

# International Journal of Education & the Arts

## Editors

Christopher M. Schulte  
Pennsylvania State University

Peter Webster  
University of Southern California

Eeva Anttila  
University of the Arts Helsinki

Brad Haseman  
Queensland University of Technology

<http://www.ijea.org/>

ISSN: 1529-8094

---

Volume 19 Number 1

February 10, 2018

## Challenging Fiction: Exploring Meaning-Making Processes in the Crossover Between Social Media and Drama in Education

Kristian Nødtvedt Knudsen  
Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway

Citation: Knudsen, K. N. (2018). Challenging fiction: Exploring meaning-making processes in the crossover between social media and drama in education.

*International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 19(1).

<https://doi.org/10.18113/P8ijea1901>

### Abstract

The aim of this study was to explore how meaning-making activity can be expressed and shaped in the crossover between drama in education and social media. This study concerns the use of empirical material from an educational drama project called #iLive, which was designed and implemented, on four different occasions with a total of 89 students from upper secondary schools in Norway in autumn 2015. The results indicated that operating in the crossover between drama and social media was a way of challenging the aesthetic qualities of drama in education. For instance, it was found that the way in which social media simultaneously frames several platforms for social interaction and blurs the boundaries between fiction and reality was different from working with fiction in relation to the teaching and learning of drama. Meaning-making processes in educational drama often tend to mediate through the vehicle of fiction by asking questions like what is the play really about? Such challenges, and the fresh

questions that were raised as part of the project, led me to the philosopher Jacques Rancière's "aesthetic regime" (2004) and his notion of dissensus. In the analysis, I adapted his theory as a theoretical framework for the discussion of how social media can revitalise the teaching and learning of drama. Based on this, I suggest that meaning-making processes in the crossover between drama and social media can be described as transformative, in that they redistribute and re-negotiate fragments of fiction or reality, and involve border-crossing activities between the notions of art and non-art.

### **Introduction**

This study is rooted in a practice-led research tradition (Rasmussen, 2012; Smith & Dean, 2009; Haseman & Mafe, 2009) that is described by Bjørn Rasmussen as constituting the introduction of multiple intentions and purposes that are then processed during the course of a study (Rasmussen, 2012). In addition, the level of complexity and transformation requires that the researcher demonstrates the validity of the process and carefully chooses how the empirical data are produced (Rasmussen, 2012, p. 45). Given this study's focus on exploring how the participants express meaning-making in #iLive, a multi-method explorative approach was adopted. The empirical material generated from the practical work with the participants included video recordings, questionnaires and participant logs. My own assumptions, as a drama teacher, participant and researcher, also influenced the research process; for example, my experience of being a drama teacher and working with dramaturgy for several years inevitably has an effect on how I teach and conduct research.

After giving some brief background on my research project and the #iLive educational design initiative, I will introduce Jacques Rancière's concept of the "aesthetic regime" as a theoretical framework for the analysis of the empirical material. Thereafter, I will explore the concept of dramaturgy as an analytical tool that assists in the structuring and understanding of meaning-making processes that operate from a performative perspective (Szatkowski, 1993, 2011; Allern, 2003). To emphasise the crossover between drama in education and social media, I have chosen to present the empirical material with the help of a visual design that is inspired by the latter.

### **Background and Presentation of #iLive**

In this study, I explored how the performative and digital society can stimulate the renewal of drama teaching and learning. Part of the research project was to develop an educational design that could operate in the crossover between drama and social media. Previous research on these two fields has been characterised by an exploration of the transfer of various forms of working with drama, such as forum theatre or devising, to social media (Carroll & Cameron,

2009; Wotzko & Carroll, 2009; Wotzko, 2012). In the examples given, the aesthetic qualities of drama in education guided the processes and framed how the drama teacher and participants explored digital and social media. In this project, I attempted to move in the opposite direction by investigating how the aesthetic qualities of social media could be transferred to the teaching and learning of drama. By adapting a performative inquiry tradition (Fels, 2015), I became an active part of the inquiry and gained the type of knowledge that can only be conferred by personal experience. One of the issues I encountered was that certain key aspects of the meaning-making processes of teaching and learning drama were destabilised when transferred to the crossover between social media and drama. For instance the level of risk appeared to be greater for both the participants and myself as a drama teacher when operating in and with social media inside the drama space. The performative inquiry allowed me to adopt a reflexive attitude towards the developmental process and to use the experiences as part of the research. The experiences and reflections gained through this inquiry were introduced into the educational design process through #iLive<sup>1</sup>.

### *#iLive – an Educational Design Project*



<https://vimeo.com/133437785><sup>2</sup>

The above QR-code was attached to the #iLive box, which was distributed to the participants at the beginning of the workshop. The code led the respondents to a video on the social media site Vimeo, which introduced the Host in #iLive. In the video, #iLive was presented by the Host as a “laboratory; it’s an experiment where I ask you to join me and explore the social media”<sup>3</sup>. The two key questions for the laboratory were also presented in the video and were as follows: “who are you on social media?” and “how do you live with social media?” At the end of the video, the participants were asked to take a selfie and post it on social media using the hashtag #iLive. Thereafter, they entered the laboratory one at a time, where they were welcomed by the Host (who was now in the physical reality). The #iLive project took place in a “drama and theatre” room. There were black curtains on the walls, although one wall

---

<sup>1</sup> For further information about the developmental process preparing for the actual workshop with the pupils, see Knudsen, 2016

<sup>2</sup> Please download a QR-reader in your app-store for Android or IOS.

<sup>3</sup> Quote from the video “Welcome to #iLive” visible on Vimeo, cf. QR-code p. 3.

featured mirrors; the room also contained technical equipment (lights, audio, video projectors) and a small stage at one end. The following status update is an attempt to give an impression of how the participants are interacting in #iLive:



**Status update** *Hands with mobile phones are stretched in the air. The sound of Snoop Dogg and Pharrell singing “you’re beautiful, I just want you to know” is filling the room. Taking pictures. Judging pictures. “Bad picture, I need to change the lights.” New pictures. Sharing pictures. The participants are looking at themselves and each other through lenses. Changing their appearances in different ways. Physical. Visual. Virtual. Editing. Some bodies stand together, others alone. Posing for the camera – **Fishmouth – duckface – throwing signs**. Sharing images. Some are laughing, others are sitting by themselves in silence. All of them are exploring how to take the perfect selfie. (A narrative description based on observation of an episode from #iLive) 2 hours ago Like*

The narrative description in the status update above gives an impression of how #iLive, as an educational design project, attempts to create a platform for reflections on social media, mediated through the use of social media itself and drama. The design consists of 14 episodes, each with a range of intentions: (1) challenging the participants to complete various tasks; (2) supplying the participants with different kinds of information to be used in the project; and (3) stimulating the initiation of both individual and collective working processes. Reflective loops are applied after each episode, which allow the participants and the host to reflect on their experiences in a shared dialogue on social media or in groups. In our study, for three hours the participants explored who they were on social media and how they lived with it. The subjects represented a variety of educational programmes, from drama/theatre to business-related and more general studies.

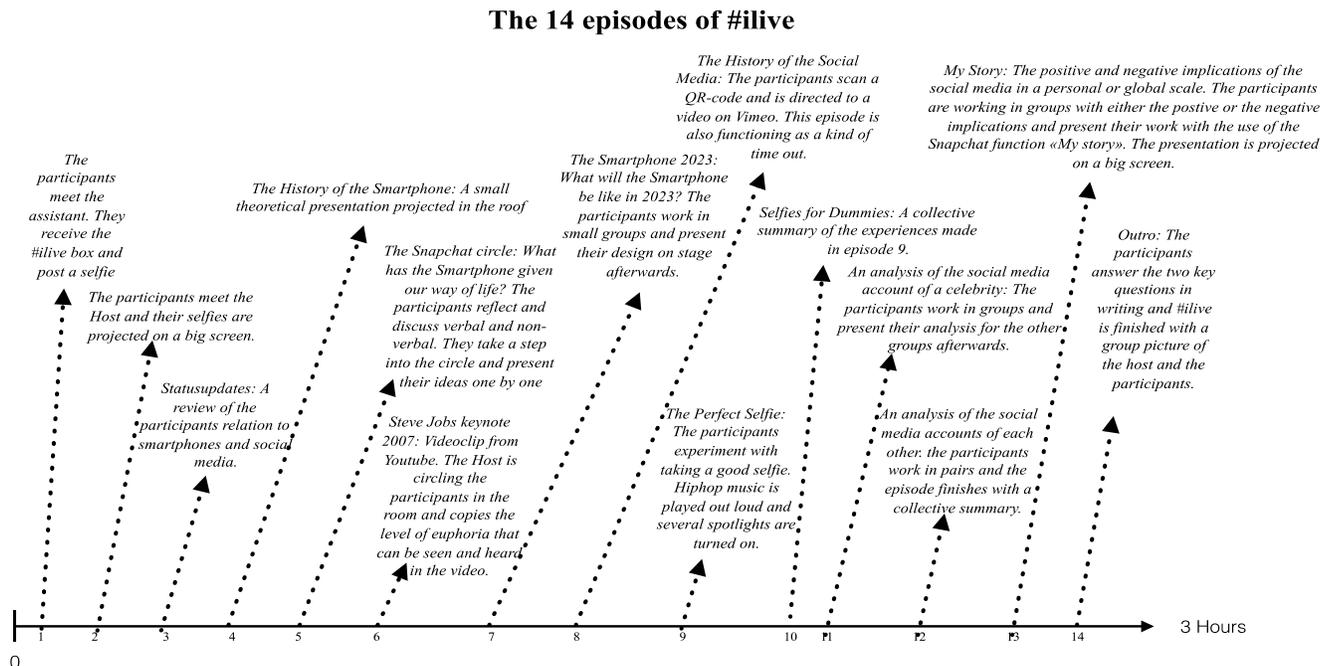
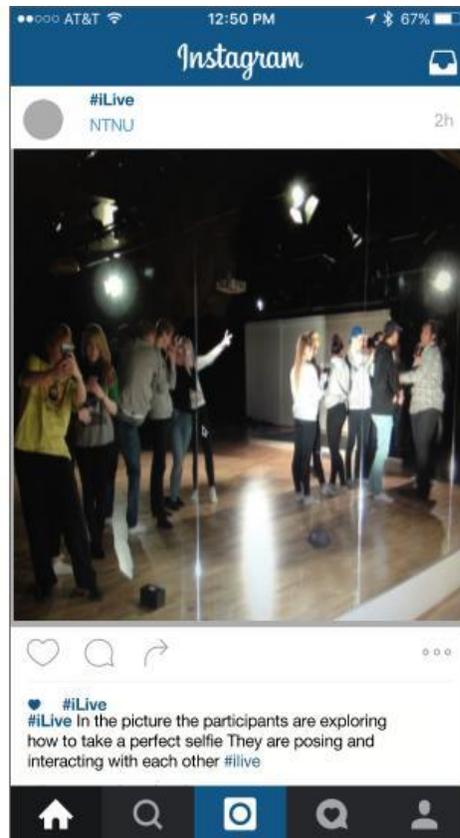


Figure 1. An outline of the 14 episodes in #iLive

The opening phase of #iLive deploys familiar techniques and strategies from the teaching and learning of drama. It establishes the fictional platform upon which the subjects will participate (the laboratory) and introduces a teacher-in-role kind of character (the Host). It is also in English, which in the case of our respondents was not their native language and therefore created an element of distance. While all the episodes in #iLive are staged or framed in the laboratory, the introduction of the participants' social media accounts, and the lack of a collective character or other fictional personages besides the Host and the assistant, differ from other forms of teaching and learning drama such as "process drama" or "forum theatre". Three of the episodes operate on the basis of clear distinctions between fiction and reality (episodes 1, 3 and 7), whereby the participants explore various aspects of social media in role. In one of them, the participants assume the role of designers to envisage what the smartphone will be like in 2023. The remaining episodes are grounded in a different kind of fictionality because they implement the aesthetic qualities of social media. Working without clear distinctions between fiction and reality challenges the aesthetics of drama in education and questions the ways in which the teaching and learning of drama stimulates meaning-making processes. This is, however, not the same as suggesting that there is no fiction and therefore no drama. On the contrary, it is based on the notion that there are several fictions and several realities, which take place simultaneously and therefore create a different kind of meaning-making activity than in more familiar drama processes like "process drama" or "forum theatre".



*Figure 2.* In the picture, the participants are exploring how to take a perfect selfie (episode 9 in fig. 1). They are posing and interacting with each other and potentially other followers on social media.

In the following section, I will shift my focus to Jacques Rancière’s concept of the “aesthetic regime” and investigate the ways in which his theory can be adapted as a theoretical framework for the discussion of meaning-making activity in the crossover between drama and social media.

### ***Challenging Fiction – Meaning-Making from a Rancièrian Perspective***

It is by this crossing over of borders and changes of status between art and non-art that the radical strangeness of the aesthetic object and the active appropriation of the common world were able to conjoin and that a ‘third way’ micro-politics of art was able to take shape between the contrasting paradigms of art as life and as resistant form. (Rancière, 2009, pp. 50–51)

The aesthetic regime of the arts is one of three regimes described by Rancière in *The Politics of Aesthetics* (2004, pp. 20–22). The other two are: (1) the ethic regime of images, which is based on a Platonic view of art, and (2) the poetic or representative regime, which is based on

an Aristotelian view of art. These regimes give an account of how art was identified as such in different historical eras; they also tell us something about how art and artistic impressions relate to the world. The regimes are historic in the sense that they can be dated to specific eras. However, it is worth mentioning that Rancière does not exclude the other regimes, but regards them as being part of the aesthetic strand. The three regimes are trans-historical; what characterises the aesthetic regime is the sense/meaning of the term aesthetic as a means of describing a specific mode of being of art objects, which includes whatever falls within the domain of art. There is no reality hidden behind a façade (cf. Platon) or one unique regime for the presentation and interpretation of something that is presupposed (cf. Aristotle). Instead, the borders between fiction and reality are redistributed and renegotiated by constantly questioning the configurations with which they were constructed. Rancière uses the term *dissensus* to describe the process that assists in rendering a specific regime, which deals with the sensible, foreign to itself. *Dissensus* is a means of emancipating human beings and turning them into independent subjects by allowing them to cross borders and to negotiate between the contrasting paradigms of art as life and as a resistant form (Rancière, 2009, pp. 50–51). According to Rancière, the challenge with art is not negotiating the relationship between art and politics, but negotiating the relationship between art and politics as two aesthetic logics (Rancière, 2009, p. 46). The key word here is “negotiation”, which reduces the distinctive elements and instead increases the tension that creates fragments of aesthetic sensory experiences; or, what Rancière calls the “third way” micro-politics of art, which “[...] take[s] shape between the contrasting elements of art as life and as resistant form” (Rancière, 2009, p. 51). Rancière uses the technique of collage as an example with which to clarify this principle of the “third” political aesthetic. A collage consists of a combination of heterogeneous elements that meld the aesthetic experience and ordinary life. It is a blurring of boundaries and a method of negotiating the relationship between two aesthetic logics (Rancière, 2009, pp. 50–51). The act of border-crossing and negotiation, as described by Rancière, seems to support the aesthetics of social media. In relation to #iLive, the way in which the aesthetic regime redistributes and renegotiates the borders between fiction and reality can be regarded as similar to the mode in which social media challenges the aesthetics of drama in education. The implementation of the aesthetics of social media into drama processes is a way of changing the status division between art and non-art.

The question is, what might Rancière’s aesthetic regime bring to my project and potentially the field of applied theatre and drama as an art form? According to Associate Professor Julie Dunn (2015):

[...] applied theatre makes use of the rich symbolic and aesthetic qualities of drama and theatre to engage the disengaged, to help connect people to their communities and to each other [...] Applied theatre is a new name for something

that theatre has been doing since the ancient Greeks... educating, challenging, supporting, engaging, and connecting. (p. 153)

First, it is not hard to see the intended political message or wish for emancipation, which is a central part of the tradition of drama and theatre. Second, Dunn's link between the ancient Greeks and the rich symbolic and aesthetic qualities of drama and theatre delineates a field or understanding of theatre that reflects the traditions of Aristotle. However, from a Rancièrian perspective, this is also what creates the dilemma that is an inevitable part of working with art in today's society. According to Rancière, said dilemma arises, on the one hand, because the creation of an understanding does not necessarily result in a transformation of attitudes and situations. This view presupposes that the ones who are in need of transformation would be committed to a political process of creating the outlines of a world to come from within the existing world. On the other hand, when art asks participants to discover signs of something bigger behind everyday objects and behaviours, it risks creating a vicious circle of constant interpretation that never leads to anything else. In relation to the quote from Dunn, the plurality of theatre as an art form is clear from the many ways in which it can be applied to different community contexts. However, the plurality of Rancière also calls for a plurality in the view of applied theatre and drama in education as an art form. Part of the aesthetic qualities of drama in education is based on the relationship between the real world and the world of art. For instance, when the participants are interacting in a "forum theatre" production, fiction is the supplier of the experiences they bring out with them into the real world. The world of art provides a safety net and environment in which to explore, fail at and manage experiences that have relevance to the real world. From a Rancièrian perspective, it represents an understanding of art that belongs to the representative regime or an Aristotelean interpretation. As drama teachers, we ask the participants: *what is the play or process really about?* The way in which #iLive is challenging fiction makes it difficult to adopt the same approach in relation to social media. Rancière's "aesthetic regime" introduces a plurality in how one works with drama by enabling the drama teacher to operate with multiple layers of fiction in relation to meaning-making processes in a "drama in education" context. Instead of asking the participants *what is the play really about?* the drama teacher should address the opportunities, which come when they recognise that it is more important to explore how the participants make meaning as they operate within multiple layers of fiction. In #iLive the questions have a more explorative approach, *who are you on social media and how do you live with social media?*

These multiple layers amplify the level of complexity of the meaning-making processes. In the following section, I will explore the concept of dramaturgy as an analytical tool that helps in the structuring and shaping of meaning-making processes that operate at that degree of complexity.

### ***Dramaturgy as an Analytical Lens***

In the simplest possible terms, dramaturgy is about *composition*; in other words, how one tells a story. From a theatrical perspective, it relates to the ways in which the director works with the drama in order to communicate the intention of the play/performance to the audience. Whether it is a classic Aristotelian model, a Brechtian epic theatre model or a simultaneous or metafictional model that stems from the traditions of performance theatre (Szatkowski, 1993, p. 130), the dramaturgical composition influences the structure of the performance and how the audience interacts with the content. From a teaching perspective, dramaturgical thinking emphasises how one structures the dramatic process and works with the themes or educational content alongside the participants (cf. O'Toole & Dunn, 2002; Neelands & Goode, 2000). Professor Janek Szatkowski has been exploring and challenging dramaturgy since the 1980s; one of his points of departure is the notion or thesis of *life as an imitation of the theatre* [my own translation] (Szatkowski, 1993, p. 120). Szatkowski speaks of the need for a *dramaturgical turn* towards a more postmodern understanding of the subject, as well as about knowledge production. The question is no longer *who am I* – which stems from modern philosophy – but on the contrary, *who can I be today* (Szatkowski, 1993, p. 121). At the heart of the *dramaturgical turn* is theatre and its metaphors (**the mask, the puppet, performativity and aesthetic doubling**, to name a few). According to Szatkowski, theatre as an art form enables a critique of the rational through its ability to play with fiction and create a metafictional distance via the notion of irony<sup>4</sup>. The metaphors of theatre speak a language that is able to frame the complexities of postmodernity and of being a subject in a performative and digital society. Even though Szatkowski's *dramaturgical turn* was written in 1993, it still resonates with the world of 2016. It would not be hard to support the argument that in today's digital and performative society, the world can be regarded as *staged* (Kershaw, 1999; Knudsen, 2016). Likewise, it is easy to accept an understanding of one's reality as being an illusion (Anderson, 2014; Knudsen, 2017). However, the *dramaturgical turn* also prompts new ways of working with theatre. Given the notion that life can be experienced as an imitation of theatre, it has an influence on the ways in which theatre composes/structures its performances (Szatkowski, 1993, p. 125). As described earlier, a simultaneous dramaturgical structure approaches the audience's or participant's process of meaning-making in a different manner than would a classic Aristotelian structure. Therefore, a further theoretical review of the *dramaturgical turn* in a drama context may be useful in terms of exploring the meaning-making processes in the crossover between social media and the teaching and learning of drama.

---

<sup>4</sup> The term metafictional refers to a narrative technique or genre, wherein the fictional work draws attention to the fact that it is being a work of imagination, rather than a work of non-fiction.

### ***Meaning-Making from a Performative Perspective***

In his doctoral thesis, Tor Helge Allern (2003) investigates the concept of dramaturgy from an epistemological perspective and refers to, among others, the works of Szatkowski (1985, 1989, 1993). Allern positions drama pedagogy within a performative paradigm, both in terms of replacing the actor with a participant and due to its ability to explore social and cultural meetings. According to Allern, drama in education, like performance theatre, separates itself from the stages of the institutionalised theatre in its understanding of theatre as an art form (2003, p. 315). The term “performance” signifies neither fiction nor theatre, but rather establishes an art form that exists somewhere in the hinterland between art and non-art. Part of a performance, from a participant’s perspective, is therefore to constantly question the correlation between the two; or alternatively, to question the level of fiction. Szatkowski describes the process of meaning-making, in relation to simultaneous dramaturgy, as diachronic pictures or associations (Szatkowski, 1989, p. 80). The pictures hold multiple layers of meaning and are interwoven with each other in a perspective that combines past, present and future. In this process, the participant or audience shape their own knowledge on several levels, such as through their interpretations of the performance, the embodied experience and cultural resources, in the form of both verbal and non-verbal reflections. The meaning-making process is never static; instead, in accordance with the notion of performativity, it is immanent, transformative, self-reflexive, embodied and becoming (cf. Ficher-Lichte, 2008).

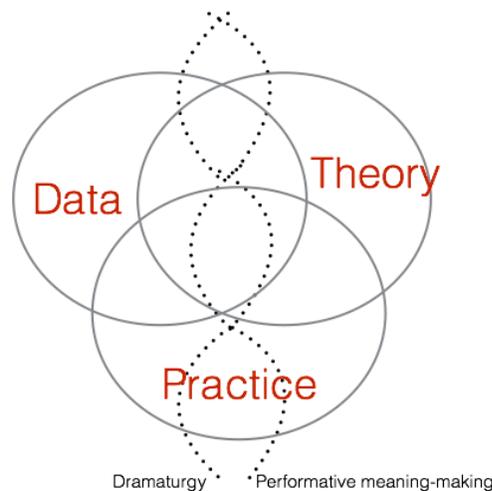
The adoption of dramaturgy as an analytical lens, in relation to the exploration of meaning-making processes and the deployment of Rancière’s “aesthetic regime” as a theoretical framework, enables the researcher to assess the participants’ reflections from a performative perspective and explore how they shape, negotiate and express meaning-making when attending #iLive.

### **Exploring Meaning-Making Activity in #iLive**

In this section, I will present the analysis of the study, wherein there will be an attempt to answer the following research question: How do the participants in the drama educational project called #iLive express and shape meaning-making in the crossover between drama and social media? The empirical material consists of video recordings, 71 (out of 89) student logs and a short questionnaire that was administered at the end of the project. The questionnaire consisted of just two key questions: (1) Who are you on social media? and (2) How do you live with social media? The log, which consisted of three questions, was handed out by the class teachers and filled out anonymously by the students a week after their involvement in #iLive. The questions were as follows:

1. Describe your experience with #iLive.
2. Have you had any thoughts about your use of social media in the aftermath of #iLive and if so, what are they?
3. Describe #iLive in three separate words.

The carrying out of research in a practice-led research paradigm involves a continuous oscillation between data, theory and interpretation. While the fluidity of such research allows me to adopt an explorative approach, some sort of analytical framework is necessary to remain focused on the research question. The aim of the current analysis is to explore how the participants shaped and expressed meaning-making in relation to #iLive. To guide me in my analytical endeavour, my starting point will be the two concepts already presented: dramaturgy and performative meaning-making.



*Figure 3.* The concepts of dramaturgy and performative meaning-making provide an analytical starting point for the analysis. As the model seeks to show, the two concepts are not separated from each other, but are intertwined in the analytical process.

An open reading of the material, through the lens of dramaturgy and performative meaning-making, generated three analytical dimensions related to signs of meaning-making: (1) meaning-making in relation to design and structure of #iLive; (2) meaning-making in relation to the content of #iLive from a participant's perspective; and (3) meaning-making in relation to the concept of deep learning in #iLive (Tochon, 2010). In the following section, I will interpret the empirical material in relation to these analytical dimensions.

### ***1) Signs of Meaning-Making in Relation to the Design and Structure of #iLive***

Several of the participants pointed to the level of variation in the design as an important aspect of their experience and a positive strategy for the educational design. They described

#iLive as being different from “ordinary school”. Some participants explained this in relation to the fact that they were allowed to be creative, while for others it was because they were encouraged to be bodily active. A few of the responses are given below:



**Participant in #iLive** *It was a different approach to working with learning. This is a day I will never forget because it was such a huge contrast to the learning methods we encounter on a daily basis [My translation] 2 hours ago Like*



**Participant in #iLive** *It did not feel like a one-way kind of teaching; that is to say, the teacher did not try to knock knowledge into our heads. We were able to be creative and there were no limitations in regards to how we chose to solve the tasks [My translation] 2 hours ago Like*

It was interesting to read the comparisons with the kinds of learning activities that the participants were familiar with from their everyday school routines. As an educational design, #iLive challenged them as students because it is different from what they are used to. From a dramaturgical perspective, #iLive is structured using a fragmented and explorative approach, instead of adopting an overarching meaning or narrative that has a correlative goal to the lesson. Some participants found this liberating, while others felt restrained. However, their tendency to describe #iLive in terms of the elements that mark it out from other kinds of learning activities stands out as a sign of meaning-making in relation to composition. The dramaturgical structure of #iLive enables the participants to utilise an explorative approach to the meaning-making process and encourages them to bring their cultural resources with them into the meaning-making process.

Another cultural resource that is challenged by #iLive is the use of mobile phones and social media. Several students emphasised the use of these tools as part of the design of #iLive. Some celebrated the fact that they were allowed to use them in a teaching and learning context, while others expressed a degree of insecurity and scepticism:



**Participant in #iLive** *I thought it was a fun experience in that we received a black box and the use of guiding videos [videos on Vimeo, which the students watched on their own mobile phones]. But I did not like the fact we had to use our own Snapchat and Instagram. [My translation] 2 hours ago Like*



**Participant in #iLive** *I was a bit put off by the fact that we had to post a picture on Instagram to attend. [My translation] 2 hours ago Like*



**Participant in #iLive** *#iLive was a fun project, consisting of totally different methods than what I am used to. I thought the way we used social media was interesting and meaningful.* [My translation] 2 hours ago Like

The students expressed an awareness of being somewhere in between their private sphere of social media and being a participant in an educational design project. From a dramaturgical viewpoint, the responses support the complexity of meaning-making in a simultaneous and metafictional structure. The comments can be interpreted as examples of diachronic pictures that are being interwoven in a joint past, present and future perspective (cf. Szatkowski, 1989, p. 80). The meaning-making processes become a collage of pictures in which each image offers potential elements of meaning for the participant. The participants' expressions of hesitation, curiosity and joy show that the level of complexity increases when meaning-making is mediated through the use of social media. The episodes of #iLive do not only take place within the drama space; when documented on the participants' own social media accounts, they potentially embrace the digital networking world. Working in the crossover between the private sphere and social media stimulated the participants to critically explore their relationship with fiction and reality. For some participants, this type of border-crossing was interesting and meaningful, while for others it resulted in hesitation and scepticism.

## ***2) Signs of Meaning-Making in Relation to the Content of #iLive from a Participant's Perspective***

The thematic content of social media in #iLive was repeated in the logs, with several participants mentioning social media as the content of the educational design. The ways in which they described and related to the content, however, were rather diverse. Below are a few examples that emphasise the variation in their replies:



**Participant in #iLive** *I did not think that I used social media wrongly in any way before attending #iLive, but I was reassured in regards to how important it is to think about what you post.* [My translation] 2 hours ago Like



**Participant in #iLive** *They [social media platforms] might be more integrated in the curricula since they are such a big part of our lives, and this assignment [#iLive] has shown that it is possible. We also learn more about things if we can connect them to our daily life and it automatically becomes more interesting to participate in the lesson.* [My translation] 2 hours ago Like



**Participant in #iLive** *The fact that no one told me what to believe, I think, made me more open to the information that I had in the end.* [My translation] 2 hours ago Like



**Participant in #iLive** *It was very interesting. It has made me think about how I and others present ourselves on social media* [My translation] 2 hours ago Like

The comments feature several interesting aspects regarding signs of meaning-making in relation to the content of #iLive from the participants' perspective. Some respondents emphasised that #iLive was about themselves and their social media habits. In those cases, the participants adopted and included their own life experiences within the meaning-making process. Some highlighted the need for social media and mobile phones as a tool for learning, using the argument that it would make the process more interesting because these factors were such a big part of their daily lives. Another participant mentioned the explorative approach to the content as a decisive element in his or her meaning-making process. The participants' responses say something about their roles or how they were playing a part in #iLive as an educational design project. They seem to have been engaging with the content and the way the design was allowing them to: (1) use familiar tools for learning (social media and mobile phones); (2) participate on their own terms in the meaning-making processes; and (3) articulate a critical and reflexive examination of their own lives.



**Participant in #iLive** *Looking back, I have been thinking a bit about the difference between how people present themselves on social media and who they really are. I have also thought about how I portray myself on social media, which depends on the platform I am using. I present myself as very tidy and politically active on Facebook; which I am, in a way. But, on Instagram for instance, I am a lot less critical and more like I am in everyday life. On Twitter, I just tweet against Donald Trump...* [My translation] 2 hours ago Like

This comment is an indication of one of the guiding principles of social media: *The distinction between who you are on social media and who you are in real life*. The way in which different social media platforms dictate changes in one's personality shows that part of the aesthetics of the phenomenon is the ability to navigate between several roles. This also supports Szatkowski's description of the postmodern subject who asks *Who can I be today?* (Szatkowski, 1993, p. 120). The analysis of the empirical material in relation to the content of #iLive leads me to the concept of depth in education. As an educational design project, #iLive concerns the whole person and implies a sense of purpose and deep, transformational learning (O'Sullivan, 1999). In the following section, I will interpret the material further in relation to the notion of deep learning (Tochon, 2010; Østern & Channels, 2015).

### 3) Signs of Meaning-Making as Deep Learning in #iLive

In the final question in the log, the students were asked to describe #iLive in three separate words. As the Wordle below shows, the most commonly occurring words were: meaningful, interesting, fun, exciting, creative and different.



Figure 4. A Wordle created using the participants' summaries of #iLive in three words. The word "meaningful" occurred 30 times. The next five most prevalent words were: "interesting" (29), "fun" (25), "exciting" (20), "creative" (14) and "different" (11).

The Wordle says something about the meaning-making processes in #iLive as an example of deep learning in the arts in education (Tochon, 2010; Østern & Channels, 2015). Francois Tochon (2010) describes deep learning as linking new knowledge to prior knowledge across various fields. As opposed to surface learning, deep learning relates theoretical concepts to daily experiences: "The emphasis is external and fragmented for the surface learners as it relates to the demands of assessment, while it is internal and holistic for the deep learner" (Tochon, 2010, p. 5). #iLive may be regarded as deep learning because, as an educational design project, it creates episodes or fragments wherein the participant takes an active role in his or her own learning. In addition, the implementation of social media seems meaningful to the participants and plays an important role in their understanding of and critical engagement with the content.



**Participant in #iLive** *I have become more critical of the image people create of themselves on the social media and care even less about creating a cool image of myself on, for instance, Instagram. I have also noticed that you get more likes on facial pictures on Instagram and less on images of nature and so on. I think that is because people feel bound to like a picture if they recognise the person, which again is ridiculous because, do I want them to like my picture if they really do not like it?* [My translation] 2 hours ago [Like](#)

The fragments from the empirical data indicate that #iLive can stimulate its participants to solve different tasks with the use of previous experience and knowledge and at the same time enable them to hear and see themselves from a distance. This is an example of what Szatkowski describes as pictures that hold multiple layers of meaning and are interwoven with each other in a past, present and future conglomeration (Szatkowski, 1989, p. 80). The participants can thereby shape their knowledge on several levels. The level of self-reflexivity expressed through the participants' comments can also be interpreted as a sign of meaning-making in relation to the notion of performativity. This is immanent, transformative, self-reflexive, embodied and becoming (cf. Ficher-Lichte, 2008). However, it is interesting that only one participant mentioned a word related to drama and theatre in their assessment of the content in #iLive:



**Participant in #iLive** [...] *I liked that the teacher was dressed up and that the design had a kind of theatrical element to it.* [My translation] 2 hours ago [Like](#)

Even though the intention of #iLive, from a “drama in education” perspective, is to explore how the aesthetic qualities of social media could be transferred to the teaching and learning of drama, it remains an educational process of working with roles, fictions and dramaturgy (this is also exemplified in the participant's comment that mentioned a kind of teacher-in-role). The participants' lack of ability to position drama as a subject in #iLive could be a result of the design being focused on working with social media, *through* social media, or adapting a simultaneous and metafictional structure to the educational design. It might also be an example of one of the challenges facing the arts in education, in relation to the articulation of what is learned by the participants in said subject. However, the lack of a mention for drama, as a subject in the content, supports the thesis of life as an imitation of theatre (Szatkowski, 1993, p. 120). The students think of the content in #iLive as part of life, not as content related to doing drama, which bolsters the understanding of art in relation to Rancière's “aesthetic regime”.

### Operating with Multiple Fictions in Relation to Drama in Education

The multiplicity of roles in everyday life is a well-known concept, both within sociology (Goffman, 1959) and also in drama in education (Heggstad, 2011). However, the way in which social media simultaneously frames several layers of social interaction differs from working inside a fictive space in relation to the teaching and learning of drama. Below is another example of this complexity from one of the episodes in #iLive:



*Figure 5.* The model presents one of the reflective loops implemented in #iLive. One of the participants is reflecting on what you must remember before taking a selfie.

This dialogue between the Host in #iLive (grey text) and one of the participants (green text) took place during one of several reflective loops implemented in #iLive. Before the reflective loop, the students had been experimenting with how to take the perfect selfie. The reflective loop in focus is called “Selfies for dummies” (see Figure 1) and features the participants collectively summing up what one must remember before taking a selfie. According to the participants, one has to choose a character. An analysis of the empirical material shows that the participants identified and described 15 roles that already existed in social media.



*Figure 6.* The collage presents 8 of the 15 characters that the participants identified on social media. From upper left to right; The Political One, Pretty Girl, The Comedian, The Poet, The Sceptic, Fuck Boy, Myself and The Stripper [Artwork by: Øyvind Tumyr].

Each of the 15 roles has a description that belongs to that type of personality. Whether one is the “Pretty Girl”, “Myself” or “Fuck Boy”, the role influences the way one looks and communicates on social media. In effect, it regulates one’s behaviour. From a Rancièrian perspective, the use of roles can be interpreted as an example of dissensus in terms of allowing the participants to make the order of the sensible, foreign to itself. For a brief moment, the tension that creates fragments of aesthetic sensory experiences is clear to the participants, which allows them to redistribute or distance themselves from the aesthetics of the platform and reflect on them, before returning to them (Rancièrè, 2009, p. 51). In previous articles, I have discussed what implications the use of social media might have on integral elements of the teaching and learning of drama (Knudsen, 2016, 2017). One of my findings was that social media challenges the notion of learning through or in fiction, because the participants are using their own accounts as part of their exploration of social media. However, the 15 roles can be interpreted as a way of redistributing the protective element of distance through fiction to a dispersment of protection through de-individualisation. The element of de-individualisation arises somewhere in the process of adapting to one of the 15 roles. All the roles are available to anybody, anywhere, who is willing to use them, as long as they follow the regulations. The roles become an expression or symbol of the individual as a

group and illustrate (a shift in) how a drama teacher can work with fictional profiles within multiple layers of fiction.

<b>Fuck boy</b> (throwing signs, posing a tough look, likes to party and not afraid of showing some skin, player)
<b>Pretty girl</b> (a better edition of myself, no flaws, the person I want to be, a person that is accepted, trying to be the best and prettiest I can be)
<b>Cute girl /boy</b> (smiles a lot, do creative things and is surrounded with good company)
<b>Stripper</b> (throwing signs, booty poses, duckface poses or the fish mouth pose, likes to party and not afraid of showing some skin, show of body)
<b>The comedian</b> (I just write about happy/funny things)
<b>The careful one / or the sceptic</b> (thinking twice before posting pictures and write comments. I don't post anything but I watch what other people posts, I show what I want others to see)
<b>Myself</b> (a polished version of myself, I still try to be myself though and promote things I love with the tools I have. I just try to be more likeable, happier than in real life)
<b>The Anonymous one</b> (Don't show anything of myself, only write with friends and family)
<b>The communicator</b> (use it for social purposes with the occasional selfie)
<b>The happy one</b> (likes to show my interests to other, outgoing person, never unhappy)
<b>The liker and sharer</b> (not very private, I post mostly general things)
<b>The poet</b> (heartbroken, turns everyday life into art/poetry)
<b>The voyeur</b> (Observes and prefers to watch others update rather than updating myself)
<b>The multicultural one</b> (happy, love to travel, go the theatre, diet, hang out with my friends and give my opinion regarding what is important in life)
<b>The political one</b> (Debates, not afraid to stand up for myself, anti-bullying, post pictures, discuss with others,

Figure 7. Descriptions of the 15 characters and their regulations.

In relation to the teaching and learning of drama as it pertains to social media, the analysis undertaken here has revealed three findings: (1) the participants bring their cultural resources with them into the meaning-making process in #iLive; (2) the redistribution of protection disturbs the notion of aesthetic doubling (Szatkowski, 1985), thereby (3) reducing the distinction between fiction and reality and positioning the metaphors of theatre within our daily lives (cf. Szatkowski, 1993, p. 120). The principle of aesthetic doubling arises in the theatrical equation when the actor (A) who plays the role of (A\*) interacts with another actor (B) who plays the role of (B\*). In this relationship, the use of fiction facilitates the meaning-making processes by enabling the actor/participant to put him or herself in someone else's shoes while influencing the transformative process of meaning-making (C) (Szatkowski, 1985, pp. 142–145). In the principle of aesthetic doubling, fiction is stable; therefore, it resonates with Dunn's link between the ancient Greeks and the rich symbolic and aesthetic qualities of drama and theatre, which delineate a field or understanding of theatre that reflects

the traditions of Aristotle. However, in social media the aesthetic doubling is disturbed, because there is no clear distinction between fiction and reality. Instead, the participants are simultaneously navigating through multiple layers of fiction by performing on several platforms. The discoveries from the analysis regarding this phenomenon challenge the aesthetic qualities of drama in education. This is where I return to Jacques Rancière's "aesthetic regime" (Rancière, 2004) to explore the concept as a potential theoretical framework for working with meaning-making in the crossover between the teaching and learning of drama and social media.

### ***Revitalising the Teaching and Learning of Drama in a Negotiation Between Two Aesthetic Logics***

When the participants in #iLive are performing one of the 15 roles, it is an example of a negotiation between two aesthetic logics. They are not only exploring a reality that is hidden behind a façade or interpreting and presenting something presupposed, they are operating in "the aesthetic regime", wherein they are challenging the configurations that construct the borders around working with the aesthetics of teaching and learning drama. In short, the participants are exploring, border-crossing and negotiating the contrasting paradigms of art as life and as a form of resistance (dissensus). The fragmented metafictional structure of #iLive as an educational design project can be interpreted as a collage consisting of a combination of heterogeneous elements, which meld the aesthetic experiences with ordinary life (Rancière, 2009, pp. 50–51). The participants are performing a play, within a play, within a play. This raises certain ethical questions, with some participants uncomfortable with being asked to use their own social media account for an educational purpose. One might say, why not make use of fictional profiles and keep the work within a fictional space? However, the analysis of the material shows that in parts of the culture of young people, there are fictional spaces and fictional characters. I argue that it is the responsibility of the drama teacher to locate those parts, one of which could be social media. Additionally, the adoption of fictional characters and working inside a fictional space would not support Rancière's notion of plurality and the concept of the "aesthetic regime". Said concept presents a theoretical framework, which allows (1) operation within an ephemeral state of "being in role" and (2) a continuous re-distribution and (re-)negotiation of the fragments of fiction or of reality. Rancière's principles of border-crossing and dissensus offer one approach to understanding the relationship between layers of fiction and layers of reality and its place in the education of young people in today's society. When one of the participants (cf. page 16) stated that he or she was highly critical of the images people create of themselves on social media and started to question why some pictures get more likes than others, it was another example of dissensus; the participant was questioning the rules of the world of social media. Part of the meaning-making process in the crossover between social media and the teaching and learning of drama operates at this level of diversity or complexity.

### ***Fragments of Fiction – Negotiating the Aesthetics of Teaching and Learning Drama***

In the introduction to this article I posed the following question: How do the participants express and shape meaning-making in the crossover between drama and social media in #iLive? The deployment of dramaturgy as an analytical tool regarding the processes of meaning-making enabled me, as a researcher, to explore them from a performative perspective. In the analysis of the participants' comments and responses in this article, I produced four areas where signs of meaning-making were articulated: (1) meaning-making in relation to the design and structure of #iLive; (2) meaning-making in relation to the content of #iLive from a participant's perspective; (3) meaning-making in relation to the concept of depth in education; and (4) meaning-making as simultaneously negotiated and redistributed through multiple layers of fiction. Based on the analysis of the study, I suggest that meaning-making processes in the crossover between drama and social media could be described as: (1) transformative; (2) continuously redistributing and re-negotiating the fragments of fictions and of realities; and (3) involving border-crossing activity and a simultaneous questioning of what is art and what is non-art. Even though the correlation between social media and the teaching and learning of drama might jeopardise the level of protection offered by working in fiction, the analysis undertaken here indicates that the participants were using different *techniques* or *strategies* to redistribute the element of protection. One of the strategies observed in the material was the participants' use of the 15 different established roles, such as "the poet" or "the pretty girl".

Rancière's concept of the "aesthetic regime" offered me a theoretical framework in which to explore the diversity and complexity of working in the crossover between drama and social media. Working with multiple fictions and realities challenges one of the pillars of teaching and learning drama, the notion of learning through fiction. Likewise, simultaneously navigating multiple layers of fiction increases the complexity of the meaning-making process in relation to teaching and learning drama. However, at the same time, it resonates with the complexities of being a subject in a performative and digital society and enables the drama teacher to create a platform from which young people can explore and critically interact with the issues of their daily life. The concept of dramaturgy, from a performative perspective, might help the teacher to work on that level of complexity and develop multiple ways of working with fiction.

### **References**

- Allern, T.H. (2003). Drama og erkjennelse. *En undersøkelse av forholdet mellom dramaturgi og epistemologi i drama og dramapedagogikk*. Trondheim: NTNU, Institutt for kunst- og medievitenskap (Diss.).
- Anderson, M. (2014). The challenge of post-normality to drama education and applied theatre.

- Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 19(1), 110-120.
- Carroll, J. & Cameron, D. (2009). Drama, digital pre-text and social media. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 14(2), 295-312.
- Dunn, J. (2015). Research as an agent of change in drama education: imagine that! *NJ – Drama Australia Journal*, 39(2), 153-158.
- Fels, L. (2015). Performative Inquiry: releasing regret. *International Yearbook of Research in Arts Education*, 3, 477-481. Münster, New York: Waxmann
- Fischer-Lichte, E. (2008). *The Transformative Power of Performance*. (S. I. Jain, Trans.). London/New York: Routledge.
- Goffmann, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Double Day Anchor Books.
- Haseman, B. & Mafe, D., (2009). Aquiring know-how: Research training for practice-led researchers. In H. Smith & R.T. Dean (Eds.), *Practice-led research, research-led practice in creative arts* (pp.211-229). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Heggstad, K.M. (2011). Frame and framing. In S. Schonmann (Ed.), *Key concepts in theatre/drama education* (pp. 259-264). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Kershaw, B. (1999). *The Radical in Performance: between Brecht to Baudrillard*. London: Routledge.
- Knudsen, K. (2016). Social media – A new stage for the drama teacher. In A. B. Sæbø (Ed.), *International yearbook of research in arts education*, 4, 205-213. Frankfurt: Waxmann.
- Knudsen, K. (2017). Performative læringsrum på digitale scener – dramadidaktik og sociale medier. *JASED – Journal for Research in Arts and Sports Education*, 1, 1-16.
- Neelands, J. & Goode, T. (2000). *Structuring Drama Work. A handbook of available forms in theatre and drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O’Sullivan, E. (1999). *Transformative learning: Educational vision for the 21st century*. New York: University of Toronto Press.
- O’Toole, J. & Dunn. (2002). *Pretending to learn. Helping children learn through drama*. French Forest: Pearson Education Australia.
- Peirce, C.S. (1903/1998). *The essential Peirce. selected philosophical writings. Vol. 2 (1893-1913)*. Peirce Edition Project (Ed.). Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

- Rancière, J. (2004). *The Politics of Aesthetics*. New York: Continuum.
- Rancière, J. (2009). *Aesthetics and its Discontents*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Rasmussen, B. (2012). Kunsten å forske med kunsten. Et blikk på kunnen ut fra praksis-teori-relasjonen. In R. Gürgens Gjørum & B. Rasmussen (Eds.), *Forestilling, framføring, forskning: Metodologi i anvendt teaterforskning* (pp. 23-49). Trondheim: Akademika forlag.
- Smith, D. & Dean, R.T. (2009). *Practice-led research, research-led practice in the creative arts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Szatkowski, J. (1985). Når kunst kan brukes ... om dramapædagogik og æstetik. In: J. Szatkowski & C. B. M. Jensen (Eds.), *Dramapædagogik i nordisk perspektiv* (pp. 136-182). Gråsten: DRAMA.
- Szatkowski, J. (1989). Dramaturgiske modeller – om dramaturgisk tekstanalyse. In E.E. Christoffersen, T. Kjølner & J. Szatkowski (Eds.), *Dramaturgisk analyse. En antologi* (pp. 9-92). Århus: Universitetet i Aarhus, Institutt for dramaturgi. (Aktuelle teaterproblemer, 24).
- Szatkowski, J. (1993). Et dramaturgisk vende. Perspektiv for teatervidenskapen, dramaturgiske modeller og forestillingsanalyse. In L. Hov (Ed.), *Teatervitenskapelige Grunnlagsproblemer* (pp.116-142). Askim Østfold Trykkeri.
- Tochon, F.V. (2010). Deep education. *Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers JETT*, 1, 1-12.
- Wotzko, R. (2012). Newspaper twitter: applied drama and microblogging. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 17(4), 569-581.
- Wotzko, R. & Carrol, J. (2009). Digital theatre and online narrative. In M. Anderson, D. Cameron & J. Carroll (Eds.), *Drama education with digital technology* (pp. 168-183). London: Continuum International Publishing.
- Østern, T.P & Channels, P. (2015). Deep learning and teaching as affordances of inclusive dance and arts education. In A. B. Sæbø (Ed.), *International Yearbook of Research in Arts Education, Volume 4*(pp.123-131). Frankfurt: Waxmann.

### About the Author

**Kristian Nødtvedt Knudsen** is Ph.D. in drama/theater in education at the Department of Teacher Education, Norwegian University of Science and Technology. His main teaching, research and developmental areas are: Drama/theatre in education, social media and drama, dramaturgy, performativity, improvisation, artistic research, design theory. Kristian finished his doctoral thesis in the autumn of 2017. The overall aim of his PhD project was to explore

how the digital and performative society can stimulate to renewal of drama teaching and learning.

(Publications/photage on academia.edu)

# International Journal of Education & the Arts

<http://IJEa.org>

ISSN: 1529-8094

## Editor

Christopher M. Schulte  
Pennsylvania State University

## Co-Editors

Eeva Anttila  
University of the Arts Helsinki

Brad Haseman  
Queensland University of Technology

Peter Webster  
University of Southern California

## Media Review Editor

Christopher Schulte  
Pennsylvania State University

## Managing Editor

Christine Liao  
University of North Carolina Wilmington

## Associate Editors

Kimber Andrews  
University of Cincinnati

David Johnson  
Lund University

Shari Savage  
Ohio State University

Marissa McClure  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Deborah (Blair) VanderLinde  
Oakland University

Heather Kaplan  
University of Texas El Paso

Christina Hanawalt  
University of Georgia

## Advisory Board

Full List: <http://www.ijea.org/editors.html#advisory>