

Topic	The language(s) of art, research and policy		
Date	June 16, 2018	Location	Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, ON
Host	Robin Sokoloski, Playwrights' Guild of Canada / Mass Culture		
Participants	<p>Notes: As this was a drop-in session, participants could come and go at any time and not all names have been captured. Most participants also belong to more than one network / institution / professional group - for example, they are <i>also</i> artists, writers, academics - but only one affiliation is listed below.</p> <p>Irfan Ali, TDSB Rebecca Benson, TWUC Sandy Crawley, National Reading Campaign Eva Hellreich, Neighbourhood Arts Network Ellen S. Jaffe, TWUC Alicia Payne, Playwrights' Guild of Canada Monique Renaud, Playwrights' Guild of Canada Rebecca Peirson, Centennial College Siobhan O'Connor, TWUC Ann Shortell, Writer Donna Yuen, Town of Newmarket</p>		
Notetaker	Sally Nicholson	Facilitator	Kevin Ormsby
Gathering Question	<p>What research choices & frameworks result in inclusion and exclusion when building cultural policy? Many things have changed since the founding of many Canadian arts institutions and organizations, not least the language that we use to discuss and define our contemporary context. Choices - of words, concepts, frames of reference - made 60 years ago have influenced the development of cultural policy to date. If we were to write a new foundational document for the arts sector today, what would it contain to reflect current and emerging realities? How would we decide on the definitions, scope of research, priorities... that will influence future cultural policy?</p>		
Perspectives and thoughts	<p><i>What does policy and language mean to us?</i> They both have a variety of meanings, for example a common code to communicate; a tool; something that shapes a vision. They both hold power. Policy can represent an opportunity: for connecting, correcting, adjusting, adding, including... <i>What are the challenges we feel are happening right now, specifically in the arts?</i> Sustainability is always a consideration, but <u>who are we sustaining for?</u> There can be confusion around words in the political realm, political correctness, and even a palpable fear around using the incorrect word/term</p>		

	<p>that needs to be looked at. Words have different meanings for people - for example <i>Canadian</i> (is it the land itself, the people who live here, the European lineage and associated privileges?) or <i>immigrants</i> (which meaning may vary depending on citizenship status, place of birth, identity...) The understanding of a word at a certain time will influence the policy development in that moment.</p>
<p>What further research on the topic discussed would be useful?</p>	<p>Who is producing Canadian culture? Who are the “shapers” in cultural policy? Whose language is being used? What policies are supporting them?</p>
<p>Whose voices are missing around the table?</p>	<p>It was acknowledged that “Who attends this event is shaping the outcome”. Given the time, place, context... participants are likely to have a certain background and level of education. However, in a drop-in event, it can be difficult for participants to know who’s here, and therefore who is not. We discussed instead: Where and how is the shaping of language and policy happening? Influencers might be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Celebrities – influence through pop culture ● Language academies / academics ● Boards of directors ● Corporate language ● Subcultural groups reclaiming words ● Research in various fields ● Digital technology, for example text messaging and emojis ● Infographics - making the oversaturation of information more digestible <p>Different groups need a different language (i.e. doctors have their own language) (There was a difference of opinion by attendees on whether or not it’s a good/ok thing) We also discussed the different languages of art / artists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - form-filling can be an obstacle to those who don’t master the official language(s) - music, choreography... are other languages and forms of expression that can tell stories and emotions. ASL interpretation, use of technology... can also give greater access and clarity.
<p>What next steps were mentioned as a result of the Gathering?</p>	<p>We need to spend more time working on and talking about definitions, otherwise we just glaze over it and possibly misinterpret it.</p>