The Routledge Companion to Drama in Education

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“Creating conditions for the emergence of the as-yet-unimagined”

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We began work on this chapter in November of 2019. Our proposal reflected on the topic of the artistry and pedagogy of drama in education and how, through the lens of our experiences, we saw it as an important contributor to the wider world of education. We are now (re)writing in the spring of 2021, and that world and our own have undergone unexpected and disturbing interruptions that have caused us to think again about what we do, how we do it, and why we consider it imperative to do, as we continue to live and learn together in these new circumstances. It is the intention of this chapter to remind us all of the tremendous power of our discipline, through its pedagogy and artistry, to counteract the pervasive influences of these uncertain times and the despair that can overcome us in crisis.

We look at our discipline as a medium that nurtures and encourages different capabilities, emotions and feelings, habits of mind, dispositions, and senses of self through collaborative, interpersonal reanimation in an as if world. With the increasing use of hours of screen time, we see drama in education as a means to balance the distancing effects digital media has on our relationships with each other. It also has the potential to remediate the losses incurred in the “drift away from fundamental social skills” and the crucial social and emotional learning so necessary for the healthy conduct of our lives (Sigman, 2012, p. 938). At the same time, in light of the challenges we are presently experiencing with Covid-19, we are deeply grateful for digital media that enables us to come together, see each other, and communicate with more people than just ourselves as we deal with quarantines, social distancing, and lockdowns. It is through the digital world’s international connective capabilities that we are realizing we must care more—and better—for each other. But it is the paucity of, inequality of, and opportunities for violating that care that social media and television have also revealed. As our democratic processes buckle under these uncivil pressures, we have come to realize the many aspects of drama in education that are uniquely suited to the specific requirements of self-awareness, engaging in community and with the democratic processes so central to how we live with ourselves and each other.

In the arts, much of what and how we learn through emotions and feelings remains “implicit, encrypted and unconscious” until these things are brought into consciousness through action (Damasio, 2012, p. 144). For Antonio Damasio (2019), the arts—“one of the
remarkable gifts of consciousness” (p. 296)—can be seen as the sociocultural homeostatic response to our emotional lives; they are the means of rebalancing and restoring our sense of well-being in a world that is chaotic, uncertain, and often out of control. This need to rebalance, fuelled by curiosity and an explanatory drive, has, over the long evolution of the human species, given us many things, amongst them stories, myths, community, religions, ways to govern behavior, science, technology, history, and the arts. Today, we recognize that mind/body is a biologically integrated system, but the dualistic nature of mind and body, as posited by Rene Descartes (1596–1650), while no longer current to our thinking, is still current for many in education. As a result, the arts, sadly no surprise to retired School Superintendent Geoff Johnson (2021), remain “a kind of ‘bolt on’ afterthought to be discarded when school district budgets are challenged” (p. D10). Why does it matter to know how mind/body works? It does, if “we care at all for what we may become,” writes Damasio (2012, p. 30). And becoming is always work in process. These, then, are the times and conditions that have become the reflective context for this chapter and the prompts for hope in the future.

“Learning how to live”

“Theatre,” Mark Robson (2019) tells us in his elegant exegesis on theater and death, “is an exposure of a culture’s fundamental structures and of the individual’s place within them … It’s a gesture of hope, an open hand extended, a first step to learning how to live” (p. 64). Improvisation, theater sports, games, exercises, and specific theatrical skill development are activities that cultivate many things, including group cohesion, time management, focus, and performance abilities. But, as educators, we have a wider responsibility, and that is to go beyond and deeper, providing “a sense of safe intimacy with a world we not only imagine but also literally embody” (Wojciehowski & Gallese, 2011, p. 16). Through the playing, we are improving the capacities for listening, perspective-taking, imagining, reflecting, risk-taking, and the evolving of generosity of spirit and empathic awareness. Many of these habits of mind and personal dispositions (Deasy, 2001) happen, as Rick Kemp (2012) reminds us, “below the level of conscious awareness” (p. 11) and for that reason, they have remained part of the hidden curriculum. That curriculum’s focus on inter- and intra-personal communications, ethics, and social justice are essential abilities for engaging with the demanding challenges of learning how to live in the twenty-first century.

Ray Misson’s (1996) analysis of drama’s strength offers a strong basis on which to begin our argument:

Drama is an extraordinarily powerful site for constructing human subjectivity because, at its best, it operates at the nexus of intelligence and emotion. Thought is given the actualizing charge of feeling, while feeling is refined and strengthened by thought. Drama gives students the opportunity to rehearse different kinds of being and so add to their experiential range, internalize various patterns of thinking and feeling, and thus extend and strengthen the repertoire of attitudes and reactions that, partly at least, constitute the self.

(p. 11)

To be aware empathically, we need to understand what others are thinking and how their hopes and dreams, beliefs and fears are invested (Dunbar, 2002). This deeper feeling of connection—a whole body/self-response that attunes to others—is indicative of deep listening, one of the essential skills, not just in theater or drama but critical for caring, collaboration,
community, and democracy. As Paul Woodruff (2008) points out, in theater and drama, “caring … may be make-believe … but it is real enough to count as practice for caring in real life” (p. 153). It is that “real enough” practice that makes drama one of the most humanizing and holistic of the art forms; its power for young people lies in its inherent focus on the integration of experience and reflection. Thinking and talking as members of a community rather than as individuals has the potential for the development of group emotion, and we know, as teachers, the shared joy that results from the feeling that we are all connected (Berg & Seeber, 2016; Putnam, 2000).

The ability to see the world from many points of view, to be comfortable shifting back and forth as we change perspectives, challenge stereotypes, explore alternatives, and question motives, expands our thinking both as we act and, later, in reflection. When we ask students to grapple with things that matter, they begin to interrogate their own learning and to make connections amongst, between, and beyond themselves, and to encounter ideas and dilemmas that demand empathic attention (Saxton & Miller, 2016).

“In these hard times,” Cecily O’Neill (2019) reminds us, “we all need the humanizing … effect of the arts more than ever” (p. 52), and inherent in the arts is the recognition that requires of participants a mutual awareness and a willingness to examine their own beliefs, assumptions, and opinions through public conversations (Ferrett, 1997). These discussions can lead to difficult conversations, but, because in drama they can be held within a fictional world, participants are free to express themselves within the safety of fictional roles. This, in turn, can lead to the kinds of questions that encourage risk-taking and agency, qualities that are necessary for going deeper into territory that, in the real world, might be avoided because of the feelings they evoke. This searching within experiential encounters is often described as critical pedagogy and might be said to be the drama/theater curriculum.

Difficult conversations require reflection, inclusion, acceptance, and responsibility. They evolve out of the third space, a space “of dialogues, confrontations, accommodations, risk-taking and unplanned discoveries” (Greenwood, 2005, p. 5). Such conversations also involve a creative component, for, as we build abstract thought through the use of imagination, together we make new connections between old ideas and reshape our thinking in ways that reveal new possibilities (Petress, 2004). Improvisation and role play can help participants develop more mature understandings and representations of others, enabling a richer recognition of who they are themselves. Talking and playing about such things within the safety of dramatic fiction offers ways of exploring the big questions about what it means to be human and alive in the world. “It is how we become who we are” (McGilchrist, 2012, p. 249). Yet, schooling still privileges academic knowledge—rational thought—over and above the human contexts in which that knowledge is sought, acquired, integrated, and felt.

The hard truth about soft skills

Throughout the first part of this chapter, we have made continuing references to what in the current literature is termed “soft skills,” but as drama educators, we have always recognized these skills as foundational to artistic pedagogy and, more importantly, to all of human development. These capacities or attributes—“education beyond academic knowledge” (Schulz, 2008), “social and emotional skills” (Shriver & Weissberg, 2020)—appear over and over again in educational drama research and scholarship. While we were never oblivious to their importance in the creative process, we never felt any need to measure numerically their growth as part of our students’ abilities. We wrote about the worth of these intangibles to our discipline in 1998 (Miller & Saxton, pp. 165–180). At that time we had the same concerns
as Maxine Greene (1995), who noted that “[e]fficiency, competence, and salability used as standards seem to have eaten away the ideal of citizenship.” For many educators at the turn of the millennium, “creating a community of citizens” was of secondary importance to the creation of “world-class technical achievements” (p. 64).

For Robin Ewing (2019), that treatment implied soft skills have less significance than those described as “hard skills.” She argues: “This kind of dichotomy is unhelpful and, in fact, entirely misleading given [that] all are core to our social and emotional well-being” (p. 9). Today, however, there is an ever-growing demand for the very skills technical achievements have superseded. The soft skills are now being recognized as fundamental to all learning in creating a responsible and effective citizenry. In fact, the idea of a curriculum of social and emotional learning (SEL) in pre-university education, according to Shriver and Weissberg (2020), has been generally accepted in the United States and Canada by parents, teachers, administrators, young people, and employers. But SEL finds itself losing curriculum ground in the twenty-first century race to implement STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) and that, in addition to the financial impact of the pandemic on educational institutions at all levels, is leading once again to a consequent diminution of the arts and humanities. As well, those who understand that “big ideas” (Wasserman, 2007) should be the driving engine of learning often find themselves stymied by the continuing influence of the back-to-basics agenda with its standards and high-stakes testing in which all parts of school curricula are seen to be measurable (Greene, 2019; Zhao, 2020).

In higher education, however, particularly in business schools, there has been a move not only to accept the importance of those social and emotional capacities so integral to a holistic education, but also to demonstrate that these skills are being taught. Attempts are being made (Levington, 2019) to satisfy the demand through what are called “micro-credentials” or “badging.” These short courses “recognize skills that won’t appear on a transcript,” so how to “define, authenticate and evaluate [these skills] … in a standardized fashion understood by students, institutions and employers” (p. 89) continues to remain a problem for some. If we are teaching such things as resilience, empathy, judgment, and the ability to provide and receive feedback (to name only a few of the dozens of soft skill attributes), we are, in the words of a business dean, asking instructors to “hone in on the intangible” in order to create graduates who have technical knowledge, soft skills, and a social conscience (Johnson, 2019, see also Note).

Iain McGilchrist (2012), in his book that discusses how the two hemispheres of the brain should function in partnership, would regard the need to measure these initiatives as the left hemisphere’s reductive determination to have a world in which everything is graspable, familiar, measurable, and bounded. Such abstracts as ambiguity, curiosity, and metaphor belong in the brain’s right hemisphere (pp. 428–462). These capacities emerge and thrive directly as a result of lived experiences, and it is only after the experience that we are able to stand apart and encode its meanings. Many educators, administrators, and academics recognize that imposing measurement scales on that part of the whole curriculum would be—if it were possible—to put limits on those things whose functions are limitless; they understand that the freedom to grow and exercise these capacities is part of the enigma of being.

Indeed, the recognition of the current importance of these abstruse, recondite capacities (Premuzic et al., 2010; Schulz, 2008; Young, 2018) is being heavily influenced by global changes in social and cultural environments. Racial unrest, feminism, the civil and gay rights movements, increasing internationalization, the sudden view of our planet, beautiful and so small within the context of the universe, and a technological explosion that has brought the world into our homes every day in ways that we had never imagined are just a
few of the components of societal change that make these humane (or soft skills) capacities so critical. Unfortunately, for many, the inability to measure their worth still makes them insignificant. And then there is the elephant, not just in the classroom, but graying-out the rest of our lives.

**Hooked online and out of touch**

We now accept that the digital explosion has impacted not only the collection of data and the extension of knowledge, but how those pursuits are reframing and reshaping the ways we think, communicate, and be with each other. The move toward online learning, while appropriate in this time of social distancing due to the pandemic, has revealed how important the social context of learning is for students who have discovered they miss “just everyday life” and “that there is no substitute for human connection” (Vollum, 2020, np). The results of this social “malnutrition” extend to “emotional, physical and mental well-being, the combination of which further hinders brain function” (D’Angiulli, cited in Szklarski, 2021, p. B8). Digital learning has significant implications for the kind of learners it may produce and the research is now available.

Sherry Turkle (2015), professor of social sciences and technology, has for the last 30 years studied the relationship between the use of digital media and its effects on those who use it. The results of her research allied to the research of others is disturbing (Sales, 2016; Tapscott, 2009). Historically, technology’s original purpose was to accomplish the tedious labors of thought (data collection, computation, research, and so on) that took up so many hours. Automated reasoning, it was supposed, would leave humans with more time to think deeply and reflectively, giving, as Turkle puts it, opportunities for “the unfolding of human creativity” (p. 76). It has not worked out in quite the way envisioned. As the digital communications ecosystem grows, our delight and fascination with our new ability to obtain a seemingly endless stream of information has meant we have less time to think about what we have discovered and less motivation to do so.

That distracted attention is nothing more than the old survival habit of curiosity at work. In addition, the image capabilities of digital media have become so quotidian that there is a growing tendency to spend as much, or more, time recording our experiences as we do actually having them. Through the solitude that media provide, the screen becomes, for some, a device behind which they can hide away from physical interactions. When we are engaged in our digital media, we are always looking at something that is distanced from us—a virtual world revealed to us by a set of algorithms, “invisible lines of code on distant servers” (Sax, 2015, p. A10).

Over the last decade, researchers have become alarmed at what they see as Internet addictive behaviors “associated with structural and functional changes in brain regions involving emotional processing, executive attention, decision making, and cognitive control” (Lin & Zhou et al., 2012, np.). Physician Victoria Dunckley (2014) observes that the children she sees suffer from “electronic screen syndrome”; they demonstrate impulsivity, are moody, and have difficulty paying attention. The Kaiser Foundation Study (Rideout et al., 2010) makes it clear that reliance on digital media creates a risk of “subtle damage” even in children with “regular” exposure. That study revealed that, as of 10 years ago, 8–18-year-olds spent more than seven hours a day on a variety of digital media, seven days a week (p. 2).

Nonetheless, we are now forced to live in our world through these devices and we are indeed grateful to them as a relief from Covid-19 restraints. But the world we live in is three-dimensional, still mostly immediate, and, if we are lucky, filled with human beings
separated from us only by social distancing, not by a device. The world is still here, and our
relationship to it and to each other is existential and constitutive. It is through drama that
we and our students gain practice in recognizing and adapting to that contingent environ-
ment. It is here that we learn to appreciate its complexity. It is here that we are always in a
state of “becoming” (Pinar, 1998). And while old problems may be solved, there are always
new problems, and the need for new procedures and innovations for which no algorithms or
vaccines have yet been invented. The embodied processes of dramatic action demand that
we actively engage with what is actually happening. Through reflection on that action, a
sense of agency may demand that we respond to the social and cultural world we are making
as it makes us.

In this contingent world, humans continue to design, and be redesigned, by the one
thing that makes them different from other species—the human brain. The plasticity of the
brain, Norman Doidge (2007) points out, makes it highly resilient, but a resilient brain is
more vulnerable to influences, particularly because they are so ubiquitous to those of the
new technologies, many of which are two-dimensional. Today, the necessary use of masks,
left together with texting, can blur, obstruct, or diminish what is being expressed in face-to-face
conversations: the shifting emotional planes of the face as we respond to each other’s words,
the human practice of thinking aloud, of hearing the words and rethinking them, rephrasing
and shifting tone and emphasis, in order to achieve clarity (Stoker, 2013). This means that
conversations can be risky as we think aloud, but given a safe space, like a drama classroom
in which we can raise issues that we need to talk about, these conversations, even distanced,
can be thrilling. To join in a conversation is to imagine another mind, to empathize, and
to enjoy gesture, humor, and irony through the medium of talk (see Freire, 1998, p. 120).
Turkle (2015) reminds us of what we gain through talk: “Face-to-face conversation unfolds
slowly, it teaches patience; we attend to tone and nuance.” However, “when we communi-
cate on our digital devices, we learn different habits. In order to get [answers] we ask simple
questions [and] become accustomed to a life of constant interruptions” (p. 105).

As citizens of the digital world, we have that sense of having hundreds of friends and
multitudes of “likes” without the hassle of friendships and all the messy responsibilities of
intimacy (Turkle, 2015, p. 7)—a virtual world but not a vital one. The result is one that may
shock; it did us. Because of the distance that devices create, there is a tendency to be less
careful about how we connect to each other, and those opportunities for anonymity enable
a coarseness of expression without having to deal with the consequences (Deibert, 2020;
Tenove, 2020). This disdain for others’ feelings and indifference to what others may think—
this anonymous bullying—undermines civility. Barbara Coloroso (2007, 2018) warned us
of a developing “culture of mean,” and Sara Konrath and her colleagues (2011), in their
meta-analysis of the impact of digital devices, reported that among college students, empathy
had dropped by 40% (see also Niose, 2016).

And one more thing

In describing the present educational context for our discipline, we cannot ignore the effects
of a neoliberal agenda that has generated a market-driven approach to most human endeav-
or. To those of us in higher education, it is clear that the students we taught pre-millennium
were very different from those we now meet. Today, whether in school or online, our classes
are filled with learners with varied abilities from different countries, backgrounds, socio-
economic status, and cultural traditions. That diversity is what can and should enrich our
classrooms, but today much effective teaching has become a victim of how the world has
changed. Efficiency, optimization, and utilitarian vocabulary (students as “clients,” “corporate” universities) place constraints upon our time, our spaces, and, in some cases, our very sense of agency and well-being. This neoliberal agenda is reshaping education to respond to a world that has little time for critical thinking or reflective thought. In the past 20 years, writes Roger Barnett (2017),

the phrase ‘critical thinking’ has almost vanished from the public debate about university education. Where it does surface, it needs to be muted, reflecting corporate needs for innovation. The idea of critical thinking as embodying large evaluative horizons … has fallen away.

(p. 301)

Such possibilities in our present world of uncertainty, historian Margaret Macmillan (2020) points out, has only enhanced our growing fear of risk-taking. And Alan Rusbridger, retired editor of The Guardian, notes that there is “a terrible flight from complexity” as we rely more and more on fear and emotion because they both are effective in the selling of “simple messages” that appear to make the unruly disorderliness of life a little more manageable (in Houpt, 2018, p. R9).

Let us take a moment to reflect

What we have laid out in the previous pages are the digital, political, and social realities of our times. We have made an argument for the importance of drama to education, reflecting on its experiential nature, the embodied processes that are engaged, and how these experiences are a way to mediate the effects of present-day digital reality and a neoliberal agenda. That agenda relies on efficiency and certainty, and on an educational curriculum that promotes the delivery of results that are reliable, measurable, standardized, and accountable. These criteria are appropriate for such things as a medical model, space exploration, engineering design, and solutions to mathematical problems, but they in no way describe artistic exploration that functions best in liminal spaces of unexpected outcomes—the same context, in point of fact, that nurtures the pure sciences. We now know that body and mind are intricately connected and that emotions and feelings are central to who we are and how we learn. The pandemic research has revealed how vulnerable we are to the stresses that impact our emotional and feeling responses, and we have become aware through our increased use of digital media how easy it is to lose those qualities that make us human.

These critical times have shown us that drama is an imperative curriculum for today, one that balances our need for certainty with our delight in the “liberation that comes from unpredictability” (McGilchrist, 2012, p. 454); the artistry with which that curriculum unfolds is more important than ever. It is artistry that enlivens activities in a classroom into rich, recursive, relational, and rigorous experiences (Doll, 1993). In a world that is post-truth, full of “fake news” and “alternative facts,” all dancing to the seductive music of the digital algorithms, what differences may artistry make?

Artistry in pedagogy

When we consider the importance of artistry to our pedagogy, we turn to Elliot Eisner (1985) for guidance. He writes that teaching is an art when it is “performed with such skill and grace that, for the student as for the teacher, the experience can be justifiably
characterized as aesthetic … [where the experiences] constitute acts of artistic expression that provide heightened awareness and deepened understanding” (p. 175).

The drama experience we now explore “enables participants to exist … where the real and imagined can co-exist, igniting the emotions and imagination” (Ewing & Saunders, 2016, p. 6). It offers a kind of reciprocity and responsiveness between students and teacher and opens up a range of possibilities for exploration. Using these criteria, let us consider how aesthetic experience may be enabled in a simple sense awareness activity, recognizable as part of drama’s early teaching repertoire but recontextualized here as a space exploration (Iowa, 1991). It is suitable for all ages and for online, face-to-face, or hybrid teaching situations.

**Context:** A drama in which the class is enrolled as explorers of a new-found planet and tasked with bringing back objects for display at the National Museum of Interplanetary Exploration (NMIE).

1. Students have been reminded to have a pair of outside shoes or boots ready for this class, twenty minutes of which will take place out of doors.

2. On the day of the activity, each student is to go outside and to find 5 objects, one of each that:
   
   a. looks like it came from another planet,
   b. has an *alien* sound,
   c. feels like the planet’s surface,
   d. smells like a star,
   e. tastes as if it came from outer space.

3. On students’ return, teacher in role as the Director of NMIE welcomes the whole group in role as astronauts who have recently returned from a planetary mission. The astronauts are asked to prepare for the opening NMIE conference where they will be sharing their findings. These findings will be part of the initial Exhibit of Discovery.

4. The Director asks astronauts to turn their attention to the mission of the Museum: to make space exploration meaningful to its visitors. The Director asks them to assemble in 5 groups, divided evenly. After sharing their findings, the Director assigns each group one of the senses on which to focus. As a group, they are tasked with deciding which one object, from the group’s whole collection, best represents the specific sense finding in terms of its possible significance to humanity. Astronauts then come together as whole group to share the five objects chosen for the exhibit and the rationale for their choices.

5. Some possible questions for reflection, depending on age group

   - Why might some people be opposed to a museum that celebrates space travel?
   - What could drive someone to become an astronaut?
   - If it takes almost half a century to travel to the edge of our galaxy, have you ever wondered why are we spending billions of dollars to explore outer space?
   - How might we help museum visitors become more capable of understanding the possible benefits of space exploration?
   - What sorts of qualities might you have that would make you a candidate for space travel?
   - What might be the response of the people on our planet should aliens want to settle here?
   - In light of our recent history, what concerns might we have as we consider populating a new planet?
   - I wonder why we call certain people “stars”?
Other possibilities for curriculum integration: Create

- a diary entry for the day on which the object was found,
- visual representations of the context in which the object was discovered,
- a computer-generated soundscape as display background,
- a series of letters to the editors complaining about NMIE expenditures,
- a series of selfies taken while working in space,
- newspaper reports announcing the museum opening,
- posters for the museum opening,
- and so on.

Discussion

Consider the neurological conditions that Dr. Judy Willis (2008) sets up that make it possible for students to be more richly responsive to a drama experience:

Novelty, surprise and teaching that connects with students’ past experiences and personal interests and that is low in threat and high in challenge are instructional strategies that appear to be correlated with increased information passage through the brain’s information filters.

Willis describes how an effective teacher can offer students a safe yet engaging educational environment in which to pursue activities. But something else is also happening. Selma Wasserman (2007) wrote that “activities are rarely memorable, nor do we think of them as having the power to affect us in long-lasting ways.” It is experiences that “deeply engage us, on both a cognitive and affective level” (p. 292, italics ours); experiences are the intention of all arts practices. Where, in this lesson, might you see this shift from “activity” to “experience” occurring? And where might those moments of artistry be happening? Our previous research examining the process of becoming an artist teacher (Miller, Saxton, & Morgan, 2000) helps to identify those attributes of teaching that may alter and/or deepen students’ engagement with the content. They are a potentially tantalizing situation (Barone, 1983); a lesson “quickened” or brought alive (Sendak, 1997); certainties unsettled or turned upside down (Conquergood, 1989); and everyone being embraced within the unfolding (Greene, 1995).

The artistry of teaching is embodied in the presence of the teacher and the students themselves being present to what is happening and taking responsibility for and pleasure in making it happen. It is in the shared action, and the reflection on that action, that the quality of the experience is revealed. Reflection through questions and prompts, “critically, but delicately,” helps students to explore content that may directly or indirectly relate to their lives (Story, 2021). It is through the artistic pedagogy of drama that the social and cultural contexts of our lives can emerge to be practiced, “deepening the connection between cultures and life processes” (Damasio, 2019, p. 28), and it is artistic processes that offset the certainties of our lives by generating endless questions yet to be asked.

This aspirational pedagogy, as Anderson and Dunn (2013, p. 9) describe educational drama, offers a utopian space (Busby, 2021; Prendergast, 2016) that can help students discover, through their work, new ways of engaging with the processes of their own change (Djikic et al., 2009). “If we behave differently,” Neelands (2006) writes, “if we see how we
can ‘act’ upon the imagined worlds of our drama, then perhaps we also begin to see how the ‘real’ world can be ‘acted on’ and changed” (p. 55). Here is artistic pedagogy at work. Through reflective practice, students may begin to consider a less dependent and more productive relationship with digital media as they find their voices for effecting that change in the world. By exercising the very attributes—personal and collective—that nurture chance, we all may learn to keep its doors open to the unexpected spaces of possibility. In the rush to confine us to a world narrowed to what we know and can know, it is the arts that offer us the visual, aural, and sensual stages on which to explore what the world may offer—it is that search that keeps us human. “Teaching,” write Davis, Sumara, and Luce-Kapler (2008), “is not merely maintaining what is known, but about … expanding the space of the possible and creating conditions for the emergence of the as-yet unimagined. The emphasis is not only on what is but what might be” (pp. 171). We are buoyed always by Paulo Freire’s (2014) belief in the opportunities for hope and in John McGrath’s (2001) vision of theater as yeast for an active democracy.

Note

A number of Deans of Business Schools (University of Alberta; University of British Columbia, Queen’s University) suggest that the term “soft skills” should no longer be used because, in the words of one, “there is absolutely nothing soft about them, they’re actually really, really hard.” Another remarks, “they are not skills you can teach from a traditional book sense. It has to be done in a much more experiential way” (Johnson, 2019, B11).

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Drama in education as artistic pedagogy


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