

**PEDAGOGICAL DRAMATURGY OF THE NARRATING BODY.
A SYSTEMIC LITERATURE REVIEW.
LA DRAMMATURGIA PEDAGOGICA DEL CORPO NARRANTE.
UNA REVISIONE SISTEMATICA DELLA LETTERATURA**

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Double Blind Peer Review

Citazione

Barra V., Corona F., (2023) Pedagogical dramaturgy of the narrating body. A systematic literature review, *Giornale Italiano di Educazione alla Salute, Sport e Didattica Inclusiva - Italian Journal of Health Education, Sports and Inclusive Didactics*. Anno 7, V 1 Edizioni Universitarie Romane

Doi:

<https://doi.org/10.32043/gsd.v7i1.861>

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gsdjournal.it

ISSN: 2532-3296

ISBN: 978-88-6022-469-9

ABSTRACT

The aim of this contribution is to initiate a reflection on "Pedagogical Dramaturgy" in order to highlight the necessity of the educational value of the theatrical device as a metacognitive artefact of pluriscenic and communicative expression of the narrating body. Through a systematic literature review and the suggestions coming from the other studies, an attempt will be made to propose new keys for a responsible training in active citizenship, with the aim of acquiring new practices of interaction and apply protocols already experienced in community theatre to promote creative thinking.

L'obiettivo di questo contributo è quello di avviare una riflessione sulla "Drammaturgia Pedagogica" per evidenziare la necessità del valore educativo del dispositivo teatrale come artefatto metacognitivo di espressione pluriscenica e comunicativa del corpo narrante. Attraverso una revisione sistematica della letteratura e le suggestioni provenienti da altri studi, si cercherà di proporre nuove chiavi di lettura per una formazione responsabile alla cittadinanza attiva, con l'obiettivo di acquisire nuove pratiche di interazione e applicare protocolli già sperimentati nel teatro di comunità per promuovere il pensiero creativo.

KEYWORDS

Dramaturgy; Body; Creative thinking
Drammaturgia; Corpo; Pensiero creativo

Received 15/04/2023

Accepted 11/05/2023

Published 20/05/2023

Introduction, theatre as a cultural approach

In 1948, UNESCO (Kase, 1949) created the International Theatre Institute (ITI), the world's largest theatre organization, which in 1962 established the annual celebration of World Theatre Day on March 27 each year. For this event, a prominent figure in theatre, music, and culture, in general, is asked to write a message that will be read in theatres, schools, libraries, and all places of culture and gathering around the world.

The economic and social crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear to everyone the importance of promoting and protecting culture, creativity, and diversity of expression, as stipulated in the 2005 UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. This Convention (Ferracuti, 2009), ratified by 150 countries and the European Union, recognizes that culture and creativity are essential elements for sustainable development, innovation and social cohesion.

The cultural sector is one of the hardest hit by the pandemic and its survival is crucial for youth employment and sustainable development. In addition, culture plays an important role in fostering social cohesion and inclusion. To monitor the implementation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention, the "Global Series" was launched in 2005, and released the report "Re|Shaping Policies for Creativity" in February 2022 (Blanco et al., 2022).

This report, which is the third edition in the series, analyzes the challenges facing the cultural and creative sector due to the COVID-19 pandemic and provides possible solutions. The report contains a wealth of information and data on the current state of the cultural sector and analyzes the global and local criticalities of the issue. The goal of the report is to establish better and more effective policies to promote creativity and protect cultural diversity. At the centre of educational practice is proposed the issue of life skills, as well as the acquisition and enhancement of new tools for being in the world with effectiveness, value and satisfaction: in this sense, soft skills acquire a central position. The WHO document (1993) *Life skills education in School* (Gitomer et al., 2016) already contained a list of personal and interpersonal skills useful for managing relationships between the individual and others, but the more recent Learning framework presents a further and complex concept: the mobilization of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values through the process of reflection. In this paper, the focus is on creativity, problem-solving, critical thinking and communication: those identified are not cognitive skills, but affective, volitional and relational skills; therefore, in designing

interventions aimed at training soft skills, there is a need to focus on the development of learning self-regulation, planning and organizational skills. The development of soft skills (*Bates, Morgan, 2018*) invests above all in the emotional sphere, particularly concerning self-awareness, emotion management and self-control: these are the skills that enable the adolescent to be more aware of his or her emotions, experiences and thoughts and that promote, above all, an evolution of the subject in harmony.

1. Theatre and creative thinking between learning and teaching

Theatre arts teaching at school represents an important opportunity for the development of creative thinking, which is also considered one of the core competencies by Law 107/2015 (Torres et al., 2022), despite its limitations. This law, in fact, emphasizes the strategic importance and educational value of theatre teaching, introducing for the first time a primary standard regarding theatre teaching: the Strategic Directions for the Educational Use of Theater Activities, issued by the Ministry in 2016. This demonstrates an important cultural and social sensitivity, as theatre art has been summoned within the regulatory framework of Public Education. The responsibility for the correct and effective interpretation of this normative input lies with academia and schools. So, teaching theatre arts in school is an essential opportunity for the development of creative thinking and cultural formation of young people. Law 107/2015, despite its limitations, recognizes the importance of this activity and establishes its guidelines through the Strategic Directions for the Educational Use of Theatre Activities. This demonstrates the cultural and social sensitivity of considering theatre art as an essential component of public education, intending to promote a more comprehensive and articulated education for students.

In light of the findings, interest on the part of national and international institutions in the proposed topic is evident; therefore, a review of studies inherent in new methodological approaches related to theatrical didactics will be analyzed next using text mining techniques (Fig. 1). The analysis conducted has made it possible to grasp the new challenges in the educational field and in particular concerning pedagogical dramaturgy and to identify possible areas of development for future studies and research. Indeed, the use of theatre (Gallese, Morelli, 2011) as an educational tool represents a still little-explored field with undiscovered potential, but one that promises to offer numerous opportunities for the training and development of young people, thus contributing to the construction of a more inclusive and aware society.

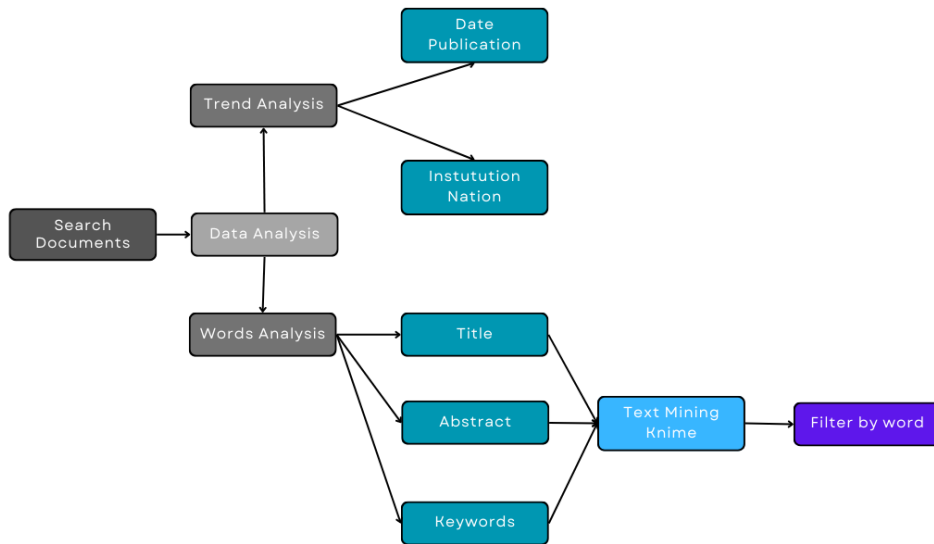


Fig. 1 Workflow

2. Materials and Methods, Text mining technique

Given the importance of the topic addressed, it was decided to go through a series of scholarly articles, from different platforms (Scopus, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate) to analyze the developments inherent in pedagogical dramaturgy. This type of analysis was carried out through a Text Mining technique thanks to dedicated software such as Knime. Our study was carried out over 5 years back to enhance the advent of new technologies (AR, VR, Metaverse, etc.) within the pedagogical drama world. The analysis was carried out on more than 70 articles, both written in Italian and English, avoiding repetition and similar articles, to keep the source dataset as truthful as possible. The study focused on analyzing three types of data: titles, abstracts and keywords. Articles were searched through non-specific but generic keywords to avoid invalidating the results of the study. The information collected was properly catalogued and preprocessed, and once a large dataset was obtained, it was subjected to text mining techniques through the Knime software described below. Text mining is a technology for extracting useful information and knowledge from large amounts of text (Gaikwad et. Al 2014). To perform text mining analysis on Knime, a series of well-defined steps must be followed, including data preparation and data analysis. Knime is a data analytics tool that offers a wide range of features for data processing, machine learning, and data

analysis. Data mining is one of the main features of Knime, which enables the extraction of useful information from large amounts of data (Mazanetz et al. 2012). The data preparation phase is critical to ensure the accuracy and meaningfulness of the analysis. At this stage, the Knime workflow involves the use of specific nodes, such as the "String Manipulation" node for data cleaning, the "Stop Word Filter" node for removing common words, and the "Stemming" node for reducing words to their base lemma. The "String Manipulation", "Stop Word Filter" and "Stemming" nodes are some of the most common nodes used in the data preparation phase of text mining on Knime. The "String Manipulation" node is used to manipulate and clean text data. With this node, you can remove special characters, convert text to uppercase or lowercase, replace parts of text strings with other words, or remove them altogether. The "Stop Word Filter" node is used to remove common words from text strings. These common words, such as "and," "of," "the," "the," etc., do not usually carry useful information for analysis and can be removed to reduce noise in the data. The "Stemming" node is used to reduce words to their base lemma. For example, the words "impression," "impressions," and "impressional" are all reduced to the root "impression." This process reduces the number of different words used in the data and simplifies analysis. In addition to these nodes, Knime offers a wide range of other data preparation nodes, including common word removal, duplicate elimination, synonym substitution, and spelling correction. Data preparation is a key step in text mining on Knime, as it can significantly influence the results of the analysis. The choice of the most suitable nodes for data preparation depends on the goals of the analysis and the nature of the data. It is important to perform several data preparation trials to determine which techniques work best for the specific data being analyzed. It is important to choose the appropriate data preparation techniques based on the objectives of the analysis. The next step is data analysis, which can be done through a variety of techniques, including information extraction, theme identification, entity analysis, opinion analysis, and relationship analysis. Knime provides a wide range of predefined nodes for data analysis, such as the "Word Vector Creator" node for creating vector representations of words and the "Text Processing" node for entity analysis. The "Word Vector Creator" node is used to create numerical representations of terms used in text documents. These numerical representations, called "word vectors," can be used to perform quantitative analysis on text data. The "Text Processing" node is used to analyze text data and identify patterns and trends in the data. This node can be used to perform word frequency analysis, word co-occurrence analysis and sentiment analysis. In addition, the "Text Processing" node can be used to identify named entities in text documents, such as people, places or organizations.

To perform complete text analysis on Knime, it is important to use a combination of data preparation nodes and data analysis nodes. For example, before using the "Word Vector Creator" node, you may need to use the "String Manipulation" node to clean text data and the "Stop Word Filter" node to remove common words. In addition, before using the "Text Processing" node, it may be necessary to use the "Stemming" node to reduce words to their base lemma and the "Chunking" node to identify phrases and named entities in the text data (Fillbrunn et al. 2017). In addition, Knime offers the ability to create custom workflows, which allow different operations and nodes to be concatenated to create a more in-depth analysis of the data. Once the data have been prepared and analyzed using Knime nodes, the last stage of text data analysis is the interpretation and visualization of the results. At this stage, various visualization tools can be used to communicate the results of the analysis in a clear and meaningful way. Knime offers some visualization nodes that can be used to create graphs and visualizations of text data. For example, the "Word Cloud" node can be used to visualize the most common words in text data visually. The "Scatter Plot" node can be used to visualize word vectors in a two-dimensional space to identify semantically similar words. In addition, for example, the "Line Plot" node can be used to visualize word frequency trends over time. In summary, the interpretation and visualization of text data analysis results are critical to communicating the results clearly and meaningfully. Knime offers numerous visualization nodes for creating graphs and visualizations of text data, but numerous external tools can be used for visualizing text data. Interpretation of the results depends on the specific objectives of the analysis and requires careful examination of the results to identify the most relevant and meaningful results. In general, data preparation and data analysis are the two fundamental processes in text mining on Knime. Data preparation ensures the quality of the data used in the analysis, while data analysis enables useful information and knowledge to be obtained from the data (Fig. 2).

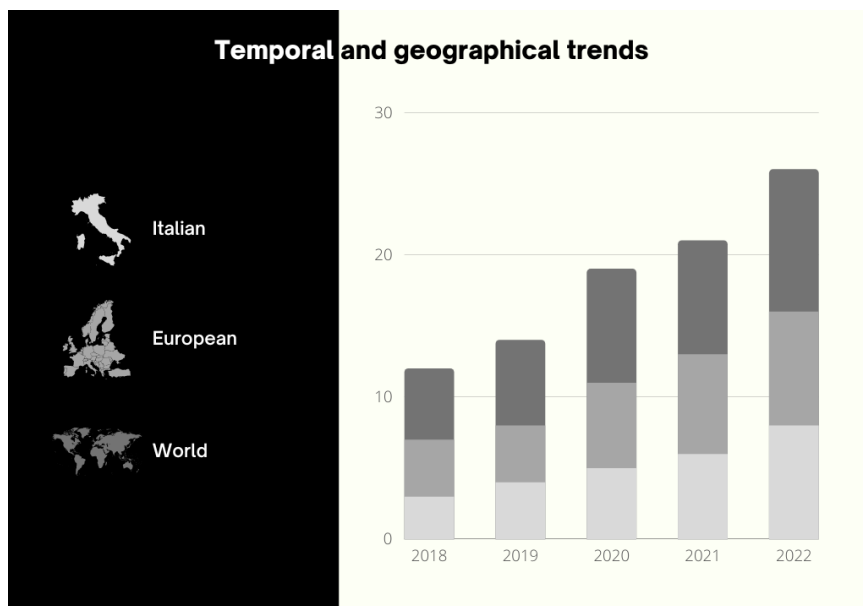


Fig. 3 Temporal and geographical evolution

Text mining technology proved to be of great help in extracting and analyzing the data obtained through the use of Knime. Our focus was on the words most frequently found in the texts considered, namely titles, abstracts, and keywords. Thanks to the many features and advanced data analysis techniques offered by Knime, we were able to identify a list of significant and relevant words, whose information was clearly and effectively represented through the pie chart shown in Figure 4.

Thanks to the data visualization capabilities offered by Knime, it was possible to immediately represent the information that emerged from the analysis performed. These revealed a strong interest in some fundamental concepts, such as impressions and drama understood primarily as metatheatre (Sorace, 2013), as well as the skill of creative thinking. In addition, among the concepts that gained the most prominence were dramaturgy and emotions. These results further confirmed the considerable potential and effectiveness of the educational proposal based on pedagogical dramaturgy, demonstrating its performativity not only in terms of understanding specific topics but also in terms of cross-cutting skills and interdisciplinarity.

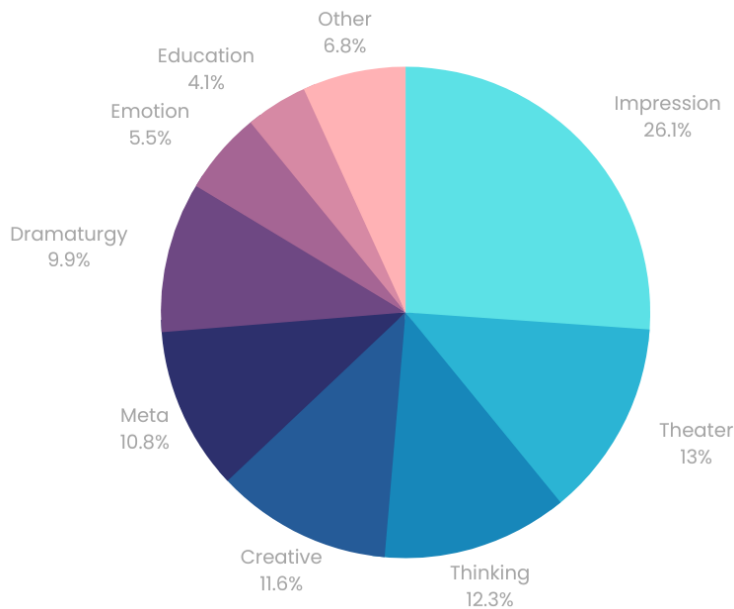


Fig. 4 Visualization Data

Through the use of specific Knime commands, it was also possible to create a word cloud that graphically represents the results obtained, providing a general overview of both the macro topics and the specific topics on which the scholarly literature has been focusing in the recent period concerning the topic of corporeality (Sibilio, 2002) in dramaturgy (as shown in Figure 5).



Fig. 5 Cloud words

Indeed, the study conducted revealed an increase in the interest expressed by the scientific community in pedagogical dramaturgy and its possible educational implications. In particular, the analysis of the most frequently used vocabulary over the past five years has made it possible to highlight the fundamental value of the emotions (Aiello et al., 2016) and impressions associated with such an approach, highlighting the multiple potentialities hidden in them. This has resulted in an innovative vision of teaching and learning (Corona, De Giuseppe, 2015), which has even suggested the hypothesis of the concept of "Meta theatre."

Suggestions from the current scenario prospect the possibility of incorporating the dramaturgical device of meta-theatricality into the educational scene (De Min, 2019). This is proposed to define a material and reflective meta-theatricality concerning the key concepts that emerged from the research study. Through the juxtaposition of narrative representation and narrated story (in line with what Oliva proposed in 2000), the totality of the play and the very purpose of the educational process could arise.

The concept of impression turned out to be trendy and with wide interest, a concept already introduced in the *Emile*, by Rousseau believing that educational action should be based on man's natural needs and dispositions, which are reflected in the first instruments of knowledge of the world: movement and the senses, through which we see the world. Young children, in particular, are naturally inclined to movement and physical activity. "We are born endowed with sensitivity and, from

birth, we receive different impressions from the objects around us [...] our first teachers of philosophy are our feet, our hands, our eyes" (Rousseau, 2022).

The first impressions we receive have an affective character (Colombetti, Thompson, 2008) and can influence subsequent information processing, remaining ingrained even in the presence of new experiences if the individual possesses a strong feeling of knowledge, that is, the predisposition to interpret new information as confirmation of one's impression.

One of the most interesting keys is emotional intelligence, which must be considered both as a means and an end. To begin the educational process according to the logic of *ex ducere*, it is also important to reflect on the concept of identity, understood as a process of gaining autonomy through received models, leading to self-actualization.

If the focus is the self-learning (Alberici, Serreri, 2002) of healthy and effective role models for society, then social theatre (Berardi, 2004) can be a very fertile avenue. By shifting the focus from an external construction of the self based on excessive protagonism typical of mass society, to a self in and with the world, one can work toward a holistic enhancement of one's inner faculties and resources, thus contributing to collective well-being. In fact, as it is argued, "theatre is the most significant experience of the individual training process, in which control of the dimension of the self, expression of emotions and the ability to relate is fundamental"(Giosi, 2011).

The potentials of classroom activity are indeed many, but it is important to emphasize that emotional intelligence constitutes a fundamental key both as an end and as a means to comprehensive and effective education. Indeed, as numerous studies show, there is a strong interaction between the emotional dimension of the individual and its expression, influencing the mental processes, decisions and actions we take.

For this reason, emotional literacy (Dettori, Lettieri, 2021), aimed at enhancing personal resources in both social and individual contexts, becomes increasingly urgent and essential. Learning to recognize one's impressions, knowing oneself and one's emotions, being able to assess one's limitations and merits, and gaining self-confidence are skills that enable progressive self-control, as well as the ability to innovate and adapt to change, increasing motivation for commitment and initiative. On the other hand, the acquisition of empathy allows one to put oneself in the shoes of others, understand others and promote their development from their diversity, while the possession of social skills fosters communication, conflict management, and the building of bonds of collaboration and cooperation for optimized personal and teamwork. Personal competence and social competence

(Daffi, 2007), therefore, are the important consequences of proper emotional literacy, both for the child and the adult. In addition, emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2011) can be used cross-culturally to foster the development of other skills and competencies, such as foreign language learning, understanding of scientific subjects, or creativity. For example, the analysis of emotions and their expression can become useful tools for understanding artistic or literary works, while the ability to handle stress and maintain attention can improve concentration and memory. Finally, it should be emphasized that emotional intelligence is not only useful for school life but also for professional and personal life. In fact, emotional skills are increasingly in demand in the world of work, as they are crucial for personnel management, effective communication and professional success. In addition, emotional intelligence allows one to improve interpersonal relationships, quality of life, and one's mental and physical health.

The social theatre represents an important practice that relies on action rather than observation. It is an artistic approach that involves a group of multifaceted professionals who are dedicated to interacting with different communities (Pontremoli, 2014) in relation to their specific identities. The social theatre aims to promote personal and social empowerment through performance, to create shared symbols and meanings to generate change. Social theatre is applied in a wide range of settings, including schools, prisons, mental health centres, hospitals, suburbs and businesses, where conditions of distress or hardship may be found. The creative process of social theatre can take different forms and use a wide range of methods and languages, but in each case, the end result consists of a play, that is, a performance whose type may vary according to the assessments made by the team and actors during the planning stage. In summary, social theatre represents an art form that goes far beyond entertainment and pure aesthetics, as it focuses on creating social connections, promoting empowerment and generating change through theatrical performance.

Conclusions and future outcomes

A theatre is a unique place in which deep and emotional relationships can be created and cultivated, as well as honing oral and gestural expression skills. The final performance represents the ultimate goal of an intense and transformative evolutionary process, leading to catharsis, or the release of emotions and a deeper understanding of oneself and the community of which one is a part. In the context of social theatre, dramatization becomes the action that allows the community to express its own dramatic dimension, to create the conditions for expression and communication, and to connect with the historical and symbolic horizon of a larger

community. Individual poetics (Inglese et al., 2013) and collective creativity meet in constant dialogue, resulting in a collective performance that is shaped as a community event.

With this in mind, the value of theatre that welcomes participants' narratives can be explored in depth and is configured as a physical and mental space for the elaboration of a common horizon, based on the recovery of cultural references and free self-expression (Capobianco, Vittoria, 2012). As Castiglia points out, the text for a theatrical narrative performance must revolve around a regenerative central idea, which becomes a central metaphor (Cappa, 2017) carrying the meaning of the entire performance and the peculiar thought of the author or creator. In this way, social theatre becomes a fundamental pedagogical tool for the growth and development of participants' awareness, enabling them to express their emotions, get in touch with their own and the group's identity (Bontempi, 2001), learn to communicate effectively and develop a greater understanding of others and society as a whole.

Storytelling (Cambi, 2009) is an art that draws on the raw material of the body, understood not only as a physical shell but as a complete and complex communication tool. The gaze, voice, facial expression, movement, sound, silence and even breath constitute the elements that, together, bring the narrative to life. Without the body, storytelling could not exist as such, since its essence is inherent in the totality of the person and his or her ability to express themselves through all the sensory channels at their disposal (Milella, 2020).

From this perspective, theatre practice provides a privileged opportunity to explore the multiple dimensions of the body, as well as to develop an awareness of these expressive tools. In particular, in the context of Theater Education (Oliva, 2010) in secondary school, the acquisition of body cognition becomes a goal of primary importance, as it allows the development of the ability to consciously and creatively use a tool that, although instinctive, requires a certain mastery and adequate preparation.

In sum, the body is the starting and ending point of storytelling, and theatre represents a privileged space to explore its many dimensions and develop awareness and mastery of corporeality as an expressive tool.

In conclusion, the attention generated by this approach allows us to be able to make considerations at the national level as well. The use of theatre as a pedagogical tool in school can be a highly effective option for developing creative thinking (De Bono, 2016), a fundamental competence also recognized by Law 107/2015. In addition, emotional intelligence is essential for social and academic adaptation, as our moods and impressions can influence mental, decision-making and behavioural processes.

Therefore, acquiring emotional literacy and awareness of a lived body (Merleau-Ponty, 2006), made up of feelings and impressions, can help enhance one's personal and social resources.

Given the results obtained and the interest highlighted through the review carried out, there are many potentialities found on which discussion and research in pedagogy can be continued, such as the influence of new technological tools with respect to the importance of theatre education and the concept of embodiment (Kiefer, Trumpp. 2022). Finally, taking into account the text mining carried out in the analysis phase, without a shadow of a doubt we cannot fail to consider the educational value of the concept of impression by screening the desirable potential of the theatrical device.

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Dr. Vincenza Barra is the author of the article, in particular of the sections: 1. Theatre and creative thinking between learning and teaching; 2. Materials and Methods, Text mining technique; 3. Results and discussions.

Prof. Felice Corona is the Scientific Supervisor of the research. He is the author of the Introduction, theatre as a cultural approach and Conclusions and future outcomes.