

---

*Submitted by* Michael J. Vetere III, Ed.D.; PofA-PIET Chairperson

---

## Introduction

---

Puppetry in Education and Therapy is a branch of the Puppeteers of America and is organized for puppeteers, therapists, teachers, librarians, and others who work in educational or therapeutic settings to learn from one another. It is a chance to work together to identify initiatives and set future directions

In order to assess the current needs and to determine the direction of Puppetry in Education and Therapy (PIET) a survey was created using Google Surveys during the month of February 2018 by PIET chairperson Michael J. Vetere III, Associate Professor of Creative Drama and Puppetry at Illinois State University, Normal, IL in consultation with PIET committee members. The committee members include:

- Aretta Baumgartner (PofA liaison and member)
- Carol Sterling
- Conni Mulligan
- Judith O'Hare
- Liz Freeman
- Matthew Bernier
- Michael Lamason
- Nicky Graziano
- Claire Ritzler
- Allen Ware

PIET members, as well as PofA members, were solicited for their responses to 13 questions consisting of both quantitative and qualitative responses. Members were informed through Facebook and direct emails. Approximately, 265 PIET members are listed on the email distribution list and an undetermined number of members were contacted through a PofA email announcement. A total of 126 individuals completed the survey. Therefore, the rate-of-return is unknown.

This report is a summary of the results and conclusions to the survey questions, as determined by predominant themes that were evident to each question. A priority reflection follows this report.

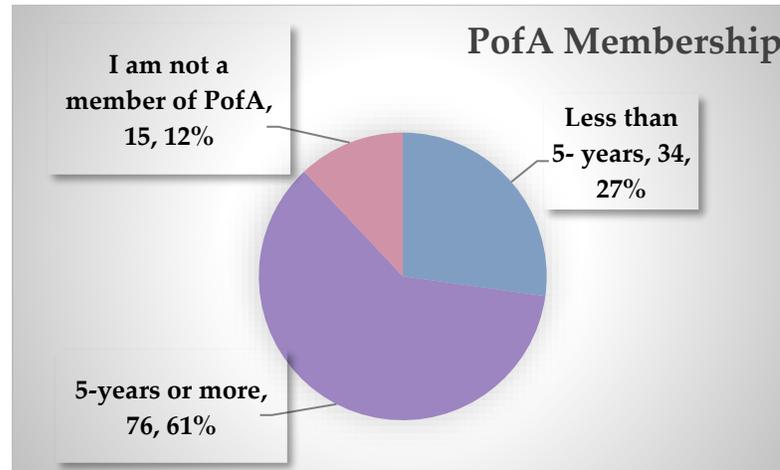
---

## 1) How long have you been a member of Puppeteers of America (PofA)?

---

### Results

A total of 125 members responded of the total 126 members (125/126). Below is a pie chart of the results.



The results indicate the following membership of PofA:

- PofA members more than 5-years: 76 individuals or 61%
- PofA members less than 5-years: 34 individuals or 27%
- Members who are not associated with PofA: 15 individuals or 12%

### Conclusions

- The majority of respondents are long-standing members of PofA with an overwhelming 61% of the individuals who completed the survey being members for more than 5 years. These members are recognized for their long-term commitment to PofA.
- There's a marked interest in PIET and PofA among non-PofA members (12%). A conversation should be had between the PIET Chairperson, the Executive Director and the PofA Board regarding membership status cross-referenced with PIET membership.
- Over ¼ of the individuals are new members of PofA and cultivation is recommended to develop long-term relationships to the PofA organization through PIET.

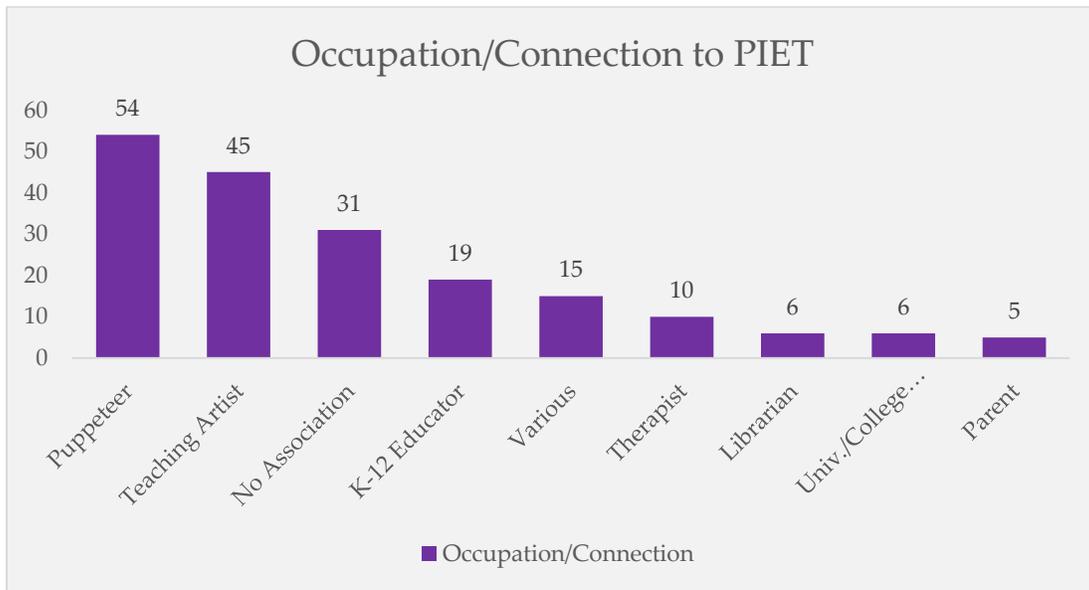
---

## 2) What is your association with Puppetry in Education and Therapy (PIET)?

---

### Results

A total of 125 members responded of the total 126 members (125/126). It should be noted that members had the option of choosing more than one association. Therefore, the chart represents a total of 191 selected items with the majority of individuals identifying their association with PIET as puppeteers, teaching artists, or no association.



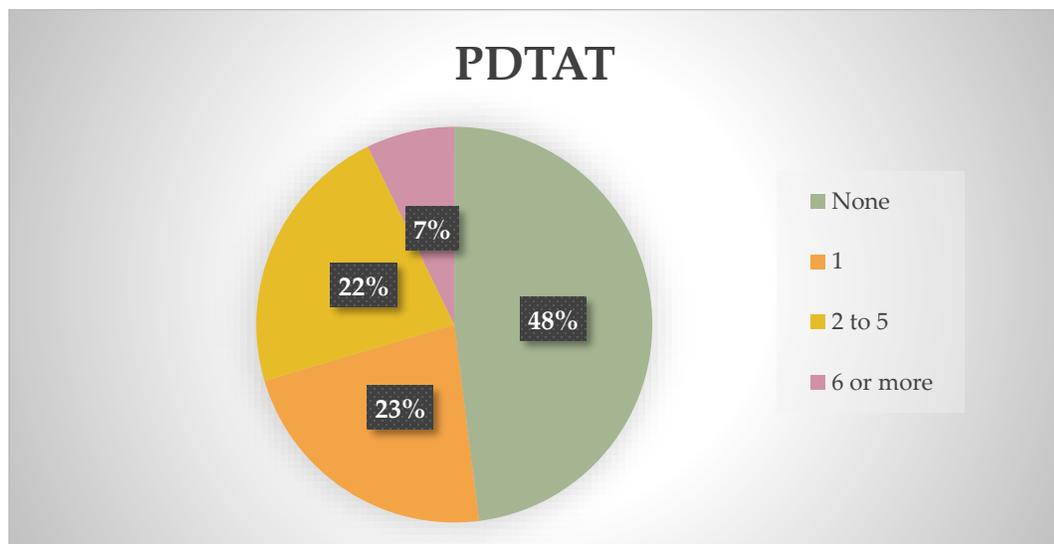
### Conclusions

- The majority of respondents are currently Puppeteers, Teaching Artists, or have No Association with PIET. It would be prudent to offer pedagogical material to these practitioners that is conducive to the non-educator trained individual.
- A limited number of individuals identified their connection via the occupation of Therapist, K-12 Educators and University/College Educators. A stronger connection to the Therapy Community is advised as well as to the underrepresented practicing educators.

### 3) How many "Professional Day for Teaching Artists and Therapists" events have you attended?

### Results

A total of 126 members responded of the total 126 members (126/126). The pie chart below demonstrates how many individuals attended PDTAT. Of the respondents, 52% have attended at least one PDTAT.



## Conclusions

- The majority of respondents have attended one or more dates of the PDTAT, which demonstrates a common interest in PIET.
- Direct communication to respondents in attendance of only one prior PDTAT is recommended to encourage repeat participation in the event.
- The 48% of individuals that have not attended should be made aware of the offering of PDTAT through action steps including:
  - Social Media
  - Email
  - Website
  - Communication with Executive Director and PofA Board
  - Utilizing the PofA listserv

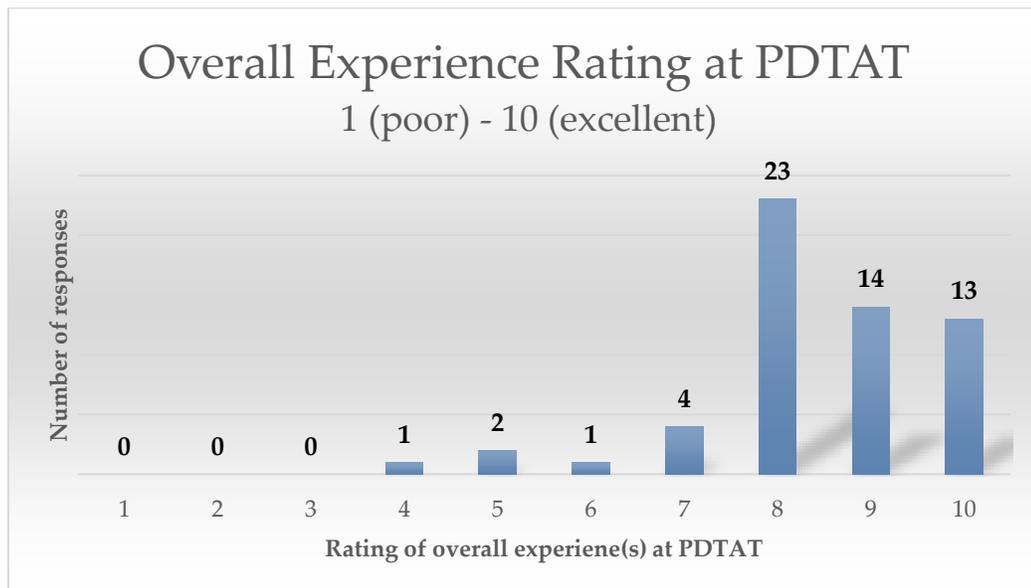
---

### 4) On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate your overall experience(s) at the Professional Day for Teaching Artists and Therapists (PDTAT)?

---

## Results

A total of 58 members responded of the total 126 members (58/126). Of note, a total of 65 individuals identified they attended at least one PDTAT (58/65). The majority of the respondents signified a positive PDTAT experience.



## Conclusions

- Of the respondents, an overwhelming majority identified a favorable rating of PDTAT. We should strive to maintain a favorable member experience rating of the event.
- Of note, there were no responses indicating a one through three marking in the levels of poor ratings.

---

## 5) If you attended PDTAT what is something you found valuable or most useful?

---

### Results

A total of 56/65 individuals responded to the value or use of PDTAT. An array of responses were received, however two reoccurring themes emerged: (1) Connecting with others/networking and (2) resources/practical ideas.

Respondents noted the value and benefits of having a time to meet together, share experiences, and network with colleagues. Participants also valued the sharing of information, resources garnered, and the opportunity to acquire practical ideas for the classroom and therapeutic settings.

### Conclusions

- Two reoccurring themes emerged: (1) Connecting with others/networking and (2) resources/practical ideas.
  - These themes should be cultivated through action steps:
    - Availability to connect with others and network
    - Availability of resources/practical ideas
- Respondents noted the value and benefits of having a time to meet together, share experiences, and network with colleagues. Participants also valued the sharing of information, resources garnered, and the opportunity to acquire practical ideas for the classroom and therapeutic settings.
  - It is recommended that we maintain a location and time within the festival to continue these main themes, as they are of the utmost value to respondents.

---

## 6) If you attended PDTAT what are one or two suggestions you have for improvements?

---

### Results

Of the 65 individuals who attended a PDTAT session, 39 responses were received in regard to suggestions for improvements. Of the responses, two clear matters should be addressed. These included (1) Format and (2) Quality.

Participants remarked that they felt the format of PDTAT should be reexamined to meet the needs of its members. Various suggestions included the length of time, practical/hands-on workshops, as well as various break-out opportunities. In addition, members valued quality presentations rather than the quantity and suggested a stronger vetting of presenters.

### Conclusions

- Two main PDTAT issues identified were: 1) Format and 2) Quality
- The PIET chairperson needs to work collaboratively with the PDTAT lead organizer and the PIET committee to create a program that benefits all participants of the event and addresses their needs.

- Actions include:
  - Reexamination of the format and flow of PDTAT to address above issues.
  - Various suggestions from individuals included the length of time, practical/hands-on workshops, as well as various break-out opportunities.
    - Options include but are not limited to:
      - Examination of length of time of PDTAT
      - Review of practical/hands-on workshops
      - Exploration of various break-out opportunities
      - Addition of:
        - Roundtable Sessions
        - Workshops
        - Guest Speakers
        - Community Outreach Projects
        - Children’s Workshops in Puppetry
        - PIET workshops integrated into the main festival programming
  - In addition, members valued quality presentations rather than the quantity and suggested a stronger vetting of presenters.
    - Develop a clear system to properly vet presenters for PDAT. This may include:
      - A constructed rubric for vetting presenters
      - Formation of an appointed Selection Committee with key community members to review potential presenters and make selections
      - Create a method for appointing above Selection Committee

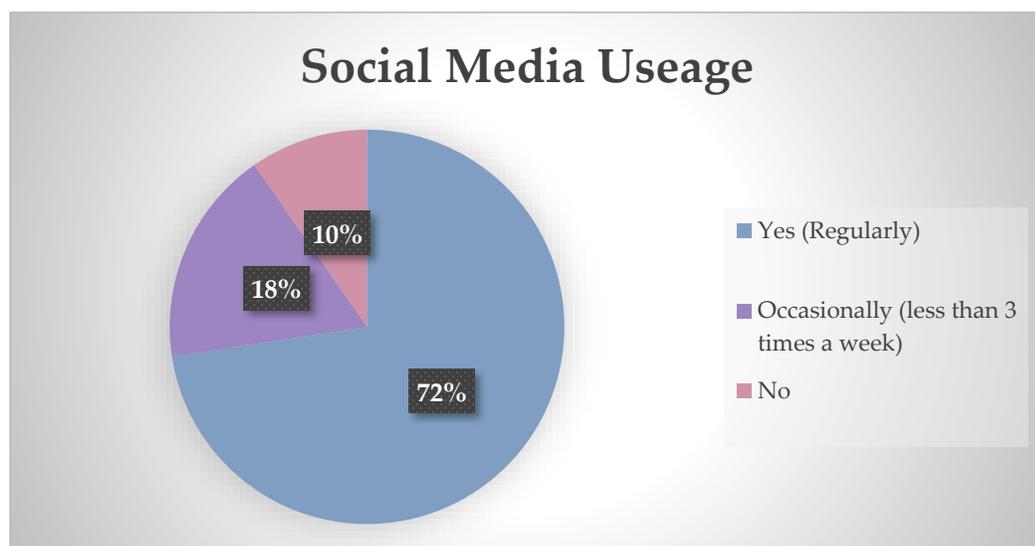
---

## 7) Do you use social media? (Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter)

---

### Results

A total of 124 individuals responded of the total 126 members (124/126). Of the respondents, 112/124 check social media at least once a week.



## Conclusions

- The overwhelming majority of individuals indicated that they regularly check Social Media accounts and a small number of individuals indicated that they do not engage in Social Media. Social Media should be used on a regular basis to connect PIET members.

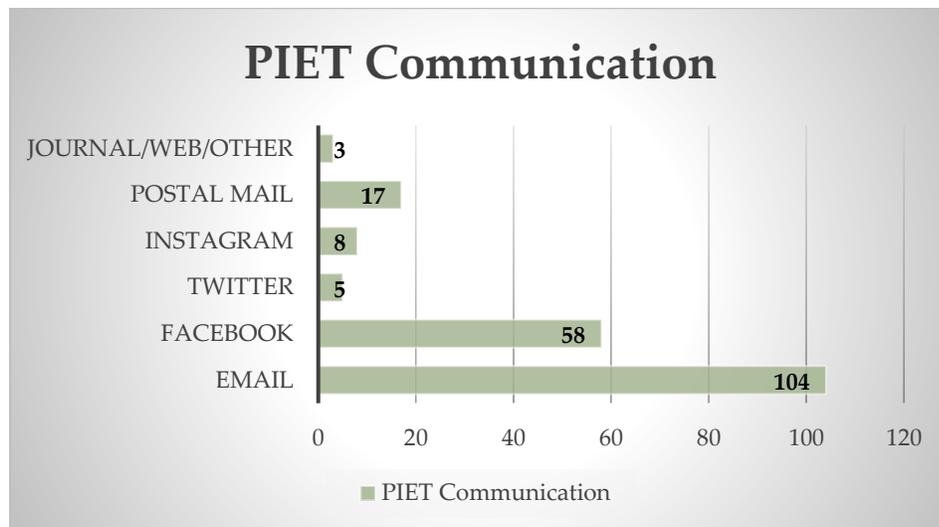
---

## 8) How would you like to receive information about what is happening in the field of Puppetry in Education and Therapy?

---

### Results

A total of 119 responses were received. Note, members had the option of choosing more than one mode of communication to receive information from PIET.



## Conclusions

- Multiple modes of communication should be utilized. A majority of respondents revealed a preference for communication via email with a second choice for communication via Facebook.

---

## 9) What would you like to see us post about on social media/email or how would you like to see us use social media/email?

---

### Results

Responses (96/126) regarding social media/email posts were similar. The majority of the respondents appreciate the use of social media as a means to connect members with emails being reserved for key/important information.

Attention to puppetry related events, professional development, research, news, opportunities, and quotes were recommended.

## Conclusions

- The majority of the respondents appreciate the use of social media as a means to connect members with emails being reserved for key/important information.
  - Actions include:
    - Creation of a members only PofA-PIET Facebook Community Group
      - Establishment of a regular relay of key shared member connections via email
    - Develop a system to segment information for PofA-PIET members vs. non-member contacts in database
- Attention to puppetry related events, professional development, research, news, opportunities, and quotes were also recommended.
  - Action include:
    - Share regular content from the above list

---

## 10) What do you feel the PIET Committee is doing well?

---

### Results

Survey participants (66/126) overwhelmingly remarked about two specific areas that the PIET Committee is doing well. These two areas included: (1) PDTAT and (2) being integrated in PofA.

Participants recognized the value PDTAT has for the PIET community as well as all areas of puppetry. Furthermore, the survey's respondents recognized the integration of PIET within PofA and support communication among members.

### Conclusions

- Members appreciate the time for like-minded interests and occupations to collaborate and share experiences.
- It is noted that, PofA validates the artist, educator, and therapist within the broader puppetry community.
- The continuation of PDTAT and further development of the integration of PIET within the larger PofA community should be encouraged.

---

## 11) How do you feel the PIET Committee can improve?

---

### Results

Individuals completing question 11 (59/126) recognized two key areas in which the PIET Committee can improve. These include, (1) more visibility and (2) more engagement.

Participants recommended more visibility within PofA including websites, emails, journal, and social media. Persons also recognized the disconnect between PofA and the work of PIET and the need for engagement through websites, social media, and other platforms. Also, the need to connect non-puppetry related individuals as well as non-educators and therapists who have an interest in the arena of PIET.

## Conclusions

- Respondents recognized two key areas in which the PIET Committee can improve. These include, (1) more visibility and (2) more engagement.
- Participants recommended more visibility within PofA including websites, emails, journal, and social media.
  - Visibility improvement actions:
    - Rebranding of PIET Logo, Banners, Color scheme, Unification.
    - Inclusion in main PofA puppeteers.org website by listing PIET with integration in further locations on the website including but not limited to inclusion in the banner, Facebook links to PIET page, further resource links, PIET portal, etc.
    - Engage with the Executive Director and the PofA Board about the possibilities with the puppeteers.org website and PIET integrations.
    - Emails – when an email from main PofA account is sent, PIET info can be integrated
      - Biannual or seasonal email blasts could be explored from PIET directly.
      - Development of an opt-in opportunity for membership to assist in culling the database and engaging with interested members.
    - Journal – PIET interested individuals can be further made aware of the opportunity to engage with the Journal by writing on PIET themed topics for inclusion in publication.
    - Social Media – Specific connection between PIET and National Organization Facebook Page as well as Regional accounts should be explored.
- Persons also recognized the disconnect between PofA and the work of PIET as well as the need for engagement through websites, social media, and other platforms. Also, the need to connect non-puppetry related individuals as well as non-educators and therapists who have an interest in the field of PIET.
  - Venues for engagement:
    - Resources and materials
    - Places and platforms for sharing i.e. Facebook Community Group, blogs, forums, etc.

---

## 12) Is there anything else you would like to share with the PIET committee?

---

## Results

The final question asked individuals about anything else they would like to share with the PIET Committee. Of the respondents 59/126 offered comments. The comments urged the committee to identify their purpose as well as goals and focus. Many individuals encouraged the group to become more active and integrated into PofA. Some individuals who completed the survey were unaware of PIET and appreciated being included in the survey and were interested in knowing more about PIET.

## Conclusions

- Actions to take:
  - Refine purpose and goals
  - Further awareness of purpose and goals through social media and email
  - Connect educators and artists
  - Develop resources for teachers and therapists
  - Identify financials
  - Explore platforms for additional growth and development

- Refine main PofA puppeteers.org website to reflect the nature of PIET
- Continue to work with Executive Director and the PofA Board to further the work of PIET for PofA members

---

### Closing: Reflection from PofA-PIET Chairperson Vetere

---

As new chairperson of PofA-PIET, I am honored and pleased to be leading such an incredible group of educators, therapists, and artists. It is only with a strong membership that we will be able to accomplish many tasks within and beyond our organization. Therefore, I am grateful for everyone who had the opportunity to complete this survey and contribute to the direction of PIET, a special interest within our PofA organization. From the results, I have determined three areas of attention: focus/direction of PIET, resources and opportunities, and PDTAT.

To begin, a reexamination and refinement regarding the focus and direction of PIET is paramount. Through a focused purpose statement and clear goals, we can direct our attention to the necessary components of PIET within PofA. It is my aim to collaborate with the PIET committee as well as consult PofA and PIET members for input and advisement as we further develop the focus and direction of PIET.

It is also my intention, through collaboration and consultation, to develop and implement a plan for connecting members with resources and opportunities about puppetry in education and therapy. This includes linking educators, therapists, puppet artists, and additional individuals who may be interested in the arena of PIET with materials and information appropriate to the fields of pedagogy and therapy.

Lastly, PDTAT has a worthwhile history and value with members of PofA. I hope to collaborate with PDTAT's lead organizer to provide the best PDTAT opportunities for all PofA and PIET members. Through our active reflection and continuous dialogue, we will be able to advance the work of PIET as a resource for all members of PofA.

I am eager to get started on developing these points further and look forward to working with our Association President, Executive Director, members of the Board, and all members of PofA.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Vetere III, Ed.D.  
PofA-PIET Chairperson  
[piet@puppeteers.org](mailto:piet@puppeteers.org)