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**7. DRAMA BOREALE –  
PERSPECTIVES ON DRAMA EDUCATION  
IN FINLAND AND NORWAY**

*Struggling for a Place in the Educational System*

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explore how drama education has been developed within two Nordic educational contexts during the past four decades. It provides an overview of the extensive attempts carried out for the purpose of establishing a place for this art subject throughout the school systems in Finland and Norway. It describes how a knowledge base for drama and theater education is constructed: through political work aiming at including the subject in school education through practice and research, through associations for drama and theater education, and through the development of study programs and curricula. This analysis introduces drama as an art form and a pedagogy with the specific aim of supporting learning and contributing to the exploration of the human condition.

Finland has a long and quite strong tradition of school theater and amateur theater. Even longer is the oral performative tradition of reciting poetry (*runolaulu*), with the performer singing lyrics from the national epic *Kalevala*. Norway also has a proud tradition from Nordic mythology, but this has been a reading drama or a storytelling tradition. In Norway the tradition with school theater and adult amateur theater can also be identified as characteristics of theater art brought into educational contexts. In both countries the strong performative traditions from the indigenous Sami people are attracting renewed interest as part of world cultural heritage. Until not so long ago, however, this story was also a narrative about the oppression of such cultural values as the Sami languages, Sami drums, shamanistic drumming, the song tradition called *joik* or *juoigan*, and the Sami tradition of clothing and crafts called *duodji*. These cultural traditions combined with a strong influence from some sections of the Lutheran church have been discussed with a high level of engagement, focusing on such aspects as the corporeality of drama and dance.

When drama was introduced into educational settings the progressive pedagogy of John Dewey was a great inspiration. He emphasized that education is education for democracy, and he wanted children and young people to learn about democratic values by participating. Dewey was a spokesperson for child-centered education and promoted inquiry-based learning. One of his core notions is experience, and especially the transformation of perceived reality into an experience by elaborating it using esthetic means, thus making it an esthetic experience (see Dewey, 1934/1980; 1938/1963; 2009). During his lifetime Dewey was much debated in the United States, as was also the place of drama in educational settings. This issue continues to be questioned, debated, and appreciated.

Another debate, which is more Anglo-American, is based in the name of the subject in educational contexts. This debate has to do with the introduction of “drama” as the name of the school subject instead of the name “theater.” The discussions, battles, and understandings of what drama and theater are, or could be in children’s and young people’s lives in the educational and arts educational context, has been very engaged from those involved. We juxtapose the presentation of two images of drama education: one from the 1970s and the other from the present, soon two decades into the twenty-first century. The battle for drama in education is a battle that is highly western and international, but necessarily also gradually more global. This is clearly echoed in Nordic voices about drama in education (see Rasmussen & Østern, 2002).

#### PERSPECTIVES ON DRAMA AND THEATER EDUCATION

In 1979 Gavin Bolton from the United Kingdom published *Towards a Theory of Drama in Education*. There he distinguished four different ways of using drama in an educational context: short drama games, dramatic playing, theater, and drama for understanding.

Drama for understanding can imply use of the three aforementioned forms of drama, but the main point with drama for understanding is to reflect in action, and on action regarding the process drama elaborated based on a pretext. Learning through drama for understanding is focused on transformation of the participants’ attitudes regarding a phenomenon, toward a new and more complex understanding. Bolton was strongly inspired by Dorothy Heathcote’s design of explorative drama forms summed up as Drama in Education (DiE). In DiE different conventions were used in order to obtain insight and find “brotherhoods.” This kind of montage was quite stylized and built on cooperation. It should always include meta reflection both within a role and outside of it. Process drama is a genre based in this drama form. It is assumed that Heathcote was inspired by Berthold Brecht’s notion of *Verfremdung* (alienation), as well as his political ideas about becoming aware of how society functions, and thus possibly participating in change. Another genre is devising, which is (more) product oriented, and where the collage forms from process drama are developed with some kind of narrative thread. In devising the group participates in the production of the performance, which is often site specific and community based.

The other image from the period we wish to bring forward is from the twenty-first century. What has happened since Bolton wrote his book? According to him it is quite clear. In 2000 Bolton gave a keynote speech in York titled “It is all theatre!” that was subsequently published in *Drama Research* (2000). He had then also published a popular version of his doctoral thesis *Acting in Classroom Drama* (1998). The positioning of drama as an arts subject has been a main trend in drama education throughout the beginning of the twenty-first century as illustrated by the following examples.

At Aarhus University in Denmark more continental influences are visible in thoughts regarding drama pedagogy developed and inspired by performance theory, dramaturgy, theater anthropology, and system theory. Janek Szatkowski, Ida Krøgholt, and Niels Lehmann have all promoted these traditions in their thinking and writings. It is not unexpected that Jan Fogt and Charlotte Fogh from Metropolia Polytechnic in Copenhagen in 2015 describe theater as a dying art form. They are engaged in the ongoing rapid changes in society that already have shown how fictionalizing, staging oneself, and using different kinds of autobiographical material in performance question what kind of theater that has something to say to people in contemporary time (Fogt & Fogh, 2015). This is called a performative turn and is connected with a focus on corporeality and a new emergent esthetics (see Fischer-Lichte, 2008), where the theater is no longer dominated by text. It is called post dramatic (Lehmann, 2006). Different kinds of concrete actions and multimodal symbols have taken the place of the verbal. Cross over and fusion of different art forms are also prominent in schools. Kristian Knudsen in Trondheim in his Ph.D. project elaborates a possible renewal of drama pedagogy connected to how young people stage themselves in social media. He wishes to renew drama education, re-conquer its artistic potential, and include fragments, episodes, a mixture of the virtual, and the “real” into a drama pedagogy for contemporary time (Knudsen, 2015).

With these short overviews of a landscape in flux and change, this chapter will turn to look at the development of drama in educational settings during the last fifty or so years in Finland and Norway. Initially the focus is on the level of national frameworks for both school and teacher education. Then it shifts to the work done by individuals and associations to promote drama in education. This is followed by a look at how drama is implemented in the school curriculum in elementary and lower-secondary education. Intermediate studies in drama and theater focused on education are then treated, this being followed by a survey of research done or in the making on drama and theater education. We conclude with a discussion regarding how our chosen contexts connect with or are different from each other, even though both exemplify the Nordic community (called *Drama Boreale*) in drama education.

#### METHODOLOGY

In the next sections of this chapter the exploration is guided by the following problem formulation: How has drama education been included in education in Finland and

Norway over a time frame extending from the 1970s to 2016? The main problem thus leads to an examination from the perspective offered by the following four subproblems: Who is to be taught drama education? Who has the right to define drama education concretely in the light of national and local curricula? What role is drama thought to play in young people's lives inside school, or, perhaps, does it play any role at all there? Who has the right to teach drama and with what competence?

In an article in the journal *Research in Drama Education* regarding Nordic curricula for drama and theater at different educational levels, Österlind, Østern, and Thorkelsdóttir (2016) did a document analyses of the art subject drama/theater in the Nordic countries. The subject status for drama is so far achieved only in Iceland in compulsory education as part of the key learning area in the arts. At all other stages drama is an optional choice or integrated as a means of promoting learning in other subjects.

This study presents the state of the drama education field in Finland (with an aside to theater education), and in Norway (where drama and theater education are included within the same frames). It draws its conclusion with a discussion of what has been achieved and what could be the options in a future perspective. The methods used for analyzing and finding answers to the research problems are document analyses, and experience-based narratives about the development, including conversations with some of the key persons in the field under study. This study utilizes experience-based narratives because all three authors are also participants in the story they are about to relate.

The present study establishes the limits of its analysis to elementary and lower-secondary education as well as teacher education including drama as a subject. Thus, upper-secondary education will not be included, even if it is interesting that students can choose to specialize extensively in drama/theater during their upper-secondary education. In Norway there are twenty eight upper-secondary schools offering drama as a study program throughout that level. In Finland theater art can be chosen in several upper-secondary schools with from two to about ten courses in theater art leading to a diploma in theater art. Another rather extensive arena for theater studies is the optional extra-curricular activity called cultural school in Norway and basic arts education in Finland (see Österlind, Østern, & Thorkelsdóttir, 2016).

The authors notice the limitation of perspectives on the theme studied, having clearly focused on two universities in Finland. The picture given of Norway is also limited, but more general, it being based on available information on the Internet. This was combined with critical reading of the Norwegian parts by key persons in Norway.

#### DRAMA AND THEATER EDUCATION IN FINLAND

School theater has been a part of the Finnish school culture, although neither school theater nor drama has status as a subject in the core curriculum in comprehensive school. In the national curriculum from 1982, an optional subject called "expressive

skills” was introduced at the upper-secondary level. The Ministry of Education approved intermediate studies for becoming a qualified teacher in expressive skills. This instruction was started at the University of Jyväskylä and the current studies in drama education have evolved from this.

Several attempts have been made to suggest drama as a subject in elementary and lower-secondary education; one such attempt was made around 2000 to form a subject called “drama,” which was seriously debated and had sufficient support from the ministry, but not enough in the parliament. An expert group working on the document *Perusopetus 2020* (Basic education 2020) has formulated a proposal for the national core curriculum (OKM, 2010). One of their proposals was to improve the status of and training in drama. They proposed drama as a new school subject in the Finnish school system for the next national curriculum. The main objectives for this subject were to encourage, promote, and develop students’ skills in expressing themselves through drama and theater, in addition to being able to interact constructively with different people and groups. For the purpose of developing drama and theater education as well as students’ skills in a systematic and meaningful way, drama was to be separated from mother tongue instruction. The expert group’s proposal for drama as a subject was not implemented due to political resistance. However, the teaching of drama remains an issue in Finland. In the current *National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014* (FNBE, 2016) for grades one through nine drama has its own important role and learning goals. The transformation of Finnish schools in general is also a frequent topic of international discussion (Lankinen, 2010).

*The Role of the Finnish Drama and  
Theater Education Association FIDEA*

In 1972 an association called the Association for Creative Activity in School was founded in Finland. This association changed its name in 1991 to ILKA, an acronym for expressive education or drama pedagogy, and in 2001 its name became FIDEA, as part of the world association IDEA. FIDEA does not have many members, their current number being approximately 200. Nevertheless, it has had an impact, being the contact link to the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) and to the Ministry of Education. After the *Drama Boreale* conference in Jyväskylä in 1997, the association formulated an appeal to FNBE and the Ministry of Education, stressing the need for a professorate in drama pedagogy, a need for drama teacher education, and a place for drama as both an art subject and a form of work in elementary and lower-secondary education. In 2009 the association renewed the appeal to the same instances, now claiming a place for theater art as a subject at these levels.

A special feature of the Finnish attempts to develop drama in education stems from a tradition with lecturers of speech expression in teacher education. Some of these lecturers were often interested in developing their positions into lectureships

in drama. This was particularly the case in Jyväskylä and Vaasa (see Arnolds-Granlund, 2009; Laakso, 2004). A local drama curriculum has been developed and applied in Oulu (Laukka & Koponen, 2014). A proposal for a complete national drama curriculum for the comprehensive school grades one through nine has been developed in Helsinki (Toivanen, 2015, pp. 239–271).

*Drama in the Current National Curriculum  
for Finnish Comprehensive Schools*

Drama in the current Finnish national core curriculum is mainly connected with teaching literature and interaction skills in the Finnish (or Swedish) language, but it has also been proposed as a teaching method for many other subjects (e.g., history, language subjects) (FNBE, 2016). In Finland drama is defined both as an art subject and as a teaching method or a pedagogy. The current curriculum underlines interaction, collaboration, creativity, and students' active role in learning (ibid.; Toivanen, 2015). The concept of drama in education in the Finnish comprehensive school system (grades 1–9) includes all forms of theater for educational purposes: performing theater, participatory theater, and applied theater in use in the learning environment (Toivanen, 2012b; 2015).

The current curriculum framework emphasizes that active involvement of the participants in the drama process is essential. Drama uses elements of the theater art form for educational purposes for students of all ages, from first to ninth grade. In drama all students work as a group using the conventions or strategies of drama in devising short pieces of fiction (e.g., freeze-frames, teacher in role). Fictional roles together with time and space help learners to communicate their understanding in an esthetic way, to themselves and their fellow participants (Neelands, 2009; Neelands & Goode, 2015; Rasmussen, 2010). Drama incorporates elements of theater to facilitate cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development and learning, it being a multisensory mode of teaching and learning (Bolton, 1998, pp.198–200; Toivanen, 2012b). Drama work covers a wide range of techniques, incorporating physical movement, vocal action, and mental concentration. The current Finnish national core curriculum confronts teachers and teacher education with a challenge. A group of teachers can acquire the competence needed for teaching drama through their own efforts. However, the majority of teachers lacks studies that would give them the competence needed to teach drama effectively.

*Drama Teacher Education in Finland*

The ideas of drama education spread to Finland from Great Britain and Scandinavia in the early 1970s, gradually becoming a part of teacher education at the Universities of Jyväskylä and Helsinki, and at Åbo Akademi. However, it took nearly two decades to establish the subject as an academic discipline, and the first Ph.D. students in drama and theater pedagogy graduated at the turn of the twenty-first century.

This section focuses on drama education, primarily concentrating on two universities, Jyväskylä and Helsinki, which are central in the development of teacher education with studies in drama education. Some other universities, including the University of Oulu, the University of Tampere, the University of Eastern Finland, the University of Lapland, and Åbo Akademi, also offer basic studies in drama education. The University of Tampere offers a master's program in drama and theater research. This program can include studies in Finnish language and literature and thus also be combined with pedagogical studies for teacher qualification. Two universities of applied sciences (*ammattikorkeakoulu*) in Finland offer a four-year education for instructors in theater expression. These four-year studies qualify the students as teachers in the extra-curricular activities in theater education.

A master's program including pedagogical studies has been offered at the Theater Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki (TeaK) in Helsinki since 1997. Seventy three students have thus far completed their master studies and been qualified as theater teachers.

In drama teacher education the idea of an "integrative pedagogy" throughout the studies for achieving professional competence is the primary focus of attention at the University of Jyväskylä. The applied educational methodology of a subject area, including theoretical reflection, is currently at the center of teacher training at the University of Helsinki.

#### *Drama Education and Research at the University of Jyväskylä*

The strongest period of establishing studies in drama education at the University of Jyväskylä took place during the teaching career of Lecturer Erkki Laakso. As an educated actor and teacher, Laakso had been impressed by the courses taught by Brian Way in the 1970s. Laakso brought the ideas of drama education into his own teaching and managed to include drama education in the study program of the Department of Teacher Education. This new program was to concern every student in the 1980s. At the end of the 1980s the Ministry of Education appointed the Faculties of Education and Humanities of the University of Jyväskylä to organize the national education of drama teachers. As a result, basic and intermediate studies in drama education started in 1990, thus giving drama education status of an academic discipline. In addition, two qualifying training programs were established to produce the necessary number of qualified drama teachers.

The 1990s and 2000s were decades with strong development in drama education at the University of Jyväskylä. The first lecturer in drama pedagogy in Finnish teacher education was appointed in 1995. The teaching program included process drama and theater work. In 1997 the first Nordic *Drama Boreale* conference convened in Jyväskylä, Finland (Teerijoki & Taskinen, 1997). Several highly esteemed international drama pedagogues, including Pamela Bowell, Nils Braanaas, Sandra Hesten, David Hornbrook, Andy Kempe, Jonothan Neelands, Cecily O'Neill, Allan Owens, Janek Szatkowski, Bjørn Rasmussen, Kari Heggstad, Stig Eriksson, John



Somers, and John O'Toole, visited and held courses in the 1990s and 2000s. With the establishment of a chair as professor in drama education in the 2000s drama education seemed poised to become an essential part of teacher education.

The advanced studies and Ph.D.-level courses in drama education were started. Nearly one hundred master's theses and several doctoral theses were produced with a drama education theme. Eventually research and publications in drama education remarkably increased (see Østern, 2001; Østern, Teerijoki, & Heikkinen, 2003). For example, Østern (2004) contributed to the development of a theory of drama education, introducing the construction of a metaphor for drama, classification of genres in drama, as well as developing analytical dramaturgical thinking. The research on serious playfulness by Heikkinen (2002) was also an important step in this development, especially in the Finnish language literature of drama education.

Since 2009 the organization for teaching drama education at the University of Jyväskylä has been the Open University of the University of Jyväskylä. The drama teachers at the Open University had had intensive cooperation with colleagues at the Department of Teacher Education and the Faculty during these years from the beginning of the curriculum planning for drama education studies in 1993. Ultimately the Open University could start offering basic and intermediate studies in the 1990s for teachers and others who were interested in drama education. Since 1993 the Open University has organized basic studies in drama education with their partner institutions in over forty localities, and since 1996 it has organized intermediate studies in ten cities. Annually, there are on average ten cooperative partners in addition to Jyväskylä and Helsinki. Until now, approximately 600 teachers have completed their qualifying studies as drama teachers at the Open University. It can be stated that the Open University of the University of Jyväskylä has been one of the most significant institutions in educating qualified drama teachers in Finland, as the required intermediate studies have not been available in any other University, apart from the Theater Academy, Åbo Akademi University in Vaasa, and before 2009 the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Jyväskylä. In recent years the intake of students in drama education has increased rapidly at the Open University, since teachers wish to improve their teaching to become more comprehensive. In addition, they have taken into account the national core curriculum for 2014.

In addition to the extent of the availability of drama education studies, the Open University has been developing the formula and the content of drama education in cooperation with the Department of Teacher Education. This has also included careful quality control. All the teachers in the partner institutions have to be approved by the Faculty. The curriculum and the required assignments are equal in all teaching localities, and the Open University takes care of the coordination. The students have to apply for these studies, showing their suitability for teaching drama. As the studies in the Open University are addressed to people in full time work, the contact courses have to be arranged in the evenings and weekends. In this pedagogic and content development the starting points were the model of experiential learning in arts and the ideas of adult education (Kolb, 1984; Sava, 1993; Malinen, 2000). In addition, the



four basic elements of professional expertise, which are theoretical, practical, self-regulative, and socio-cultural knowledge, are taken into account (Tynjälä, Häkkinen, & Hämäläinen, 2014, pp. 992–994).

The main aim of the studies is to develop the competence and identity of a person who is an artist, teacher, and researcher. To achieve this goal, practice and theory are combined in a way that contact courses include active drama work when practicing drama skills and drama teaching skills. The experiences and knowledge thus gained are linked to theory by applying assignments with relevant references. In addition, the students' own projects in authentic learning environments, essays, network courses, and learning diaries play a central role. In all teaching and activities the core aspects are: (a) to find the connections between practice and theory through multilevel reflection; (b) to develop artistic-pedagogical thinking and skills; (c) to develop self-regulative knowledge, including metacognitive and reflective skills; and (d) to both understand and benefit from their socio-cultural knowledge. These aspects represent the model of integrative pedagogy (IP model) (see *ibid.*, pp. 992–994). They have also been the core lines in teaching future drama teachers.

Contemporary society, with its various ways of using social media and constantly improving educational technology, is under continuing attention in the development of the curriculum for drama education. For example, the ideas of flipped learning, where the core theoretical and/or guiding knowledge is mediated before the contact courses by video clips, are part of the syllabus (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). In addition, the relevant use of such digital resources as short film courses with tablet computers or peer-based learning in virtual environments, and some applications of social media, are used to enhance learning.

Societal interaction has long and strong traditions in drama education at the University of Jyväskylä. Cooperation with the Jyväskylä City Theater was established already in the 1980s with various kinds of cooperation, such as artists as teachers for students in drama education and students creating workshops for the audiences of the theater pieces. Cooperation with schools around the province has also been intensive throughout. The teacher students have taught process drama, Theater in Education, and so on not only for their students, but also for school teachers as a form of in-service education. As a current example of school cooperation seven so-called UNESCO schools are cooperating with drama students of the Open University in Jyväskylä. These prospective drama teachers are conducting their project studies by teaching process drama in those schools with themes such as child rights, human rights, and cultural education. In addition, cooperative projects inside the university have increased across faculty borders. Alongside these numerous projects, research in drama education has also been carried out. These research results have been disseminated through scholarly as well as popular publications.

*Research in Drama Education at the University of Jyväskylä*

As mentioned before, the University of Jyväskylä has been an active contributor to research in drama education from the 1990s upto the present. The doctoral theses have covered such topics as laughter in the theater (Herstad, 2001), serious playfulness (Heikkinen, 2002), the learning potential in process drama (Laakso, 2004), and drama as rehabilitation for speech and intellectually disabled people (Pulli, 2010). Recent research has focused on interactional procedures in teaching drama (Solin-Lehtinen, 2013; Jyrämö, 2013; Viirret, 2013; 2016) and in philosophical aspects of drama education (Uusitalo, 2016).

Connected to or inspired by the milieu at the University of Jyväskylä, several doctoral theses on early childhood education (Heinonen, 2000; Walamies, 2007), in process drama (Asikainen, 2003), and youth theater (Aaltonen, 2006) have also been defended. In fact, a recent overview made by Østern (2015, n.p.) based on a literature search resulted in a list of forty-two doctoral theses from different universities in Finland from the period 1995–2014. As of 2016 some fifty doctoral dissertations connected to drama and theater education, including at least eleven theses from the Theater Academy in Helsinki (University of the Arts Helsinki), have been published. Untamala's doctoral dissertation (2014) contains an overview of theater and drama education research in Finland.

*Teacher Education and Drama Research at the University of Helsinki*

The program of basic studies in speech and expressive education began in teacher education at the University of Helsinki in 1990 and this development has continued without interruption. At the beginning the basic studies were titled Speech and Expression Skills. In 2005 it was changed, becoming Drama Education. This subject has become an essential part of teacher education with research and publications. All elementary school and kindergarten students at the Department of Teacher Education have three ECTS credits of drama in their studies. Drama education is very popular as a topic for master's degree research. At the moment (2016) five doctoral theses are in preparation.

*Drama Education Research Projects at the University of Helsinki*

One of the research projects undertaken at the Department of Teacher Education tries to find answers to some of the challenges of drama teaching. Pedagogical interactions between teachers and students are very complex in all real-life teaching-studying-learning situations (Toivanen, 2012a, pp. 231–234). The potential complexity and diversity of creative processes in classroom drama make it even more challenging for teachers especially at the beginning of their drama teaching careers. In most other school subjects, the ways students work, move, and interact in classrooms are controlled by the teacher's actions. The teacher controls students' behavior by the layout of desks,

the choice of teaching materials, and scripted teaching methods. Movement around the classroom is restricted by the teacher's instructions. In contrast, classroom drama teaching usually starts with moving the desks aside. Working in drama takes place in open spaces. Open space, fiction, and drama techniques, as well as students' and their teacher's actions are the basic materials for the drama lesson. The aims of the current research project are to develop a theoretical framework for drama pedagogy.

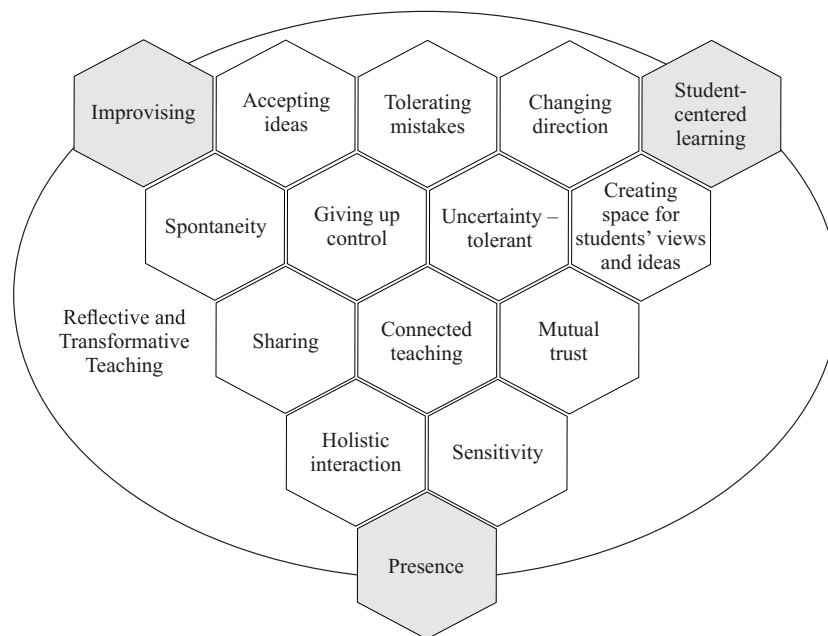
The following interpretation of the three aspects of drama education is based on Kansanen's (1999; 2009) triangle model of education. According to Toivanen (2012a, p. 229; 2015, p. 18), the model for drama education takes into account the specific nature of drama education and its working modes in three realities. A teacher using drama needs to be able to manage time, space, and people and to do so in both the social dimension (pedagogical level) of the classroom and the instructive level of education. The latter is connected to teachers' decision making in the teaching-studying-learning process interaction (making pedagogical decisions in action, managing fictional time, space, tools, etc.) and post-interaction (reflection). At the pedagogical level, teachers need to be able to relate to students, both individually and in groups within in the social dimension of education. The esthetic dimension of the drama art form includes esthetic doubling (fiction, creative actions, and reflection).

In the first studies of drama pedagogy at the University of Helsinki, Toivanen and his research group have conducted research on the relationship between drama and creativity, aiming to construct a theory of teaching supporting children's creativity in the context of drama education and classroom drama (Toivanen, Halkilahti, & Ruismäki, 2013; Toivanen & Halkilahti, 2014; Toivanen, Salomaa, & Halkilahti, 2016; Lehtonen, Kaasinen, Karjalainen-Väkevä, & Toivanen, 2016). The objective of the first theory-based article was to characterize the terminology used regarding creativity in drama education. Toivanen and associates (2013) delineated the context of classroom drama teaching (a creative environment) as a stage where there is space for individual creativity and, particularly, for collective group creativity to emerge.

The second and third studies were based on observed, videoed, and analyzed lessons. Their purpose was to determine whether teacher trainees and teachers specializing in drama education have succeeded in supporting student group creativity in drama lessons. In these studies the analysis was carried out by dividing the drama lessons into sections according to the drama work form used (warm-up game, concentration activities, used drama techniques, and ways of ending the lesson) (Toivanen & Halkilahti, 2014; Toivanen et al., 2016). Group creativity was simply defined as a process with the characteristics of group creativity (improvisation, collaboration, and emergence) presented by Keith Sawyer (2006; 2011; 2014). Although this study had only sixteen observed drama lessons, the conclusion suggests that drama teaching could support the student group creativity, since creative group work took up from thirty-four percent to ninety-one percent of the active working time in the observed lessons (Toivanen et al., 2016, pp. 50–51).

The fourth article brought together three doctoral studies of teaching drama (Lehtonen et al., 2016). This article presents three different approaches to how a

teacher could support student creativity in a drama class. The writers suggest that it might be beneficial for teachers teaching drama to have training in improvisation, to pay attention to the holistic presence and to focus on student perspectives, agency, and ownership in teaching. Developing the skills of disciplined improvisation in teaching should be part of drama teacher education. According to the research project conducted by Toivanen and associates (2016, pp. 41–44), one way to improve the skills of teacher students and teachers in creative teaching seems to be making use of drama and improvisation in teaching. The goal of the drama educational process in teacher education is to develop skills in drama methods as well as in teacher–student interaction. These skills are to be part of both the dialogue and of the broader group dynamics of listening to the group.



*Figure 1. Aspects of Creative Teaching in the Drama Class (Lehtonen, Kaasinen, Karjalainen-Väkevä, & Toivanen, 2016, p. 564)*

In [Figure 1](#) the model titled Aspects of Creative Teaching in the Drama Class, Lehtonen and associates (2016) put together the central elements of creative teaching that have evolved from the aspects of three approaches: presence, student-centered learning, and improvising. These are elements that the research group suggests should be taken into consideration when aiming to improve the practices of creative teaching in drama. The model and teaching of drama should be approached as a playful space that teachers could participate in with an orientation of serious

playfulness (see also Heikkinen, 2002; Huizinga, 1949). The elements can be used as pieces of playful culture and the participants in the playing need to consider what they have in their hands and what they should focus on. If they play with all the pieces simultaneously, they probably will not be able to manage the game and will lose. This seems to indicate that teachers must be encouraged to participate in the creative game of teaching drama, to take risks and throw themselves into the process, to critically reflect upon their experiences, and, finally, to develop their own ways to teach drama in creative ways.

#### DRAMA AND THEATER EDUCATION IN NORWAY

##### *Educational Policies and the Role of the Association for Drama and Theater in School, and of the Journal Drama*

The Nordic drama pedagogic journal *Drama* (from 1963) is now in its fifty-second year of existence, and it is in a way important to start there, because the main editor for the first thirty years of this journal was Nils Braanaas (Rasmusson, 2000). Braanaas was active in articulating the path for drama in education in Norway. He was active in the association for drama teachers and motivated by the fact that many of the members do not work in schools, but in the cultural field. This association was first called the Association for Theater in School (*Landslaget teater i skolen*). The name was subsequently changed to the Association for Drama in School (*Landslaget drama i skolen*), and then again to the Association for Drama and Theater Pedagogues (*Drama og teaterpedagogene*) in 2014. The persons promoting drama and theater in education have been interconnected through the association, the journal, and the developmental work done on intermediate studies. The association has, among many other appeals, delivered a text regarding a White Paper about the school of the future to the public consultation round (NOU, 2015).

The journal *Drama* has a Nordic editorial board. It is currently distributed to 1,350 members (and institutions). The journal has had such themed issues as the importance of audience, space, drama in elementary and lower-secondary education, criticism, drama work with asylum seekers, the drama programs in upper-secondary education, passion as a driving force, drama work in health institutions, Germany for inspiration, and performativity in youth culture. Developing a national drama network, a Nordic *Drama Boreale* network, and an international community (IDIERI and IDEA) have promoted the identity of drama and theater teachers and researchers.

Many persons have contributed to the political work carried out in order to try to include drama and theater in the national curriculum framework. It has been quite close several times, but so far drama/theater has not been an obligatory subject as part of the curriculum in elementary and lower-secondary education (grades 1–10). In 1985 it was “almost” included in the curriculum framework. In the 1997 curriculum drama was included as a part of the curriculum in Norwegian language. A “victory” was then that all teachers for grades one to ten starting from 1999 had to have a

minimum of thirty hours of drama in their education. Sæbø (2003) studied the impact of drama in elementary and lower-secondary education after the national curriculum framework of 1997. This curriculum included drama as one form of work. It was also named as a specialization area within the subject Norwegian. Sæbø wrote about the identity of the drama subject in the curriculum. She concluded that the core of the subject lies in theater art, but progressive humanistic pedagogy has contributed to the evolution of the subject in many ways: the art content from theater, the art-educational content from art education, the personal and social aspects from the general school curriculum, and, finally, the thematic content from different school subjects (p. 11).

The framework for teacher education of 2003 no longer included any art subject as a necessary part of the teacher education. The obligatory thirty hours of drama became optional. This has proved to have negative effects in terms of regarding drama as an important part of teaching in grades one through ten.

The national curriculum framework of 2006, called the *Knowledge Promotion* (KD, 2006), proposes of free choice of methods in education. In this document drama was mentioned as a form of learning and thus marginalized in the curriculum.

These changes emanated from the so-called PISA shock in 2001, when Norwegian teenagers scored only in the middle range among European and other international comparisons. Stress was then put on fundamental skills in reading, writing, speech, numeracy, and computer literacy.

In 2015 the White Paper called the *Fremtidens Skole* (the school of the future) was delivered to the Knowledge Department (NOU, 2015). This document has been discussed extensively and a new possibility seems to be available for including such arts subjects as drama and dance in the curriculum for elementary and lower-secondary education, perhaps as a learning area called Music, Drama, and Dance. This is because of the White Paper and the statement made there that more stress should be put on deep learning and esthetic issues. Practical subjects such as food and health, physical education, and movement should also have a more prominent place. Regarding the problems that the schools of the future will face, the expert group concludes that the challenges posed by climate change, multiculturalism, and incipient adulthood will dominate.

#### *Drama in School Education in Norway*

Drama/theater has not yet achieved the status of being a subject in elementary and lower-secondary education. It is an elective in upper secondary with an extensive curriculum (around 1,000 hours during three years). This has led to a quite impressive development of course books for the different minor subjects in drama and theater at the upper-secondary level. This is also the case for course books in teacher education. A few notable examples are Hammer and Strømsøe (2015), Heggstad (2012), Ibsen, Ibsen, and Ilsaas (1988), Reistad (1991a; 1991b), and Sæbø (2010; 2016).

The national curriculum framework for elementary and lower-secondary schools, which is called the *Mønsterplan 87*, mentioned drama as a method. It also suggests the possibility of drama serving as a link between subjects.

An elective choice called Audience and Stage (*sal og scene*) comprising fifty-seven hours a year has been available to secondary school students since 2012. This course may embrace different kinds of activities involving a stage and an audience, such as a musical, a performance of music or dance number, film making or an exhibition, or a drama club. Curricula for elementary and lower-secondary schools have been developed on a more local basis.

The municipality for a certain school can decide to have drama in the school curriculum. One example is Okstad School in Trondheim. Here, drama is a subject in grades one to four. The school has made this possible in Norwegian, physical education, religion, and music by slightly reducing the number of hours. The school has a drama teacher with competence in drama and theater, as well as extensive experience of using drama as a form of learning in other subjects. The drama teacher stresses cooperation among the students. The principal of the school considers the character-forming aspects as central when introducing drama as a subject in the school curriculum. Part of the motivation mentioned is that drama seems to enhance surprise, curiosity, and spontaneity among the students. Drama makes difficult themes accessible by a form of work based on exploration and understanding of the premises of young people. The students learn to give each other positive feedback. The teachers acquire valuable experience of students managing social interaction in different situations.

At present a group of drama and theater educators is working on a suggestion for inclusion of drama and theater as a subject in elementary and lower-secondary education. They negotiate on issues such as which would be the key elements of the subject – dramaturgy, staging, improvisation, and changes of perspectives – so that it would optimally promote empathy, mastering, and empowerment.

*Drama and Theater Education at Universities and  
Teacher Colleges in Norway*

As the analysis has shown so far, drama was an obligatory subject in teacher education for elementary and lower-secondary schools from 1999 until 2003, thus providing some basic insight into drama as an art subject and as a form of learning. Even if drama does not have status as a subject in the school curriculum, and is no longer in teacher education, the practices in different teacher education programs vary considerably.

One of the most extensive projects was carried out in order to raise the level of drama competence among teachers. This was a consequence of the place drama held as a method and a subject area within Norwegian language and literature in the national curriculum framework of 1987, called the *Mønsterplan 87*. Teachers were offered a two-year project with further education in drama.



In 1974 the first university-level studies started in Trondheim. Nils Braanaas was an actor and a teacher, who had been teaching at a progressive upper-secondary school in Oslo (*Forsøgsgymnaset i Oslo*). Since 1974 Braanaas served as a university lecturer in the University of Trondheim at the time, when it began to offer intermediate studies in drama, theater, and film. He designed lectures on drama pedagogical theory and history. These lectures were developed into an influential course book that has been revised many times (Braanaas, 2008). Another prominent initiator from the field of theater science was Jon Nygaard, who was an active designer of studies in Trondheim in the initial phase. His idea was to combine theoretical and practical studies of the craft (e.g., to stage theater performances). He also published books on theater history based on his lectures in the 1970s in Trondheim (Nygaard, 1992–1993). Gradually, film emerged as a separate university subject.

The first professor of drama, theater, and film in Trondheim was Viveca Hagnell, a Swede, who was appointed in 1978 (Hagnell, 1983). The advanced-level studies in drama, theater, and film started in 1979. In 2000 the professor of drama and theater, Bjørn Rasmussen, was appointed at the University of Trondheim, now called the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (*Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet*, NTNU). Drama and theater studies are placed in the Faculty of Humanities. Several associate professors and professors are at the unit today.

Another important site for drama pedagogy is Bergen University College. Actually, the first intermediate studies in drama pedagogy in Norway were launched there in 1971. Gradually Bergen has become a central place for drama education with a national hub function. The drama unit is, from a Norwegian perspective, quite big, with around ten people working there, including for the time being, two doctoral students. Similarly, quite many universities and university colleges have developed drama and theater studies in Norway.

In 2012–2013 the Association for Drama and Theater Pedagogues distributed a survey in order to map the amount of drama teaching in the institutions preparing elementary school teachers (Strand & Krosshus, 2013). The responses from eighteen teacher education institutions show great variations: seven of the institutions offer from thirty to 125 hours of obligatory drama teaching for the teacher students, while eleven of them offer up to twenty-seven hours of drama teaching. Several of the teacher education institutions report the introduction of two forms of teacher education. One of them is used in grades one through seven, the other uses five to ten hours with the material integrated into other subjects. This has led to a closer cooperation between the drama units and subjects. Many places offer teaching about drama as a form of learning integrated into subjects such as pedagogy, teacher's background knowledge of individual students, and Norwegian (*ibid.*, pp. 3–12).

*Master's and Bachelor's Studies in Drama and Theater Education in Norway*

*Master's Studies*

Norway offers several master's and bachelor's programs, the names of which differ:

- Drama and theater communication (Oslo and Akershus University College);
- Drama and theater (NTNU, Faculty of Humanities);
- Arts education (NTNU, teacher education program in cooperation with the DMMH kindergarten teacher education university college);
- Drama pedagogy and applied theater (Bergen University College);
- Arts subjects with in-depth study in dramatic art (Agder University); and
- Creative subjects and learning processes (Stord/Haugesund University College).

A professor of the field is usually in charge of the master's studies.

*Bachelor's Studies*

The aforementioned institutions with a master's degree in most cases also offer bachelor's-level (BA) studies. The names of the master's programs differ. The University College in Volda provides a BA in drama/theater. The Arctic University in Tromsø provides a BA in drama and theater. The kindergarten teacher education university college DMMH in Trondheim provides a BA in kindergarten teacher education with a specialization in drama, arts, and craft. The institutions mentioned previously also offer a one or a half-year study in their specialities. In the University College Oslo Akershus these include dramaturgy, story telling, masque work, figure theater work, and theater direction. In addition, the University of Stavanger offers sixty study points in drama.

This wide range of studies implies important things regarding quality and qualification. The teachers and artists who work at these institutions of higher education have a degree at the level of Ph.D. Chairs for professorates in drama/theater education have been established in Trondheim (NTNU and DMMH), Bergen, and Kristiansand. Due to a system offering possibilities to seek promotion to professor based on qualifications, Norway currently has about ten professors. The number of possibilities for studying drama/theater education in teacher education also implies that the competence level among drama and theater teachers is high. Finding qualified persons for the professorates remains a problem, but on the other hand too many qualified persons might apply for the other positions offered at teacher education institutions. This might be because of the changes in both the qualifications for becoming a teacher (no arts subject is required) and in the political focus being on core subjects such as mathematics, Norwegian, English, and science.

*Research and Development Projects in Drama and Theater Education in Norway*

The research in drama and theater education has so far resulted in about thirty Ph.D. dissertations in Norway. The central institution offering doctoral studies in drama and theater is the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

Hovik (2014) at the University College for Early Childhood Education (DMMH) has promoted artistic research in her Ph.D. project at NTNU, thus inspiring other colleagues to promote more artistically-oriented research. She is currently exploring interactive dramaturgies for children in the project SceSam. Reistad (1991a; 1991b) has written about children and theater, and Guss (2000) has studied children's dramatic playing from a performance perspective.

Engelstad (2004) at the University College South East has promoted forum theater in education, likewise Songe-Møller at the University of Stavanger in cooperation with Bjerkestrand at Oslo and Akershus University College. Aune (2010) has studied youth theater, Haagensen (2014) has written about devising, and Ulvund (2013) studies the teaching artist concept with Volda University College as her working place. Rasmussen and Kristoffersen (2014) have studied drama as character forming in secondary school.

An umbrella project embracing many teachers and researchers within the field (34 projects in progress) is called Drama/Theater and Democracy 2014–2017. This project is coordinated by certain professors at Oslo and Akershus University College, Bergen University College, NTNU, the University of Stavanger, and North University.

#### *The Nordic Conference Drama Boreale and the IDEA World Congress*

In this subsection the role of Nordic and international cooperation will be presented, because Norway and Finland are active in this networking. In the 1970s some important Nordic gatherings took place at the Nordic Folk High School on Biskops Arnö island in Sweden, and two Nordic courses about “body and articulation” were arranged at the Nordic Folk High School in Kungälv in Sweden. The first Nordic *Drama Boreale* conference was held in Gothenburg, Sweden in 1994. Since then this conference has been organized in every Nordic country at three-year intervals. In 1997 the venue was Jyväskylä, Finland, in 2006 it was Trondheim, Norway, and in 2009 it was Vaasa, Finland. These conferences have become important for the dissemination of good practices as well as for providing information about artistic and scientific research within the field of drama and theater education.

The Nordic Educational Research Association (NERA) is also a meeting place for arts education through the special interest groups (see Østern, 2004). The Nordic Conference plays a similar role in Subject Education (NoFa). Both of these work through annual conferences. The International Association of Drama and Theater in Education (IDEA) celebrated its first world conference in Porto, Portugal in 1992. The University College in Bergen hosted this world conference in 2001 (see Rasmussen & Østern, 2002). IDEA world conferences have been arranged every third year.

COMPARISON AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter would have benefited from a contribution from the other Nordic countries, since we have a good Nordic network, *Drama Boreale*, developing knowledge and inspiring colleagues within the field. This chapter has focused on two of these countries, because its authors have contributed to and are working in these two countries. There are many similarities between Finland and Norway regarding the development of drama and theater education. The development in Finland has also been supported by visits from Nordic colleagues. Especially Norwegian Nils Braanaas has had an impact in Finland through his book about the history and theory of drama, which Erkki Laakso has unofficially translated into Finnish for his students (Braanaas, 2008). When the Faculty of Education of Åbo Akademi in Finland accepted a study plan for a master's degree in drama education, it was planned in cooperation between Åbo Akademi University, Gävle University College in Sweden, and the Drama and Theater Unit at NTNU in Trondheim, Norway. These studies were, however, never realized because of a lack of funding. A master's degree program in drama and theater education, organized by the School of Education at Aarhus University in Denmark, was active for a few years.

With our descriptive analysis as a backdrop, we have made some concluding remarks concerning the findings. The obvious similarity between Finland and Norway is that drama has not yet achieved the long sought for status as a subject in the curriculum. The gatekeepers have mostly been political, but in both countries the already established art subjects of music, and arts and crafts might have been protecting their own status, at least earlier in Finland. Now there seems to be a change in attitudes. In Finland the current curriculum clearly supports drama as a form of learning in other subjects and in projects. In Norway a revision of the national curriculum framework, called the *Knowledge Promotion* of 2006, is making a difference in favor of the learning fields connected to drama and dance.

Another obvious similarity is the sharpening of the contours of the art subject drama, omitting many aspects connected with the pedagogical reduction of drama to one method. The importance of drama in education is connected to the power of the art form, and this has led to a change in the wording used when drama supports learning in other subjects and fields. The concepts used regarding drama for learning are at least drama methods (in the plural), but preferably drama as a form of work, or a mode of work, and in Norway the concept used is drama as a form of learning.

In Norway the number of positions in drama and theater education is far beyond that in Finland, and they cover the country well. In Finland the situation is more complex. At the University of Jyväskylä a professorship in drama pedagogy was established, but subsequently withdrawn. The Theater Academy (now the University of the Arts Helsinki) has professorships in dance or theater education and in artistic research. An adjunct professorship in drama education has been established at the University of Helsinki. It is notable that in Finland the decision has been made that theater teachers can only be educated at the master's level at the Theater Academy in

Helsinki and at Tampere University. Such restrictions do not exist in Norway, where different universities and university colleges also offer studies in drama and theater education at the advanced level.

The number of master's theses with the relevant themes of drama and theater education is quite high in both Finland and Norway. Finland has produced many more doctoral dissertations and from many of its universities than Norway has. As many of the Finnish dissertations are written in Finnish they are not so easily accessible for an international readership, and they are not included in the list of Nordic Ph.D. dissertations published by the Norwegian Association for Drama and Theater Pedagogues.

In Norway the Association for Drama and Theater Pedagogues has been and still is quite strong. It has contributed in substantial ways to the discussion on educational policies. Its national network contributes information regarding the status of drama education using the channel of the journal *Drama* as well as annual network meetings. In Finland FIDEA does not have so many members, but the association has actively contributed to the discussion on educational policies.

In both countries the impact of key persons has been huge. Most of them started without a doctoral degree, and they were driven by their ideological wish to promote democracy, equality, and solidarity. They were also driven by their educational ideals and their passion for drama and theater as a central part of a character-forming education. To a high degree, these persons have started to conduct research, but they have achieved a doctoral degree quite late in their career, or even after retirement. This tells a story of its own, specifically that these central contributors have learned that it is necessary to have a solid research-based foundation if they are to have a say when decisions are made regarding place and impact in education.

This chapter has focused on drama and theater in school education, on opportunities for drama and theater education, and on drama teacher education in two countries, Finland and Norway. It has not described the whole array of drama and theater educational practices in cultural schools, kindergarten, upper secondary, amateur theater, other professions, or in different cultural contexts outside school. A huge and influential field still remains to be described and explored. What connects all these cultural contexts is the wish to investigate the human condition and thus contribute to the development of society. The present chapter has elaborated the guiding questions posed in the paragraph about problem formulation. This study suggests that drama education be thought of as something for all school students. The right to define drama education concretely regarding national and local curricula depends on educational policies more generally. The role drama is thought to play in young people's lives inside school, or if it is to play any role at all inside school, is still under debate. What has been achieved is a common understanding of the need for subject specific competence for drama teaching.

As a concluding remark, the authors wish to note that a space still remains to be filled for Nordic cooperation regarding research and development within the field of drama and theater education.

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