the harmony and complementarity of colours.

Artworks	Relation to critical questions	
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Working at Computers	☐	
Two Girls Reading	☐	☐
Take the lead		☐
Double Tent		☐

### Critical elaboration of the artworks

The teacher presents consecutively the three artworks and asks and encourages all students to watch closely and express freely their views on what they see. Each piece is analysed and critically connected to the critical questions. The teacher may elicit students' answers by asking questions and prompts such as

- What do you see (or read or hear)?
- Why are you saying this? What do you see (or read or hear) that makes you to consider this?
- What are your thoughts and feelings?
- Keep on! Try to discover new elements! Try to find any symbols or marks? What is the symbolic meaning of ...?
- Pay attention to the details! Why does the artist use these colours?

In the end of the intervention, the teacher supports and facilitates a critical reflection on the previous discussions and tries to reveal students' current views in comparison to the initial ones. Also, the students may express their impression of what they experienced.

Instead of oral communication throughout the whole process, the teacher may ask students to express their initial beliefs and their beliefs after the application of the method, in written form.

