

# Formative assessment and academic writing skills in theatre history course

R. Oruaas, *University of Tartu*

**ABSTRACT:** In my paper, I will analyse and sum up the results of a research taken place in year 2016/17 during my course on General Theatre History in University of Tartu, Institute for Cultural Research and Arts. The results of the research are considered in the context of sociocultural theory (Englert, Mariage, Dunsmore 2006).

The research focus is on developing reading and academic writing skills in the context of learning to understand a theatrical event (Postlewait 2009, Sauter 2004). Learning to write a structured and coherent text in appropriate style is one of the keys in learning humanities. It includes working with various sources and different type of texts and images, including poetically complex drama texts, and understanding the position of the study object in a given cultural and historical situation. The initial results of the survey show that individual writing and group discussions are most effective for the students while supporting each other. The connecting point is constant feedback, both oral and written. One of the crucial results of the survey was a clearly acknowledged need of the students for more structured and guided seminar discussion.

Teaching the course for the second year, the process has made me ask, what is theatre history, and what does it mean to teach history of a specific art form? The course includes several activities to enhance wider understanding of the topic. Main parts of the course are lectures, seminars with student presentations, lecturer and peer feedback. As the result, the main idea to develop the course is to frame it with the concept of theatrical event. Learning situation in the university itself is an event with different agents, contexts, codes, etc. Learning to know different value systems and understanding a text in its social and cultural context leads to think about one's own value system, and thus write more complex and interesting arguments.

## REFERENCES

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