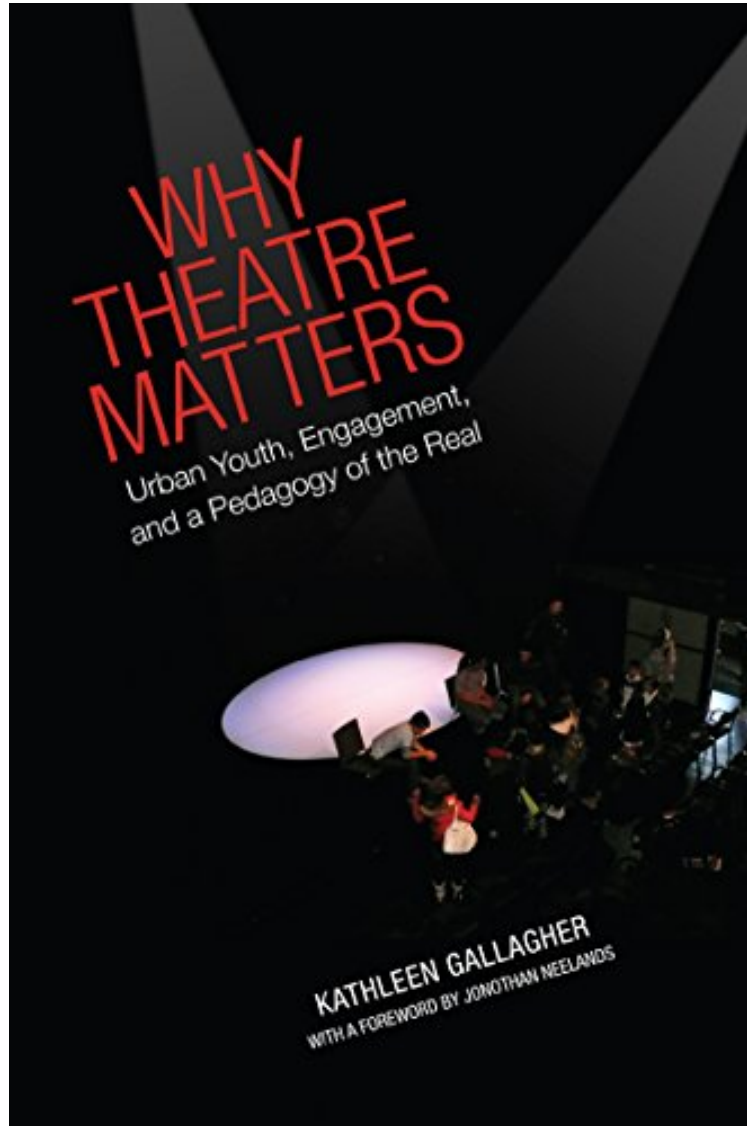


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Why Theatre Matters: Urban Youth, Engagement, and a Pedagogy of the Real

Kathleen Gallagher

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What makes young people care about themselves, others, their communities, and their futures? In *Why Theatre Matters*, Kathleen Gallagher uses the drama classroom as a window into the daily challenges of marginalized youth in Toronto, Boston, Taipei, and Lucknow. An ethnographic study which mixes quantitative and qualitative methodology in an international multi-site project, *Why Theatre Matters* ties together the issues of urban and arts education through the lens of student engagement. Gallagher's research presents a framework for understanding student involvement at school in the context of students' families and communities, as well as changing social, political, and economic realities around the world. Taking the reader into the classroom through the voices of the students themselves, Gallagher illustrates how creative expression through theatre can act as a rehearsal space for real, material struggles and for democratic participation. *Why Theatre Matters* is an invigorating challenge to the myths that surround urban youth and an impressive study of theatre's transformative potential.

Why Theatre Matters is written as a beautifully moderated conversation among the students and the teachers; This book reflects a researcher who pursues excellence and vulnerability together, inviting the field of theatre education to do the same. (Cortney McEniry *Theatre Topics* vol 26:03:2016) Few scholars have as much depth, insight, and command of the literature as Kathleen Gallagher. *Why Theatre Matters* takes us inside the classroom to reveal how youth feel about school, life, friends, work, and their futures. A must-read. (George Belliveau, Department of Language and Literacy Education, University of British Columbia) This imaginative, data-rich, theoretically informed, and beautifully written book makes a significant contribution toward shifting current deficit discourse about urban youth and schooling in neo-liberal times. Gallagher's focus on drama space as a rehearsal site for young people's civic engagement and their social resilience provides inspiration and direction for educational policy and practice. (Wendy Luttrell, Urban Education Program, The Graduate Center, City University of New York) *Why Theatre Matters* is an intellectual tour de force. An enthralling journey towards the complex interior experience of engagement, Kathleen Gallagher's book is a message about the hope that good teaching in the arts can bring about. (Michael Finneran, Senior Lecturer in Drama, Department of Arts Education and Physical Education, University of Limerick) About the Author Kathleen Gallagher is a Distinguished Professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.