THEATER IN EDUCATION AND THE NEW SCHOOL: A SHIFT IN EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES

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Abstract:

Introduction: Education has always played a crucial role in shaping both individuals and the societies they form. Due to its direct influence on human mentality and social behavior, education requires constant redefinition and adaptation. Traditionally, educational goals focused primarily on cognitive development. However, in today's increasingly complex societies, this approach is no longer sufficient. Education must now expand its scope to incorporate emotional, social, artistic, and ethical dimensions. This transformation demands a fundamental cultural and philosophical shift in how we perceive the function of education. **Purpose:** This article aims to explore the role of theater education within the framework of the New School — a contemporary educational model that advocates for the modernization of outdated teaching methods. Specifically, it investigates whether the continuous marginalization of theater education is justified and assesses its potential contributions to a more holistic educational system. **Methodology:** The analysis is based on a qualitative review of educational literature that addresses the evolution of school curricula and pedagogical practices. Special attention is given to sources that discuss the integration of arts, particularly theater, in education. The research also draws upon case studies and examples from schools that have incorporated theater education into their programs, observing the outcomes on students' development beyond academic performance. **Results:** Findings indicate that theater education significantly contributes to multiple areas of student development. These include enhanced communication skills, increased empathy, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and collaboration. Moreover, theater encourages creativity and self-expression, which are essential for preparing students to navigate and contribute to complex modern societies. Despite these benefits, theater education often remains underfunded and undervalued in many educational systems. **Conclusions.** In light of the New School's goals, theater education emerges not as a secondary or optional subject, but as a vital component of modern curricula. Its continued degradation is not only unjustified but also counterproductive to the demands of contemporary education. For a truly holistic and effective educational reform, theater should be embraced and integrated more fully into

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school programs, supporting the development of well-rounded, empathetic, and adaptable individuals.

Keywords: theater in education, New School, John Dewey

1. Introduction

Education, due to its impact on the mentality of individuals and the societies formed by these individuals, needs constant redefinition. Thus, if over the years, its goals were in a single direction (cognitive level), nowadays, when societies have become more complex, they should be expanded, incorporating many other aspects. That is, a change in its functional culture is required (Mattila & Silander, 2015), based on which, the goal is not exclusively the cognitive background of the learners and their reinforcement, but the way in which education is produced and offered, so as to satisfy all individual and social needs and lead its recipients to development. Under these circumstances, therefore, this change should not concern exclusively the result, but generally the educational process, within which the space, time and the way in which it unfolds are also included. But also, the result is not considered successful only if the learners acquire more knowledge in various subjects, but when the learners can face the challenges of the society they live in and evolve (Booth et al, 2014). For this reason, in the effort to develop this sector, on the one hand, attention should be extended to the leadership, pedagogy, buildings, technology and architecture of each educational institution, so that both the learner and the teacher are in favorable conditions for learning and education and, on the other hand, teachers can acquire a leading role in this change effort (Mattila & Silander, 2015).

Thus, the New School, as this new form of education is called, must replace outdated methods of education with more modern ones, fundamentally changing the philosophy that the school had previously and following new approaches. Naturally, this requires new curricula, new educational methods and techniques and, in general, a new way of education, where learners will seek to acquire knowledge themselves and not simply receive it from a source (e.g. a school textbook) or a person that transfers it to them (e.g. a teacher) (Ministerial Decision No F12/620/61531/C1/31-05-2010). In this context, the responsibility of each teacher is no longer to teach a subject that has been selected by the ministry and to ensure that the learners assimilate it, but to guide the learners so that they can structure the knowledge themselves, in order to be able to subsequently use it and expand it even further. At the same time, it is important to evaluate specific courses in how they function to achieve this goal and to decide whether or not to include them in curricula, as well as their duration in curricula.

One such subject, which in recent years has become the subject of disputes and confrontations between teachers and the State, due, on the one hand, to its exclusion from the curricula of the last two grades of Primary School, and on the other hand, to its degradation in the educational process, with the reduction of its teaching hours and the shortage of staff, is theatre in education course. The purpose, therefore, of this article is to examine the role that this subject may have in the New School and in the educational

process in the way it seeks to develop in the modern era, so as to provide, subsequently, an explanation of the correctness or otherwise of the State's decision to limit it.

2. Literature Review

The concept of Theatre in Education (TIE) has been extensively studied in both historical and modern educational discourse, often appearing under a wide range of terms such as dramatic play, educational theatre, theatre for development, social or community theatre, interactive theatre, and process drama. This variety in terminology can lead to conceptual ambiguity, making it difficult for researchers and educators to determine whether TIE should primarily be seen as an art form, a pedagogical strategy, or a tool for social engagement (Katsaridou, 2014). In institutional terms, TIE has been formally recognized as "theatrical education" and included in national curricula, reinforcing its legitimacy as an educational practice (Presidential Decree 132/10-4-1990; Official Gazette 1373/18-10-2001; Official Gazette 303/13-3-2003). Nonetheless, research emphasizes that TIE encompasses much more than staged performances (Govas, 2006).

The educational model currently implemented in schools incorporates a combination of pedagogical, artistic, and social objectives, a holistic approach that is supported by both Greek and international research (O'Neill, 1995). Within this framework, Neelands and Goode (2000) propose a classification of drama techniques into four key categories. The first includes context-building techniques, which help establish the dramatic environment and create the foundation for meaningful engagement. The second category, narrative techniques, focuses on the development of plot and storyline, guiding the dramatic progression. Poetic techniques form the third group, using expressive language, gesture, and movement to generate symbolic meaning and emotional resonance. Finally, reflective techniques are designed to deepen participants' understanding of the dramatic experience, encouraging introspection and emotional connection. Together, these categories offer educators a flexible and comprehensive toolkit for integrating drama into the learning process in a way that is both impactful and developmentally appropriate.

Educators select and sequence these techniques based on students' age, interests, background, and experience in theatre. Flexibility is essential, as not all methods suit every group, and adjustments may be required (Avdi & Chatzigeorgiou, 2007).

Other supportive methods include brainstorming, which encourages exploration of themes; integrating music to enhance mood and expression; and using visual arts to help form dramatic environments (Katsaridou, 2014). A key influence in this field is Forum Theatre, introduced by Augusto Boal (1981), which turns spectators into "spect-actors" who can intervene and reshape the dramatic action, thereby reflecting on and challenging real-life social issues (Neelands, 2004).

Equally influential is Paulo Freire's "problem-posing" model of education (Freire, 1977), which promotes critical thinking, personal engagement with everyday realities, and resistance to passive acceptance of norms. Freire's pedagogy empowers learners to

become active, thoughtful participants in society — a process he refers to as humanization (Freire, 1977).

3. Materials and Methods

The study uses qualitative analysis of educational literature and case studies related to the integration of theatre in schools. It examines how theatre influences the development of students in the New School with an experiential and creative nature.

3.1 The Roots of the New School

The New School, as a concept, may be an invention of the modern era; however, its roots as an idea lie much further back in time, when various philosophers and educators spoke of a different education from that which was practiced until then. Given, however, that the subject of this article is far from a historical review, it does not make sense to present all of these perspectives, but only one of them, which clearly shows its correlation with the New School. This is the educational thought of John Dewey, who, at the beginning of the 20th century, raised the issue of challenging traditional education and replacing it with progressive education, indicating, in this way, the non-functionality of the educational standards, objects and methodologies of the former (traditional education) and the need to adopt more socially attractive learning experiences to promote the latter (progressive education) (Dewey, 1938). Thus, for the first time, education is given a social dimension that was not supported by the practices until then (Flinders & Thorton, 2013) and aims at: (1) the reconstruction of experiences and adaptation to the environment, (2) the development of social skills and (3) education in democratic life.

In this context, in addition to his consideration of society as a dynamic structure with constantly renewing needs, he advocated the establishment of specific principles for the education program rather than a specific program, as such an effort would very quickly be nullified in practice. Thus, he identified six basic requirements for the curriculum: (1) child-centeredness and socio-centeredness, as the educational process can only be successful when it attracts and maintains the interest of its recipients (Schiro, 2013), (2) correlation with children's interests, which have to do with their need for discussion, for exploration and testing, creation and artistic expression, (3) connection with real life, so that students can acquire and apply the experiences they gain in their everyday lives (Dewey, 1938), (4) practical utility, so that children can provide solutions to both their basic needs, which are food, clothing and shelter and the process for acquiring and maintaining them, as well as to the needs created by interaction with the environment (Flinders & Thorton, 2013), (5) connection of objects and activities, so as to facilitate the understanding of the knowledge they received and children tried to synthesize through the correlation of the various scientific fields and (6) flexibility, so that children can cover their different interests, inclinations and abilities, in the different environments in which they live, as well as the different needs that arise from time to time in each society (Ford et al, 2014).

For this reason, he placed the learner and the social environment to which he belongs at the center of education. He rejected any predetermined knowledge and preferred the experimental (learning by doing) method of learning as the best method, since, in its various stages, abilities are developed that help the child to solve real problems in the course of life, such as, for example, observation, action, experience, reasoning, generalization and testing. Furthermore, he emphasized that any activity that would come from the side of the teacher should be designed to match the interests of the children, according to the four categories mentioned above (discussion, exploration and testing, creation and artistic expression). All of this, of course, always within the context of solving real-life problems to keep the interest of the learners undiminished and to connect the various subjects with each other, so that they can support each other and produce the unified knowledge in which Dewey believed (Petkova, 2019).

On the other hand, in the methodological part of teaching, discipline could not be imposed by punitive means, since the fear of punishment alone would create negative emotions and reaction towards the person who would try to impose order in this way, that is, the teacher. As a result, it would repel students from the process, no matter how interesting the educational objects were. Therefore, the process should evolve with more democratic means, and above all, the freedom of students, so that they can think and behave based on social rules. Anything that caused pressure would bring opposite results to those expected, while the application of democratic means and the development of such an environment would lead to love, empathy and cooperation, which, in turn, would be capable of the emergence of self-discipline, which is the most powerful form of discipline (Dewey, 1966).

Therefore, since the time when John Dewey developed his theory, the form that is sought today in the New School has been foretold. Always in proportion to the needs of the two different periods to which the objectives of each relate. Therefore, the plan already exists; what remains to be examined so that the New School can function in the present era is the starting point and the point to which it is sought to reach in order to be effective and fulfill all its objectives. To do this, a careful study of all the needs, possible problems, the means and supplies available, the procedures that are to be followed to provide effectiveness, the people from whom it is produced and to whom it is addressed, as well as the purpose that is set to be achieved, is needed.

3.2 The New School in the Modern Era

The philosophy followed in the effort to implement the New School today is exactly the same as the pedagogical concept of John Dewey. The difference, therefore, that one can point out in his quest to describe the New School in the modern era, is the way in which these basic educational principles are put into practice, with the conditions, means and needs that prevail today. For this reason, in a nutshell, the New School can be simply described as an evolved and postmodern version of the social archetype, which manifests itself with two basic characteristics: on the one hand, the meeting of different generations (educators - learners) and the interaction between them through transmission, reflection, investigation, guidance, discussion, disagreement, collaboration, and so on, in the context

of the study of the world, on the other hand, the consolidation of a social space or a small community in which new forms of understanding emerge and dysfunctional elements are reshaped through shared experience and participatory governance. In other words, these are two characteristics that have to do, the first with the adult-child relationship, and the second with the history of democracy as a form of emancipatory practice, and are directly dependent on each other (Kennedy, 2018), as the smooth functioning between them will lead to people who will have the ability to perceive things and problems, the ability to prevent, but also to solve problems, when their presence is detected, and the skill to educate and guide other such people later.

In fact, in the archetypal model, the adult-child relationship is expressed either by the projective reaction, where the child becomes the means for projecting the adult's unconscious, or by the inversion reaction, where the child is used as a substitute for an adult figure, or by the empathic reaction, where the child's need is accepted, but the adult keeps his distance from satisfying it, resulting in violence, neglect or abandonment. With the New School and its social aspect, the child is recognized as an individual who is guided by internal forces of development and reorganization (Petschauer, 1989). The adult, in other words, recognizes the child's good vitality and, for this reason, the teacher, subsequently, constructs and manages environments, both didactic and pedagogical, that seek to shape the child, simultaneously, through restriction and encouragement and through reward and punishment, in order for the latter to be led to a correct and adequate adulthood (Dewey, 1922). In short, according to the model of the New School, the uniqueness of the child as a being is recognized and thus any of his actions is not only tolerated and respected, but is also encouraged, while, at the same time, the form of his logic is also recognized and his failures and regressions are tolerated.

Regarding the method, while, according to the archetypal model, any acceptance of the child's individuality would be achieved primarily through authoritarianism and, more generally, anti-democratic habits, practices, forms and traditions, in the New School, the adult resists the projection of his own shadow material to others and recognizes the uniqueness of the child (Kennedy, 2018). As a result, the school becomes a place of adult-child dialogue and not of adult domination, in which communication and, by extension, democratic personality are cultivated. At the same time, as an original democratic institution, the New School is transformed into a space of new ways of reading the world and acting within it, of a community of students that is participatory, forward-thinking, communal and collaborative (Bruner, 1996).

3.3 The Achievement of the New School in the Modern Era

Considering that the New School seeks to meet the needs of the modern era, the completion of its work cannot help but concern all its aspects. In this sense, its goals cannot be limited only to the educational part, but also extend to all those elements that facilitate the educational process, as well as to anything or anyone included or even related in some way to it (i.e. the New School). Therefore, in the multicultural, capitalist and knowledge society in which the New School is located, its implementation should transform it into an educational institution without borders, without cultural or any other

discrimination, which follows standard educational methods and practices, while ensuring the energetic participation of students. Therefore, the dimensions on which those responsible for its development should focus are: space, standards and principles of grouping, the organization of knowledge (curriculum), the material of knowledge (textbooks and educational tools), communication (pedagogy) and administration (discipline of power).

Regarding space, the requirements are, on the one hand, flexibility and suitability for the implementation of the educational process, and, on the other hand, the creation of a good psychology, so that both teachers and learners can participate in the educational process without feeling any kind of discomfort (Oblinger, 2006). In this context, as important as the adequacy of space is for each lesson to be implemented comfortably, so important is its correct architecture, so that the people who meet in the school environment can feel pleasure and emotions that will later help to increase their performance. Therefore, the space of the New School should, on the one hand, be shaped based on pedagogical modeling, where each activity can be performed without problems, and, on the other hand, based on the design that allows the learning community to function effectively (Rudd et al, 2006), which is achieved both with the appropriate architectural layout and with the adequate electrical and audio visual design (Cefai, 2007).

Regarding the standards and principles of grouping, the goals are diversity, multiculturalism, and, more generally, diversity in characteristics and interests, which promote both individual differences and the uniqueness of each individual and help better accept them. To achieve them, therefore, learning environments should focus on individual differences and personal preferences (Hawley & Wolf, n.d.). As a result, attention should not be focused exclusively on learning outcomes, but also on satisfying the need for well-being, participation and motivation. For this reason, the curriculum should include both the individualized approach and the encouragement of cooperation, in order for the student population to connect effectively and create social cohesion (Stephan et al, 2004).

Regarding the organization of knowledge, the curriculum should recognize the uniqueness of each individual participating in the educational process. With this reasoning, a curriculum that includes a single set of knowledge, skills and attitudes does not meet current needs (Kirkgoz, 2008). Of course, this does not mean that it should describe each case separately, because, in practice, this is not only difficult, but also impossible. Thus, it is considered appropriate to refer to a common base that students at each level are sought to have and from there to give space for each of them to be able to cultivate and develop their talents. However, because abilities and skills must be linked in parallel with the needs of society, it is important that there are options and directions in it (i.e. the curriculum) for the development of soft skills, such as creativity, curiosity, entrepreneurship and innovation (Chrusciel, 2006).

Regarding the educational material and the means used for this purpose, what was said above about the organization of knowledge applies in general, at least in terms of their content. However, as regards their type, it is necessary to enrich them with modern

materials, following the flow of the times. It is therefore useful to transition to the digital age and use similar means, such as Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), which expand people's skills and offer them greater ease and speed to carry out their work, even remotely.

Regarding communication and pedagogy, what is required is the adoption of a different philosophy from that followed in the traditional school. Thus, emphasis should be placed on four basic elements: (1) the perspectives of knowledge and learning, (2) the productivity of knowledge and social equality, (3) the way of learning and (4) lifelong learning (Petrovska & Veselinovska, 2013). Specifically, in the first case, it is important that knowledge does not result from the teaching and transmission of some specific information that students will be asked to simply memorize or accept as it is. On the contrary, they should guide the student to discover knowledge on their own and with the autonomy that is necessary for them to reach the expected results (Dancy & Henderson, 2007). In the second case, since students have now been given the relative autonomy to try to discover knowledge, the school should help them process it and transform it into skills and abilities, so that they can then cope with the demands of the knowledge society and reduce the inequalities that arise from the knowledge deficit (Zohar & Dori, 2003). In the third case, it should be taken into account that the school environment is a preparation for the integration of children into the wider society. In this context, the school environment constitutes a preparatory stage for the work environment, in which certain specific skills and abilities are required. Therefore, in addition to everything else, it should make sure to devote great attention to the development of knowledge, talents and skills so that the adults into whom the students will develop can later solve real problems. Finally, in the fourth case, schools should become attractive to students, so that they seek to seek knowledge in their later lives through other forms of education that extend beyond the formal education system (Entz, n.d.).

In conclusion, regarding the administration, what is required is its ability to offer a change in the school's business culture and its continuous renewal in order to be able to respond to the challenges of society. It has under its jurisdiction, therefore, the correct and smooth functioning of the entire organization. For this reason, the administration should take care to define precisely the goals of the school, to carefully choose the methods to follow for their best achievement and to constantly try to maintain the interest of those involved in the school, whether they produce education or request education. It is important, therefore, to properly guide strategic thinking and decision-making and to take action when a deviation from the goals is created or when changes in plans arise. Finally, because the school is an organization and, therefore, many other people participate in its smooth operation, the administration should take care to select them carefully and share some of the individual supervision with them so that each project can be successfully completed in a shorter time (Day et al, 2020).

3.4 Theater and Education

Although the art of theater has been officially introduced into education in US schools since the mid-19th century (Partain, 2024) and, since the 20th century and beyond, the necessity of linking it to education has been discussed in other developed regions, the degraded position it still has this field in Greece, as recently demonstrated by the decision to cut it from the last two grades of elementary school, shows that its value has not yet been recognized and its contribution at the pedagogical level is ignored. In this article, after describing two of the basic aspects of theater, the incorrect way in which the State treats it as a subject in schools will be demonstrated, and, in this way, the need will be highlighted, not only for its inclusion in education, but also for its greatest possible expansion to all educational levels.

Theater as an art, beyond its visual part, which is the obvious one, also contains a psychological background, which is revealed by the attempt to present the behavioral model of humanity each time, through imitation, as Aristotle put it, since ancient times. But, if this seems simplistic, in reality it is not at all like that, since it is an action that has a very strong impact on the subsequent regulation of behaviour. Imitation is not a simple copy, but an aestheticized representation of a specific event, which activates people's thinking and influences their attitude towards it and makes them act in a specific way. It is also characteristic that young children learn many things through imitation (Biswas, 2017).

Theater has, however, at the same time, a social background, which then causes some unconscious reactions. Again, since ancient times, people have had a tendency to tell and listen to oral stories. These narratives, with the art of theater, acquired a visual representation, which, as societies evolved, helped in their preservation, by extension, and the connection between people who lived either in other times or in other societies and, therefore, in some way made them interact with each other. Thus, the societies that were created at a later time contained elements from all these different people and their indirect contact, which led to the changing character of the existing societies, resulting in the creation of societies with a different mix (Biswas, 2017).

These, therefore, alone prove that theater is much more than a simple means of entertainment, where people spend their time pleasantly. Because as an object it encompasses many other aspects than those mentioned above. If, in fact, all the other elements associated with it are added to all of this, such as literature, photography, makeup, music and singing, dance, costume design, and so on, it becomes easy to understand the extent to which it can change people and societies. Its application, therefore, in education, is considered not only useful but necessary, as it has the potential to function as a powerful tool for the development of children's personalities (Petkova, 2019).

Theater, with its focus on play, can easily attract the interest of children and motivate them to participate. Thus, a process of shaping their personality will automatically begin for them, which will manifest itself on multiple levels (cognitive, emotional, social, kinesthetic, etc.), mainly because one level will influence the other and the development of one will help in the development of another, which will play the same

role in another and all of this will eventually lead to the full development of the individual. This transformative power of theater will be explained descriptively, so that the reader is not bombarded with countless information that will cause confusion, immediately below, with the help of knowledge from psychology, education and cognitive science (Abhimanyu, 2023).

Starting from the cognitive level, which refers to the child's intellectual abilities that include thinking, reasoning, problem solving and understanding, development is due to the cultivation of critical thinking, creativity, empathy and social skills that result from the way the drama education lesson is structured. This process, however, occurs in the following ways: with regard to critical thinking, children, either through the analysis of the plays they will be asked to do, or through watching performances, or through researching the play and the characters of a play in order to stage a performance, are asked to interpret scenarios, understand the motivations of the characters and analyze the plot of the play. This process, even if done only at the first level, will encourage children to analyze and synthesize information to understand the narrative, to solve problems when unexpected developments arise and to make decisions about how to represent the role they are called upon to play. As for creativity, this will come through the development of imagination and innovation that will be activated in order to best represent both the plot of the play and the characters. As for empathy, development will come through understanding the different perspectives that theater contains (understanding emotions, characters' points of view), through the emotional literacy that will be created as a result of recognizing and projecting their own and others' emotions, as well as the social understanding that will result from the children's awareness due to the expression of all these emotions. Finally, regarding social skills, their development will come through the interaction of students with each other that occurs within the context of this specific lesson. Mainly, through effective communication, which is required for the preparation and implementation of a performance, the cooperation that children are required to have in order to successfully reach the final result, and the development of leadership skills, from the guidance and organization of the people they collaborate with, when they hold more leadership roles (e.g. directors, team leaders, etc.) (Abhimanyu, 2023).

At the socio-emotional level, which is related to managing emotions and achieving personal and collective goals, showing empathy towards other people, building and maintaining supportive relationships, making responsible decisions and developing healthy identities in general (Greenberg, 2023), development occurs through self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and the ability to make decisions that will bring about the best possible outcome (Dryburgh et al, 2022). Theater in education, by giving students, even those who are more introverted or have low academic performance and, therefore, are a little more marginalized, the opportunity to take on leadership roles, encourages them to express their feelings honestly (Schiller, 2008). This improves their self-confidence, and they become more actively involved in the problem-solving process they are called upon to face, identifying emotionally with

their classmates. In this way, they gradually gain awareness of their personality and abilities and develop communication and interpersonal skills (Sunaksle & Pavitola, 2024). Finally, at the motor level, which concerns everything related to the management of the body, development is created through kinesthetic imagination and through body learning. In the first case, however, more specifically, the process of development occurs with the help of imagination that is activated in the child's attempt to enter the world described by the theatrical work he is involved in, which manifests itself both at the aesthetic and motor levels (Zarrilli, 2020). In the second case, development results from the ability of sensorimotor activity, which is activated in the attempt to represent a theatrical work, to produce embodied learning and, in this way, students interconnect both the body and the mind with their social and physical environment (Antilla & Svendler Nielsen, 2019) and, as a result, are led to the formation of consciousness, knowledge and a sense of self (Macrine & Fugate, 2022).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Theater in Education and New School

After proving that theater in education can offer holistic development to the learner and that he/she, in turn, can acquire abilities and skills that will help him/her to develop, the questions that arise are the following: Could theater in education be just as functional within the framework of the New School or can these positive results only be achieved in the traditional school? Furthermore, is this educational subject able to offer individuals, and by extension, societies, the resources that the New School seeks so that they can then respond to the demands of the modern era? The answer will be given through a one-by-one examination of all those elements that shape what the New School demands or, better yet, what is set out in the curriculum as basic prerequisites for the New School to have a reason to exist.

The first requirement that the curriculum of a course at the New School must have, is child-centeredness, that is, in simpler words, placing the child, to whom the knowledge is to be transmitted, at the center of the educational process. Therefore, here it should be examined whether and to what extent the methods and techniques used in the theatre in education course are oriented towards active learning. The answer is obvious to both questions (whether and to what extent) and is very easily understood by anyone who observes that each of these methods and techniques (e.g. theatrical play, creative puppetry, improvisational drama) requires the participation of the child himself/herself, whose goal is to learn through fun activities. Thus, the learning process acquires an interactive character and learning is transformed into a social activity, which cannot be implemented if the child has a passive attitude towards them (Adugba et al, 2024).

Regarding the second requirement, which is the correlation with the interests of the children, the answer is again positive, as one of the basic requirements of the various forms of education that take place within the framework of theatrical education is the emotional involvement of the children. This is done with the aim of not only the participation of the children in the learning process, but also its maintenance. Therefore,

in the majority of cases, teachers and learners collaborate in the selection of the topics that they will deal with in the lesson, and the learners have a stronger say (Kafewo, 2008).

Regarding the third requirement, which is the connection with real life, here one should consider the impact that theatre in education course has on the personality and character of the child. Given, therefore, that its development takes place on multiple levels (cognitive, psychological, motor, emotional, moral, social, etc.), it is found that the contribution of theatre in education course is not limited only to the academic level, but also extends to all other areas of life that may affect the individual (Braha & Fuchs, 2025). Thus, the child acquires life skills that he/she can use both at the given time and in his/her adult life later (Ceylan & Gok Colak, 2019). Therefore, theater in education does not simply offer some theoretical knowledge that will inform the student about people and events, but will teach him/her how to understand and solve problems, to be able to collaborate with other people and will provide him/her with the background to be able to constantly increase his/her abilities and skills in order to face any kind of future challenge. Therefore, the theater in education course offers a complete connection with real life.

As for the fourth requirement, which is practical utility, it should, first of all, be clarified what the New World seeks. Does it simply need some manual workers who will produce, and some more spiritual people who will train the former? Does it simply need some technical skill on the part of people to be able to respond to the purely practical side of life? Certainly not. The modern world needs people who possess both the practical and the spiritual side, who respect their fellow human beings, while, at the same time, they use all their strength in the development of societies, whether productively or morally and socially. In this sense, therefore, the lesson of theatrical education, with its ability to offer the child the life skills mentioned earlier, is as if preparing him for the world he will encounter outside the school context. Therefore, this particular lesson has absolute practical utility and is not at all an object that simply entertains the child (Dakhia, 2024). Regarding the fifth requirement, which is the connection of objects and activities, for the answer, the arguments should focus again on the methods and techniques used in theater in education. Thus, here, if it is excluded from the game, which is only one of the techniques of the various methods included in the theater in education course, the other techniques used in the various methods, such as, for example, music, storytelling, improvisation, require the child to participate with all his/her senses. So, he/she should also make use of his/her experiences, which means connecting with his/her already existing knowledge (Adugba et al, 2024).

Finally, regarding the sixth requirement, which is flexibility, the arguments for the answer will be combinatorial, that is, they will concern at the same time both the methods and the techniques and the effect that theatre in education has on students. So, in the first case, taking into account that the methods and techniques vary, the teacher is able to choose one or some of them depending on the educational goal he/she has in his/her lesson each time and in relation to the preferences, capabilities and inclinations of each child he/she has before him, according to his own assessment of them (Andresen et al, 2000. Dewey, 1966). On the other hand, in the second case, which has to do with the

impact that the specific lesson has on children, its flexibility is due to the holistic development of the students, which will offer the possibility of their adaptation to the various environments and the various conditions that the children will later find themselves in (O' Toole, 1992).

5. Recommendations

Research findings consistently highlight the substantial contribution of theater education to various dimensions of student development. It fosters enhanced communication skills, empathy, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and collaborative abilities. In addition, theater promotes creativity and self-expression—skills that are increasingly vital in navigating and shaping today's complex, rapidly changing societies. Despite these well-documented benefits, theater education often remains marginalized, both in terms of funding and curricular priority, within many educational systems.

Aligned with the vision of the New School, theater education should not be treated as a supplementary or non-essential subject. Rather, it must be recognized as a fundamental element of contemporary education, one that supports the formation of well-rounded, socially conscious, and adaptable individuals. The ongoing neglect of theater education is not only unwarranted but also stands in opposition to the broader goals of holistic educational reform.

Looking forward, there is a growing need for further scientific research to explore the long-term impacts of theater education on students' cognitive, emotional, and social development. Interdisciplinary studies that combine education, psychology, and the performing arts can offer deeper insights into how theater-based pedagogies can be systematically integrated into curricula. Such research will be crucial in redefining the role of the arts in education and providing evidence-based arguments for the expansion of theater programs in schools worldwide.

6. Conclusion

The need to connect the school with society and the evolution of society from the product that the school exports, has led in recent decades to efforts to establish a school that will meet the specific requirements. Since, therefore, the purpose and objectives that the New School is called upon to fulfill have been precisely defined, scientists and researchers have focused on the search for ways that will yield specific results. In this context, this article dealt with the investigation of the usefulness that the theater education course at the New School. For this reason, on the one hand, the impact that this specific subject has on education was presented and on the other, the way in which the theater education course can strengthen the New School. Previously, however, all the characteristics of the New School were analysed, so that the reader knows the correlations.

The New School, although it began to be implemented in the current century, its idea dates back at least a century, when John Dewey openly questioned the effectiveness of the traditional school and spoke of the need for a school more connected to society. In

this context, he argued that both educational methods and pedagogical concepts of school, as well as the content of the education provided, needed to be changed. Thus, he advocated placing students at the center of the learning process, with active learning being the basis of all methods, and the complete abandonment of disciplinary methods of imposing learning, providing students with the necessary space and freedom to learn at their own pace. Furthermore, he emphasized the need for practicality of knowledge, that is, its connection with the real problems that people encounter in their everyday lives and its correlation with the interests of children, so that they have the desire not only to acquire this knowledge, but also to expand it. Of course, always in proportion to the capabilities and inclinations of the children, so that there is no weakness. The same applies today to the New School, only that each of these conditions also includes the current means and interests of the children.

When examining the role that the theatre in education course can play in the New School, it was found that the subject in question is structured on the basis of the aforementioned conditions. The educational methods and techniques, for example, are completely student-centered, the content is directly linked to the interests of the children and real-life issues, while each level of education uses different types of methods and techniques that are based both on the children's previous experiences and on their capabilities and interest in performing. In this way, it is proven that its non-inclusion from the curriculum of any of the classes would not only be an omission, but a significant error in the New School's effort to respond to society.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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