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GUIDELINES FOR THE AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT





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TraNET – (Trans)National European Theatre is a Creative Europe project that reimagines how theatre is created and shared across linguistic and national borders.

Coordinated by Avignon Université with partners PACTA dei Teatri (Milan), multiculturalcity e.V. (Berlin), and IULM University (Milan), TraNET blends live performance with digital technology to offer a shared European stage.

Its core is the Clashing Classics Festival, a biennial event where three national classics—reinterpreted by each partner—are performed and live-streamed simultaneously with multilingual surtitles.

Audiences across Europe take part in a single, transnational experience, extended by cross-border debates.

In its final phase, TraNET culminates in a bold, multilingual co-production of The Waste Land by T. S. Eliot, created collaboratively by the three companies. More than a festival, TraNET is a cultural innovation lab promoting accessibility, multilingualism, and new professional pathways in European theatre.

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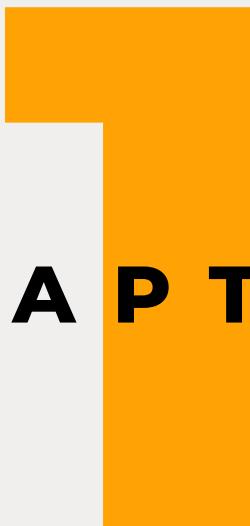
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C H A P T E R

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The **TraNET project** is committed to transforming how audiences experience European theatre by intertwining live performances with innovative audiovisual tools. The *Clashing Classics Festival* acts as a central platform to enhance cultural participation, deepen transnational connections, and dismantle linguistic and physical barriers.

By blending the traditional appeal of live theatre with the accessibility of modern technology, TraNET aims **to reimagine audience engagement**.

This document lays out the comprehensive strategies, principles, and structures necessary to achieve these objectives. It emphasizes the importance of fostering meaningful connections between audiences and productions, ensuring inclusivity, and sustaining long-term cultural dialogues.

This document provides comprehensive guidelines for creating an engaging and inclusive audience experience in theatre productions. By blending traditional live performances with innovative practices, these guidelines aim to enable any organization to replicate a successful audience engagement strategy.

The focus is on fostering meaningful connections between audiences and productions, ensuring inclusivity, and sustaining long-term cultural dialogues. These guidelines are adaptable for various contexts and cultural settings.

CHAPTER



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ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

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2.1 PRE-SHOW ENGAGEMENT

Goals

Foster anticipation, provide context and create a sense of community before the performances.

Key actions

- **Multilingual digital content:** release introductory posts explaining the plays' themes and historical significance in English, French, Italian and German.
- **Newsletter launch:** introduce a regular newsletter to keep the audience informed about upcoming events.

Pre-show engagement is essential for building anticipation and creating a **meaningful connection** between audiences and the production's themes. It begins by providing accessible and engaging content to immerse potential attendees in the cultural and artistic context of the play. These communications may include event announcements, simple production notes, or brief messages from the creative team. This format builds continuity and invites audiences to remain engaged across the various stages of the project.

Community involvement is another critical component. Informal meetings with cultural partners, open-door rehearsals where possible, or classroom visits may foster a stronger connection between local communities and the performances. The aim is not to produce complex or large-scale events, but rather to identify achievable actions that activate local interest and participation.

2.2 IN-SHOW ENGAGEMENT

Goals

Enhance the live theatre experience and foster cross-border connections.

Key actions

- **Real-Time multilingual surtitles:** provide synchronized translations in the original languages to ensure accessibility.
- **Simultaneous projections:** stream live performances across partner cities to create a united transnational audience.

During the performance, ensuring an immersive and inclusive experience is paramount. Use advanced **surtitling technology** to provide real-time translations in multiple languages, catering to diverse linguistic backgrounds.

If the production is presented in multiple locations, consider **live streaming the performance** to create a unified experience for audiences in different venues.

Enhance the theatrical experience by incorporating subtle interactive features, such as **live polls or audience feedback tools**. These should be carefully integrated to maintain the integrity of the live performance while fostering a sense of shared participation among attendees.

Ensure that these features are accessible to all, regardless of technical proficiency.

2.3 POST-SHOW ENGAGEMENT

Goals

Deepen audience reflection, promote dialogue and foster long-term connections.

Key Actions

- **Post-Show conversations:** host live-streamed and in-person post-performance debates led by theatre experts, directors and cast members.
- **Feedback collection:** use digital surveys to gather audience impressions and suggestions.
- **Educational content:** share post-show materials that encourage deeper engagement.

The post-show engagement phase centers on fostering reflective and interactive discussions, creating a platform for deeper exploration of the play's themes and creative process. Discussions will involve the cast, directors, and cultural experts, offering audiences a rare behind-the-scenes insight into the production.

These conversations will bring together audiences from the theatres hosting the performances, as well as those participating via live streaming. This physical and virtual gathering of diverse voices aims to enrich **the dialogue and foster cross-border connections**.

To facilitate these discussions, professional translators will be present in the auditoriums to ensure that questions and answers flow seamlessly across linguistic barriers. This real-time multilingual support will enable participants from different countries to fully engage and share their perspectives.

For school audiences, the discussions will be further enhanced by **educational kits** provided to teachers in advance. These kits will include curated materials that align with the play's themes, offering students an enriched understanding and fostering more meaningful contributions during the post-show sessions.

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CHAPTER

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

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4.1 INCLUSIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

- Ensure **surtitles** are available for all performances.
- Provide online streaming options to include remote participants.
- Collaborate with accessibility organizations to provide services for differently abled audience members.

Ensuring inclusivity and accessibility is **at the core** of audience participation strategies. Productions should incorporate multilingual surtitles and sign language interpretation, to create an environment that welcomes individuals with diverse needs. Collaborating with accessibility organizations ensures these tools are effective and widely available. Additionally, physical accessibility measures, such as wheelchair ramps and priority seating, must be prioritized to make the theatre experience truly inclusive for all.

4.2 CULTURAL DIVERSITY

- **Design events that highlight the multilingual nature of the productions.**
- **Ensure marketing materials reflect the cultural diversity of the project to foster broad appeal.**

Embracing cultural diversity enriches the theatrical experience and ensures a broad spectrum of voices is represented. Productions should reflect a variety of cultural perspectives through their storytelling, casting, and creative teams.

Outreach efforts must target **multicultural communities**, creating spaces where diverse audiences feel seen and heard. Programs that celebrate and integrate different traditions foster deeper engagement and a sense of belonging.

4.3 CROSS-GENERATIONAL PARTECIPATION

- **Create content tailored to different age groups.**

Fostering cross-generational participation creates opportunities for intergenerational learning and dialogue. Tailored programs for schools and universities encourage younger audiences to engage with theatre in a way that resonates with their interests and needs. For older audiences, productions can offer senior-friendly initiatives, such as earlier performance times, quieter environments clearly structured formats can enhance comfort and participation.

Printed materials or short introductory talks may also support comprehension and enjoyment. Intergenerational workshops and discussions further enrich the audience experience by fostering connections between age groups.

4.4 FORMATS FOR AUDIENCE INTERACTION

- **Post-Show Live Q&A Sessions: hybrid events where audiences can pose questions to directors and actors in real-time**

Innovative and adaptable formats for audience interaction are key to meaningful engagement.

Live Q&A sessions after performances allow audiences to connect directly with the creative team, offering insights into the production process and themes. Thematic workshops provide hands-on opportunities to explore the cultural and artistic elements of the play.

A relevant example of this approach is **the thematic workshop** organised by the Université d'Avignon as part of the Festival Clashing Classics. Titled "*Transferts culturels et théâtre: Les comédiens et les processus de création comme figures de médiation*," the event explored cultural transfer in European theatre through the lens of actors and creative processes. The workshop included contributions from scholars working on French, German, English, and Italian theatre traditions, spanning from the 17th century to today. Among the participants was director Helen Landau, who shared her experience of working with non-professional actors—students from the University of Avignon—on the English adaptation of Marivaux's "*L'Île des Esclaves*". Landau's contribution offered valuable insight into her creative process and the pedagogical and intercultural dimensions of her theatrical work.

Community dialogues, hosted in collaboration with local cultural leaders, enable audiences to share their perspectives and deepen their understanding of the work. These formats ensure the audience becomes an active participant in the theatrical journey.



CHAPTER
4

RESOURCES REQUIRED

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4.1 HUMAN RESOURCES

- Moderators and Facilitators:** Lead post-show discussions and manage digital forums.
- Translators:** Provide real-time multilingual support for live events and digital content.

The foundation of a successful engagement program lies in skilled facilitators and moderators who guide discussions and manage audience interaction.

Multilingual translators, cultural mediators, and educators enhance inclusivity.

Technical specialists are crucial to operate and troubleshoot advanced tools such as surtitles and live-streaming systems. Accessibility coordinators ensure all resources are designed with inclusivity in mind.

4.2 TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- Streaming equipment:** high-quality cameras and software for live streaming and recording.
- Surtitling software:** tools to synchronize surtitles with live dialogue.
- Digital platforms:** virtual meeting spaces for engagement

4.2.1 Technical Tools

- **Surtitling systems:** use advanced software capable of real-time, multilingual translations. Tools such as StudioCoast VMIX ensure accurate timing and seamless integration during live performances.
- **Streaming equipment:** high-definition cameras, microphones with directional sensitivity, and stable streaming platforms like YouTube or Vimeo enable high-quality broadcasts. Reliable internet bandwidth and backup systems are necessary to avoid interruptions.
- **Interactive platforms:** invest in applications that allow audience engagement, such as live polling, question submissions, or feedback forms. Examples include StreamElements or Vimeo Live Polls.
- **Accessibility technologies:** sign language interpretation devices and apps with assistive features should also be integrated for inclusivity.

4.2.2 Hardware requirements

- **Projection systems:** high-resolution projectors or LED screens for displaying surtitles or multimedia elements.
- **Audio equipment:** surround sound systems with adjustable volume controls and assistive listening devices for clarity.
- **Venue modifications:** structural installations like ramps, elevators, and adjustable seating to ensure physical accessibility.

4.3 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

- **Educational materials:** comprehensive learning kits designed for different demographics, including visual aids, thematic essays, and practical exercises. For schools, provide teacher guides with instructions to link the play's themes to curriculum goals.
- **Social media strategy:** a campaign targeting diverse audiences with multilingual content.
- **Feedback systems:** use tailored survey tools such as QR codes for anonymous responses, apps that track audience engagement, and facilitated discussions to gather insights.
- **Partnerships:** collaborations with cultural institutions, universities and local organizations to broaden outreach.

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CHAPTER

POST-SHOW CONVERSATIONS

POST-SHOW CONVERSATIONS

5.1 STRUCTURE

Post-show conversations are structured **to facilitate meaningful exchanges** between the audience and the creative team, offering a deeper understanding of the performance's themes, production choices, and broader cultural implications. These sessions typically unfold in the following stages:

- **Introduction (5-10 minutes):** the moderator opens the session with a brief overview of the performance's key themes and contextual relevance. This introduction sets the tone for the conversation and provides a framework for audience engagement.
- **Audience interaction (20 minutes):** the cast, directors, and dramaturgs share insights into the production process. Topics may include the creative vision, challenges faced during rehearsals, and interpretations of the play's central themes. The audience is invited to ask questions and share their impressions. Translators ensure that linguistic barriers are overcome, enabling a multilingual and inclusive dialogue. This segment fosters direct interaction and allows the audience to explore their curiosities.
- **Wrap-Up (5 minutes):** the moderator concludes by summarizing key points and announcement of upcoming events.

5.2 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Increased understanding of the play's cultural and thematic context.

Post-show conversations provide audiences with a comprehensive view of the production's artistic and thematic choices. This enhances their appreciation of the performance and fosters critical thinking.

Enhanced cross-cultural dialogue and exchange of perspectives

By bringing together linguistically and culturally diverse participants, these discussions create a platform for cross-cultural exchange and shared learning.

Strengthened sense of community and identification with European cultural heritage

The interactive nature of these sessions builds a sense of connection among audience members and between the audience and the creative team.

Feedback for continuous improvement

Insights gained from audience questions and reflections serve as valuable feedback for the creative team, informing future productions and engagement strategies. Surveys that can be filled out online (QR-Code) or directly at the theatre have helped to point out some aspects to improve, in particular concerning the live streaming experience of theatre in a foreign language, with surtitles.

Educational enrichment

For school audiences, the integration of educational materials and guided discussions deepens students' understanding and engagement, linking the performance to broader cultural and academic themes.

Trans)National European Theatre: audiovisual tools and simultaneous interpreting for the internationalisation of theatre production and consumption (TraNET)

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