

# The creative drama method in cultural heritage education: Bursa Grand Mosque

Hare Kilicaslan<sup>1</sup>, Hulya Aktumsek<sup>2</sup>

Hare Kilicaslan  
Assistant Professor  
Karadeniz Technical University  
Department of Architecture  
Trabzon 61080  
Turkey  
e-mail: hkkilicaslan@gmail.com

Hulya Aktumsek  
Creative drama instructor  
Creative Drama Association  
Bursa 16130  
Turkey  
e-mail: hulyaakce16@hotmail.com

*Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo, 2020, 8:1:5-17*

## *The creative drama method in cultural heritage education: Bursa Grand Mosque*

The research presented here is based on the idea of using creative drama, which adopts the principle of learning by doing and experiencing, as a method to teach individuals about the artistic and historical elements of religious architecture and increase their sensitivity to cultural heritage. This particular study involved introducing Bursa Grand Mosque to 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, with the aim of raising their awareness of their cultural heritage through processes based on creative drama. The positive feedback from students showed the project was a success, and the authors propose that similar programmes in other mosques will provide historical and cultural contributions in terms of forming a connection between yesterday, today and tomorrow, and having a long-lasting, lifelong impact on the lives of students.

Keywords: cultural heritage, cultural heritage education, creative drama, Bursa Grand Mosque.

## Introduction

Education is the transfer of many common elements such as language, religion, customs, tradition, history, and sense of art from one generation to the next. Cultural heritage is an important element that should be considered in the broad scope of education. Culture refers to the entirety of the material and spiritual values of a society. The most important factors that make a society are its values, traditions, beliefs, cultures, and lifestyles.

Culture, a social product, is gained through learning<sup>3</sup>. Cultural heritage is one of the most important indicators of the traditions of a nation. It is necessary to create educational opportunities that provide and reinforce the social and cultural participation of individuals.

<sup>1</sup> Hare Kilicaslan has been an Assistant Professor at Karadeniz Technical University's Department of Architecture since 2019. She obtained a bachelor's degree in architecture from Karadeniz Technical University in 2007, a master's degree in architecture from Karadeniz Technical University in 2010, and a PhD in architecture from Karadeniz Technical University in 2015. She has been a creative drama instructor since 2014. Her research areas are architectural education, design education, creativity, and creative drama.

<sup>2</sup> Hulya Aktumsek graduated from Bursa Necatibey Vocational School for Girls in 1989. She completed a Creative Drama Leadership/Training Program in 2019. Her research interests include museum education and creative drama.

<sup>3</sup> AKIN, Galip. *Antropoloji ve Antropoloji Tarihi*. Ankara, Turkey: Tiyem Yayıncılık, 2011, p. 11.

It is thought that raising awareness among individuals about cultural heritage supports the formation of their sense of social and cultural identity.

Cultural heritage education is a subject of study in several disciplines, including history and education, and it is carried out with various aims in mind, such as arousing young people's interest in the past, ensuring the continuity of traditions, and raising awareness urban citizens about their environment<sup>4</sup>. A person who can perceive and evaluate art as a cultural entity with a critical eye also learns to place works of art in their historical context. In this way, he/she also comprehends the intellectual background of the works. Every work of art is similar to a living and speaking language and what it says can only be accurately revealed with a scientific approach. A work of art gives information about many subjects such as the artist's emotions, thoughts, historical period and the features of his/her society<sup>5</sup>. A thorough search of the relevant literature reveals many studies conducted to date on the relationship between cultural heritage and education, and the importance of the educational process in developing individuals' awareness of cultural heritage<sup>6</sup>.

Mosques, which are part of a society's cultural heritage, can be defined as places where Muslims gather to worship. Mosques and masjids, which have an essential role in the development of the socio-cultural aspects of Islamic society, are among the basic structures of religious architectural practice<sup>7</sup>. Throughout history, mosques and masjids have been used as schools, administrative centres, courts, military headquarters, guesthouses, ambassadorial reception areas, student residences, libraries, wedding halls, showrooms, hospitals and solidarity centres<sup>8</sup>. Yuca<sup>9</sup> states that since the early days of Islam, mosques have been used for worship,

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<sup>4</sup> SIMSEK, Gokce; ACAR, Esin; CAYIREZMEZ, Nurdan Atalan; KESICI, Ayse Elitok. Exploring the role of the city as a learning environment for heritage education. In: *METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture*, vol. 30, no. 2, 2013, pp. 105–35.

<sup>5</sup> BURCOGLU, Ebru Baran; AYKAC, Murtaza. Sanat Eserlerini Incelemede Yaratıcı Drama Yonteminin Kullanımına İlişkin Katılımcı Görüşleri [Participant interpretations about the use of creative drama method in the examination of works of art]. In: *Mersin University Journal of the Faculty of Education*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2013, pp. 181–182.

<sup>6</sup> ALKIS, Secil; OGUZOGLU, Yusuf. Ulkemiz Kosullarında Tarihi Çevre Eğitiminin Önemi ve Gerekliliğini Artıran Etkenler [Factors that increase the importance and requirement of historical environmental education in the conditions of our country]. In: *Journal of Uludağ University Faculty of Education*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2005, pp. 347–361; CURTIS Reagan; SEYMOUR, Cathy. Louisiana heritage education program and heritage in the classroom: Children's attitudes toward cultural heritage. In: *Journal of Social Studies Research*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2004, pp. 20–24; HEIN, George. Evaluating teaching and learning in museums. In: HOOPER-GREENHILL, Eileen (ed.). *Museum, Media, Message*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2005, pp. 189–203; HENSON, Don. The present state of education in the United Kingdom. In: HENSON, Don; STONE, Peter G.; CORBISHLEY, Mike (eds.). *Education and the Historic Environment*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2004, pp. 15–21; HUNTER, Kathleen. Heritage Education in the Social Studies. In: *Heritage Education in the Social Studies*, 1988. ERIC Digest (ERIC ED 300306); LAMBERT, Cathleen Ann. Heritage Education in the Postmodern Curriculum. Unpublished masters' thesis. University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, 1996, pp. 1–4; STONE, Peter G. Introduction: A framework for discussion. In: STONE, Peter G.; MOLYNEAUX, Brian L. (eds.). *The Presented Past: Heritage, Museums and Education*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2003, pp. 14–25.

<sup>7</sup> AKIN, Ahmet. Tarihi Surec İçinde Cami ve Fonksiyonları Üzerine Bir Deneme [An essay about the function of mosques throughout the history]. In: *Hittit University Journal of Divinity Faculty*, vol. 15, no. 29, 2016, p. 181.

<sup>8</sup> ONDER, Mustafa. Camilerde Sunulan Hizmetlerin Rehberlik ve İletişim Acısından Değerlendirilmesi [Services offered guidance and evaluation of communication in mosques]. In: *The Journal of Academic Social Science Studies*, no. 44, 2016, pp. 233–248.

<sup>9</sup> YUCA, Yakup. Türkiye'de Geçmişten Günümüze Camilerin Eğitim Fonksiyonları [In Turkey, education functions of mosques from past to present]. Unpublished masters' thesis. Uludağ University Social Sciences Institution, Bursa, Turkey, 2015, pp. 14–20.

administration, and education. The Ottomans used them for both worship and educational purposes.

As institutions, mosques serve society and its development, bear witness to the people and the environment in which they live, protect them, and share information with the community. They are open to the public for research, education, and finding peace. Mosques also benefit from many branches of science and art. For these reasons, it is thought that the many kinds of educational practice in mosques are useful in raising awareness about cultural heritage and establishing a bridge with the past.

### Cultural heritage education and creative drama

Creative drama is thought to play an essential role in making cultural heritage education creative, explorative and enjoyable. This is because creative drama, which takes the individual beyond being a visitor, can help establish a link between people and objects. Various forms of learning can be applied in cultural heritage education. Adopting the principle of “learning by doing” as a teaching method, creative drama is thought to contribute to the individual’s awareness of artistic and historical elements. Such learning processes encourage questions such as “Who built it?”, “Why did they build it?”, “For whom did they build it?”, “For what purpose was it built?”, and “Has it ever changed?” and can generate a sense of curiosity and discovery.

In cultural heritage education, the use of creative drama, imagination and conceptual thinking are combined. Individuals who participate in creative drama through games and the engagement of all their senses experience a more permanent learning process. Unlike methods that involve the direct transfer of information, this process creates a free environment in which students can ask questions and make decisions about what and how to learn.

The present paper focuses on research involving the use of creative drama as a learning process in a mosque. In contrast to the traditional classroom environment, the activities carried out in the mosque enabled students to interact with historical works and to learn by doing. Creative drama prioritizes participants expressing themselves as free individuals through interactions with their friends in a social environment. As stated by Adiguzel<sup>10</sup>, the general purpose of creative drama is to enable children, adolescents and young people to travel between the real world and the fictional one using roleplay and, through a process of awareness raising and acculturation, to educate creative, self-contained, self-aware individuals who are able to communicate with and improve their environment and who develop aesthetic awareness and democratic attitudes and behaviour. Thus, the creative drama method is thought to help individuals empathize with each other and to raise awareness about history and culture.

To achieve these aims through creative drama and ensure they are internalized by participants, the selected activities should be complementary, and certain stages should be followed<sup>11</sup>:

1. Warm-up Stage: This is the basic process of familiarising members of the group with each other and with the space. It is key to setting the group dynamics and also lays the foundations for the next stage.
2. Roleplay Stage: In this stage, students improvise individual or group dramas and perform them to each other in a process that helps to shape and explore the subject in question.
3. Evaluation-Discussion Stage: This is the stage where educational achievements are

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<sup>10</sup> ADIGUZEL, Omer. *Eğitimde Yaratıcı Drama* [Creative drama in education]. Istanbul, Turkey: Yapi Kredi Yayinlari, 2018, p. 95.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 134–141.

discussed and ideas are shared on what has been achieved and whether these achievements will have an impact on future experiences. Speaking or writing activities can be used to get students' views on their experiences.

For this study, Bursa Grand Mosque was used as a learning environment where creative drama activities were applied. These activities included warm-up activities, games, role-playing, and improvisation.

## Bursa Grand Mosque

Bursa Grand Mosque is one of the best examples of religious-architectural works featuring multi-domed structures on columns, a style that is strongly associated with the early Ottoman period<sup>12</sup>. It is one of the last and best examples of the Grand Mosque type that was popular in the Seljuk period, characterised by cavernous interior spaces<sup>13</sup>. The Anatolian Seljuk tradition was adopted in the construction of mosques built in the early Ottoman period. The Bursa Grand Mosque (1396-1399) is one of the most significant examples of multi-domed mosques. It was built on twelve massive rectangular columns which support twenty domes with an average diameter of 10.5 meters. There is a fountain (sadırvan) inside the mosque, which also features two minarets made of cut stone and can be entered through gates which open on three sides<sup>14</sup>.

## Method

The study was based on qualitative research conducted by means of the case study methodology, which examines an actual topic in a real-life framework. A qualitative approach offers the researcher flexibility in designing and conducting the study. Developing new methods and approaches and making alterations in the structure of the research at every stage constitute the essence of qualitative research. Exploratory research is very useful in elucidating understudied topics<sup>15</sup>.

For this study, an interview form was developed as a qualitative data collection tool. Interviewing is one of the most common data collection methods used to learn individuals' knowledge, thoughts, attitudes, and behaviours in relation to various topics and their causes. The interviews were divided into two groups: individual interviews and group interviews<sup>16</sup>. A distinctive feature of focus group interviews is that they are aimed at gaining insights from the interactions between participants. The main purpose of the interviews was to reveal the students' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a way that could not be achieved by other methods<sup>17</sup>.

At the end of the creative drama activities, the students were asked questions using the interview form, and their answers were evaluated. While deciding upon the items in the

<sup>12</sup> AKIN, Tarihi Surec Icinde..., p. 184.

<sup>13</sup> KEMIKLI, Bilal. Onsoz. In: KEMIKLI, Bilal (ed.). *Bursa Ulucami* [Bursa Grand Mosque]. Bursa, Turkey: Bursa Kultur A.S., 2014. p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> SAHIN, Tahir Erdogan. *Sanat Tarihi II* [History of art]. Istanbul, Turkey: Serhat Yayinlari A.S., 1999, p. 79.

<sup>15</sup> NEUMAN, W. Lawrence. *Toplumsal Arastirma Yontemleri, Nitel ve Nicel Yaklasimlar I* [Social research methods, qualitative and quantitative approaches I]. Ankara, Turkey: Yayin odasi Yayıncılık, 2014, pp. 232-234.

<sup>16</sup> KARASAR, Niyazi. *Bilimsel Arastirma Yontemi: Kavramlar İlkelere Teknikler* [Scientific research method: Concepts principles techniques]. Ankara, Turkey: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2018, p. 211.

<sup>17</sup> KUS, Elif. *Nitel-Nitel Arastirma Teknikleri Sosyal Bilimlerde Arastirma Teknikleri: Nicel mi? Nitel mi?* [Quantitative-qualitative research techniques research techniques in social sciences: Is it quantitative? Is it qualitative?]. Ankara, Turkey: Ani Yayıncılık, 2012, p. 102.

interview form, sample forms from the academic literature<sup>18</sup> were taken into consideration, and the questions were reviewed by experts. Based on their recommendations, some necessary edits were made to the interview form before it was finalized. The focus group interview questions were as follows:

1. What do you think about the introduction of Bursa Grand Mosque through creative drama?
2. Do you feel you have been informed about Bursa Grand Mosque through the creative drama method? What did you learn about the Grand Mosque?
3. What was the most influential and beneficial activity?
4. Did the creative drama activities in Bursa Grand Mosque contribute to your knowledge? If so, what contributions did they make?
5. How did the creative drama activities affect your desire to study and seek more information about mosques? Why?

At the end of the activities, a focus group interview was held with 15 students. The students were asked five questions about Bursa Grand Mosque and their achievements. Their responses were coded and the data obtained interpreted under the themes presented below, in the Findings and interpretation section.

### Working group

The activities were carried out with 15 volunteer students enrolled in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade of Ahmet Rustu Anatolian High School in the 2018/19 academic year. The research included 12 females and 3 males. All but two of the students had never participated in any drama activity before the research.

### Creative drama activities

The creative drama activities implemented within the scope of the research aimed to introduce Bursa Grand Mosque to participants and generate sensitivity towards cultural heritage. The workshops conducted as part of the study were structured according to the stages of creative drama method described above (warm-up/preparation, roleplay, evaluation). The workshops were conducted in 10 sessions, requiring a total of 23 hours. The titles of the sessions were: "Meeting-Communication", "Introduction", "Founders of Bursa Grand Mosque", "Exterior Elements of Bursa Grand Mosque", "Construction Stages of Bursa Grand Mosque", "The Opening of Bursa Grand Mosque and Features of the Minbar" (pulpit), "The Calligraphy and Calligraphists of Bursa Grand Mosque", "Suleyman Celebi and the Writing of the First Mevlid", "History of Bursa Grand Mosque", and "General Evaluation". Two of the sessions were held in Bursa Grand Mosque; the others were conducted in Ahmet Rustu Anatolian High School. The present study discusses the two workshops held in Bursa Grand Mosque, namely, "Exterior Elements of Bursa Grand Mosque" and "History of Bursa Grand Mosque" (Fig 1, Table 1 and Table 2).

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<sup>18</sup> YILDIRIM, Ali; SIMSEK, Hasan. *Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Arastirma Yontemleri* [Qualitative research methods in social sciences]. Ankara, Turkey: Seckin Yayınevi, 2013, p. 39.



**Fig 1.** *Photos of activities*

### Findings and interpretation

As a result of the content analysis of the data obtained, students' opinions have been presented under four themes: "Introducing Bursa Grand Mosque through creative drama," "Learning about Bursa Grand Mosque through creative drama," "Creative drama's contribution to personal development", and "The effects of creative drama on students' interest and desires to investigate and learn about other mosques".

### Introducing Bursa Grand Mosque through creative drama

The students reported that the creative drama activities they participated in at the mosque provided a different type of experience through which they could investigate and learn about Bursa Grand Mosque in a practical way. Several described how they were able to learn about the mosque through seeing, touching and experiencing, which ensured the knowledge they obtained took a more permanent hold. Their thoughts on being introduced to Bursa Grand Mosque through creative drama are presented in Table 3.

**Table 1:** *Activity 1: Exterior elements of Bursa Grand Mosque*

<b>Warm-up/Preparation</b>	<p>1. Students, accompanied by an instructor, walked around the courtyard of Bursa Grand Mosque and examined its exterior elements. While in the courtyard, the instructor asked the students to form a circle and then divided them into two groups, called 'ulu' and 'cami'. The two groups were asked to stand in two rows and were told they were going to play Chinese whispers. The instructor showed a word or phrase to the student at the back of each row, who then whispered it to the student in front of him, and so on. The student at the front of the row was given paper and a pen and told to write the word on the paper. The groups started at the same time, and the group that conveyed the word fastest and most accurately was the winner. The words shown to the students at the back of the groups were: Dome, minaret, east gate, crown gate, court gate, colourful stained glass, and fountain.</p> <hr/> <p>2. The students were told to count 1, 3, 9, 9, to bring to mind the year the mosque was completed (1399). Those who did not say the correct number had to sit out the rest of the game.</p>
	<p>3. The instructor gave each student the name of one of the mosque's gates: the "court gate", "sultan's gate", or the "crown gate". They were then told to form a group with those who shared the same name. The groups were asked to form three lines, with the sultan's gate group in front, the court gate group in the middle, and the crown gate group at the back.          The aim of the game was for students in the crown gate group to reach the sultan's gate, while it was the job of those in the court gate to hinder them.          The court gate group was told, "When I say start, you must make yourselves into obstacles that will prevent the crown gate people from reaching the sultan's gate. But you have a very short time to get into position. When I clap my hands, you must freeze exactly as you are. Anyone who moves or changes position will be sent out."          The sultan's gate students were told: "You must pair up with someone from the crown gate group, who will be blind, and help them negotiate the obstacles created by the court gate group. You can do this only by speaking to them. When your friend reaches you, you can eliminate one person in the court gate group."          The crown gate group was told: "Close your eyes and, with the help of directions you will hear from the sultan's gate, try to get past the court gate and reach the sultan's gate. When you reach the friend from the sultan's gate who has been helping you, the two of you can eliminate one person in the court gate."</p> <hr/> <p>4. The students formed a circle. In the middle of the circle, two chairs were placed, one on its four legs, and the other overturned. The students were given the following scenario: "You are builders working on the construction of Bursa Grand Mosque. A workplace accident has just occurred. What kind of an accident might it have been? When the accident occurred, where were you and what were you doing? Everyone take their places at the time of the accident and freeze. If I touch you, you must tell us about the accident." The students then gave their account of the accident.</p>
<b>Roleplay</b>	<p>5. Each student was given a number from 1 to 4 and asked to form groups accordingly. Each group was given the beginning of a scenario and told to improvise on it. After a while to prepare, they performed their skits for each other.          Group 1: You are construction workers working on the construction of Bursa Grand Mosque. You were supposed to leave the dome above the fountain (one of the twenty domes in the mosque) open to let the sunshine into the building and allow the rain to accumulate in the fountain. You forgot to leave it open, and now the architect is furious with you.          Group 2: You are construction workers building Bursa Grand Mosque. You are carrying stained glass to be used in the construction of the mosque. You drop it, and it breaks. You have no other stained glass prepared, and the window needs to be installed by tonight.          Group 3: You are construction workers building the minaret of Bursa Grand Mosque. You forgot to build a gate to the balcony of the minaret. (A balcony on a minaret encircles the upper sections from which the muezzin gives the call to prayer.)          Group 4: You are construction workers building the crown gate of Bursa Grand Mosque, which is supposed to be aligned with the Qiblah (the position of the Kabaa shrine in Mecca). The kadi (Islamic judge) claims that the Qiblah is in the opposite direction, but you are sure that the location of the crown gate is correct.</p>

6. The students were given the names “dome”, “crown gate”, “window”, or “minaret” and make groups accordingly. The groups were given envelopes, each containing a jigsaw puzzle and a piece of cardboard on which to stick the completed jigsaw. The dome group’s jigsaw puzzle depicted the dome, the crown gate’s puzzle was of the crown gate, and so on.

The groups were told to open the envelopes and assemble the puzzles on the cardboard. The completed puzzles were exchanged between groups. Then, the groups were asked to write a riddle about the visual elements of the part of the mosque depicted in their puzzle. The completed puzzles were collected and hung in a place where everyone could see them, and the riddles distributed between the groups. The groups had to guess the answer to their riddle, write it on a post-it note, and stick it on the related jigsaw puzzle. Finally, the students checked whether the riddles were stuck on the correct puzzles.

**Evaluation-  
Discussion**

7. Each student was given a number from 1 to 3. The students with the same number came together to form a group. Each group was given a sheet of craft paper and pens. Group 1 were sent to the east gate, group 2 the crown gate, and group 3 the court gate. Each group was asked to draw a sketch of the interior of Grand Mosque, looking in from the perspective of their gate, showing every detail that grabbed their attention in the sketch.

**Table 2:** *Activity 2: History of Bursa Grand Mosque*

**Warm-up/  
Preparation**

1. The students walked around the Grand Mosque. They studied the mosque’s exterior and its courtyard. Then, they returned to their starting point, formed a circle, and told each other about the things that had grabbed their attention.

2. The instructor asked for a volunteer, who was told to divide students into As and Bs. Each A was told to partner with a B. They were then told, “Rumour has it that there is a jar of gold coins buried beneath where we stand, in this part of Grand Mosque. With your partner, you must unearth this jar without anyone seeing you. The volunteer police will try to catch you. You must try to find and take the gold without being seen anyone or caught by the police. If you see the police, the only way to escape is to freeze by taking the shape of an object that you have seen outside the mosque. If you are caught, you will continue to play the game as a police officer. The last pair remaining uncaught wins the game.”

3. Each student was given a number from 1 to 4 and told to form groups according to their number. Each group was given an envelope with a piece of paper and a pencil inside. The students were then brought to the starting point in front of Grand Mosque’s crown gate and asked to walk around the outside of mosque in their group, studying a particular aspect of it, and writing a riddle about that feature. Students were warned to make sure they were not overheard while writing their riddles. Group 1 were told to examine the gates of the mosque, group 2 its windows, group 3 the minaret and courtyard, and group 4 the domes and walls. When they had finished, they were told to place their riddles back in the envelopes and come back to the starting place at the crown gate, where the envelopes were swapped between groups. Students then had to try to answer each other’s riddles.

4. The students were told to partner with someone they had not yet partnered with. One would be student A, the other B. The As were asked to close their eyes and the Bs’ job was to lead them around the interior of the Grand Mosque, describing what they saw. Then, Bs closed their eyes and As described to them what they saw. Once they had both described the interior of the mosque to each other, the activity ended.

5. Students were given notepaper and a pen and instructed to find something inside the mosque starting with the same letter as their name and write it down (e.g., Cemil: calligraphy, Merve: minbar). Once they had finished writing, they were asked to form a circle and read the word to the group.

6. Each student was given a number from 1 to 4 and split into groups accordingly. They were told: “You are four groups of artists working on the construction of the interior of Bursa Grand Mosque, 600 years ago, and each group has a separate task. You will have to perform your task as a mime.” The students were assigned tasks and given some time to prepare. They performed their mimes in front of each other, and the other groups had to try and guess what tasks were being performed.

7. Each student was given a piece of paper and told to think about a feature in the interior of Grand Mosque that they found interesting and write down five clues about it (e.g., it is made of iron, it has stairs, etc.) They then had to write three sentences about the location of that element (e.g., the crown gate is to the right of it; it is opposite the fountain). When everyone had finished, the sheets were put in the middle, and everyone took one. Each student had to read the clues and try to guess the object being described. Then they read out all the hints to each other, and the whole group tried to guess the answer.

	<p>8. Each student was given a number from 1 to 4 and formed into groups accordingly. Each group was given a photograph of an element in Grand Mosque (the fountain, the minbar, calligraphy of the letter vav in Arabic, or a Kaaba) and told to prepare a skit about that element. The students then performed their skits to one another.</p>
Roleplay	<p>9. Students were given a number, 1 or 2, and asked to form two groups accordingly. 1s were told: "You are with a friend who cannot see. You are describing Grand Mosque for him/her." 2s were told: "You are with a friend who cannot hear. You are describing Grand Mosque for him/her with facial expressions and body language." The students were asked to pair up, 1s with 2s, and improvise according to these instructions.</p>
	<p>10. Students were split into four groups and asked to try to remember the stories about Grand Mosque that had been roleplayed in the previous sessions. Then were then asked to make a new drama about one of them.</p>
Evaluation-Discussion	<p>11. Students were instructed to sit in a circle and share their experiences and thoughts. The following questions were discussed: "How many temples have you ever visited? How many of them did you love? Which ones do you feel you were able to understand? What will you remember most about today in the future?" Students then shared their responses with each other.</p>

**Table 3:** *Students' opinions about the introduction of Bursa Grand Mosque through creative drama*

Theme	Students' opinions
Introducing of Bursa Grand Mosque through creative drama	<p>S. 13. In the past I have been to Grand Mosque several times to worship, but even though I wondered about the elements in it, I didn't have the opportunity to learn anything about them - or what I learned was not permanent. I learned about all of these things through creative drama. We roleplayed the rumours about the mosque. I learned by seeing, feeling, experiencing. What I learned is now permanent, and it was fun.</p>
	<p>S. 4. In fact, we can learn things that are usually more difficult to learn. To give a short example, we learned that the Grand Mosque was built in 1399 in a game, which made it easier for us to learn.</p>
	<p>S. 3. We thought like the people of that time, and we tried to roleplay the way they behaved. We learned about the difficulties the people of that time had to face and what materials they used. It was beneficial for me.</p>
	<p>S.8. I had never visited Grand Mosque before. It was more useful to learn by seeing; I was very excited. Normally, I wouldn't be so interested in it, but when I learned some stories about the mosque, it started to attract my attention.</p>
	<p>S. 10. You said Grand Mosque was like a museum. It is indeed like a museum with its minbar, the cover of the gate of the Kaaba, the picture of Kaaba, the letter vav in Arabic, its calligraphy and the muezzin mahfil (a special raised platform in a mosque where the muezzin carries out his duties). The fact that people thought that the planets over the minbar were pea flowers, that they found out that they were in fact planets, the history of the entire mosque, and everything... I think it is a public museum, and the fact that it has been used for centuries is quite valuable.</p>

### Learning about Bursa Grand Mosque through creative drama

The students reported that learning about Bursa Grand Mosque through creative drama was very effective. They described how they had been given the opportunity to get to know the history, interior, and exterior of Bursa Grand Mosque and all the history and stories embodied in these features. They noted that through creative drama activities, they had learned about the mosque's founders, features of the various elements within it, and its exterior elements, such as its domes, gates, and minarets, and why the fountain had been built. Students' opinions on learning about Bursa Grand Mosque through creative drama are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** *Students’ opinions on learning about Bursa Grand Mosque through creative drama*

Theme	Students’ Opinions
Learning about Bursa Grand Mosque through creative drama	<b>S. 4.</b> I learned that the Grand Mosque was commissioned by Yildirim Bayezid Han. I learned that the architects were Ali Neccar and Haci Ivaz Pasha. I learned that the artists of that time made figures of the planets in the solar system on one side of the minbar at a time when no one knew about the solar system. I learned that the gate of the old Kaaba was in the Grand Mosque.
	<b>S. 10.</b> I didn’t know what a dome was, why one of the 20 domes (the one over the fountain) was open, or why it was left open. I discovered that one of the minarets was built later and the elements in it were added later. I learned about these through creative drama activities.
	<b>S. 6.</b> I learned a lot about Somuncu Baba. I learned that he contributed a lot to the construction of Grand Mosque. I knew about Somuncu Baba but did not know that he came out of the three gates at the same time at the opening of Grand Mosque. This was quite interesting for me.
	<b>S. 7.</b> I learned about the location of the fountain, east gate, crown gate, and the court gate.

### Contribution of creative drama to students’ personal development

The students stated that the creative drama activities contributed to their knowledge of history and their personal development, and some felt they were now able to express themselves more easily thanks to the activities. Students’ thoughts about how the creative drama activities contributed to their personal development are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5:** *Students’ opinions about how the creative drama activities contributed to their personal development*

Theme	Students’ opinions
Contribution of creative drama to students’ personal development	<b>S. 7.</b> We learned about our history. I learned who built Grand Mosque and how they built it. This experience contributed to my knowledge of history and my personal development.
	<b>S. 6.</b> Now I know all about Grand Mosque. It was cultural learning. Through improvisation and roleplay, I could behave like other people. We thought about what the other person will tell us. We had to use our brains fully, and use body language too. In the community, I can express myself more easily through speaking and body language.
	<b>S. 3.</b> When I saw calligraphy previously, I would just say ‘That looks beautiful!’ Now I know who wrote the calligraphy and how much effort they put into it. So it is more valuable for me now. In the activities, we role-played and improvised. Moreover, we did that in the Grand Mosque. It was fun to learn about our history in this way.
	<b>S. 1.</b> The roleplays were of great use to us. We also improvised the history of Grand Mosque and tried to guess what might have happened in the construction process. We played our roles and expressed ourselves through improvisation.

### The effects of creative drama on students’ interest in and desire to investigate and learn about other mosques

The students stated that they learned about the history of Bursa Grand Mosque through first-hand experience. Many of them stated that the activities aroused their interest in the history of other mosques as well. The students’ opinions about the effects of creative drama on their interest in and desire to investigate and learn about other mosques are presented in Table 6.

### Discussion and conclusion

The creative drama method for teaching and learning includes activities that allow students to observe, review, evaluate, interpret and design. The fact that the students are continuously in contact with each other during the process enables the sharing of experiences and enriches the

**Table 6:** *Students' opinions about the effect of creative drama on their interest in and desire to investigate and learn about other mosques*

Theme	Students' Opinions
The effect of creative drama on students' interest in and desire to investigate and learn about other mosques	S. 10. Now I want to learn about the history, architects, elements, and parts of other mosques as well. It was quite useful and interesting to learn about the history and gates, glass, domes, and minarets of Grand Mosque through games.
	S. 15. Frankly, I never wondered about mosques when I went there. I think I would wonder [about them] now if I visit other mosques. I would think, "The Grand Mosque was constructed in that way, so how was this one constructed?"
	S. 6. Mosques are a cultural heritage left for us. Every stone in this cultural heritage has history. This applies to not only the Grand Mosque but also our other cultural heritage, other historical artefacts. I think I will pay more attention to this from now on. This experience provided me with some general knowledge. I had never wondered about mosques before, but I will from now on.
	S. 13. This experience developed a sense of curiosity in me. I would like to learn about other mosques in this way as well. It was a very entertaining and enjoyable experience and provided me with some cultural knowledge.

educational environment. It can be said that such activities contribute to the development of students' creativity and expressive skills, offer new experiences, and enable them to see things from different perspectives through group work.

Based on the students' evaluations at the end of workshops and the results of the focus group discussion at the end of the process, it seems that the research has achieved its purpose. The activities seem to have left students with a positive impression of mosques; many have developed a greater sense of curiosity about mosques, and expressed a desire to learn more about other mosques. After each session, it was observed that the students were willing to participate in future activities that might be held, and that they had developed a fondness for the Grand Mosque and were more curious to learn about it. It was also observed that students were interested in other mosques and were willing to participate in similar activities in other mosques as well. The opinions that the students expressed during the sessions show that they learned by exploring and enjoyed the process. Overall, it seems that creative drama was an effective tool for learning through exploration and having fun, and could be usefully applied in other mosques.

Society is responsible for transferring the entirety of its material and spiritual cultural background and social values from generation to generation. For establishing a relationship between yesterday, today and tomorrow, and ensuring a permanent positive impression regarding mosques on students, the implementation of similar studies in other mosques is quite essential.

Based on the results of this study, the use of creative drama methods to introduce mosques as part of Turkey's cultural heritage can be recommended. There are many more possible activities that can develop students' awareness of the historical and cultural value of mosques and help ensure that future generations will preserve these monuments. The dissemination of creative drama activities and other learning environments that encourage students to develop the habit of visiting mosques will ensure that young people realize the artistic, historical and cultural aspects of mosques.

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