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### **Tuning Theatre Education**

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# TUNING DOCUMENT THEATRE EDUCATION

This tuning document has been produced by Prospero (the Theatre Section of the ELIA, European League of Institutes of the Arts) within the framework of the *inter}artes* thematic network, strand 2.

The following document is the final draft of the *Tuning Template* for Theatre Higher Education in Europe. This draft was prepared by Professor Anthony Dean (Dean of Faculty of Arts, University of Winchester, UK), Magnus Kirchhoff (Manager of Development, National Academy of Mime and Acting, Stockholm, Sweden), Professor Francisco Beja (Director, School of Music and Performing Arts, Porto, Portugal) in October 2006. Earlier drafts were disseminated as consultative documents across the membership of the Prospero Network and at the Prospero session at the ELIA biennial conference in Ghent (October 2006). Feedback received through this formative process has been used to shape this final draft.

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT AREA

To summarise and outline the characteristics of the subject area of Theatre (In many contexts the term 'theatre' is interchangeable with, or can be substituted by, the terms 'drama', 'performance' or 'dance theatre' as well as other variants. In this statement the term 'theatre' will be used to describe the totality of this broad and diverse subject) it is necessary to recognise that it is a multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary art form that embraces a wide range of subsidiary disciplines (e.g., acting, directing, scenography, technical theatre skills) which may be studied individually but that will normally be learned and/or applied within a multi-disciplinary context. Theatre is the only art form which articulates all the other arts, and which demands a knowledge and understanding of all the arts it contains. Theatre is a complex art form that presents students with a complex profile of learning opportunities and challenges. It should also be emphasised that the set of competences and understandings particular to training and education in this discipline area are also usefully applied beyond the arts and applied arts fields. Theatre programmes, therefore, play an active role in providing the necessary creative human capital required to meet a wide array of needs in our changing society.

Diverse approaches to theatre education replicate the diversity of the art form itself. This spectrum of approaches runs from the many vocational traditions – that imply intensive training with a high level of tutor-supervised study and a focus on training in skills and methodology within a tradition of craftsmanship – to the academic tradition, one that implies student-managed study with an emphasis on the development of intellectual skills and/or individual self-expression. Between these two poles lie a plethora of approaches that in different ways combine the two traditions. Diversity is vital both to practice and to training and education in the subject of theatre. The diversity of the theatre sector is balanced by

its great capacity to create communities – essential in this most social and sociable of art forms. Fundamental to theatre is the ability to unify disparate disciplines, and to manage the multitude of creative and relationship opportunities that arise through the process of production. If there is a single core competency required of all theatre-makers, it is the ability to collaborate and negotiate through this process.

The practice and conceptual bases of the range of Theatre Arts within the subject area are discrete, diverse and inter-related. They do not represent a stable or fixed body of knowledge and skills but are continually re-shaped and re-defined by changing social, political and artistic values and practices; it is the dynamic nature of these cultural practices and their frequently contested nature that sustains the vitality of the subject area. Given the diversity and dynamism of the subject domain it is vital that any definition of the subject does not constrain future innovation, nor should the continuation of well-established methodologies and engagement with traditional subject matter be threatened.

Theatre is studied as both a theoretical and practical subject and most programmes of study will seek to provide a blend of these modes according to the stated aims and outcomes of the specific programme. Theatre can be studied as an adjunct to literature (drama) or as a creative and expressive art form (performance), it can be studied as a means of developing a research career or for the purpose of entering the arena of professional theatre practice, or for the attainment of a specific range of knowledge, understanding and skills that can be effectively transferred into other fields of activity. For example, there are academies and conservatoires of performance and production where the focus is on nurturing and training the professional practitioner. There are also institutions where practice and theory are taught in varying proportions and with varying purposes and where the pursuit of scholarship and research, including practice as research, has a greater emphasis. This statement considers programmes of study that are taught in a range of institutions of higher education that have quite discrete missions and objectives for learning and teaching.

Theatre, and the study of theatre, has well established roots and practices which are reflective of the diverse and specific theatre traditions that co-exist and have cross-pollinated over both time and across geographical borders. For example, in recent years pan-European experiments in mime, physical theatre and dance theatre have helped to develop an agenda of inter-disciplinarity and have helped to promote a tangible understanding of theatre as a 'universal language'. Such advances are now beginning to challenge the privileging of the spoken text in many European theatre traditions that has, at times, inhibited the mobility of students – particularly at undergraduate level. However, the centrality of spoken language and/or culturally specific contexts within the art form continues to present particular challenges as far as student mobility is concerned and, in other ways, also inhibits the dissemination of practice-based knowledge and research.

Contemporary theatre practices retain a nature which is dynamic and mutable and, therefore, the subject is characterised by both traditional and contemporary conceptions of theatre and by new categories such as performance art, live art and installation work. All countries within the 'Bologna' Higher Education Area have long-established theatre traditions that, over time, have mutually influenced each other and shaped each others practices. Due to the fact that theatre has traditionally drawn together, or drawn from, other art forms (e.g., music, literature, fine arts and dance) it is often difficult to demarcate a clear boundary for the subject. The range and diversity of both provision across higher education and within the diverse range of theatre traditions and practices that exist across the Bologna area is extremely broad and it is the intention of this statement to encompass this range whilst also seeking to provide a clear indication of the kinds of creativity, knowledge, understanding, skills and methods of learning that are appropriate to the field of study.

### **Nature and scope of the project**

The subject domain of Theatre comprises a range of related methods, practices, disciplines and fields of study. In many instances the learning and teaching methodologies utilised in the study of theatre share common characteristics with those used within other subject domains. In order to be useful to its purpose, therefore, this statement seeks to identify the range of approaches and methodologies that can be considered to define the particular needs of this subject within higher education settings.

Broadly, the field of study includes:

- practical work experienced in the performance, creation, design and presentation of drama, theatre, performance, and production, and related areas, such as film, television and radio study, both in terms of process and product;
- theoretical studies (e.g., analytic, historical, critical, contextual) appropriate to the context of the award in drama, theatre, performance, and production, and related multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary areas;
- performance and production in relation to technologies (film, TV, video, digital sound and imaging); and,
- preparation for vocational destinations, including entrepreneurial skills.

The area embraces the study of the theatre traditions of non-western cultures and the cultural pluralism that informs historical and contemporary performance practice. New conceptual frameworks have arisen to challenge traditional ways of theorising practice such as, post-colonial and gender perspectives.

This field is characterised by the following range of common features:

- knowledge and understanding of the ways in which 'performance' originates, is constructed, circulated and received;
- 'embodied knowledge' and 'practice as research';

- the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding through processes of research, action, reflection and evaluation;
- practical, workshop-based learning is normally a feature of all theatre programmes. Practical learning involves active participation in the process and/or production and/or performance and/or technical construction and management;
- reflecting the public and community nature of theatre practice, particular emphasis may be placed on collaborative learning and heuristic principles, on 'learning by doing' in group contexts. Such an approach fosters a range and high level of communication and ensemble skills;
- study may embrace analysis of theory and of theatre texts, which may be written or notated. Equally, emphasis may be placed upon the study of the design and creation of performance as an event or process;
- research - practical and/or theoretical - is seen as a necessary requirement for engagement with all facets of performance and production practice and theory; and,
- the location of practice within an appropriate framework of informing ideas, history and skills;
- taking responsibility for presenting ideas and beliefs in the context of social and civic awareness.

Studies in Theatre are further informed by concepts and methods drawn from other disciplines such as anthropology, art and design, cultural studies, ethnography, history, literature, media studies, music, philosophy, politics, social policy and sociology. In turn Theatre offers its own distinct theories and practices to other fields of study such as, education, gender studies, business studies, social and health studies.

### 3.2 DEGREE PROFILES

A range of practice is currently seen in Theatre programmes with regard to the '*Bologna*' model of three cycles. While some countries adopted a three-cycle system model many years ago (e.g., UK & Ireland) others are at different stages of development, but in Theatre higher education there are no countries represented within the subject group where the Bologna process is not being discussed with a view to implementation.

#### Typical degrees offered in theatre

<b>First Cycle</b>	The focus of study at this level is on the acquisition and testing of established skills, competences and knowledge. Typical elements of this cycle include: practical studio work, staff/student directed productions, the study of the theory and history of theatre, critical analysis, self-reflection, research and professional practice.
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<b>Second Cycle</b>	Study at this level is informed by advanced self-critical thinking, critical theory and/or practice. Typical elements of this cycle include: practical studio work, self-initiated and/or self-directed performance or production projects, advanced study of the theory and history of theatre or specific aspects professional practice through the development of experimental production projects and public performances.
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<b>Third Cycle</b>	The outcome of study at this level is expected to make a significant contribution to the knowledge and/or practice of the subject. Typical elements of this cycle include: a self-initiated and self-directed programme of research and practice with a rigorous critical self-evaluation. PhDs in Theatre vary considerably in the weighting of written to practical work, in some cases the PhD is based significantly on the theatre practice in other cases it may be in the form of a written dissertation.
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### **Typical occupations of the graduate**

Different skills and knowledge are called for in the different destinations of graduates in this area. Common destinations include the professional theatre arts, the broader entertainment industries, the media industries, applied theatre arts, community work, education and scholarship. The particular quality of the graduate in this domain cannot be defined in the singular but will involve a range of both subject specific and general skills. The transferable skills of graduates in this domain are those much sought after in other environments such as business and commerce. These skills include those of communication (written, oral and performance), of research and analysis, presentation, the ability to work independently, interpersonally and in groups, to deadlines and under pressure, with flexibility, imagination, self-motivation and organisation.

<b>First Cycle</b>	By the completion of this cycle, students are equipped to enter some form of professional practice. Depending on vocational level and/or degree of specialism undertaken within their programme of study, they are prepared to enter the arena of professional theatre employment or a related field of employment for which the specific and transferable knowledge and skills they have acquired will have equipped them (e.g., arts administration, teaching and marketing). Completion of this cycle also leads to further study on postgraduate theatre programmes, teaching qualifications or cognate subjects.
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<b>Second Cycle</b>	By the completion of the second cycle (again depending on the specific focus of the programme) students will normally be fully equipped to enter practical and/or critical practice in the arena of professional theatre. Sometimes students follow a particular role or area of theatre (directing, dramaturgy, design, etc) in order to gain particular expertise required for highly skilled and demanding roles within the professional arena of theatre.
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<b>Third Cycle</b>	By the end of the third cycle, the student will have applied many of the competences realised at the second cycle towards the realisation of creative/theoretical work that makes a significant contribution to the development of the discipline. At this stage candidates may already be established in a career path and undertake further study in order to enhance and deepen their knowledge and research skills. A PhD in the area of theatre arts primarily equips students for an academic career but may also help them to develop their profile as a professional artist.
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### **Role of the subject in the other degree programmes**

There are traditional intersections between Theatre and other subject domains, and whose continuation acknowledges a general interdisciplinary focus in the arts and humanities. For example, dramatic texts and their context of production may be studied in departments of literature and in departments of drama. The study and practice of film, video, television and radio may be considered to be a fundamental component of some Theatre programmes, whilst also being available in programmes devoted to the study of communications and media. Theatre programmes often encourage this cross-fertilisation of subjects and believe that it contributes to a considerable enrichment of the students' learning experience.

## **3.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES - LEVEL DESCRIPTORS**

### **1<sup>ST</sup> CYCLE LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES**

<p data-bbox="295 1627 714 1665"><b>Technical/Artistic Skills</b></p> <p data-bbox="617 1669 1006 1707"><b><u>Skills in the specific area</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="295 1711 1088 1749">By the end of their studies, the students should be able:</p> <ul data-bbox="341 1753 1299 1900" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="341 1753 1299 1900">– to accomplish, both technically and creatively, the different challenges that the techniques, knowledge, research and (where appropriate) technical equipment places at their disposal in realising his/her expression within the context of a theatrical production;</li> </ul>
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- to collaborate in the interpretation of the ideas and/or intentions expressed within a dramatic text or devised performance scenario bringing these to a concrete realisation in a production;
- to respond creatively to the professional opportunities that the theatre, film and other related expressive forms provide them.
- to demonstrate their awareness of the value of research, the rehearsal process and experience of performance and/or production as a form of individual and collective development.

### **Skills of Ensemble**

By the end of their studies the students should be able to:

- contribute effectively to the collective accomplishment of a production and/or performance;
- operate effectively through a common professional 'vocabulary' while also being aware of the specificity of that vocabulary and the ways in which this enables the trans-disciplinarity of the individual disciplines involved;
- understand theatre, in a broad sense, as a transcendent reality where the techniques, expression and individual creativity, is revealed within a production.

### **Preparatory and rehearsal Skills**

By the end of their studies, the students should be able to:

- manage their personal tasks, of accomplishing pre-established goals, and also to define and set out collective objectives;
- demonstrate their awareness of the techniques of rehearsal and production methodologies, adapted to the creation and accomplishment of the performances;
- evidence that they have participated in the construction and public presentation of different theatrical creations.

### **Oral Skills**

By the end of their studies, the students should be able to:

- know how to use the specific vocabulary, as form of privileged communication among the several specialists intervening on a production;
- speak and write in an intelligible way about the concept and the intentions of the productions in which they have participated.

### **Professional Competences**

By the end of their studies, the students should be capable of:

- mastering the techniques, materials and necessary technical equipment to the accomplishment of a production within his/her specific area;
- the effective communication of his/her creative and artistic performance/production role to an audience.

## **Theoretical (Knowledge-based) Outcomes**

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the Theatrical Language**

By the end of their studies, the students should be:



- capable of understanding the fundamental elements of the theatrical language, and be able to contextualise these within the process of transition from the 'page to stage' through the analysis of texts, scripts or other blueprints for performance;
- able to interrelate theory and the practice within his/her specific area of study.

### **Contextual Knowledge and Understanding**

By the end of their studies, the students should be able to:

- understand the major reference points of theatre history and dramatic literature as it applies to their intended field of practice;
- place dramatic literature within different historical, ethno-social and artistic contexts;
- identify and recognise the work and thought of the key personalities of his/her specific area of intended practice, and of the theatre in general. They should be able to contextualise the different theoretical currents and aesthetics they represent;
- evidence that they possess a wide understanding of the technology appropriate to their discipline and how it can serve the theatre;
- understand the value of technological progress and its potential to optimise production procedures and processes, and potentially open new approaches and developments within their field of intended practice;
- demonstrate basic artistic administration skills that enables them to successfully develop a professional activity;
- evidence their awareness of the ethical considerations and implications that are appropriate to their intended field of practice;
- demonstrate an awareness of the need to continually develop and deepen their theoretical knowledge and understanding in order to support their continued development as reflective practitioners.
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### **Generic Outcomes**

#### **Independence**

By the end of their studies, the students should be able to:

- collecting, analysing and synthesising the information in the pursuit of an investigative attitude;
- engage in critical self-reflection, develop ideas and construct reasoned arguments;
- be autonomous, self-motivated and be able to self-manage while also supporting the interest of the performance/production as a whole.

#### **Psychological Understanding**

By the end of the studies, students should be able to make effective use of:

- their capacity to think and solve problems that are presented by

- production and/or performance challenges and opportunities;
- their emotional awareness, sensibility, imaginative and expressive capacities.

### **Critical Awareness**

By the end of the studies of 1<sup>st</sup> cycle, the students should:

- be critically self-aware;
- be able to apply their critical capabilities to the work of others;
- have developed a broad social and civic awareness.

### **Communication Skills**

By the end of the studies, the students should possess effective communication and social skills, including the ability to:

- work harmoniously and effectively with others on projects and/or activities;
- demonstrate skills in teamwork, the discussion of ideas, the organization of tasks and in their respect for established deadlines;
- present work in a clear and accessible way;
- demonstrate the appropriate skills in the use of information and communication technology.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> CYCLE LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES**

Technical/Artistic Skills

### **Skills in Technical/Artistic Expression**

By the end of their studies, the students must have acquired the capacity to:

- intervene in the multiple contexts of a theatrical production as: actors, designers (set, costume, lighting and/or sound), technicians, producers, etc, revealing themselves as creative professionals, demonstrating a technical maturity and artistic awareness adapted to the expression and realisation of their own expressive concepts;
- demonstrate an attentive, critical and creative commitment – during the production process – as a means of assisting in the development of a solid and consistent performance;
- recognise research as a form of accumulated knowledge and reflection, using the references found as the propellers of new ideas and aesthetics.

### **Skills in Technical/Artistic Autonomy**

By the end of their studies the students must have:

- acquired the capacity to lead others, developing leadership abilities in an expressive and creative way, necessary to the accomplishment of all new projects;
- the ability to organise and administer their own projects, managing both human and material resources appropriately while also meeting the required deadlines for the successful execution of a project in its different stages.

### **Oral Skills**

By the end of their studies the students should:

- be able to debate and reflect upon their own artistic projects in an articulate way;
- have the personal resources for presenting creative solutions, in their specific area, as an integral element of the whole production.

### **Pedagogic Skills**

By the end of their studies, students whose preferred option is the application of their theatre education to broader contexts (such as, education, community and social contexts) should have additionally acquired:

- the capacity to intervene in educational and artistic contexts as theatre/drama animators and they should reveal particular artistic and pedagogic maturity in this domain;
- secure and developed methodological competences and a mastery of a didactic knowledge in order to elaborate and apply programs structured for artistic-educational contexts.

## **Theoretical (Knowledge-based) Outcomes**

### **Analytical Competences**

By the end of their studies the students should have:

- consolidated the methodological and auto-reflexive competences developed in the 1st cycle, and they should be able to autonomously apply analytical tools to produce critical analysis.

### **Contextual Knowledge and Understanding**

By the end of the 2nd cycle, the students must have:

- deepened their knowledge and understanding of several genres and styles of Theatre, appreciating them in their historical and socio-cultural contexts as well as recognising the essential bibliographical references;
- the capacity to interrelate the theory and the practice in their specific area of study;
- a demonstrable understanding of, and intelligent involvement with, cognate inter-disciplinary elements, as well as to be able to apply knowledge, practices, concepts and abilities of other disciplines or artistic/scientific areas in an effective way.

## **Generic Outcomes**

### **Independence**

By the end of their studies the students must be able to demonstrate:

- an advanced capacity to work with a professional level of autonomy;
- critical reflection and originality in their creations through the collection, analysis and synthesis of information, and the generative development of ideas and concepts.

### **Self-Knowledge**

By the end of the 2nd cycle, the students must have:

- advance their capacity to make effective use of their imagination, knowledge and emotional understanding to work creatively towards the resolution of problems.

### **Critical Awareness**

By the end of the 2nd cycle, the students should be able to:

- demonstrate a critical and self-critical awareness fully structured;
- recognise their individuality as an original contributor within the work of the group.

### **Communication Skills**

By the end of their studies the student must have deepened their social and communication skills so as to be able to:

- co-ordinate projects or collective activities;
- direct teams and assume the direction of collective processes where necessary, assuring the organization and transmission of the information;
- present projects in an articulate and original way;
- collaborate effectively with other individuals in a variety of cultural contexts;
- demonstrate an ability to utilise Information and Communication Technology and the appropriate communication skills needed for the success their projects and activities.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> CYCLE LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES**

### **Key Subject Specific Competencies**

By the end of their studies the student should be able to demonstrate:

- original, independent and critical thinking, and the ability to develop theoretical and/or practical concepts in the field of theatre study or practice;
- a knowledge of recent advances in their own field of study and in related areas;
- the ability to self-direct a significant research project, based upon a clearly focused and well-founded research proposal;
- a mastery and understanding of relevant research methodologies, techniques and generative strategies and their appropriate application within the field of theatre research and/or practice;

- a broad understanding of the wider theatre context in which their research takes place and the ability to position the outcome of their research in relation to peer review and published, performed and other public outcomes;
- an ability to make a contribution which is at the forefront of developments in contemporary theatre practice or the contemporary study of theatre and/or its development, as well as within the wider cultural context.

### Key Generic Competences

By the end of their studies the student should be able to demonstrate an ability to:

- recognise and validate problems;
- critically analyse and evaluate their own findings/outcomes and those of others;
- apply effective project management through the setting of research goals, intermediate milestones and the prioritisation of activities;
- design and employ systems for the acquisition and collation of information and insight through the effective use of appropriate resources and equipment;
- identify and access appropriate bibliographical resources, archives, and other sources of relevant information;
- be creative, innovative and original in their approach to research, demonstrating flexibility and open-mindedness while recognising boundaries and drawing upon/utilising sources of support appropriately;
- constructively defend research outcomes, construct coherent arguments and articulate ideas clearly to a range of audiences, formally and informally through a variety of techniques;
- develop and maintain co-operative networks and working relationships with supervisors, collaborators, colleagues and peers, within the institution and in the wider communities of research and practice.

### 3.4 CONSULTATION PROCESS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The process of developing a 'tuning document' for theatre was undertaken by a steering group formed from members of 'Prospero' (the Theatre section of ELIA). In addition to consultation with the wider membership of Prospero, ELIA and others, the steering group consulted the following documents and papers:

- Towards a European Space for Higher Arts Education – AEC/ELIA;
- Four Years – Milestone Document 2004 - Towards a common framework for learning outcomes and levels of award in higher theatre education and teaching;
- On The Move – Theatre Bolognese?;

- Implementação do Processo de Bolonha – Artes do Espectáculo – MCTES, Portugal;
- Sector das Actividades Artísticas, Culturais e do Espectáculo – Instituto para a Qualidade na Formação – MSST, Portugal;
- Subject Benchmark Statements – Dance, Drama and Performance - UK;
- Subject Overview Report – Quality Assessment of Drama, Dance and Cinematics 1996/1998 – QAA, UK;
- Standards for Art and Design – HETAC, Ireland;
- The Dublin Descriptors;
- The pilot *inter}artes* questionnaire (the findings of this were also used to compile a draft set of Learning Outcomes).

After an initial draft of this document was obtained, a consultation process with colleagues started at subject specific meetings and international conferences.

### 3.5 WORKLOAD AND ECTS

In the milestone document *Four Years, ELIA On the Way to a European Higher Education Area in the Arts* (2004) Northern and Western Europe are identified as the most advanced in implementing ECTS or equivalent and compatible credit systems, with the exception of some countries where there remain concerns about the 3 cycle system and the relevance of a credit tariff.

In other countries progress was being made to convert to ECTS.

<b>First Cycle</b>	3 to 4 years 180 TO 240 ECTS
<b>Second Cycle</b>	1 to 2 years 60 TO 120 ECTS
<b>Third Cycle</b>	2 to 5 years?

### 3.6 TRENDS AND DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA IN THE FIELD OF THEATRE

As already outlined in the introduction, diversity is both a characteristic and core value of Theatre education and training. Programmes may have distinctive characteristics that are related to local traditions and the nature of contemporary Theatre practice in their locality. Institutions also vary a great deal in scale, the number of years that they have existed and in the way they are funded and/or managed within their national political context.

**A number of trends have been identified.**

- Theatre plays a major role as part of the cultural industries in most European countries. The different areas where acting skills are demanded are constantly increasing with the growing media industry; film, TV, commercials, events etc. This has set new challenges for Theatre educators, creating a healthy demand for new development and a questioning of traditional practice leading to a process of constant change. It has also caused many programmes to more explicitly recognise the value of entrepreneurship and the diverse and increasingly specialised roles represented within professional practice.
- The role of place of theoretical studies differs greatly between Theatre programmes across various countries. Whereas a combination of the study of theory and practice is, for example, established in the UK and Portugal it is not the norm in the Scandinavian countries where critical theory is more commonly taught within the Theatre Studies departments of universities. As the notion of research in (and through) the arts becomes more prevalent, partly as a result of the Bologna process, theoretical studies are a growing and increasingly relevant part of the theatre curricula in many countries.
- Practice-based research degrees in the area of theatre are a relatively recent development. There are a range of approaches to the practice-based theatre PhD and the proportion of written work to practice differs across Europe. There are still no arts-based PhD degrees available in most countries.
- Developments in learning, teaching and assessment have included the increasing use of Learning Outcomes and assessment methodologies used as positive learning tools that sometimes involve students in peer review. There is a general move towards a more accountable and transparent approach to teaching that is student-centred and learning-oriented. With the use of Learning Outcomes students are clearer about what is expected of them at different stages in their studies and the assessment process can become more explicit and transparent. Coming out of a strong oral tradition, theatre educators are facing a double challenge in the formulation of written Learning Outcomes.
- The central value of the oral language in the art of acting creates particular challenges and difficulties for students and teachers with regard to mobility across national borders. In particular in minor language areas. In Scandinavia, for example, the number of exchange acting students, incoming as well as outgoing, though increasing, is currently minimal.
- Since short-term contracts are a common practice in professional theatre in most European countries, higher education institutions play a central role in the process of life-long learning for professionals in the field. This will become even more common as a result of the implementation of the three cycle process, as many



students will go in to the field of work on completion of the first cycle and may return after a few years to undertake the second and third cycles.

- Admissions procedures vary across the sector but most are based on some kind of audition/interview system. These are normally very time and resource intensive for the institutions. To ensure a reasonable degree of objectivity in the selection process, the selection of students is normally undertaken by teams of staff, sometimes including representation from the relevant field of professional practice.
- Some programmes of study in the discipline are significantly shaped by post-structuralist critical and cultural thinking and encourage the breaking down of distinctions between established performance and production traditions, promoting broader definitions of what constitutes theatre that, in themselves, demand different skill sets.
- (further evidence to be added to this section) Public interest in, and demand for, the creative performing arts – such as theatre, film and media - in general has increased and it is recognised that creative industries make a significant contribution to national and international economies (UK dept for culture, media and sport reports 1998, 2001, Arts Council of Ireland report ??). Theatre education has increased in popularity accordingly leading to a wide range of career opportunities (Dutch research project on careers 2004 and the Portuguese Report '*O Sector das Actividades Artísticas, Culturais e do Espectáculo*' 2006).

#### **A number of differences have been identified:**

- Some institutions consider that traditional subject disciplines provide students with useful base from which they can create a platform for the development of their own artistic expression. Others have established more contemporary, experimental Theatre courses where students can engage in trans-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary forms of practice. Some institutions are finding ways to support both of these approaches.
- Models of teaching are diverse in Europe. There is a strong tradition of the master/apprentice system in many countries. In other countries students take a more central role in their studies.
- There is a diversity of programme lengths. Many countries are moving from a system in which the 3 cycle structure did not exist.
- Theatre education in Europe is provided by a range of institutions including: universities, specialist academies and colleges of higher or further education. While the standard of the programmes and students' achievements are comparable there may be differences between the resources available and the level to which academic

staff are supported to undertake their own research and/or artistic practice.

- Different structures are employed by institutions in delivering the curriculum. Some are modularised or unitised where students can choose 'optional' components that involve them in studying on courses devised and delivered by academics in other fields. Other institutions have developed a specifically holistic approach where the different components of the curriculum are imbedded rather than explicit.

### **3.7 LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT**

Theatre curricula and teaching and learning practices have developed in response to the wider cultural, ethnic and social context and associated changes in the nature of contemporary theatre practice. In order for students to be prepared for and engage in professional practice, innovations and curriculum development have been required. At the same time many educations have preserved and deepened longstanding traditions in theatre training, protecting and revitalising cultural heritage.

Students will usually be involved in a wide range of learning activities such as: independent artistic work, attending lectures and seminars, classes in technical skills, discussions on their own and others performances, collective processes, producing their own and others work and critical and self reflective writing about their own and others artistic work.

Students in theatre education institutions are, to an increasing extent, expected to take responsibility for their own learning and artistic development. Assessment methods that stimulate active learning are used with growing frequency.

#### Example 1

Self-managed projects:

These projects are initiated to give students a greater understanding of the entire production process leading to performance and to get a strong sense of responsibility for their own artistic statements. Early in their studies students are told to start working on their own performance that will be presented during the last year of their acting programme. With supervision they are expected to develop a personal performance of approximately one hour to be presented to a public audience. They are free to base their work on an already written text or write their own material. The result as well as the process is thereafter evaluated and documented.

#### Example 2

Public performances with peer production teams:

Students from different areas of theatre; acting, directing, lighting, make up and mask, production, scenography, etc are grouped together to produce a joint performance from a given theme under the supervision of tutors. This allows students get to know and work with colleagues from the same generation, learning from each other and overcoming profession boundaries. Students are learning about and strengthening the understanding of their different skills and thereby deepening the respect for each others professional knowledge. This is also a way of developing a common aesthetical ground with future professional colleagues.

### Example 3

Devising projects:

A group of students will form a performance ensemble to develop and produce a performance based upon a shared idea or a theme suggested by supervising staff or identified by the student group. They will build their performance through the application of a disciplined studio practice that utilises appropriate devising and rehearsal strategies, generative and critically reflective thinking, and which evidences a lively and questioning approach to the relationship between theory and practice. The group will be asked to produce extended 'programme notes' that critically relate the work shown to the original production intentions and students will individually 'map' their own progress through, and contribution to, the performance outcome by maintaining a production journal which will form the basis of their individual critique.

### Example 4

Public performances with professional production teams:

Students are taking part in productions with fully professional production staff brought in to the educational institutions. This way, students get to learn about professional standards, expectations, qualifications etc, giving them a chance to understand the demands for future employability. Students are also provided with a chance to start building a professional network, crucial for their future carer. By bringing the professionals in to the teaching institution environment, students' integrity and educational development is protected.

## **3.8 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT**

- The practical and ephemeral nature of Theatre, that demands a wide range of tacit knowledge and is derived from an oral tradition, has made the ongoing transparency process difficult in the field. On the other hand, after overcoming initial obstacles, the formulation of written learning outcomes and quality criteria have, for the most part, become valued developments that have deepened awareness of learning & teaching processes.
- In most Theatre Faculties and Departments, a mixture of part-time staff with ongoing artistic careers is mixed with full time teaching staff. This blending of contemporary artistic experience and

educational teaching stability creates a foundation for a challenging and inspiring, yet stable and secure learning environment for students.

- Teachers in Theatre institutions are in different ways encouraged to constantly develop their own educational as well as artistic skills and subject knowledge. This ongoing professional and personal development combined with the enthusiasm and currency of staff involvement is directly reflected in the quality, relevance and vitality of the learning and teaching experience available to students.
- A wide range of monitoring procedures provided by the institution are fed into transparent systems where implications for improvement are discussed, such as student satisfaction questionnaires; student and external representatives, discussion and focus groups, staff views and reviews of student assessment.
- Annual programme reviews that include students as well as the teaching team and non-judgmental peer observation may occur. In some countries (e.g. UK, Ireland, Scandinavia, France) external examiners at all degree levels are involved in this process.
- In some countries periodic (4 – 6 yearly) regular monitoring by an internal panel with external experts from Higher Education or related professional agencies appointed by the faculty/department or institution are invited to scrutinise and to assess performance, quality maintenance and enhancement processes of programmes, faculties/departments and institutions. This process is usually based on the analysis of a self-critical report, accumulated results, annual reports and other appropriate documentation covering the period in retrospect together with plans for future development.
- Processes of quality enhancement vary considerably across Europe. A variety of quantitative and qualitative tools and a range of participants are required. Students are increasingly involved in quality assurance and improvement processes as part of their development as reflective professionals.
- External evaluations by national and international quality assurance agencies are playing an increasingly important role. These processes are usually developed on a consultative basis and utilise a self-study/analysis process that provides a focus for faculty/departmental and personal reflection and improvement.
- Many countries, as well as individual institutions, have devised various means of assuring the professional relevance of vocational programmes as recognised preparation for entry to the arena of professional practice. In some cases this is achieved through nationally recognised accreditation schemes which are jointly recognised by representatives of professional practice, in other cases individual institutions have systems whereby representatives

drawn from the arena of professional practice monitor and regulate standards of student achievement appropriately.