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Title of the chapter: The case of drama: ILSA exemplified in arts education. What learning competences can be developed through drama education?

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Abstract

This chapter discusses the role of aesthetic education with a focus on educational drama and theatre. It investigates the lack of international large-scale studies (ILSA) in the field of aesthetic education and exemplifies how to measure competence development in one of the aesthetic subjects: drama, based on the international mixed method large-scale assessment study DICE (Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences in Education). The aim is to gain new understanding of the role of aesthetics in schooling, relating traditional philosophical arts theory from Aristotle and Dewey to relevant contemporary conceptualisations, such as 21st century skills (OECD), Lisbon Key Competences (EU) and Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO). The discussion considers three main questions: Why does only a few international large-scale quantitative assessments of drama education exist? Why are researchers and practitioners in drama education sceptical about quantitative measurements? Can we design large-scale assessment studies in drama education?

Keywords

Educational drama, applied theatre, arts education, aesthetic subjects, DICE.

The case of drama: ILSA exemplified in arts education

What learning competences can be developed through drama education?

I. Introduction

From the viewpoint of an apparent lack of International Large-Scale Assessment (ILSA) studies in the field of aesthetic education, the chapter will in what follows present an exemplary investigation of how to measure development of competences and knowledge in one of the aesthetic subjects: drama, based on the international large-scale assessment study DICE (Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences in Education). A supplementary aim of the chapter is to gain some insight into reasons why ILSAs are seldom used in the field of aesthetic education, seen from an epistemological perspective, and to identify ways to change the current situation. In line with chapter 1 in the present handbook, we identify the term International Large-Scale Assessment (ILSA) as a large-scale assessment scheme that includes several countries, and where the word 'assessment' will include a variety of competences. In using the term 'large-scale', we imply representativeness and comparability across countries.

The chapter will mainly focus on the case of drama. After a brief historic introduction to the field of drama education, the chapter takes a closer look at it as an aesthetic subject area and discusses it from three perspectives: Learning *about* the art form, learning *in* the art form, and learning *with or through* the art form. As points of reference, we use a simplified version of Lars Lindström's taxonomy of 'four ways of learning art' (Lindström, 2012), tempered by Schonmann's reference to art education practices of the 1990s, "/.../ which differentiates between education for the arts and education through the arts" (Schonmann, 2019, p. 238).

II. Historical, pedagogical and epistemological grounding

In this chapter, we discuss the role of aesthetic subjects in education, contextualised in a Western tradition. We are aware of the deficiencies in considering arts in education as a generic field, with largely similar traditions, practises and styles – as appropriately problematised by Jörrissen et al. (2018, p. 6). The available space, however, prevents us from discussing a diversity of positions beyond prevailing "Western concepts" of the arts in school, including "visual culture" or digital games, and so-called crafts or culinary arts.

Covering a wide spectre of meanings, 'education' is a composite dimension, so our focus is mainly limited to formal education, i.e. to schooling (Jörrissen et al., 2018, pp. 7-8). An aesthetic subject is, in the present context, a discipline with roots in an art form, hence: *the arts* (Abbs, 1987), and the aesthetic is associated with the special forms of expression and cognition characterising the arts (Sæbø, 2009, p. 5). Our basic understanding of what arts education entails is in line with the Norwegian public committee report: *Action Plan for Advancing the Aesthetic Subjects in School. Impression, Expression, Imprint* (Norsk kulturråd/Grunnskolerådet, 1991). The report recommends that the main concern for attending to the aesthetic aspects in education, and to aesthetic teaching and learning in school, lies with the arts (p. 5). The report designates the

following as the aesthetic school subjects: dance, drama, literature, music, visual art & craft (p. 14). The aesthetic dimension in schooling is explicated as ". . . the qualities that comprise intentional work in artistic designing and symbolising, creating and reflecting, experiencing and expressing, and - not the least – in attitudes and values. The aesthetic dimension is the sum of intellectual and emotional stimulus, of knowledge, and of knowing and Bildung" (our translation, p. 6.). We do not regard this report as a normative account, but we find it useful as a framing reference (Schonmann, 2015, p. 15). The German word *Bildung* sounds alien in English. However, it is now slowly entering the professional idiom of general education and in arts education (e.g. Biesta, 2002): "The concept of *Bildung* brings together the aspirations of all those who acknowledge – or hope – that education is more than the simple acquisition of knowledge and skills, that it is more than simply getting things 'right', but that it also has to do with nurturing the human person, that it has do with individuality, subjectivity, in short, with 'becoming and being somebody'" (Biesta, 2002, p. 343). Bildung is an ongoing process, not necessarily based on an instrumental aims-means model but is more processual and not strictly utilitarian – which is a position appreciated in the arts (Varkøy, 2015).

II.1. Concepts of knowledge and arts education

Education of children and adolescents all over the world is based on the task of society to raise the pupil's level of knowledge. But certainly, knowledge is not a given, or a once and for all known fact or situation. In John Dewey's terms, knowledge acquisition consists of a process of alternating experiences: experience of thinking and felt experience. Without an emotional quality, an intellectual inquiry is incomplete. The binding element is the aesthetic: "Esthetic [*sic*] cannot be sharply marked off from intellectual experience since the latter must bear an esthetic [*sic*] stamp to be itself complete" (Dewey, 1980, p. 38). Further, experiences are made in the interaction between person and material, as perceived and communicated: "Experience is the result, the sign, and the reward of that interaction of organism and environment which, when it is carried to the full, is a transformation of interaction into participation and communication" (p. 22). 'Sense', an essential core of the aesthetic, is the means through which experience is embodied and transformed into knowledge, and also an inherent aspect in creating knowledge.

From an etymological perspective, the words 'knowledge' in English, 'kunnskap' (or 'kjennskap') in the Scandinavian languages and 'Erkenntnis' in German are all nouns, but they are derived from verbs: 'to know', 'å kjenne', 'zu erkennen', i.e. 'to sense' in the connotation "ascribe a meaning to" *(Oxford English Dictionary)*. So, in the chapter, knowledge is understood as an active, verb-like, sensed process in the pragmatic tradition of Dewey.

Inspired by Dewey, Lars Løvlie sees knowledge as a complex process based on thinking as an instrument of action, with language as a tool and sense as an aspect of intelligence (Løvlie, 1990). Løvlie also claims that the aesthetic dimension is intrinsically connected to experience and knowledge (p. 1), forming the foundation of what Dewey calls 'the aesthetic experience'. The aesthetic experience as a concept is not specifically defined in Dewey (1980) but it seems to rest on the basic premise that aesthetics and art arise out of bodily biophysical rhythms and are qualified by social and historic forces. Dewey maintains that: "Experience occurs continuously, because the interaction of live creature and environing conditions is involved in the very process of living . . ."

(Dewey, 1980 p. 35). He calls for attention to the difference between unconscious everyday experiences and *an experience*:

> . . . we have *an* experience when the material experienced runs its course to fulfilment. Then and then only is it integrated within and demarcated in the general stream of experience from other experiences. A piece of work is finished in a way that is satisfactory; . . . [when it is] so rounded out that its close is a consummation and not a cessation. Such an experience is a whole and carries with it its own individualizing quality and self-sufficiency. It is *an* experience (Dewey, 1980, p. 35).

It is this kind of experience that Dewey characterises as the aesthetic experience, regarding it as a mode of knowing, through which knowledge is transformed and expanded: "/…/ in both production and enjoyed perception of works of art, knowledge is transformed; it becomes something more than knowledge because it is merged with non-intellectual elements to form an experience worthwhile as an experience" (p. 290). In non-aesthetic experiences, Dewey claims that we drift, evade, and compromise; we are not investing attentive interest or absorbed in it – "such experiences are anesthetic" (Dewey 1980, p. 40). Worthwhile experiences are what we strive for in (aesthetic) education, because they contribute to knowledge acquisition and Bildung.

Within the drama and theatre field literature, the idea of aesthetic Bildung through the art form is well established in many countries, as demonstrated in titles like: *Drama as Education* (UK) (Bolton, 1984), *How theatre educates* (CA) (Gallagher & Booth, 2003), *Theaterspielen als ästhetische Bildung* (DE) (Hentschel, 2010), *Teater som danning* (NO) (Heggstad et.al., 2013). In Dewey's philosophy, aesthetic experiences are characterized as integrated, dynamic and complete, involving growth. This relates well with the emerging new focus among educators on 'the four Cs': creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration (NEA, 2017) and 'in-depth learning' (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2016, Østern et.al., 2019), even though tangible challenges exist concerning accepting and implementing a balanced arts education into existing curriculum frameworks in schools. In later paragraphs, we introduce educational drama and theatre as ways of experiencing in-depth learning in the aesthetic domain. First, however, we will re-visit Aristotle as a guide to further understanding aspects of knowing.

The term 'knowledge' is, according to Aristotle (1998), possible to understand philosophically as three different ways of developing new understanding, either through *episteme*, *techne* or *phronesis*. Episteme is in Aristotle, what can be referred to as scientific knowledge or "true" knowledge, i.e. what Western education tends to value as bookish learning. Techne is the type of knowledge that can be defined as 'practical skill' or 'craft', which enables a person to produce a certain product, including what is today called an art product. In fact, techne *is* a term for 'art'; it is the concept for 'productive knowledge', i.e. knowledge about the making of something. Techne in relation to the arts primarily signifies the technical skills needed to make art forms. Aristotle defines techne as "a state concerned with making, involving a true course of reasoning" (Aristotle, 1999, ch. 4, p. 94). The origin is in the producer, and not in the thing itself, and involves reasoning, which we regard to be a significant aspect in arts education. The Aristotelian term *poiesis* is another word denoting 'production'. It literally means 'making', from *poiein* "make" / "compose" (Janko, 1987, pp. 199, 218). In the *Poetics*, this is the term that corresponds to the creative art forms in the modern sense: painting, music, sculpture, poetry, drama. *Techne* is the art skills of the artisan. *Poiesis* is the creative act of art making by the artist. Both dimensions are relevant in aesthetic education.

Phronesis is in Aristotle understood as 'practical wisdom'; it is the kind of intellectual virtue needed in making good judgement and execute decent behaviour. It is more an ethical than an aesthetical concept; phronesis suggests 'mindfulness' in modern terms. This is the type of knowledge that is at stake when a person makes judicious and sensible decisions based on the understanding that it might be different (Hansen, 2008). In school, we can facilitate learning processes that combine episteme, techne or phronesis by using e.g. drama, music, dance, literature or visual art in order to develop pupils' competences. The traditional *competence* conception in Western education often includes the first two types of knowledge, i.e. episteme and techne, and less frequently phronesis. In the arts, however, all three can be realised by developing the work through the four phases of making, presenting, responding, and evaluating, which Abbs claims constitute the central elements of the aesthetic field (Abbs, 1987, pp. 55-62). These are elements involving factual knowledge and opinion, craft and skills, production and composing, as well as appraisal and mindfulness. Similarly, when describing the general work of educational drama and theatre practitioners, the authors of the DICE research project (to be presented in more detail below), seem to draw on corresponding knowledge foundations: "[The work] functions along a continuum, with process at one end, moving on through exploring, sharing, crafting, presenting, and assessing, towards performance at the other" (Cziboly & DICE Consortium, 2010, p. 16). Such work processes can of course be explored from the perspective of different competences. In what follows is a review of some central and well-known theories, practises and contributions to the building of the field of drama and theatre in education.

II.2. The field of drama/theatre education

Educational drama and theatre have roots reaching as far back as the origins of the Western theatre in ancient Greece (Coggin, 1956, Courtney, 1974, Eriksson, 1979, Bolton, 1998 and 2007, O'Toole & O'Mara, 2007, Braanaas, 2008). But as a discipline, it has been subject to multifarious vogues of acceptance or rejection in education throughout the ages. Arguments against it, will typically characterise dramatics as being of second order experience, i.e. not "real", and thus not serious enough to be accepted as a significant medium of learning. Supporting arguments will, in turn, capitalise on the high degree of concentration and commitment that can be evoked in the dramatic experience, rendering it real in a heightened sense, i.e. as a consummatory response to an abstraction, to a "bracketing-off" from living (Bolton, 1984, p. 104), which is 'aesthetic distancing' (Løvlie, 1990, Eriksson, 2009a), aiming for the kind of significant experience to take place that both Aristotle (Janko, 1987, p. 71) and Dewey describes (1980, p. 41).

By the turn of the present century, drama as an aesthetic education field has a rich assortment of subject literature (scientific as well as practise-based), a good selection of international research journals, many university and teacher education courses worldwide, and an international professional network.

A way of describing drama education as a broad and composite field is to look at its place and organisation in schools – and outside schools in the wider community – as an 'aesthetic discipline', as an 'arts education subject', and as a 'learning method in other subjects'. These categories will be further illuminated below.

Drama as an aesthetic discipline

Already from Aristotle's assertion that "representation" (*mimesis*) is natural to human beings from childhood and that the human being "learns his first lessons through representation" (Aristotle, 1987, p. 4), drama is explained and situated in a context of aesthetic education. First, Aristotle's explanation takes place as a lecture for students on 'poetics', i.e.in an aesthetic context. Secondly, Aristotle conceives of dramatic art as being concerned with mirroring and exploring reality, in both experiential and reflective ways – and it can be presented to an audience in a theatre (*theatron*) – from where something is seen and reflected about (Szatkowski, 1985, p. 143). Thirdly, Aristotle connects dramatic art with action, by linking it with the word *dran*, which etymologically is the root of drama, meaning 'do' or 'thing done' (Janko, 1987, p. 204), or 'be in action' (p. 196). In Aristotle, it denotes "a purposeful action based on a decision, for which its agent is responsible" (p. 71, 196). The purposeful attitude denotes significance: drama is ideally concerned with significant events in life.

Janko (1987) remarks that educationally this is a useful idea: "Aristotle argues that we can learn about reality from it, even at the most basic level, because of how representation works" (Janko, 1987, p. xv). It is an idea that corresponds well with John Dewey's notion of what characterise an aesthetic experience: an experience of something significant, like when we say, "that was an experience" (Dewey, 1980, p. 36). In this sense, the dramatic experience is also an aesthetic experience, and a learning experience. Risking a gross simplification in jumping about 2350 years ahead in time, the qualities of significance and involvement, accentuated by Aristotle and by Dewey, resonate with Dorothy Heathcote's assertion that the essential task of drama is concerned with "real man in a mess" (1971). The concern in the dramatic event implies, however, an aesthetic kind of exploration, because it unfolds within the framework of an art form: as 'real' exploration taking place in an imagining of the real (Davis, 2014). Basically, there seems to be an agreement in the field that: "Drama explores human actions, attitudes, values and relationships, through a shared fiction, by means of an agreement to pretend" (Byron, 1986: 22). The make-believe of being in another person's shoes, offers the participants shifting experiential perspectives that can be felt, responded to and reasoned about, during and after the context of the dramatic fiction. This is in sound agreement with acknowledged theory of the aesthetic: that it facilitates felt response - but not to the expense of reasoning. The viewpoint is one of the biggest claims of David Best, in his publication with the telling title: *The Rationality of Feeling* (1992). Criticising the not uncommon notion in education that the arts are frills, with a low academic content and primarily subjective in kind, Best emphasises the counterargument that the arts are both rational and cognitive in character, and capable of eliciting objective discourse, like in any other school subject: "We *can* argue that artistic experience is as fully rational, and as fully involves cognition or understanding, as any discipline in the curriculum" (Best, 1992, p. 15). And the same point of view is put forward by Winston: "/…/ the emotional response is in itself cognitive" (Winston, 2015, p. 12). The notion of drama for making meaning (Davis, 2014, p. 66) complies with this claim, as does Bolton's reference to the combination of cognition and emotion in Heathcote's 'classroom drama': "Rationality looms large in Heathcote's work. Her classes are always being invited to 'look for implications', 'check the motivation', 'assess the consequences', 'make decisions', but this is the rationality that springs from a 'feeling context'" (Bolton, 1998, p. 185). Feeling and cognition are considered compatible dimensions in the dramatic aesthetic experience.

The dramatic imaginary is a shared experience among those involved, either as participants or audience, ". . . where they suspend disbelief and imagine and behave as if they were other than themselves in some other place at another time" (Cooper & DICE Consortium, 2010, p. 17). 'Suspension of disbelief' (Coleridge, 1817, ch XIV, p. 145) is another defining parameter of the dramatic aesthetic experience, which is closely connected with the concept of 'aesthetic distance' (Bullough, 1957). Whilst the first is needed to uphold commitment and belief in the dramatic reality, the latter is a frame of reference that differentiates the drama experience psychologically from 'reality'. The interplay of these two aesthetic dimensions offer to the participants in a drama protection from real consequence and freedom to explore. Ken Byron succinctly explains how dramatic fiction works for protection, while at the same time indicates its potential for experiential learning: "[W]e have the protection of a fiction in our exploration of issues /…/ – the material is distanced and therefore less threatening, because we are looking not at *our* attitudes but at *theirs* (the people whose roles we have adopted). Of course, we *are* exploring our own responses, but at one (protected) remove" (Byron, 1986, pp. 76-77). This is an aesthetic learning experience that is essentially transcendent, in the sense that it can activate participants' real-world experiences and assemble them into new contexts, because within the metaphor of drama, it is potentially possible to explore situations from different perspectives. This is the process that Szatkowski refers to as 'aesthetic doubling' (1985, pp. 143-144, 162), i.e. where the participants in the drama are both the creators of the metaphor and at the same time experiencing its effects. The carrying characteristic of this aesthetic process is that the participants are simultaneously present as themselves and as role figures - with an individual and collective awareness of both the dramatic fiction, other participants, and themselves. The idea of 'aesthetic doubling' exhibit similarities with terms like 'methexis'/'metaxis', 'holding two worlds in mind at the same time', 'seeing oneself from a different angle' – aesthetic dimensions that belong to the dominant theoretical issues in drama pedagogy. It has been discussed by Bolton (1984, pp. 141-142), O'Toole (1992, p. 98), O'Neill (1995, pp. 119, 125), Allern (2002, pp. 77-85), Davis (2014:52-53), and others.

Drama as an arts education subject

Ever since drama/theatre was introduced as an arts subject in schools on a broader basis than as scattered occurrences, during the latter part of the previous century, there has been a discussion of what the subject should most appropriately be named: 'drama' or 'theatre'? In his formative publication, *Play Drama and Thought*, Richard Courtney (1974) informs that in the USA the subject was treated as 'children's theatre' or 'creative dramatics, whilst in the UK the overall term of reference was 'drama in education'. He continues: ". . . in the States, the subject was seen as something different from theatre history, or dramatic literature and criticism; in the Commonwealth, 'Drama in Education' was inclusive of all other aspects of drama – historical or literary, children's play and native dance, Shakespeare and Kalidasa, role-playing and improvisation, etc." (Courtney, 1974, p. ix). Courtney himself chose to define the subject area quite broadly, as "the developmental study of human enactment". Bolton commonly referred to the subject area as drama-in-education, classroom drama, process drama or simply (educational) drama (1984, 1998). Ready to acknowledge theatre art as a central reference for educational drama, Bolton also asserts in an essay from the last part of his career that "it's all theatre" (2000, p. 21) - adding that the recognition of 'theatre' as a common basis for practice in the art might contribute to "a greater tolerance of diversity in an educational context".

In the context of this chapter, the authors have used both the terms educational drama and educational theatre, wanting to respect diversity and at the same time wanting to acknowledge the close connection between drama and theatre as we have elucidated in our discussion of etymology above, i.e. that it involves both 'doing' and 'seeing'. We find it constructive and useful to value drama and theatre as supplementary aspects of the subject matter but also to suggest that they are dimensions with different "tasks": Whilst the drama dimension can be viewed as representing a more processual side of the subject, the theatre dimension contains a stronger production element. In theatre, the intention is primarily to show and to represent – to *describe* through the dramatic expression – performing in front of an audience. In drama, the intention is primarily to investigate and to explore – to *be* in the dramatic expression – within the own context of the creative collective. Both dimensions are, however, linked by sharing the common aesthetic aspect of enactment: dramatic playing. Thus, by looking at the subject area from the perspective of varying tasks or intentions, the theatre vs drama dichotomy is dissolved, and it is now frequently referred to as the educational drama/theatre field.

Learning about and in the drama subject – the double content

Drama/theatre is in many countries not yet a mandatory and/or discrete aesthetic subject in school. As a result, it enjoys flexibility in terms of selecting curriculum content; presumably more so than in its more hierarchically placed sister arts: literature, music and visual art & craft. Traditionally, the drama/theatre subject has possessed a double content: On the one hand, the making part of the subject area – *techne* and *poiesis*, i.e. creating form, like acting and improvising skills, poetics and dramaturgy, conventions, auditive and visual means of expression, and style. On the other hand, what the dramatic world will be about, i.e. the meaning of the drama, like theme and story, predicament and conflict, and the personal and the social investment. Both parts of this double content, which of course involves cross-over deliberations too, involve aesthetic considerations. The two first (of four) aspects from Lindström's conceptual framework of teaching for aesthetic learning are useful points of reference in this context.

In Lindström's model, our first content approach fits into his category: learning *about* drama/theatre, whilst our second content approach agrees with the category: learning *in* drama/theatre (Lindström, 2012, table 1, p. 169). Both approaches are "medium-specific", i.e. arts-based. The "about" is concerned with the properties and the tools of the subject, i.e. with the form of the message. The "in" is concerned with using materials and techniques to achieve and convey, i.e. to understand the message (pp. 169-170). We can also relate Lindström's goal dimensions 'convergent' and 'divergent' to our double-content-context: "Convergent learning is goal-directed, focussed and rational, while divergent learning is explorative, open-ended and intuitive" (p. 166). Convergent implies a retrospective orientation, in the sense of learning the basics of the art form, like elements, principles, styles, genres – and about artists, "illustrating or animating what is already known" (p. 169). Conversely, divergent suggests a prospective orientation, which means creative experimenting with the aesthetic means to explore new purposes: "looking forward towards that which is not yet completed". Admittedly, Lindström's model is not tailor made for drama – his arts domain is *sloyd* (in Sweden a part of the subject art, craft and design). Yet, relating the core elements of his model to drama teaching, seems useful in explaining the context of our own subject, and applies to the next paragraph as well.

Learning with or through drama: drama as a learning method in other subjects

The last two aspects from Lindström's conceptual framework are: learning *with* art and learning *through* art (Lindström, 2012, table 1, p. 169). For our purpose, conforming better with current curriculum placements of drama in school, we have suggested folding these two categories into one, thus sharing the characteristics of *with* and *through*. They are both "medium-neutral" and basically instrumental in kind: "Learning WITH often refers to the integration of art with subject matter from other disciplines" (p. 170), whilst learning THROUGH "refers to the 'studio habits of mind' or thinking dispositions that students might acquire by involving themselves in the arts". It seems like the "with" chiefly represents uses of various dramatic tools or conventions to interact with the subject matter, whilst the "through" suggests uses of competences like "persisting, expressing, making connections, observing, envisioning /.../, innovating /.../, and reflecting /.../". The competences exemplified in the latter aspect are, however, typical in media-specific drama/theatre education, too, resembling formulations of so-called 'lifelong learning' (Lindström, 2012, p. 177).

The main challenge at stake when drama is applied as a method in other subjects, is how artistic and aesthetic quality is secured. The danger exists that the school does not have a qualified drama/theatre teacher in the staff, so that the dramatic support activity is left to the general teacher or even to the pupils themselves. The pupils may have some performance or role-play expertise from extracurricular activities and gaming but it stands to reason that the educational potential in applying drama pedagogically across the curriculum varies in accordance with the readiness of the teacher and the pupil to understand and communicate through the language of drama/theatre. So, it seems important to underline that the pedagogy of using the art form in another curriculum context, must be *aesthetic*, i.e. (in)formed by the premises and characteristics of the aesthetic subject from which the pedagogy is devised: The drama/theatre method is – and must be – an *aesthetic* method. From this perspective, a reasonable recommendation appears to be that educational drama and theatre should first have a place as an aesthetic discipline, then – as an aesthetic subject of its own - it can be used for learning about and in the art form, and when used as a method in other subjects, it must be exercised as an aesthetic method by people schooled in the art form.

Depending on whether the participants are pupils having drama/theatre as a subject on a regular basis in their school or taking part in it as a more occasional event, the curriculum content will be different. In the former case, there will be a defined curriculum orientation, catering to both the demands of the art form, and to the chosen theme under exploration. In the latter case, the learning area can vary from a focus driven by the interest of the pupils, a focus suggested by the teacher, or a focus informed by a school project. In both cases, it is a subject-specific event. When the drama method is applied to serve the interest of other curriculum areas, the curriculum content is not subject-specific. But there is a blurred borderline between drama as an arts discipline and a subject, and its instrumental use as a method. Schonmann sees these positions as complementary: "there is no need to choose between them, they can be regarded as existing on the same continuum" (Schonmann, 2019, p. 238).

Drama - and the arts hegemony in schools

In many countries, drama is more commonly found and recommended in school curricula as an instrument for other purposes than as an aesthetic subject on its own. It is more a general rule than an exception that the non-hegemonic aesthetic subjects: dance, drama/theatre, film/media are *not* included in school curricula on a par with the traditionally positioned arts subjects: literature, music, and visual art & craft. Exceptions are, for example, the national curricula in Australia, Iceland and Hungary, which include all the arts, from primary school to higher education. Bjørn Rasmussen refers to this situation as "the absent recognition of heteronomous arts education" (Rasmussen, 2015, p. 122). We are not familiar with any research that has attempted to map, identify or explain the reasons why (or how) some art subjects have managed to attain a hegemonic position. It stands to reason, though, that an obvious first cause for upholding the established arts categories is a reluctance in educational structures to initiate change in the distribution of subject areas; another explanation is the dismissive regard for the arts referred to in an earlier paragraph; and a third reason is likely what Best has termed the myth of the generic arts (Best, 1995). The latter is the conceptional fallacy – and expediency – among educators and politicians that all arts share some mutually inclusive qualities, which makes arts education sufficiently catered for without having to include all the arts in the curriculum. According to Best, this is strongly detrimental to aesthetic education:

> A seductive thesis has been proposed that the arts comprise a generic area of the curriculum and therefore that they should be planned for collectively. This is often taken to imply that the arts should be combined, since they supposedly involve the same creative processes. Such a notion is very attractive to administrators on grounds of expediency, to economize on staff in schools, timetable space, and money. This is no abstract danger: it has already led to ominous consequences for the arts (Best, 1995, p. 79).

Best maintains that the conception of the arts as constituting a generic community "is fundamentally confused and misguided: no valid reasons have been offered to support the notion of a collective policy for the arts in education"(p. 80). To our knowledge, no research still exists that support the notion of the generic arts.

Applied drama and theatre

In the wake of New Public Management policies, which have influenced school policies during the last 30 years, the situation for drama/theatre in school curriculums in many European countries today has been markedly weakened. Today, the subject area is also found in arenas outside the classroom: in youth culture centres, community and migration centres, museums, prisons, hospitals, care homes, etc. (Gjærum, 2017). So, from around the turn of the century, an additional terminology reference has emerged: applied drama and/or applied theatre. Even though these are umbrella terms for uses of drama/theatre strategies within many different sectors and communities, the school is still included in this picture.

The concept of applied drama/theatre is to be understood in a broad sense - beyond its actual site specificness and with a general interest in the educational (Gjærum, 2015). It is a comprehensive and diverse aesthetic subject area, involving miscellaneous dramatic genres, like theatre for (cultural) development, theatre of the oppressed, prison theatre, museum theatre,

reminiscence theatre, learning play, process drama, and theatre-in-education (TIE). In their diversities of form and style, they are mostly interventionalist in kind, working with participant/percipience interaction, for social action purposes, with an ambition to create transformative encounters through reflective practices. James Thompson (2003, p. 14) suggests that rather than seek a specific definition of applied drama/theatre, we should see it as a broad term for "a theatre that claims usefulness". That should not be construed as pedagogical instrumentalism. A commitment to artistic considerations reigns, involving reflection on aesthetics, style, form and content. Jonothan Neelands has warned against a too narrow leaning towards the political transformative at the expense of social and dialogic exchange, advocating for "parity of participation" in the dramatic event (Neelands, 2007, pp. 315-316). This "processual" perspective seems conducive to the development of cultural competence, personal development, and citizenship and democratic competence, which are among the key competences investigated in the DICE research project.

II.3. Competences which develop through the Arts

The competences that develops though the Arts will now be exemplified through different socially relevant learning concepts sought from OECD, UNESCO and EU.

Centre for Educational Research and Innovation in OECD promote what they call 21st century skills as crucial to develop in pupils of today in order to prepare them for our future society. These skills are critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration. In arts education literature, claims have been put forward that such competences develop through pedagogic principles that combine collective and individual work but also moving between reality and fiction within the frame of sensual, bodily and cognitive formation processes (Sæbø, 2009, Lee, 2019, Sickler-Voigt, 2020, Fleming et.al., 2015, Schonmann, 2019, Østern et.al., 2019). "The Arts teach young people how to learn by giving them the first step: the desire to learn" (Fiske, 2002, p. VI).

In the project Champions of Change: The impact of Arts of learning, seven teams of highly qualified researchers studied which changes the arts could contribute to in a learning situation. They found that the arts: reach students in innovative ways, support extended engagement, encourage self-directed learning, promote complexity in learning processes, allow management of risk by the learners, reach students who are not otherwise reached, connect students to themselves and each other, transform the environment for learning, provide new challenges for the students already successful and connect learning experiences to the world of real work (Fiske, 2002).

One of the researchers in the Champions of Change project, James Catterall (1998), studied the link between participation in the arts and academic achievement in school. He used big data from the American National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (i.e. 25,000 secondary school students). He found that students in the high-arts group outperformed their low-arts counterparts on all measures of academic achievement, and he also concluded that a positive relationship was found between arts participation and academic achievement for students in the lowest quartile of socio-economic status (Catterall, 1998). It's interesting to note that Catterall as early as 1998 found that sustained involvement in music and theatre are highly correlated with success in mathematics and reading. We know that creativity and critical thinking are key skills for future citizens in: ". . . complex, globalised and increasingly digitalised economies and societies. While teachers and education policy makers consider creativity and critical thinking as important learning goals, it is

still unclear to many what it means to develop these skills in a school setting" (Vincent-Lancrin et al., 2019, p. 1.). In this chapter we illuminate how these kinds of skills (Sickler-Voigt, 2020) can be developed through the arts as part of sustainable learning strategies.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), promoted by UNESCO, consists of aesthetic ways of learning (Leicht, Heiss, Byun, 2018). ESD pedagogies prepare educators to move from teacher-centred to student-centred lessons, and from traditional memorisation to participatory learning through place-based or problem/issue-based practices that encourage critical thinking, social critiques and analyses of the 3Ps [people, planet and prosperity] within a local context (Leicht, Heiss, Byun, 2018). Education for Sustainable Development is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015).

What we call 'key competences' in the shape of knowledge, skills and attitudes, are fundamental for everyone in a knowledge-based society. The European Commission (2019) promotes eight key competences: 1. Communication in the mother tongue, 2. Communication in the foreign languages, 3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, 4. Digital competence, 5. Learning to learn, 6. Social and civic competences, 7. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, 8. Cultural awareness and expression.

According to the recommendation of the European Commission (2019), the key competences provide added value for the labour market, social cohesion and active citizenship by offering flexibility and adaptability, satisfaction and motivation. Because the key competences should be acquired by everyone through lifelong learning, in all the member states, the Commission wants to ensure that these key competences are fully integrated into the states' strategies and infrastructures.

III. An ILSA in drama education: the DICE study

Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences in Education (Cziboly & DICE Consortium, 2010) was an international EU-supported project. It is used in this chapter to demonstrate how it is possible to measure development of key competences in an aesthetic subject, across several countries and school cultures, as an ILSA design.

Part III of this chapter is an edited version of extracts from the original DICE research report (Cziboly – DICE Consortium, 2010). Special thanks to Ildikó Danis, Szilvia Németh and Attila Varga, who were leading researchers in the project. (For a full list of all correspondents, please visit http://www.dramanetwork.eu/acknowledgements.html. The research report can be downloaded in 16 languages from http://www.dramanetwork.eu/).

III.1. Motivation, consortium, objectives and hypothesis

Educational theatre and drama practitioners have always argued for the efficacy of their work, but drama practice has rarely been assessed with quantitative tools or in an ILSA study. In the DICE project, several dozen educational theatre and drama practitioners from twelve countries, with the

widest theoretical and professional background, joined efforts with academics, especially psychologists and sociologists, to measure the impact of educational theatre and drama as precisely as possible. DICE was the first research to demonstrate connections between theatre and drama activities in education and the Lisbon Key Competences. The fact that many of the competences had rarely or never been examined before in cross-cultural studies, caused the researchers to invent and develop new measurement tools. Besides some newly developed questionnaires for children, teachers, theatre and drama practitioners, and external assessors, the researchers devised a toolkit for the independent objective observation of educational theatre and drama classes. All materials used were identical in all twelve countries, and, therefore, are applicable in any culture. The measurement tools might be useful in the future for other educational areas too.

DICE was conducted by an international consortium as a longitudinal cross-cultural study from 2009 to 2011. Data were collected from the educational fields of twelve different nations (see Figure 1)**.** These represented the European North and South, East and West, plus Palestine. The research was conducted by partners from the following twelve countries: Hungary, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden and United Kingdom. The consortium leader was Káva Theatre in Education Company (www.kavaszinhaz.hu) from Hungary, the project leader was this article's second author. All representatives were highly regarded professionals nationally and internationally and stood for a wide variety of formal and non-formal sectors of education. The partnership comprised four universities, several theatres, and public bodies such as cultural centres and NGOs.

The objectives of the project were (1) to demonstrate with cross-cultural quantitative and qualitative research that educational theatre and drama is a powerful tool to improve the key competences; (2) to publish a policy paper, based on the research and (3) disseminate it among educational and cultural stakeholders at European, national, and local levels worldwide; (4) to create an education resource - a publication for schools, educators and arts practitioners about the different practices of educational theatre and drama; (5) to compare theatre and drama activities in education in different countries, and (6) to help the transfer of know-how with the mobility of experts (Cziboly & DICE Consortium, 2010).

The hypothesis was that educational theatre and drama has an impact on five of the eight Lisbon Key Competences. DICE examined the following five of the eight key competences: Communication in the mother tongue, Learning to learn, Interpersonal, intercultural and social competences and civic competence, Entrepreneurship and Cultural expression (Eriksson et al., 2014).

III.2. An introduction to the methodology

Please note that due to the limitations of space, the description of both the methodology and the results are highly superficial. E.g. we do not discuss the one-year-long developmental phase in details, where the consortium rigorously tested all questionnaires and other tools in pilot studies to achieve the high level of reliability and validity; we are not including tables showing significance levels and confidence intervals; we completely omit discussing the kind of inferential statistical analyses conducted etc. More details can be obtained from the original research report (Cziboly & DICE Consortium, 2010) or from Adam Cziboly (adam.cziboly@hvl.no)

The sample

The DICE team collected data from altogether 4475 students, with almost equal numbers of boys and girls. The distribution of the sample among the countries was as follows: Czech Republic: 182, Hungary: 1,336, Netherlands: 399, Norway: 383, Palestine: 426, Poland: 361, Portugal: 122, Romania: 331, Serbia: 285, Slovenia: 298, Sweden: 156, United Kingdom: 196. 2,257 students were participating in an educational theatre and drama activity, 2,218 students were in one of the control groups. Within the research groups, 1,035 participated in a one-occasion activity and 1,222 in a continuous activity. 938 stated that they regularly participated in educational theatre or drama activities before the DICE project; most of these belonged to the research groups. 111 different educational theatre and drama programmes have been measured, of which 56 were continuous and 55 were one-occasion events. 83 groups were homogeneous (students from the same class) and 25 were heterogeneous (students from different classes or schools) (data missing in 3 cases). The distribution of the programmes among the countries was the following: Czech Republic: 4, Hungary: 26, Netherlands: 6, Norway: 7, Palestine: 13, Poland: 10, Portugal: 6, Romania: 7, Serbia: 7, Slovenia: 12, Sweden: 7, United Kingdom: 6. Altogether 1 080 different variables were measured per student (including originally measured variables and calculated ones, e.g. average scores of scales). We gathered exactly 4,833,000 cells of unique data.
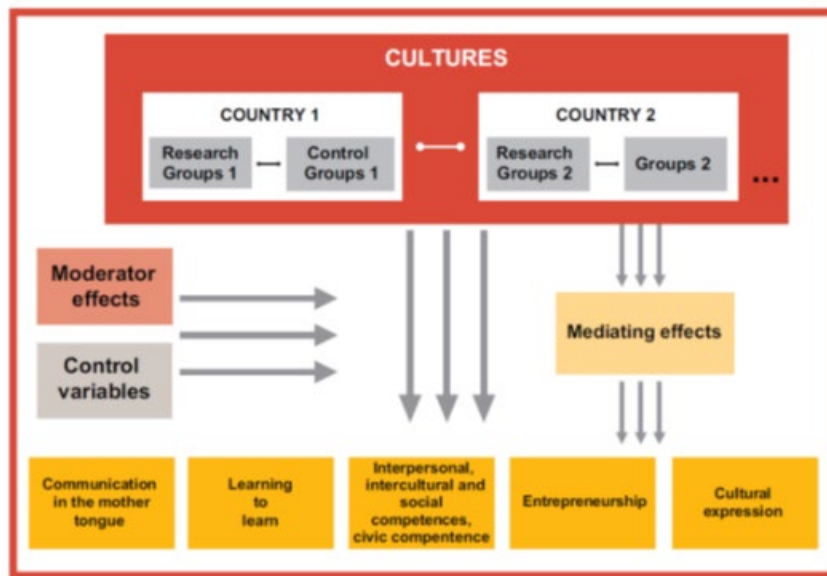

Figure 1. Cross-cultural aspect of the research (© Cziboly & DICE Consortium, 2010, used with the permission of the project leader)

Data collection

Three different kinds of groups - with different approaches - were examined in every culture (see Figure 2). (1) *Research groups with 'one-occasion' theatre and drama*: in which the effects of educational theatre and drama as a special few-hours-long occasion (e.g. a Theatre in Education programme) were measured. (2) *Research groups with 'continuous, regular theatre and drama activities'*: in which the effects of recurrent meetings in a 4-month-long period (e.g. youth groups preparing theatre performances, classroom drama) were measured. A minimum was 10 occasions

during the 4 months. (3) *Control groups for both research groups*: in which there were no occurrences of theatre and drama activities. These groups attended the same school or belonged to a very similar environment as the research classes. Each research group of youngsters participating in an educational theatre and drama activity was matched with a control group that had as many identical characteristics as possible (in most cases from the same school and the same year).
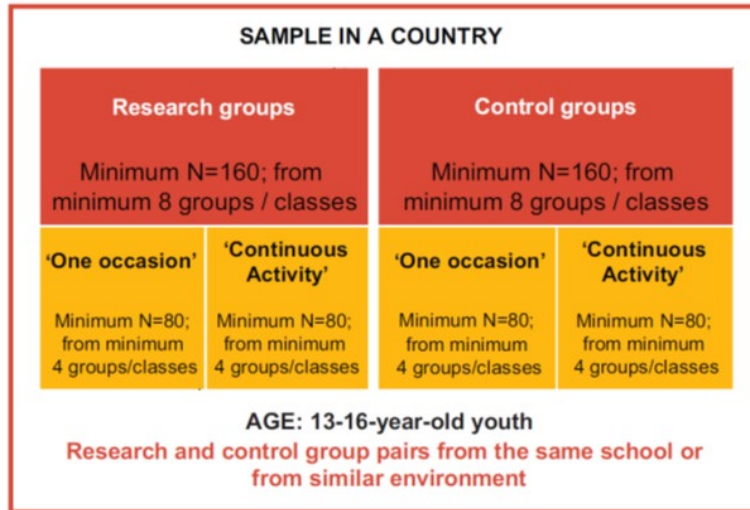

Figure 2. Sample structure in every country (© Cziboly & DICE Consortium, 2010, used with the permission of the project leader)

In DICE, the age of the informants was between 13-16 years, because reliable measurement of attitudes is more possible in that age group (e.g. questionnaires are not reliable with very young children). The researchers chose an adolescent cohort to investigate, because these are the formative years for attitudes (e.g. self-efficacy beliefs). Attitudes have been somewhat under-emphasised aspects of key competences, yet adolescents depend on social interaction to form their identities. The DICE team was interested in how educational theatre and drama can help in this very sensitive period. In addition, educational theatre and drama activities offered for this age group differed highly in European countries during the data collection period (according to reports of the consortium members), so a wide variety of settings could be measured. The sample included countries where drama was not part of the national curriculum alongside countries where it was.

Two longitudinal investigations were conducted in order to demonstrate some robust effects of educational theatre and drama activities on key competences: one 4-month-long design for continuous and one short-time (1-month-long) design for one-occasion activities (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Time aspect of the research (longitudinal design) (© Cziboly & DICE Consortium, 2010, used with the permission of the project leader)

Data collection points were as follows: For groups with one-occasion theatre and drama & their control groups, input data were collected two weeks before the occasion, observational data during the occasion, and output data two weeks after the occasion. For groups with regular theatre and drama activities & their control groups, input data were collected before the process started, observational data halfway through the process and output data after the process finished. For one-occasion research groups the research period was four weeks, for continuous ones it was 3 to 4 months. So, the measured period was quite short, but it was long enough to indicate if any changes occurred, and to prognosticate what effect that specific programme would have on a long-term basis. If there was a minor but significantly positive change within four months, one can expect that a major change in the same direction would be likely over several years.

Eight different sources of data

In the DICE research, data were gathered from eight different sources (see Figure 4), which gave access to a much more complex and rich pool of information than if data had been collected from one source only (e.g. from just the students). Sources were: (1) questionnaire for students, (2) questionnaire about each student for the class-teachers, (3) structured observation of educational theatre and drama activity, (4) structured description by each programme leader about their educational theatre and drama activities, (5) independent ("blind") professional pre-classification of the programmes, (6) structured survey of the project leaders and other European theatre and drama leaders about the situation of educational theatre and drama in their countries, (7) different qualitative research studies conducted independently by the country partners, and (8) secondary research.
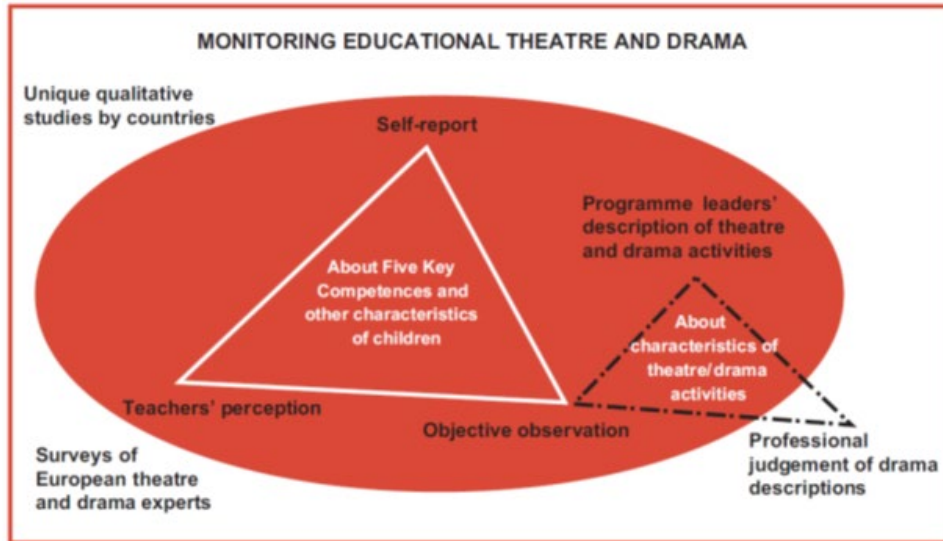
Figure 4. Sorts of and relationships between the different types of data (© Cziboly & DICE Consortium, 2010, used with the permission of the project leader)

The *questionnaire for students* was a 14-page-long set of self-completed questions about the key competences and some moderator, mediator and control variables. It was the self-reported component of the research. The questionnaire measured a wide variety of aspects of all the competences. The *questionnaire about each student for the class-teachers* involved questions about the five competences of each student as perceived by the class-teachers. This questionnaire mirrored what the researchers were measuring with the children, so in this way they received information about many aspects of changes from two different sources. Both the students' questionnaire and the teachers' questionnaire were pre-tested in a pilot study in all twelve countries. Scales had been validated using the appropriate statistical analyses.

The *structured observation* of educational theatre and drama activity meant that each programme was observed by two independent observers per occasion, who had been trained in the use of a simple coding-system. The observation grid developed for the project focused on the sequence of special work forms of activities, and on the occurrence of various interactions during them. By monitoring these activities, not only the main initiators of interactions but also the quality and direction of interactions could be defined. Important activities or events that indicated the presence of one of the five competences (e.g. expressing an idea, co-operation among pupils, etc.) were included in the coding-system. Every relevant event or activity had to be noted by the observers.

The *structured description by each programme leader about their educational theatre and drama activities* included some multiple choice and some open questions to specify group size, methods used, forms of evaluation, professional background of the programme leader, etc. Using these descriptions, *two independent professionals "blindly" pre-classified* the programmes according to their estimated efficacy.

The *structured survey* from the project leaders and other European theatre and drama leaders about the situation of educational theatre and drama in their countries included reflection on the following topics: Training for theatre and drama in education, schools (effects on learning and personal life), and education policy (aims and opinions).

In addition, different *qualitative research* components were conducted independently by the country partners. The British partner conducted a piece of qualitative research on young people's views of a Theatre-in-Education programme, while the University of Gdansk in Poland focused on the effect of drama on entrepreneurship. The eighth source of the data in DICE was *secondary research*: previous research studies in the field of educational theatre and drama that had been widely reviewed by a group of international academics.

III.3. Overview of the key results

Analysing the input measurement data, when those students who regularly participated in educational theatre and drama activities were compared with those who did not, the DICE researchers found that educational drama is proven to have a moderate, but highly significant (usually $p<0.0001$!) impact on a wide variety of factors for students who experienced such activities long term (i.e. who were exposed to such programmes even from the input measurement). Students who regularly participated in educational theatre or drama activities were found to: feel more confident in reading and understanding tasks (those who participated regularly in educational theatre or drama activities scored 4.21 % higher on the scale measuring confidence in reading on average), feel more confident in communication (4.86 %), have a better sense of humour according to self-assessment (3.57 %), more likely feel that they are creative (6.9 %), enjoy school activities more (2.51 %), like going to school more (6 %), be better at problem-solving (2.25 %), be better at coping with stress (1.12 %), be significantly more tolerant towards both minorities (13.63 %!) and foreigners (12.3 %!), show more interest in participating in public issues (11.5 %!), show more interest in voting at any level (7.8 %!), be more empathic, i.e. they have concern for others (4.15 %), be more able to change their perspective (2.53 %), be more innovative and entrepreneurial (3.26 %), show more dedication towards their future and have more plans (2.39 %), be much more willing to participate in any genre of arts and culture, and not just performing arts (15.34 %), but also writing (16.44 %), making media and music (7.00 %), going to cinema (1.6 %), participation in visual arts (7.74 %), and attending all sorts of arts and cultural activities (9.02 %), spend more time in school, more time reading, doing housework, playing, talking, and spend more time with family members and taking care of younger brothers and sisters. In contrast, they spend less time watching TV or playing computer games, do more for their families, are more likely to have a part-time job and spend more time being creative either alone or in a group; they more frequently go to theatre, exhibitions, museums, cinema, hiking or biking, and are more likely to be a central figure in the class (1.2 %).

Besides self-assessment, theatre and drama students were assessed more highly by their teachers in all aspects of the five competences (communication: 3.54 %, learning to learn: 3.62 %, social and civic competence: 2.72 %, entrepreneurship: 3.06 %, cultural awareness: 7.3 %).

On five of these scales, a significant change was measured even within a few months. Comparing the changes in the input and output scores of the control and the research groups, the DICE researchers measured significant influence over time in the following cases: self-assessment

of creativity, acceptance of outgroup (both minorities and foreigners), self-assessment of active participation in public issues, self-assessment of dedication towards future and plans, self-assessment of how one feels at home. In addition, in the Palestinian sample, the researchers measured a significant effect of drama on the average grades of students.

We must keep in mind, however, that all the above listed results are derived from the analysis of the *entire* sample. If we analyse the database with factor analysis, it seems that while most of the educational theatre and drama programmes have a small but significant impact (63 %), some of them have a much larger impact (21 %), but some have actually a negative impact (16 %). Programmes in these three groups altogether add up to a slightly moderate impact in the entire sample. When the DICE team tried to identify those variables that significantly differ in these three subcategories (programmes that have a moderate impact, a strong impact and a negative impact), the following variables were identified: the programme leader's intention to create an artistic work, the programme leader's intention to teach pupils about theatre and drama, the programme leader's intention to learn about a specific theme or topic through drama, the programme leader's intention to develop pupils' creativity and thinking skills, the intention of the programme leader(s) to offer voluntary participation (as observed by the independent observers), the length of time the programme leader(s) have been working in the field.

To sum up, the DICE research statistically proved in a large sample what many educational theatre and drama practitioners have known intuitively for a long time: that practitioners with long experience and clear goals in mind, are more likely to achieve better results. This finding also underlines that drama is not a miracle in anyone's hands, although it is indeed a proven powerful tool that can even cause harm when applied without the necessary experience and clear objectives.

IV. Discussion: how arts educators assess assessments

In this final chapter, we map the potential reasons behind the fact that only one ILSA exists in the field of drama education. Besides our attempt to understand the reasons for general scepticism towards any quantitative researches, we also explore the potential future of ILSAs in the field. Due to both our personal background and limited space, we narrow our focus to drama education only, whilst to our best understanding, most of our following conclusions would be relevant and valid in other fields of aesthetic education as well.

IV.1. Why does only a few international large-scale quantitative assessments of drama education exist?

Although the Lisbon Strategy has identified eight key competences as recommended objectives of education in Europe, the most widely used and known international large-scale assessments such as PISA, TIMSS or PIRLS target only three of them almost exclusively: Communication in the mother tongue; Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; and Digital competence. Besides, these assessments mainly use self-reporting questionnaires and individual paper and pencil tests to assess students' competences, and thus they are dominantly

outcome-oriented: there are only very rare efforts to document and study the methodological teaching process leading to the particular results.

So, on one hand, it seems that most of the currently dominating ILSA practices are disinterested in the field of arts education, and even in assessing softer competences – not to mention attitudes or personality traits. The only refreshing exception we found is ICCS (Schultz et al., 2018) which assesses the civic and citizenship education internationally in every six or seven years.

On the other hand, in the field of drama education, the situation is quite the opposite. Although drama educators believe that their work develops soft competences, the discipline seems to show general disinterest in assessments, and even generally in any kinds of quantitative studies. Matt Omasta and Dani Snyder-Young (2014) studied 428 international research articles published from 2002-2012 about educational drama in order to study which methodological designs researchers apply to conduct their studies, what types of results these studies reveal and if researchers based in certain geographic regions influence the field's discourse drastically. They concluded that the field of educational drama's: ". . .self-imposed research paradigms create comfort zones that encourage certain types of research while creating conspicuous gaps and silences by limiting the modes of inquiry we employ and regulating what data they report" (Omasta & Snyder-Young, 2014, p. 7). They found that only 4% of the studies were quantitative.

Further, Omasta and Snyder-Young (2014) concluded that 90% of the studies' results were reported as exclusively positive results, or a mix of positive and neutral results, in the sense that participants benefited from the educational drama interventions investigated, and/or the results provided evidence affirming the importance of the field. This finding is confirmed by Jenny Hughes' (2005) reviews of 400 arts programs in the criminal justice sector. Hence, it is of great importance to listen to the advice Omasta and Snyder-Young (2014) offer to researchers in drama and theatre: "Conducting studies free of underlying, advocacy-related goals in a disinterested manner may be the most effective way *to* advocate for the field in the long term" (p. 18). Furthermore, according to Kuftinec (2011), studies on educational drama are mainly written from a Western and privileged position, and the study of Omasta and Snyder-Young (2014) confirms that 67% of the studies are conducted in Europe and North America. This current situation is problematic. We need to investigate the field of aesthetics in education in a less legitimising and "white" Western or Eurocentric way; perhaps dare to utilise quantitative methodologies more and let educational researchers into our territory in order to conduct mixed method studies (O´Cathain et al., 2007) in a more disinterested manner. DICE was such an attempt.

When looking for similar ILSAs like DICE in the field of drama education, we did not manage to find any (!) other study that fulfilled all the criteria set by this handbook. We could not find any other research that was conducted on an (1) *international*, (2) *large-scale* sample with a (3) *quantitative* or at least mixed method and an (4) *assessment* approach. Besides our own desk research, we also relied on review articles (e.g. Belliveau and Kim, 2013) and thematic indexing (e.g. Mooney and O'Mara, 2019). We found large numbers of smaller scale qualitative studies with an assessment approach (e.g. Carrol & Dodds, 2016) and even some smaller scale mixed method or quantitative assessments (e.g. McLauchlan & Winters, 2014). We did find several national level large-scale qualitative studies (such as the Finnish Artsequal, 2020) and even national level large-scale mixed methodology assessments (such as the Australian Y Connect Report; Dunn et al., 2019). We are aware of numerous national level and some international level analyses and policy

papers, and the field has even seen international large-scale mixed method analyses, such as the notable and widely cited "Wow-factor" global research by Anne Bamford (2006). Although there is a slight chance that we overlooked another relevant ILSA study in our field, it is most likely true that there is no other. But why?

IV.2. Why are researchers and practitioners in drama education sceptical about quantitative measurements?

Since we used DICE as an example of an ILSA study in this article, we will demonstrate the facets of scepticism towards ILSAs through the criticism that the DICE project received. The Danish professor in children's culture research, Beth Juncker, published a critical commentary to DICE (2012) and the Norwegian researcher Yngve Flo at the Rokkan Research Centre criticised (02.12.2010) the research design. Note: Flo has not initiated criticism based on close reading of the DICE report; he only agreed to voice an ad hoc evaluative criticism based on a lecture given by the third author of this article. Both critics are researchers in Scandinavia, with exhaustive proficiency in the qualitative research paradigm.

Flo problematised the findings that the cultural active adolescents score higher than the cultural passive ones, indicating that it is too simplistic to interpret the results that "culture" works developmentally and formatively, and creates better citizens. Flo claims that the interpretation may be flawed by a certain "blindness". He raised the question if it really is "the culture", i.e. the drama input, that is the independent variable explaining differences between the research and the control groups, or rather if culture and positive outputs can be more likely explained from other social background variables, for example that participants who are well equipped culturally to start with, tend to value culture and cultural activities more than peers who are not endowed with this kind of ballast. Strangely enough, the DICE study measured by far the largest impact of educational drama programmes in Beit Hanoun, Gaza, where the participants were actually the least "endowed with this kind of ballast" in the entire international sample (Katan et al., 2010). Furthermore, this criticism well illustrates what Best (1995) calls "generic arts" (see also above in chapter I.). The DICE study has never stated that it had measured the effect of "culture" in general. On the contrary, like in other ILSAs, it assessed the impact of (111 kinds of) very specific educational drama and theatre programmes on exactly pre-defined dependent variables and mediator variables. This example demonstrates a cardinal difference between quantitative and qualitative designs. Whilst quantitative research planning is almost always linear (data is collected on pre-defined variables with pre-defined instruments) and deductive, qualitative planning is usually rather circular (in many cases data is collected and analysed at the same time, and the data collection process might even influence the research question) and inductive, and in analysing the results, (over)generalisations tend to be more common.

Both critics assume that the measured changes are due to mediator effects: Flo suspects what we would call "teacher pleasing", while Juncker believes that the individual attention had an influencing importance. Flo asks if the drama and theatre education received by the research groups may have also enticed or coached them to give "right answers"? For example, could it be that instead of really becoming "better human beings", the adolescents became better at expressing that they had developed the competences researched in the project? Juncker assumes that because the students received more individual attention during the lessons of drama and theatre, and became challenged in a new project setting with novel communications tasks and procedures, their

competences were improved compared to their peers in the control groups. She thinks that the improvement is caused by secondary motivational factors, not by the drama/theatre activity in itself (p. 17-18). Indeed, the DICE study did not measure the respondent's motivation to faking (the children's self-assessment questionnaire did not include a social desirability scale). Neither did it compare the effect of educational drama and theatre to other activities where the students enjoy more individual attention (e.g. playing chess in a club). But these examples of criticism demonstrate how drawbacks of a quantitative setting are perceived by researchers used to the qualitative perspective.

Furthermore, Flo questions if the research instruments have managed sufficiently to consider premises and framework conditions relevant to each individual adolescent's point of departure. However, later he acknowledges that the application of pre-research and post-research questionnaires counter his criticism. In order to make the methodology and the results accessible to artists, pedagogues and researchers not used to quantitative methodology and terminology - the DICE report's main target audiences - the DICE research was presented in a somewhat oversimplified way in its final report. This also evoked criticism. According to Juncker (2012), all the positive 22 result points listed in the DICE report are too good to be true: "It is simply just overwhelming" (p. 17). She does not find that the published DICE report can convincingly substantiate its result, and she finds it to be a problem that the research report ". . . ascertain it, rather than discuss it in relation to the premises of the project". Some findings she characterises as simply obvious or evident. In Juncker's view, the DICE research report would have benefitted from more attention to problematising and discussion of findings. Still, it seems that despite the oversimplified presentation of the results, aspects such as high significance levels or the results of the factor analysis presented above, were overlooked by the critics.

It has to be stated that Juncker also credits the DICE report with a high degree of probability that ". . . the creative, innovative and communicative competences, which are sought after in all late modern societies, are in fact being supported in such creative experiences and processes" (p. 19). Also, in her concluding comment, Juncker explicitly regrets the fact that even if the researched competences are widely acclaimed and asked for in the Nordic countries and in Europe, very little is being done in education to develop and support them.

V. Conclusion: can we design large-scale assessment studies in drama education?

The research tradition in the field of educational drama can be characterised by a social constructivist epistemological discourse, where "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) from the field through practice-near or art-based research is the "golden standard".

DICE did try to complement not only ILSA programmes but also previous research studies in the field of educational theatre and drama. The most prevalent feature of these research studies is their qualitative nature (Omasta & Snyder-Young, 2014). On the one hand, there is a philosophical basis to this: researchers in this field often state that the nature and real effect of educational theatre and drama cannot be caught by any "hard data", because quantification inevitably means simplification, and certainly masks the most important features of theatre and drama (Gallagher, 2016; Adams & Owens, 2015; Hughes, 2005). If one compares, for example

how broad the definition of communication in the mother tongue is (including reading, writing, oral comprehension and expression), and how narrow the methodology usually used to assess it is in leading ILSAs (usually a multiple choice paper and pencil test), one can understand the basis of this criticism. Elinore Belfore (2009) claims that:

> /…/ in a climate where policy influence is considered a relevant, or even a privileged, criterion for the allocation of research funds, the type of research that is more likely to be supported is that which can provide the 'evidence' that politicians and decision-makers need. This might be the kind of research, for example, that can provide appealing statistics and other data required for the 'statisticulation' that so much political discourse is based on (Belifore, 2009, p. 333).

On the other hand, a qualitative approach cannot describe the effect of educational theatre and drama in a quantitative way, and this can lead to difficulty in communicating its value outside a narrow circle of specialists, thus keeping it marginalised and still largely undiscovered in mainstream education (Belifore, 2009). That is why DICE tried to collect the available evidence from both qualitative and existing quantitative research studies, and on the basis of these researches made an effort to develop a methodology which could serve as a mixed method bridge between the qualitative and quantitative approaches, and utilise the advantages of both. To our very best knowledge, DICE is the largest research study that has been conducted in the field of educational theatre and drama so far, with the largest population sample and the most complex design.

In the DICE project, researchers were experimenting with new approaches by targeting competences usually forgotten by other assessment programmes. Through the research design, the DICE team tried to use wider methodological tools, including teacher reports, independent structured observations and self-reported programme descriptions. Researchers collected data not just about the competences itself but also about the way the competences were developed. Instead of having a single point data entry, researchers had input and output data, and along with each target group they had a control group as well, in order to measure the effect as precisely as the present psychometrical tools would allow the researchers to do so.

DICE demonstrated that there are available, reliable and valid tools to assess some of those key competences that seem to have been "forgotten" by large-scale student assessment programmes. We don't think that the tools used in DICE as an example, are the perfect tools to assess students' key competences. We agree with Winner et al. (2013) that "some of these outcomes could have been measured more objectively" (p. 225.) But we are also aware that the methods used in PISA and other assessment programmes are increasingly subjected to pedagogical critique and discussion (see e.g. Fernandez, 2016, Sjøberg, 2007). If other competences besides literacy, numeracy and digital competences are valuable for our future societies, as OECD claims through their focus on 21st century skills, and UNESCO promotes by their Education for Sustainable Development, then the assessment of such competences should be embedded into future ILSA programmes. We truly believe that the research design and some of the tools developed and tested in the DICE research setting can serve as a model or inspiration for further similar studies in the field of aesthetic education.

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Appendix

In the DICE project, particularly two genres of applied drama/theatre constitute important references for the research: process drama and theatre-in-education (TIE). The following descriptions of these two dramatic art genres may clarify their function in educational contexts:

> *Process drama* is a genre of educational drama which focuses on collaborative investigation and problem-solving in an imaginary world. Process dramas use 'pre-texts' (photographs, newspaper articles, music, artefacts, etc.) to frame the investigation and raise questions for the students. Process dramas are improvised, not script-based, built up from a series of episodes or scenic units, usually in a non-linear and discontinuous fashion. The entire group of participants are engaged in the same enterprise, and the teacher may function within the drama as playwright and participant ([e.g. teacher-in-role). A primary purpose of process drama is that the participants discover, explore, and articulate a theme, narrative or situation together as percipients, /…/, or put differently: as audience to their own acts. In process drama there is an intention to learn and understand, rather than to perform and entertain (Cooper & DICE Consortium, 2010, p. 203).

> *Theatre in education* (TIE) is a theatre genre and dramatic outreach activity for schools or nurseries/ kindergartens – tailored to specific age or target groups – by professional actors.[1] Its primary aim is to use theatre and drama to create a wide range of learning opportunities across the whole curriculum. Most TIE programmes comprise performance and participatory/interactive elements. Actor-teachers (so called because they use the skills of the actor while thinking as a teacher at one and the same time) engage the pupils directly in parts of the play, or tasks and activities extending from it. Often the TIE programme involves preparation work and follow-up (usually drama) activities developed as a part of the whole experience (Cooper & DICE Consortium, 2010, p. 205).

They both operate visibly at the crossroads of art and education and can be regarded as contemporary best practice examples of drama/theatre as aesthetic subject areas in schools.

Three examples of drama structures showing how the art form can actualise, perspectivise, contextualise, and lead to discussion. The first two are process drama, the third is TIE:

1. In an approach to "Snow White" (primary school), the teacher combines narrative with interactive play sequences. Partly narrator and partly player, the teacher enrols the class as people with special tasks or as advisors. The castle is created collectively as a big drawing on the blackboard, so that the pupils get a common sense of place and time. Then they are invited to become workers in the castle. "What kind of work do you know that is needed there? What is your speciality? How can you demonstrate your particular skill?" The teacher in role as the king (or the queen) comes to inspect his / her workers. After another sequence of narration, the teacher in role as the hunter, invites his work friends to a secret meeting: "The queen has asked me to kill Snow White this very evening. What shall I do?" After this sequence, a class discussion follows - about responsibility, moral dilemma, obedience, consequence, empathy. The story may well continue with a shift of perspective: The teacher in role as the queen visits the apothecary (the

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[1] Or occasionally highly qualified drama/theatre teachers or university-trained drama/theatre students.

whole class collectively): "I need to buy some poison. What do you have in stock?" The teacher follows the train of the fairy tale when improvising with the apothecaries, but challenges them in role to make considerations and decisions. In doing so, the teacher balances cunning with smooth talk – depending on what resistance she gets from the apothecaries. A final class discussion follows after having finished the tale. (Heggstad, 2012, pp. 94-95).

2. With a newspaper article about the peace activist Rachel Corrie as pre-text, teacher connects Rachel's destiny with that of the Greek heroine Antigone, by involving the class (secondary school) to explore situations from the lives of these two young women: From teacher narration, the class create still images of life situations (e.g. respective family pictures), the pupils act short scenes from Rachel's e-mails and Sophocles' play, they contrast extracts from Rachel's e-mail monologues with Antigone's script monologues - experiencing their dilemmas across time and space, and they witness ritual: The class in a half circle on the floor. Teacher lays out a silk cloth and puts on it two glass beakers with sand. Pours out a small heap of sand on the cloth and narrates: "Rachel Corrie, 23 years old from the state of Washington, was killed while she was trying to prevent Israeli army bulldozers from destroying a Palestinian home. … (etc.)." Pours out another small heap of sand on the cloth and narrates: About 2500 years earlier, Antigone - daughter of Oedipus and his mother Jocasta, became a victim of a battle between private conscience and public authority... (etc.)." The drama invites shifts of perspective, like the convention 'the chair': Volunteer participants in turn represent Rachel on the chair. The class ask Rachel questions after death, for example "would you do it again?"; or 'hot-seat': The class interrogate the driver of the bulldozer (volunteer participant) or other witnesses: bystander, soldier, politician, journalist, boyfriend, mother, father, grandma. The session ends with a class discussion of issues raised and explored in the drama. (Eriksson, 2007, pp. 134-146).

3. The pupils (primary school) are watching a refugee girl, Amani, and a boy, George, interact in a disused railway station. Amani and George are played by two actors in role. The interaction is fraught with tension. Amani is frightened, George is aggressive – he is frightened too. They cannot speak to each other. One of the pupils, a girl aged seven, a girl who is often quiet, distant even, taps one of the adults working in the programme on the shoulder. "I know what the problem is", she says. The adult gets the attention of the actor facilitating the programme, indicating that the child is prepared to share her understanding with the rest of her peers. "His story is her story" she observes with quiet confidence, "and her story is his story, but they don't realise it." The significance was apparent to everyone in the room, it was held in a portentous silence. The task for everyone involved now was to deepen this understanding and share it with George and Amani. This was the stuff of real drama (from Cooper and DICE Consortium, 2010, p. 17).