

Call for Papers: Special Issue Dec 2024

Submissions are invited for a Special Issue of Education in the North

Drama Conventions in Educational and Applied Settings

Conventions are widely used in drama practice, in both educational contexts and applied drama settings.

In their influential book *Structuring Drama Work*, Jonothan Neelands and Tony Goode (CUP 2015) state that drama conventions “are indicators of the way in which time, space and presence can interact and be imaginatively shaped to create different kinds of meaning in theatre” (p. 3). The use of conventions, they argue can be seen as “part of a dynamic process that enables participants to make, explore and communicate meaning through theatre form” (p. 1).

Dorothy Heathcote published a list of some thirty-three conventions in her article, Signs and Portents, in Liz Johnson and Cecily O’Neill, eds: *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected writings on education and drama* (Hutchinson 1984) (A first version of this article, Signs (and portents?), was published in *SCYPT Journal*, No. 9, 1982, pp. 18-29.) She said that they were designed “to enable children to become involved in drama experiences of many types” (1984, p. 165), in TIE as well as classroom drama.

Heathcote stated:

Obviously in the THEATRE, an amazing control over conventions is possible. It therefore offers a teacher in classroom a most remarkably rich field. The convention in THEATRE is an agreement to the form at any given moment. I seek to translate this into my classroom. (1985)

However, Heathcote also asserted that “the conventions are as yet the least understood and used in Mantle of the Expert style of teaching” (2010).

Other authors have written and incorporated conventions into their work, for example: Jindal-Snape et al., (2023), McGregor & Anderson (2023), Baldwin & Galazka (2021), McNaughton (2016), Lewis & Rainer (2012). Clark et al. (1997).

Conventions are sometimes described as strategies and techniques by authors in the field, e.g. Readman (2022) and they have also been critiqued by some authors, e.g. Davis (2005 and 2014) and Bethlenfalvy (2020). Fleming (1995, p. 3) has argued that “these techniques can be used in a way which gives pupils and class a rather unsatisfying,

fragmented experience.” In Clark et al. (1997, p. 130) it is underlined that conventions need “to be used with a proper regard for questions of internal coherence”, and Neelands emphasises that the conventions “are the palette of colours, but they don’t make a picture. You know, it’s how you then put the brush in and make the picture which is the point” (Cooper, 2019). Recently, Cziboly, Lyngstad and Zheng have focussed on how international respondents describe their experiences in working with conventions and on different academic receptions of the conventions approach (2021 and 2022).

At the *Dorothy Heathcote Now International Drama Conference 2023*, we revisited the use of drama conventions in different contexts. This special edition of *Education in the North* seeks contributions that can add to the discussion. We anticipate that some contributions will emerge from the conference itself. Topics might include:

- The relationship between the Heathcote and Neelands/Goode conventions
- Applications and uses of conventions in different contexts
- How conventions draw on theatre form
- Is there a difference between strategies, techniques and conventions?
- Analysis of conventions as distancing devices, to make strange
- Uses of Heathcote’s conventions in Mantle of the Expert
- Uses of conventions in devising processes leading to theatre work.

Different types of submission are possible:

- Articles dealing with research findings that have not been submitted or published elsewhere (up to 8000 words);
- Features which describe on-going or completed research and/or practical drama projects (up to 4000 words).

We anticipate that the issue will include not only academic texts, but also pieces by drama practitioners who might take a more practical approach – for example, they may present a record of work they have undertaken, or conference workshops etc.

We welcome the incorporation of multimedia elements (images, video, etc).

Please refer to the journal website www.abdn.ac.uk/eitn/information for author guidelines.

We are especially interested in publishing work in Indigenous and minority languages as the journal has a proud tradition of publishing work in Scottish Gaelic over the last 50+ years.

Submission Deadlines

1. Expression of interest and 500-word abstract sent to eitn@abdn.ac.uk by 31st October 2023
2. Submission of manuscript sent to eitn@abdn.ac.uk by Friday 19th January 2024.

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