

# Performing Art Experiences and Development Processes

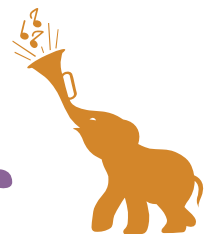
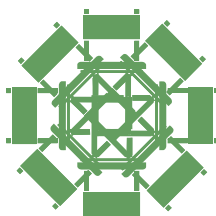
by Elisabeth Hovde Johannesen and Tone Cronblad Krosshus

## Competence

One of the overarching goals of performing art visits is that they will contribute to children and young people's education and development. Here you can read a little about how you as a teacher can utilize performing art experiences in education.



Photo: Kulturtanken/Lars Opstad



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## Why are performing arts important?

Performing art is important because it's about life. When encountering performing arts, students are given unlimited opportunities to experience and learn.

Performing arts invite us to explore existential themes such as shame, friendship and exclusion because it shows different aspects of such phenomena. Performing arts can make the unknown known, or the known unknown. Performing arts can challenge established truths, accepted attitudes, and contribute to understanding and reflection on inherited values.

In this way, encounters with performing art can make us rethink something we thought we understood or make us question something we thought we knew.

## What is a performing art experience?

Anyone who has been engrossed in a book, gripped by a movie or moved by music has had a performing art experience. These experiences are difficult to describe in words. They are bodily, personal, emotional, and cognitive all at once. Performing art experiences are therefore referred to as composite and complex.

Performing art visits allow students to encounter artistic expressions such as music and performing arts, often also combinations of these. A performing art visit provides opportunities for both individual and collective performing art experiences. Therefore, such visits have great educational potential.



## What does performing art have to do with development?

The overall part of the curriculum emphasizes the school's responsibility for the development of students. The goal is to equip students to live in freedom, independence, accountability, and humanity. Schools help students to understand themselves, others and the world, and to make good choices.

Art experiences are of particular importance for development, where particularly two aspects can be emphasized.

The first is self-transcendence, which is about the students' ability to face what is alien. Encouraging curiosity and taking someone else's perspective can train such skills.

The second is critical thinking, which is about the ability to think freely. Training critical thinking is the opposite of training goal-driven and predetermined knowledge. A thought that is free does not conform to learned conventions, does not take for granted, but explores and goes beyond limits.



## How can teachers facilitate performing art experiences?

All children have the right to experience performing art. When adults read a book, watch movies or listen to music, they do this voluntarily. Students, on the other hand, are forced into performing arts.

Unlike performing art encounters, the performing art experience cannot be forced. This is a pedagogical paradox that makes didactic questions relevant: How to motivate, inspire and arouse curiosity? And how to make performing art visits meaningful for students?

A pedagogical approach to performing art experiences is about training students' ability to

1. experience (skill)
2. communicate about experiences (knowledge)
3. reflect on experiences (competence)

## How can teachers turn performing art experiences into development processes?

Teachers can use performing art experiences to create groups of interpretations and disagreement. It is about facilitating that students can have different understandings and different experiences in their encounters with performing art. The educational framing of performing art visits is important. It should facilitate individual experiences, while these also may be explored in a classroom community, preferably before and after the performing art experiences.

Based on performing art experiences, teachers create situations in which diversity of expression is given value. With the performing artists, teachers can create complex learning processes where self-transcendence and critical thinking can be trained.



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