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Enhancing Theatrical Understanding and Skills through Field Trips: Insights from Experiential Learning

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Abstract: A persistent challenge in theatre education is effectively translating theoretical knowledge into practical competence. Educational field trips offer a potential solution by providing experiential learning opportunities. This qualitative study investigated the impact of such a field trip on the attitudes, learning, and engagement of level 100 Theatre Studio students in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Education, Winneba in 2015. Employing experiential learning theories as a framework, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, field notes, and document analysis. The analysis revealed three key themes: enhanced student confidence and teamwork; a deeper comprehension and appreciation of theatrical production processes; and the acquisition of practical skills in observation, analysis, and technical domains. The findings indicate that well-designed field trips, encompassing pre-trip preparation, in-trip activities, and post-trip reflection, significantly improve learning outcomes and cultivate a stronger connection to theatre practice. While the study's sample size of sixty participants is a limitation, it underscores the significant potential of experiential learning within theatre education and suggests directions for future research within the Theatre Studio curriculum.

Keywords: *Theatre Education, Field trips, Experiential learning, Appreciation of teamwork.*

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Introduction

Krepel and Duvall (1981) describe field trips, commonly referred to as school excursions or instructional outings, as educational experiences in which students interact directly with a setting to link theoretical concepts with practical experience. According to studies, these excursions can promote curiosity and comprehension (Michie, 1998). The anecdotal evidence is strong: Children who watched the National Theatre of Ghana's rehearsals frequently became very interested in studying theatre, proving the potent impact of experiential learning. Research consistently highlights their significance as indicated by Cwikla et al., (2009).

The study looks at how university-level theatre students are affected by instructional field trips. **There is often a gap between theoretical instruction and practical understanding in theatre education, which field trips aim to bridge.** The study looks at how do educational field trips to theatrical facilities impact students' scholarship, engagement and attitudes toward theatre studies in a university setting? The objective is to investigate the effectiveness of educational field trips in enhancing students' practical skills, understanding and overall appreciation of theatre studies by analysing students' experiences, perceptions and learning outcomes before, during and after a field trip to a theatrical venue. This research builds upon prior work demonstrating the benefits of field trips across various disciplines (Hudak, 2003; Tal & Morag, 2009) while focusing specifically on their impact within the context of university-level theatre training.

The author's own experience of going on a life-changing field trip to the National Theatre of Ghana serves as additional inspiration for this investigation into the important influence field trips can have on students' education and future theatrical career goals.

Theories of Experiential Learning

To establish a theoretical foundation for this paper, this section outlines core principles of experiential learning theory and their application to pedagogical practices. Experiential learning, a framework pioneered by David Kolb (1984), posits that knowledge is constructed through a cyclical process of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Unlike passive instruction, this approach emphasizes learning as an active, reflective process where direct engagement with real-world contexts drives cognitive and skill development. Kolb's model asserts that meaningful learning occurs when individuals critically reflect on experiences, derive conceptual insights, and apply those insights to new situations.

In the context of field trips, experiential learning theory provides a lens to understand how hands-on environments bridge abstract classroom concepts and practical application. Behrendt and Franklin (2014) extend this framework, arguing that field trips operationalize Kolb's cycle by offering students concrete experiences (e.g., observing professional theatre productions) paired with structured reflection (e.g., post-trip discussions). Crucially, they emphasize that the pedagogical value of field trips



depends not solely on the experience itself but on how educators scaffold learning before, during, and after the trip—a view corroborated by Storksdieck's (2006) research on museum education. Pre-trip activities (e.g., preparatory lectures) prime students for abstract conceptualization, while guided in-trip tasks (e.g., backstage workshops) foster active experimentation. Post-trip reflections (e.g., journaling or presentations) then solidify insights through reflective observation. This framework informs the investigation's focus on how structured off-site activities—when aligned with Kolb's cycle—enhance theatre students' cognitive, collaborative, and technical competencies.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1984), also sets strong foundation for understanding learning through experience, provides a robust framework for analyzing how field visits facilitate student development (Chan, 2012). This cyclical model posits four interconnected stages that learners navigate, often iteratively and not necessarily in a fixed sequence: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation.

The Concrete Experience phase, within the context of a field trip, represents the “doing” stage. It involves students actively immersing themselves in a new environment and engaging with novel situations. For theatre students on a field trip, this could entail visiting a theatre, directly interacting with actors or technicians, observing rehearsals firsthand, or participating in practical workshops. The sensory richness of this direct engagement – the sights, sounds, smells, and the overall physical atmosphere – contributes to a vivid and memorable concrete experience. As Kolb (1984, p. 38) aptly states, “Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.” This initial sensory encounter lays a crucial foundation for subsequent learning. Fielding (1994) further characterizes this stage as one of “sensing/feeling,” highlighting the immediate and often emotional connection to the experience.

Following the concrete experience, learners move into Reflective Observation. This stage requires students to step back from the immediate action and critically reflect on what they have experienced. On a theatre field trip, this might involve individual contemplation, written reflections in journals, or engaging in discussions with peers and instructors about their observations. This process of making meaning from the tangible experience is essential for deeper understanding. Well-designed field trips often facilitate this contemplative stage through structured conversations and guided reflection activities. This aligns with Fielding's (1994) description of this phase as “watching/reflecting.”

The third stage, Abstract Conceptualization, involves learners developing hypotheses and forming abstract concepts based on their reflections. In this phase, students begin to connect their direct experiences with existing knowledge and theoretical frameworks. This might involve formulating new ideas, linking academic concepts to real-world observations, or synthesizing what they witnessed with theoretical principles learned in the classroom or during the field trip itself. For instance, after observing a play rehearsal at the National Theatre of Ghana drama rehearsal hall, students might analyze the technical aspects they observed, such as lighting or stage design, and compare their findings to established theories of stagecraft and aesthetics. This stage represents a shift

towards “thinking” (Fielding, 1994), where meaning is actively constructed.

The final stage, Active Experimentation, involves integrating newly developed theories and concepts and applying them in novel contexts. This is where learners actively test their understanding and explore its practical implications. Following a theatre field trip, this could manifest in various ways, such as applying learned principles in a class project, designing a stage set based on their observations, or proposing innovative technical theatre solutions inspired by their field trip experience. This active application demonstrates comprehension and solidifies learning by connecting the knowledge gained on the field trip to real-world scenarios. Fielding (1994) aptly describes this stage as “doing,” emphasizing the active application of newly formed concepts.

Well-planned field visits inherently facilitate Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle. Pre-trip preparation helps contextualize the upcoming concrete experience, providing a framework for observation. The immersive nature of the field trip itself offers a rich and memorable concrete experience. Structured activities during the trip and post-trip debriefing sessions actively promote reflective observation and abstract conceptualization by guiding students to process their experiences and connect them to theoretical knowledge. Finally, post-trip assignments and projects provide opportunities for active experimentation, allowing students to apply their newly acquired understanding in practical ways. The structured character and inherent nuances of many educational field trips contribute significantly to their potential for supporting the experiential learning cycle. However, it is crucial to recognize that thoughtful planning is paramount to ensure that all four stages are adequately supported. Without careful preparation and meaningful follow-up activities, students may not fully complete Kolb's cycle, thereby diminishing the overall impact and educational value of the field trip.

John Dewey's pragmatist philosophy

The pragmatic educational philosophy of John Dewey places a strong emphasis on experiential learning and active engagement. His idea of “learning by doing” is quite similar to the ideas that underpin successful field trips. In that, Dewey promoted a more active, experiential method where learning is a process of growth and development resulting from engagement with the environment, as opposed to passive learning, when students are only receptive of knowledge. The following facets of Dewey's pragmatism highlight the importance of field trips. Additionally, Dewey (1997) asserts that learning is lifelong, and students should interact with the outside world to learn knowledge from things in their daily lives and adapt better to the environment.

Significantly, Dewey saw the experience as an active engagement between the learner and their surroundings rather than only a passive reception of inputs. Both the environment and the learner are shaped and changed by this interaction. Field trips inherently foster active engagement. Students actively participate in the surroundings by posing inquiries, making observations, and communicating with people and objects, leading to a deeper, more meaningful understanding than passive observation allows.

Inquiry-based learning was promoted by Dewey, in which a problem or question serves as the starting point for learning. The learning process is driven by this inquiry approach, which inspires students to actively create their understanding and seek knowledge. Students are encouraged to explore and research because the new

setting piques their interest and raises questions. A well-planned field trip may even revolve around a particular research issue that students investigate while there, gathering information and coming to their own conclusions.

Additionally, Dewey emphasized the value of thinking back on past experiences. Learning is more than just the experience itself; it also includes critically analysing what has been learnt and how it might be used in novel contexts. Reflection exercises, such as journaling, presentations, or post-trip conversations, are a key component of successful field excursions because they help students analyse their experiences, draw connections to previously taught content, and think about how their newfound understanding may be used in different situations.

Again, Dewey emphasised the value of interaction and teamwork in his understanding of learning as a social activity. Collaborative activities are a common feature of field trips, giving students the chance to talk about their findings, share their experiences and gain knowledge from one another. This common experience fosters a sense of community and improves learning. According to him, he viewed the teacher as a facilitator of learning rather than imparting knowledge. It is the teacher's responsibility to direct the learning process by asking probing questions, encouraging inquiry and offering assistance and direction. This important function is played by the teacher on a field trip, who sets the scene, frames questions, leads discussions and makes sure that students get the most out of the learning experience. The instructor is frequently more than just a passive observer; they are a guide. Essentially, well-planned field trips put Dewey's educational philosophy into practice. They offer chances for social contact, reflection, inquiry-based learning, active participation and teacher-led inquiry. Through firsthand experience, they promote a deeper, more profound comprehension, going beyond the passive transmission of knowledge. The field trip must be carefully organised and structured, with activities that promote inquiry, reflection and knowledge application to completely achieve Dewey's goal. A badly organised field trip may fall short of its potential and not provide the dynamic and captivating educational experience that is consistent with Dewey's pragmatism.

Field trips expose students to different theatrical environments, practices and perspectives that may directly challenge their existing assumptions about theatre. For example, a trip to a community theatre could make one reevaluate preconceived notions about the scope and materials required for a successful theatrical show. Observing a rehearsal process may challenge assumptions about the creation and performance of plays. Exposure to a variety of performance styles may challenge preconceived notions and extend perspectives. Students may be exposed to facets of theatre that they had not previously thought about, thanks to field trips. Their awareness of the scope and complexity of the theatrical world can be significantly increased by attending a play in an unconventional setting, networking with theatre professionals from various backgrounds, or learning about the technical parts of a production. Their future goals and approach to theatre may be significantly shaped by this broadening of their horizons.

Again, students may gain a critical awareness of the social, political and cultural problems woven throughout theatrical productions and works through close observation and engagement with a variety of theatre professionals and spectators. For instance, they might see how colour, gender, or class are portrayed or not

both on stage and in the audience, which prompts them to consider social injustices and power relationships. Importantly self-reflection is made possible by the field trip experience. Students are prompted to consider their own preconceptions, presumptions and biases regarding theatre in the new setting. They might think back on their own theatrical experiences and how they contrast with other people's realities. A crucial element of transformative learning is this kind of self-awareness. This self-reflection process can be greatly aided by journaling or debriefing sessions after the field trip. Discussions and critical discourse are facilitated via field visits. Conversations with teachers, other students and theatre professionals both during and after the visit promote the exchange of ideas and the questioning of preconceptions. The intricacies of theatre and its role in society are better understood as a result of these conversations which also encourage critical thinking. A field trip's vibrant and engaging atmosphere makes it easier to make significant connections between theory and practice. By directly connecting classroom ideas to their personal experiences, students can reinforce their learning and show how their knowledge is put to use in real-world situations. This improves their comprehension and has a long-lasting effect.

Both Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle and Dewey's pragmatist philosophy provide complementary theoretical frameworks for understanding the effectiveness of field trip-based learning. Kolb's cycle outlines the specific cognitive processes involved in learning through experience, emphasizing the progression from concrete experience to reflection, conceptualization, and active application. Dewey's philosophy provides a broader pedagogical rationale for experiential learning, highlighting the importance of active engagement, inquiry, reflection, and social interaction in fostering meaningful learning and lifelong development.

Field trips, when thoughtfully designed, can effectively integrate both frameworks by providing rich concrete experiences that prompt reflection, encourage the development of abstract concepts through inquiry, and offer opportunities for active experimentation and application, all within a social and interactive learning environment guided by the teacher as facilitator.

This study, focusing on the impact of a field trip on Level 100 Theatre Studio students at the University of Education, Winneba in 2015, directly aligns with these theoretical perspectives. For these novice theatre students, a field trip offers a crucial opportunity to move beyond theoretical instruction and engage directly with the practical realities of the theatre world in Ghana. By providing concrete experiences in professional or community theatre settings, the field trip can stimulate their curiosity, encourage critical observation and reflection on theatrical processes, and potentially inspire them to connect classroom learning with real-world practice as they continue their journey in the Theatre Studio curriculum. The findings of this study can therefore be analyzed through the lens of both Kolb's cycle and Dewey's principles to understand how this experiential learning opportunity influenced their attitudes, learning, and engagement with theatre practice.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design grounded in experiential learning theory to explore the impact of an educational field trip on theatre students' learning, attitudes, and engagement. A grounded theory approach was adopted to allow

themes to emerge inductively from the data, providing a rich understanding of how experiential activities influence student development within a theatrical context.

Participants were purposively selected from Level 100 Theatre Studio students in the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Education, Winneba, who participated in a field trip to selected theatre spaces in Accra. The sampling strategy aimed to reflect a diversity of backgrounds, levels of prior theatre exposure, and participation in the field trip. A total of sixty (60) students were recruited, with data saturation used to determine the final sample size.

Data were collected over a period of three weeks following the field trip. The process involved multiple methods to enable triangulation and enhance the credibility of the findings. One-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with all 60 participants using a pre-tested guide. These interviews explored students' experiences during the trip, their learning outcomes, reflections on theatre practice, and specific moments of impact. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

In addition, the researcher kept detailed field notes during the trip, documenting student interactions, participation levels, and contextual dynamics. Supplementary materials such as student journals and reflective writings were also collected and analyzed to provide further insights.

The data were analyzed thematically using manual coding. Transcripts, field notes, and student documents were read multiple times to identify recurring patterns. Initial codes were developed inductively, grouped into categories, and refined into overarching themes through constant comparison. This process enabled a deep interpretation of how the field trip influenced student learning and attitudes.

The study adhered to ethical research standards. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained, and no identifying information was included in the final analysis. Ethical clearance was sought and approved by the relevant departmental board prior to data collection.

Findings and Discussion

Pre-Trip Preparation

Their pre-trip preparation greatly influenced the students' experiences and learning objectives during the field trip. Students could interact more deeply with their observations because of the underlying information and context that lectures and conversations supplied. One participant affirmed, *"When we got on stage, the stage lighting techniques discussion was very beneficial. I used to merely notice the lights and the kinds of effects produced by the instrument but now the field trip has offered me the opportunity to know the many kinds, their impacts, and how they add to the overall atmosphere. I was able to recognize those several methods on the field trip. It greatly enhanced my understanding."* This emphasizes how crucial pre-trip planning is for laying the groundwork and relating abstract ideas to real-world situations. As Lee (2019) argued, well-structured pre-trip planning enhances students' ability to connect abstract concepts to real-world experiences, leading to deeper understanding and retention of knowledge. Prior knowledge from the field trip significantly influenced students' achievement. Furthermore, the effectiveness

of lectures in providing context and stimulating interest before a field trip is well-established.

Readings and other preparatory activities encouraged active participation and promoted a deeper comprehension of the material. Learning about the National Theatre's history before our visit truly made a difference. One student said. *"I was able to relate what I had studied about the building's history and architectural elements after seeing it in person. It was more than just a structure; it was a location with a narrative, and I now knew it better."* This emphasizes how important pre-trip assignments are for improving understanding and encouraging active learning. Students' observations and participation during the trip can be enhanced by assignments that highlight particular elements of the forthcoming experience. Research suggests that structured pre-trip assignments help students engage more deeply with learning experiences by providing them with essential background knowledge and guiding their focus on key concepts (Paul, 2020). Even though there were not many skill-building exercises in this study, the participants found them to be beneficial. For instance, the observational skills workshop improved the students' capacity to observe and document things while on the trip. This highlights how important it is to teach students particular skills related to the goals of the field trip. The development of pre-trip skills directly increases the pupils' ability to gain from the field trip (Sevinc, 2019). In conclusion, the student's capacity to actively participate in and gain knowledge from the field trip was greatly impacted by their pre-trip preparation. By guaranteeing that students arrived ready, involved, and focused on maximizing this educational experience, a combination of lectures, discussions, preparatory assignments, and targeted skill-building exercises boosted learning outcomes.

During-Trip Activities

A range of activities intended to maximize student participation and learning were included in the field trip. An organized framework for touring the locations was offered by guided tours, which made sure that all the important details were discussed. Feedback from participants, however, indicated a range of experiences. With remarks like, *"The guided tour was informative, others expressed their appreciation for the educational value of the tours. Meanwhile, the guide was well knowledgeable about both the technical elements and the theatre's history. Others thought the pace was too quick, restricting possibilities for personal investigation and questioning, but I learned a lot more than I would have simply by exploring on my own."* Learning outcomes during field trips are significantly influenced by the harmony between opportunities for independent inquiry and organized instruction (DeBoer, 2019).

The practical exercises, like the stage lighting workshop received great appreciation for their ability to promote greater comprehension and participation. One student who has a strong interest in lighting wrote, *"...The practical stage lighting session was amazing! Working with the lighting instrument firsthand gave me a better understanding of how everything operates. Compared to simply listening to a lecture, it was far more interesting."* This is consistent with studies showing how beneficial active learning experiences are for improving knowledge application and retention. However, the success of hands-on activities depends heavily on their alignment with the overall learning objectives and the provision of sufficient time and support (Fleischmann, 2021).

For many participants, the combination of these strategies guided tours, practical exercises and interactive discussions proved especially successful. A student said, “*I thought it was great how the many activities were integrated. The hands-on exercise helped me grasp the practical side, the guided tour provided an overview and the discussions allowed me to think and express my opinions.*” The experience was well-rounded. A multifaceted strategy that accommodated various learning preferences improved learning results and engagement (Barkley & Major, 2020). Future field trips should prioritize a balanced approach to optimise learning for all students.

Post-Trip Reflection and Debriefing

In order to consolidate learning and extend the field trip’s influence beyond the immediate experience, post-trip reflection and debriefing sessions were essential. This process was facilitated using a range of tactics and participant comments demonstrated how successful these methods were. Journaling and graphic organizer were examples of structured activities that offered chances for personal introspection. “*Writing my journal immediately following the trip helped me process everything, I became aware of things I had not previously considered. It really increased the significance of the experience,*” one participant wrote. This comment aligns well with research emphasizing the importance of immediate reflection for consolidating learning. According to Liu (2020), reflective practice enables learners to critically analyse their experiences in real-time, fostering a deeper understanding and long-term retention of knowledge. By engaging in immediate reflection, students can connect new information to prior knowledge, identify gaps in their understanding, and actively construct meaning, which are essential processes for effective learning. “*The concept map was a great way to organize my thoughts. I was able to see the connections between the various parts of the journey, which made it easier for me to comprehend the overall picture,*” indicated by a participant.”

Facilitated class discussions and small-group talks offered chances for cooperative learning and the exchange of different viewpoints. Discussions in small groups created a secure environment for exchanging ideas and getting criticism (Michaelsen et al., 2023). The importance of debriefing in integrating experiential learning with preexisting knowledge is highlighted by the following “*The instructor’s guidance during the discussion helped us to connect our experiences to the theoretical concepts we learned in class. It made everything more meaningful. The whole-class discussions led by the instructor linked individual experiences to broader theoretical concepts. The small group discussion was really helpful. It was a safe space to share my thoughts and hear other people’s perspectives.*” One gets to learn a lot from smaller class groups discussions (Calp, 2020).

Last but not least, exercises that specifically connected the field trip experience to past knowledge and upcoming education strengthened ideas and improved comprehension (García de la Vega, 2022). A participant was of the view that, “*The understanding was reinforced by applying newly acquired knowledge to the post-trip assignment: “It was incredibly helpful to me to apply what we learned on the trip to the class project. It increased the learning’s applicability and relevance.”*” This illustrates how crucial it is to incorporate experience learning into the large curriculum (Ennis, 2018). Overall, the various post-trip reflection techniques effectively increased the field trip’s

educational value beyond the immediate experience, producing deeper and more enduring learning results (Bright, 2018).

Enhanced Understanding and Appreciation

A central finding of this study was the significant enhancement of students’ understanding and appreciation of technical theatre resulting from the field trip. This went beyond merely gaining knowledge to include a deeper, more revealing experience of the intricacy and artistry of technical theatre fulfilment. This is consistent with research showing how experiencing learning can improve understanding and increase engagement (Deslauriers, 2019).

Direct engagement with the lighting equipment according to one of the students was fulfilling, where the lighting crew member explained every question posed to him. Students’ comprehension of the technical aspects that are sometimes disregarded in conventional classroom settings was much improved by the practical exercises and guided tours. “*The release of the electric fly bars to rig lights and the final departure back to fly session was executed with ease and precision. A system that I had never tried before.*” This was a statement from one of the students highlighting the importance of firsthand observation and engagement. A study highlighting the value of hands-on experience in acquiring technical abilities is supported by this finding. As asserted by Yao (2023), experiential Learning Theory emphasizes that practical, hands-on engagement is crucial for developing technical skills, as it allows learners to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts. Through active experimentation and concrete experience, learners not only enhance their understanding but also improve their ability to retain and transfer skills to different situations. Another participant pointed out that a more comprehensive understanding of these elements of theatrical production was made possible by the opportunity to watch and even interact with professionals and equipment.

A greater understanding of the collaboration aspect of theatre-making was developed through rehearsal observation and conversations with theatre professionals. Several attendees shared how they now understand the intricate relationship between actors, directors, designers, and technicians. The study emphasized the value of comprehending the collaborative character of artistic activities is directly supported by this finding. According to a student, “*The collaborative nature of theatre-making fosters a deeper appreciation of the art form, as it requires the collective creativity, discipline, and dedication of diverse individuals working toward a shared vision.*” The field trip expanded participants’ awareness of the various forms and expressions within theatre by exposing them to a range of theatrical settings and performance styles. This stands in contrast to the constraints of a conventional classroom environment, where exposure is frequently limited to specific genres (Rodriguez, 2018). This expanded viewpoint emphasizes the value of experiential learning in fostering critical engagement with the arts and aesthetic appreciation. The field trip successfully closed the knowledge gap between classroom theory and real-world implementation. A key component of successful learning is the integration of theory and practice (Hardy, 2018). The field trip was an effective means of accomplishing this integration.

Development of Practical Skills

Beyond theoretical knowledge, the field trip helped students build a number of practical skills related to theatre studies,

improving students' capacity to actively participate in the art form. Research highlighting the value of real-world application in skill development is consistent with this experiential learning strategy (Sangwan & Singh, 2022). Participants' ability to observe was greatly enhanced by the field trip's immersion format and pre-trip instruction in observational techniques. Within the theatre space, students were able to pay attention to details, decipher visual cues, and evaluate performances more critically. This is consistent with evidence showing that directed observation enhances observational skills, especially in a rich and stimulating environment. For instance, participants reported better skills in recognizing lighting methods, evaluating stage decisions and deciphering minute details in actors' performances. The chances to watch rehearsals, talk to theatre professionals and see performances up close, encouraged the growth of critical thinking abilities. The ability to assess theatrical productions improved, allowing students to pinpoint the production's advantages and disadvantages in a variety of areas, including set design, and lighting. Research showing the value of critical reflection and active observation in the development of analytical abilities is supported by this finding (Erdogan, 2019).

Opportunities for cooperation and communication with peers and professionals were presented by the field trip. Communication skills were developed through sharing observations, asking questions, and taking part in group discussions. Throughout the trip, cooperative activities improved problem-solving and teamwork abilities. Research on the value of communication and group learning in skill development is supported by Barnes & Todd (2021), who asserted that collaborative interactions enhance the exchange of ideas, promote critical thinking and foster a deeper understanding of concepts. Through effective communication and shared learning experiences, individuals develop not only technical skills but also essential interpersonal abilities, which are crucial for teamwork and professional growth.

Positive Shift in Attitude and Motivation

Participants' enthusiasm and attitudes toward theatre studies were greatly changed by the field trip. They gained a greater understanding of the art form, more self-assurance in their skills, and a greater desire to learn more and participate in theatrical activities because of the immersive experience. This is consistent with studies showing how experience learning improves student engagement and motivation. This aligns with research demonstrating that experiential learning enhances student engagement and motivation. Morris (2020) affirms that Experiential Learning Theory suggests that students learn more effectively when they actively participate in real-world experiences, allowing them to apply knowledge in practical contexts. Likewise, the Self-Determination Theory emphasizes that hands-on learning meets students' intrinsic needs for autonomy, competence and connection, which fosters greater motivation and sustained engagement (Ma, 2023).

In theatre, several participants reported feeling more confident and self-sufficient. Their self-confidence and sense of success were increased by the practical exercises and professional encounters that gave them the chance to show off their abilities and get encouraging comments. This is in line with studies that demonstrate how successful experiences and encouraging feedback boost self-efficacy. This positive change is aptly illustrated by participants' remarks like, *"through my involvement in theatre, I have gained the confidence to express myself more clearly and*

collaborate effectively with others." Such statements reflect the increased self-efficacy and personal growth that often emerge from active participation in theatre-making. For many participants, the field trip rekindled their passion and interest in theatre. Many students were motivated to continue their education by the experience's immersive and captivating qualities as well as the chance to observe the professional theatre practitioners' collaborative creativity and craftsmanship.

An understanding of the value of cooperation and teamwork in theatre was cultivated by the field trip. The importance of cooperating to accomplish a common objective was brought home by witnessing the cooperative efforts of many teams during rehearsals and production. An understanding of the value of cooperation and teamwork in theatre was cultivated by the field trip. Witnessing the collaborative efforts of various teams during rehearsals and production underscored the importance of working together to achieve a common objective. This aligns with research highlighting the significance of collaboration in the arts and creative fields. According to Ellinor & Girard (2023), creative collaboration fosters innovation and shared meaning, while Brown (2021), emphasizes that group creativity in performance arts relies on collective effort, adaptability, and mutual trust to bring a unified artistic vision to life. Participants' remarks demonstrated a renewed respect for the collaborative nature of theatrical understandings. A passion to study more and explore theatre was sparked by the field trip. Participants indicated a greater desire to take advanced classes, go to seminars or do independent theatre-related research (Pennia, 2021). This enhanced motivation for learning is in line with studies that demonstrate how these experiences can cultivate a deeper desire to pursue information and skill development. One important conclusion is that the field trip had a favourable effect on attitudes and motivation, indicating that experiential learning is an effective teaching strategy for raising student involvement and encouraging a lifelong love of theatre.

Conclusion

This study looked into how university-level theatre students learning, involvement and attitudes towards theatre were affected by an educational field trip. The results of this study strongly imply that educational field trips that are carefully thought out and executed can be a potent teaching tool for improving attitudes, learning and engagement in theatre studies.

In order to maximise the significance of meticulous pre-trip planning a variety of activities during the trip and in-depth post-trip reflection and debriefing. They also reinforce the benefits of experiential learning. Although the study's limitations such as its small sample size and concentration on a single institution and field trip make it necessary to use caution when extrapolating the results, the rich qualitative data offer convincing proof of the substantial benefits of field trips on student learning and appreciation of theatre. A bigger more varied sample size, the addition of quantitative data to support the qualitative findings and an examination of the long-term impacts of field trips on student outcomes could all be advantageous for future research. However, this study provides insightful information about how field trips could improve the educational experience in theatre and possibly other subjects that gain from hands-on learning. Ultimately, experiential learning through field trips transcends traditional instruction, transforming passive students into engaged practitioners who embody the artistry, collaboration, and

innovation that define theatre's transformative power on both stage and society.

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