

Education & Theatre

Vol 23 (2022)

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Editorial

Mary Kaldi, Betty Giannouli, Katerina Alexiadi, Nassia Choleva, Marios Koukounaras-Liagkis, Hara Tsoukala, Christina Zoniou

doi: [10.12681/edth.37660](https://doi.org/10.12681/edth.37660)

To cite this article:

Kaldi, M., Giannouli, B., Alexiadi, K., Choleva, N., Koukounaras-Liagkis, M., Tsoukala, H., & Zoniou, C. (2022). Editorial. *Education & Theatre*, 23, 6–7. <https://doi.org/10.12681/edth.37660>



Dear friends,

For 21 years now, our journal has been a welcoming place to record thoughts and present innovative ideas from established teachers in the field of Theatre in Education as well as young researchers, educators, artists and theatre educators. When we started the first issue with **Nikos Govas**, who envisioned and conceived this journal, we could not have imagined that after so many years we would have a substantial presence in this field, highlighting the issues and possibilities offered by Theatre in Education as an alternative way of teaching but also as a social intervention. After 20 years the circle has closed for Nikos, who leaves behind an admirable legacy. We thank him for his great contribution and continuous effort to enrich the journal with new voices and ways of presentation. Thus, we grew as a group and learned to collect, record, judge and present the concerns, questions, results and conclusions of those who work in and love this field. Along the way, we had help from the Academic-Advisory Committee and all our friends and fellow travellers. The dialogue continues with this issue which leads us to new paths of knowledge and experience by raising noteworthy questions.

What is the status of drama education in the world today? Has its special significance been recognised in our times? Why is it often seen as something dangerous? These are the questions that preoccupy **Robin Pascoe**, who admits that as drama teachers we walk on a tightrope and wonders how we stand astride the line between safety and risk. He believes that drama teacher education must be firmly embedded in a framework of values that recognises our responsibilities and balances them with our instinct to lead the way for change. We need an articulated philosophy about why and how we operate – a Theoretical Framework. He then puts forward the basic principles that should apply to both the introductory activities and content of drama lessons.

On his part, **Chris Cooper** discusses with **Betty Giannouli** the historical evolution of Theatre in Education (TiE) as a particular form of theatre art with a distinct pedagogical approach and methodology. He highlights its social and political aspect from its very beginning at Belgrade Theatre in Coventry, UK and outlines the trajectory of TiE from its heyday to its gradual decline. He also talks about his personal journey as an artistic director, his work as a playwright, as well as his unwavering focus on the fundamental principles of TiE. Finally, he refers to his relationship with ancient Greek dramatists as well as his fifteen-year experience in Greece within the framework of his cooperation with Greek theatres.

Is art in prison simply entertainment or is it a social intervention, a place of shelter, a vehicle for reintegration? What do artists do in prison? This is the subject of research by **Ioanna Mitsika**, who takes us to Diavata prison in Thessaloniki, where from 2016 to 2022 she organised theatre and dance workshops. On the one hand, the interaction of participants with a new "language" of physical expression and communication highlighted issues such as the inequality of access to education, the lack of a mechanism for decoding art as well as the limitations set by the social and cultural capital they carry. On the other hand, this common language of art brought them together and provided inmates with a tool to speak and address society in their own personal way against prison stereotypes by strengthening the concept of community through teamwork, solidarity and cooperation.

In a different place, **Sofia Vlachou** presents a pedagogical project of embodied-experiential learning that she developed during her collaboration with refugee teenagers at their accommodation centre in Filippiada, Preveza during the 2020–2021 school year. With techniques deriving from the

Freinet pedagogy, such as "What's new?" and "Class Council", they first processed experiences from their everyday reality and ultimately created a "performance text" of public protest through collaborative processes. Priority was given to physical expression through theatre play and forum theatre techniques. As part of the project's outcomes, teenagers showed a noticeable improvement in understanding the Greek language and were able to adequately perform in school.

Exploring the challenges of our time, **Anastasia Voutyra** presents a pedagogical scenario that allows students to take on the roles of eco-journalists, visual storytellers and artists, take an interest in dealing with major global issues and succeed in acquiring life skills. Language and art education expand by incorporating socio-ecological concerns, particularly climate change, thereby raising awareness of the areas where nature, human rights and culture intersect, encouraging ecological literacy, sustainability values, student creativity, critical thinking and active participation.

Using educational drama as a vehicle, **Ioanna Lioutsia** leads us to an alternative way of approaching our history and national tradition. Specifically, from 2019 to 2021, two educational drama projects – on the Greek Revolution of 1821 – were carried out in primary schools as part of "The NTNG in Education", a series of educational programmes by the National Theatre of Northern Greece (NTNG). The article demonstrates how students are encouraged towards experiential learning with the appropriate tools of Theatre in Education and acquire in a safe framework the ability to connect the historical past with current events and sensitive issues that concern society. From memorisation to experience to empathy.

From Northern Greece we travel to China together with a new drama teacher who has been active in the country for the last two years. **Miao Bin** describes his experience, placing it in the wider context of institutional changes and efforts made by older and younger drama teachers to promote drama in education and introduce drama at all levels of education in China.

From the Far East we move back to the Mediterranean, where **Eleni Polyviou** presents the results of a primary research conducted in Cyprus with the aim of putting together an overall picture of active Youth Theatre organisations during the years 2017–2020. The research records the objectives of the Youth Theatre programmes, the composition of the organisations and the theatrical activities that take place in the context of their action. It also examines whether these programmes result in the staging of a theatre performance and to what extent teenagers participate in the various aspects of the entire process.

Finally, we set sail for a transatlantic journey with **Christiana Moschou** who studies Mexico as well as Greece through social theatre used as a tool of expression and learning. The central theme of her doctoral dissertation is the education of the citizen in democracy focusing on the common way in which citizens learn to form communities and cultivate qualities within democratic institutions.

We wish you an enjoyable read!

Sincerely,
The Editing Committee

