

Future-making in education through Social Presencing Theatre: an awareness-based anticipatory methodology.

CONTEXT OF THE CURATED SESSION

With the loss of what Guyer (2017) refers to as 'near future certainty', it is no wonder that the aims of schooling and the education of our children and young people are at a crossroad. The very loss of near future certainty should shock the education system into raising its gaze beyond what Anusas and Harkness (2014) refer to as the 'close present: the present of a recent yesterday, limited now, and almost tomorrow'. To enact such a change in perspective we will need to embed anticipatory practices and literacies in education communities, so as to learn from the future as it emerges. During this session, we will propose applied anticipatory practices - from viewpoints ranging design and theatre, and education at compulsory and tertiary stages - for working with learners, educational communities, and schooling systems. These approaches are framed as being awareness-based. They consider our awareness of one another and how we generate our interactions based on that awareness - what is referred to in Social Presencing Theatre as an awareness of the whole social field. Social Presencing Theatre (SPT) is an arts and awareness-based methodology for working with social change, harnessing the body as a way of knowing. The methodology was developed by the Presencing Institute (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) within the framework of Theory U - an applied and theoretical framework for supporting organisational and communal change. Theory U provides a generative structure for practitioners, researchers, and changemakers to co-sense into the possibilities of an emerging future. This framework, developed by MIT Professor Otto Scharmer, is currently applied globally in contexts as diverse as corporations, governments, and social movements. SPT is a core dimension of Theory U. Its origins are in MIT's systems thinking research groups and was developed for practical application by choreographer Arawana Hayashi. As a set of body-led practices for individuals and groups, SPT works as a social technology for supporting a system to sense and see itself. Through a series of co-creative enactments, SPT widens participation in future-making by providing a platform for groups to attune to and sense shared futures.

HOSTS

We bring together four interdisciplinary researchers for a curated session in which Social Presencing Theatre, as a participatory anticipation methodology, is introduced through each host's own discipline and context. This includes research and work in design, theatre, education, and choreography. Our core meeting points are education, and anticipatory and future-making practices using the body. We come from a global context,

including Brazil, South Africa, the United States, and Norway - representing a very diverse field of contexts. Our experience ranges transdisciplinary and experience design, applied cultural change practices, performance, as well as teaching and learning in compulsory and higher education.

PRACTICAL SESSION: PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

During this participatory session, attendees will be invited to an embodied exploration of Social Presencing Theatre as an applied anticipatory methodology, specifically focussing on examples from education-based interventions. The session will comprise an initial introduction to these frames of thinking, followed by embodied activities and sub-sessions introducing learnings from case studies. All the activities will be interspersed with discussions and peer reflection. Through experiential and reflective activities participants will be engaged in conference questions around performative anticipation, how anticipatory learning happens, and feeling and caring for the future. Participants will have the option of deepening into an experiential sub-session of one of the following cases:

- Applying embodied learning as an anticipatory literacy with a high school immigrant community of South Los Angeles.
- Deep learning in K12 education at a Waldorf School in Stavanger Norway.
- Using a participative social design approach to develop body-led anticipatory literacies in youth changemaker settings, London UK.
- Embodied research on borders and migration through devising theatre at a public community college, City University in New York.

At the end of the sub-sessions, participants will reconvene to share learnings and final reflections on the use of SPT as an anticipatory practice.

Participants will come out of the session with insights into the application of body-led, arts- and awareness-based anticipatory practices for working with communities, both as research methodology and social intervention strategy.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The workshop is open to an interdisciplinary audience interested in:

- Education, schooling, and learning;
- Practitioners and researchers working in the fields of social change, social transformation, cultural change, systems thinking, mindset transformation;
- Practitioners and researchers interested in awareness-based approaches for co-sensing and co-shaping emerging futures;

- Practitioners and researchers interested in arts-based approaches to knowing.

REFERENCES

Guyer J.I. 2017. Anthropology and the Near-Future Concept. In: Poli R. (eds) Handbook of Anticipation. Springer, Cham.

Anusas, M. and Harkness, R. 2014. Things Could Be Different: Design Anthropology as Hopeful, Critical, Ecological. Paper presented at Research Network for Design Anthropology: Ethnographies of the Possible, Aarhus.

For further context on SPT see <https://www.presencing.org/aboutus/spt>

For further context on Theory U see <https://www.presencing.org/aboutus/theory-u>

For further details on Arawana Hayashi see <http://www.arawanahayashi.com>

For further details on Otto Scharmer see <http://www.ottoscharmer.com>