

1-1-1999

A comparison study of process drama and actor training

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A COMPARISON STUDY OF
PROCESS DRAMA AND ACTOR TRAINING

by

MARY PRATT COONEY

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

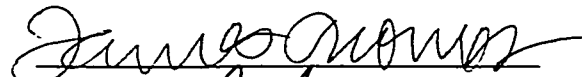
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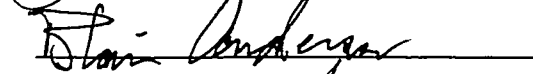
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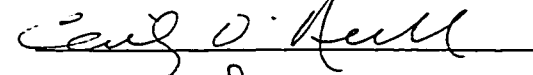
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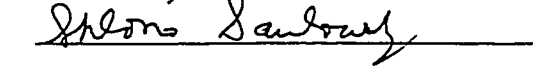
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Cecily O'Neill, an inspiring mentor and friend, whose teachings provide the foundation for this work.

* * * * *

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to acknowledge the support of an excellent dissertation committee:

Professor O'Neill.

My advisor Professor Anthony Schmitt, whose support and encouragement launched this project and sustained me through it.

Department Chairman, Professor James Thomas, who gave permission for this research to take place in his department's classrooms and whose scholarship helped me to make the connection between process drama and the work of Stanislavski.

My minor advisor, Professor Shlomo Sawilowsky, whose expertise in educational research built the bridge that supports the hypotheses.

Professor Joseph Calarco who led me to make the connection between Brecht and process drama.

Professor Blair Vaughn Anderson who helped to formulate the assessment tool, served as an evaluator, and kept a keen eye on the details.

Others I would like to thank are: Christine Jones, Millie Mills, Patsy Huff, Rebecca Treiman, Janet Schmitt, Lavinia Moyer, Charles McGibbon and Nancy Dougherty;

My fellow students in doctoral program: John Gorscak, Leslie Sloan, Keir Cutler, David Young, Deena Conley and Scott Mackenzie, who helped to keep this undertaking in

perspective;

The trusting students of Acting 1040, Winter 1998,
without whom this study could not have been completed;

All of my friends and family, whose support and
enthusiasm made it impossible to quit;

My parents, who ignited my interest in theatre;

Especially, I thank my spouse and sons for the
sacrifices they have made of time and energy to see this
through.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE RESEARCH QUESTION:

What effect does process drama have on actor training?

Actor training programs in higher education have been highly successful in teaching students how to approach the plays we think of as the dramatic canon, beginning with Aeschylus and the other ancients, down the ages through Shakespeare and Moliere, to the first decades of our own century. A major shift in actor training came through the teachings of Konstantin Stanislavski, whose principles have guided actors as they prepare our modern "classics" by playwrights such as Anton Chekhov, Tennessee Williams, and Eugene O'Neill.

Less easily taught, however, are the acting techniques of non-Aristotelian Epic Theatre, largely associated with Brecht and his legacy in the avant-garde theatre tradition. Turning epic acting theories into practice is often mystifying. With all of its contradictions and vagaries such as "historicization," *verfremdungseffekt* ("v-effect"), and "gest," some practitioners are tempted to relegate epic theatre to the criticism classes or to the fringe, hoping it will go away. Yet, Peter Brook claims that "Brecht is the Key figure of our time, and all theatre work today at some point starts or returns to his statements and achievement" (65). Indeed, a growing number of playwrights, including

Peter Weiss, Edward Bond, Dario Fo, David Hare, Sam Shepard, Caryl Churchill, Tony Kushner, and Oyama, are following in Brecht's footsteps. Some of the Brechtian methods employed in their plays have been summarized by Patterson in The Cambridge Companion to Brecht:

- portraying characters not as unchanging and circumscribed entities but as complex, contradictory people whose individuality is a function of a social situation.
- showing that the social situation, more than the emotions or psychology of the individual, is of primary importance.
- a willingness to forgo suspense about the outcome of the plot in order to focus on the way the plot develops; a willingness to consider possible outcomes.
- developing plays that are vigorously theatrical, using exaggerated visual qualities, what Brecht called 'gestic' action, songs, and settings that have something of the exotic -- whether geographical or historical.
- rediscovering the fun of the theatrical event.
(276)

If, as Brook and Patterson imply, playwrights and directors can be expected to continue along this path, it then will be essential that acting students be trained in the alternative acting methods they will need to meet the demands of epic-style plays. All the skills actors have always needed must still be taught; what we need in addition is to teach the actor how to come to terms with the epic style. Where does one turn for help in teaching ways of acting that probably were not included in one's own acting training?

The improvisational acting techniques of process drama may provide an answer. Process drama is already in use by drama educators in a growing number of elementary and secondary schools; Cecily O'Neill, building on the work of Dorothy Heathcote, has introduced these techniques to the educational community. This present research concerns process drama's place in advanced actor training programs.

Definition of Process Drama

Although process drama is similar to other forms of improvisation in that it proceeds without a written text, there the similarity ends. Process drama is an **episodic** form of improvisation that is initiated through the given circumstances of a **pre-text** and develops over an **extended period of time**. It differs from other forms of improvisation in three significant characteristics:

First, as the group members and the leader co-create each episode (scene), the participating actor usually portrays different characters, thus allowing her or him to approach a single dramatic situation from a number of perspectives.

Second, there is no external audience; therefore the actors gain the perspective of being both participants and observers at the same time.

Finally, in process drama the leader, after launching the drama with the pre-text, frequently changes function,

becoming director, playwright, and actor as the demands of the drama change. (See Appendix E for a sample of the devices used in process drama.)

Significance of Proposed Research

The hypothesis of this study is that process drama can enhance the acting skills of undergraduate acting students. If this is proven correct, a new pedagogical tool is available for acting teachers. Not only is process drama effective in teaching acting skills in general; it is also adaptable to teaching those particular skills which are required by alternative forms such as epic theatre. Process drama creates a framework within which acting students can readily explore some of those dramatic elements that are particularly characteristic of epic theatre: contradictory nature of a character, the social implications of a scene, focus on plot development versus outcome, and use of "gestic" actions as part of the process.

Process drama will provide teachers with a way to use improvisation, moving beyond the clichéd, skit-like forms that too often characterize "improv." Process drama allows class improvisation, not just the typical one-on-one exercises. With the teacher "in role," the entire class is involved and the group can more easily maintain a dramatic focus.

Process drama involves a "pre-text," or dramatic

premise. There is a wide range of pre-text possibilities; for example, the instructor might introduce an unfamiliar play text to the class by using process drama to explore it improvisationally before or during the first reading. Students are thus helped to make a personal connection with the theme of the play, further assisting in their understanding. Or, the pre-text might be of a social nature, perhaps connecting a real-world political situation with theatre; we find such connections in the political theatre of Augusto Boal as described in his book Theatre of the Oppressed.

The collaborative nature of process drama work will be of use to students who want to join the experimental theatre world, giving them tools for building their own plays. This leads to probably one of the most fundamental values of process drama: through it a student is not only acting, but is also learning what the basic elements of the dramatic event are and how they function--dramaturgy at its most basic. A student allowed to stretch his or her own dramatic experience using process drama, while also being given a grounding in a Stanislavskian system, will more readily realize that all theatre styles--classic, representational, and epic--merge at the core of dramatic experience.

Summary of the Research Question

The purpose of this study is to build directly on

Cecily O'Neill's hypotheses about the potential that process drama has for actor training. Proceeding from that research, and arising from an interest in Brecht's pedagogy, comes the question: What effect might the use of process drama have on our systems of actor training? Possibly, Stanislavski's system of basic acting skills and Brecht's epic theatre can come together in the medium of process drama, as part of the continued development of exciting, contextual, and authentic actor training.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE: (The Foundations of Process Drama)

Origins of Process Drama

The origins of process drama can be found in the work of Dorothy Heathcote. Heathcote came to educational drama by way of the professional stage in the 1950s and 60s. While working as an actress in England's regional theatre, she began visiting schools as an artist in residence. She was appalled by what Brecht had called the "culinary" (easily consumed) orientation of the drama lessons and set about to use her strength as an actress to engage children in a deeper level of dramatic exploration.

In Drama for Learning: Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert Approach to Education Gavin Bolton, another pioneer in the field, summarizes Heathcote's teaching principles.

They are:

- Drama is about making significant meaning.
- Drama operates best when a whole class together shares that meaning-making.
- The teacher's responsibility is to empower and the most useful way of doing this is for the teacher to play a facilitating role (i.e. the teacher operates from within the dramatic art, not outside it). The teacher/student relationship is laid aside and becomes a more collegial one of artist to artist. (4)

Students wearing the "mantle of the expert" can frequently be seen in role as police investigators, courtroom judges or research scientists. In the book's foreword O'Neill says:

All successful learning depends on the capacity of the learner to bring relevant background and information to bear on a problem and to accumulate further experience as a result of encountering and resolving the problem [. . .].

From the firm foundation provided by the teacher, the students gradually begin to take control of the imagined context, a control they have earned in a context they have helped to create. (vii-ix)

Although she did not refer to her work as "process drama," Heathcote's ideas continue to influence drama teachers and theorists. One of those, Cecily O'Neill, has largely been responsible for describing these teaching principles as "process drama", a term that emerged in Australia and the United States in the early 1990's; she has furthered the practice of process drama in the United States during the past ten years.

In her book Drama Worlds: A Framework for Process Drama, O'Neill contends that "process drama shares the key features of every theatre event, and is articulated through the same kinds of dramatic organization" (xiii). "Process" in improvised drama had been defined earlier by John O'Toole in The Process of Drama as "negotiating and renegotiating the elements of dramatic form, in terms of the context and purposes of the participants" (2). O'Neill argues that the same can be said for theatre production, and that one should

not set process drama at cross purposes with production-oriented drama:

In fact, both process and product are part of the same domain. Like theatre, the primary purpose of process drama is to establish an imagined world, a dramatic "elsewhere" created by the participants as they discover, articulate, and sustain powerful elements of composition and contemplation, but improvised encounters will remain at the heart of the event as the source of much of its dramatic power. (xvi)

Process drama, therefore, involves a set of teaching techniques which use the dramatic experience to instruct. Process drama evolved over the past thirty years, originally in England; as it is becoming known in the United States, its possible applications are expanding.

Stanislavski and Process Drama

Process drama, like most forms of contemporary improvisation, shares some of the principles of acting which Stanislavski developed in Moscow at the turn of the last century. In his autobiography, My Life in Art, Stanislavski states that his struggle was against "the false pathos and declamation, against actors' artificiality and bad conventional staging" (84). Stanislavski's training methods, in contrast, sought to guide the actor towards a more authentic personal response to the dramatic material. His work produced a time-proven system in which the actor uses "outer actions as a path to inner feeling [. . .]" to "awaken consciously his subconscious creative self for its superconscious organic creativeness" (168).

Stanislavski frequently used improvisation in his actor training and play rehearsal. In actor training, improvisation helped teach such skills as observation, concentration, imagination, relaxation, sense memory, and adaptation. An example of the power of improvisation can be found in Stanislavski's most famous book, An Actor Prepares, in which the Stanislavski and his students find themselves in Maria's apartment, believing that a former tenant who had become violently insane, had sought refuge there. The problem of how to escape the madman became paramount:

Either accidentally or on purpose, Vanya who had been pressing against the door after it was shut, suddenly jumped away, and we rushed after him, the girls screaming and running off into another room. In the end I found myself under a table, with a heavy bronze ash-receiver in my hand. (42)

Stanislavski's supposition is that the intensity of feeling and believability experienced by the actors did more than any "external acting techniques" to help the cast understand the importance of focusing on an immediate problem to be solved.

O'Neill contends that process drama could build on Stanislavski's practices by using the "Maria and the madman" scene as a pre-text to further explore the nature and limitations of this imagined world. What was the previous history of the mad tenant? Why had he returned? What was his relationship with Maria? The actor, by expanding this single exercise into a larger context, could benefit both from specific skill development and increasing awareness of

the dramatic form (Worlds 10).

Stanislavski developed one type of improvisation, to be used during rehearsal, which he called the "Étude": actors maintain the character they are playing, but improvise a situation which is similar to the play's action and is close to the actors' personal experiences (Gorchakov 399). Examples of études as documented in Stanislavski Directs describe how they were used in many types of drama, ranging from vaudeville to historical and biographical plays. Études allow actors to explore spontaneously the play's objectives, motivation, line of action, character relationships, inner thoughts and subtext, and historical context.

Process drama is not identical with Stanislavskian études: process drama, for example, might allow actors to take on roles other than their own in order to view the situation from different perspectives; it might permit an actor to move ahead in time, introduce characters not seen on stage, or explore alternative endings. In general, process drama might not adhere as closely to role and plot as do études. However, the two techniques share certain characteristics:

- they both use the script as a pre-text;
- both are developed over an extended period of time, with no external audience present, and with the leader "in role" at times;

- they share the overall purpose of creating the world of the play (or the play behind the play.)

In summary, process drama may expand the teachings of Stanislavski's system by introducing new framing devices while remaining true to his guiding principles.

Brecht and Process Drama

Just as Stanislavski's new style of acting coincided with a period of extreme social change in Russia, Bertolt Brecht's acting innovations coincided with Germany's social upheaval just a few decades later. Both directors used realism as a base, to which Stanislavski added naturalism and Brecht added a presentational style which has since become known as "epic theatre" (a term which is derived from Aristotle's usage for a narrative not governed by the unity of time and without the constrictions imposed on the "higher" dramatic form of tragedy). Where Stanislavski emphasized the psychological motivations of characters, Brecht looked at the shaping forces inherent in his characters' sociological contexts. Stanislavski sought "through-line" and consistency of character, while Brecht chose to explore contrasts, both in character and in plot. Their philosophical differences were extreme; but their shared mission was to create authentic theatre for their times.

When asked to describe the type of acting required for

the plays he wrote, Brecht responded:

[. . .] the only type of acting that I find natural: the epic, story-telling kind. It's the kind the Chinese have been using for thousands of years; among modern actors [Charlie] Chaplin is one of its masters. (Brecht on Theatre 68)

He went on to name, as his shaping influences, the didactic tendencies found in medieval mystery plays, classical Spanish theatre, and the theatre of the Jesuits (76).

An illustration of the dramatic concepts and devices incorporated into Brecht's epic style can be found in his commercially successful adaptation of Marlowe's Edward II at the Munich Kammerspiele in 1924 (Fuegi 33). Brecht's socio-political emphasis was immediately displayed through his choice of subject matter: he saw the plight of Edward's fourteenth-century England as parallel to that of contemporary Germany.

Edward II also illustrates Brecht's use of historicization, a concept that presents modern problems in historical context, thus allowing the audience an aesthetic distance from which to contemplate modern political issues. He wants his audience to be aware that the times they live in are part of the process of political evolution. Events happening today will later be placed in a historical context, in just the same way that we consider the events of the 14th century as part of history. Awakening this political awareness in the audience is a central objective

of Brecht's drama.

Another Brecht keyword, alienation, belongs also to his concept of *verfremdungseffekt* ("v-effect"), in which he wants his audience to see the world through a different perspective, one that is unsettling, so that the audience might gain insight about what is needed for social change. As Brecht defined it, *verfremdungseffekt* is "representation that alienates; one which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar" (BT 192). Consider the scene when a gallows is being prepared for a hanging. During rehearsal Brecht noted that the actors playing the hangmen were being too lackadaisical in tying the noose. It wasn't believable. He suddenly stopped the rehearsal and spent a considerable amount of time teaching the actors precise noose-tying. He wanted the audience to believe that these men could leave the stage and obtain real-world jobs as hangmen. However, once having created this realistic atmosphere on stage, during the hanging the actors turned their backs to the audience and returned in white-face, having covered their faces with chalk. What once seemed familiar, the duties performed by a hangman, became foreign by changing the color of their faces halfway through the procedure, forcing the audience to contemplate this action and its implications. Thus, this form of alienation has made the familiar unfamiliar and vice versa.

The entire hanging scene just described exemplifies what Brecht would call gestus, the overall social "attitude" that the gesture embodies. In Brechtian terms, the hangmen (already skillful enough in the practice of their craft) must take the additional step of stylizing their appearance, placing themselves on a separate existential plane, before they can actually carry out their gruesome work.

In order to portray the narrative style of epic theatre, Brecht used a rehearsal device in which the actors narrated their parts by speaking the stage directions along with their lines. This was to help them get the feel of inhabiting a character for Brecht's specific purpose: not simply to identify personally with the character, but to "tell a story." This also resulted in the actors maintaining some emotional distance from the action of the play. As Brecht stated: "The essential point of the epic theatre is that it appeals less to the spectator's feelings than to his reason" (BT 23).

Brecht's actors did not necessarily abandon Stanislavski's techniques when they performed in the epic style. Such skills as concentration, objective, imagination, and sense memory form the basis of most acting. Angelicka Hurwicz, the first actress to play Grusha in Brecht's Caucasian Chalk Circle, cites Stanislavski's text An Actor Prepares as having "parts which appeared quite important, which I have made use of for years now"

(Cambridge 262). Regarding the tension between Brecht and Stanislavski she said:

All that he (Brecht) said in the Small Organon (sic) against the possession of the actor by his role, which caused so much confusion and indignation, is aimed against actors who forget about their super-task, who only see their own parts, and who offend against the content of the play as a whole, even when they give their parts interesting details and great acting ability. (Cambridge 262)

Brecht and Stanislavski, it appears, shared a belief in the importance of the "superobjective" of the actor to which Brecht added the concept of keeping the actor inside and outside the play at the same time.

It is in teaching actors to master epic theatre that process drama may be the most useful. As an example, this investigator recently used the techniques of process drama while preparing actors to present a performance workshop, entitled "Mythmakers," as part of Wayne State University's Black Theatre program. The acting company used hero mythology as the pre-text, the same way that Brecht used history and literature as the starting point in his dramas.

The narrative, epic style was established by use of story theatre to establish the dramatic premise. The cast, and the high school students they worked with, all played multiple roles in the epic style, which allowed them to explore the hero's quest from a number of perspectives.

"Historicization" came about as the drama juxtaposed the initiation of the mythological hero to that of the young urban hero today. Through the use of tableaux depicting

possible outcomes for the modern initiate, social "gests" were analyzed by participants. All of these epic components worked together to explore dialectically the meaning of the hero's myth for today's youth. The epic style is a very effective form for this sort of teaching drama; and the techniques of process drama proved a useful way for the actors to approach the material.

Literature Review

The literature review focuses on dissertation research on actor training in theatre, and on practice and research in process drama within the last decade. Sub-categories of actor training include (1) training programs, (2) artists' contributions to training, and (3) reflections on acting pedagogy.

Training Programs

Four studies were related to physical aspects of actor training. The first, by Davis, was a four-month mime class to cultivate bodily expression involving seven students. The next, Crawford's, was an eight-week summer workshop with sixteen students observing the significance of music in actor relaxation, concentration, and body centering.

An empirical study, by Acker, to verify the effects of vocal training on the perception of the stageworthy quality of the voice used recordings of an experimental group of ten

students from a Lessac method fourteen-week course, and recordings of a control group--ten students with similar characteristics, but no vocal training. A panel of judges verified that those with training did rate higher than those with none.

A historical analysis of the techniques and theories of physical expression from classical Greece through the Middle Ages in Europe by O'Brien sought to collate widely scattered sources and demonstrate the sophistication of their theories and techniques.

Studies which focus on the psychological aspects of actor training include Porter's 1997 research on the use of drama therapy to increase emotional expression in actors and its implications for actor training. In 1994 Bensen proposed that young actors with limited life experiences can benefit from a study of Greek mythology and Jungian archetypal theories to make a connection between the actor's psyche and that of the character he or she is portraying. Chabora proposed new approaches to actor training pedagogy, describing how certain research in neuropsychology could lend itself to use by actors in their training. Besides analyzing research documents and texts on the Alexander Technique and the Feldenkrais Method, the researcher interviewed actor training innovators--Lessac, Bloch, and Delgado--as well as practitioners from Julliard, Tisch, and the Asolo Conservatory. Gold looks at the fictional family

in actor training as a technique to develop characterization.

Park-Fuller and Pelias describe the emerging discipline of performance studies and how to conduct and evaluate alternative performance art events in the classroom.

Two studies emphasize the role of improvisation in actor training. Brone analyzes the use of improvisation from a theoretical, historical, and practical perspective in 20th century America using the teachings of Sills, Spolin, Stanislavski, Strasberg, and Johnstone. Included is a discussion of the importance of the Compass Players, Second City, and Open Theatre in the history of improvisational theatre. O'Neill in her dissertation study "Structure and Spontaneity: Improvisation in Theatre and Education," examines how improvisation can be used to create formal dramatic structures, using theatrical elements and devices to generate texts resulting in a valid and significant theatre experience.

Artists' Contributions to Actor Training

Dissertation studies of significant artists' contributions to actor training pay tribute to artists from the United States, Europe, and Asia. American artists Sanford Meisner, Anne Bogart, Joseph Chaikin, and Stella Adler are the topics of the first set of studies. Cecchini describes Sanford Meisner's approach to actor training from

1939 through 1991, and examines his legacy as taught by his students at the Neighborhood Playhouse School of Theatre and other New York City acting studios. Olsberg studies Anne Bogart's approach to directing which allows actors freedom as creators and collaborators within the structure of her direction. Her "viewpoint" training and "composition" classes assist actors with this process. Actor and director Joseph Chaikin's thematic investigations and manner of questioning as related to his collaborations with the Open Theatre are explored by Herman. Rotte conducted a structural analysis of Stella Adler's teaching and evaluated her contributions to the actor training.

Looking abroad at actor training, Earnest examines the evolution of the German Hochschule Fuer Schauspielkunst "Ernst Busch" from Reinhart's Schauspielschule in 1905 to today. Included in a discussion of the school's ideology, practice and theory is an explanation of the co-existence of Brechtian and Stanislavskian acting theories in the training program. The contribution of Elsie Fogarty's pioneering efforts as a vocal coach in England during the early 20th century to modern voice training is explored by Palmes. The influence of the puppet and classical Spanish plays in Lorca's actor training process at the turn of the century is studied by Sturn.

A cross cultural study of the differences in Lyubimov's directing techniques for the same play in USSR and US

productions is conducted by Yerieff. Eugenio Barba is considered in two studies: Shoemaker in 1993 examines his performance theory as it pertains to theatre anthropology. Klein in 1988 explores the meaning of Barba's concept of "third theatre."

The final two dissertations available on artists' contributions to training involve the influence of Asian Theatre. Goto examines the career of Suzuki Tadashi, considered the innovator of contemporary Japanese theatre. Discussed is the "Suzuki Method," an innovative actor training program drawing on movements taken from Noh and Kabuki. Goto goes on to analyze the eleven exercises used in the method, demonstrating that physical consciousness is the source of theatrical expression.

A comparison of Brecht's concepts of actor training and the performance techniques he acquired from the traditional Chinese theatre are made by Prophet.

Reflections on acting pedagogy.

Five literature surveys review the historic and current acting texts, teaching methods, and courses offered by American colleges and universities. Holder's findings revealed that many acting instructors are confident of their ability to prepare students for realistic plays, but not other forms of theatre.

Three periodicals: American Theatre, Performing Arts

Journal, and Designs for Arts in Education, have recently devoted entire issues to theatre training in higher education. Most recently American Theatre in January, 1996 reported findings from a national survey of theatre educators on the pervasive influence of film, television, and other mass media on students. Noting that acting students have "become more visual and cinematic, less literary and more comfortable with non-linear modes of expression," (Rustan, 39) many respondents felt that teachers "may be poised to face yet another sea-change in actor training" (Istel, 39).

The Performing Arts Journal in May, 1995 asked critics, artists, and scholars to discuss the issue of pedagogy and performance as it pertains to future of theatre education. Maranca (57) makes the scathing indictment that theatre departments in general are training students for little more than the:

largely moribund institutions of mainstream regional theatre.[. . .][T]his cautious orientation may have been more suitable for a post-war curriculum set on making theatre a respectable form of study, but it is hopelessly out of date given the last half century of experimentation in the arts, and the shift away from dramatic heritage, not to mention the tiredness with which the overly-familiar repertoire is greeted. (57)

Anna Deavere Smith, in the same journal, states that in 20 years of teaching actors she has found:

they have a much broader expressive range than they use, or are encouraged to use. They are seldom pushed to find and to commit to gestural specifics that create a picture of behavior that is as complex as actual human behavior. When I have tried to urge my students

to do this, their response is resistance, largely because of the way they have been previously indoctrinated to believe in psychological realism. I believe in it too, but I think that is only part of the picture. (83)

In his article "Teaching Students to be Artists" also in The Performing Arts Journal Dasgupta pleads with theatre instructors to help their students become more than practitioners ("theatrocrats") and learn how to approach the world through theatre with a critical mind. "[O]ur task must be to open up critically, and that is the key word, the world to our students, and not merely a limited artistic domain [. . .]" (99).

Design for Arts in Education in March/April, 1991 reprints articles from its Symposium on Advanced Graduate Study in Theatre Education. In her article on pedagogy Wilkerson asks university faculty to rethink their assumptions about the purpose of theatre and how it should be taught: "There is a need to liberate college and university teaching from the lecture method and to provide the professoriate with other ways to expose their students to the challenge of learning" (32). She suggests that theatre as a tool for teaching may have implications for the university that go beyond the theatre department. Comtois, the head of graduate studies in playwrighting and former director of the School of Drama at the University of Washington, argues the need for colleges to teach undergraduate students the most basic aspect of dramaturgy,

how new works for theatre are made, and learn the collaborative process involved.

We need to educate our drama/theatre majors about the great diversity of theatre fare being offered outside the mainstream theatres. While in school, they need at least one experience in generative playmaking. A course in play devising should take priority over one in play directing. (27)

Process Drama

Recent developments in process drama include a series of studies being published on research in the field as illustrated in Drama and Theatre in Education: The Research of Practice, the Practice of Research, a result of the Second International Drama in Education Research Institute held in Victoria, British Columbia, in the summer of 1997. This text is a compilation of keynote speeches, research papers and workshop events.

The issues of greatest interest to this study include the debate over qualitative versus quantitative methods of study, the connections being made between process drama and contemporary learning theories, and the need to advocate for drama process's place as a legitimate form of theatre.

In "Beyond the Systematic and Rigorous," Taylor refutes the dismissal of process drama educators by empirical researchers as ungeneralizable. He contends that drama is about human transformation and as such cannot be quantified. He uses the analogy of what happened in the theatre world when Waiting for Godot opened in London in

1955. Critics were aghast by the conventions blatantly broken by Beckett. According to Kenneth Tynan, the critics' reaction only proved that the theatre's rules of convention were simply not elastic enough, and thus they needed to change, not Beckett. Likewise, Taylor calls for a research process that:

- honors artistry
- trusts the participants voices
- embarks on many truths
- generates a flexible and transformative approach. (85)

Jackson as quoted from a symposium in Exeter, England, cautions us to:

be wary of always seeking and trying to prove unambiguously a unified set of facts about outcomes for drama. In our postmodern world we are more likely to stress the importance of the enquiry and perhaps to deny any expectation that we find a single indisputable truth. (58)

Roslyn Arnold in "Articulating Dynamics" addresses the connection between drama and psychodynamic pedagogy, the study of affect and cognition. Briefly defined, "feeling gives life to thinking" (114). It is in the interactive teaching and learning that takes place in process drama one can capitalize on the interplay between feeling and thought and help the student to deepen consciousness and understanding. She states that:

[T]he Piagetian notion that learning is a process of increased cognitive differentiation, now needs to be partnered with a concept of learning as a process of increased affective differentiation

through psychodynamic teaching and learning. (123)

In a keynote speech, Wagner asserts that drama should be allied with the constructivist theory, which transcends simple behaviorist models by putting the significance of meaning back into the study of learning. In keeping with the work of theorists such as Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner, this theory maintains "that knowledge is not passively poured into the heads, but instead is constructed by the learner" (61).

Wagner goes on to emphasize that in this "digital age" students need time to stop and reflect. Teachers are no longer called on to help students master any particular bit of information, but to help them learn how to learn and how to put that knowledge to use.

Finally, Miller along with Saxton, a professor of Drama in Education in the theatre department at the University of Victoria (Canada), in "Lurching out of the Familiar" calls for the need for process drama practitioners to advocate within their theatre departments for acceptance as a valid expression of theatre:

Theatre cannot be totally defined as the well-made play. The mainstream literary theatre that privileges the written text and all the conventions that surround the production of that text is regarded by the western world as "legitimate" manifestation of the art form. Such privileging ignores and erases the broader spectrum, both historical and international. (173)

They go on to remind us of the traditions of *commedia dell'arte*, early street theatre of the medieval mystery

plays, the great court masques, the shadow theatre of Indonesia, puppet theatres of Japan, and the sacred world winter dances of the Kwakiutl in northern British Columbia. Process Drama, they contend, is a modern manifestation of these ancient theatrical forms as also seen in the work of Peter Brook and Augusto Boal.

The remaining literature review of Process Drama is not exhaustive. It focuses on the texts and journal articles that the author has found helpful in developing a understanding of how the process works.

In New Beginnings: Knowledge and form in the drama of Bertolt Brecht and Dorothy Heathcote, Alistair Muir explores the belief that "knowledge and the means for change through theatre form (1)" are shared by Brecht and Heathcote. Through the comparison study of these two theatre artists, Muir contends that educators can learn much about "the transformational power of education (1).

One should note that Wagner in Handbook of Research on Teaching of English Language Arts provides an overview of over 100 empirically-conducted studies to measure the educational value of drama in education. Many of the studies had positive outcomes in teaching oral language, reading, writing, mental imagery, and creative thinking; as well as personal attitudes such as self-confidence, self-concept, self-actualization, empathy, helping behavior, and cooperation. (796)

In one of her own studies, Wagner conducted an experimental study of the effects of role playing on persuasive letters. Eighty-four randomly-selected fourth graders and seventy eighth graders wrote letters to their school principals on three different topics in one of three instruction conditions: (1) role playing prior to writing, (2) direct instruction and presentation of models prior to writing (including a set of rules and examples), and (3) no instruction. The main effects, interactions, and post-hoc analyses of covariance and Newman-Keuls tests on both the Highest Target Orientation Level and the Variety of Levels measure show that the fourth and eighth graders who role-played produced letters that were significantly more oriented towards their target than students in both the other groups.

Wagner, in 1976, also wrote one of the earliest books on what has since become known as process drama: her study of Dorothy Heathcote: Drama as a Learning Medium. Heathcote and Bolton elaborated on her methods with Drama for Learning: Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert Approach to Education. Bolton's Towards a Theory of Drama in Education is considered a groundbreaking study in this field.

O'Neill has written most extensively on process drama beginning with Drama Guidelines (with Lambert, Linnell and Warr-Wood) and Drama Structures (with Lambert). Both

provide pretexts and support for the novice teacher. In 1984 O'Neill (with Johnson) wrote Dorothy Heathcote: Collected Writings on Education and Drama and provided insight into Heathcote's philosophy and teaching methods. Drama Worlds: A Framework for Process Drama is the outgrowth of her earlier-cited dissertation research into the connection between process drama and actor training. In O'Neill's work, the alternate reality created by teacher and students in the classroom, (through use of pre-text, role-playing, and improvisational episodes) constitutes the "drama world." It is within this world that process drama takes place. The book aims to assist teachers and directors in initiating and maintaining the drama world through examples and strategies. She explores in depth the kinds of pre-texts that launch process drama, the kinds of roles available, its relation to its audience and dramatic time, and the leader's function in the event. She writes that process drama provides, for the student actor, a readier access to the theatrical experience:

Learning about drama occurs through engagement in the experience. Too often, theatre arts courses expose students' deficiencies and weaken their confidence by immediately requiring them to perform both formally and informally. For many, lack of experience and technique will make this a painful experience. Process drama, on the other hand, permits direct engagement with the event, a range of role taking, and an encounter with the power of drama without necessarily demanding the immediate display of sophisticated acting techniques. (Worlds xvi)

Other books of note are Verriour's In Role: Teaching

and Learning Dramatically; Swartz' Dramathemes: A Practical Guide for Teaching Drama; and Morgan and Saxton's Asking Better Questions.

Drama Matters: The Journal of the Ohio Drama Education Exchange, first published in Spring 1996, is solely devoted to research on process drama. Two significant journal articles (from other sources) are Edmiston's "More Than Talk: A Bakhtinian Perspective on Drama in Education and Change in Understanding"; and "The Liminal Servant and the Ritual Roots of Critical Pedagogy" (McLaren).

Each of these sources contains extensive bibliographies for further study.

In summary, the literature review shows that there is a strong interest in the academic community regarding contributions to acting pedagogy; and that practitioners of process drama are seeking ways to expand its applications. While this study builds on the body of prior knowledge in the field, it does not duplicate existing studies.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND CONDUCT OF STUDY

Description of Research Design

Given the hypothesis that process drama can improve the acting skills of university theatre students, an intervention study was conducted during a one-semester undergraduate acting course for non-majors in the winter semester of 1997-98. An experimental pretest-posttest design was selected because of its ability to control for threats to internal validity. Two sections of the course were taught; one using a traditional teaching method and the other using process drama. The investigator taught both sections (the investigator will sometimes be referred to as the "teacher.") A pretest was administered by the investigator to establish a baseline for all students. The standard evaluation technique of performance observation was used in both sections for the mid and posttests. The same acting skills and knowledge were tested in both sections.

Sample

The sample for the experimental group was made up of 7 males and 9 females; 3 freshmen, 5 sophomores, 3 juniors, 4 seniors and 1 undetermined. They majored in various fields including criminal justice, business, early childhood education, political science, computer science, music, and fine arts. One student had not yet decided on a major;

another had just decided to major in theatre and was taking this as his first class.

The sample for the traditional group was made up of 5 males and 13 females; 5 freshmen, 3 sophomores, 4 juniors, 4 seniors and 2 undetermined. Their majors duplicated many of those in the experimental group, in addition to english, dance, physical therapy, psychology, and nursing.

In both sections, the students' stated reasons for taking the course fell into three main categories:

- "to enhance my presentation skills in my chosen field"
- "something I have always wanted to try"
- "undecided about my major field of study - considering theatre as an option."

In terms of class standings and variety of majors, both groups were fairly diverse. Because of attrition, the group became unevenly divided genderwise, with more females in the traditional group than in the experimental group. This variable could only have been corrected by reassigning groups, which was not feasible. Gender, in any event, was not a major consideration in the hypothesis of this study.

Instruments

A six-item skill assessment instrument was devised using three levels of measure (1 = poor; 2 = Satisfactory; 3 = Outstanding). The six assessed skills were as follows:

- Speech
- Physical
- Listening
- Concentration
- Clarity
- Energy

After the students were randomly assigned to traditional and experimental groups for the semester, each student was pretested through observation, using the skill assessment instrument described below and in Appendix D, to establish baseline information. Assessment of each student's progress was made at midterm and again at the end of the semester. The final evaluation, once again using the skill assessment instrument, was made through observation by two faculty members in the Wayne State University Department of Theatre as well as by the primary investigator.

Content validity of the skill assessment instrument was addressed by having the two evaluating faculty members participate in the design of the instrument.

The six skills in the instrument were selected because they had measurable components. These skill categories are similar to those already in use at Wayne State University Department of Theatre to evaluate student progress. These skills also reflect the influence of Stanislavski's acting principles on the department's actor training program. The skills are defined as follows:

- Speech: vocal volume; vowel tone; speech clarity and enunciation of consonants.
- Physical: appropriate movement; physical contact with other actors.
- Listening: focused listening; ability to listen and adjust to partner.
- Concentration: knowledge of lines, ability to be centered and relaxed.
- Clarity: ability to select a believable goal and to adopt clear tactics to attain it.
- Energy: ability to create a sense of expectation, enthusiasm, and excitement.

These selected skills are connected with the text used in the course. In Acting One, the class text, Cohen states that students must "master the basics of talking, listening, tactical interplay, physicalizing, building scenes, and making good choices (xv)."

Procedure

The study, with protocol approved by the University's Human Investigation Committee, was originally scheduled for Fall semester 1997. Due to low enrollment (11 students) in the course selected, the study was postponed until Winter 1998. However, the investigator did teach that course in the Fall semester, and the one-semester delay proved advantageous, allowing the investigator to pilot lessons incorporating both process drama and traditional learning approaches.

The low enrollment problem was resolved by actively

recruiting students across campus, through flyers and through an advertisement placed in the campus newspaper The South End (see Appendix B). The investigator also encouraged the students from the Fall semester offering of the course to recruit their friends for the Winter semester. The result was an initial enrollment of 44 students for the Winter semester. Even after dividing the enrollment into two sections, the classes were large: usually the ideal acting class size is 12 - 16. As hoped, attrition during the first 2 weeks of the term resulted in more manageable groups of 16 and 18. The classes were scheduled to meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays for 90 minutes at midday.

Although written consent is not required for classroom research, the Human Investigation Committee chair suggested that every participant be asked to sign a letter of consent to confirm his or her participation in the study. This suggestion was followed. The consent letter helped to formalize the proceedings, and encouraged the students to take seriously their roles in the investigation (see Appendix A).

The course syllabus was based on the department's current syllabus for non-major acting courses, with adjustments made for fewer class sessions due to the division of sections. As much as possible, the process drama syllabus paralleled that of the traditional class (see Appendix C).

The stated objectives for both sections were as follows:

1. Gain confidence performing for others.
2. Free the imagination through improvisation.
3. Explore the potential of the theatrical ensemble.
4. Learn fundamental acting techniques.

Robert Cohen's textbook Acting One was used in both sections. The same written midterm examination was given to both sections to evaluate text learning.

During the first week the groups were combined in order to give participants an overview of the research objectives for the class, conduct the pretest, and give students an opportunity to add or drop the course before sections were assigned. Each student was given a fact sheet about the study and a 3" x 5" card to record personal data such as name, class rank, major and reason for taking the class. The cards were divided according to gender, by an independent party, in order to keep the balance of males and to females between the two groups for optimal class dynamic. Students were then randomly assigned to one section or the other. Section assignments were announced during the final moments of class at the end of the first week. From then on the experimental group students met on Tuesdays and the traditional group met on Thursdays.

Pretest

The pretest used the skill assessment instrument

described above. The test was based on the first three episodes of the process drama "Famous People" found in Drama Worlds (104-09). It was selected because many beginning acting students associate acting with a life of fame and stardom, and this drama allowed them to explore the fantasy and the personal ramifications of such a life. The three episodes will be described in order.

EPISODE ONE: The first episode took place on the set of a television talk show. The teacher (in-role as a talk show host) interviewed each student (in role as a celebrity guest). The teacher asked each guest to state in a sentence what he or she liked most about being famous, and then asked what was least desirable about being in the limelight.

Analysis: This opening scene established the rules of the game. In process drama the teacher in-role becomes whomever she says she is; the student is thus implicitly given permission to become whomever he or she wishes to be, in response to the situation presented by the teacher. The acting skills the investigator/teacher evaluated were whether or not the student could:

- 1) be energetic and uninhibited enough to enter into the imagined world of the drama;
- 2) listen carefully enough to the "cues" being given within the drama to make appropriate responses;

- 3) concentrate enough to sustain an improvised character for the duration of the scene;
- 4) vocally project loudly enough to be heard when answering a question;
- 5) assume a physical attitude in keeping with the elevated status of the role.

EPISODE TWO: The students divided themselves into small groups for this episode. Within each group, the students chose one of their number to play the role of a famous person as a young child. (The "famous person" could be one of the people the members of the group had played in the previous scene, or could be a generalized "famous person.") The group's task was to devise a tableau in the form of a family photo. Somehow the family photo/tableau was to indicate that this child was destined to become a "star" sometime in his or her future.

Analysis: Here the focus changes from a room full of famous people to a selected few, so that the drama can begin to include the other "actors" in a famous person's life: family members, friends, etc. By requiring the students to move back in time from the first episode, the work enabled the students to realize the flexibility of time in the world of drama. The exercise also required the students to work together quickly, to brainstorm, and to come up with a tableau which demonstrated a time, place, and situation to

illustrate this bit of character background.

The investigator/teacher, in evaluating this episode, was observing whether the student could:

- 1) Sustain the pose with enough physical concentration and clarity of action that the audience could satisfactorily interpret what they saw;
- 2) Be energetic enough in this static pose that the audience felt compelled to watch and perceive the intended meaning;

EPISODE THREE: The students were now assigned to work in pairs. In each pair, one student assumed the role of the "star" and the other took the role of his or her agent. The pairs were to engage in a telephone conversation in which the "star" needed to cancel an important engagement, and was reluctant to explain to the agent the real reasons for the cancellation. The actors sat back to back, to simulate the lack of eye contact during a phone conversation.

Analysis: The investigator moved about the room and observed the pairs in action as there was no external audience for this scene. Student evaluations were based on:

- 1) how actors used speech to convey their character's goals and tactics;
- 2) how carefully the actors listened to each other and concentrated on overcoming the obstacles

presented by the other character;

3) whether their physicalization supported the attitude they conveyed in the dialogue.

The investigator was able to observe the students while facilitating the drama. The investigator then completed an assessment sheet for each student.

The pretest served to establish a skills baseline for each of the students. The same skills assessment tool was used again at the midterm and, finally, for the posttest.

Course Work

The course work was divided into four units:

- introduction,
- scene work,
- monologues, and
- final presentation.

Unit One

Introduction

The introduction, which lasted for two weeks, was directed towards teaching basic acting vocabulary and concepts. Robert Cohen, the author of the course text, Acting One, presents in the book an acronym, "GOTE," which he uses to represent the four basic principles that he believes "represent a basic method for approaching an acting assignment." The letters stand for Goal, Other, Tactic, and

Expectation. GOTE became the basis for all character analysis in both the traditional and the experimental sections of the course. The four basic principles are defined by Cohen as follows:

- Goal: The fundamental principle of all acting. Goal is "what the character wants," also known as objective or intention.
- Obstacle: That which stands in the way of achieving the character's goal.
- Tactic: Real interpersonal behaviors designed to influence other people. There are two basic types of tactics: those that induce and those that threaten.
- Expectation: Whether realistically or not, the character expects to reach the goal, and expects that the tactics will succeed in overcoming the obstacles. It is the character's expectation that gives rise to those other "E words," such as Energy, Excitement, Electricity, and Enthusiasm. If the character lacks this expectation, the audience remains uninterested and the presentation falls flat.

Traditional Group

In the traditional group the introduction to GOTE was accomplished through acting exercises and improvisations as prescribed in the Cohen text. The text is intended to be used a little at a time, ideally over a two-year period. Because of the introductory nature of this course, many

components were sampled. The following are examples of exercises Cohen described, and which were used in the traditional group to teach his GOTE principles. The parenthetical references are to the text:

- GOAL: (exercise 1.1 and 1.2) First the student stands in one place and simply reaches for the ceiling. Then the student is told that just beyond his or her reach is a beautiful jewel and to try and reach again. This is intended to demonstrate the importance of having a reason for doing any action on stage. The student has to want something in order to be dynamic.
- OBSTACLE: (exercise 1.3) The student is asked to repeat the last exercise, with the difference that this time he or she is feeling ill, and the more he or she reaches, the stronger the feeling of illness becomes. This, states Cohen, makes the act of reaching become an emotionally complex experience and launches the process of acting.
- TACTIC: (exercise 4.7) Cohen frequently uses what he refers to as "contentless scenes," meaning that the dialogue does not have any intrinsic content. The meaning is to be created by the student. The dialogue for this scene is:

A: I know you will.

B: No, I won't.

This pair of lines is repeated by the students five

times. The objective is for A to experiment with a range of tactical approaches in making his or her statements, beginning with inducement and ending with threat. In this exercise the student experiences the variations on the two types of tactic.

■ EXPECTATION: (exercise 5-1) The student is asked to memorize Masha's line in Chekhov's The Three Sisters: "I am bored, bored, bored." Cohen suggests that Masha's real goal in this line is to get "unbored." The prescribed exercise has the student trying to deliver the line a number of times, each time conveying a different expectation. For example:

1. The character wants to liven up the party.
2. The speaker wants to allure another character.
3. The speaker wants her sisters to acknowledge her intellectual superiority.

The student then realizes that what he or she expects to have happen heavily influences how the line is to be delivered.

These exercises and many others were part of the first unit for the traditional class.

Experimental Group

The experimental group developed a process drama based

on a pre-text from Drama Worlds about the return of Frank Miller (141-44). As each episode (scene) was completed the group analyzed the work they had just done, looking for the four GOTE elements.

The premise of the drama is that a man named Frank Miller has returned to his hometown after being gone for ten years, and the townspeople have reason to fear him. The motives for this fear and the events that occur upon his return are explored through the drama.

In one episode the class was separated into three small groups and each was assigned the task of creating a scene in which a stranger appears in a public place and those present try to discern if this stranger is, indeed, Frank Miller. The three scenes created in the experimental group became the occasion for focused exploration of Obstacles.

Scene One: The first small group set its scene, not in a public place as instructed, but in an after-hours club. Those inside kept the doors locked. The stranger approached, but the guard wouldn't let him in. He knocked and asked politely to be admitted. He knocked and asked a second time. The third time he barged through the door and chaos ensued. The scene broke down in confusion.

Analysis: The whole experimental class, observing this scene, came to the conclusion that the physical obstacles created by the locked door and the obdurate

guard were so great that the stranger could not overcome them. Obstacles that are actually insurmountable keep the drama from moving ahead. The group repeated the scene, but this time chose a regular night club for the setting, so that the stranger could enter; the scene then could proceed.

Scene Two: The stranger came into a local bar, sat down on a stool and started "chatting" with everyone there talking practically non-stop. The locals began asking questions, apparently assuming that if he liked to talk so much he'd tell them about himself. The stranger, however, evaded the locals' questions in such a way that the scene couldn't progress.

Analysis: This scene provided an example of verbal obstacles that are too great. No one (probably not even the stranger) could discern the stranger's goals or tactics. Why did he draw so much attention to himself and then anger townspeople by deflecting their questions? Economy of language can strengthen tension and interest.

Scene 3: A group of friends are having dinner in a local restaurant. One actor creates great ambiance as the attentive waiter. The stranger enters wearing a low slung fedora and carrying a newspaper; he sits at a table in the corner. First one member of the dinner

party notices him, then others. He seems to be cautiously glancing at them over his paper. The dinner chatter becomes more and more subdued, soon in whispers the diners are speculating as to who is sitting in the corner.

The stranger summons the waiter and whispers to him. Next thing we see is a bottle of wine being delivered to the dinner party, "compliments" of the stranger. The consensus is that Frank Miller is here.

Analysis: In this scene, the physical obstacles consist of a hat covering a portion of the face and a newspaper used as a shield. The mood changes from light and festive to fearful. The stranger communicates but by mime with the waiter and by symbol (wine) with the diners. The scene has a beginning, middle, and end. Yet the scene leaves everyone wondering--why the wine? What does it mean?

Comparison of Traditional and Experimental Groups

In summary, the main difference between the sections for the first unit was that the traditional group learned basic concepts within the context of specifically designed exercises. The experimental group learned the basic concepts within the context of the on-going drama, so that development of character and plot coincided with acting terminology.

Unit Two

Scene Work Using a Script

Traditional Group

Various two-person scenes, all from Antigone by Jean Anouilh, were assigned to class members. This modern version of the ancient Greek play was selected for a number of reasons: it enabled the class to make a contemporary connection with ancient classics; it provided strong roles for the female majority of the class; most roles were similar in age to the actors portraying them, making it easier for beginning actors to identify with the character; and finally, the dramatic tension--whether one should follow the state's law or one's conscience--was straightforward and readily grasped by the young actors. The entire group was assigned scenes from the same play so that the students could see the variety of interpretations of one scene and the development of a character throughout the course of the play. An added benefit was that if one actor were absent from a class there would be another actor present studying the same role, or even the same scene, who might assist his or her classmate in rehearsal. This helped to maintain class momentum. During the course of rehearsing and memorizing scenes, each student completed a written character analysis, referred by Cohen as a "GOTE sheet." By the conclusion of the unit each pair had performed their scene before the class at least once. Some scenes were more

"polished" than others, but everyone had the experience of overcoming the initial hurdle of performing before the group.

Experimental Section

Here, Anouilh's play served as pre-text for exploring Antigone's life in a range of settings. The classwork took the form of six episodes, preceded by an introductory session. These are described, along with an analysis of the process drama devices incorporated.

Introduction:

Gathering the group into a circle, the teacher announced that the story of Antigone would be the focus of the next few sessions. Students were asked to recall what they knew about Antigone. Fortunately the story was already familiar to most of the class, and the group worked together to retell the story.

Analysis of Introduction:

In the process of "storyweaving," a story is crafted by the group; each participant is encouraged to contribute a portion of the plot. The group's attention focuses on the story; a shared body of knowledge and a common mood begin to arise from the experience of telling the story. Rather than just have the teacher review the facts of the story, this way of starting the drama allowed the communal, mythic, and ritualistic qualities of the piece to unfold.

With the group still in the circle, the teacher, in role, began the drama itself with no prior explanation:

"I don't know why I keep coming out here. Foolish girl. She makes me sick. Acting like such a big shot! A real hero, burying her brother just to get herself killed. Well, she got what she really wanted . . . all the attention. (Silence) So . . . why I do I keep coming here? We all know if Creon's guards catch us here at her grave, we'll be in trouble. I can't stop sneaking in here. You, I've seen you here before, why do you keep coming?"

With that the dialogue amongst the group began as to why they had come to Antigone's grave. Some are inspired by the girl's conviction. Some are just curious. Some can't believe she is really buried in there: perhaps it's just a royal conspiracy meant to scare and distract us from all the other evil Creon is doing.

Next, the teacher posed the question: "What's next? Where do we go from here? Do we just sneak in to look at her grave forever?" Some suggest we form the core of a revolutionary movement. Others say let's forget about it and go home and try to get on with our lives. Still others think we should start a secret society to support other dissidents, explaining that we can't all be heroes, but we can help.

The discussion is brought to a conclusion when the teacher spots a guard appearing in the distance. The scene ends so that all can disperse quickly. After the scene has ended the class discusses what has just happened and its

implications for dramatic meaning.

Analysis of Episode One:

The device of teacher-in-role establishes the context, place, time, and mood of the drama within the scene itself. The aim is to help the participants "build belief" in the dramatic premise more quickly and easily than if this were explained out of role prior to beginning the scene. The class members are, in effect, members of the community-- people whose everyday lives are being altered by the "Big Event." This episode, of course, actually begins just after the big event of the actual play has taken place.

The teacher-in-role speaks at some length initially but becomes less dominant as others join in. Hopefully, by seeing the teacher take the risk of leading within the drama, students will relax sooner and be more willing to join in, as well as to maintain character and concentration in the ways modeled by the teacher. Because the participants must decide who they are and what their character's motive is while the scene is in progress, the resulting spontaneity increases the energy and concentration of the group. Through this process the dramatic focus begins to emerge.

The teacher intentionally chose a skeptical role in order to provide an attitude that other members of the group might choose to challenge. The episode raised questions about how we are to perceive our society's "martyrs;" could

students dig more deeply and find alternatives to the heroic cliches? The episode also introduced the notion of ambiguity of character. How could a person pay tribute and at the same time feel angry? How could a person choose to enter into a risky situation, yet not be able to articulate reasons for being there? How do we as a community grapple with chaos? As the scene was discussed, the students found themselves aware of such questions.

Episode Two:

The teacher divided the class into small groups of three to four people and gave each group five minutes to create a short newscast of one of the key events which occurred during the days leading up to Episode One, the graveside scene. The purpose of limiting the amount of the groups' preparation time was to ensure that the ideas stayed as spontaneous as possible, and to keep the group focused on the work at hand. Experience has shown that with lengthy preparation time performances can become overly intellectualized and convoluted. In the scenes witnesses were interviewed, editorial comments were made, Creon even held a press conference (for spin control). These scenes were one to three minutes long. As each group performed their newscast scene, the remainder of the class served as audience. The teacher acted primarily as stage manager and assisted groups when asked.

The anachronistic device of the newscast helped to "historicize," "distance," and change perspective. It also allowed the students to bring their modern sensibilities to an ancient situation and connect more familiarly with the historical situation. Similar devices are encountered in Brechts's work. Having just experienced the results of these events from the commoners' standpoint in the prior scene, the students now could explore how it felt to be a "key player." Again, what took place in this episode was not an actual scene from the play re-enacted, but the event as it would be reported on, keeping the students one step removed from the actual "living through." The newscasts were presented in chronological order to help gain perspective on the chain of events in the drama.

In this episode most students took on high status roles of royalty or media personalities; therefore language and movement became very formal. Even "common folk" spoke more formally when being interviewed by the media. Focus was developed in the choice of the key event that each group chose to cover. Decisions had to be made about time and place for each scene. The tension and mood were communicated through the interview format. Some humor even came into play (e. g., Creon as a blustering politician). Even in tragic situations there is humor to be found and vice versa.

Working in small groups, again with short advance preparation time, students were assigned to create a series of tableaux depicting scenes from Antigone's early childhood. (A similar exercise to one done during the pretest) The focus of these tableaux were on signs that she was destined to sacrifice her life for her principles: moments where she insisted games were played fairly, or that family pets must be treated humanely. Her devotion to her brother (Polynices) was also shown in these tableaux.

Analysis of Episode Three:

Because tableaux require the discipline of posed bodies with no movement or sound, they are excellent for the study of dramatic tension, focus, place, time, mood, and symbols. One facial expression, gesture, attitude, or physical relationship has to tell a whole story for each participant. This exercise also requires the physical discipline to sustain a pose for a relatively long period of time, thus enhancing concentration skills greatly.

Likewise the students observing the tableau have the challenge of "reading" the dramatic meaning of the moment placed before them. It became clear that there is frequently more than one way to interpret the meaning of eye contact, group composition, and relationships. Frequently the meaning derived by the audience was not intended by the actors. This gave rise to the opportunity for all to learn about the wide range of symbolic meanings. To pull the

meaning of a given tableau together, the audience might be asked to create a title for what they have just witnessed. This edits many words of interpretation into a succinct few. Another step in tableau work, if the particular tableau's meaning is extremely hard for the audience to interpret, is to ask the actors to bring the tableau into motion, turning it into a short, usually wordless, scene. Alternatively, Augusto Boal's technique of forum theatre can be employed to "interrogate" characters in an individual tableau about her or his goals, obstacles, tactics, and expectations. The tableau, although a very basic process drama device, can lend itself to a great range of discovery for the student as actor and audience.

Episode Four:

The teacher opened this episode by reminding the class of the opening scene at Antigone's grave and the questions that had been raised as to whether or not she did the right thing in burying Polynices. The teacher pointed out that despite what personal motives there may have been, nevertheless according to ancient Greek religious belief, the soul of a dead person cannot rest until his body has been properly buried. Ultimately Antigone provided that rest for her brother.

A theatre game called "hand search" was played. Each student chose a partner. Taking one another's hands they closed their eyes and tried to "memorize," by touch, what

the partners' hands felt like. They were told that they would be separated from their partners and, still unable to see, would be asked to find each other through touch. After a few moments the pairs were split up and moved (eyes still closed) to different parts of the room; they were then given the signal to begin the search. The goal was to find one's partner as quickly as possible without seeing or speaking. The teacher (with eyes open!) made sure no one hurt themselves while walking blindly about. The students thus experienced the sensation of being in search of completion. The intent was to simulate the feeling of connection that is needed between the soul and eternity in order for the soul to rest. Students were able to use only their sense of touch for assistance; they experienced the fear and frustration of separation coupled with the exhilaration of finally being reunited with the right partner. Time was spent afterward reflecting and talking about the experience offered by this simulation game.

Analysis of Episode Four:

Use of game for simulation of an emotional event can be more powerful for sense memory than other methods of emotional recall.

Episode Five:

The class was asked to imagine what was the most difficult moment in Antigone's life. Deciding to break the law and bury Polynices? Dying by suffocation? The

consensus among the students was that the hardest part was saying a final farewell to her loved ones. The class was then assigned to work in pairs. In each pair, one actor took on the role of Antigone while the other could choose between playing Ismene, Haemon, or Nurse. Facing each other, seated in chairs spread about the classroom, each pair improvised the farewell conversation that might have taken place between these characters, moments before the guards came to take Antigone to her execution. The improvised conversations took place simultaneously around the room. There was no "audience" except for the teacher who went about listening to bits of the various conversations. Some partners reminisced; some were still caught in debate about whether she had made the right choice, and some had few words at all. The teacher concluded this episode when she felt the scenes had run their course. All actors stayed in character until asked to stop.

The teacher then told each character to recall one key word or phrase he or she felt had particular meaning to them from the dialogue and asked that each be ready in just a moment to repeat that word or phrase. She then asked one of the students who had played Antigone to come forward and be seated in the center of the circle. The other students gathered in a close circle around her and, on the teacher's cue, began walking around Antigone's chair. As the students passed Antigone, each spoke their word or phrase of

farewell. This created a vocal montage that expressed the wide range of thoughts and feelings which had just been expressed by Antigone and by her loved ones as she confronted death. The pattern was repeated several times, the teacher sometimes directing the group to deliver their words more loudly or more softly.

With some of the other episodes, the students engaged in a great deal of discussion following a scene. However, at the conclusion of this one, the room remained silent for some time.

Analysis of Episode Five:

The process drama device of working in pairs allows for a more intimate level of interaction than had been explored in previous episodes. This coupled with no outside audience allowed actors to take some emotional risks in this "living through" exercise. Until now the action of the process drama had revolved around the perimeter of the key event. This is the first time Antigone's voice was heard. Because there had been episodes leading up to this, the scene (which could in other circumstances have easily become maudlin or even melodramatic) instead was the occasion for a remarkable degree of trust and commitment. The students were willing to dig into the emotional content of the situation--to experience what it might have really been like to say good-bye. The vocal montage allowed the actors to feel how variations in volume can effect the emotional range of

words, even when the words themselves do not change. The montage also demonstrate how intense emotion can be expressed in a contained setting. The exercise taught the students ways to create dramatic tension, focus, time, language, and mood.

Episode Six:

To conclude this unit on Antigone the teacher explained that when Anouilh wrote his version of the play in 1942 it was a way to "historicize" what was happening in his home country of France during the Nazi occupation. There was no freedom of speech to confront such tyranny and betrayal directly so Anouilh did it through reference to the safely ancient past. The question was then posed: "Where in today's world are people in need of Antigone's inspiration?" Responses such as Bosnia, Northern Ireland and China were given. The class was then asked to imagine that they had been commissioned by a "secret society" in one of these countries to create a subversive work of art that could stand as abstract symbol promoting Antigone's principles for all to witness. This could be done in the form of a statue, a sculpture, or a dance. No words could be used, although there could be movement and sound. The students were given more time to prepare this exercise than in some of the previous episodes, because they were now quite immersed in the experience of the play and it was thought that this was an appropriate occasion for the class

to refine some of the techniques that had been learned. The class took great satisfaction, as they watched each other's responses to this assignment, in the diversity of expressions that were produced by the group to commemorate this young girl's story.

Analysis of Episode Six:

The purpose of the abstract expression was to summarize what had just been done and to draw a symbolic conclusion. From the devices we had used throughout the unit, the students could now choose the one best suited for them. The focus was on how to translate the dramatic meaning of all that gone before into a concise form. Strong dramatic emphasis was on movement, space, mood, and symbol.

Unit Three

Monologues

Traditional Group

Lasting 2 weeks, this brief unit focused on the memorization of monologues. Each student selected a one minute monologue to memorize, complete a GOTE sheet on, and perform. The teacher assisted in selection and preparation if requested. The process of auditioning, and the importance of monologues for auditions, were discussed. Final presentation of the monologues was delayed until the end of the semester.

Experimental Group

This group created one-minute monologues based on the character they had played in their two-person "farewell" scene in the previous unit. The monologues were written as if they were letters to another character in the play, diary entries at a critical point in the play, or a direct confrontation with a character in a play. The function of the GOTE sheet was also introduced and used in character development for the monologue.

Time constraints prevented full presentation of each individual piece so the monologues were anonymously passed amongst the class and each student selected one that impressed him or her. The student then edited the monologue selecting key phrases, images or words felt to be dramatically strong. These then were woven into a vocal montage and presented by the ensemble.

The exercise allowed students to experience what it is like to have someone else present their creation. Students learned to identify those key words and phrases that carry the scene's dramatic impact. The exercise also emphasized ensemble presentation over individual performance. This also served as preparation for one aspect of the "playbuilding" that took place in fourth unit.

Unit Four

Final Presentation

Lasting four weeks, this unit focused on preparing a

presentation piece for the evaluators by incorporating the acting skills studied during the semester. During the final week of the course, the two groups--traditional and experimental--had the opportunity to observe each other's final product.

Traditional Group

Students in this unit chose a contemporary two-person scene or monologue, memorizing it, doing character analysis, and rehearsing during class time. Class members were given the option of monologue or scene because it became evident during the second unit that some students were more committed to working with a partner than others.

The following is a student's description and assessment of this final project:

Before the class dove into the actual scripts, we performed basic exercises to fight stage fright and to learn how to develop a genuine character. Many of the exercises were utilized to build energy, because the more energy you have the more life you can bring to your character on stage. The GOTE sheet was a key factor in developing a more believable character.

Using what we had already learned, the next task was learn lines and stage movement, which to me was the most difficult part. It's easy to recite lines, but the stage movement is what makes them sound real and not like they're being read. You have to practice and practice in order to flow smoothly through a scene.

While we worked on prescribed material the other class had the challenge of coming up with their own material. It is this creative process that I think our class lacked. We were able to portray a character in whatever way we saw fit, but there has to be great satisfaction in performing what you developed from the very

beginning.

However, with prescribed material we were able to put more effort into stage movement and character development. It also seemed that the other class based their performances on personal scenarios, which is fine, but it is often more challenging and rewarding to play an entirely different person.

We also had fewer people to depend upon. When you put on a performance that requires the entire class, you put your faith in strangers. We all worked on monologues and two-person scenes. It is much easier and less stressful when you only have to depend on one other person.

Experimental Group

Process drama by nature is not meant to be performed in a traditional performance setting, but because outside evaluators needed to observe individual students, something had to be presented to facilitate comparison with the traditional group. Therefore process drama devices were employed in a "playbuilding" format which resulted, over a period of four class sessions, in an original ten to fifteen minute play. To maintain the correspondence between the groups, this play was created by the experimental group during the same number of class hours that had been set aside for the traditional group's rehearsal of their scenes. The experimental group's play was then performed for the evaluators. Playbuilding, as described by Tarlington and Michaels, results in "non-naturalistic, expository plays . . . Its main focus will be on presenting an argument, with scenes linked logically rather than temporally" (20).

The students began in the first of the four assigned

class sessions by "brainstorming" a topic for the play. This process put special emphasis on the intended audience, i. e. the students' own peers. Once the topic-- "Relationships"--was chosen, a process drama device known as "silent negotiation" was used to stimulate the creation of scenes.

The class was divided into five small groups. In each small group, one member silently struck a pose expressing his or her feelings about some aspect of the general topic of Relationships. The rest of that group observed and attempted to "read" what the group member was attempting to convey by that pose; then each of the group members in turn silently got up and joined the pose. In a few moments, each small group had created a group pose. At that stage it was not clear whether or not the group's pose represented a consensus about the group's feeling. Next, all the groups except one were asked to abandon their pose and come to observe one of the groups, and to comment verbally on what they all thought the small group was up to. After a short time, it was another small group's turn: they resumed their pose, and the rest of the class now gathered around them and commented. In this way, each small group, holding their own pose, had the opportunity to hear how their pose was being received and reacted to by the class.

After all five small groups had taken their turn in the "spotlight," each group was asked to return to its own

rehearsal space in the classroom and work to prepare a one-minute scene. Each group in turn performed its scene before the class. In some cases, a group prepared a scene based closely on the original pose its members had taken. In other cases, a group found that its thoughts and feelings about its pose had been radically affected by the comments the group had heard from the rest of the class, and the group's one-minute scene was very different from what the original scene would have suggested.

At this point, the class had created five scenes about "relationships."

At the second assigned class session the separate scenes were linked into a coherent drama through what the teacher/investigator has termed "one-liners." The teacher presented to each student a sheet of paper containing a series of six incomplete sentences intended to generate ideas. All pertained to the general topic of "relationship"--for example, "When I think of relationships I" Each student was asked to fill in a word or a phrase to complete each of the six sentences. The completed sheets were then passed around the class, and each class member chose a favorite sentence (which had been completed by some other class member) that appealed to him or her. Next the class went "on stage." Each student took a position in one end of the classroom, in no particular order, and they all spoke their "one-liners" at the same

time, in an exercise somewhat similar to the vocal montage used in the Antigone unit. After the students had gotten used to saying their sentences, the teacher called on each student in turn to repeat the line, and asked the class as a whole to react, with a gesture or a word, to the line. From the several reactions among the class, the teacher selected a single group reaction to each one-liner, and the class was asked to adopt that reaction as its response. The class rehearsed the lines and the reactions.

At the third assigned class session the teacher placed the scenes and the one-liners in a coherent order so that the one-liners linked the scenes. The rehearsal process continued through the remainder of the third session and at the fourth assigned class session the final rehearsals took place.

This "playbuilding" process begins with an individual's silent reaction to the stated theme of the work to be created. Still in silence, others state their reaction. Only in the third step of playbuilding do the creators have the opportunity, if they wish, to incorporate the verbal comments of others into the developing play. This overrides the temptation for the students to become too contrived, which is likely to occur if the process begins with words rather than with physical expression. Using bodily vocabulary facilitates students' use of more symbolic situations; from those situations the actual text of the

play is launched.

The teacher served as playwrighting editor, recorded what happened, composed one-liner sheets, edited, staged and conducted rehearsals in order to facilitate aesthetic values, and gave the class a feeling for what it is like to work with a director under time constraints.

The following description of the playbuilding process was written by one student for his final reflection:

Since the midterm, we began setting up our play. We began by throwing ideas out until we had a list of about 25 or so key words that we would use as guides for our play. We then voted and eliminated most of them until we had just a few to work with. Our keyword of course, was "relationships." This worked out perfect because of the word's infinite possibilities.

We then paired off or grouped together with others and were told to make a pose that we thought represented relationships. At this point everyone was confused, but in a good way. This caused everyone to spontaneously work out a scene from a single pose.

After this we were given a sheet of paper which asked us to respond to various questions dealing with relationships. Some people answered seriously, others comically, giving us a very broad set of answers. We then handed these sheets out where we picked our favorites to become one-liners for our play. At this point I don't think anyone knew we had almost written our entire play.

After all of this we basically put our play together day by day. Everyone gave suggestions and before we knew it, you handed us all scripts containing our scenes and one-liners. A couple of days it took, but we did it.

This class was genuinely a great experience. The spontaneous format we took allowed me to see the quick possibilities and results that we achieved. No script at first to follow, just stray ideas quickly formed into our play.

Internal Validity

The value of any study is at risk unless the

investigator becomes aware of the variables that threaten internal validity, and attempts to control for them. Listed below are threats which needed to be controlled for in this intervention study.

- **Subject characteristics:** Because it was not possible to select participants completely randomly for the study, there is a chance that skills and other characteristics might vary from group to group. The control for this is that the initial pretest should reveal any significant initial variations.

- **Mortality:** There is a risk that some students will drop out of class before the term is over. This can create an imbalance in the sample size between the two groups. There is no control for this; however, it will be assumed that students with low scores drop classes.

- **Location:** Allowing each group to work in the same space (or in identical spaces) is considered very important for significant results. If one section meets in a spacious theatre studio and the other meets in a cramped classroom, environment alone can affect attitudes and the ability to work creatively, thus harming final outcomes. Both classes met in the same room at the same time of day, on different days of the week.

- **Instrumentation:** Fatigue can influence outcomes: towards the end of the experiment, the participants and the

investigator begin to tire. Every effort was made to maintain consistent energy and both sections encountered the end-phase simultaneously.

Another source of instrument decay can come from the uncertainties of adapting process drama to standard teaching instruments. To help control for this, acting teacher Dr. Blair Vaughn Anderson monitored the "traditional" section and Dr. Cecily O'Neill monitored the "process drama" section for continued comparability.

Investigator bias also contributes to instrument decay. With the same investigator in both sections, problems that stem from different personalities were controlled for. However, in this study the investigator would prefer to find positively for the process drama outcomes, which can affect not only instrumentation but implementation as well. Therefore, special care was taken to approach each section with an equal amount of enthusiasm and commitment to teach. The outside evaluators provided a control for this threat.

■ **Testing:** One of the dangers of a pretest is that it can alert students to what the investigator is looking for in the final outcome and thus contaminate results. In acting class, this awareness should not affect the teaching processes that followed. Any effect it may have had would impact both groups equally, since both groups took the same pretest.

■ **History:** This concerns the things that happen

outside of class during the semester that contribute to student learning, such as play attendance or being cast in a play. Since students from both sections had an equal opportunity to participate in these activities, historical validity should not be threatened.

■ **Maturation:** Growth in students inevitably happens as they learn more from daily living, regardless of the effectiveness of a teaching technique. Because both sections were taught for the same amount of time, maturation should have affected everyone equally.

■ **Hawthorne Effect:** This is a term researchers use to describe a change in behavior that occurs because subjects know they are being studied. It was important that students not be told anything more than that they are part of a study to compare to teaching methods, with no preference given to one over the other.

These controls, along with careful monitoring of all research activities, should have contributed to the internal validity needed to achieve external validity, and thus generalizable results.

Data Analysis

The SPSS software program was used to analyze the results. At the end of the course student outcomes were analyzed using the following statistical techniques (all statistical hypotheses were conducted at the nominal α level

of 0.05.):

- descriptive statistics; this involves describing the average scores attained by the subjects.
- univariate F-tests; these are used to analyze, statistically, the variation both within and between each of the two groups.
- multivariate analysis of variance; this is a statistical technique for determining the significance of the differences among arithmetical means, where two or more dependent variables are present in the same analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

A multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted on the six dependent variables (i.e., speech, physicalization, listening, concentration, clarity and energy) posttest scores with the pretest scores used as covariates. The Hotellings' T2 was significant ($F = 2.185$; $df=36, 110$; $p=.001$). Step-down univariate F-tests are reported in the table below.

Table 1
Univariate F-tests

Subscale	F	df	p
Speech	2.30	6.25	.105
Physical	2.61	6.25	.042
Listening	2.86	6.25	.029
Concentration	2.13	6.25	.085
Clarity	3.96	6.25	.006
Energy	2.78	6.25	.033

The performance averages are summarized in Table 2. On average, the traditional group scores slightly exceeded the experimental group in Speech (.07) and Energy (.02). In the other four areas where the experimental group scores exceeded the traditional group scores, they did so by somewhat higher margins: Physical (.18); Listening (.21); Concentration (.17) and Clarity (.13).

Looking at the combined averages for both groups, the

greatest overall improvement was in Speech (.36); Listening (.27) and Energy (.26).

Table 2
Combined Means

<u>Speech</u>	Pre	Mid	Final	Overall
Traditional	1.94	2.12	2.41	2.15
Experiment.	2.00	2.00	2.25	2.08
Combined	1.97	2.06	2.33	

<u>Physical</u>	Pre	Mid	Final	Overall
Traditional	1.94	2.12	2.06	2.04
Experiment.	2.13	2.25	2.27	2.22
Combined	2.04	2.19	2.17	

<u>Listening</u>	Pre	Mid	Final	Overall
Traditional	2.29	2.53	2.37	2.40
Experiment.	2.31	2.75	2.77	2.61
Combined	2.30	2.64	2.57	

<u>Concentrat.</u>	Pre	Mid	Final	Overall
Traditional	2.41	2.59	2.33	2.44
Experiment.	2.38	2.69	2.77	2.61
Combined	2.40	2.64	2.55	

<u>Clarity</u>	Pre	Mid	Final	Overall
Traditional	2.24	2.41	2.18	2.28
Experiment.	2.19	2.63	2.42	2.41
Combined	2.22	2.52	2.30	

Table 2 (continued)

<u>Energy</u>	Pre	Mid	Final	Overall
Traditional	2.24	2.41	2.47	2.37
Experiment.	2.19	2.38	2.48	2.35
Combined	2.22	2.40	2.48	

Supplemental findings are found in the written midterm scores; the mean was 88 for traditional and 85 for experimental. Both approaches found most students in the B ranking, with the traditional section doing slightly better.

Another supplemental finding lies in student attendance. Only those students who missed more than 2 classes during the semester were required to take a written final. In the traditional group this resulted in 7 of 18 students (39%) and in the experimental group 4 of 16 (25%) taking the final exam. Attendance was therefore slightly higher in the experimental group. The significance of this is in the ensemble nature of the work. Possibly students felt a greater responsibility to be present in the creation of an original work.

With regard to the submission of other written assignments such as play reviews, character analyses, and class reflections both sections responded evenly.

Reliability

The data was analyzed using the SPSS software program. The reliability coefficients are shown in Table 3. Cronbach

Alpha, a measure of internal consistency, showed strong reliability for the 6 items. However, this statistic must be corrected for the effects of the short test length. Therefore, total scale projected reliability was projected by using the Spearman-Brown Prophecy Formula (S/B) to estimate reliability had the number of items been increased to a full 36 scale (six objectives times six items). The results confirm a high reliability for the instrument used.

Table 3
Reliability Coefficients

	Pretest	Midterm	Posttest
Alpha	.90	.83	.88
S/B	.98	.97	.98

Kendall's (K-W) Coefficient of Concordance was used to determine the level of agreement between the three judges on the 33 students for a scale of one item. The results are depressed due to the low number of items being tested. Therefore, the Spearman-Brown estimate was applied to increase the one item to six. (This is a somewhat novel application of Spearman Brown.) The rationale for this number was based on the fact that the subscale contained six items, therefore it is feasible that each item could be increased by 6. The result of the Spearman-Brown estimate shows that rater concordance is suitably high.

Table 4

Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance

	Speech	Phys.	Listen.	Concen.	Clarity	Energy
K-W	.62	.44	.58	.61	.47	.59
S/B	.91	.83	.89	.90	.84	.90

Summary of Results

The results showed that in four of the six categories (physicalization, clarity, concentration, and listening), skills were improved in the experimental group, to a significantly greater extent than in the traditional group. In one category (energy) the results were about even, with the traditional group showing slightly more improvement; it has been hypothesized that if the sample size had been larger, the experimental group would have improved significantly. In the sixth category (speech), it was the traditional group that showed more improvement. This requires some discussion, which will be found in the following chapter.

Overall, the findings confirmed the hypothesis that process drama shows statistically significant advantages over traditional actor training for beginning students. The exception within the skill area of speech needs to be accounted for.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary and Conclusions

The research question posed at the beginning of this study was: What effect does process drama have on actor training? In this study, process drama techniques proved more effective than traditional teaching techniques at developing young actors' skills in the specific categories of:

- physicalization,
- clarity,
- concentration, and
- ability to listen.

Traditional techniques, however, were more effective at developing skills in the category of speech. In the sixth category, energy, the experimental and the traditional techniques were equally effective. A discussion of possible explanations for these results will follow.

The study's procedure involved dividing a class of beginning acting students into two groups: traditional and experimental. The learning objectives remained the same for both groups; the only variation was in the teaching techniques.

Students were pretested by the primary investigator through observation at the beginning of the semester, to establish a base-line in the six skill categories. At the end of the study, two external evaluators participated in

the posttest observations to ensure reliability and validity of the results.

The results showed that in four of the six categories (physicalization, clarity, concentration, and listening), skills were improved in the experimental group, to a significantly greater extent than in the traditional group. In one category (energy) the results were about even; had the study group been larger, that category would also have been statistically significant for the experimental group. In the sixth category (speech), it was the traditional group that showed more improvement. Again, with a larger study group the traditional group would have shown a significantly greater degree of improvement than the experimental group.

Explanations for Results

The following section seeks possible explanations for the study's results.

Physicalization: The students' improvement in the areas of appropriate movement, and physical contact with other actors.

The students in the experimental group actually created, through process drama, each of the characters they played during the semester. This made it easier for them to identify physically with the characters they portrayed. The impulse for the physical action came from within because the character itself sprang from each student's own imagination.

It appeared that these students could "connect" more naturally with the choices they were making and feel less self-conscious. The experimental students were able to develop character first through thought, then through body, and finally through words.

Although students in the traditional class did improvise some responses during various skill exercises, it was primarily through the written text that they encountered dramatic characters. They did not themselves originate these characters. Therefore, they were required to process character first through words, then find the bodily actions and thoughts to support the words. Ultimately this process is required of the majority of professional actors, but it is also a very sophisticated and complex undertaking. Some young actors instinctively master the process quickly; others find it overwhelming. A young actor can become physically detached when approaching a character perceived as "other." It appears that it takes longer to "physicalize" a character through scripted material than through process drama. Stanislavski, as noted earlier, helped his actors develop a physical sense of their characters through his "études," which bear some resemblance to the episodes used in process drama.

Listening: The students' improvement in the areas of focused listening--the ability to listen and adjust to partners.

In the experimental group, the improvisational nature of the work meant the students had to listen carefully so that each would know when and how to contribute to the scene being created. In the absence of written text, students had to learn to listen for their cues. It took intense concentration and dependence on others in order to be successful. If a student chose not to pay attention, the work would simply proceed without her or him--the group participation kept the momentum going. Therefore a student who wanted to participate had to be alert throughout the preparation process.

In the traditional section, some group activity was part of the daily warm-up; however, the core focus of class was on one or two people at a time. Listening to the whole group, therefore, did not have as much immediate importance. Also, with written texts as the basis for the scene work, the student could simply read her or his lines and the other characters' responses, at least during the early stages of rehearsal. The written text reduced the amount of time the student spent making eye contact, and also made it tempting for the student to anticipate what the other character was going to say by being able to read it. Written text, at this stage, allows the student to short-cut to his or her own next line, rather than concentrating on what the others are saying.

Process drama allows the beginning student to

concentrate on listening in scenes. In actor training and play preparation based on process drama, the complication of reading the text and listening at the same time comes only at a subsequent stage.

Concentration: The students' improvement in the areas of knowing lines, and being "centered" and relaxed.

For the experimental group the number of individual lines a student had to memorize were fewer than for the traditional group; however, the experimental group also had many lines that were delivered chorally. Students thus had to concentrate on picking up cues from a dozen different people. Since the scenes were not very long and the entire group was usually on stage together, students were not as easily overwhelmed or nervous. The group support resulted in more relaxation, and readiness to jump in with one's own contribution to the piece.

In the traditional group concentration was primarily focused on memorization of lines. Until that was mastered students did not have the time to concentrate on the subtleties of acting. Some handled this well. Others got "stuck" on the demands of memorization; these students' performances tended to be more mechanical, with much energy spent on recitation and not much left for playing the role. In some instances the pressure of being on stage alone for a monologue or with just one other person for a scene blocked the student's ability to center and relax. Students in the

traditional group tended to feel more like they were "on the spot."

Process drama, with its group performance and minimal line memorization, seemed to result in increased concentration and more relaxed performances.

Clarity of Action: The students' improvement in the ability to select goals and tactics.

In the experimental group goal-selecting was made easier because the group helped to create their own goals as part of creating their play. Selecting goals and tactics evolved naturally from the work itself. The experimental group's shorter scenes made the goals and tactics more manageable and easier for beginning actors to encompass.

The traditional group had to discern their characters' goals from a written text and then devise tactics to achieve these goals. With the added steps involved, it took the students more time to master the techniques, and in some cases goal-setting could not be achieved within the time limits of the course.

With process drama, clarity of action is easier to comprehend because the context is simplified and more manageable for a beginning actor.

Energy: The students' improvement in creating a sense of expectation, enthusiasm, and excitement.

The experimental and traditional groups were statistically close in this area. The prediction tests show

that with a larger group the experimental section would have excelled in this area as well.

In the experimental group the reason for their high energy had to do with the fact that they selected the topic for their final production. Knowing they had created the text became a source of pride for the group. The amount of group reaction kept momentum within the performance going. The pace rarely lagged. All of this contributed to sustained energy in their performance.

The high scores for the traditional group show that students were committed and engaged in their scene performance. Most of these students enjoyed being on stage and performing their scenes.

Speech & Voice: The students' improvement in the areas of vocal volume, vowel tone, speech clarity, and enunciation of consonants.

In this area the traditional group's improvement exceeded that of the experimental groups; and had the group size been larger, the statistical significance of the difference would have grown. One explanation for this result is that possibly more students in the traditional group had a background in speech than in the experimental group. The traditional group had more words to memorize, and speaking lines was a larger component of the scene work than in the experimental group. In other words, the traditional group showcased speech more significantly.

Future ways to correct for this lack in process drama might include expanding the process drama into longer scenes. Integrating monologues into process drama performances would also emphasize speech skills more.

Student Responses

At the end of the term the students wrote final reflections summarizing what they had learned from the class and comparing their section with the other one.

Students in both sections noted the importance of having a "goal" for the actor. Key items among the observations of the experimental group were that they seemed to understand the importance of being aware of the total dramatic situation that one is a part of, listening to others, reacting quickly to what has been said, supporting other actors, the value of teamwork on stage and the rewards of creating original work.

Key items among the observations of the traditional group were their awareness of the different stages in the rehearsal process, appreciation of the depth of character that they explored in their scenes, the challenge of memorization, the intensity of focus required when working with one other person, and the similarities of this style of classwork to what they believe they will encounter in the world of professional theatre.

After observing the traditional group perform, members

of the experimental group voiced disappointment in not having more memorization work to do. They said they had missed the interpretative challenge of an existing script, a traditional actor-director relationship, and the intensity of role portrayal allowed in two-person scenes.

The traditional group noted that they had missed the satisfaction of creating original performance material, the teamwork exhibited by the experimental group, and the creative reflexes developed by continual exposure to process drama teaching techniques.

The investigator is pleased to note that the majority in both sections felt they had been instructed well and learned much; neither group said they felt "favored" over the other. Both groups indicated they had gained self-confidence through the class experience.

Members of both sections were very generous in their appraisals of their peers' work, noting that there is value in both techniques. For example: one student, from the traditional group, said, "We arrived in the same boat; it just took us longer to get there." Another student, from the experimental group, said he now felt better prepared to attempt the sort of scene work he had seen the traditional-group students do, without being as intimidated as he might have been had he not had the experimental experience. Students in general said they believed that combining aspects of traditional and process drama techniques would be

advantageous to all.

The following samples of student responses are quoted verbatim. Each paragraph is from a different student:

Experimental Group

Since the midterm, we focused on building a short play. This required concentration as to what the goal was and how to achieve it. As a class, we voted that the play should deal with relationships, but we also decided to do it in a way that our peers would understand. Needless to say, we paid a great deal of attention when it came time to stress certain aspects using facial expressions, phrases, and body movements. In all, the end result was a tribute to our dedication to reaching our goal.

For me, it was a true learning experience. I had to realize that every single part of the play was to be treated with equal attention and concentration. When it came time to react to someone else's line, I had to do so with every intention of making that line and that actor stand out as the most important aspect of the play at that moment in time. It wasn't as easy as I originally thought. I had to identify with what the actor was feeling and how the lines were being delivered . . .

Acting involves people behaving in ways that support everyone else. Even if the roles required that two characters be at odds with each other, the actors playing those characters must strive to enhance each other's performances as much as possible.

This class has really let me see that everybody has to work as a team when acting.

Improvisation skill increased our speed to react and confidence level to perform . . . you must be aware of everything in the play. You have to pay attention; but not be afraid to go with what feels right.

We learned a lot about relationships in the practice of our final exercise. Not only because of the quotes used and brainstorming of ideas, but the actual interaction between us the students, is where the real learning took place.

The pros to our method of acting training I believe are the relations made between us as individuals in the class. It teaches us to react on the spur of the moment. We learned about others around us and how to fit in to create a believable atmosphere while acting. The only con I see in the method we used is the lack of practice in memorizing lines.

This class was genuinely a great experience. The spontaneous format we took allowed me to see the quick possibilities and results that we achieved. No script at first to follow, just stray ideas that quickly formed our play . . . My major is film, so it is directly obvious how I will be able to use these techniques in the future, allowing my actors to flow and give me their feedback rather than follow a direct script.

I was amazed at how we came together as a group of strangers to do something so complete and well done.

This process . . . tells the actor to trust him or herself, to believe in what he or she has to offer as an individual. It aims to convince any actor that the contribution he or she makes is genuine and valuable, as long as it comes from within.

This method encourages creativity, while leaving a sense of reality in the character's words and actions. The only con I can think of for my section's acting method is that we did not get the experience of bringing life to a cement script. We were not trained to mold our minds into the vision that is our director's. In the real world most acting is not improvisation, but improv is more fun.

The thing I like more about our methods was open creativity. Having to work as one big group, it felt harder to remember the whole thing whereas in the other class, they worked with one other person for the whole scene. It wasn't like a story, but rather a scene which allowed them to be more intense and get into role better. I think learning our methods has helped me to better perform like the other classes methods. If I jumped into the final script, like in the Thursday class, I might not have done as well as I feel capable of now.

I enjoyed what we did in class a lot. I thought it was fun and educational. Quite honestly my favorite college course to date. However, after seeing the other class' performances I was rather impressed,

though I'm not sure if the acting was better or just the writing. In any event, both classes worked well. They got people involved and I sensed a feeling of accomplishment from both classes.

Traditional Group

I see the importance of a character having a goal. Having watched the other class, I felt we learned more about acting. I was disappointed at first that I wasn't in the "improv" class . . . The good part of our acting method was that we just had to concentrate on acting, not coming up with material. The bad part of it is that I'm a creative person, and it was frustrating having to stick to the script. Overall, I learned a lot, and I'm really glad I took this class.

This class really gave me more self-confidence. As for the other class I think they had the chance to work more closely as a team. Their scene work included all of them and depended on all of them. Our class, however, had the chance to work on a more individual basis. This really helped us to focus more on our parts.

I now have a basic understanding for how to go about studying, rehearsing, and playing a role. I know what I have to do in order to relax while on stage. I prefer the traditional acting training because this is the method that's been used for training actors for thousands of years and its been proven to be effective. In improvisational training there is not time to really analyze one's character, and look for deeper meanings in what the script says, because the script is being made up pretty much on the spot.

The whole ordeal was quite a learning experience. It was interesting to feel myself become the character as I read through the lines and actually being able to feel the same emotions of the character and then shut them off completely. I never knew I was capable of such a thing. I believe this will help me place myself in other peoples' shoes, to look at situations in different ways than my own. I find more pros than cons for the Thursday section. I believe we learned a lot more acting. It would seem at first that the Tuesday section had more room for self-expression, but I thought we had equal opportunity to do so within our characters. It didn't seem the other class had a chance to play a character as we did. The only con I

really noticed was that the other class seemed much more together. Ours was more segregated.

We learned about the self-directed script, how to chose our skit properly and how to make it alive in our audience's eye. We learned many dos and don'ts of stage etiquette, like stand open towards the audience, don't move around a lot or it will weaken your presentation and don't make eye contact with the audience. We didn't use our imaginations quite as much. We learned memorization rather than reaction. We were challenged to allow our imaginations and personalities run loose, in a confined area.

While we worked on pre-scripted material the other class had the challenge of coming up with their own material. It is this creative process that I think our class lacked. We were able to portray a character in whatever way we saw fit, but there has to be great satisfaction in performing something that you developed from the very beginning. We were able to put more effort into stage movement and character development . . . The other class based their performance on personal scenarios, which is fine, but it is often more challenging and rewarding to play an entirely different person.

We had fewer people to depend upon. When you put on a performance that requires the entire class, you put your faith in strangers. We all worked on monologues and two-person scene work. It is much less stressful when you only have to depend on one other person.

I have learned the skill of initiative. An actor must make himself noticed . . . When I played the character of Florence in "The Odd Couple," I realized that I have goals and tactics to accomplish those goals. The hardest part for me to figure out what these goals were because sometimes I can't even figure out what I want, let alone this character.

I feel our class was instructed well, yet I feel that if we were given an opportunity to think on our feet with impromptu, we may have become aware a lot quicker. I know our class has had a better opportunity with being able to experience some actual playwrighting, but we did not really have to think about our acting. I became involved with my scene, character, and myself, but it was not until later into the class. Overall, I feel that both classes ended up in the same boat, it just took our class more time to think on our feet and

start to swim.

Based upon my observation of the other class section's work the pros of the acting method I studied are as follows: Most of the work that actors come across in their acting careers will come from scripts that have already been written without a specific actor in mind, so as an actor you have to adjust yourself to the part, which teaches discipline. The cons of the method of acting that I studied are as follows: There is no room to create or to let your individuality shine through.

Memorizing lines and actions from a play, and putting in my opinion of how the character would react to certain situations gave me a chance to get the feeling of performing live.

In my introduction to acting this semester I discovered something that I think I'm pretty good at, and that is very fun and interesting. The other class with their improvisation method didn't have as much work to do as we did. In our study we had to memorize scripts that had already been performed. These scripts set a standard for us to follow, and in turn forced us to act in a certain way. The big con in our study was the memorization of lines and working by ourselves on stage or with just one more person. This made everything a little bit more personal and it put more pressure on us to do a better job because we were the center of attention.

We learned different ways to make a scene work. Personally I was satisfied that I didn't pass out while performing my monologue, but I believe I could have done a lot better had I attended every class and rehearsed a little more. Overall, this class has met my expectations and was to my enjoyment.

Based on my observation of the other class section's work, I can say the pro's to being in the scripted section were familiarizing myself with script work, learning by working with partners, learning to memorize, and having something concrete to focus on. The cons would be not being able to improvise, waver from the script, and be totally creative. We had to memorize and had a longer and harder project to do. Even though my cons outweighed my pros, I am still glad I was in the scripted section of the class, because I that I learned much more and that our section might be a little more realistic for future classes.

There are several positive aspects of each method, and in general the pros of one method are the cons of the other. Our method allowed us to concentrate more on character development and interpretation, because we had scripts that were already written. We were able to develop the techniques needed to interact with one individual in a truly personal fashion, whereas they interacted more as a group than individuals. This was something we unfortunately did not get to experience. The other class developed skills in teamwork and formation of a family-like atmosphere in their work group.

Evaluator Comments

Outside evaluators for the final project made comments similar to those expressed by the students. The evaluators felt that experimental group excelled in ensemble skills, whereas the traditional group members were able to demonstrate more individual skills such as character interpretation and memorization.

One evaluator who had previously observed actor training at the Moscow Art Theatre noted that process drama is very much in keeping with that institution's tradition of teaching students to be conscious of their presence in the dramatic situation, and at the same time to be conscious of others. The Moscow Art Theatre's philosophy is that when such an awareness has been developed, only then is the student ready to move on to the next phase, and to begin mastering the skills needed to encounter characters in a written text.

The investigator found it easier in many ways to begin the semester with the traditional class, because the lessons

were well defined in the text, clear-cut. Process drama, on the other hand, became easier to work with during the final project: once the premise of the drama had been launched the students increasingly assumed responsibility for the outcome of the piece.

In the traditional class, due to the individual and paired nature of the work, uneven class participation was more noticeable; some students were more consistent with attendance, prepared with material and eager to rehearse than others.

The nature of the traditional class involved a scene being "presented" for the teacher; classmates could either observe or rehearse privately with their partner. Some students had no qualms about showing their scenes "in process" and rehearsing before peers; others found this intimidating and avoided having to do so, which resulted in uneven class attendance. In the end, some final scenes were presented having been observed by the teacher only once before which did not allow for much assistance or coaching. The final impression was that those who were naturally adept at this to begin with performed well at the end. For the others, this method of working made it difficult to overcome barriers of stage fright and to really explore acting possibilities.

Although both teaching methods are effective for their specified goals, a combination of both techniques would be

most effective.

Implications

Stanislavski and Process Drama

In Chapter Three the six skill categories under study in this experiment were chosen based on departmental objectives, and that those objectives are, in turn, grounded in Stanislavski's teaching principles. The fact that in four of the six skill categories the experimental group students improved more than the traditional group students is a strong indication that process drama is effective in teaching those very acting skills which Stanislavski thought important.

Brecht and Process Drama

The Brechtian/epic principles, as they relate to process drama, include:

- exploring the contradictory nature of a character,
- developing the social implications of the dramatic situation, and
- focusing on plot development rather than upon outcome.

Although these principles were not part of the quantified study, the potential of process drama to give students experiences in the epic style was clearly demonstrated.

Examples of looking at the contradictory nature of a character are to be found throughout the experimental group's process drama experiences during the term. For example, the drama about "Frank Miller" explored the life of the title character, a man who was considered to be a town terrorist but who was also a father longing to be united with his child. In "Antigone," we experienced the contradictory behavior of community members gathered at Antigone's grave site, who both resented and revered her behavior. In the final performance piece about "relationships" the class examined ways we are drawn by the desire for intimacy and at the same time fearful of it, and how our behavior as we deal with those contradictory feelings can at the same time be both humorous and sad.

An example of developing the social implications of a dramatic situation is found in the experimental group's final episode of "Antigone." In that episode, the students learned about the political situation in Nazi-occupied France, as it influenced Anouilh's version of the play. They then went on to develop dramatically the moral principles illustrated in Antigone's story, and to create metaphors of resistance in contemporary settings of political oppression. As Brecht suggested, they used their art as a tool for political expressions relevant to the modern situation.

Instances of the importance of plot development versus

final outcome in process drama can be found throughout the semester. In none of the process drama scenarios did the exercise reach a traditional dramatic conclusion. In "Famous People" the emphasis was the moment at which celebrities at the "top of their game" could no longer continue. The process drama focused on what led to the rise and demise of the career, and the impact of this event on those closest to the celebrity; however, there was no resolution to the character's dilemma. In "Antigone," because the process drama began where the actual play ended, the ramifications of the event received the emphasis: what happens to those who remain after her death? How did she say good-bye to her loved ones? Why was it so important that she did what she did? In the "Relationships" drama the answer to the question of how young adults perceive the world of dating today was woven like a web. There was no precise beginning, middle, or end; just the range of connections made and missed presented for actors and audience to reflect upon.

Pedagogy

In the Literature Review a number of questions were raised about acting pedagogy. Based upon the above discussions, valid answers to some of those questions can be found in process drama.

Holder's survey found that most acting teachers are

uncertain about how to prepare students for other than realistic forms of acting. The experience of the experimental class with "Antigone" would indicate that process drama may provide a tool for this sort of preparation.

Process drama likewise speaks to Rustan's contention that acting teachers must prepare students for the "more visual and cinematic, less literary and [. . .] non-linear modes of expression (39)."

Process drama responds to Maranca's call for actor training that deals with the kinds of experimentation that have taken place in theatre in the second half of the 20th century.

Process drama addresses Deveare-Smith's concern that today's students need to learn a "gestural" style of acting that is broader than psychological realism.

Dasgupta described the need for what he called "critical thinking about the world," on the part of those who teach actors. This thinking would lead the teacher to instructional forms that go beyond skill building. It would appear that process drama, with its emphasis on politicization and externalization, moves instruction in the direction Dasgupta described.

Wilkerson sees implications for theatre as a tool for teaching in the university that goes beyond the theatre department. Certainly process drama, as shown in this

study, has the capability of providing non-theatre students with the experience of using drama to explore questions that matter to them.

Process drama certainly answers Comtois request that every student take a least one course in "generative playmaking (27)."

Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the conclusions of this research that process drama is a valuable tool for teaching undergraduate acting students there emerge a number of new questions to be investigated. For instance, the instructor seeking to use process drama as a pedagogical tool will encounter several challenges which bear further research:

- How to find an appropriate pre-text which can draw material from existing plays, stories, myths and folk-tales to use as "seeds" to begin the drama.
- How to frame episodes as they evolve.
- How to lead "in role" when required - not as an outside observer or side coach but as part of the drama.
- How to function as playwright, stage manager and audience simultaneously.
- Finally, how to work in the moment, take risks and tolerate large amounts of ambiguity.

Case studies of process drama's application in the classroom will help teachers in developing their system for using process drama.

Other areas of research could include:

- ways in which speech can be strengthened in teaching process drama.
- development of pre-texts from playscripts and exploring ways process drama and scene work can be combined.
- ways that process drama can be used in the advanced actor training.
- ways that process drama can be used in play rehearsals.

developing assessment instruments for process drama and for acting classes.

- the link between process drama and actor training at the Moscow Art Theatre.

The answers to these questions could greatly assist in making process drama more accessible to acting teachers seeking innovation.

Final Observations

The results of this study are based on quantified outcomes: comparing traditional methods of actor training with process drama. However, in the final analysis, working with process drama also carries some benefits that cannot be

quantified. These have to do with the qualitative "feeling" aspects of the discipline. Without an acknowledgment of these feelings, the report of this investigation would not be complete:

- There is the feeling of anticipation and excitement as one launches a group of students into the unknown world of the drama, like a guide on an expedition into the wilderness of the human experience.
- There is the feeling that a midwife must have, assisting a student who labors to make ethical and meaningful decisions about the dramatic dilemma.
- There is the feeling of pride when witnessing a student make the connection between the meaning of a dramatic revelation and the world that lies beyond it.
- There is a feeling of joy, being able to help students collectively discover the humor that can be found in painful situations as well as the pain that can be found in humorous situations: the paradox of life.

Process drama provides a space within which the actor, seeking authenticity, can safely explore the "risky," feeling aspects of life. The vital task of nurturing the whole human being is made easier for the teacher who picks up the tools of process drama.

The purpose of this study was to build directly on O'Neill's research about the potential that process drama

has for actor training. The results indicate that the potential is great and deserves further exploration and development. The avenues for further research are varied; of particular importance is the need for case studies which can assist acting teachers in formulating their own approach to using process drama in the classroom.

As O'Neill states in Drama Worlds:

[I]t is possible for process drama at its best to provide a sustained, intensive, and profoundly satisfying encounter with the dramatic medium and for participants to apprehend the world in a different way because of this encounter. (13)

We have seen how this process affected the perception of the students who participated in this study: their growth in understanding of team work on stage; their exploration of the meaning of "relationships;" and their emerging consciousness that they are, each of them, truly creative young adults. Process drama may provide a way to introduce new acting students to the principles of acting and to the dramatic event, and to do so in a way that is manageable, but still challenging. Process drama can allow young actors to grow into the traditional use of scripted scene work, and to feel better equipped for that work when the time comes. Process drama also allows actors to experience firsthand the acting skills they will find necessary when they work in alternative styles such as that of epic theatre. Again, as O'Neill points out:

When process drama develops in harmony with the principles of the theatre form, when an understanding

of dramatic structure gives unity and coherence to the work, and when the spontaneous experience is not subverted by pressures of audience, end-product, or limited instrumental demands, it becomes possible for it to evolve into a significant dramatic event, as immediate, engaging, and necessary as any kind of theatre. (13)

Process drama builds upon the strides that have been made during the twentieth century in the world of actor training, and it will be of great use as actor training develops in the century ahead.

APPENDIX A
PROTOCOL APPROVAL



Wayne State University
Human Investigation Committee

Behavioral Institutional Review Board
University Health Center, 8C
4201 St. Antoine Blvd.
Detroit, MI 48201
(313) 577-1628 Office
(313) 993-7122 Fax

Notice of Protocol Exempt Approval

TO: Mary Pratt Cooney, Theatre
476 W. Drayton
Ferndale, Michigan 48220

FROM: Peter A. Lichtenberg, Ph.D. *Peter A. Lichtenberg Ph.D.*
Chairman, Behavioral Institutional Review Board

SUBJECT: Exemption Status of Protocol # B 07-07-97(B03)-X; "Process
Drama and Actor Training"

SOURCE OF FUNDING: No Funding Requested

DATE: August 1, 1997

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The research protocol named above has been reviewed and found to qualify for exemption according to paragraph #1 of the Rules and Regulations of the Department of Health and Human Services, CFR Part 46.101(b).

Since I have not evaluated this proposal for scientific merit except to weigh the risk to the human subjects in relation to potential benefits, this approval does not replace or serve in the place of any departmental or other approvals which may be required.

Cc: A. Schmitt, 95 W. Hancock



Wayne State University
Human Investigation Committee

Behavioral Institutional Review Board
University Health Center, 8C
4201 St. Antoine Blvd.
Detroit, MI 48201
(313) 577-1628 Office
(313) 993-7122 Fax

Notice of Protocol Expedited Amendment Approval

TO: Mary Pratt Cooney, Theatre
476 Drayton
Ferndale, Michigan 48220

FROM: Peter A. Lichtenberg, Ph.D. *Peter A. Lichtenberg Ph.D.*
Chairman, Behavioral Institutional Review Board

SUBJECT: Approval of Amendment to Protocol # B 07-07-97(B03)-X

Title; Process Drama and Actor Training

Exemption Given On: August 1, 1997; Source of Funding:
No Funding Requested

DATE: January 8, 1998

=====

The following requested changes to the above protocol have been reviewed and approved for immediate effect:

- 1) Receipt of a change in study dates (Fall, 1997 to Winter, 1998), sent in directly by the PI on January 6, 1998.

Cc: A. Schmitt/95 W. Hancock

PROCESS DRAMA and ACTOR TRAINING
an Investigation by Mary Pratt Cooney

PARTICIPANTS' CONSENT FORM

INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE:

I am being asked by Mary Pratt Cooney to participate in a research study about actor training methods during this semester. I understand that she is using this study to complete requirements for her PhD degree in Theatre at Wayne State University.

PROCEDURE:

I understand that I will be randomly assigned to one of two class sections; one section being taught using traditional actor training methods and the other using process drama. I have been provided with an explanation of the differences in these teaching methods. By participating in this study I will help determine how process drama compares with traditional actor training methods. The learning objectives and means of evaluation will be the same in both sections, only the teaching methods will differ.

RISKS:

The only foreseeable risk by participating in this project is that I will be limited to the benefits of one teaching method, instead of a combination of both.

ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT/PROCEDURES:

Should I decide during the university's official add/drop period that I do not wish to participate, I can drop this class with no penalty and re-enroll next semester when only the traditional teaching methods will resume.

If I have any questions concerning my participation in this study now or in the future, Mary Pratt Cooney, or her advisor Dr. Anthony Schmitt can be contacted at 577-3508. If I have any questions regarding my rights as a research subject, Dr. Peter A. Lichtenberg, Chairman of the Behavioral Investigation Committee can be contacted at 577-5174.

BENEFITS:

This investigation will allow me to learn with a smaller than usual number of students, thus providing me with more personal attention from the instructor. I will also have the opportunity to learn about university research methods. I understand that data from my class achievements will be kept confidential and used anonymously in her final report and I will have full access to this report.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY:

I have read or had read to me all the above information about this research study, including the experimental procedure, possible risks, and the likelihood of any benefits to me. The content and meaning of this information has been explained and is understood. All my questions have been answered. I hereby consent and voluntarily offer to the study requirements and take part in this study. I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

Participant's Signature

Investigator's Signature

Date

Date

APPENDIX B
CLASS RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

ATTENTION

English Majors
Business Majors

Dance Majors
Communication Majors

and those studying

Film

Music

Art

Education

Work on ways to be comfortable appearing before an audience

Learn creative problem-solving through improvisation

Find out how the actor gets inside the character's head

TAKE

ACTING FOR NON-MAJORS

In the Winter 1998 Term

The course is THR 1040, and the Section number is 22196. We will be exploring a variety of techniques for getting you off your chair and out in front of your audience. And we all need to know how to do that, don't we?

The class meets Tuesday/Thursday from 11:45 to 1:10 in Old Main. Call 577-0768 for more information.



Announcements

ENROLL NOW

Acting for non-majors. Winter term '98. Work on ways to be comfortable appearing before an audience. Learn creative problem-solving through improvisation. Find out how the actor gets inside the character's head. THR 1040 Section 22196. Call 577-0768 for more information.

APPENDIX C
CLASS SYLLABUS

THR 1040: Acting I (Non-Majors)
Winter, 1998

Instructor: Mary Cooney

Section # 22196

Office: 3357 Old Main
Phone: 577-0768

Class Meets: Tuesdays & Thursdays

Office Hours: 10:00-11:30

Time: 11:45am - 1:10pm

Mon., Tues. & Thurs.
Location: 4413 Old Main

Course Description: An introduction to improvisation and the process of acting, for students who are not currently majoring in theatre.

Objectives: 1. Gain confidence performing for others.
2. Free the imagination through improvisation.
3. Explore the potential of the theatrical ensemble.
4. Learn fundamental acting techniques.

Text: Acting One by Robert Cohen (available at Marwil's & University Bookstore).

Course Requirements and Grading:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Class participation, reading assignments, and attitude | 40% |
| 2. Four written reflections, one on each of the four units we will cover in class. These are due as we complete each unit. Also one written critique of a Hilberry or Bonstelle performance | 30% |
| 3. One written midterm covering text reading assignments | 15% |
| 4. A performance and written final | 15% |

Grading: You will receive a point score for each of the above categories, with the maximum score for each category being the same as the above percentage for that category. Your point total at the end of the semester will determine your grade:

A = 90-100 points; B = 80-89 points; C = 70-79 points; D = 60-69pts; F = 59 and below.

Attendance: A maximum of two excused absences are permitted. After the third absence, the highest grade you can get is a B; after 4 a C; after 5 a D; and after 6 an F. Any student more than 10 minutes late will not be admitted to class and counted as absent. A missed presentation is equivalent to two absences.

CALENDAR

Unit One: Process Drama Text assignments	Week 1	Introduction and Lesson One "Goal and Obstacle"
	Week 2	Lesson Two "Acting With 'Other'"
	Week 3	Lesson Three "Beginning to Act"
Unit Two: Process Drama with Script Text Assignments	Week 4	Lesson Four "Tactics"
	Week 5	Lesson Five "Expectations"
	Week 6	Lesson Six "GOTE"
	Week 7	Midterm
Unit Three: Monologues Text Assignments	Week 8	Lesson Seven "Preparing a Role"
	Week 9	Lesson Eight "Rehearsing"
Unit Four: Playbuilding Text Assignments	Week 10	Lesson Nine "Staging the Scene"
	Week 11	Lesson Ten "Choices"
	Week 12	Lesson Twelve "Evaluation"
	Week 13	Lesson Thirteen "The Actor's Voice"
	Week 14	Final Presentation
	Week 15	Final Written Exam

(used for Experimental class)

CALENDAR

Unit One: Introductions		
Text assignments	Week 1	Introduction and Lesson One "Goal and Obstacle"
	Week 2	Lesson Two "Acting With 'Other'"
Unit Two: Scene work		
Text Assignments	Week 3	Lesson Three "Beginning to Act"
	Week 4	Lesson Four "Tactics"
	Week 5	Lesson Five "Expectations"
Unit Three: Monologues		
Text Assignments	Week 6	Lesson Six "GOTE"
	Week 7	Midterm
	Week 8	Lesson Seven "Preparing a Role"
	Week 9	Lesson Eight "Rehearsing"
Unit Four: Scenes II		
Text Assignments	Week 10	Lesson Nine "Staging the Scene"
	Week 11	Lesson Ten "Choices"
	Week 12	Lesson Twelve "Evaluation"
	Week 13	Lesson Thirteen "The Actor's Voice"
	Week 14	Final Presentation
	Week 15	Final Written Exam

(used for Traditional class)

APPENDIX D
STUDENT ASSESSMENT FORM

THR 1040 ASSESSMENT FORM

Name _____ Date _____

	Outstanding	Satisfactory	Poor
Speech & Voice	3	2	1
Physicalization	3	2	1
Listening	3	2	1
Concentration	3	2	1
Clarity of Action	3	2	1
Energy Level	3	2	1

Comments:

Assessed by _____

ENABLING SKILLS:

Speech & Voice: vocal volume; vowel tone; speech clarity and enunciation of consonants.

Physicalization: appropriate movement; physical contact with other actors.

Listening: focused listening; ability to listen to and adjust to partner.

Concentration: knowledge of lines, ability to be centered and relaxed.

Clarity: ability to select a believable goal and to adopt clear tactics to attain it.

Energy: ability to create a sense of expectation, enthusiasm and excitement.

APPENDIX E
STRATEGIES FOR PROCESS DRAMA

THE MEDIA	Interviews experts witnesses bystanders	Documentaries -film -TV -radio	News Items -paper -radio -TV	Press Conferences	Reports
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VISUALS	TABLEAUX photos family albums life histories	museum exhibits statues cartoons dream sequences	slide shows main incidents book illustrations sociograms		
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ENACTMENTS	extensions : gaps or implications in the story events before the story 20 years later analogies				
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WHO'S TO BLAME?	trials courts martial tribunals	the people's court the secret tribunal juvenile court	case conferences
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EXTENSIONS THROUGH WRITTEN WORK:

journals	ending the story	letters
news stories	obituaries	legends
folk songs	poems	gravestones

EXPLORATIONS IN OTHER ART FORMS:

art	music	literature	poetry
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ABSTRACT

A COMPARISON STUDY OF PROCESS DRAMA AND ACTOR TRAINING

by

MARY PRATT COONEY

May 1999

Advisor: Dr. Anthony Schmidt
Major: Theatre
Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

This study hypothesizes that process drama can enhance the acting skills of undergraduate acting students. Not only is process drama effective in teaching acting skills in general; it is adaptable to teaching those particular skills required by alternative forms such as epic theatre. Process drama is an episodic form of improvisation that is initiated through the given circumstances of a pre-text and develops over an extended period of time.

The quantitative pretest-posttest procedure of this study involved dividing a class of beginning acting students into two groups: traditional and experimental. The learning objectives remained the same for both groups; the only variation was in the teaching techniques.

Students were pretested by the primary investigator at the beginning of the semester, to establish a base-line in the six assessed skill categories: speech, physicalization, listening, concentration, clarity of action and energy. At the end of the study, two external evaluators participated

in the posttest to ensure reliability and validity of the results.

The results showed in that in four of the six categories (physicalization, clarity, concentration and listening), skills were improved in the experimental group, to a significantly greater extent than in the traditional group. In one category (energy) the results were about even; had the study group been larger, the experimental group would have shown significantly more improvement. In the sixth category (speech), it was the traditional group that showed more improvement.

The results indicate that the potential is great and deserves further exploration and development. Of particular importance is the need for case studies which can assist acting teachers in formulating their own approach to using process drama in the classroom.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Mary Pratt Cooney first developed an interest in process drama while directing the Artist-in-Residence Program for the Attic Theatre and Detroit Public Schools between 1986 and 1989. She received her training in process drama from Dr. Cecily O'Neill, Associate Professor of Education at Ohio State University.

Ms. Cooney's exploration of process drama as a tool for learning continued from 1989 through 1994 with a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. During this time she founded and directed an inner-city youth theatre troupe and consulted with other community arts projects as part of the Kellogg Youth Initiatives Program.

While pursuing her in Ph.D. at Wayne State University she served as a graduate fellow from 1996-1998, working with the department's Black Theatre Tour. In 1997 the program toured "Mythmaker's" a performance workshop using process drama principles as the basis for the work. In the spring of 1998, Ms. Cooney made a presentation about the project at The Ohio Drama Education Exchange Conference in Columbus.

Because of her interest in the connection between Brecht's pedagogy and process drama she directed three Brecht one act plays as part of the University's 1997-98 Studio Theatre season. Process drama was used as a rehearsal tool. Her article, "Lehrstücke and Process Drama" was published in the Spring, 1997 issue of Drama Matters, The Journal of the Ohio Drama Education Exchange.

In March, 1998 she presented a paper on her current research topic at the Mid-America Theatre Conference Directing Symposium in Omaha, Nebraska.

Ms. Cooney originally came to Wayne State University from the Pacific Northwest in 1980 as a member of the Hilberry Graduate Repertory Company. She earned her M.F.A. in Directing in 1982. She resides in the Detroit area with her husband, George and son, Cameron Andrew.