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Trauma Prevention & Best Practices in Performance Classrooms

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TRAUMA INFORMED TEACHING
&
BEST PRACTICES IN PERFORMANCE CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

This thesis has been constructed to create a trauma-informed teaching method to be used within performance classrooms at the college level. The first chapter starts by defining trauma and walking the reader through the neuroscience behind trauma. Next, the code of ethics created by the National Educational Association is examined and a definition for best practices within the classroom is outlined. Finally, this chapter concludes with a definition of emotional abuse that brings all the concepts together and explains how they are interlaced.

The next chapter is dedicated to learning more about the percentage of actors who have experienced childhood trauma. The two studies in this section show us that performers are more fantasy-prone, dissociate more, and tend to have more traumatic childhood experiences. From here this chapter then moves into exploring already established and successful trauma-informed teaching models outside of the performance classroom.

Chapter three then dives into the differences between teaching, therapy, and dramatherapy. After these three vocations have been explored, the six beliefs at the core of my trauma-informed model are presented and justified.

Chapter four then investigates different established acting pedagogies and pairs them with the six core beliefs established at the end of chapter three. Six theatre practitioners techniques are explored and discussed, with multiple acting exercises explained in-depth for each practitioner.

Chapter five takes a brief moment to bring light to generational trauma and trauma of marginalized groups. Concluding with a summarization of my personal process constructing this thesis.

Finally, chapter six serves as a conclusion where all the research conducted above comes together to create a visual acting trajectory, syllabus, and lesson plan for a new trauma-informed performance pedagogy.

Introduction

Trauma-informed teaching and ethical practises within the classroom truly can open doors leading in multiple directions. As I begin my thesis journey I realize that in the year 2021, it is crucial to recognize the trauma associated not only utilizing normative experiences of but also those engaged by members of historically marginalized communities whose experiences may present previously unaddressed instances of trauma with a seeming multitude of triggers. With the advent of intimacy direction, many directors, theatre pedagogists, and actors have begun asking themselves a very important question: is acting being taught in a way that puts an actor's mental health and well-being at risk? Many acting methods up to this point have been composed by renowned theatre artists and practitioners. Many of whom went to ivy league institutions, acted or directed on Broadway, and have enough accolades to decorate an entire home. But very few based their educational approach on actor training in psychology and actor health and well-being. Many of the methodologies used today were created during a time when opening up discussions around mental illness were seen as taboo, therefore the majority of these practitioners did not even approach the subject of human psychology, or explore it at all. For an art form so heavily based on the inner workings of a human brain, it's ironic that actor training is just beginning to branch into actually understanding the science behind the motor between our ears.

After graduating from the University of Rhode Island in 2015, I started to notice troubling correlations in the story of the "trained" actor as I worked in the field and spoke to other professional performers. So many of our narratives included incidences of negative reinforcement that bordered on abuse, harassment on the basis of appearance, and comments that would be deemed inappropriate in any other academic department. It started to feel like theatre departments were the wild west of academia, spaces where anything goes and nothing is policed. Therefore giving instructors the ability to say and do as they wish and never be questioned.

When I was diagnosed with PTSD shortly after completing my BFA, I was shocked to realize that my education had included all of the above-named abuses and that those had been perpetuated by a single professor. It started to dawn on me that there was a very prevalent and toxic culture within actor training. Slowly, I realized there must be another way to teach acting and keep our students safe, a method that puts first and foremost the psychological workings of the performer's brain. A method not based on broadway reviews or where the instructor attended graduate school. No matter how monumental or prolific a performer's career may be, it is not a direct correlation to how well they will be able to educate and manage a classroom. At the academic level, I have met many educators with impressive resumes that still perpetuate the same toxic cycles and behaviors that I spoke of above. I believe this comes from the lack of pedagogical understanding and development of personalized teaching philosophy. Due to the fact that there is no educational prerequisite to teaching at the college level, these professors pull from their memory bank and teach what did or didn't work for them, and often, I believe, do not question if the way that material was approached could be potentially harmful. The assumption being that if it worked for them, it should work for the general population.

At the core of this thesis is the hope that performance educators will be able to instill confidence and joy in a performer. If that is the goal, the approach will be made through the analysis of educational psychology research and the study of diverse acting methodologies to create an acting method that puts the actor's wellbeing at the forefront. To dive headfirst into this work there are a series of questions that must be answered by the analysis of research. The following 6 chapters aim to address and get to the bottom of the following:

A) <u>What is trauma? What is happening in the brain when trauma occurs?</u>

      First and foremost we must create a definition for trauma and build an understanding of what is happening inside the brain. This is key if we wish to learn how to understand, stabilize and put our students at ease.

B) <u>What is the correlation between childhood trauma and the artist?</u>

      We've heard the term "starving/ suffering artist" over and over again. Is there something behind this? Must an artist suffer to create? Is there any merit behind this statement? Must artists, specifically performers, have to have suffered trauma if they wish to attempt their best work? Is the population of performance arts classrooms more densely populated with trauma survivors? I hypothesize that a large percentage of the students we meet in academia have suffered childhood trauma and bring it into rehearsal with them every day. I believe these students call on these experiences when necessary within the work. This method in theatre is often referred to as "transference".

C) <u>Where in its development is the brain of an average undergrad student in a pre-professional acting program? Is a student more likely to be facing trauma during this time in their lives? What are the long-term impacts of trauma experienced at the college level? Can trauma be compounded?</u>

The next series of questions aims to address the here and now for college students. While the last question aimed to see how many students bring prior childhood trauma into the rehearsal room; this series of questions is here to examine how many students are actively living amid trauma. This is so we can get a sense as to whether our response as educators to these students is helpful or hurtful. For instance, if I speak to a student in a specific way, while trauma may be unfolding in a student's life, could I be causing major psychological harm for the rest of their life?

D) <u>How does Trauma hold our students back? What can we do as educators to help?</u>

How can trauma stand in our students' way as they try and navigate creating their best work? What are some of the tools and techniques we can teach our students so they can move through trauma in the safest way possible?

E) <u>How can we then take the tools and techniques created by mental healthcare professionals and drama therapists and pair them with activities created by great acting practitioners (Stanislavski, Uta Hagen, Sandford Meisner, Lee Strausberg, Jacques Lecoq, etc) To create a trauma-informed acting trajectory that can be used in any performance classroom?</u>

CHAPTER 1: Background Information & Definitions

a. Introduction

This chapter serves as the foundation for all additional research. It starts with a definition of trauma then immediately goes into the science behind trauma. It explores the way the brain functions when triggered and how the brain develops. It then takes a deep look at Toxic Stress, new terminology that segues nicely into the code of ethics as set by the National Education Association, and then a definition of best practices. The chapter wraps up with the definition of emotional abuse and a look into a specific study where emotional abuse is observed within the classroom setting.

b. What is Trauma?

The DSM-5, the resource turned to when diagnosing an individual with mental illness, used for years by mental healthcare practitioners, defines trauma as the aftermath of living through what can be termed as a "traumatic event". "A traumatic event is something horrible that people have lived through or seen. It upsets, scares, and disturbs those who survive or learn about the event. Stress is a common experience and involves feeling tense or pressured. For some major stress can lead to feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope" (Black et al. 107).

Some examples of traumatic events listed by the DSM-5 include real or threatened death, severe injury, sexual assault, physical assault, natural disasters, and combat. As a reader at this moment, I became intrigued as to why emotional abuse and harassment were not listed? Surely, the use of intimidation and manipulation of a victim's psyche to a certain extreme would "scare, or disturb" anyone. The DSM-5 also goes on to explicitly say, "trauma and stress disorders are a new group of disorders" (Black et al. 107). But how new exactly, and how little do we know?

On a baseline level, we know that 60% of men and 50% of women live through at least one traumatic event. This means that without any other conducted research into the childhood trauma of the artist, about half the population of a class at the college level will inevitably bring baggage into the classroom. Baggage more akin to a landmine, that can blow up if/when the student approaches work that mirrors their experience in real life.

c. Understanding Trauma and the Brain

Before the 1990s scientists were able to understand how chemicals such as serotonin or norepinephrine fueled the brain, but with the advent of brain-imaging techniques, scientists were able to finally take a look at the "engine" itself. In 1994 Harvard Medical school was at the forefront of the neuroscience revolution and began studying the brains of those who were experiencing post-traumatic stress flashbacks. The study used a small sample of patients experiencing PTSD symptoms. The scientist conducting the session would hook the patient up to a brain scanner and read a very detailed description of the traumatic event the patient had lived through, thus inducing a flashback. "I was standing outside the scanner as Martha underwent the procedure and could follow her physiological reactions on the monitor. The moment we turned on the tape recorder, her heart started to race, and her blood pressure jumped. Simply hearing the script activated the same physiological responses that had occurred during the accident thirteen years earlier. After the recorded script concluded and Marsha's heart rate and blood pressure had returned to normal, we played her second script: getting out of bed and brushing her teeth. This time her heart rate and blood pressure did not change" (Van Der Kolk 41). Although the passage above from *The Body Keeps The Score* does not yet describe the inner workings of the brain, it is a clear depiction of how physiological symptoms are controlled by the brain. The author goes on further to explain the expression on Martha's face after she emerged from the scanner. "Martha

looked defeated, drawn-out, and frozen. Her breathing was shallow, her eyes were open wide, and her shoulders were hunched." (Van Der Kolk 42). All eight participants in this study displayed similar physical responses after hearing the script created to induce a flashback.

The brain scans below illustrate what was occurring psychologically while the script was being read. The first area of interest for the scientists is shown in image A. Scientists were not surprised to find the limbic system brightly lit up in red as a response to trauma since this region is often referred to as the *emotional brain*. This area of the brain, in particular the amygdala, works as the "alarm system of the body." The amygdala warns us of impending danger and helps us to activate our body's stress responses. What's interesting is that the patients did not have to be experiencing a present traumatic event to have this area activated.

While the limbic area showed a significant increase in activity, Broca's Area, shown in
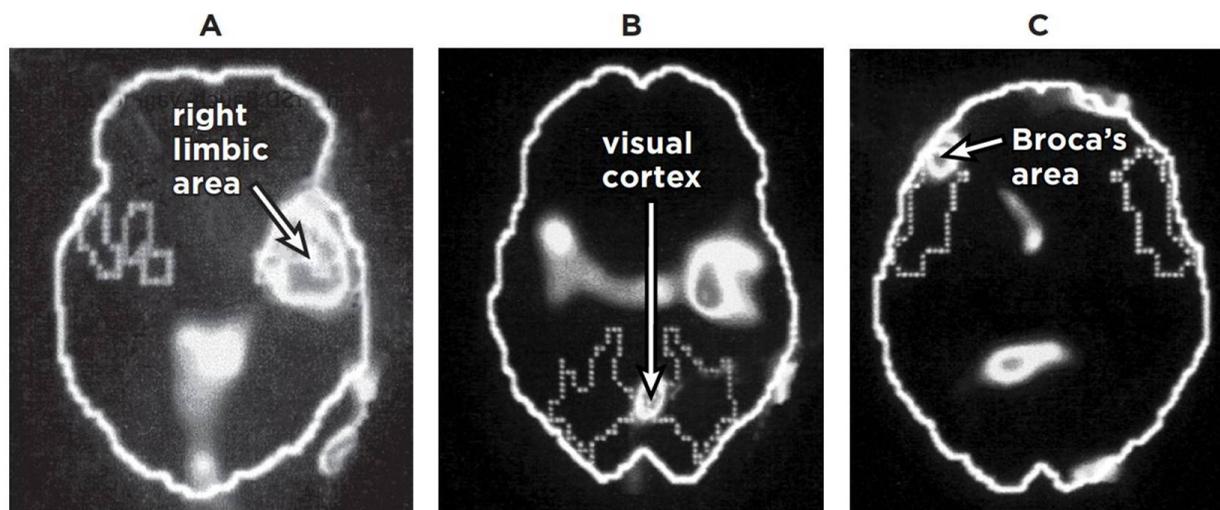
image C, indicated a significant decrease. Essentially, Broca's Area went entirely offline as patients re-experienced their trauma; this is the speech center of the brain. "Without a functioning Broca's Area, you cannot put your feelings into words" (Van Der Kolk 43). While not being to articulate oneself can be an indicator of trauma, that is not always the underlying reason. Many other factors could be affecting a student in a way that could make communication

difficult. But, without this knowledge as a professor, it is still important to employ trauma-informed teaching methods, because trauma very well may be the cause. If you have a student that is anxious and unable to articulate themselves there is no way they will be able to produce their best work. Especially in an area of study that is contingent on the student being able to talk and perform.

Meanwhile, as the limbic brain becomes more active, and the Broca's Area goes offline; the visual cortex (shown in image B above) also begins to create "Haunting images, [that] capture the experience and return as nightmares and flashbacks" (Ver Der Kolk 44). The three areas of the brain affected create a perfect storm, where a patient is experiencing high anxiety, gruesome imagery, and the inability to articulate what they are experiencing.

We also know from the research conducted in *The Body Keeps The Score,* that while survivors are experiencing a flashback only the right hemisphere of the brain is active. The right side of the brain we associate with intuition, emotions, visuals, and space. "The right brain stores memories of sound, touch, smell and the emotions they evoke" (Van Der Kolk 45). This is why triggering a flashback for a survivor can be as simple as presenting them with a specific sound, smell, or texture. Many survivors of trauma may be able to explain the sensory experience but cannot map a story of their experience from the beginning, middle to end. Whereas, The left side of the brain is linguistic, sequential, and analytical. The concept that those reliving past traumas lose their rationality and logic is thus true. The left side of the brain allows us to store facts, statistics, and vocabulary.

Now that we have a clearer picture as to what is happening inside the brain of a human dealing with trauma, we must understand how the brain develops. Understanding the

development of the brain is crucial to because teaches coping techniques within the classroom

for students who may become emotionally activated by the work.

d. Developing Brain & Trauma

"The brain is built from the bottom up. It develops level by level within every child in the

womb, just as it did in the course of evolution" (Van Der Kolk 56) The first part of the brain to

develop in the womb, which sits at the base or the bottom of the brain as described by Van Der

Kolk, is commonly referred to as the *reptilian brain*. The reptilian brain controls eating, sleeping,

waking, crying, breathing, hunger, wetness, pain, urination, defecation, and our ability to sense

temperature. This area of the brain

is accountable for the most basic, life-sustaining systems. "It is amazing how many

psychological problems involve difficulties with sleep, appetite, touch, digestion, and arousal. Although these may seem to be simple functions of the brain and body,
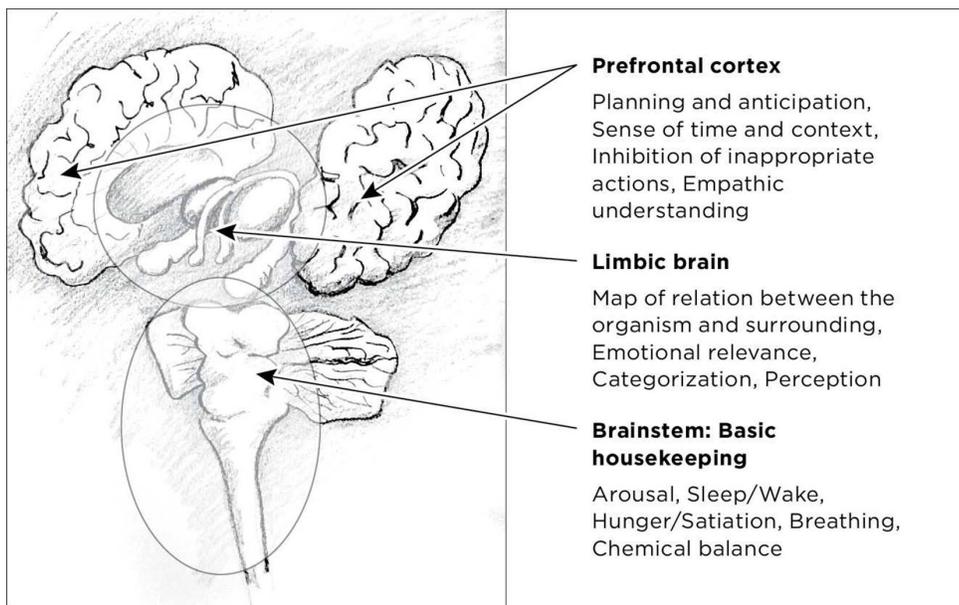
Brainstem: Basic Housekeeping, the image is drawn by Licia Sky and is featured on page 59 of *The Body Keeps The Score*

When trauma comes into the mix, these simple operations and the smooth functioning systems

may go awry and ultimately have a major impact on a person both mentally and physically.

Above the reptilian brain is what is commonly referred to as the *mammalian brain*,

otherwise known as the limbic brain or limbic system, which has already been touched upon in

the previous section. This part of the brain develops after birth and is the center of our emotions. The mammalian brain is also used to monitor danger, decide where the line between pain and pleasure is, and ultimately decide what is or is not a priority for our survival. More than anything else, the mammalian brain helps us navigate complex interpersonal problems.

While the reptilian brain is a great example of natural development, the mammalian brain is a great illustration of nurturing development. "If you feel safe and loved, your brain becomes specialized in exploration, play, and cooperation; if you are frightened and unwanted, it specializes in managing feelings of fear and abandonment" (Van Der Kolk 56). The limbic system is shaped almost entirely by experience. Negative experiences may lead to stressful or uncomfortable emotions while navigating relationships, whereas positive experiences in our youth can lead to lifelong skills such as exploration, play, and cooperation.

The last area of the brain to develop is the neocortex, which includes the frontal lobes. Although other mammals possess a neocortex, it is much thicker in humans, which enables us to use abstract thought, construct language, absorb vast amounts of information, and attach meaning to it. "The frontal lobes allow us to plan and reflect, to imagine and play out future scenarios. They help us predict what will happen if we take one action (like applying for a new job) or neglect another (not paying rent). These make choices possible and underlie our astonishing creativity" (Van Der Kolk 58). This is the area of the brain that separates us from other mammals and allows humans to rationalize the world around them in a logical way.

Without the consent and normal functioning of the neocortex, acting and performance become close to impossible. The ability to play, imagine and create are all necessary for an actor to perform effectively. The ability to analyze a script, create a character, and create a fully

fleshed-out narrative, are all also skills driven by this area of the brain and are of monumental importance to an actor.

     e. The Developing Brain: Teens Vs. Adults

It has become common knowledge that the human brain is not fully developed until the age of 25. The brain functions of a teenager and an adult are almost entirely different. Interestingly enough teenage brain function is incredibly similar to how the brain experiences trauma.

     Because the prefrontal cortex is not fully developed, those below the age of 25 take in sensory information through the thalamus, and that information is almost entirely processed in the amygdala or the emotional area of the brain. This means that the information is processed unconsciously, emotionally, and, possibly, irrationally. The neocortex is not developed enough to do this logistical work, and so for a student below the age of 25, the feeling of being abused or unfairly treated happens more readily than in an adult with a fully functioning brain.

     f. Traumas Chain Reaction & The Long Term Effects on the Brain

     Anytime any sensory information from the world arrives through the eyes, nose, mouth, or skin, the sensations converge in the thalamus, which takes in all of this information and uses it to create and store the story of your life. From here, this sensory information is either sent down to the amygdala (unconscious brain) or up toward the frontal lobes (conscious brain). In general, sending a message from the thalamus to the amygdala is far quicker than sending a message from the thalamus to the frontal lobes.

     When the amygdala senses a troubling situation, it evaluates the potential threat, takes these isolated sights, sounds, smells, and textures, and instantaneously activates the autonomic nervous system to release the chemicals necessary (cortisol and adrenaline) for fight, flight, or freeze. Due to the fact that it is quicker for our amygdala to receive this sensory information than

the frontal lobes, the unconscious brain reacts first, which means we are already processing the information before we are even consciously aware of it. "While the amygdala is usually pretty good at picking up danger clues, trauma increases the risk of misinterpreting whether a particular situation is dangerous or safe. Faulty alarms can lead to blowups or shutdowns in response to innocuous comments or facial expressions" (Van Der Kolk 62). For those living with trauma, emotional escalation can be triggered easily and unconsciously.

Meanwhile, although it might take a few milliseconds longer, this sensory information is also arriving at the frontal lobes. The frontal lobes are located directly above our eyes which gives us as humans the ability to view the situation in front of us. While the amygdala unconsciously reacts, the frontal lobes allow us to weigh in and come up with our own strategies when dealing with a dangerous situation. They can also help us register if we are reacting to a faulty alarm being set off by the amygdala.

"Being able to hover calmly and objectively over our thoughts, feelings, and emotions and then take our time to respond allows the executive brain to inhibit, organize, and modulate the hardwired automatic reactions preprogrammed into the emotional brain. With PTSD The critical balance between the amygdala and the frontal lobes shifts radically which makes it harder to control emotions and impulses" (Van Der Kolk 62). Therefore, a student that walks into the classroom with previous trauma may be more prone to anxiety and disproportionate reactions. They may not feel in control of their bodies, brains, and voices which have automatically reacted without the input of the frontal lobes. This can make it very difficult for these students to remain at ease and receive criticism.

g. What is Toxic Stress?

As I continued my research on trauma I came across a new term, Toxic Stress, that seemed to fit the exact kind of behavior in the classroom I aim to discuss in this paper, and ultimately diminish within the field. Above when I spoke about trauma I mentioned being confused as to how emotional abuse and harassment had not been included within the categories of what can qualify as a cause for trauma. *The Center On The Developing Child,* at Harvard University, has just recently begun its study on toxic stress and the lifelong effects that can accompany it.

"Learning how to cope with adversity is an important part of healthy child development. When we are threatened, our bodies prepare us to respond by increasing our heart rate, blood pressure, and stress hormones, such as cortisol. When a young child's stress response systems are activated within an environment of supportive relationships with adults, these physiological effects are buffered and brought back down to baseline. The result is the development of healthy stress response systems. However, if the stress response is extreme and long-lasting, and buffering relationships are unavailable to the child, the result can be damaged, weakened systems and brain architecture, with lifelong repercussions" ("Brain Architecture"). This explanation and definition was a breakthrough. Yes, understanding trauma and being able to educate from a trauma-informed standpoint is important and integral to how acting teachers manage a classroom. But, understanding toxic stress is mandatory so that educators can hold themselves accountable and recognize the impact they may be making on their student's mental and physical health that could potentially last a lifetime. It seemed blatantly clear at this point that supportive adult relationships are necessary within all classrooms.

From here Harvard goes on to define the three different types of stress a person may experience:

- **Positive stress response** *is a normal and essential part of healthy development, characterized by brief increases in heart rate and mild elevations in hormone levels. Some situations that might trigger a positive stress response are the first day with a new caregiver or receiving an injected immunization.*

- **Tolerable stress response** *activates the body's alert systems to a greater degree as a result of more severe, longer-lasting difficulties, such as the loss of a loved one, a natural disaster, or a frightening injury. If the activation is time-limited and buffered by relationships with adults who help the child adapt, the brain and other organs recover from what might otherwise be damaging effects.*

- **Toxic stress response** *can occur when a child experiences strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity—such as physical or emotional abuse, chronic* ("Brain Architecture")

This distinction is important because understanding that not all stress is unhealthy stress is important. Some stress is healthy and normal, just like experiencing anxiety from time to time when placed in a stressful situation is normal. But, when environmental factors and patterns create prolonged stress this can have a major impact on brain function and the body. Once the brain creates pathways that are used over and over again it becomes increasingly more difficult for the brain to not use these pathways when placed in a

stressful situation. Over time this can end up causing lifelong anxiety as well as a slew of

physical health issues. As educators, we must create an environment where we are not

causing our students chronic toxic stress, if not trying to completely eliminate it from our

practice. "When toxic stress response occurs continually or is triggered by multiple sources,

it can have a cumulative toll on an individual's physical and mental health—for a lifetime.

The more adverse experiences in childhood, the greater the likelihood of developmental

delays and later health problems, including heart disease, diabetes, substance abuse, and

depression. Research also indicates that supportive, responsive relationships with caring

adults as early in life as possible can prevent or reverse the damaging effects of toxic stress

response"("Brain Architecture"). In my opinion, causing students toxic stress is an example

of emotional abuse and harassment within the classroom. Even if toxic stress doesn't fit

into the definition of abuse you may aline with, the quote from Harvard's website above

illustrates the lifelong impacts toxic stress can have on the brain and body.

      While reviewing this material one word continually made me question if this type of

The brain's ability to change in response to experiences

The amount of effort such change requires

AGE

SOURCE: LEVITT (2009)

Center on the Developing Child 🛡 HARVARD UNIVERSITY

www.developingchild.harvard.edu
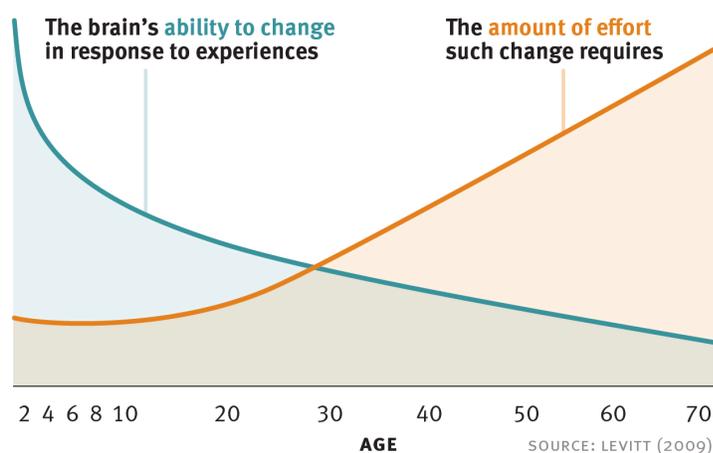
research was applicable. That word being childhood or early childhood. Because of this specification, I started to wonder if students at the college level could still be affected by toxic stress on such an invasive level. But, when I came across the following

image I was relieved to find that toxic stress affects everyone. This image shows the difficulty of trying to change these types of experiences and pathways within the adult brain. It shows that as an individual agesAt present it becomes harder and harder for adult brains to biologically change these pathways and for adults to develop tools to change their emotional responses. This graph ultimately shows us that the older you get the more potent and damaging toxic stress can be. Thus the words childhood and early childhood may be a misrepresentation of the data gathered.

h. Code of Ethics: Education

While the last few sections of this chapter have focused on how the brain functions once already traumatized, the following segments aim to give us an understanding of what has been established as the code of conduct for teachers within the classroom, a definition of best practices, and finally a definition and exploration of emotional abuse. This is so that educators can begin to see the overlap between set ethical standards, best practices, and the psychology of trauma and toxic stress. These standards are also placed here so that as we move into chapter four, where we explore specific acting pedagogies, we can establish if these types of actor training are ethical.

The following is an excerpt from the National Education Association (NEA) Handbook printed in 2019. Although the code of ethics was first printed by the NEA in 1975, it has remained nearly identical in the newest version printed in 2019.

Preamble

"The educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of the democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach

and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards.

The educator recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The desire for the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the members of the community provides the incentive to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct. The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession indicates the aspiration of all educators and provides standards by which to judge conduct.

The remedies specified by the NEA and/or its affiliates for the violation of any provision of this Code shall be exclusive and no such provision shall be enforceable in any form other than the one specifically designated by the NEA or its affiliates.

COMMITMENT TO THE STUDENT

The educator strives to help each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society. The educator, therefore, works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the educator--

1. Shall not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning.

2. Shall not unreasonably deny the student's access to varying points of view.

3. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress.

4. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.

5. Shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement.

6. Shall not on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social or cultural background, or sexual orientation, unfairly--

1. *Exclude any student from participation in any program*
2. *Deny benefits to any student*
3. *Grant any advantage to any student*

7. Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.

8. Shall not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

("Code of Ethics For Educators" 3)

i. Best Practices

Below is my favorite explanation I was able to find of best practices, as it applies to the classroom setting, from the textbook *Educational Psychology, Constructive Learning* by Dennis M Mcinerney.

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and best practice

What is 'best practice'? The expression *best practice* seems to originate in the professions of law and medicine, as well as in the fields of government administration and project management. *Best practice* refers to the most efficient and effective way of accomplishing a task, based on repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time. Best practice is *efficient* because it requires minimal amount of resources (that is, time and effort), and it is *effective* as it promises to deliver best results. In short, the term *best practice* is used to describe solid, evidence-based and state-of-the-art work in a particular field that has proven to lead reliably to a desired outcome.

In the field of education, 'best practice' in teaching and learning is defined as innovative, creative, research-informed and learner-oriented instructional practices that produce learners who are not only engaged and motivated in learning but also possess a high level of physical and psychological well-being. These state-of-the-art instructional practices should produce students who are active and independent in thinking and able to construct meanings from the lessons they receive. Hence, best practice in classrooms, whether it is at the primary, secondary or tertiary level of education, should reflect what the best theorising and research has to offer. In order to encourage the use of best practice in schools, many educational jurisdictions across the world are establishing standards for initial and continuing teacher education.

Establishing standards for initial and continuing teacher education plays an important role in ensuring that teachers are well trained, and have the necessary knowledge, dispositions and skills to provide quality education for students. Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom and many other jurisdictions have developed—or are developing—such standards, embedded with theories and principles drawn from

When I use the term *best practices* in the title and throughout this document, I would like it to be known that this is the definition I will be working from. The reason why I chose this description, as opposed to others, was because I felt it encapsulated so many aspects of what I wish to capture within this thesis. It also aligns with my personal teaching philosophy. Throughout this thesis, you will see much emphasis put on innovation, creativity, research-informed methods, and learner-oriented instruction. Even in the introduction, I begin to touch upon these core tenants. The blatant examples being: how I wish to put the student in the driver's seat (learner-oriented instruction), intend to thoroughly explore educational psychology

and trauma-informed models (research-informed methods), and then of course the summation of

this work being a syllabus based in these methods (innovation and creativity).

The other reason I chose this explanation of *best practice* is because of its focus

on student well-being. "Instructional practices that produce learners who are not only engaged

and motivated in learning but also possess a high level of physical and psychological well-being"

(Jaque 1). This concept of not only producing critical thinkers and motivated learners goes

hand-in-hand with our ability to also keep students safe, the concept at the core of my thesis.

j. Emotional & Psychological Abuse

"Non Physical abuse: a pattern of behavior in which one person deliberately and

repeatedly subjects another to nonphysical acts that are detrimental to behavioral and affective

functioning and overall mental well-being. Researchers have yet to formulate a universally

agreed-upon definition of the concept, but they have identified a variety of forms that emotional

abuse may take, including verbal abuse; intimidation and terrorization; humiliation and

degradation; exploitation; harassment; rejection, and withholding of affection; isolation; and

excessive control. Also called psychological abuse"("Therapy" par. 1).

Between this definition and the code of ethics set by the NEA, there is a blatant overlap.

That being clause number five "An educator Shall not intentionally expose the student to

embarrassment or disparagement" ("Code of Ethics for Educators" 3), and the above definition

that points to intimidation, humiliation, and degradation as acts that fall under emotional abuse.

Humiliation and embarrassment qualify as synonyms, as can disparagement and degradation.

Thus we can see how the National Educational Association wishes to ban emotional abuse from

the classroom. Not to mention clause number four as set by the NEA, " An educator Shall make

reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and

safety" ("Code of Ethics for Educators" 3) and the definition of emotional abuse, "nonphysical

acts that are detrimental to behavioral and affective functioning and overall mental

well-being"("Code of Ethics for Educators" 3). Emotional abuse is thus unethical within the

classroom and could serve as grounds for being let go from an educational position.

     Eventually, I found an article that specifically addressed emotional abuse within the

classroom that included working definitions. But, within the first five pages, I came to realize the

lack of research in emotional abuse within the classroom, specifically within the United States.

This was a major talking point at the beginning of the article and was explained by the author as

fear within the United States of insinuating that a teacher may be perpetuating abusive teaching

methods within the classroom. This was described as a specific sensitivity within the American

educational system, A harsh reality America has chosen not to face. This shocked me.

Researchers in Israel, Zimbabwe, Botswana, New Zealand, Egypt, and Romania have published

about this topic in-depth; so why had we not followed their lead and realized this could be an

important field of study? As I read the article, it became more and more clear that we do not

want to accept that there may be emotional abuse happening within the classroom in America.

"The topic of child abuse, as it was decades ago, is a controversial and unappealing one for

educators to discuss and confront. Furthermore, in most instances, students, parents, or teachers

who observe such abuse do not report it. As with other types of abuse, the teacher's colleagues

may hold the erroneous belief that their colleague is not capable of such abuse" (Aluede, Kenny,

McEachern 8). While this can be a difficult topic to study and approach from an unbiased

standpoint, studies from the countries listed above have come back with eye-opening results. For

example, in 2002 a study was conducted across an array of schools in Israel, where students were

interviewed and asked about their experiences; about one-third of this population reported having experienced some type of emotional abuse within the classroom.

In the article, *Emotional Abuse in the Classroom: Implications and Interventions for Counselors*, the authors create a working definition of emotionally abusive behavior within the classroom. "Despite the lack of generally accepted terminology and definitions, emotional abuse has been defined by some as the constant use of verbally abusive language to harshly criticize and denigrate a child and/or placing excessive demands on a child's performance, and/or withholding warmth and affection. Emotional abuse can deteriorate self-esteem and affect students' psychological development. However, O'Hagan (1993) has contended that emotional abuse and psychological abuse are not necessarily synonymous. He defined psychological abuse as "the sustained, repetitive, inappropriate behavior which damages, or substantially reduces, the creative and developmental potential of crucially important mental faculties and mental processes of a child; these include intelligence, memory, recognition, perception, attention, language, and moral development" (Alude, Kenny, McEachern).

When emotional abuse is present in the classroom: the educator is not following NEA ethical guidelines, has chosen not to create best practices within the space thus making learning more difficult, and they are most likely impacting students with trauma and causing toxic stress. From what we have learned about the brain and its reaction to trauma we know that this can affect a students' creativity and mental faculties. So when educators behave in an emotionally abusive manner how can we expect students to thrive within the classroom? If a student can no longer access their imagination and is experiencing anxiety their ability to perform or improve their craft has been reduced significantly. Of course, this is also exacerbated if the student is subjected to this repeatedly over a period of time, which can conclusively be deemed as Toxic

Stress. Ultimately, the employment of unethical or abusive behaviors as an educator could affect

a student's psychological development and well-being for the rest of their life.

CHAPTER 2:Trauma-Informed Teaching Models

a. Introduction

This chapter serves two purposes: summarizing studies that conclude that performers do indeed tend to come from more traumatic backgrounds, and three established trauma-informed teaching methods developed and researched outside of the performance classroom. Some models have only been tested with K-12 students, other models were used with college students within a range of disciplines.

b. Trauma and the Performer

I. STUDY SUMMARY:
Generators and Interpreters in a Performing Arts Population: Dissociation, Trauma, Fantasy Proneness, and Affective States

In this study, Paula Thomson, E. B. Keehn, and Thomas P. Gumpel outlined three working hypotheses that attempted to investigate the following: "Hypothesis 1: Generators and Interpreters would Show No Difference in Levels of Dissociation, Trauma History, Fantasy Proneness, or Affective Variability; Hypothesis 2: Higher Affective Variability would be Endorsed by Both Generators and Interpreters and it would be higher than in the Normed Population; and Hypothesis 3: Higher Dissociation Scores in Both Generator and Interpreter Populations would be Evidenced, But without Significant Findings in the Taxon Range" (Gumple, Keehn, Thomson 1). A pool of 130 artists from Canada and the United States (with varying ethnicities and life experiences) were divided into two groups: generators and interpreters. The artists deemed as generators were those who created from the ground up: writers, choreographers, music composers, and playwrights. The other group, the interpreters, were artists who interpreted work created by the generators: actors, dancers, opera singers, etc.

The study used four types of tests to discover whether those working in creative disciplines were more or less likely to experience dissociation, trauma, and fantasy at a level that would deem them pathological or non-pathological. The four tests administered were the Dissociative Experiences Scale (DES II), Inventory of Childhood Memories and Imaginings (ICMI), Trauma Event Questionnaire (TEQ), and Affective Neuroscience Personality Scale (ANPS).

The first test, the Dissociative Experiences Scale (DES II), was used to measure the occurrence and frequency of dissociative episodes. From these results, Thomson, Keehn, and Gumpel could then diagnose individuals within the selected sample with Dissociative Identity Disorder, otherwise known as DID. The test was measured by "A 28-item self-report measure that asked subjects to indicate the frequency of dissociative experiences such as (a) loss of memory for important periods in your life, (b) feeling that your body does not belong to you, or (c) becoming so absorbed in watching television or a movie that you are unaware of what is happening around you. (Gumple, Keehn, Thomson 9). Total scores were calculated by averaging the 28 items that had been tallied. The 5 subscales included: amnesia (8 items), absorption and imagination (8 items), depersonalization and derealization (6 items), imagination and changeability (10 items), and the taxometric scale (8 items) which differentiated pathological from non-pathological dissociative experiences" (Gumple, Keehn, Thomson 9).

The second test, *Inventory of Childhood Memories and Imaginings* (ICIM), was then used to measure the occurrence and frequency of fantasy proneness. "The ICMI, a self-report paper-and-pencil questionnaire, probed for current experiences and memories from childhood. Examples included: 'When I was a child I enjoyed fairy tales. At the present time I am very imaginative'; 'When I was a child I lived in a make-believe world'; 'As an adult, I still

occasionally live in a make-believe world. The test consisted of 52 dichotomously scored items.

The ICMI was scored by summing the scores" (Gumple, Kenny, Thomson 10).

The next test, the Trauma Event Questionnaire (TEQ), probed candidates for experienced

trauma. "A self-report, 11-item, dichotomously scored instrument assessed exposure to nine

different traumatic events: accidents, natural disasters, crime, child abuse, rape, adult abusive

experiences, witnessing death or mutilation of someone, being in a dangerous life-threatening

situation, and receiving news of an unexpected death of a loved one. The final two items probed

for any other traumatic event not listed, and for traumatic event(s) that were too difficult to

discuss with anyone" (Gumple, Kenny, Thomson 11). Unfortunately, Thomson, Keehn, and

Gumpel did end up using a different grouping of individuals for this test. "The TEQ was

administered to 34 undergraduate dance students with one week elapsed between test

administrations"(Gumple, Kenny, Thomson 11).

The last test administered was the Affective Neuroscience Personality Scale (ANPS).

"The ANPS had strong correlations to the Five-Factor Model of Personality (FFMP) created by

Goldberg" (Gumple, Kenny, Thomson 11), the five major factors being: anger, playfulness,

sadness, spirituality, and seeking.

In conclusion, "Hypothesis 1: Generators and Interpreters would Show No Difference in

Levels of Dissociation, Trauma History, Fantasy Proneness, or Affective Variability" (Gumple,

Kenny, Thomson 1), was proven incorrect by the fact that there were moderate correlations on

the ICMI, DES, and DES subscales for interpreters only. Making a moderate difference between

generators and interpreters. Further, there were no significant correlations between TEQ, DES,

and DES subscales, or on the ICMI, for interpreters or generators. Meaning, that certain tests

created a correlation that proved one result, while the correlation and grouping of other tests showed another result.

"Hypothesis 2: Higher Affective Variability would be Endorsed by Both Generators and Interpreters and it would be higher than in the Normed Population" (Gumple, Kenny, Thomson 11), was proven to be correct. Although "none of the subscales of the ANPS were statistically different between Generators and the Interpreters, the results did prove that these 130 candidates statistically differed from the normed group of college students. the seeking subscale, interpreters scored significantly lower than the normed group of college students generators scored significantly lower than the normed group, Similar results were found for the fear, care, play, and anger subscales, However, for the anger subscale, there were no statistically significant differences between the generators and the norm group. For the sadness and the spirituality subscales, both interpreters and generators scored significantly" (Gumple, Kenny, Thomson 12).

Hypothesis 3: Higher Dissociation Scores in Both Generator and Interpreter Populations would be Evidenced, But without Significant Findings in the Taxon Range. Actors had the highest DES-II scores out of all interpreters. Multiple analysis of variance was then performed for each of the five subscales of the DES-II. Although, The results of the omnibus test were nonsignificant. "A correlation analysis between the DES-II scales and the ICMI and between the DES-II and the TEQ revealed that there was a significant correlation between the DES-II scales and the ICMI at the moderate level. The ICMI scores of the total population concluded that both generators and interpreters have a moderate range of fantasy proneness. There was no significance between the DES-II and the TEQ, although many of the artists did report trauma. The most frequently endorsed item on the TEQ was item 8 (serious danger of losing a life), yet

item 4 (childhood abuse) was endorsed at a moderate to low rate" (Gumple, Keehn, Thomson 12).

Finally, Paula Thomson, E. B. Keehn, and Thomas P. Gumpel sat down to analyze their findings and figure out why the results may have appeared as they did. Overall the three noted that interpreters did score higher than generators on total dissociation. The three then wondered if dissociation was a key part of the creative process we do not yet understand. They also questioned if dissociation in this context can be argued as a therapeutic release, or if it shows pathological tendencies in this group of individuals. They also wondered if due to this, this population was better able to regulate their emotions.

II: STUDY SUMMARY:
Childhood Adversity and the Creative Experience in Adult Professional Performing Artists

Understanding The ACES TEST

As I continued my research into trauma, and specifically toxic stress, I began to see another type of psychological test that had recently come to the scientific forefront. That test being The Adverse Childhood Experiences, otherwise known as ACES. This test is a 10 part questionnaire that measures common traumatic experiences. Those who answer yes to more questions have higher ACES scores and thus have a more traumatic personal history. These scores tend to have a strong correlation to both mental and physical health as an individual ages. Overall, this quiz is used as an indication as to whether a specific individual's health is at risk. It is important to note that even if the results of an ACES test come back extremely high, that does not guarantee that that individual will suffer consequences to their health. Certain children develop resilience and thus traumatic childhood experiences may not affect them in the same way. The ACES test is composed of the following questions:

1. *Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often… Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?*

2. *Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often… Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?*

3. *Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever… Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? or Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?*

4. *Did you often or very often feel that … No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? or Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?*

5. *Did you often or very often feel that … You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?*

6. *Were your parents ever separated or divorced?*

7. *Was your mother or stepmother:*
   Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? or Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? or Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?

8. *Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?*

9. *Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?*

10. *Did a household member go to prison?*

("Brain Architecture")

Application of ACES in Study

For this study, 234 professional performers were gathered as the sample group. This group was composed of not only actors, but dancers, opera singers, directors, and musicians. The study used self-reporting to measure: adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), the experience of creativity, dispositional flow, trait anxiety, internalized shame, fantasy, and total adult and childhood traumatic events. From these results, the sample was then broken into three main groups: those who answered no to all of the ACES questions, those who answered yes to one to three of the ACES questions, and those that answered yes to four or more ACES questions. Those artists within the third grouping (with four or more ACES questions answered as yes) "had significantly stronger creative experiences related to distinct creative processing, absorption, and a transformational sense of self and the world. They were also more fantasy-prone, shame-based, anxious, and experienced more cumulative past traumatic events. Although the high ACE group experienced greater negative effects, they also endorsed positive creative performance experiences" ("Brain Architecture"). With results like these, it became more and more clear that students within the acting classroom would most likely be walking into the room bearing trauma and the

negative effects of trauma. Although the individuals within this study still endorsed careers within the arts, I believe that this group would still be likely to experience more negative effects at a higher frequency if they were placed in an environment with instructors who perpetuated toxic stress. Additional toxic stress compounded on top of preexisting childhood trauma seems to be the perfect equation for triggering past experiences, thus causing an instructor to potentially deal with an emotionally escalated student, something an educator should avoid at all costs. It is not a teacher's job to help a student once they have reached this state. However, I would argue that an educator can use class time at the beginning of the semester to discuss techniques of how to return to a grounded state.

c . Exploring The TIPE Model

Researchers Tom Brunzell, Helen Stokes, and Lea Waters set out to learn more about trauma-informed teaching in schools in 2016 and yielded the study, *TRAUMA-INFORMED FLEXIBLE LEARNING: CLASSROOMS THAT STRENGTHEN REGULATORY ABILITIES.* The three held a 13-week qualitative study, at the beginning of the school year, with students ranging from kindergarten to seniors in high school. The school utilized for the experiment was specified as an outer-metropolitan suburb in Australia with a total population of 1900 students. The school was chosen due to the teachers, administration, and the school therapist reporting that they had an abnormally large population of traumatized students. 42% of the students reported English as their second language and many came from very low socioeconomic homes. 9 teachers were selected throughout the school to implement trauma-informed teaching using the TIPE model in their classroom to observe and record the results. The teachers chosen were between 23-38, seven teachers identified as female, and two identified as male. "Procedure

Permission to conduct the research was granted through the University of Melbourne Human

Ethics Advisory Committee and the State Government Victoria Department of Education and

Training before the research being conducted. The procedure included a series of longitudinal

interviews conducted with the nine participants. Interviews for this study were conducted over

thirteen weeks. Participants each took part in three interviews, conducted as group interviews.

Interviews, conducted face-to-face with participants, were audio-recorded and fully transcribed"

(Brunzell, Stokes, Waters 225).

      First and foremost, understanding the TIPE model is crucial. "According to the TIPE

model, the first priority of teacher focus is to ensure a predictable classroom environment that

nurtures strong regulatory capabilities for trauma-affected students" (Brunzell, Stokes, Waters

226). Subthemes are at the core of the TIPE model, allowing teachers to better learn about how

to create, implement, and reflect on the classroom interventions used to potentially regulate

trauma-affected students. The four subthemes studied were rhythm, self-regulation, mindfulness,

and de-escalation.

      The first subtheme of rhythm was used as a device to structure the classroom

environment and schedule the frequency of trauma intervention activities. "The teachers set out

to do three tasks: "(a) proactively using rhythm in the form of "brain breaks"; (b) applying

rhythm as a form of triage intervention to address heightened or resisting students; and (c)

specifically focusing on heart rate as a rhythmic form of body regulation"(Brunzell, Stokes,

Waters 226). "Trauma and chronic stress exposure for children can have significant impacts on

the body's ability to regulate the arousal response, including the basic body functions of blood

pressure, body temperature, and heart rate. Children who have experienced acute trauma may

have a resting heart rate that far exceeds the desired 60 to 80 beats per minute as a result of

continuous activation and reactivation of their stress response systems" (Brunzell, Stokes, Waters 226). The teachers chose to periodically offer students "brain breaks" that were between 2-5 minutes and consisted of mindfulness and meditation activities. Teachers lead students by focusing their attention on one point. Some teachers asked students to listen and observe all the sounds in the classroom, other teachers did a guided meditation with students to some of their favorite locations (beach, forest, room, etc.). Another activity implemented by teachers was, "silent ball" (e.g., a game where a ball was thrown from student to student, using nonverbal cues such as eye contact and hand gestures; students compete as a class to beat their prior score of successful ball-passes without the ball dropping to the floor)" (Brunzell, Stokes, Waters 226). Some other implemented strategies were: clapping call-and-response games; and Brain Gym physical activities.

The Second subtheme was self-regulation. Teachers utilized two approaches: "teaching students about their own stress response with strategies to shift their arousal and using specific self-regulation tools to help students identify their own ability to self-regulate and identify their readiness for learning" (Brunzell, Stokes, Waters 228). Teachers can connect and educate students by explaining how sensory experiences may affect their mood, thus leading by example. Reminding students that it is ok to feel a heightened sense of irritation when hungry, or feel fear when a door is behind their back. Normalizing these types of experiences allows students to start focusing on their own triggers. By drawing awareness to these types of factors students can now learn how to take accountability for their own emotional state. Through this work, teachers reported they were better able to connect with their students and found that students were able to successfully articulate their emotions over the course of the experiment.

The next subtheme explored was mindfulness, which ties directly into the concept of "brain breaks" discussed above. While rhythm dictated the frequency at which teachers implemented these strategies, mindfulness was the technique used to quiet students' brains and refocus them. As explained above many focused on breathing, sounds, observation, and led meditation. "In a recent evidence-based review, statistically significant effects of mindfulness and meditation interventions in schools [...] conclude that meditation positively increases student success by increasing cognitive functioning and emotional regulation" (Brunzell, Stokes, Waters 230). Yet again, the teachers reported positive results in their students and visible results.
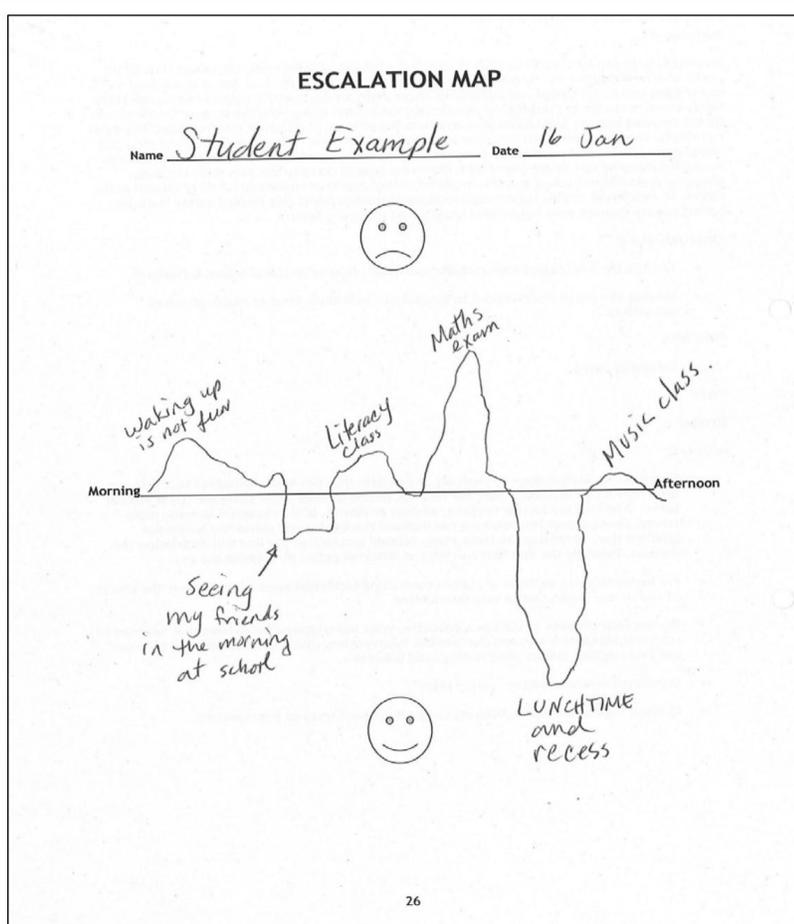
The last subtheme was de-escalation. These strategies were used to help lead a student out of an emotionally escalated state and to help students understand their internal patterns when it came to emotional escalation. The three strategies used were: (a) learning about de-escalation, (b) creating and using de-escalation maps, and (c) designing individualized safety plans with and for students. "A teacher can make proactive steps towards de-escalation by creating a calm, routine, and

predictable environment; consistently monitoring and identifying aroused stress states; and implementing interventions to maintain optimal states" (Brunzell,Stokes, Waters 231). The teachers first started by explaining emotional escalation and some of the strategies they use when they feel as though they are in a heightened state. The second strategy of mapping emotions allowed students to better understand when they were most likely to become escalated. Above is an example of a map used by a student, found on page 232 of the study. From these activities, yet again, teachers found that students were better able to articulate what they were feeling and learn how to self-regulate.

Overall this study proved to be successful based on the teachers' interviews, observation, and reflection. All four subthemes helped teachers create a space that better served their traumatized students.

d. Ecology Based Model

In an article written by Shantel D. Crosby in 2015, Crosby goes into great detail about creating a classroom environment that helps students thrive despite the trauma they may bring into the room. The trauma-informed method she is proposing is entirely based on ecology, starting at a micro-level of personal relations and dynamics and moving out to a macro level where she discusses the impacts of cultural changes and legislation passed.

"Ecological theory views human development and behavior as the product of various interacting systems. Individual behavior is described as "a function of the interaction of the person's traits and abilities with the environment. As individuals develop, they are not only influenced by their unique biological and psychological characteristics, but also by the family system, school, community, and larger social system that surrounds them. This environment forms the ecosystem, consisting of five distinct levels: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem,

macrosystem, and chronosystem" (Crosby 1). The core belief of this system is within the train of thought that nurture is stronger than nature. By nurturing a safe environment, students are far more likely to remain safe, versus assuming that trauma and triggers are solely based on a student's biological makeup.

The microsystem is the most intimate of these five distinct levels and accounts for children's direct social interactions. Some examples of interpersonal relationships that exist for a child/student at this level are parent and child relationships, teacher and child relationships, and relationships between peers.

The next distinct level is the mesosystem. "The Mesosystem refers to the relationships and interactions between the multiple microsystems that exist in one's life; for example, parent-teacher communication, school–peer interaction" (Crosby 1). Essentially, the relationships the child or student makes, turn into complex relationships and systems between not only themselves and that one person, but between all parties involved.

The exosystem is the level where we begin to see this model changing from interpersonal relationships and dynamics into the impact of policy. "The exosystem does not directly interact with the individual, but has indirect influence by affecting the individual's microsystems; for example, school policies, teacher access to professional development" (Crosby 1).

From here we move into the fourth distinct level, the macrosystem. "The Macrosystem serves as the greater cultural context of the aforementioned systems, including influential legislative policies, as well as cultural perceptions of socioeconomic status, race, and gender" (Crosby 1). This level is bound to change and shift as a student begins to mature and become more aware of life outside their bubble. As a child, this may not have much effect on the student, but by the time they have reached college, the macrosystem plays a large role in the classroom.

Last but not least we have the chronosystem which, "refers to development throughout the life course and the influence of time on one's development. As individuals age, they may encounter life events that alter the way in which they interact within these systems" (Crosby 1). Living through a traumatic event, such as a natural disaster, is a great example of how your chronosystem may shift and change throughout your life.

I. Microsystem Practices

The Microsystem is the easiest way for an educator to begin creating a classroom that could be referred to as a *Safe Space*. Coincidentally, it is also the only level of the model described above that functions entirely on interaction with the student whereas the other levels begin to explore the container in which that communication takes place. Within this level educators are asked to employ five tasks while interacting with students, using the acronym CAPPD: remain Calm, be Attuned, stay Present, be Predictable, and Don't let children's emotions escalate your own. To remain attuned, educators are asked to focus on two behavioral elements: tone and body language. "Educators should also be emotionally present, exhibit unconditional positive regard for students, and facilitate the growth of strong relationships to correct previously formed negative associations and improve student styles of interpersonal connection" (Crosby 1). Being able to create a calm and regulated work environment for students is key, and being able to maintain that atmosphere is equally as important.

Power struggles between teachers and students are not advised. Students thrive inside what they perceive to be democratic, versus what they perceive to be a dictatorship. "Power struggles between teachers and students are regarded as extremely counterproductive to student success and well-being, potentially furthering the feelings of oppression experienced by students who have already been disempowered by their trauma. On the other hand, negotiating,

compromising, and providing opportunities for students to make choices can give students a healing sense of ownership and control over their environment" (Crosby 1). For students to have a positive and effective education within the classroom educators must put them in the driver's seat. Classrooms that hold little to no space for the student to share opinions and perspectives can create a toxic environment wh

Creating ritual and structure is the last hallmark of best educational practices within the microsystem. Creating predictability for students can help them perceive safety. Their world becomes more stable by doing this and allows them to feel more in control.

II. Mesosystem Practices

Trauma-informed practices within the Mesosystem tend to involve the power of modeling positive behaviors, clear communication, and trustworthy relationships. When a student has witnessed or been part of a traumatic event, it may become increasingly difficult to get them to trust both their teachers and their peers. By modeling behavior that suggests that they are safe and have autonomy, these students are better able to develop a rapport with others in the classroom. This is also the level where an educator may intervene if they witness any negative student interactions or relationships.

Above the Mesosystem was described as, *complex relationships and systems between not only themselves and that one person, but between all parties involved*, meaning that relationships between guardian and educator are important; the relationship between school therapist and teacher is important, et cetera. Ultimately, the educator must see and recognize the importance of all of the relationships a student creates inside and outside the school/classroom and make an effort to create the best relationships possible with these people. Knowing what is happening with a student daily in the lunch line may be affecting the student just as much or more than the

relationship you have formed with that student. At the college level when discussing performance, it's important for acting, voice, and movement teachers to have a relationship and open dialogue about students. It's important for educators to note the relationships between students, and to create relationships with all students. This level of the model focuses on interpersonal systems and the awareness of them.

III.   Exosystem Practices

The Exosystem is where rules and regulations surrounding trauma are enforced by a department or institution. For example, perhaps a teacher reads about the microsystem and realizes that implementing a daily warm-up for students creates a sense of ease. The educator then recommends that the school should consider making some type of a daily warm-up policy; that educator would then approach colleagues and students and ask them if they believed this was a policy worth implementing. If the school/department decides to create this policy, then the teacher has now made a trauma-informed policy in the students' exosystem.

This is also the level where understanding existing constructs surrounding trauma-informed teaching is necessary. "guidelines for student confidentiality, mandated reporting, and cross-system collaboration. Staff trauma training is another part of creating a trauma-informed school climate. Professional development on this topic can make teachers and support staff aware of the impact of family violence, legal considerations with traumatized students, ways to help students interact appropriately in the classroom, and many other critical skills for engaging this student population" (Crosby 1). Making sure the entire educational team at a specific institution is on the same page when it comes to a student is of the utmost importance. This is so that all students can receive the same care and understanding in every classroom they enter.

IV.   **Macrosystem Practices**

Last but not least, we reach the level where we need to be aware of laws and legislation passed, as well as the culture we are a part of. "It is undeniable that school social workers and educational staff face overwhelming demands in their workplaces. Their work can be further impeded when school districts, policies, and legislation do not actively support the implementation of new promising practices. For example, universal social and emotional learning (SEL) programs have been associated with improvements in academic outcomes and reductions in emotional distress among students. Still, school districts do not always possess the capacity to implement such programs" (Crosby 1).

Having an awareness of what type of decisions are being made at this level, and figuring out how you can raise your voice to positively affect change is crucial. If you want the safest and best education for your students or children, it is key that you are willing and ready to support a cause.

This is also the level where we must look internally as educators and question our own cultural biases which could lead to stereotyping. It is important that educators constantly challenge these assumptions and preferences and actively work to become as unbiased as possible.

e. Exploring the TIC Model

When learning about the TIC model, I came across a very interesting article written by Lisa D. Butler entitled "Practicing What We Teach: Trauma-Informed Educational Practice." Although the article specifically addresses the education of social workers, it was refreshing to find a model geared directly towards the education of college students, especially those who are repeatedly exposed to traumatizing material.

Dramatic literature bombards students with traumatic experiences; the plotlines of plays often focus on traumatic experiences, since they mirror the true human experience. Students are asked to mentally and physically reenact and fully embody the circumstances of the character. Many works are riddled with scenes that discuss or depict rape, physical violence, domestic disputes, and much more. In this way, our students can relate almost directly to social workers learning how to help process and cope with such events.

"In addition, given that 66–94% of college students report exposure to one or more traumatic event, approximately 9–12% of freshman meet criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder, and many more may suffer subsyndromal symptoms, it also follows that many, if not most, students enrolled in clinical training programs report trauma histories. Because theatre students and repeatedly exposed to traumatic material in their coursework and field placements and report that both are highly stressful, both aspects of clinical training, therefore, have the potential not only to vicariously traumatize but also to retraumatize students (i.e., reactivate trauma-related symptoms that may be signaled by exposure to material reminiscent of an earlier traumatic event). This is worrisome because, as we have argued elsewhere, retraumatization can impact learning and educational achievement" (Butler, Carello 1).

Although work in the pre-professional performance classroom may be quite different from the clinical education of social workers, I believe that the texts we explore within these classes may be just as potent, thus making them just as easy to traumatize or retraumatize students.

The TIC model is an approach developed by Harris and Fallot in 2001. The model focuses on how to become a "*trauma-informed*" educator and asks for all teachers to, "understand the ways in which violence, victimization, and other traumatic experiences may

have impacted the lives of the individuals involved and to apply that understanding to the design

of systems and provision of services so they accommodate trauma survivors' needs and are

consonant with healing and recovery" (Butler, Carello 1). The model is based on five principles

that are fundamental to creating and sustaining a safe classroom. Those five principles are,

"ensuring safety, establishing trustworthiness, maximizing choice, maximizing collaboration, and

prioritizing empowerment" (Butler, Carello 1). These are principles I believe should be used

within all classrooms in academia and that the most important of the principles is ensuring safety.

This model is also highly influenced by many new disability-informed teaching methods,

which have shifted into student-centered learning and putting the student in the driver's seat of

their education. The core belief behind this helps educators "promote the role of education in

creating a more socially just and egalitarian society" (Butler, Carello 1).

One of the practices central to the model is reaccessing materials presented in class and

the importance of trigger warnings and allowing students to either leave the room or not work on

certain types of materials. This can involve either vocalizing or offering students a written

content warning. In theatre, this also involves students having the autonomy to tell the educator

when they are uncomfortable with material and wish for a new scene or monologue. But for

practices like this to be successful, the educator must let students know at the beginning of the

semester this is an option available to them.

The next practice discussed involves instructor behavior, which, "(even if inadvertent)

may be activating for students. One way to diminish this risk is to avoid engaging in minimizing

or being dismissive of student concerns, or permitting threats, ridicule, or displays of power,

impatience, or even disappointment. Using neutral language and a strengths-based perspective in

communication, including in all aspects of feedback and grading, can also address this risk"

(Butler, Carello 1). For example, educators should not make remarks about a student based on appearance, gender, sexuality, religion, etc. Comments regarding a student's identity are inappropriate and are made far too often in the performance classroom. Making sure criticism is given in a constructive manner versus a destructive or hurtful manner is also important. It is important to remember that modeled behavior in college classes is what students bring into the real world. It is never appropriate, no matter the occupation, to completely lose your cool and ability to regulate your emotions. If an educator finds themself in this state I encourage them to walk away from the issue and reproach it at another time.

You may notice as well that the quote above from the article written by Lisa D. Butler almost directly corresponds to the code of ethics set forth by the NEA discussed in the 1 first chapter, especially the fourth and fifth clauses.

4. The educator shall make a reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.

5. The educator shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement.

Engaging in power struggles with students does not make for an effective trauma-informed classroom. If anything, it strips a student of their autonomy and disempowers their thoughts and questions and can create a hostile classroom. Due to this students may become afraid to present or perform.

Another principle, closely related to the sub-theme of de-escalation in the TIPE model, is awareness of student behavior. In this model, educators are asked to note relationships between students and notice if students are helping to emotionally activate other students within the

classroom. When these tactics are employed it can be easier to keep students safe and recognize who can help each other and who can hurt each other. In theatre classrooms this is extremely important when pairing students in scene work; it is not in anyone's best interest to pair students that do not have matching or complementary temperaments. Although, there is something to be said about learning to work with actors with different temperaments than your own. Theatre is so deeply based on collaboration that in the educational system it is in an educator's best interest to facilitate and teach a student how to remain professional in these situations. Teachers should in this case exemplify ways for students to effectively communicate and learn how to emotionally take care of themselves if tempers end up running high.

This model also discusses the importance of atmosphere and environment. "For example, abrupt changes in the physical characteristics of the classroom (such as in lighting and sound levels) may be startling for those living with some degree of hyperarousal symptoms. Similarly, instructors who walk through classrooms may inadvertently loom behind students, which may be disturbing for those with an assault history. In addition, some students may have special trauma-related needs. Veterans may want their back to the wall or other special conditions to enhance their sense of security. Soliciting student feedback and suggestions for improving the safety and comfort of the classroom may help identify and address such specific needs and accommodations" (Butler, Carello 1).

Last, but not least, this model puts high importance on the teaching of self-care, so students can leave the classroom and take the necessary steps to de-escalate for themselves. "As instructors and professionals, we believe in teaching, modeling, and practicing self-care at all opportunities. In fact, we typically teach a brief self-care module in our classes. We also recommend, at minimum, including a self-care statement on course syllabi that emphasizes the

importance of and the instructor's expectations with respect to student self-care, as well as

providing links to resources, such as our school's own self-care website" (Butler, Carello 1).

f. IN CONCLUSION: Review of Trauma-informed teaching models

The emphasis on creating a safe atmosphere seems to be the largest overlapping theme

between all three of the models examined. The teaching of mindfulness, de-escalation and

self-care also seem to be extremely present in all three as well.

The last study, the Butler Study, was able to give some great statistics on the trauma

experienced by students at the college level, as well as how to avoid traumatizing and

retraumatizing students. Both of these aspects perhaps are most applicable to the performance

classroom in academia. More than anything else, this article showed me how the teacher is the

one facilitating a safe space and that work should not fall directly upon the students themselves.

What I found most interesting was learning about the TIPE model. As a substitute teacher

for three years in Portland, Oregon, I was entirely unaware as to why I was being asked to

implement strategies like "brain breaks," but now this makes so much more sense. I distinctly

remember working in a Title I elementary school and struggling to facilitate these interventional

activities. I also remember that a particular school had a room called the "wolf den," specifically

designed for students to recharge and de-escalate. At the time I was confused as to why a student

would be allowed to leave the classroom to read quietly and engage in games.; now I understand

and am so thankful the school was able to implement these trauma-informed methods and create

an easily accessible safe space for their students. I also recognize that, even at the college level,

allowing students the opportunity to leave the classroom when feeling emotionally activated or

in fear of retraumatization is important and necessary.

CHAPTER 3: Application To Higher Education

a. Introduction

In this chapter, I aim to suss out the difference between teaching, therapy, and drama therapy. Once I have accomplished giving each specific vocation a definition, and have compared and contrasted all three, I will then consolidate the information in Chapter 2 and synthesize my observations to create six core tenets of a trauma-informed performance classroom.

b. The Line Between Therapy and Teaching

In my experience as a student within the pre-professional performance classroom, I have heard one adage over and over again: "I am a teacher, not a therapist." While I recognize the importance of this statement, and the fine line I am walking between teaching and therapy, I believe that the article *Trauma-informed Flexible Learning: Classrooms that strengthen Regulatory Abilities*, by Tom Brunzell, Helen Stokes, and Lea Waters, sums up the situation perfectly. "Although teachers are not therapists, they often find themselves acting as front-line trauma workers for young people who do not have access to clinical care" (Brunzell, Stokes, Waters 3). Although educators are not trained therapists, it is the educator's responsibility to keep students safe. After reading about trauma-informed educational models, I believe that in the acting classroom educators tend to step into the role of therapist more than these models would advise. This chapter is devoted to defining and understanding the difference between therapy, teaching, and trauma-informed models, and how they can be applied to academia.

c. Defining Therapy

 The American Psychological Association defines therapy as "...help[ing] people of all ages live happier, healthier and more productive lives. Psychologists apply research-based

techniques to help people develop more effective habits. There are several approaches to

psychotherapy, including cognitive-behavioral, interpersonal and psychodynamic, among others,

that help people work through their problems. Psychotherapy is a collaborative treatment based

on the relationship between an individual and a psychologist. A psychologist provides a

supportive environment that allows you to talk openly with someone who is objective, neutral,

and nonjudgmental. Most therapy focuses on individuals, although psychotherapists also work

with couples, families, and groups.

The right match when choosing a psychologist is important. Most psychologists agree

that an important factor in determining whether to work with a particular psychologist is your

level of personal comfort with that person" (American Psychological Association 1).

While many overlapping traits might benefit both a teacher as well as a therapist in the

definition above, I would like to highlight some specific clauses in this statement where there is a

notable line between what therapists are expected to do and what teachers should not do. A

therapist *"helps people work through their problems,"* an educator should not try to solve

students' interpersonal problems, nor is it their business to help solve yours. Relationships within

the classroom need boundaries to be successful.

The APA definition also gives us the sense that the relationship between therapist and

client is intimate, a safe place where anything could and should be said. The bond you create

with your students should not be one where they rehash all the details of their life to you and you

help them. The seventh bullet point in the code of ethics as set forth by the NEA is, "I shall not

use professional relationships with students for private advantage." This clause outlines the

importance of keeping your personal life and your student's personal life separate. You should

not be trying to create *"personal comfort with that person",* that makes them feel as if they could

confide in you on a deep level. Nor should the educator pry, inside of classwork, or outside of classwork to learn about a student's personal life. Of course, if a student decides to confide in an educator or report abuse of any sort, even when you have created boundaries, then the situation is entirely different and requires you to report what they have said to you. Truly it is in the educator prompting the student that is problematic.

When acting teachers direct a scene or monologue in class they are often known to ask probing questions such as, "Has anyone ever broken your heart?" or "Have you ever been through something truly traumatic?" These questions seem far closer to therapy than the trauma-informed teaching models suggested in the previous chapter. Meisner repetition exercises were created to emotionally provoke your scene partner, and feel closer to therapy and retraumatization than the approaches I will suggest at the end of this chapter.

d. Defining Teaching

In the article "Concept of Teaching," Isola Rajagopalan offers the following definition: "When a person imparts information or skills to another, it is common to describe the action as teaching. Imparting may mean sharing experiences or communicating information, for instance, lectures. Teaching is regarded as both an art and a science. As an art, it lays stress on the imaginative and artistic abilities of the teacher in creating a worthwhile situation in the classroom to enable students to learn. As a science, it sheds light on the logical, mechanical, or procedural steps to be followed to attain an effective achievement of goals. Different educationists hold different ideas regarding the concept of teaching" (Rajagopalan 1).

Ultimately your goal as an educator is to "impart information and skills." In the performance classroom, this line can become blurred quite easily since the material covered is a reflection of real-life in all its emotionality and physicality, and Rajaopalan's definition

recognizes teaching as both an art and science. They shed light on the importance of the "Imaginative and artistic abilities of the teacher in creating a worthwhile situation in the classroom to enable students to learn" (Rajagopalan 1), and this provides us with a connection to the ecology-based model investigated in the last chapter. Educators are responsible for creating a safe environment, which means being able to safely facilitate students who bring mental illness and trauma into the room with them when they arrive.

But What about Dramatherapy?

When looking at the definition of therapy, it was hard for me not to recognize the overlaps between being an educator and being a therapist. While there are massive differences between the two fields, there were also enough common factors to warrant further investigation into dramatherapy. I was curious to learn if this field could help develop my pedagogical approach to actor training. One of the main differences I noticed was that theatre and actor training is a performative practice, whereas dramatherapy is a practice created for the sole purpose of healing. Yet, both use theatre as a way of holding a mirror to nature and exploring real-life relationships and situations, in this way there is indeed an overlap. Educators must make sure they are helping facilitate an actor's experience while embodying a role and leading them in how to go in and out of an emotional state safely. Educators should not be focusing on the healing aspect, because this leads a teacher to practice far closer to healing.

In the "Handbook of Dramatherapy," the practice is defined as: "The word therapy is derived from the greek, meaning 'healing'. So 'psychotherapy' is the healing of the mind and 'dramatherapy' is healing through drama. Dramatherapy is a discipline in its own right with its own professional body and research."
(Emunah 15).

From this definition, I can definitively say that I do not believe that the role of an educator in collegiate theatre is to attempt any type of healing. Nor do I believe a student should be readily attempting to use the classroom as a place to heal. But, I wondered if the therapeutic process and framework of dramatherapy could be of any help. According to Renee Emunah, author of the book "Acting For Real; Drama Therapy Process, Technique, and Performance," dramatherapy is based on five main pillars, as follows:

1) *The healthful if not essential value of play*

2) *The liberation afforded by acting*

3) *The need for laboratory space to rehearse, review, preview, and experiment with real life*

4) *The emotionally and somatically based opportunity to dramatically revisit, grapple with, and heal deep-seated wounding*

5) *The containing, transcendent, and integrative power of dramatic ritual*

While some of these core values couldn't be further from the type of environment an educator should aim to create, many offered possibilities for more exploration. Pillars one and two absolutely can be explored in any drama classroom. The use of play will be one of the key elements used in the next chapter, where all of my research will be synthesized into choosing and creating an acting trajectory based on already existing methodologies.

Liberation is also a value that I believe can be embraced within the pre-professional acting classroom. Truthfully, I immediately associate liberation with joy. In my introduction, I distinctly mention the need to spark joy in our students. Liberation from day-to-day life is a way of finding joy.

The third and fourth clauses apply more to therapy than they do to education. I think it could be unethical to bring these frameworks into any setting other than a therapy session. The

phrase "rehearsing, reviewing, previewing, and experimenting with real life," makes me believe

there is a certain amount of honesty and intimacy that would be inappropriate within the

classroom. As an untrained mental healthcare worker, I believe it's important not to dive too

deeply into work that mirrors the real life of the student lest they become emotionally activated;

an educator may not have the tools or resources to help them in the way a therapist can. I believe

that "...dramatically revisiting, grappling with, and healing deep-seated wounding," falls into the

same category.

Out of all the clauses, I believe the fifth is the most applicable to the theatre classroom. In

the TIC model, the importance of ritual is emphasized as a way of empowering students and

creating a sense of safety. There is some overlap between dramatherapy and trauma-informed

teaching methods.

f. The Dramatherapy Trajectory & Curriculum

The trajectory and curriculum I will be sharing with you in this section of the text are

traditionally used in a group therapy setting. This setting is usually one where theatre is taught by

a trained drama therapist and then explored by a group. Due to the nature of this process, I

believe it deserves further investigation.

Similar to the five core pillars of dramatherapy, the dramatherapy process is also based

upon five phases. The phases being: dramatic play, scene work, role play, culminating enactment,

and dramatic ritual. Some of these phases we have discussed before and recognized their

importance in all acting classrooms. Other phases, such as role-play or culminating enactment,

may be inappropriate outside the realm of therapy.

"The first phase lays the foundation for work that is to follow. A non-threatening, playful,

and engaging ambiance is established. Processes include versions of creative drama,

improvisation, interactive techniques, and theatre games" (Emunah 8). Play is a concept I've encountered time and time again when attempting to create a trauma-informed teaching model for the academic acting classroom. Play can be used as a tool to create a safe space and strengthen relationships within the space. It is used in dramatherapy as a tool to "generate spontaneity and foster relationships and interactions" (Emunah 8).

*"*Phase Two progresses from the spontaneous play and structured dramatic techniques of Phase One to sustain dramatic scenes, composed of more developed roles and interactions. The primary dramatic process in this phase is scene work, which is typically improvised" (Emunah 9).

If the initial goal of any acting instructor is to create a safe space and caring community, perhaps scene work is the next necessary phase. Moving from improvisatory dramatic play to improvised scenes seems like a pretty seamless transition. On a very basic level, this is the foundation of Sandford Meisner's work and the trajectory his work follows (which will be explored in the next chapter).

"In contrast to psychodrama, in which protagonists play themselves in their real-life situations, the scene work in phase two involves playing fictional roles and scenarios, allowing greater role distance and less immediate self-disclosure. Enacting roles might entail inhabiting a variety of characters, though the focus in the integrative five-phase model is less on character development and more on emotional dynamics, including expressing a wide range of emotions, experiencing diverse relationships and interactions, and accessing dormant parts of oneself" (Emunah 9). This quote gives us an even deeper understanding of what is to come in the dramatherapy process. During this phase, scene work is being used as a tool to explore the character's perspective. Dramatherapy, from this point on, heads down a path of self-exploration

and self awareness. Although any actor must explore the self and practice self-awareness, it is important not to put a student in a space where they either feel pressured to share personal information or where an educator pries into their personal life.

"Phase Three is marked by the shifting of the dramatizations from the imaginary to the actual: clients are now ready to use the dramatic medium to explore situations in their lives. Current dilemmas, conflicts, challenges, and relationship issues and examined in action"(Emunah 11). Without a shadow of a doubt, phase three is not appropriate in the average acting classroom. While I recognize the power that reenactment can have, and the magnitude of the realizations an actor can come to about their personal life through the art form, inviting a student's personal life into the room invites opportunities for unexpected emotional activation, which could create an unsafe environment in the room. Without a degree or certification in dramatherapy, educators are inadequately prepared to help students de-escalate from these heightened emotional states.

"The increased level of awareness of role and emotional patterns achieved in Phase Three ushers in scenes of greater emotional depth and significance. Phase Four is marked by the shift from concrete, present-day matters to core issues in clients' lives" (Emunah 13). Phase Four, entitled *Culminating Enactment,* goes even further into exploring a patient's internal conflicts. This is not safe for the average student in a classroom setting, so phase four will also be discarded when creating a trauma-informed teaching model for performance classrooms.

"After the climatic, culminating scenes of Phase Four (the duration of which widely varies), a treatment series gradually begins to come to a close. This closure is in itself an important developmental process, facilitating the integration of the therapeutic process made in preceding phases. The work of Phase Five assists clients in transporting the changes made within

the context of drama therapy into the outside world. The multiple complex feelings regarding termination are explored. Phase Five is about assimilation, transition, and closure" (Emunah 15). From my exploration thus far, I have come to realize the importance of ritual for students and the sense of ease and empowerment that they can establish within the classroom. The description above leads me to believe that this phase is more based on how to close a dramatherapy session or series. Though I do find closure for any class, may it be the end of the session or the conclusion of the course, important. I also believe that the integration of ritual can be even more prominent.

"The Five Phases are best viewed not as rigid entities but as a formulation for the gradual unfolding and progression of a drama therapeutic journey. The phases are often flexible and often overlapping. The inherent flexibility and scope of possibilities within the model lead it to be broadly applicable; the model is suited to work with any population or person" (Emunah 17).

Overall it seems as if there are some applicable core beliefs and phases that dramatherapy has to offer. If we use the model explored above and take into consideration that the framework is more flexible than rigid, there is a fair argument that some of these phases can be implemented into the standard collegiate performance classroom.

g. Application to Academia

Now that I have successfully defined both therapy and teaching, it's time to examine the models approached in Chapter two and decide what is or isn't helpful in higher education performance classrooms. Below are six core beliefs I have developed through this research that the trauma-informed teacher should be implementing in the collegiate performance classroom.

I: Environment

After defining trauma, learning the science behind trauma, investigating three trauma-informed teaching models, and defining both teaching and therapy; one factor has seemed to appear over and over again, and that is the importance of creating a safe environment for students. This can be as simple as awareness of sensory factors, (i.e. lighting, noise levels, temperature, etc.), as well as being cognizant of student behaviors by monitoring body language and vocal tone. In the first chapter, where we explored the neuroscience of trauma, these indicators were highly important. If a student brings trauma into the classroom from elsewhere, something as simple as an upsetting environmental factor may trigger them. Taking the time to get to know students, and allowing them time to work as an ensemble and get to know each other, is key in creating a safe environment. The question of environment can also be complicated: knowing university policy inside and out, fighting for changes that help your students to have the best experience possible. Creating a safe environment means practicing self-awareness and making sure you aren't carrying unnecessary negative emotions into the room as an educator. It also means that you as the educator need to have a leadership position, while students can still hold autonomy. The ideal educator should wish to create a democracy, not a dictatorship.

II: Mindfulness

In the TIPE model, mindfulness is one of the four main pillars and is discussed in detail. I believe many educators in collegiate theatre already focus on this principle but remain unaware that it can be a great way to prevent trauma within the classroom.

A set warm-up that involves mindfulness can put a student at ease, and allow the student to walk into class knowing what to expect. By setting this expectation, students will show up empowered and feeling safe knowing the situation they are walking into. Activities such as yoga already have a prominent place within the performance classroom. Giving your students an extra moment to take in the sensory information the room has to offer may deepen this practice and lead them to a place where they are completely present.

On a scientific level, yoga is also great for the brain. Breath techniques as developed for yoga, quite often are recommended to people diagnosed with PTSD. By recentering the breath, one can begin to alleviate the sensitive amygdala that may be trapped in a state of fight or flight. Not only can breathing techniques create some structure and expectations at the top of the class, but can also very openly be recognized as a technique taught to students for situations where they need to emotionally de-escalate. On many levels, mindfulness has extreme value in the pre-professional performance classroom.

III: Play

Dramatic play is the first phase in the drama therapy process. The rationale behind this is that starting students from a place of discovery and exploration will ultimately establish a sense of safety more quickly than if students were thrown directly into monologue work. Play is a great way to begin creating a safe space through the exploration of ensemble and team-building activities. Setting a foundation of play mitigates any toxic, combative influences. Play sparks joy and curiosity, which ultimately only serves your students as they continue through the course.

IV: Frequency

Although the TIPE model has predominantly been explored for use in K-12 classrooms, I believe frequency has a place in education no matter the age of the student. In the TIC model,

created primarily for college students, the authors speak specifically about being able to gauge students based on body language and tone. If you as an educator get the sense that the students within your classroom need a "brain break" then this is a great time to either engage all the students in an ensemble-building activity or return to a mindfulness activity. By doing this it sends a message to your students that you care about them, rather than just covering the material. It shows you are flexible and willing to meet them where they are. You are allowing your students to hold space in the room, and simultaneously honoring their needs.

V: Awareness & Trigger Warnings

It's a personal belief of mine that when working in an acting classroom with sensitive material at the college level, it is in everyone's best interest to have private email correspondence or private meetings with students at the beginning of the semester. Educators in the theatre should use early communication, at the beginning of the semester, to understand where students' boundaries are when working with triggering materials. Yet again, this does not mean you have to ask a student to divulge personal details of past trauma, that is where you get into that sticky area of playing a therapist, these meetings are purely to make sure the educator knows if there is any content that may make the student uncomfortable to work on. For example, if your student says they are uncomfortable with working on a scene that involves sexual assault, you should not assign that student a scene that involves them being raped. You should also let students know before a scene is performed if it has any material that could make a student within the class uncomfortable. By having these tough conversations, you put the students' health and well-being at the center of your educational practice. Yet again communicating to them that you wish for this space to be a democratic one.

VI: Tools for Managing De-escalation

This is the trickiest concept to apply because it asks the educator to walk a very delicate line. I would suggest, instead of helping students to de-escalate when they become emotionally activated, we make sure to teach strategies within the classroom that help them manage their emotions when dealing with work that could traumatize them early in the course. If these students have the intention to work as an actor professionally (which is generally the point of higher education) then these skills are necessary to learn so they can bring them into their post-graduation work. Essentially, we are teaching lifelong safety techniques. Of course, if you as the educator find yourself in a situation where a student is escalated and needs immediate help, you should know strategies to employ to help them return to a state of ease, and have the resources to get that student the help they need.

With that, all being said, yet again I am not encouraging the educator to pry or ask a student to divulge unnecessary details about their personal life. What I am referring to is making a student aware of therapeutic breathing and drawing attention to the mindfulness activities taught in class. Asking students to try and become more aware of their triggers, maybe even suggesting that they create an emotional chart to map their emotions either daily or hourly.

Finally, I would ask educators to encourage students to figure out activities that foster self-love and self-care. Help students create a list of activities that relax and bring them joy, some examples include hiking, eating, bathing, reading, phoning a friend etc. Therefore if you find a student is in a place of emotional activation you can turn their focus towards the techniques you have established as a class.

CHAPTER 4:Pairing Research With Established Acting Techniques

a. Introduction

This is the part of the process where I start moving out of the research and science behind trauma, and moving into the artistic creation of developing a syllabus, lesson plan, and visual trajectory of how I intend this work to be implemented. This is the time when I will be fully exploring methodologies and great practitioners, such as Uta Hagen, Stanislavski, Sanford Meisner, and more, in an attempt to find the best exercises to be paired and put together to accomplish the six core beliefs I established at the end of the last chapter.

b. Jaques Lecoq and the Power of Play

When starting an acting class based on a trauma-informed model, we have established that play is naturally one of the best places to begin. "The key qualities within the process are disponibilité (openness), complicité (a spirit of shared creativity), and le jeu (play), which combine as the foundation of theatrical creation" (Lecoq xxvii). In the quote above we can see the importance placed upon play, otherwise referred to as "le jue" within this acting pedagogy. The concepts of openness and shared creativity have also been explored in the research up to this point and help to create a safe space. The concept of shared creativity also can be drawn back to the article *Generators and Interpreters in a Performing Arts Population: Dissociation, Trauma, Fantasy Proneness, and Affective States,* where the authors write extensively about how spirituality can mitigate trauma. Spirituality, in this context, refers to the feeling of being part of something greater and having a purpose. Through the concept of complicité, I believe the Lecoq classroom is one of a spiritual nature that will only help students put forth their best work. The text of *The Moving Body* almost immediately goes on to say, "It also operates at a social level; students work together in improvisations and auto-cours and disponibilité develops openness to

the group dynamic, to the input and impact of others in performance" (Lecoq xxvii). Auto-cours being challenges given to a group of students to have them work together to devise a response to the prompt. Yet again, this concept moves our classrooms closer to a truly safe space.

"We approach improvisation through psychological replay, which is silent. Replay involves reviving lived experience in the simplest possible way. Avoiding transposition and exaggeration, remaining strictly faithful to reality and the student's psychology, with no thought for spectators, students bring a simple situation to life: a classroom, a marketplace, a hospital, the metro. Play [acting] comes later, at the point when, aware of the theatrical dimension, the actor can shape an improvisation for spectators using rhythm, tempo, space, form. Play may be very close to replay or may distance itself through the more daring theatrical transposition, but it must never lose sight of the root anchoring in reality. A large part of my teaching method involves making students understand principle" (Lecoq 29).

By starting from a place of silent ensemble play and replay, students can get their bearings before jumping into scripted scene work, or the even more intimidating, audition prep. This is a way to start your practice by building trust and play within a cohort of students.

I. **Jacques Lecoq: Silent Play & Replay Exercises**

Metro Station

Metro station is an activity that puts students in a realistic situation where they are asked to simply be and react, and then analyze what has occurred throughout the exercise. Students are asked to imagine they are silently at a train station waiting for the next train. They are asked to create the circumstance where they are running late for a very important job interview. If the train comes behind schedule they run the risk of walking in late and losing the job opportunity purely due to their tardiness. Once the group of students has entered the train station, previously

laid out before the exercise, the instructor then takes on the role of the voice on the intercom announcing the arrival of the train. The instructor starts by warning the students the train is 2 minutes away, then 1 minute, then 10 minutes, 15 minutes, and then the train is ultimately canceled. With these types of stakes student movement and interaction immediately change. After the activity has commenced students are then asked to analyze the group as a whole through the means of rhythm, tempo, space, and form. This is a great way to create ensemble and awareness because it asks students to take stock of all moving bodies within the space, this alone starts to build community.

Cafe Miscommunication

"You are sitting in a cafe. Opposite you, at another table, someone makes a small hand gesture in your direction. You wonder if you know each other or not. Out of politeness, you respond in the same way. The person opposite, put at ease, begins to gesture more wildly, making large movements, playing with an object, and smiling. Little by little complicity grows between you, a dialogue conducted in gestural signs or facial expressions. In the end, the person gets up and comes towards you, smiling. You to get up to greet them… But they pass beside you and go on to someone behind you" (Lecoq 34).

This activity I would label as slightly more advanced because it is only two individuals on stage versus the entirety of the class. This may make a student feel uncomfortable at first, but I believe the more time you take building a strong foundation for the ensemble, the more at ease students will feel as they move into focused scenes. If I were instructing this scene I would briefly pull aside the student that will be initiating the wave and give them a breakdown of what the scene will look like. By doing this the other student, receiving the gesture will be able to react authentically within the set circumstances.

Lecoq Conclusion

The activities listed above are a great way to begin building an ensemble, thus creating a safe space. Shared creativity as a group creates purpose and the feeling of being part of something greater. In previous chapter two, I discussed how spirituality based on these tenants is one of the only ways to mitigate trauma, as studied up to this point. Ultimately group activities can create a sense of ease that will allow students to put forth their best possible work. This work is integral in the trauma-informed performance classroom and should not be underestimated in a rush to explore scripted scenes and monologues. Although I will not be going on to explore Jacques Lecoq's mask work, pantomime, and clowning, that is not to say that they are not applicable or could hold great importance to this work. But, for the time being, as I build a standard trauma-informed acting syllabus, I will not be exploring these methods of Lecoq's pedagogy.

d. Sanford Meisner and The Reality of Doing

Similar to Jacques Lecoq, Sanford Meisner also starts with simple activities to focus on observing body language and honestly reacting to what your fellow actor is doing. Meisner works to achieve those same goals by employing mindfulness exercises and an activity commonly referred to as repetition. All of these exercises are then put together so an actor can focus on doing, versus presentationally performing for an audience. Meisner refers to this as the reality of doing, the core principle behind his teaching methodology.

I. **Meisner: Exercises**

Mindfulness

In the book *Sanford Meisner on Acting* (a written transcription of a class taught by Sanford Meisner) the first thing the acting pedagogist asks of his class is to simply tell him how many cars they hear outside of the studio. This is of course drawing the class towards their authentic sensory experience, otherwise known as mindfulness. Some students heard a plane, others heard a car, some heard nothing. The exercise can easily be used in any classroom and can be performed in a variety of ways. The instructor can ask about the temperature, noise, or even smell. This exercise can be as long or as short as necessary.

Observation

The second exercise Meisner runs the class through In the book *Sanford Meisner on Acting* is an activity purely based on observation. For this exercise, Meisner pairs students off and asks them to stand back to back. He tells students he only wishes to give them 30 seconds to a minute to turn around and observe as much as they can about their partner's appearance, and then he will instruct them when to return to their original back-to-back positions. He then asks students everything they were able to observe in that amount of time. This activity yet again brings the class back to the initial concept of the reality of doing. They are not being asked to perform, merely to *be* and start working together.

<u>Repetition</u>

Probably Standford Meisner's most famous and recognizable exercise is that entitled repetition. The activity is simple. Actors are paired up yet again and asked to either sit or stand rather close to each other (about 3 feet) and note the other students' appearance. When one student is ready they will make a factual statement purely based on appearance. Such as, "long hair," "blue shoes," or "small earrings." It is important that at this point students not place any emotional perceptions they may have constructed about the other student on them. From here

the two repeat the simple phrase. At first, the activity will feel mechanical, then slowly but surely actors will begin to unconsciously react to the others' body language. The activity should be stopped if the instructor gets the sense the two students are varying each repetition to make the exercise less mundane.

The Joyful Object

For this activity, each student is asked to bring in a small item that sparks joy for them. It could be a photo, a rock, a piece of lint, truly anything. When the student brings this object into class they are asked to stand up for one minute and explain why it brings them joy. For an activity of this nature, a minute will feel incredibly short to the student. This exercise is designed in order to spur authentic human emotion and behavior. After the activity is done the teacher simply asks the class, "Did you believe them?" and usually the entire class will answer with yes. This is due to the fact that the student *knows* what they are talking about and is not attempting to be anyone other than themselves. Yet again, this is a simple show and tell that brings us back to the reality of doing.

Door Exercises

Door exercises are usually the next step in the Meisner acting trajectory. One called the impossible activity, the other created by giving each student a circumstance that they must play when entering the room. The first iteration of this activity begins by asking each student to bring in a task that takes tons of focus and is nearly impossible. In the book *Sanford Meisner on Acting,* there is an example of a student bringing in an unraveled and knotted cassette tape. This activity is close to impossible. Then another student is asked to knock on the door and come in with a very important circumstance they are trying to communicate. This creates authentic mannerisms and behavior for the student with the impossible task. The next iteration of this

exercise is simply putting both students in opposite and dire situations and asking them to deal with each other. Yet again, this encourages authentic behavior and mannerisms on stage.

e. Meisner Conclusion

Overall Meisner is creating game-like activities to create ease on stage and authentic human behavior. These activities can help a population that may bring trauma and anxiety into the room, and ultimately it moves us towards one of our core beliefs and goals, creating a safe environment.

f. Lee Strasberg and The Method

Lee Strasberg, similar to Sanford Meisner, used the teachings of Stanislavski as primary source material to inspire his acting pedagogy. Lee Strasberg is specifically known for asking actors to live in their roles outside of the rehearsal room. To think and behave in the way the character would. Truthfully he believes the actor can become the character, versus the actor interpreting the role individually and becoming their version of the character.

I.   Strasberg: Exercises

Relaxation

"In a particular instance, an actress exhibited good progress in her general relaxation, yet there were still areas of tension that exhibited themselves not only in the relaxation exercises but in her acting as well. During one exercise I lifted her arm; there was tension with some slight suggestion of oppositional stance. I told her she was tense, expecting that she would make an effort to relax. She did not respond. I repeat my comment, and to make sure she heard and responded to me, I lightly hit her arm, immediately she relaxed the area. Something made me say, "Did you used to be punished?"

She said "Yes."

"A lot?"

"Yes." "Were you stubborn despite it?"

"Yes." (Strasberg 98)

      Strasberg's Relaxation Exercise was originally developed to help the actor practice self-awareness when it comes to unwanted tension in the muscles of the body, including specifically the muscles in the face and neck.

      Strasberg's relaxation exercise begins sitting in a straight-backed, armless chair. The actor is instructed to attempt to assume a position in which sleep could occur. After finding such a position, the actor begins to explore tension.

      First actors are asked to raise an arm above the head and begin exploring for tension in the fingers, thumb, and wrist by moving the muscles in these areas one at a time, back and forth and in circles, slowly, while the mind asks the individual muscle, "Where is the tension there?" When the mind has identified the tension, it is simply a matter of willing the muscle to "let go."

      This process continues throughout every muscle in the hand, arm, shoulder, neck, chest, stomach, hips, upper and lower legs, ankles, and down to the toes. Special attention is given to the facial muscles, especially the brow, temples, and jaw, where years of holding back unspoken thoughts, words, and emotions have created habitual patterns of tension.

      After exploring the body students will then be asked to move the lips around a,andnd to stretch their face muscles to their full limits. Next students will stick out their tongue and move it around in circles, and then extend the jaw and wiggle it around. After the lips, tongue and jaw students will move the muscles of the brow up and down to release that habitual "worried" expression.

Emotional Memory

"As discussed earlier, previous acting practitioners divided affective memory into two categories: analytic memory, and the memory of a feeling. Analytic memory is trained and developed by exercises involving imaginary objects: in our work, we call this aspect of affective memory sense memory. The second category that other practitioners described was memory feeling, which is called emotional memory. My work at the Actors Studio and in my private classes revolved around emotional memory as part of actor's training" (Strasberg 111).

During this phase of Strasberg's training students are asked to reveal memories from their past that they may be able to transfer to the scene, monologue, or play. This process happens as students explore the text.

g. Strasberg Conclusion

In conclusion, after exploring this methodology I think there are both pros and cons. The first activity used to relax a student most definitely has a place within the trauma-informed teaching model I am creating. Although, the story Strasberg tells above about one particular situation is problematic. The fact that he hit the student without her consent, the fact that he dug for details in her life, could potentially trigger a student within the classroom that has been physically abused.

The same goes when discussing transference. I think it is important to tell students before jumping into this type of work that they must choose wisely about the emotional memories they bring into the room. It is important to tell students that some memories may be too raw and traumatizing and that they should not be trying to retraumatize themselves in order to create an emotionally effective performance.

I also believe that if you intend to ask questions such as, "have you ever had your heart broken", that students are given the ability to not answer if they do not feel comfortable, or simply told not to respond. This way you are not taking on the role of a therapist within the classroom.

h. Stanislavski: The Most Well KnownPractitioner

I believe it is fair to say that within almost every theatre in the western hemisphere, if not the world, if you say the name Stanislavski every person knows exactly who/what you are talking about. Stanislavski inspired Lee Strasberg, Sandford Meisner and Uta Hagen to create actor training based off of his system. He has made an impact on the theatrical world potentially greater than any other acting pedagogist. Thus, his system must be reviewed.

I.   Stanislavski: Exercises

Imagination

Similar to Michael Chekhov's work, the first thing Stanislavski asks of an actor is to be a keen observer of the real world. This he says is the basis of the imagination necessary to play a character. Students go out into the real world, observe different environments and other human actions and come back into class and discuss what they learned just by being a keen observer of the world.

Relaxation

The exercise as written is very similar to the activity described above by Lee Strasberg. In Stanislavski's training system he simply asks students to pretend to sit in a chair, stand or even lie on the floor and note where their body is holding tension. The actors then try to breathe into those areas and relax. Many students will notice if they carry tension in their shoulders for

example, when they go to relax that area the tension will then move to a different area of the body. This type of self-awareness is the foundation of creating ease on stage.

Units & Objectives

Once text is placed in a student's hands within this pedagogy, students are then asked to break down the text into smaller chunks. These chunks are both those of action and emotion. For example, if you go to leave your house you must make sure you have your wallet and keys, put on gloves and a jacket, lock the door behind you, etc. Meanwhile, as these actions are taking place each is happening concurrently with human emotion and objective. Each emotion and objective must move the actor from action to action with purpose.

Emotion Memory

In Stanislavski's original texts he endorsed the ideas of transference and emotion memory as discussed above in the Strasberg section. Later in his life, Stanislavski came out and made a statement about how this practice was not ethical, and that other methods should not be used to express emotion on stage.

J. Stanislavski Conclusion

Most of the actor training methods in this section are built off of the groundwork laid by Stanislavski. Yet again, we see relaxation and ease as the first principle explored by Stanislavski. To create ease on stage, you must first and foremost create a safe space to work in. This goes hand in hand with the trauma-informed teaching model I am developing.

The use of units and objectives is also a great tool for all actors. This type of work does not involve recalling situations from the past. If anything this is an intellectual method that helps an actor be more active on stage and more emotionally present.

It is important to note that later in his career Stanislavski condemned emotion memory as a concept. Although I believe there is value in emotion memory, I still deeply believe that we must do this work with as much care and caution as possible.

k. Michael Chekhov and Calling on Emotion Through Movement

Michael Chekhov's methodology, as explored in the book *To The Actor*, is mostly based on the concepts of atmospheres and psychological gesture. Similar to the five core pillars of dramatherapy, the dramatherapy process is also based upon five phases. These methods are based on his belief, and science, that the brain and the body work as one total system and are constantly influencing each other. The two concepts tend to start by inducing physical movement that is then able to provoke emotion from the actor. By using this method a teacher can focus more on the body versus poking and prying in an actor's brain.

I. Chekhov: Exercises

Observation & Atmospheres

The first assignment Michael Chekhov asks his students to complete is, going out into the real world and observing different atmospheres. Examples include a cafeteria, a library, a Christmas party, ext. Then students bring to class their observations for discussion. From here the teacher guides the students through these atmospheres as they mill around the room. As they do so the actors, as well as the instructor, should notice changes in physicality that potentially induce psychological change. After doing this, students sit down once again to talk about what their internalized experience is.

Psychological Gesture

When first approaching psychological gestures students are asked to look at a series of drawings that showcase different gestures. The actors will then go through a repetition assuming these gestures. Afterward, students sit down to talk to the instructor about how each gesture affected them psychologically. Next, students are asked to do the opposite. The teacher will then call out emotion and students are asked to create a gesture that they feel encapsulates that emotion. They are then asked to repeat this gesture in hopes that it will provoke more emotion. From here instructors should help students create gestures inside of text and character work, specific to both the character's emotional and physical life.

l. Chekhov Conclusion

Overall, I think these methods are brilliant for the trauma-informed performance classroom. The reason being is because you are not asking them to draw on what could be a traumatic experience outside of the room, but inducing emotion through movement. It feels like this work is the work of a teacher, whereas work like Strasberg's may tend to feel more like a therapy session.

m. Chapter Four Conclusion

Ultimately I could go on with methodologies and acting exercises for another 20 pages, but I believe these 5 methods will give a great foundation when creating a trauma-informed acting trajectory. Some methods will need to be explored in a sensitive manner, one where boundaries are set and trigger warnings are given, such as the emotion memory suggested by Lee Strasberg. Other exercises and methods may not need this. Due to the fact that all of Lecoq's work is based on community, openness, and play, this method is almost perfect for trauma-informed teaching and should be approached with little to no hesitation.

CHAPTER 5: Other Considerations & Personal Process

a. Introduction

This chapter is a hodgepodge of ideas. As states at the beginning of this paper

trauma-informed teaching and ethical practices within the classroom truly can open multiple

doors leading in many different directions. Sometimes it feels impossible to stop working and

distill what you want to say. As I began my thesis journey I realized that in the year 2021, it is

crucial to recognize the trauma associated with marginalized communities. Generational trauma

is something that deserves its own space, and many of the experiences of the queer, BIPOC, and

other marginalized communities are those of generational trauma and systematic oppression.

These students may need different types of instruction, which needs to be explored and

recognized.

This chapter will also go into depth on my personal process. How I arrived at this thesis,

how I moved from point A to point Z, why this work is so deeply important to me, and

ultimately what I intend to bring into my classrooms. Also, where do we stand on those tricky

questions asked in the first chapter?

b. What is Generational Trauma?

"Generational trauma may be defined as a secondary form of trauma that results from the

transfer of traumatic experiences from parents to their children. This form of trauma is also

referred to as intergenerational, transgenerational, or secondary trauma. Generational trauma can

result from any number of different types of disturbing incidents or experiences. This form of

trauma may be derived from such tragic events as atrocities of war and domestic violence, and

more recently the discovery of the existence of psychological manifestations of Holocaust

experiences in the lives of survivor offspring"(Doucet 1)

Put simply, one may have traumatic impulses even if they themselves have not experienced trauma on a personal level. Trauma can be passed down generationally. For example, if your parent was a holocaust survivor you may end up having more acute trauma responses. This happens because of both nurture and nature. Biologically, a parent's brain may have been compromised by trauma at some point during their life. Then if that adult reproduces they may then pass down a chemical makeup that makes the baby predisposed to trauma. On the topic of nurture, the parent may be easier to emotionally provoke. Parents and guardians with an incredible amount of trauma tend to react from their amygdala, moving directly into fight, flight, or freeze when a stressful situation arises. This may cause a wide variety of reactions, from yelling to isolation, to even walking away from a child. These types of behaviors could cause traumatic stress for a child. Thus the cycle of trauma continues and may continue for generations if it is not recognized.

c. Understanding Racial Trauma

"Racial trauma, a form of race-based stress, refers to People of Color and Indigenous individuals' (BIPOC) reactions to dangerous events and real or perceived experiences of racial discrimination. Such experiences may include threats of harm and injury, humiliating and shaming events, and witnessing racial discrimination toward other BIPOC. Although similar to a posttraumatic stress disorder, racial trauma is unique in that it involves ongoing individual and collective injuries due to exposure and reexposure to race-based stress" (Comas-Díaz 1).

Racial Trauma is almost directly linked to generational trauma and historical trauma. The history of the BIPOC community is one of trauma. Trauma that can not be erased, but can be recognized. When teaching populations that include BIPOC students it is important to recognize that these students may have more trauma than they are even readily aware of. Although these

students may say they feel comfortable working on graphic and triggering material, it is even more important to practice awareness when observing these students. When you as an educator see something that appears to be troubling, it may be in your best interest to set a boundary and assign a different scene or monologue. Although not every student of color may bring this type of trauma into the room, educators should be aware of the system that has perpetuated this type of trauma and marginalization. Anti-racism training, and learning how to eliminate microaggressions from teaching is work that is of the utmost importance.

d. Trauma in the Queer Community

"Queer people are more likely than heterosexual people to experience victimization in the form of discrimination and violence, with one study finding that 56% of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people in the US have experienced verbal harassment, 50% experienced sexual harassment, and 44% reported experiences of discrimination). A study by Herek (2009) found that about 20% of sexual minorities have experienced a hate crime; or "an illegal act involving intentional selection of a victim based on a perpetrator's bias or prejudice against the actual or perceived status of the victim" (Lubitow and Town 1). When using the word queer in this context it is to be seen as an umbrella term. Encompassing both queer people (e.g. lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual) and trans people (e.g. transgender, non-binary). Similar to the last section on racial trauma, you may find students that identify as members of the queer community to bring more trauma than the average student into the classroom. Yet again, educators need to recognize the abuse and harassment that has been bestowed upon these communities and work our hardest to help students remain emotionally at ease. For example, this can be as simple as asking a student if they are willing to work on a scene from *Laramie Project* before flippantly casting a scene based on what you believe a student can relate to.

e. **Personal Process**

My personal process of writing this thesis feels like it's taken far longer than just my two years in graduate school. If I'm being entirely honest, It feels like this journey began after the altercation I had with a professor, as referenced in my introduction. After that point in the fall of 2013, it truly felt like something I loved had been taken from me unjustly. Up to that point I had loved performance and never experienced any sort of anxiety on stage or in my personal life. After that incident, my ability to perform was inhibited by anxiety. I became triggered by performance. Due to the fact that I loved the art form so much I continued to act. Even though that meant walking into audition rooms and having panic attacks. When you love something that much you don't just let it go.

Over time I watched that anxiety seep into my everyday life. It was like wildfire inside my brain that I couldn't stop. When I finally went to therapy to get help and was diagnosed with PTSD, I spent almost all my time trying to understand the disorder. Although getting this diagnosis as a young woman who felt she had not experienced this type of trauma may have been isolating, it was also empowering because it allowed me to start learning more about the reasons why I act and behave the way that I do. With that being said there was an emotional cost that I paid when writing this thesis. There were moments when I found myself at my desk crying as I came to a new realization. There were moments I had to get up and walk away, but ultimately I decided that if this paper could help one student it would be worth it. Maybe it would even be worth the initial pain if it helped someone else and began a shift towards better educational practices.

In the fall of 2020, I decided to take advanced educational psychology to start building a foundation for my thesis. Within this class, I wrote a paper about the TIPE model and a review of the article on artistic interpreters and generators. This was my first step towards my thesis and gave me a lot of insight into the research that had been conducted up to this point and where to begin looking for answers and resources. At that point, I started to realize that the process wouldn't be one of digging to find the right materials but instead distilling the massive amount of research out there to construct a document that strengthened the method I was trying to create.

In the end, the research showed me that many of the ideas that I believed were the answers to mitigate trauma as an educator were true. I've always believed that a good educator can essentially teach anything in the classroom if they know how. I still believe this to be true. We can approach transference and emotion memory, If we set up the activity property and express to students where they may cross the line into dangerous territory. More than anything, it seems to me now that education has more to do with awareness, temperament, and structure than it has to do with remaining true to any one pedagogy. Unfortunately, because there is no true educational recognition the prerequisite to teaching at the college level, too many theatre practitioners enter the classroom and teach exactly how they were taught, thus perpetuating a cycle of abusive educational tactics that can and will cause trauma. Most of these educators, when confronted, will tell you they use these methods because in the real world directors and people within the industry will treat you in such a way. This type of thought process does not move the industry in a safer direction. Instead, it perpetuates the cycle of abuse and trauma as students bring these practices into the field. Therefore, if we want to take a stand against trauma and abuse in this industry we must start at the pre-professional performance level.

Many of the topics I discussed seemed to be a no-brainer to me; a kind ask for educators to treat their students with respect and mind the golden rule our parents taught us all whilst we were growing up. Ultimately I care about students and their experiences within my classroom. If I as an educator am unable to transition students into the professional world and or cause them some type of harm, that is a reflection of myself. That is personal and should affect me as an educator. I believe that the student should be at the center of their educational journey, they take the lead and the instructor helps facilitate the path they choose to take.

f. **Answering the Initial Questions**

A) What is trauma? What is happening in the brain when trauma occurs?

In the first chapter, we used the DSM-5 to outline how trauma is defined within the healthcare industry. That chapter then goes into the process of how sensory information arrives at the thalamus and then either takes the low road to the amygdala that controls fight, flight, and freeze, or the high road to the neocortex that controls verbalization, logic, and executive function. For those suffering from trauma sensory information tends to take the lower road to the amygdala more often. We also know now that trauma is more complex. Generational trauma and toxic stress are also explored in the paper.

B) What is the correlation between childhood trauma and the artist?

We learned from analyzing the study, *Generators, and Interpreters in a Performing Arts Population: Dissociation, Trauma, Fantasy Proneness, and Affective States,* that actors have the highest childhood trauma, fantasy proneness, and dissociation

scores of any other type of artist within the study. This information indicates that there

may be more students with childhood trauma walking into our classrooms than any other.

C) <u>Where in its development is the brain of an average undergrad student in a</u>
   <u>pre-professional acting program? Is a student more likely to be facing trauma</u>
   <u>during this time in their lives? What are the long-term impacts of trauma</u>
   <u>experienced at the college level? Can trauma be compounded?</u>

The brain is not fully developed in the average college student. The brain isn't

fully developed until 25 and most students in undergrad are between the ages of 17 and

23. Therefore, trauma experienced during these years would be considered to have taken

place during a formative time in the student's life. This means trauma experienced during

undergrad might be held on to for the rest of that student's life and may end up impacting

the way they live their day-to-day life. We also know from the research gathered about

toxic stress that the older a human is when they experience toxic stress the harder it is for

the brain to re-adjust and for that adult to learn coping strategies.

D) <u>How does Trauma hold our students back? What can we do as educators to help?</u>

Trauma can make it difficult for a student to create a state of ease or relaxation for

themselves. When the Amygdala is activated and a student goes into fight, flight, or

freeze they have reached a place where performance is no longer possible. Since the

Neocortex is not active, and Broca's Area has gone offline a student is unable to use logic

or articulate themselves. Skills a human must have to effectively perform. From a

pedagogical standpoint, ease and relaxation are two techniques that are spoken about

frequently by Micheal Chekhov, Lee Strasberg, Stanislavski, and more. As an educator

using mindfulness activities and starting from a place, a play should help create trust

between student and teacher.

E) How can we then take the tools and techniques created by mental healthcare
professionals and drama therapists and pair them with activities created by great
acting practitioners (Stanislavski, Uta Hagen, Sandford Meisner, Lee Strausberg,
Jacques Lecoq, etc) In order to create a trauma-informed acting trajectory that can
be used in any performance classroom?

The last chapter includes the summation of all the research I have conducted. A syllabus

for an intro to acting class, a lesson plan, and an acting trajectory all based on trauma-informed

teaching. This shows how everything has been paired together to create a full trauma-informed

acting pedagogy.

CHAPTER 6:The Final Outcome

Trauma Informed Acting Pedagogy Trajectory

Improvisation

Scripted Materials

Relaxation and Ease Exercises

Meisner Repetition

Lecoq Games Without Words

Chekhov Atmospheres

Chekhov Psychological Gesture

Monologues and Audition Prep

Mindfulness & Observation

Meisner Joyful Object

Emotion Memory

Meisner Door Work

Stanislavski Units & Objectives
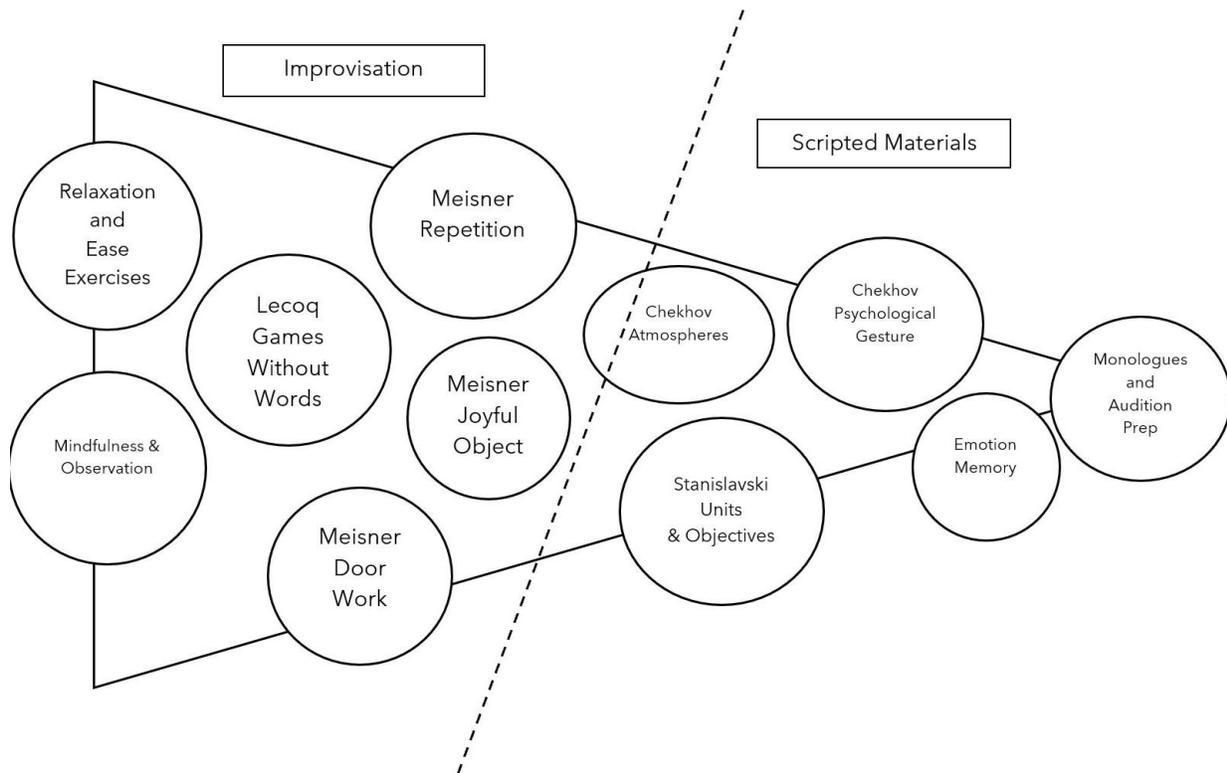
<u>TRAUMA INFORMED ACTING SYLLABUS</u>

THEA 107 Fall 2019
Intro to Stage Performance: THEA 107
T/R 5:30 pm-6:45 pm in Shafer 302

Instructor: Laine Wagner
Contact: wagnerl2@mymail.vcu.edu OR laine.wagner101@gmail.com
Office: Zoom *OR* The Graduate Office (second floor, across from the main theatre office)
Office Hours: 1:00pm-3:00pm M/W

Instructor Communication Policy: *Please email me your concerns and questions. I will respond within 24 hours Monday-Friday and on weekends within 48 hours. If you would like to set up a ZOOM meeting pleaseemail me a day in advance.*

Overview:
What are the building blocks of performance? How can actors build a strong foundation and understanding of performance? The goal of this courseis to help you develop your actor's tool kit, create a personalized artistic process, and to develop a deeper understanding of how to effectively perform. We will start the course with several improv assignments and activities. The course will then shift into scripted materials, and how to prepare an audition so that you may continue this type of work (if you so chose) once the course ends inNovember.

BOOKS & READINGS:
> **any scene work/ monologues assigned in class will require you to acquire a copy of the play.*

- all articles/reading will be available online/linked on Canvas

ASSIGNMENTS: All reading is to be completed by the class period after it is assigned. Each week, after you have completed the reading, you will be asked to write a brief response to what you have read on Canvas. These responses will be due before the beginning of class on Tuesdays. Some weeks I may post response questions, other weeks I will not. On weeks that have no prompt, you are still expected to write a response to your readings. These responses require you to choose a short passage from what you have read and respond to it. There will be a 2-4 pg term paper due at the end of the semester explaining the artistic process you have personally developed; as bolstered by in-class activities, performance assignments, and the readings you have completed over the course of the semester. The bulk of your work will be centered on the performance of monologues and scene work. All performance-based due dates are **mandatory** and must be completed and performed by the date assigned.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
After the successful completion of this course, you will be able to:
1. complete both physical and mental actor warm-ups

2. Establish concrete memorization skills

3. Begin developing an artistic process and tool kit that you can use when presented with any performance assignment in the future

4. Gain an understanding and appreciation for theatre's great acting pedagogists

COURSE STRUCTURE:
- This class has been designed to be completely online if need be. Hopefully, by the end of the semester, we will be able to explore scene work in person. FOR NOW: all of the information will be delivered through an online learning environment. Assignments and projects will be submitted online.

- This is a 16-week course that will require participation and collaboration with fellow classmates. Be prepared to complete assignments as well as participate in group discussions/assignments on topics related to online teaching and learning.

- The course will begin with improvisation work to allow students to learn how to live authentically in the moment on stage, with a sense of ease. The course will then shift into scripted materials that students will be expected to memorize and perform.

- Follow the course schedule to be sure you are keeping up with weekly responses, performance assignments, and readings.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS & SUPPORT:
1. A computer with a webcam and access to the Internet a. A USB microphone is encouraged but not necessary.
2. Google Chrome (web browser) and Google Drive.
3. Access to Zoom

If you have technical problems follow these steps:
1. Clear your browser's cache
2. Shutdown and restart your computer
3. If your problems persist, contact the IT support center itsc@vcu.edu or 804-828-2227

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is mandatory. You may miss 2 classes. **For every extra class you miss, your overall course grade will be lowered**. Excessive tardiness will also lower your grade.

LATE WORK:
While late work is never advised. It is clear that periodically life gets in the way and students must be given some latitude regarding late assignments. If for some reason you have some type of emergency, please contact me and we will brainstorm a solution together.

GRADING:
30%   Participation and Attendance
20%   Weekly Responses
15%   Scene work
15%   Monologues
20%   Final Paper

CHEATING & PLAGIARISM:

- Plagiarism is stealing and passing off the ideas or words of another as one's own; it is using another's production without crediting the source. The best way to avoid plagiarism is to cite properly in any assignment information and concepts that are not your own originally. If a student is discovered to have plagiarized, that student will fail that particular assignment.

- Academic integrity is expected in all aspects at the University including this course. Don't expect less of yourself than you do of your students. For more information: https://students.vcu.edu/studentconduct/

PANDEMIC EXPECTATIONS:

When we return, things will look and feel different as we take the necessary steps to protect the well-being of our community. Here is what is expected of you:

1. Monitor your health daily. Testing will occur according to protocols.
2. Wear a face covering or mask in common areas, including class.
3. Apply physical distance guidelines to all settings.
4. Clean and disinfect personal and shared spaces before and after use.
Cleaning supplies will be available in numerous locations.
5. Report symptoms associated with COVID-19 to VCU Student Health
Services. A call center hotline will be available later in the summer.
6. Not sharing is caring during this unique pandemic. Please do not share
calculators, tools, lab supplies, etc.

Following rules regarding face coverings or masks, cleaning and disinfecting, and physical distancing is *required*. Students will receive reminders for daily health monitoring. Staff in the Dean of Students office will be notified after incidents of non-compliance. Refusal to comply with rules can include progressive disciplinary action up to and including suspension, based on the VCU Student Code of Conduct.

REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS:

The university recognizes that some students who previously did not need Section 504 Academic Accommodations, and those who have a qualifying condition or disability, may need support or assistance during the return to campus process. A modified

approach for the temporary and more permanent need for accommodation has been developed and implemented to provide students with full access to programs and activities related to their academic majors. Because every case is different, student requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Please share your need for an accommodation with the Student Accessibility and Education Office, or MCV Campus students, the Division for Academic Success, after you have worked directly with your faculty member.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING:

Navigating the anticipated stressors of daily life can often be challenging enough. When unexpected stressors emerge or when we are faced with uncertainty, it can be tough to know how to cope. Try out some of these tips and resources for health and wellness to see if they are the right fit for you.

Symptoms or Diagnosis: If an on-campus student identifies symptoms, has tested positive for COVID-19, or has come into contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, that student should contact University Student Health Services. At that point, isolation should begin, and contact tracing will be performed by Student Health Services. Symptoms will be monitored and the student should refer to a medical provider if symptoms worsen or are released from,m isolation after 14 days if symptom-free.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY:

VCU is committed to providing a safe, equitable and inclusive environment for all its employees, patients, and students. Discrimination or discriminatory harassment is not only unlawful, it is harmful to the well-being of our university community. Our university's core values, specifically those related to diversity and inclusion, have withstood many difficult situations and trying times, and they will not falter now.

Reports of discrimination, bullying, harassment, and/or stereotyping of persons of color or those impacted by COVID-19 or otherwise, will not be tolerated. Be assured that VCU will make every effort to address and prevent the occurrence of unlawful discrimination and, if necessary, take prompt and appropriate action to

remedy and prevent its recurrence. Every member of our community is asked to:

● Become familiar with the university's policies on Preventing and Responding to Discrimination and Duty to Report and Protection from Retaliation in the VCU Policy Library.

● Consult with Equity and Access Services or VCU Human Resources for additional guidance on how to file a report of discrimination.

● Contact the Office of Institutional Equity, Effectiveness and Success

(IES) on how to address and maintain a culture of inclusion.

● Encourage individuals who may need an ADA accommodation for a known or newly acquired disability, to contact the ADA/504 Coordinator in ADA Services.

● Bookmark and share information on university or community agencies that offer support or services, such as VCU's Counseling Services or Ombudsperson.

● Explore training and educational opportunities on diversity and inclusion at IExcel Education and through the Office of Institutional Equity, Effectiveness, and Success.

● Offer non-judgmental support and empathy to those affected by current events and this health crisis.

INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT :

I want you to know that I am grateful for your presence and input in our classrooms (whether in person or online). I appreciate and welcome you regardless of your immigration status, country of origin and/or citizenship, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, gender/sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or dis/ability. Thank you for enriching our world, sharing your vital experience, and contributing to the diversity that makes our intellectual community vibrant and ever more creative.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

● When taking online and hybrid courses, self-motivation, and self-pacing are critical. For this course, you should plan to work about 7-9 hours per course module as we move through the materials. Be sure to plan your time accordingly.

● Make yourself a calendar with all of your due dates across ALL of your courses. Plan for when you will work on each one for completion in advance of the due dates.

● Make sure you note any "online" course that still has a required meeting time (such as a Google Meet or Zoom session).

● Avoid the common assumption that online courses are easier or should be easier. That is a MYTH!!

● Plan Ahead!! Study as you go instead of at the last minute!

Where to post questions

Questions of general interest should first be posted to the discussion board (only if they have not already been answered) so that other students can benefit from the response or have an opportunity to respond to your question. Only questions of a private nature should be communicated to me through email. When sending a message to me, please allow a minimum of 24 hours for a response. Most of the time I will respond much faster,

but sometimes meetings and other courses take over my schedule.

NETIQUETTE GUIDELINES:

Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online. Your instructor and fellow students wish to foster a safe online learning environment. All opinions and experiences, no matter how different or controversial they may be perceived, must be respected in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse. You are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an idea but you are not to attack an individual. Working as a community of learners, we can build a polite and respectful course community. The following netiquette tips will enhance the learning experience for everyone in the course:

- Do not dominate any discussion.
- Give other students the opportunity to join in the discussion.
- Do not use offensive language. Present ideas appropriately.
- Be cautious in using Internet language. For example, do not capitalize all letters since this suggests shouting.
- Popular emoticons such as ☺ can be helpful to convey your tone but do not overdo or overuse them.
- Never make fun of someone's ability to read or write.
- Share tips with other students.
- Keep an "open mind" and be willing to express even your academically informed opinion.
- Think and edit before you push the "Send" button.
- Do not hesitate to ask for feedback.
- Using humor is acceptable

VCU HONOR SYSTEM:

VCU recognizes that honesty, truth, and integrity are values central to its mission to advance knowledge and student success both in the world VCU students will enter, or return to, once they have graduated and in the university community as a microcosm of that world. In a community devoted to learning, a foundation of honor must exist if that community is to thrive with respect and harmony. Therefore, all members of the university community must conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty, ethics, and integrity at all times. (from https://conduct.students.vcu.edu/vcu-honor-system/)

THEA 107: **Weekly Breakdown**

Week One: Introduction
8/18: **IN CLASS:**   •INTRODUCTION

      ASSIGNMENTS:
           •RITUAL OBSERVATION *due 8/25*
             •JOYFUL OBJECT *due 9/3*

8/20: **IN CLASS:**   •SHARING RITUAL OBSERVATIONS
           • LED MEDITATION & MINDFULNESS
           • EMOTIONAL WELLNESS & DE ESCALATION STRATEGIES
           • PHYSICAL WARM-UP
           • CONCENTRATION GAMES
           • CLOSING RITUAL

      READING & ASSIGNMENTS:
         •*The Actor and The Target: Introduction* **(Donnellan, Declan)** pg 1-3
          •*The Actor and The Target: FEAR* **(Donnellan, Declan)** pg 30-35
          • *Daring Greatly (***Brown, Brene)** pg 1-3

Week Two: Living in the moment
 8/25: **IN CLASS:**   • WARM-UP
          • READING DISCUSSION
          •GAMES WITHOUT WORDS
          •CLOSING RITUAL

8/27: **IN CLASS:**   • WARM-UP
          • RITUAL OBSERVATION
          • MEISNER REPETITION
          • CHECK-IN & CLOSING RITUAL

 READING & ASSIGNMENTS:
      •*Building a Foundation: The Reality of Doing*(Meisner, Sanford) pg 16-20
        •*The Moving Body: Approach to the Arts* (Lecoq, Jacques) pg 47-48
          •JOYFUL OBJECT *due 9/3*

Week Three: Sparking Joy
9/1 IN CLASS: • WARM-UP
          • READING DISCUSSION
          • REPETITION EXERCISES
          •CLOSING RITUAL

      ASSIGNMENTS
          • JOYFUL OBJECT *due 9/3*

9/3: **IN CLASS:** • WARM-UP
  • JOYFUL OBJECT
  •CLOSING RITUAL

  READING & ASSIGNMENTS
    •*Respect for Acting: The Character* (Hagen, Uta) pg 152-157
      • IMAGE ***due 9/10***

Week Four: Creating a Character
9/8: **IN CLASS:** • WARM-UP
  • READING DISCUSSION
  • DOOR WORK
  •CLOSING RITUAL

  READING & ASSIGNMENTS
    • DEVISED SCENE: PART I ***due 9/17***

9/10: **IN CLASS:** • WARM-UP
  • 9 QUESTIONS *(Uta Hagen)*
  • DOOR WORK PAIRED WITH CHARACTER
  •CLOSING RITUAL

  READING & ASSIGNMENTS:
    •*Working from the Text & Roles Within the Group* (*Complicite*) pg 121-123
      •*Respect for Acting: The Circumstances* (Hagen, Uta) pg 158-164
        • SCENE WORK: PART I ***due 9/17***

Week Five: Breaking Down a Script
9/15: **IN CLASS:** • WARM-UP
  • READING DISCUSSION
  • DEVISED SCENE: PART I REHEARSAL
  •CLOSING RITUAL

  ASSIGNMENTS
    • DEVISED SCENE: PART I ***due 9/17***
      •DEVISED SCENE: PART II ***due 9/24***

9/17: **IN CLASS:** • WARM-UP
  •DIVISED SCENE:PART I
  •CLOSING RITUAL

  READING & ASSIGNMENTS
    •*To the Actor: The Psychological Gesture* (*Checkhov, Michael)* pg 121-123
      •*Respect for Acting: The Obstacle* (Hagen, Uta) pg 180-183
        • SCENE WORK: PART II ***due 9/24***

Week Six: It's All in The Gestures

9/22 **IN CLASS:**   • WARM-UP
               • PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE: EXERCISE 16
               •DEVISED SCENE:PART I (continued)
               • DEVISED SCENE: PART II REHEARSAL
               •CLOSING RITUAL

          ASSIGNMENTS
               • DEVISED SCENE: PART II *due 9/24*

9/24: **IN CLASS:**
               • WARM-UP
             •DEVISED SCENE :PART II
             •CLOSING RITUAL
           • BEATS & UNITS SCENES ASSIGNED

          READING & ASSIGNMENTS
               •*Analyzing a Scene* (Atlantic Acting School) pg 152-157
                  •*Beats and Units* (Stanislavski, Constantin)
                   • BEATS & UNITS SCENES *due 10/1 (electronically)*

Week Seven: Individual Meetings
9/29 **IN CLASS:** • INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS (via zoom)

10/1: **IN CLASS:**• INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS (via zoom)
                • BEATS & UNITS SCENES *due (electronically)*

 READING & ASSIGNMENTS
         •*Respect for Acting: Sense Memory* (Hagen, Uta) pg 152-157
            • *The Emotional Trap* (Atlantic Acting School) pg 152-157
               • SCRIPTED MONOLOGUES *due 10/8*

Week Eight: Scene work begins
  10/6 **IN CLASS:**   • WARM-UP
               • READING DISCUSSION
               • BEATS & UNITS SCENES DISCUSSION
               • EMOTION MEMORY INTRODUCTION
               •SCRIPTED SCENES ASSIGNED (groups A, B &C)
               •CLOSING RITUAL

          ASSIGNMENTS
               • TABLE READ FOR SCRIPTED SCENES
                    (A) *10/13*
                    (B) *10/15*
                    (C) *11/20*

10/8: **IN CLASS:**

• WARM-UP
•SCRIPTED SCENE READING REHEARSAL
• CLOSING RITUAL

READING & ASSIGNMENTS
• TABLE READ FOR SCRIPTED SCENES
(A) *10/13*
(B) *10/15*
(C) *11/20*

Week Nine: Scene Work: Week II
10/13 **IN CLASS:** • WARM-UP
•TABLE READ (Group A)
•CLOSING RITUAL

ASSIGNMENTS
• TABLE READ FOR SCRIPTED SCENE
(B) *10/15*
(C) *10/20*
• REHEARSAL FOR SCRIPTED SCENE
(A) *10/15*
(B) *10/20*
(C) *10/22*
• SCENE PERFORMANCE (ON BOOK)
(A) *10/22*
(B) *10/27*
(C) *10/29*

10/15: **IN CLASS:**
• WARM-UP
• TABLE READ (Group B)
• SCENE REHEARSAL (Group A)
• CLOSING RITUAL

READING & ASSIGNMENTS
• TABLE READ FOR SCRIPTED SCENE
(C) *10/20*
• REHEARSAL FOR SCRIPTED SCENE
(B) *10/20*
(C) *10/22*
• SCENE PERFORMANCE (ON BOOK)
(A) *10/22*
(B) *10/27*
(C) *10/29*

Week Ten : Scene Work: Week III

10/20 **IN CLASS:**   • WARM-UP
                  • TABLE WORK (Group C)
                  • SCENE REHEARSAL (Group B)
                  •CLOSING RITUAL

                  ASSIGNMENTS
                        • REHEARSAL FOR SCRIPTED SCENE
                              (C) *10/22*
                        • SCENE PERFORMANCE (ON BOOK)
                              (A) *10/22*
                              (B) *10/27*
                              (C) *10/29*
                        • REHEARSAL II FOR SCRIPTED SCENE
                              (A) *10/27*
                              (B) *10/29*
                              (C)*11/3*
                        • FINAL SCENE SHOWING (OFF BOOK)
                              (A) *11/3*
                              (B) *11/5*
                              (C)*11/10*

10/22 **IN CLASS:**   • WARM-UP
                  • SCENE PERFORMANCE (ON BOOK) (Group A)
                  • SCENE REHEARSAL (Group C)
                  • CLOSING RITUAL

                  READING & ASSIGNMENTS
                        •*Respect for Acting: Relationships* (Hagen, Uta) pg 165-174
                • SCENE PERFORMANCE (ON BOOK)
                              (B) *10/27*
                              (C) *10/29*
                        • REHEARSAL II FOR SCRIPTED SCENE
                              (A) *10/27*
                              (B) *10/29*
                              (C)*11/3*
                        • FINAL SCENE SHOWING (OFF BOOK)
                              (A) *11/3*
                              (B) *11/5*
                              (C)*11/10*

Week Eleven : Scene Work: Week IV

10/27 **IN CLASS:**   • WARM-UP
                  • READING DISCUSSION
                  • SCENE SHOWING (ON BOOK) (Group B)
                  • REHEARSAL II (Group A)

•CLOSING RITUAL

ASSIGNMENTS
- SCENE PERFORMANCE (ON BOOK)

    (C) *10/29*
- REHEARSAL II FOR SCRIPTED SCENE
    (B) *10/29*
    (C)*11/3*
- FINAL SCENE SHOWING (OFF BOOK)
    (A) *11/3*
    (B) *11/5*
    (C)*11/10*

10/29 **IN CLASS:**
- WARM-UP
- SCENE SHOWING (group C)
- SCENE REHEARSAL (group B)
- CLOSING RITUAL

ASSIGNMENTS
- REHEARSAL II FOR SCRIPTED SCENE
    (C)*11/3*
- FINAL SCENE SHOWING (OFF BOOK)
    (A) *11/3*
    (B) *11/5*
    (C)*11/10*

Week Twelve: Scene work: Week V

11/3 **IN CLASS:**
- WARM-UP
- FINAL SCENE SHOWING (OFF BOOK) (group A)
- SCENE REHEARSAL (group C)
- CLOSING RITUAL
- SCRIPTED MONOLOGUES ASSIGNED

ASSIGNMENTS
- FINAL SCENE SHOWING (OFF BOOK)
    (B) *11/5*
    (C)*11/10*
        - SCRIPTED MONOLOGUES (ON BOOK) *due 11/12*

11/5 **IN CLASS:**
- WARM-UP
- FINAL SCENE SHOWING (group B)

•CLOSING RITUAL

ASSIGNMENTS
- FINAL SCENE SHOWING (OFF BOOK)
  (C)***11/10***
  - SCRIPTED MONOLOGUES (ON BOOK) ***due 11/12***

Week Thirteen: Scene Work Conclusion & Beginning of Monologues

11/10 **IN CLASS:** • WARM-UP
- FINAL SCENE SHOWING (OFF BOOK) (group C)
- CLOSING RITUAL

ASSIGNMENTS
- SCENEWORK
  - SCRIPTED MONOLOGUES (ON BOOK) ***due 11/12***

11/12 **IN CLASS:** • WARM-UP
- SCRIPTED MONOLOGUES (ON BOOK)
- CLOSING RITUAL

ASSIGNMENTS
- FINAL MONOLOGUE SHOWINGS (OFF BOOK) ***due 11/24***

Week Fifteen: Monologue Work

11/17 **IN CLASS:** • WARM-UP
- SCRIPTED MONOLOGUES CONTINUED (ON BOOK)
- CLOSING RITUAL

ASSIGNMENTS
- FINAL MONOLOGUE SHOWINGS (OFF BOOK) ***due 11/24***

11/19: **IN CLASS:**
- WARM-UP
- PAIRED MONOLOGUE REHEARSAL
- CLOSING RITUAL

ASSIGNMENTS
- FINAL MONOLOGUE SHOWINGS (OFF BOOK) ***due 11/24***

Week Sixteen: Final Monologues

11/24   LAST DAY OF CLASS
- WARM-UP

• **FINAL MONOLOGUE SHOWINGS**
 •CLOSING RITUAL

TRAUMA INFORMED ACTING LESSON PLAN

LESSON PLAN (Intro to Performance)

Second Class: WARM-UP DAY

Class Time : 5:30 PM- 6:30 PM

Adjunct professor: Laine Wagner

Activity	Duration	Description
Intro & Structure	5:30 PM- 5:35 PM (5 minutes)	The first thing I do every class gives students a rundown of all the activities we will be doing for the day. This adds structure and "rhythm" to the class. When I keep this consistent students know what to expect. For this class I teach and explain all the different types of actor warm-ups and explain to the students we will be doing an abbreviated version of all of this at the top of every class.
Yoga	5:35 PM-5:50 PM (15 minutes)	I will then go into teaching the class their first sun-salutation, a sun salutation being a set grouping of yoga moves that are then repeated. I try and introduce them to about three different sun salutations over the course of the semester. This again helps students know what to expect. It also helps the students with ease and relaxation. Key principles in both the acting

		methodologies of Stanislavski and Michael Chekov. We also go into depth about breath and how it can be used as a tool both in yoga and while performing.
Meditation & Mindfulness	5:50 PM- 6:20 PM (30 minutes)	The equivalent of a "brain break" in the TIPE model. First students lay down on their backs on the floor, and are told to observe their breath and listen to all the noises they can hear in the room. Next, Warm-Up we work from toes to forehead visualizing our body melting into the floor. I then lead students through an exercise where they go to "their tree". This is a self-led version of meditation that creates a personal and internal safe space for all the performers.
Hot Warm- Up	6:20 PM- 6:25 PM (5 minutes)	Quickly we then do a follow the leader dance where I turn on fun music and get our bodies warm. This often involves jogging, jumping jacks, ect.
Game	6:25 PM- 6:35 PM (10 minutes)	This is a great time to introduce a game without words from Lecoq's Pedagogy. *Metro Station* would be a great way to get students on their feet and working on their observational skills.

Journal Assignment Intro.	6:35 PM- 6:40 PM (5 minutes)	For each class, this semester Students will be asked to write a journal entry reflecting their process. It's important to tell students that everything they write is confidential. They can draw, write about class or talk about life. They can also make an emotional activation map as discussed in the subtheme of self-regulation in the TIPE model. Keep in mind you should give them this option, but not pry for them to share more personal details about their life.
Closing Ritual	6:40 PM- 6:45 PM (5 minutes)	Each day at the end of class I also run a closing ritual where I go around the room to each student and ask them to share their word of the day. They can choose to elaborate if they wish, but they do not have to. I also give them my word of the day and I try to be as honest as possible. This allows me to track their mood and thus create a class that meets them where they are.

<u>Vita:</u>

Laine Wagner was born in Narragansett, Rhode Island G in 1992. She attended Narragansett High School and graduated in 2011. From there, she went on to study at the University in Rhode Island and graduated in 2015 with a BFA in Theatre, concentrations in Acting and Design & Tech. Currently, Wagner is Pursuing her MFA at Virginia Commonwealth University. As well as her educational accomplishments Wagner also toured for a year with Missoula Children's Theatre for a year, and lived in Portland, Oregon for three years where she worked as a professional performer, playwright, and teaching artist at Northwest Children's Theatre.

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