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**TYA AND EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH IN
HIGHER EDUCATION: AN ASSET TO
UNDERGRADUATES AND THEIR COMMUNITY**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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ABSTRACT

TYA AND EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH IN HIGHER EDUCATION: AN ASSET TO UNDERGRADUATES AND THEIR COMMUNITY

By Emily J. Mattison, M.F.A.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2021.

Major Director: Dr. Keith Byron Kirk, Director of Graduate Studies Theatre Department

Undergraduate students pursuing a career in theatre are at the beginning of their life-long training and understanding and appreciation for the art. Performing in a Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) touring production alongside the responsibility of crafting educational outreach opportunities provides the students with a unique chance to comprehend the art they have chosen to devote their lives to. This paper details the value of offering a course I crafted entitled “TYA Educational Outreach”, for both the undergraduates enrolled and the community they would be reaching. While undergraduates develop an understanding of the impact theatre can have on an individual and how to share the art form with others, children in the community are exposed to live theatre and the social, emotional, and academic benefits that accompany it. The course curriculum will introduce students to the genre of TYA, educational outreach, and arts integration with their respective advantages. The course, taken in conjunction with a Rehearsal and Production credit, entails rehearsing and performing a one-hour adaptation of William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* to local middle and high schools. On top of that students

will be responsible for generating an accompanying study guide and workshop lesson plan, which they will lead in classrooms following the performance.

INTRODUCTION

Undergraduate students pursuing a career in theatre are at the beginning of their life-long training and understanding and appreciation for the art. Education is inherently cyclical; the teacher educates the student while the student, in turn, informs the teacher. One of the best ways to assist a student with comprehension is to have the student share their knowledge with others. This concept produces the ideal opportunity for a university to engage its community and look to local K-12 schools to provide hands-on training and an insightful learning experience for students at both institutions. As some would put it, kill two birds with one stone. This thesis supports the value of offering an undergraduate course I have constructed entitled “TYA Educational Outreach” to be offered as a part of the Virginia Commonwealth University Theatre Department’s curriculum. This course will serve as an introduction to Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA), in particular touring productions and arts integration. Students enrolled in the course will also register for a Rehearsal and Production credit, seeing as students will rehearse and present a one-hour touring production of William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* in conjunction with what is happening in the course. I will elaborate upon the logistics of this in Chapter 4. During the semester, students will craft an accompanying study guide and lesson plan for a post-show workshop, which they will lead, of *The Tempest*. Unfortunately, due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, this course is currently unable to be put into practice. Therefore, the final result of this project will be presented in the form of preparatory paperwork including a course syllabus, assignment prompts, and classroom handouts. I hope the department will implement this course once the pandemic has passed and theatre can be performed safely in front of a live audience again.

INSPIRATION

The impetus behind the project is my own experience as a teaching artist, specifically with the Walnut Street Theatre and Arden Theatre Company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and my desire to translate that to a unique first-hand experience in higher education. Before attending graduate school, I worked as a teaching artist with numerous theatre companies throughout the greater Philadelphia area. I began my career as a teaching artist with the Arden Theatre Company, where I partook in an in-school arts education residency program they offer called Arden for All, AFA for short. As stated on their website:

AFA serves third through fifth grade classrooms in schools across the Philadelphia region, targeting student populations who have little to no arts education and would otherwise not be able to attend a live theatre performance. AFA offers in-classroom lessons taught by Arden Teaching Artists in partner classrooms built around state Core Curriculum and the themes of Arden Children's Theatre, as well as tickets to two Arden Children's Theatre productions followed by onsite lessons. (ardentheatreco.org)

Working with the program for five years, allowed me to sufficiently observe the benefits it has on teachers and students alike. Each classroom received a total of four in-classroom lessons and one onsite workshop, which occurred immediately following the performance for each of the two Arden Children's Theatre productions. Two of the in-classroom lessons occurred before students attended a performance and the other two were after. The lessons covered topics such as the concept of theatre, roles within theatre, insight into various technical elements of the production, and acquainting students with the plot, characters, and themes of the play. The Arden Theatre Company provided each student in the program with a copy of the text from which the play was adapted. Reading the book was incorporated into the first two lessons to familiarize the students

with the plot prior to seeing the performance. The final two lessons focused on a culminating small group project that involved a presentation of some kind in front of the class. This program is a way to introduce students to theatre who may not otherwise have the opportunity and provide them and teachers with the experience of utilizing theatre as a learning tool in the classroom.

A couple of years later, I began working with the Walnut Street Theatre. Like the Arden Theatre Company, the Walnut Street Theatre offers a Theatre for Kids series. It was common for private groups to arrange a backstage tour and workshop after viewing a performance. As a teaching artist, I guided them around the set and through the backstage area, giving the patrons insight into how theatre works and fun facts associated with that particular production. The workshop focused on basic acting skills and prevalent themes in the play. Since workshops were not presented within a school setting, there was a little more freedom to what we could explore, as there was no need to tie them into state core curriculum standards. In addition to a Theatre for Kids series, the Walnut Street Theatre offers a Touring Outreach season. I became very familiar with the inner workings of the tour once I became the full-time Resident Teaching Artist. Part of my position required me to be acquainted with all shows being offered, answer any inquiries, schedule tour dates with local schools, and attend final dress rehearsals of every production. Additionally, as overseer of the Adopt-a-School program, I was responsible for scheduling preview performances with our three partner schools and receiving feedback from students afterward. My ventures with both companies have supplied extensive insight into the world of TYA and the importance of engaging children with a theatrical production both before and after witnessing the performance.

REASONING BEHIND THE PROJECT

My involvement with these two theatres allowed me to witness the benefits theatre has on children first-hand. My observations only deepened my love and respect for the art and granted me the chance to understand the art from a new perspective. This lesson would be invaluable to undergraduate students as they embark on their own theatre journey. Famous theoretical physicist Albert Einstein once said, “If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough.” When working with younger individuals, a new concept must be deconstructed and explained step by step. Asking undergraduates to prepare a study guide and workshop lesson plan for middle and high school students, which they would conduct, requires them to boil down their knowledge so they may successfully disseminate it to others. This process strengthens an undergraduates' own comprehension of the art. Directly witnessing the effects theatre has on others, will aid undergraduates in developing a more profound appreciation for the art they have chosen to devote their lives to. Oftentimes, undergraduates do not have the opportunity to interact with younger audiences. Theatre for Young Audiences is different in that younger audiences feel less confined by traditional theatre etiquette, as they are not yet familiar with the social constructs that have been generated in regards to live performance. They are freer with their responses and engage in a more participatory role. In my experience, younger audiences are more inclined to applaud or vocalize during a monumental, hysterical, or shocking moment. By the audience having a more active role, the actor becomes directly more aware of the impact they have at that moment. TYA productions are also typically accompanied by a post-show talkback. This opportunity for the actors to communicate with audience members face-to-face as they collectively discuss their theatrical experience.

This course will also serve as a way for VCU Theatre to contribute to the Richmond community. The touring production provides local children the chance to experience theatre onstage and in the classroom. The resources provided in conjunction with the tour will provide teachers with the necessary tools to integrate performance-based learning into their everyday teaching, maintaining the benefits of arts education for their students. Ideally, the advantages showcased by the tour may inspire the need for more local touring companies in the greater Richmond area, providing more work for the local theatre community. Additionally, the course will serve as another performance and design opportunity for undergraduates during their time at VCU. With the ever-growing department, it is vital to generate as many chances for performance experience as possible.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Arts Integration: The approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process that connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both (The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts).

Children's Theatre: Plays written by playwrights and [presented] by living actors for child audiences (National Endowment of the Arts).

Educational Outreach: Efforts made by a theatre organization to educate the community about theatre and to heighten the impact of an artistic work in the lives of the audience (Bradaric, 2007).

Performance-based Learning: An interactive approach to the study of literature in which students participate in a close reading of text through intellectual, physical, and vocal engagement (Folger Education).

Teaching Artist: Individuals who exist at the intersection of arts and education. They teach in, through, and about the arts in a variety of environments that serve the needs of local communities. A teaching artist does not serve to replace school certified teachers but rather serve as a valuable resource and partner to those teachers (The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts).

Theatre for Young Audiences: Professional performances for young audiences (usually with professional adult performers), though the term can also encompass performance featuring non-professional or semi-professional child and teen performers (National Endowment for the Arts).

CHAPTER 1: THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES AND TOURING

“It is my conviction that the children’s theatre is one of the very, very great inventions of the twentieth century; and that its vast educational value-now dimly perceived and but greatly understood-will presently come to be recognized.” -Mark Twain

WHAT IS TYA?

As stated on The National Endowment of the Arts website, Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) is professional theatre specifically geared toward young audiences, anyone under eighteen. Typically, these performances are written by professional playwrights and executed with professional adult actors. The term can also encompass performances featuring non-professional or semi-professional child and teen performers. More recently, Theatre for Very Young Audiences has come into play and is professional theatre tailored to children ages zero to five. The term TYA is often interchanged with the term children’s theatre. A committee of TYA professionals gathered in 1956 to define children’s theatre as “plays written by playwrights, [presented] by living actors for child audiences.” (Chapman 22) The difference between the two terms for me is that the phrase children’s theatre is broader. Children’s theatre works can be written by child or adult playwrights and utilize child and adult actors. Both playwrights and actors can be professional or non-professional theatre artists.

When it comes to the content of TYA, it is common for scripts to be adaptations of well-known children’s books. The popularity of adaptation is due to schools, TYA’s largest audience base, desire to justify seeing a production to administration. Works adapted from books can be more easily incorporated into the classroom as they can tie directly into the state core curriculum. More recently, there has been a rise in original TYA works, thanks to relationships

that have been established between TYA companies and their communities. Theresa Holden, the co-chair and co-founder of the booking agency Holden & Arts Associates, expresses:

There are those presenters that have developed the knowledge and appetite of their audiences, both the school district and the general public, and those people trust them, no matter what they put on their stages. Even if it's not a well-known title, or if they don't know the name of the company, they are going to come to that presenter because they have had good experiences there. (qtd. in Halpern)

Throughout my time at Walnut Street Theatre, I noticed a clear difference between shows selected for the Theatre for Kids series, versus those chosen for the Touring Outreach season. The Theatre for Kids series was compiled solely of shows adapted from children's books, whereas the touring outreach season consisted of only original works. I believe the reasoning between the difference in the two seasons lies in the target audience of each. The Touring Outreach season is intended for schools and community groups, while the Theatre for Kids series is marketed to the same groups in addition to the general public. The Walnut Touring Outreach Program has been operating for the past thirty years, during which they've developed relationships with the majority of the schools in the greater Philadelphia area. To Ms. Holden's point, the Walnut Touring Outreach Program can explore new works thanks to the loyalty formed over many years of conducting business with one another. The Theatre for Kids series is open to the public. While there may be devoted subscribers, it still lacks the intimate relationship cultivated between Walnut's education department and schools as they book performances year after year. Without this relationship, the theatre must rely on the notoriety of plays adapted from books for ticket sales.

Besides content, another distinction between TYA and adult-centered theatre is the belief that TYA is not just about entertainment but education as well. Some consider it to be the most important factor. Childhood is an impressionable time, therefore TYA takes advantage of the opportunity for a child to learn through another medium besides school. Dennis Eluyefa's paper "Children's Theatre: A Brief Pedagogical Approach" explains that theatre provides the perfect chance to, "teach them morality and shape their behavioural patterns and also entertain them." (87) Generally, children devote their attention to what is entertaining; for that reason, making theatre the perfect vehicle for teaching a lesson or life skill. I will discuss the educational benefits of theatre later, when examining the overall advantages witnessing live theatre has on young audiences.

When creating TYA the quality must be just as good as theatre for adults. The opening lyrics of "Greatest Love of All" by Whitney Houston wisely states, "I believe our children are the future/Teach them well and let them lead the way". Children are responsible for the state of our future world. If we expect to use theatre to equip the next generation with skills and knowledge that will assist them in navigating it while also promoting change, we must do so in the best possible way. The father of modern acting Konstantin Stanislavsky suggested that "the only important difference between theatre for children and theatre for adults is that theatre for children should be better." (qtd. Eluyefa 83) Award-winning playwright Karen Zacarias immigrated to the United States from Mexico in the fifth grade and began writing plays as a way to maneuver and find her voice in a new world. After founding Young Playwrights Theater, she realized there were few plays that she deemed relevant to her students so she started writing professionally. In a testimonial shared in a report, entitled "Envisioning the Future of Theater for

Young Audiences” published by the National Endowment of the Arts, Zacarías details her journey writing TYA plays:

I started writing plays that addressed the imaginative, magical, and isolating aspects of childhood. And to my surprise, the theaters started to produce the plays. Nothing improved my writing more; kids are the most honest audience a writer could want. It completely changed the way I wrote and saw plays. It drove me to not create work as a literary exercise, but as a communal commitment to change and connection... Writing a play for a children’s theater is not just writing a script; it is about giving kids dynamic tools to help them make sense of our complicated world. I have written ten TYA plays. Nothing imbues my work with more purpose than writing a TYA play. It is the present and the future. (qtd. Chapman 19)

With great poignancy, Zacarías highlights the crucial need to produce quality TYA and the demand a young audience has on a playwright to compose excellence.

TRACING THE HISTORY

You don’t have to look far back to observe the evolution Theatre for Young Audiences has undergone. The birth of TYA dates back to 1903 when the Children’s Educational Theatre, referred to as the first children’s theatre in the United States, under the direction of Alice Minnie Herts opened its first production of *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare. It took place in the immigrant portion of New York City at the cross-section of Jefferson Street and East Broadway in the Educational Alliance Building. With a cast of community children, the production was the most anticipated event of the neighborhood. Eager families obtained copies of the play in advance, causing shops to be sold out of the play for weeks prior to the performance. The

Children's Educational Theatre assisted immigrant families in transitioning to life in America and learning the English language. It focused on producing work that provided a higher level of English compared to what you encountered at the corner Nickelodeon, a movie theater that costs a nickel, or Vaudeville. A mere two years later, on November 6, 1905, Mr. Barrie's hit new play *Peter Pan* opened at the Empire Theatre on Broadway in New York City. The technological spectacle of people flying above the stage brought TYA into the eye of the masses. Following *Peter Pan*, there was a boom of triumphant TYA productions including, *The Blue Bird* (1910), *Little Women* (1912), *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1912), *Racketty-Packetty House* (1913), and *Alice in Wonderland* (1915). In 1915, a young man by the name of Stuart Walker advanced TYA with what he called the "Portmanteau Theatre". The "Portmanteau Theatre" was a portable theatre in which all of the sets, lights, and costumes could be packed up into a few crates and shipped anywhere. Walker also instituted young professional actors to bring his original plays to life. Walker's theatre only operated until 1919, however, his influence would live on bringing theatre to a substantially larger audience. The first national touring company arrived in 1928 at the hands of Clare Tree Major. Her adaptations were toured by up to six companies from coast to coast until she died in 1954. She additionally founded the Threshold Players in 1921 in New York City, where she produced such favorites as *Treasure Island* and *Pinocchio*. Major later expanded her operations to include the Princess Theatre which produced plays, particularly for high school students.

It's said a shift in attitude towards the TYA movement began with the work of Winifred Ward during her time at Northwestern University in the mid-1920s. Ward established the Children's Theatre of Evanston, Illinois as a result of a partnership between the Northwestern School of Speech and the Evanston Public School System. The quality of TYA experienced an

evolution when Charlotte Barrows Chorpenning stepped into the role of director at the Goodman Theatre in 1931. Chorpenning managed to double the amount of great TYA scripts over the course of her lifetime. TYA continued to flourish throughout the '30s and the '40s, with community theatres, recreation programs, Junior Leagues, and colleges and universities also joining in on the action. Even the Depression couldn't stop TYA as The Federal Theatre Project formed as part of the Works Progress Administration in 1935, which lasted through 1939. Throughout the four years, TYA was treated with the same professionalism as that of theatre for adult audiences. Another landmark in TYA history emerged in 1936, when Mrs. Dorothy McFadden of Maplewood, New Jersey, initiated Junior Programs, Inc. Its goal was to sponsor children's entertainment within their community. The idea of sponsorship gained recognition, prompting similar Junior Programs to emerge across the country. (Davis and Evans 3-5) Over the years, with the establishment of The Children's World Theatre, (the first professional TYA company in New York City), the approval of the first Actor's Equity contract for TYA in 1969, and the reopening of New Victory Theater in 1995, Broadway's first performing arts center that exclusively produces work for children and families year-round, Theatre for Young Audiences has done nothing but continue to grow and garner more recognition. Most recently, The Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis was the first TYA company to win the Regional Theatre Tony Award for their Broadway run of *A Year with Frog and Toad* in 2003. (Chapman 20-25) The formation of various groups such as the Children's Theatre Foundation of America, The International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People, and The Child Drama Collection have helped maintain TYA's history and continue the fight for its advancement in the theatre world.

TYA TOURING

When it comes to the TYA community, touring is a fundamental component.

Unfortunately, for the longest time within the greater theatre community, TYA has been viewed as being not as lucrative as adult-centered theatre. Therefore, many theatres are not producing TYA productions as part of their mainstage season. Despite some gain in recognition, it is still a battle we are fighting today. Without a home base available many TYA productions take their shows on the road, promoting them to local schools and community programs. This leads to the trademark of touring productions, which is that all the necessary components of the show can be packed up and moved from one location to the next. Unlike national tours of hit Broadway musicals, TYA tours are the most scaled-down version you can have of a production. All of the sets, props, lights, costumes, sound equipment, and actors can be packed away and configured into a large van like a three-dimensional puzzle. Since everything must fit into a van, productions tend to utilize as few technical elements as possible and reuse them in varying ways throughout the show. Designing and directing a TYA tour forces you to expand your imagination and figure out how to tell a story with as little as possible. Each tour typically consists of a few cast members and a stage manager. Since they are the only people on-site during a show, it requires cast members take on roles typically handled by technicians. As a result, actors must become proficient in the set, props, lighting, costumes, and sound equipment in addition to performing.

When a production tours, it can happen virtually anywhere, as stated in T.M. Hartmann's article "Playing for Tomorrow's Audience Today: The World of Children's Theatre":

The range of venues that a cast can encounter is staggering. "We'll play everywhere from the Palace Theatre in Cleveland to a gym floor in Sheboygan," quips Lotzkar. The theatre can be proscenium, thrust, or in-the-round, and the stages have to be cropped and sets

adjusted accordingly. But how do you manage to adapt to a movie theatre? An immense outdoor amphitheatre? How about space at a horse auction? As Lotzkar tells it, you make the stalls the dressing rooms. (5)

As a theatre artist, you learn to make it work within the circumstances you are given. You may walk into a school to discover the stage filled with boxes because it is used as storage or you are in a parking lot with no electrical socket in sight. Hartmann puts it beautifully, “Somehow, makers of children’s theatre manage creatively to make any space work.” (5) Likewise, when a complication occurs, you must be ready to readjust to make the show possible. Hartmann’s article details a situation in which an actor, during the first of a two-show morning, happened to walk right off the stage and fall two feet resulting in a broken wrist. The stage manager quickly changed into the actor’s costume, as they were taken to the emergency room, and stepped into the role for the second show. (5) Complications are not confined to the venue but can happen on the road as well. A laundry list of problems can occur before you even get to the location such as an accident, the van breaks down, a flat tire, or traffic delays. Adaptability is an essential attribute to possess if you desire to partake in a TYA tour.

BENEFITS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

Only within the last few years have studies been conducted to assess the impact watching live theatre has on young audiences. Witnessing live theatre influences a child’s overall development in a myriad of ways. A report released in 2019 by the National Endowment of the Arts, in collaboration with Theatre for Young Audiences/USA, details the results of some of this research:

Seeing live theater offers a range of academic, social, and emotional benefits to children. This includes a greater ability to accept people with different opinions from their own and understand the diversity of ways others experience the world; an increased hope for their own future, with the ability to imagine attending college and envisioning success; a greater recognition that the arts can have a place in their lives in the present and future; improved engagement and behavior in school environments, which can impact success; increase success on standardized tests; higher writing scores; and a stronger command of narrative devices. (Chapman 3)

At its core, theatre is a way for people to engage with the world. By viewing others' behavior, children can understand why someone acts and responds as they do, cultivating a sense of empathy. The ability to see the world through various perspectives assists a child in knowing there is no one way to function, which is entirely acceptable. In turn, providing them with the awareness that they are part of a much larger picture. The awareness allows the child to appreciate each component, both living and non, of that picture. Through their recently initiated program SPARK (Schools with Performing Arts Reach Kids), The New Victory Theater completed a five-year longitudinal study with the research firm WolfBrown to assess the innate impact that live theatre has on young audiences. Lindsey Buller Maliekel, Director of Education/Public Engagement at The New Victory Theater, observed from the study that, "Kids who get to see live performing arts and work with artists are more optimistic about what their future will be like than kids who are not." (Chapman 11) Maliekel goes on to suggest a possible reason for this outcome, "As you raise kids' ability to think about lives other than their own, and simultaneously raise their ability to practice imaginative skills, you raise their ability to wonder 'what if?' and adjust their own hopefulness for their future." (Chapman 11) The ability to

comprehend alternate perspectives coupled with future aspirations translates into other facets of a child's life. A child is able to establish healthy and meaningful relationships, knowledgeably express themselves, think at a more complex level which encourages an inquisitive disposition, and possess a heightened imagination and interest in the world around them. A sense of accomplishment in the aforementioned skills fosters positive results in both their personal life and the classroom.

TYA is also instrumental in introducing young audiences to the concept of community through the act of *communitas*, coined by Victor Turner. To understand Turner's definition of *communitas*, you must first know that theatre is a ritual. Richard Schechner characterizes rituals as, "collective memories encoded into actions" that "help people (and animals) deal with difficult transitions, ambivalent relationships, hierarchies, and desires that trouble, exceed, or violate the norms of daily life." (52) In theatre, we recreate previously learned behavior (acting), for the audience to understand and better maneuver the world they live in. Rituals occur during a liminal state, described by Turner as, "a period of time when a person is 'betwixt and between' social categories or personal entities." (qtd. in Schechner 66) A liminal state is when a transition or transformation occurs, such as *communitas*. Turner defines *communitas* as the following experience, "While in a liminal state, people are freed from the demands of daily life. They feel at one with their comrades; personal and social differences are set aside. People are uplifted, swept away, taken over." (qtd. in Schechner 70) During a theatre production, everyone in the space (audience, actors, and technicians) are taking part in the same experience and through that shared experience a connection is made. Throughout my time as a teaching artist, I had the opportunity to witness many TYA performances. There were countless times I observed a child turn to their neighbor and share a smile or a laugh during a hysterical moment or hear the

audience collectively shout “watch out” as a character walked into danger. It didn’t matter who they were interacting with, it could be the person next to them or the person onstage, the child had to engage in the experience with someone else. Author Jason Reynolds, whose books were adapted into TYA scripts, describes how theatre provides an immersive experience that reading his books on your own can not:

There’s something electric that happens when a child connects to a story through theater, in a room with other humans all witnessing the same story at the same time. The energy is palpable. Live theater transports the audience directly into the world of the story, witnessing the characters and emotions in real time. It allows them to see the world of the character through their eyes, in an encompassing way that only being in a room with other people can do. It’s one of the most human experiences one can have, and every child deserves to know it. To feel it. (Chapman 6)

Reynolds spotlights how sharing an experience with others enhances the encounter and allows an audience member to more deeply appreciate the occurrence.

Introducing theatre to audiences at a young age is also a means of securing the next generation of theatre audiences. I previously mentioned a longitudinal study carried out by New Victory Theater. Additionally, this study produced an enlightening outcome that children exposed to live theatre before the age of eight were most likely to continue seeing theatre into adulthood. Those exposed after the age of eight were less likely to attend theatre as an adult as they didn’t consider theatre an art form meant for them. (Chapman 3) When these young audiences reach adulthood they will then take their children to the theatre continuing the cycle.

BENEFITS FOR ACTORS

Performing for a young audience is a unique experience as children are the most honest audience you could ask for. Eric Schorr, composer of “Young Tom Edison” by Theatreworks/USA states, “Kids are a harsh audience, because they will let you know immediately--by starting to talk to the person next to them, by fidgeting--if they’re not interested. You can tell if they’re laughing, or getting it. So it’s a bit daunting, but very enlightening.” (Hartmann) Children are transparent, openly sharing their reactions with you in the moment, as the constructed concept of theatre etiquette has not been embedded into them yet. It is important to note that children talking while in the audience is not necessarily a negative thing. It is a common occurrence and can be a positive thing as long as they are talking about the show. It is also not unusual for students to want to join in on the action. Actress Sander, who was performing as Laura Ingalls in “Little House on the Prairie” stories at the time of the article, shares how once she was calling the cast down to a hoedown onstage and a little boy jumped in to join them. There was another moment when she was singing while walking on a log and a child joined her onstage to see if the log was real. (Hartmann) The commentary from children continues even after the performance ends. It is typical of TYA productions to have some sort of interactive experience following the performance like a talkback, backstage tour, or meet and greet. Sander recounted, “After a show, if they don’t like something, they might come backstage and say, ‘Why did you do that?’ “ (Hartmann) The brutal honesty aids you as an actor, allowing you to adjust as needed in order to ensure the moment lands with the audience or to maintain audience engagement. Actors are not granted this opportunity when acting for an adult audience. Adults are more reserved and feel obliged to adhere to theatre etiquette. They will clap when they feel it is required and refrain from exclamations of any kind for fear of being admonished

by ushers or other audience members. Children also keep you on your toes as you never know what to expect. The unfettered responses of a child audience can generate an evident visceral energy in the space, bringing it to life.

Children are at a different place than adults developmentally that allows for them to more freely enter into a new world. As Eluyefa states, “Children do not need to force themselves into a story like adults. They can get emotionally involved. There is no need for a suspension of belief because children believe everything they see is real.” (83) A child’s ability to buy into what is happening on stage enables the actor to focus less on bringing the audience into the world and more on playing within the world. The actor is able to view the performance as a playground, celebrating the freedom to make a plethora of fun acting choices because you know the audience will follow along with you.

CHAPTER 2: EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

OBJECTIVES

Educational outreach has two potential objectives, to educate the community or audience about theatre itself or to enhance the understanding and impact of a theatrical production on an audience. It serves as a resource to those who are interested. Some audience members are perfectly content with attending a performance and leaving it at that. They have no desire to ruminate, discuss or expand their knowledge surrounding the text or production. The important thing is to make the opportunity available to them, so they may choose whether they would like to take the next step and further explore their artistic experience or not.

With the evolution of technology came the creation of one-sided entertainment like television, film, video games, and virtual reality. Due to the gratifying immediacy and widespread reach of these technological formats, theatre has become an art form that fewer people have been exposed to. This paired with the shift towards a STEM-based curriculum in schools, which focuses on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, leaves individuals accustomed to the conventions of art and theatre in shorter supply. Educational outreach is a way to familiarize people with theatre practices, making it less intimidating as they know what to expect when they attend. It alerts audiences that theatre is experiential, embracing human interaction and playing off your senses and imagination. Audiences will also anticipate their role as active participants, as theatre does not supply you with the answers, you must interpret them yourself. By knowing what to anticipate audiences feel more at ease, allowing them to more effortlessly suspend disbelief. Additionally, educational outreach can introduce an audience member to a specific production and guide them through deciphering, contemplating, and connecting with the piece. This is especially helpful to children, as they are still evolving

developmentally. They have yet to formally learn certain literary concepts or grasp the notion of critical thinking. Forms of educational outreach can help them start to understand and question what happened in a play or why a character behaved the way they did. Overall, educational outreach has the potential to elevate an individual's theatre-going experience.

FORMS

Educational outreach can assume a variety of forms, each providing a different entry point for a given community or audience member. The most common forms are pre and post-show talkback sessions, study guides, program notes, workshops, and backstage tours. Recently, the field of educational outreach has acquired more interest and evolved to include lobby displays, lectures, small group discussions, special events, partnerships with other companies, and constructed moments of audience participation. Educational outreach serves as a resource to those who are interested. Some audience members are perfectly content with attending a performance and leaving it at that. They have no desire to ruminate, discuss or expand their knowledge surrounding the text and the production. The important thing is to make the opportunity available to them, so they may choose whether they would like to take the next step and further explore their artistic experience or not. My course will concentrate on study guides, lobby displays, post-show talkback sessions, and workshops.

Study guides are tools predominantly utilized by classroom teachers as a means to integrate productions into the classroom. They can vary in length and contain any of the following components:

... playwright and director biographies, notes and interviews; plot synopses; character descriptions; historical background information; discussions of the plays' themes,

context, sources, and language; explanations of theatrical styles and conventions; glossaries; timelines; reviews from other productions of the plays; lists of additional resources; and discussion or essay questions. (Bradaric 30)

In this modern age, most theatres deliver study guides electronically or post them directly to their website. By posting study guides to their website, they are also available to the general public. Particularly with TYA productions, parents use study guides to create an elongated theatrical experience for their child. To supplement my income as a teaching artist I also worked as a house manager at Arden Theatre Company. Part of the job required me to lead backstage tours for child ushers during children's theatre productions. During the tour, I would often reference the online study guide to parents as a way to continue the child's interaction with the production. On one occasion, there was a mother who brought up the study guide on her phone during the tour and at the end excitedly pulled me aside to share she planned on asking her daughter the post-show discussion questions while they were out to lunch after the show. Study guides are generally broken down into two sections, pre and post-show. The pre-show material prepares the audience member for the performance whereas the post-show material encourages analysis, interpretation, and further engagement. Lobby displays are the interactive representations of study guides. They visually introduce the audience to the world of the play in addition to provoking contemplation surrounding the play's themes and essential questions. When working as the dramaturg for Cal Rep's 2006 world premiere of *(M)asking Questions: The Life Stages of Humanitas Persona*, Bradaric collaborated with a professor and set designer to craft a lobby display that functioned as an extension of the play's set. The premise of the play was that the audience was viewing a museum exhibit about a mysterious masked species, so Bradaric's team transformed the lobby into "Edison Theatr  Science Museum", displaying masks representing various members of the

species. (Bradaric 38-39) Lobby displays should serve as a pre-immersive experience that excites the audience about the production.

Talkback sessions are an opportunity for the audience to communicate directly with those involved in the production. Sessions can be held with actors, designers, the director, or the playwright. During talkback sessions, audience members ask the production members questions to facilitate their comprehension of the play. Inquiries can be made about the text, artistic or design concepts and processes, specific acting choices, themes, or the logistics behind the magic of theatre. While not as common, talkback sessions can be held with theatre scholars or specialists in a field that the play addresses. When SuzAnne Bradaric directed a play at Anderson University in Indiana that dealt with difficult issues, she enlisted the help of a therapist to provide mental health resources throughout the rehearsal process. The consulting therapist also participated in the post-show talkbacks, where they answered audience questions regarding the psychological and social issues of the play. (Bradaric 35) When Arden Theatre Company produced *Sideways Stories from Wayside School* in 2013, I served as an understudy for the role of Bebe. I was required to regularly attend performances to keep the material fresh. After every performance, the cast would go out into the lobby for a meet and greet with audience members. A meet and greet is a more personalized version of a talkback in which audience members can talk with actors in one-on-one conversations. I was standing in the lobby after a performance one morning, and I vividly remember a little girl hesitantly standing at a distance staring at the actor playing Myron. In the play, Myron's character is obsessed with Leslie's pigtails and all he wants to do is pull on them even though he knows it is wrong. The actor playing Myron noticed the little girl and approached her. With the help of her mother, the little girl asked the actor if Myron only likes pigtails or if he pulls on ponytails too? She went on to explain that her brother pulls

her hair in either hairstyle. Due to the meet and greet, the little girl was able to ask a complex question regarding a moment in the play that resonated with her and would help her make sense of the action and character she witnessed. Workshops are a way to vocally and physically engage the audience through their own theatrical experience to the production. Workshops can be taught by a teaching artist or an actor from the cast and can occur either before or after seeing the performance. A workshop can assume an acting or design approach. Debra McLauchlan documents the activities undergone during pre and post-show workshops in association with the touring production *The Power of Harriet T.* through a project entitled Playlinks:

Pre-production activities introduced the Underground Railroad, and invited students to embody physical positions of power and powerlessness. Post-production activities returned to the notion of power by (a) having groups prepare tableaux representing moments of power and powerlessness in the play and (b) engaging students in a “voices-in-the-head” (Neelands, [36], p.61) activity wherein they vocalized recalled dialogue that invoked feelings of either power or powerlessness. Students then created a chant with movement to describe Harriet’s actions and personal qualities. (5)

The goal of these workshops was to ask the students to embody the themes of the play by stepping into Harriet Tubman’s shoes. Instead of thinking about them, the students are now living them. The workshop that the undergraduates will construct and lead in conjunction with the tour of *The Tempest* will operate similarly as the one McLauchlan describes, drawing on an acting methodology. Since each form of educational outreach caters to a different mode of learning, it is best to include a variety in association with a given production to garner as much audience engagement as possible.

CHAPTER 3: ARTS INTEGRATION

ARTS INTEGRATION IN THE WORLD OF ARTS EDUCATION

In arts education, there are varying approaches that may be used; arts as curriculum, arts-enhanced curriculum, and arts-integrated curriculum. The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., a federally mandated resource for arts education, has performed extensive research in efforts to define these approaches. The term arts as curriculum is used when music, dance, theater, or visual arts exist as part of the school curriculum in their own regard. An arts-enhanced curriculum is when any of the previously mentioned art forms are used as a “hook” to focus attention. An arts-integrated curriculum is when an art form is used in tandem with another subject and both receive equal treatment in the learning process. (Lewis and Mardirosian xii) Since this course is looking at educational outreach, it will focus on arts integration in schools, specifically alongside English and Language Arts courses, from a teaching artist’s perspective.

Eric Booth, teaching artist and arts learning consultant, aptly reveals that the definition of an arts experience and a learning experience are intrinsically identical, “making personal connections outside of what you already know.” (Lewis and Mardirosian xv) Through both of these experiences, an individual is expanding both their world and themselves. It makes perfect sense to employ the arts in a learning environment, as they aid in a common goal. Furthermore, theatre and learning are both active practices. For the event to bear full effect, the individual must participate. Utilizing arts integration as pedagogy in the classroom offers numerous advantages to students. The interactive nature of theatre promotes a sense of engagement, which leads to deeper focus and enhanced retention of the material. The ability to better sufficiently recall concepts ultimately leads to better test scores. Engagement can also result in a greater

desire to remain in school. The student now feels that they are an essential component in the classroom and that their thoughts and opinions matter. As previously mentioned, arts and learning experiences entail broadening one's horizons. When this occurs, an individual can encounter an adrenaline rush, wanting to know more. This developed sense of curiosity is a typical marker of a motivated learner. Those who are interested in learning want to stay in school and enjoy attending. A pre-residency survey administered by the education department at Roundabout Theatre Company concluded, a "majority of students surveyed (217 students) reported that they wanted to come to class *sometimes*, but after the Roundabout residency the great majority reported that they wanted to come to this class *often*." (DiBella et al. 172) The rise was also supported by an increase in reported student and teacher participation. Through increased engagement and motivation, arts integration sets students up for success.

Theatre uniquely offers engagement by providing a safe space for students to discover their voice and find a personal connection with the material. A teaching artist for Roundabout Theatre Company's education program reflects on an experience in which students were asked to explore issues with identity and perception surrounding HIV:

The student is from Ghana. She has experienced a lot of abuse and prejudice from other students in the school about being African. We encouraged her to write a monologue about her feelings about Africa and HIV. She had previously told us that what her peers often say to her makes her ashamed to be African. She wrote the speech. [...] When she presented, she brought all her anger and passion to the piece. When she started, the audience was not with her--they were heckling--yes, HIV does come from Africa; yes, Ebola does come from Africa. But, she continued, impassioned. The audience started to agree with her, and join her in unity--she turned the audience around and got an

enormous, enormous round of applause. When she finished with “We all come from Mother Africa,” Mrs. D and I were crying. (DiBella et al. 172)

Through the monologue writing and presentation process, the student unearthed her true feelings about the subject matter and asserted her identity in the world in which she lives. While I was a Resident Teaching Artist for the Walnut Street Theatre, I worked primarily with the Adopt-a-School program. In this program, a three-year partnership is created between the Walnut Street Theatre and three select schools in the greater Philadelphia area. The schools receive tickets to the Children’s Theatre season, scheduled performances of all Touring Outreach shows, and visits one day a week from two teaching artists to introduce theatre and use it to teach what is currently being taught in the classroom at no cost to them. Once I was working in a classroom that was at the start of their Civil War unit. I assigned an activity in which I taped various historical Civil War photos around the room and asked the students to choose a photo and write a three-page scene inspired by that photo. A few of the female-identifying students in the class expressed they were having difficulty being inspired by the photos. I had an inkling that was because they only saw female figures as nurses in the medical photos. I discussed with the students that women served a multitude of roles during the war. They were nurses, cooks, laundresses, sewed and mended uniforms and blankets, disguised themselves as men and fought on the battlefields, and provided a comforting maternal essence that provided soldiers with a feeling of home. When the students realized the vital roles women played, they were drawn into the photos and excited by a whole new world of opportunities that lie within the photos. Through theatre, a student is also able to discover their voice and find a personal connection with the material.

An arts-integrated curriculum that draws on theatre aids a student in understanding a diverse range of concepts and skills commonly found in a common curriculum. Through analyzing and acting out a script, students may exercise vocal and physical communication, active listening, interpreting word and grammar usage, vocabulary, point of view, collaboration, problem-solving, and evidence-based decision making. The outcomes of a case study conducted by teaching artist and researcher John Nicholas Saunders beautifully express the value of arts integration in an English classroom. In the study, Saunders worked alongside a classroom teacher in a Year 6 class for seven weeks as part of the School Drama program developed by the Sydney Theatre Company and the University of Sydney's Faculty of Education and Social Work. By the end of the study, he analyzed that each student exhibited a positive shift in literacy achievement, specifically inferential comprehension, and descriptive language. Students who were demonstrating mid to low-level literacy scores before the program experienced the strongest increase. In student evaluations and observations, "The students articulated how they observed the drama work contributed to their own learning and engagement. Some students made comments about enjoying embodying characters, or 'acting' parts of the story out, while other students discussed links between drama and how they felt it helped them develop their comprehension and descriptive language." (Ewing and Saunders 161) This case study demonstrates how in just seven weeks, an arts-integrated approach had a clear difference in a student's literacy proficiency. Theatre is most commonly used in English classrooms as most people often think to involve the acting and playwriting components of theatre. However, theatre at its core is interdisciplinary in nature, allowing it to connect with a variety of subjects. Technical theatre, which encompasses set, lights, costumes, sound, etc., easily accommodate math and science classrooms. For example with costumes, you must understand how to use the

concepts of shapes, surface area, and symmetry when pattern making and draping and understand how light affects certain colors and fabrics. Theatre is also a business and relies heavily on marketing to survive. Promoting a production through the fields of graphic design and digital marketing could be applied to a variety of technology or business courses. Arts integration opens the door for cross-curricular connections.

Learning styles that are not frequently used in the classroom are often addressed through an arts-integrated curriculum. Theatre especially is a hands-on medium that engages an array of senses to accommodate various learning styles like kinesthetic, visual/spatial, and auditory. As a teaching artist, I often heard from classroom teachers about students “coming to life” during our visits to the classroom. They were shocked when students who typically presented behavioral concerns were focused and invested in what was happening or students who were on the quiet side were all of the sudden speaking up and participating like never before. These students were finally receiving a pedagogy that catered to their specific learning styles. They knew that when I walked into the classroom, they were going to be out of their seats activating their bodies and voices in space, collaborating with their peers, and exploring their imaginations. Unfortunately, teachers are kept to a succinct timeline and pressured to produce high test scores to uphold a favorable reputation. This in turn leaves teachers focusing on the regurgitation of ideas as there is little time to allow students to explore a concept and discover it on their own, in a way that works best for them. This speaks to a larger issue of reform within the education system. Ideally, as the recognition of arts as a pedagogy continues to grow through research, this overarching problem can begin to be addressed.

PERFORMANCE-BASED LEARNING

The undergraduates in this course will be introduced to the concept of performance-based learning, which is the approach they will be using when they are rehearsing *The Tempest* and when planning and leading the post-show workshop accompanying the tour. Performance based-learning focuses on immersing oneself in a text through embodiment. This form of learning is notably valuable when working with William Shakespeare's texts, as they were intended to be visually and auditorily received by an audience member from an actor. To put it simply, you are not supposed to sit back and read Shakespeare, it is meant to be experienced. Elizabethan English is complex and at first, can seem like a foreign language to students. By studying the text through performance, students are actively connecting with the content through action. English teacher Kevin J. Costa elaborates, "The beauty of learning Shakespeare through performance is that it provides students a deeply rigorous interaction with a complex text at the same time that it stimulates their creativity and ability to problem-solve collaboratively... It's real work, but compelling work because it puts them at the center of their learning." (qtd. in Anderson 199) This method encourages students to think critically by requiring them to interpret the language, make choices based on what they discover in the text, and understand the text from various perspectives. Performance-based learning eliminates the usage of aids such as the ever-popular *SparkNotes* or *No Fear Shakespeare*, as students can decipher the language through a sense of play. There is no longer a concern about being immediately right but rather working your way to the answer. By asking the student to take ownership of their learning, they learn to take initiative and gain confidence in their abilities.

Shakespeare is, "one of the few literary names specifically suggested as a reading in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for ELA standards, adopted by 45 states and the District

of Columbia.” (Anderson 198) While it is used mostly in English classrooms, it can also be used as a tool to immerse a history class in Elizabethan culture. Many of Shakespeare’s texts contain music and dance. Teachers may use this opportunity to introduce students to traditional instruments and dances of the era by enacting one of these moments from a play in class. They may also explore the movement of an individual as determined by the clothing of the time. Or perhaps the etiquette set forth by society deeming what behavior was considered acceptable. A hands-on strategy proposes a chance for a deeper understanding that is not offered through reading alone.

The education division of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. is one of the country’s leaders in Shakespeare education. Folger Education bases its program entirely on performance-based teaching. I grew up not far from Washington, D.C., and would visit often however, I did not become acquainted with the Folger Shakespeare Library until college when I unmasked my appreciation for Shakespeare’s work after being cast in *Richard III* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Their education division came to my attention when I was asked to teach a Shakespeare workshop at a community college. At that point, I understood the language performance experience but had no training in teaching Shakespeare. Through research, I came across the Folger Teaching website which provided an array of resources that were profoundly helpful in my first foray as a Shakespeare teaching artist. The undergraduates will use the same resources found on the Folger Teaching website about the Folger Method as inspiration in developing a teaching philosophy that is geared towards Shakespeare. I would like to make clear that I have no intention of using the course as a way to train Folger Method teaching artists, as I have not completed any formal training with the company myself. I intend to use the Folger

Method as an entry point for the undergraduates, as they begin their journey as teaching artists and discovering what works best for them when instructing on Shakespeare.

ROLE OF TEACHING ARTISTS

Arts integration can be implemented by either a classroom teacher or a teaching artist. During the post-show workshop, the undergraduates will be taking on the role of the teaching artist. When a teaching artist is utilized in a school setting, they act as a guide for the classroom teacher. In our case through an observation model, the classroom teacher will witness how to use arts integration, explicitly performance-based learning, as a tool to enhance students learning in the classroom. The hope is that through the workshop, the classroom teacher will gain understanding and confidence, and adventure to use arts integration on their own. Ideally, this teacher will pass their knowledge and interest on, inciting other teachers to integrate the arts into their classrooms as well. It is imperative that the teaching artist actively involve the classroom teacher in the lesson. By participating, the classroom teacher can understand and acknowledge the benefits the students are exposed to. The teacher partaking in the lesson also creates buy-in with the students. When the students see their teacher willing to join, they are more inclined to take part. Besides asking them to take part in the lesson, I urge teacher involvement by enlisting them as a volunteer when demonstrating an activity, inviting them to assign partners or small groups, and implementing classroom management techniques that have been established in their classroom. An eager classroom teacher is the key to an all-around successful workshop.

CHAPTER 4: COURSE DESIGN

COURSE LAYOUT

As stated on the course syllabus located in Appendix A, the “TYA Educational Outreach” course was designed with eight learning outcomes in mind. Overall, the course aims for students to define, understand, and implement the concepts behind Theatre for Young Audiences, educational outreach, and arts integration. It is important to note, the rehearsal process for *The Tempest* will not occur during the class times designated for the course. Rather the students enrolled in this course will also enroll in a Rehearsal and Production credit, which is available to those working on a Theatre VCU production. I will detail this further in the next section of this chapter.

The course is composed of five units. The first unit focuses on Theatre for Young Audiences. Throughout this unit, students will learn what Theatre for Young Audiences is, the history, the content, the style and performance techniques used, the benefits for young audiences, the advantages for actors, the view of TYA in the greater theatre community, and touring. Following a lecture, students will explore Joseph Robinette’s *Charlotte’s Web*, a commonly produced TYA play. Students will read the script, view videos and images of various professional productions, and act out sections of the play to specifically examine the concepts of adaptation, audience participation, theatricality (Charlotte climbing the theatre and spinning the web), humans playing animals, and possible sensory experiences. Students will then look to Jeremy Kisling’s *The Princess Who Lost Her Hair*. However, with this production, students will focus on generating a tour concept of the show by conceiving a tour-friendly approach to the set, costumes, props, and sound as well as how to handle possible obstacles that may occur while on the road.

The next unit concentrates on arts education and arts integration. Similarly, this unit will begin with a lecture that defines and shares examples of each of the previously listed concepts along with their value. For this course we will be investigating the performance-based methodology of the Education Division of the Folger Shakespeare Library, that I previously addressed. Students will also look into the programming of other companies such as Education at Roundabout with Roundabout Theatre, Arden for All with Arden Theatre Company, and the Adopt-a-School Program with Walnut Street Theatre.

Following the lecture, students will be introduced to the art of teaching in three steps: content, execution, and classroom management. First, students will learn how to choose or craft an activity to be used in the classroom. Copious amounts of theatre activities are readily available to teaching artists through resources such as books, websites, and other teaching artists. We will view some of these activities in class however, students need to be able to adapt pre-existing activities and produce original activities to grasp the core of what a teaching artist does. After learning what goes into an activity, students will be taught how to lead or teach an activity. We will review how to do the following: approach teaching various age groups, actively give instruction, maintain student engagement, use a variety of entry points, encourage creativity, and allow the student to come to their own conclusions. Lastly, students will be educated on classroom management techniques. We will touch upon topics like establishing guidelines, attention grabbers, assigning off-limits areas during activities, countdowns, students who do not want to participate, and positive reinforcement. These three lessons will take a hands-on approach by engaging students in classroom discussions, small group assignments, and dramatization of scenarios. After these lessons, I will appoint the midterm assignment as laid out in Appendix B. The midterm requires the students to implement everything they have learned in

this unit while also providing the first-hand experience needed in preparation for the post-workshop they will lead on tour. As a teacher, I must implement what I teach in the classroom into my pedagogy. My teaching serves as an example, whether consciously or unconsciously, to the students.

The third unit shifts focus to outreach and audience engagement. The initial lecture will discuss the various forms of outreach and audience engagement and their assets to an audience and in turn the theatre community. Through the previous unit, we will have already touched on workshops and residency programs. Additionally, we will explore program notes, post-show discussions or talkbacks, lobby displays, and in the next lesson study guides. The class will be responsible for creating the study guide being sent to schools that book a touring performance. Students will practice creating components of a study guide using the selected companion text for the touring play, Aime Cesaire's *Une Tempete*. Through viewing examples from different TYA companies (Seattle Children's Theatre, Lexington Children's Theatre, and Enchantment Theatre Company) and following the format outlined in the Study Guide Reference found in Appendix C, students will complete specific assigned sections for a grade. After mastering study guides, students will concoct potential questions that could be asked of them during a talkback for *The Tempest* and rehearse how to provide a fun yet educational answer. The biggest challenge for students will be how to reroute a vague question or comment into a specific answer.

At this point in the course, students will present their midterm assignments leading us into the fourth unit, lesson planning. Students are already familiar with how to choose and create an activity, now they will discover how to piece together activities to create a cohesive lesson. Employing the lesson plan guide found in Appendix D, students will work together, as a class, to construct the post-show workshop to be taught in conjunction with the tour. Students will be split

into two teaching groups, which will be the same groups they will use when teaching the workshop on tour. Each group will assign members to lead specific sections of the lesson. Leading up to the start of the tour, each teaching group will have the opportunity to lead the other group through the workshop for a grade and receive feedback to assist them as they head out into the field.

The concluding unit consists of the ten tour performances, a course post mortem, and final presentations. During the performances, students will be required to keep a show journal. The show journal will serve as a reflection tool for the students to look back on their experience with each performance. Students will be encouraged to ruminate on audience response, student and teacher engagement during the workshop, and any challenges they encounter. As described in the final assignment prompt in Appendix E, in small groups students will select a TYA production and craft an interactive and educational lobby display for the show. Their lobby display will be shared with the class on the final day of the course. This assignment encapsulates all the knowledge they acquired throughout the course, both in the classroom and on tour.

PRODUCTION APPROACH

There were a few reasons behind my choice to use a touring production as part of this course. A touring production provides advantages to both the schools visited and the undergraduate students themselves. Taking the show to the school is not only more cost and time-efficient for the school but also less stressful for the school staff involved. There is no longer a concern for transportation, additional chaperones, or the logistics of lunch. A touring production provides the undergraduates with experiential learning that is key to their development as a theatre artist and an individual in society, “Many TYA programs blur the line

between teaching and learning, as students take on peer mentoring, leadership, and community outreach roles. Touring also trains transferable skills, including adaptability, problem-solving, and relationship-building with community members.” (Caine) Additionally, this opportunity sets students up for success by preparing them for the real world as TYA touring is an extremely viable option for employment post-graduation. *The Tempest*, which traditionally runs approximately two and a half hours, will be adapted to a one-hour version. One hour is the ideal time limit in terms of the attention span of younger audiences and the practicality of fitting it into the school’s schedule.

As previously stated, the students enrolled in this course will also be enrolled in a Rehearsal and Production course. Rehearsals will occur on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The rehearsal process will begin the second week of classes and last through the ninth week, resulting in 24 rehearsals total. The last three rehearsals will serve as tech rehearsals. I based the rehearsal schedule around a previous experience I had directing a one-hour adaptation of Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible* with high school students. When working on that project, I was allotted twelve four-hour rehearsals and three four-hour tech rehearsals. In the end, I was able to put up the show however, I was wishing that I had more time to dive a bit deeper into the text and refine moments. The schedule I have designated for *The Tempest* allows for the time I was yearning for after the last project. Performances will be scheduled for the tenth through fourteenth weeks of classes during the meeting time allocated for the “TYA Educational Outreach” course, as according to my time spent working for the Walnut Street Theatre, schools generally prefer to schedule programming in the morning. In addition to the ten in-school performances, the students will present two evening performances in one of VCU’s performance venues for their peers to appreciate their hard work. Students will audition

for the show during the previous semester so they may register for both courses and tailor their schedule accordingly. The tour will strictly serve as a performance opportunity for upperclassmen as it is a unique performance experience that will require an established foundation of acting knowledge. The course will be open to fourteen students, thirteen of which will take on the role of actor and one as stage manager.

There are a few reasons behind my selection of a Shakespeare piece as the touring production. The first being that Shakespeare's texts are considered free domain, meaning the department isn't required to pay rights for performances and the piece can be altered without permission from the estate to fit a one-hour running time. Secondly, Shakespeare is taught within the Virginia state curriculum, qualifying the production to be tied directly into the classroom. Out of Shakespeare's numerous works, I have specifically chosen *The Tempest* as its themes are topical considering our country's current climate in the fight against racism. *The Tempest* illustrates the relationship between a European colonizer (Prospero) and the native colonized people (Caliban). Furthermore, it provides the classroom teacher the opportunity to pair Shakespeare's text with an adaptation written from a postcolonial perspective, Aime Cesaire's *Une Tempeste*. The student-developed study guide will address both texts.

As the focus of the course is not on the production itself, but rather the experience the undergraduates have rehearsing and performing for a young audience, I'm going to touch upon a few of the TYA characteristics I plan to utilize in the production rather than the artistic vision as a whole. Audience participation is a trademark component of TYA. In this production, the entire space, the stage and the audience, will be considered playing space. The actors will frequently be blocked so that the action occurs among the audience. As this is a touring production, a variety of staging options will be addressed during the rehearsal process. When the students arrive at the

venue on the day of the performance, they will assess the space and determine which blocking options correspond to the venue. For example, this blocking would be used whenever a character is hiding or observing the action from a distance. For instance in Act 3 Scene 1, the actor playing Prospero will place himself among the audience while they observe the flirtation between Ferdinand and Miranda. This happens again in Act 3 Scene 3, as Prospero observes Ariel accusing Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio of abandoning Prospero and Miranda at sea and informing them that revenge has been enacted as Ferdinand is dead. Another attribute of TYA is music, which also happens to be a device Shakespeare often employed. Ariel is Shakespeare's most musical character, playing music and singing four songs throughout the play. The actor playing Ariel will play live music on a flute and drums during the performance. Other actors will join it at times, on other instruments such as a guitar or violin. At times, actors will appeal to the audience to join in the music and clap a certain rhythm along with them. Lastly, I intend to incorporate the element of movement and dance. Ariel is a magical entity that will embrace an other-worldly essence when they move. Two other actors will function as additional spirits and adopt the same movement as Ariel. These three actors will perform stylized choreographed movements during Ariel's songs and as they execute certain magical moments in the play such as setting up the banquet in Act 3 Scene 3. Their movements will draw inspiration from the Graham technique created by the great modern dancer and choreographer Martha Graham. The technique is based upon contraction and release and is known for its unique use of falls and floorwork. Implementing these elements will encourage sustained engagement from a young audience.

CONCLUSION

Despite its struggle against recognition in the greater theatre community, Theatre for Young Audiences has continued to flourish. Efforts are being taken to support its value as a tool in assisting young audiences in broadening their minds and making sense of the world around them. With the country's current climate, theatre is needed more than ever as actions speak volumes to a child. Theatre has the capability of enhancing a wide range of emotional, social, and academic skills in a child. Coupling theatre with educational outreach opportunities enhances the theatrical experience leading to an in-depth comprehension of the material and an appetite for curiosity. Maximizing the encounter fosters the development of an active learner and member of society.

Just as young audiences learn from witnessing live theatre, theatre artists learn from performing theatre for young audiences. Theatre departments in higher education often overlook the genre of Theatre for Young Audiences. There are 26 institutions that provide a B.A. or B.F.A. program that addresses the study of theatre in relation to young audiences. Of the 26 programs only one offers a concentration specifically in TYA. (www.tyausa.org) The genre of TYA offers lessons that can not be learned when performing for an adult audience. Teaching and interacting with a child provides an enlightening outlook into theatre and its possibilities. Offering the "TYA Educational Outreach" course at Virginia Commonwealth University will benefit the Richmond, Virginia community at large. Children will be exposed to theatre, teachers will be educated on how to utilize arts-integration in the classroom, and young undergraduate actors will develop a new set of theatre skills furthering developing their appreciation for the art.

APPENDIX A: COURSE SYLLABUS



Department of Theatre THEA XXX TYA Educational Outreach

Meeting Days and Times: T 9:00-10:50 am
TR 9:00-10:50 am

Room: TBD

Instructor: Emily Mattison

Contact Information: mattisone@vcu.edu

Office: TBD

Office Hours: TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION

TYA Educational Outreach is a course designed to introduce undergraduate theatre artists to the ever growing genre of Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) and the complimentary field of educational outreach. Over the past 100 years, continuing research has shown how beneficial theatre is in the development of those under the age of 18. Providing supplemental educational outreach opportunities with productions allows children to further enhance their understanding and engagement with the show and it's text. Students will specifically acquire a knowledge of arts integration, the basics of teaching a lesson, and the craft of composing a study guide. Students enrolled in this course (in conjunction with a Rehearsal and Production credit) will rehearse and present a one hour touring adaptation of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to local schools.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course students will be able to:

1. Define TYA and identify it's benefits
2. Identify the various performance techniques employed by TYA
3. Define educational outreach and it's various forms
4. Identify the benefits of educational outreach on an audience
5. Generate a thorough study guide to be utilized by a classroom teacher
6. Define arts integration and performance-based learning

7. Identify the benefits of arts integration for children
8. Generate and lead a post-show workshop in association with a specific production

ASSESSMENT

Attendance and Participation 20%

- Full participation includes work completion, preparedness, focus, positive attitude, willingness to try, and respect for other classmates and their work.

Study Guide 10%

- Students will be assigned a section of a study guide for their touring production of *The Tempest*.

Midterm Activity Presentation 20%

- Students will lead the class through a 20 minute theatre activity that could be used in an arts education setting.

Post-show Workshop Rehearsal 15%

- Students will lead half the class through the generated post-show workshop in preparation for the tour.

Show Journal 10%

- Students will keep a show journal throughout the performance process. This journal will serve as a reflection as to what they have taken away from their TYA touring experience.

Final Presentation 25%

- In small groups students will choose a TYA production for which to develop an educational and interactive lobby display.

DEPARTMENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Absences are factored into grades. Please note the following: (1) Two late arrivals or early departures=one full absence. (2) Two absences=allowed for a course that meets twice per week. (3) Three absences result in a lower letter grade for each additional absence.

COURSE READINGS

You will be supplied with an adapted copy of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* on the first day of rehearsal. All other readings will be supplied to you via Canvas.

DEPARTMENTAL ANTI-RACISM STATEMENT

The faculty and staff of the Department of Theatre at VCUarts unequivocally condemn all forms of bigotry, racism, and anti-Blackness. We recognize that the history of theatre and performance in the United States is inextricably linked with white supremacy, and we undertake to dedicate ourselves and our department to dismantling the racist structures within theatre education that have enabled the perpetuation of bigoted, racist, and anti-Black systems within theatrical institutions. We are committed as a department to developing an anti-racist curriculum and production season, and we pledge as individuals to engage in concrete anti-racist work on both a personal level and in our work as educators, artists, and scholars in order to promote real

and lasting change. We are determined to support all our students by mindfully creating a culture of both safety and accountability within our department where BIPOC students feel seen and all our students feel valued, and we will devote ourselves and the resources of our department to eliminating bias, discrimination, and racism from our curriculum, our training, our classes, and our productions.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Please refer to <http://go.vcu.edu/syllabus>.

For other syllabus statements, please refer to the syllabus page on Canvas.

ACCOMODATIONS

For more information, visit go.vcu.edu/syllabus or communicate with the Office of Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity on the Monroe Park Campus (828-2253). Please also visit the Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity website via <https://saeo.vcu.edu/> and/or the Division for Academic Success website via <https://das.vcu.edu/> for additional information.

Any Monroe Park Campus student needing a medical exception to wearing a face mask should contact the Student Accessibility and Education Office via <https://saeo.vcu.edu/>.

PREVENTING HARASSMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

This class pledges a welcoming environment free of harassment and discrimination. We are proud to hold a zero tolerance policy when it comes to harassment.

Harassment includes, among other behaviors:

1. Inappropriate or insulting remarks, gestures, jokes, innuendos, or taunting about a person's racial or ethnic background, color, place of birth, citizenship, ancestry, creed, or disability. (Remarks or jokes or stories that are insulting or offensive.)
2. Unwanted questions or comments about an artist's private life.
3. Sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to:

1. Unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendos, or taunting about a person's body, attire, gender, appearance or sexual activities.
2. Unwanted touching or any unwanted or inappropriate physical contact.
3. Unwelcome inquiries or comments about a person's sex life or sexual preference.
4. Leering, whistling or other suggestive or insulting sounds.
5. Inappropriate comments about clothing, physical characteristics, or activities
6. Transmitting by text, email, or any other delivery method offensive sexual remarks, jokes, stories, pictures or materials which are sexually oriented.
7. Requests or demands for sexual favors which include or strongly imply the promises of rewards for complying (e.g. job advancement opportunities, and/or threats of punishment or refusal).

8. Sexual solicitation or advance made by a person in a position to confer, grant, or deny a benefit or advancement.
9. Reprisal or threat of reprisal for the rejection of solicitation of advance where the reprisal is made by a person to grant, confer, or deny advancement.

All or part of the above grounds may create a negative environment for individuals or groups. This may have the effect of creating a toxic work environment. A person does not have to be a direct target to be adversely affected by a negative environment. It includes conduct or comment that creates and maintains an offensive, hostile, or intimidating climate.

If a comment or conduct in rehearsal feels like it is bordering harassment, we encourage you in the moment to voice your concern. This could be as simple as “ouch” or “you know, that comment made me uncomfortable.” We ask that the recipient of this, take a moment to respond with an acknowledgment and apologize if needed. It is then up to the actors in the moment to decide if there is a conversation that needs to take place or continue on. We ask you all to pledge to each other that we work together to create an environment where it is safe to speak up. We ask for a positive and respectful working space.

Harassment Reporting

If you experience concerns about harassment, safety, or a negative or hostile environment, you may convey your concerns to me, or any member of the theatre faculty, or to the deputy Title IX Coordinator for Students, Tammi Slovinsky, (804) 827-1963 or tslovinsky@vcu.edu.

For more information on safety in theater and at VCU please reference the following sites:

- <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/qa-201404-title-ix.pdf>
- <http://www.notinourhouse.org/>
- <https://equity.vcu.edu/titleix/>

GRADING SCALE

- A 90 - 100
- B 80 - 89
- C 70 - 79
- D 60 - 79
- F 59 & below

Grade	Description
A (4.0)	Exceptional achievement. Substantial effort and achievement in the areas of critical thinking, technique, and presentation.
B (3.0)	Very good work that satisfies goals of course; clear and convincing structure that is complex and unique.
C (2.0)	Average. Original assignment approached but does not develop further.
D (1.0)	Below average. Does not fully understand assignments. Very little effort, is incomplete or late. Lacks of full understanding and commitment.
F (0)	Failure, no credit.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to change at anytime)

Week One- Theatre for Young Audiences

T: **LECTURE** Intro to Theatre for Young Audiences

TR: **DISCUSSION** *Charlotte's Web* (Video Clips and Images)

DUE: Read *Charlotte's Web* by Joseph Robinette

Week Two- Theatre for Young Audiences

T: **LECTURE** Intro to Touring

TR: **DISCUSSION** *The Princess Who Lost Her Hair* (Video Clips and Images)

DUE: Read *The Princess Who Lost Her Hair* by Jeremy Kisling

Week Three- Arts Education

T: **LECTURE** Intro to Arts Education and Performance-based Learning

TR: **LECTURE/DEMONSTRATE** How-to Generate an Activity

DUE: Read packet of sample theatre activities

Week Four- Arts Education

T: **LECTURE/DEMONSTRATE** How-to Lead an Activity

TR: **LECTURE/DEMONSTRATE** Classroom Management

Week Five- Outreach/Show Engagement

T: **LECTURE** Intro to Outreach/Show Engagement

TR: **LECTURE/DEMONSTRATE** Study Guides

DUE: Read *Une Tempete* by Aimé Césaire

Week Six- Outreach/Show Engagement

T: **DEMONSTRATE** *The Tempest* Study Guide Work Session

TR: **DEMONSTRATE** The Art of the Talkback

DUE: Study Guide Assignment

Week Seven- Midterm

T: **DEMONSTRATE** Activity Presentations

TR: **DEMONSTRATE** Activity Presentations

Week Eight- Post-show Workshop

T: **LECTURE** Lesson Planning How-to

TR: **DEMONSTRATE** Workshop Lesson Planning

Week Nine- Workshop Rehearsals

T: **DEMONSTRATE** Group 1 Rehearsal/Feedback

TR: **DEMONSTRATE** Group 2 Rehearsal/Feedback

Week Ten- Performances

T: Performance #1

TR: Performance #2

Week Eleven- Performances

T: Performance #3

TR: Performance #4

Week Twelve- Performances

T: Performance #5

TR: Performance #6

Week Thirteen- Performances

T: Performance #7

TR: Performance #8

Week Fourteen- Performances

T: Performance #9

TR: Performance #10

Week Fifteen- Post-mortem

T: NO CLASS (work on final presentations)

TR: **DISCUSSION** Course and *The Tempest* Post mortem

Week Sixteen- Final Presentations

T: Final Presentations

HAPPY END OF THE SEMESTER!

APPENDIX B: MIDTERM ASSIGNMENT PROMPT

TYA Educational Outreach Midterm Assignment Prompt

Choose one of the following topics:

- Ensemble
- Imagination
- Character
- Setting
- Plot

Create a theatre activity that highlights the topic you chose. The activity should engage the entire group with everyone taking on the role of a performer at some point in the activity. This could mean everyone is participating at the same time or the group is broken down into smaller groups with a presentation from each at the end. You will lead the class through the activity the week of _____. The activity should last 20 minutes in length, you will be timed. Please keep the following in mind as you create and rehearse your activity:

- Are the instructions overly clear?
- Do you need to provide an example during the activity?
- Does the activity fully engage the student (i.e. does it get them up and out of their seat)?
- Did you address the purpose of the activity?

APPENDIX C: STUDY GUIDE REFERENCE

A Study Guide for Classroom Teachers

Title of Play
Playwright/Author

Presented by (Name of Theatre Company)

This study guide was prepared by _____

Teacher Welcome Letter

Thank the teacher for bringing their class to the production and for taking the initiative to bring theatre into their students' lives. Clarify that this study guide has been provided as a resource to extend the theatrical experience of the students and to deepen their understanding of the play and theatre as an art form. Explain what they will expect to find in the study guide and when it may be useful for them to use each component (i.e. before or after seeing the show).

Table of Contents

Student Welcome Letter	
A Who's Who	
Play Synopsis	
About the Playwright/Author	
About the Production	
Before You See (Title of Play)	
Activity One	
Activity Two	
Activity Three	
Discussion Questions	
A Conversation with (Director or Designer)	
After You See (Title of Play)	
Activity One	
Activity Two	
Activity Three	
Discussion Questions	
Accompanying Text	

Student Welcome Letter

Introduce the students to the production they are about to see. For some this may be their first interaction with theatre, so describe what they are about to witness and some guidelines to follow during the performance. Most importantly thank them for joining the cast and crew in this theatrical experience as theatre means nothing without an audience.

A Who's Who

Write a list of all the characters and their role within the play, i.e. Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. If there are many familial relations within the play, feel free to incorporate a family tree. Also, include pictures of all the actors with their role(s) listed underneath.

Play Synopsis

Write a brief yet engaging synopsis that includes all the major plot points of the play.

About the Playwright/Author

Write a brief biography of the playwright. If the play is adapted from a book include a brief synopsis of the book's author as well.

About the Production

Highlight any interesting components of the production. These could include masks, live music, specific style of movement, acrobatics, projections, videos, etc. Likewise, you could discuss elements specifically to touring, for instance actors only changing an article of clothing to delineate a change in character. Include pictures!

Before You See (Title of the Play)

Activity One, Two, and Three

These activities should introduce the students to the world of the play. Set up the time, location, relationships, customs, culture, language, fashion, etc. If the production is one of Shakespeare's texts, be sure to include an activity specifically about language. You may also introduce themes of the play.

Discussion Questions

Include a list of questions that inquire about first impressions and prompt the students to begin thinking about the themes of the play.

A Conversation with (Director/Designer)

Interview either the director or a designer (scenic, costumes, or props). You could inquire about what their job entails, what their process was for the production, and what themes they focused on, etc. *Feel free to include an additional interview

After You See (Title of the Play)**Activity One, Two, and Three**

These activities should encourage students to recall and think critically about what happened in the play. You may choose to incorporate an activity that addresses one of the components listed in the “About the Production” section of the study guide, an activity that explores point of views surrounding a theme of the play, an activity that focuses on characters and their actions, an activity surrounding defining moments of the play, or an activity looking at the themes discussed in the play.

Discussion Questions

Include a list of questions that inquire about students’ reactions to the play and production, entice students to think more deeply about the events of the play, encourage students to explore the themes of the play and how they relate to current events, and prompt students to understand a character and their actions.

Accompanying Text

Share a text that the students could read in addition to the play that further challenges their understanding of the piece. Explain how the choice could be utilized in the classroom. For our purposes we will be using Aime Cesaire’s *Une Tempete*.

APPENDIX D: LESSON PLAN GUIDE

Post-show Workshop Lesson Plan

Materials Needed: *What materials will be necessary to carry out the lesson?*

Student Objectives: *What do you intend for the students to take away from the lesson?*

Core Curriculum Standards Met: *What Virginia core curriculum standards are met through the activities in the lesson?*

Introduction (5-10 min): *How do you intend to start the lesson? Introduce yourself, get to know the students, establish classroom guidelines, etc.?*

Warm Up (10 min): *An all inclusive warm up activity that gets the students' bodies, voices, and imaginations going.*

Activity 1 (15 min): *This activity should introduce the concepts you would like to focus on.*

Activity 2 (20 min): *This activity should be a more in-depth experience with the concepts previously introduced. There should be a performative element to this activity.*

Wrap Up (5 min): *Give the students the opportunity to reflect on the lesson and review the take-aways.*

APPENDIX E: FINAL ASSIGNMENT PROMPT

TYA Educational Outreach Final Assignment Prompt

Within your assigned group choose a published TYA play or musical. Create a lobby display for your chosen show. The display should be interactive and educational for the audience. A lobby display is a way to introduce the audience to theatre itself and the material of the play/musical. Think of it as the embodiment of a cross between a dramaturgical report, study guide, and a museum exhibit. Remember this may be the first time your audience member is seeing a theatre production. You will be presenting your lobby display on the final day of class. Keep the following in mind while you are creating your display:

- Does the display introduce the audience to the world of the play?
- Does the display share with the audience what they can expect when seeing a live performance?
- Does the display excite the audience for what they are about to be a part of?
- Does the display engage a variety of senses?
- Is the display appropriate for the target age of the audience? i.e. what is their reading level?

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VITA

Emily J. Mattison was born and raised in Sykesville, Maryland. In 2011, she received her Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Performance from Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania. Subsequently, Emily moved to Philadelphia where she worked as a teaching artist for numerous years with various theatre companies in the greater Philadelphia area including Arden Theatre Company, Wolf Performing Arts Center, Philadelphia Young Playwrights, and Walnut Street Theatre. She currently works as an adjunct professor for Virginia Commonwealth University teaching Fundamentals of Performance to the freshman class.