

International Conference

# THE PARTICIPATION EFFECT

Perspectives on

## THEATRE IN EDUCATION

09 of December 2022

Event organized by the  
Theatre Pedagogy M.A. within the project

**Caravana UNATC, artă pentru tineri creativi**

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# THE PARTICIPATION EFFECT

## PERSPECTIVES ON THEATRE IN EDUCATION

opening  
speech

**13:00 - 13:10**

**Dr. Bogdana DARIE, Professor at UNATC**  
*Opening of the conference*

EN  
presentation

**13:10 - 14:10**

**Persephone SEXTOU, Professor at Canterbury Christ Church University**  
*Applied Theatre in Paediatrics. Performing in Confined Spaces: the hospital as a 'stage'*

EN  
presentation

**14:10 - 14:35**

**Dana ROTARU, Associate Professor at UNATC**  
*Performing in the Classroom*

EN  
presentation

**14:35 - 14:55**

**Ana VICOVAN, PhD student at UNATC**  
*The special need for connection through art in children with chronic illness*

EN  
workshop

**15:00 - 18:00**

**Persephone SEXTOU, professor at Canterbury Christ Church University**  
*Performing in confined spaces: the hospital as a stage*



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# ABSTRACTS

**Persephone  
SEXTOU,  
Professor at  
Canterbury  
Christ  
Church  
University**

APPLIED THEATRE IN PAEDIATRICS. PERFORMING IN CONFINED SPACES: THE HOSPITAL AS A 'STAGE'

This presentation discusses applied theatre performance for hospitalised children with chronic conditions (long-term patients) in confined spaces such as hospital wards and hospices in England. It consists of 2 parts. PART 1: I will first share my philosophy about the need for applied theatre research in the community. Then, I will present the values and aims of my research to demonstrate that bedside theatre performance with digital technology can help improve hospitalised children's wellbeing and can assist adults access and better understand children's emotional experiences and needs. Next I will talk about audience participation, the transformation of hospital space to a 'stage' and how the actor's body and voice can adjust to the needs of the space and the synergistic 1:2:1 participation with children bedside. PART 2: To illustrate the above, I will share the Rocket-Arts research project as an example of my practice that took place before and during COVID-19 in UK hospitals. As the digitalisation of the arts is very much at the core of discussions, I will share our bespoke film for children in hospital during the pandemic 'Here I am flying' and some of the findings at a glance. For example, such as the children's feedback in evaluation forms, their drawings and one of the stories they told us in response to and inspired by Rocket-Arts. The complexity of this interdisciplinary approach to performance in collaboration with healthcare may raise various questions that could be explored with the audience during the Q&A session.

*Persephone Sextou* is a Professor in Applied Theatre for Health & Well-being with a digital agenda. With a 27-year of experience in Higher Education in the U.K. and abroad, she is focused on innovative, interdisciplinary, creative research and scholarship with a social and cultural benefit. She developed a research model of bedside storytelling theatre performance while exploring how advanced modelling, co-simulation, and Augmented Reality (AR) & Virtual Reality (VR) model-based systems engineering can support vulnerable hospitalised children and terminally ill young people and deliver patient-centric digital solutions in health and palliative care in England and Australia.



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# ABSTRACTS

**Dana  
ROTARU,  
Associate  
Professor at  
UNATC**

## PERFORMING IN THE CLASSROOM

The presentation proposes a reframing of education through theatre for pre-academic students (children, young people, teenagers and their teachers) in Romanian mass education and discusses the social dimension included in the educational approach, reaffirming the importance of experiencing through (theatrical) play any themes and sub-themes of study or school tasks, and especially the themes and issues arising from the needs of each child/young person/adolescent participating in the educational/social/human act when he/she/they work in school. The presentation discusses:

1. The importance of diagnosis and the steps to be followed in carrying out the diagnosis by the teacher leading the Drama Education workshop/class;
2. Selecting together (class of pupils and teacher) the topics of study through (theatrical) play/exercise;
3. Definition and analysis of the terms a. performing (action, functioning, theatrical/social/psychological play) and b. class of pupils.
4. Games and exercises to cultivate intimacy (defining intimacy which has nothing in common with sensuality or any other kind of sexual touching/physicalisation) and vulnerability in public, games and exercises to develop emotional and social intelligence. This study is based on my experience of more than 20 years working with children, youth, adolescents and adults, currently working with a sixth grade class (age 12-13) of a school in Bucharest.

*Dana Rotaru* is a lecturer at the Faculty of Theatre at UNATC I.L. Caragiale, Bucharest, an actress and theatre director. She stages, acts and promotes valuable Romanian drama and musical theatre in Romania, collaborating with the Bucharest Children's Musical Theatre, the Ion Dacian National Operetta and Musical Theatre, Nottara, Bulandra, TNB, but also with the independent venues The Fool, Godot, Spice Club, Elisabeta Theatre, National Military Circle, etc. She is a supporter of the independent theatre movement, staging original, 100% Romanian shows (The Amusement Park, Haşteg, Believe in Yourself!), but also classics (The Nameless Star).



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**Ana  
VICOVAN,  
PhD Student  
at UNATC**

## THE SPECIAL NEED FOR CONNECTION THROUGH ART IN CHILDREN WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS

The presentation follows an Erasmus+ mobility to Ireland, during the month of November, where Ana had the opportunity to intern with the award winning charity Helium Arts. The experience was multifaceted, from the team's research and preparation process, to the implementation of community workshops and everything in between. Observations from this experience highlight the importance and purpose of art as a process that engages children with chronic illness, but also the depth achieved when artists work together to reach a common goal driven by caring for those kids who feel unrelated to and like they can't relate to their peers in conventional circumstances and meeting their additional needs.

*Ana Vicovan* graduated in Acting from UNATC, class of 2011, followed by an MA in Performing Arts, class of 2013 and an MA in Theatre Pedagogy, graduating in 2019. In the meantime, she has taught English and led theatre workshops for various companies and educational institutions in Bucharest, working with children and adults of all ages. Currently, she is a UNATC PhD candidate, writing articles, attending conferences, assisting professors of the Theatrical Pedagogy department in their MA courses, and carrying out various artistic activities for children and teenagers, such as those diagnosed with chronic conditions or the patients in the paediatric oncology ward of the "Alexandru Trestioreanu" Oncology Institute in Bucharest, with the aim of improving their quality of life.



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