

AN EXPLORATORY AND DESCRIPTIVE INQUIRY INTO THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN THE GOALS OF GENERAL EDUCATION AND DISCIPLINARY  
CONTENT IN ACTING  
FOR NON-MAJORS COURSES IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN THE  
UNITED STATES

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A Dissertation  
presented to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School  
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

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by  
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MAY, 2013

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

AN EXPLORATORY AND DESCRIPTIVE INQUIRY INTO THE RELATIONSHIP  
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CONTENT IN ACTING FOR NON-MAJORS COURSES IN COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

presented by Patricia K. Downey,

a candidate for the degree of doctor of philosophy,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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To  
Betty Jane and Jim

We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive  
where we started and know the place for the first time.

T.S  
Elliot, n.d.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank those people without whom this dissertation would not be possible. First, thank you to the members of my doctoral committee: Dr. Cheryl Black, Dr. Heather Carver, and Dr. Jeni Hart. Special gratitude goes to Dr. Suzanne Burgoyne, committee chair, mentor, and friend, who kept me moving forward and often steered me towards insightful material. Second, this dissertation would not possible without the generosity of one hundred and fifty-seven disciplinary colleagues who contributed syllabi to this study. Third, thank you to all my departmental colleagues who graciously inquired about the content and the process of the work. Their questions engaged me in a continuous loop of clarification and refinement of the question and the findings. Finally, thank you to my children and friends who offered supportive words when I got bogged down.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
	LIST OF ILLUSTRATION	vi
Chapter		
ONE	INTRODUCTION	1
	Definitions of Terms	2
	Historical Context	5
	Higher Education	5
	General Education	9
	Theatre in Higher Education	13
	Summary of Historical Contexts	17
	Significance	19
	Methodology	21
	Organization of the Report	23
TWO	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	25
	Research Design	26
	Type of Data Analyzed	28
	Institutional Documents	29
	Course Syllabi	30
	Method of Sampling	31
	Identifying Information Rich Sites	35
	Recruiting Participants	36
	Method of Data Analysis	38
	Trustworthiness	41
	Credibility	43
	Transferability	45
	Dependability	47
	Confirmability	50
	Summary of Chapter	58
THREE	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	60
	Historical Surveys	61
	Curricular Development	61
	Development of General Education	62
	Theatre in American Universities and Colleges	68
	Liberal Learning, Habits of Mind, and Intellectual Character	74
	Liberal Education	76
	Habits of Mind	77

	Intellectual Character and Learning Dispositions	81
	Pedagogy and Learning Theory	83
	Dual Purpose of Content	83
	Signature Pedagogies	85
	Pedagogical Practices for Non-Majors	87
	Theatre, Acting, and Liberal Learning	90
	Chapter Summary	92
FOUR	ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTS	94
	Institutional Documents	94
	Institutional Mission Statements	95
	General Education Goal Statements	95
	Performance as a Mode of Inquiry	97
	Cultivate and Understand the Creative Process	98
	Mode of Communication	98
	Continuity	99
	Preparation for Civic Responsibility	100
	Syllabi	100
	Collection Process	101
	Selection into Analysis Sample	101
	The Disciplinary Centered Sample	103
	Course Demographics	103
	Course Goals and Objectives	107
	Learning Experiences	118
	The Interdisciplinary Sample	130
	Course Demographics	131
	Course Goals and Objectives	134
	Learning Experiences	135
	Signature Pedagogies Emerging from the Data	142
	Review: Concept of Signature Pedagogies	142
	Signature Pedagogical Orientation	143
	Signature Pedagogies in the Sample	145
	Signature Pedagogy #1: Experiential Learning	146
	Signature Pedagogy #2: Performance: Scene Work	149
	Signature Pedagogy #3: Writing	150
	Signature Pedagogy #4: Observing Performances	151
	Summary of Chapter	155
FIVE	CONCLUSIONS	156
	Review of Design and Methodology	157
	Summary of Literature Review	158
	Summary of Document Analysis	167
	Institutional Documents	167
	Syllabi	169
	Limitations of the Syllabi Analysis	171
	Applications of Findings from Literature Review	173



Empathy as a Mode of Inquiry	173
Definition of Terms	175
Empathy and Higher Learning	176
Empathy: Understanding Self with Others and the World	176
Empathy: Understanding Self	178
Empathy, Signature Pedagogy, and Course Design	180
Summary of Applications Section	181
Significance of the Findings	181
Limitation of the Findings	185
Issues for Future Investigation	186
Final Reflections	193
 APPENDIX	 194
Request for Data Letter	195
Philosophy of Teaching	198
IRB Training Certificate	201
IRB Approval Letter	202
Curriculum Vita	203
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 214
 VITA	 229

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### Figures

1. Johari Window 179

### Tables

1. Number of Syllabi collected by type of Sampling 35
2. Number of Institutions Identified 36
3. Diversification of Institutional Type in the Analysis Sample 103
4. Course Demographics: Disciplinary Centered Sample 107
5. Frequency of Learning Experiences for the Disciplinary Sample 129
6. Frequency of Learning Experiences for the Interdisciplinary Sample 141
7. Ubiquity of Pedagogies within the Combined Sample 145

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Acting for Non-Majors is a course taught by theatre faculty at many colleges and universities across the United States. Where offered, it is frequently situated within the general education curriculum of an institution. Broadly speaking, general education curricula have three aims: to introduce students to diverse pools of knowledge for the purpose of providing broad exposure to multiple modes of inquiry; to provide a core of knowledge common to students graduating from a given institution regardless of disciplinary major; and/or to provide a group of courses within which the development of intellectual character can be introduced, understood, practiced, and begin to be habituated. My curiosity was ignited by the last goal, the development of intellectual character. As a teacher of acting for non-majors, I was secure in my ability to teach disciplinary skills and knowledge; however, *what* characteristics comprise intellectual character, *why* the development of intellectual character is significant, and *how* intellectual character is effectively and intentionally taught/learned *simultaneous* with disciplinary content were mysteries to me. I was interested in learning how to design a course in acting for non-majors that intentionally and transparently engaged students in the development of their intellectual character; a course in which content serves as a vehicle for forming the kinds of habits of mind that lead to liberal learning experiences.

I began with the assumption that instruction in the art of acting does develop intellectual character.<sup>1</sup> Next, I formed questions about the development of intellectual

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<sup>1</sup>See chapter 3, "Literature Review," for arguments from theatre scholars in support of this assumption.

character and its relationship to the art of acting. *What* learning dispositions and habits of mind comprise intellectual character? *Which* learning dispositions can be facilitated by the study of acting? *How* does the study of acting facilitate the development of intellectual character in students? *What* pedagogical practices introduce students to the unique skills of acting while simultaneously habituating intellectual character?

Learning about the pedagogical choices of my peers in the professoriate along with a review of relevant literature seemed a logical place to start. Other teachers of acting for non-majors may have grappled with some of these questions and made pedagogical choices that simultaneously facilitate the delivery of disciplinary content and the habituation of intellectual character. Their course designs, resources, and practices could provide one or more models useful in facilitating the development of learning dispositions concurrent with acting skills. Therefore, the research question guiding the design of this study is: What is the relationship between the development of intellectual character and pedagogies used to teach acting to non-majors in institutions of higher education in the United States.

### **Definition of Terms**

Several terms have a specific meaning within the context of the study or a particular disciplinary field. The reader and researcher should have a shared knowledge of the contextual definitions of these terms in order to facilitate communication.

- ***Pedagogical practices***: methods through which teachers instruct students including overall course design, goals and objectives, resources, classroom activities, assignments, and assessment techniques.

- ***Non-majors:*** undergraduate students enrolled at accredited universities and colleges in the United States who are not majors or minors in theatre, are enrolled in courses designed to introduce them to the art of acting, and are using the course to satisfy a general education requirement.
- ***Majors:*** undergraduate students enrolled at accredited universities and colleges in the United States who are seeking a BFA, BA, or Associate Degree in some aspect of Theatre Arts.
- ***Acting:*** a phenomenon that is conscious of itself as a performance, is observed by an audience that acknowledges what it is observing is a performance and interacts with it, is deliberately and consciously designed to entertain and/or instruct an audience and is framed by some theatrical conventions for the purpose of telling a story. I am indebted to ethno-linguist Richard Bauman whose definition of the more encompassing term *performance* influenced the definition of the term “acting” as it is used in this study.<sup>2</sup>
- ***Liberal education:*** a philosophical concept that is the foundation upon which higher education in America is built. The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) defines it as, “An approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change... A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.”<sup>3</sup> A liberal education may be pursued through any content area.<sup>4</sup>
- ***Liberal Arts:*** traditionally, a group of curricular disciplines forming a core of knowledge thought to be essential for the well-educated person. General education, also known as core curriculum, often resembles a traditional liberal arts curriculum. The specific content of such courses is subject to change based on temporal, geographical, and ideological contexts. Theatre is considered one of the original seven liberal arts. Exposure to a liberal arts curriculum, in and of itself, does not guarantee a liberal education.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Marvin Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 5.

<sup>3</sup>Association of American Colleges and Universities, “What is Liberal Education?” Association of American Colleges and Universities, [http://www.aacu.org/leap/What\\_is\\_liberal\\_education.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/leap/What_is_liberal_education.cfm) (accessed September 29, 2008).

<sup>4</sup>Robert Shoenberg, “How Not to Defend Liberal Arts Colleges,” *Liberal Education* (Winter 2009): 56.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

- **General Education:** that part of institutional curriculum designed to serve one or more of the following goals: diversify exposure to disciplinary knowledge in order to ensure a broad basic education, provide a core of knowledge common to all students graduating from a given institution regardless of disciplinary major and/or provide a palette of courses within which habits of mind characteristic of liberal learning can be cultivated and become habituated.
- **Habits of Mind (HOM)** “a disposition towards behaving intelligently when confronted with problems the answers to which are not immediately known: dichotomies, dilemmas, enigmas and uncertainties.”<sup>6</sup>
- **Disciplinary habits of mind (DHOM):** A habit of mind that is emphasized in the intellectual culture of a discipline and is ubiquitous in or essential to the effectiveness of the disciplinary mode of inquiry.<sup>7</sup>
- **Intellectual Character:** overarching sets of behaviors toward learning; dynamic and idiosyncratic in their contextualized deployment, they motivate, actuate, and direct our abilities.<sup>8</sup>
- **Dual function of content:** a pedagogical philosophy espousing the belief that disciplinary content has a larger role to play than the cultivation of disciplinary expertise.<sup>9</sup> In the context of this study, dual function of content means the intentional use of course content to develop intellectual character through the inculcation of habits of mind.
- **Signature Pedagogies:** dominant methods of teaching disciplinary content that “define how knowledge is analyzed, criticized, accepted, and discarded” within a discipline.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick. “Describing 16 Habits of Mind?” <http://www.instituteforhabitsofmind.com/> (accessed October 21, 2008).

<sup>7</sup>Nancy L Chick, Regan A. R. Gurang, and Aeron Haynie, “From Generic to Signature Pedagogies: Teaching Disciplinary Understandings,” in *Exploring Signature Pedagogies: Approaches to Teaching Disciplinary Habits of Mind*, ed. Nancy L Chick, Regan A. R. Gurang, and Aeron Haynie (Sterling, Virginia: Stylus, 2008), 3-4.

<sup>8</sup>Ron Ritchhart, *Intellectual Character: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How to Get It* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 31.

<sup>9</sup>Maryellen Weimer, *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 51.

<sup>10</sup>Lee S. Shulman, “Signature Pedagogies in the Professions,” *Daedalus* 134, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 54.

## Historical Contexts

I begin with an historical overview because, “What is past is prologue.”<sup>11</sup> By understanding the history of a phenomenon, we can better understand its current status and our relationship to it. An historical survey can shed light on both *how* and *why* a phenomenon has developed in the way it has. *How* and *why* provide important contextual clues and point to ways in which the past continues to influence the present as well as guide future development of a phenomenon. An historical perspective may be useful in determining how the questions I am asking now regarding acting pedagogy and its relationship to liberal learning are connected to “dilemmas that developed at its beginning.”<sup>12</sup> The rise and development of acting instruction to non-majors as we know it today is embedded in at least three large historical contexts: (1) the history of higher education in the United States; (2) the history of the evolution of general education in university curricula; and (3) the history of theatre’s struggle to be recognized as a legitimate and autonomous field of study in higher education.

### ***Higher Education***

There has been an ongoing debate regarding the primary purpose of higher education in America since the founding of the first post-secondary institution in the

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<sup>11</sup>William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, act 2, scene 1.

<sup>12</sup>Lynne Greeley, “All Things to All People,” in *Teaching Theatre Today: Pedagogical Views of Theatre in Higher Education*, ed. Anne L. Fliotsos and Gail S. Medford (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 126.

United States.<sup>13</sup> Should higher education focus on eternal questions of humanity or on the concerns of everyday life? Should it primarily benefit the individual or the community? What is the best preparation for citizenship? Responses to these questions have tended to be situated within three overarching educational philosophies.

The first philosophy is the classic liberal arts<sup>14</sup> education. The liberal arts philosophy of higher education is modeled after “seventeenth century English and Scottish universities, with their classical curriculum packaged in a theological framework.”<sup>15</sup> The purpose of education from this perspective is to educate students “to think critically about many subjects and ideas thereby producing broadly educated citizens.”<sup>16</sup> In America, a liberal arts education was and still is tightly bound to the concept of democracy. In order for people to govern themselves wisely they need to be educated to think critically and broadly across disciplinary boundaries and understand how bodies of knowledge connect. A curriculum grounded in the seven traditional liberal arts was the primary vehicle through which skills necessary for responsible citizenship were developed. It should be noted that at the time American universities and colleges were establishing themselves, “citizens” were defined as white, male, owned land, and had reached the age of twenty-one. This bias was reflected in student enrollment of the

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<sup>13</sup>Harvard University is the oldest institution of higher learning in the United States. It was founded September 8, 1636.

<sup>14</sup>Historically, the seven liberal arts are grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. Theatre, an offspring of Rhetoric, is considered a part of this grouping. Some campuses also refer to them in the aggregate as Arts and Sciences or the Humanities.

<sup>15</sup>Clifton F. Conrad and Jean C. Wyer, “Liberal Education: A Dynamic Tradition,” in *College and University Curriculum: Developing and Cultivating Programs of Study that Enhance Student Learning* (Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2002), 60.

<sup>16</sup>Lisa R. Lattuca and Joan S. Stark, “Recurring Debates about the College Curriculum” in *College and University Curriculum: Developing and Cultivating Programs of Study that Enhance Student Learning* (Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2002), 70.



period. To this day, liberal arts based education carries with it the stigma of elitism. In the current economy, some consider it to be of less value than vocational or professional training.

The second overarching educational philosophy declares the creation of new knowledge, or the research mission, to be the preeminent purpose of higher education. This purpose was introduced into American higher education at Harvard University as early as 1825. Lisa R. Latucca and Joan S. Stark note, “By 1825, several changes in these directions [a research orientation] had been taken by the Board of Trustees at Harvard; and although many of these reforms were temporarily forestalled by a negative faculty reaction, the foundation for change had been laid.”<sup>17</sup> The research mission ranks the production of new knowledge above all other purposes of higher education. Early specialization in a discipline at the undergraduate level is encouraged. As a result, disciplinary knowledge, skills, and dispositions become entrenched and isolated in departments seeking to train specialists in a particular discipline. Specialization trumps generalization.

The third educational philosophy is motivated by practical concerns and declares that the purpose of higher education is to train the student for a profession or vocation. According to this philosophy, the purpose of a college education is to “train citizens to participate in the nation’s economic and commercial life.”<sup>18</sup> The basic structure and financial support for this mission was inaugurated by the Morrill Land Grant Act of

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<sup>17</sup>Conrad and Wyer, 62.

<sup>18</sup>Lattuca and Stark, 70.

1862.<sup>19</sup> Like the research-centered model before it, this utilitarian model required disciplinary specialization at the undergraduate level and encouraged segregating knowledge into disciplinary degree programs.

By the mid-nineteenth century, cultivating an ability to connect knowledge across disciplinary lines (a priority for the liberal arts model) was no longer a priority in some types of academic institutions. Currently, public perception of the purpose of higher education is strongly aligned with the utilitarian model. Educators and administrators alike are increasingly under the gun to produce quantitative data proving higher education develops competent workers for the purpose of guaranteeing the global economic supremacy of America.

These three competing philosophies have merged and intertwined over the course of the twentieth century resulting in the curricular infrastructures currently in place in many institutions of higher learning. The result is that “By mid-twentieth century, the status quo lay firmly within the multi-purpose, multi-mission universities.”<sup>20</sup> This desire to serve a combination of educational missions is illustrated by the manner in which curricular requirements of a typical four-year degree are allocated: 30-40% to general education (liberal arts) and 60-70% to the major and electives (research and vocational interests).<sup>21</sup> All of the institutions included in this study are examples of the multi-mission structure.

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Conrad and Wyer, 60.

<sup>21</sup>Stark and Lattuca, 74.

## *General education*

The concept of a liberal arts education has been preserved in the general education curriculum of many colleges and universities around the United States. The roots of the general education movement can be traced to the early twentieth century. As universities adapted their curriculum and degree offerings to accommodate the pragmatic and research models, a group of educators who called themselves “generalists” protested the “specialization involved in the new Germanic-modeled University and the fragmentation of the undergraduate curriculum.”<sup>22</sup> It was at the University of Chicago under the stewardship of Robert Maynard Hutchins that the philosophy of general education, as we know it today, was developed between 1929 and 1950. The movement flourished throughout the 1930’s and 1940’s. A group of respected professors, including Hutchins, calling themselves “the general education movement” articulated an influential philosophy of general education through their published writings.<sup>23</sup>

In 1946, *General Education in a Free Society*, commonly called the Harvard Redbook, was published. It outlined a general education plan based on the Chicago model of Hutchins et al. The curriculum advocated by the writers of the “Redbook” proposed that “general education will constitute one-third of the undergraduate degree...”<sup>24</sup> The “Redbook” was influential in disseminating the ideas of the general education movement across the nation; many colleges in the country implemented some version of general education requirements in the years following its publication.

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<sup>22</sup>Anne H. Stevens, “The Philosophy of General Education and Its Contradictions: The Influence of Hutchins,” *The Journal of General Education* 50, no. 3 (2001): 167.

<sup>23</sup>This group included Robert Hutchins, Mortimer Adler, Richard McKeon, R. S. Crane, Jacques Barzun, John Erskine, Mark Van Doren, Scott Buchanan, and Stringfellow Barr.

<sup>24</sup>Stevens, 184.

The cornerstone of the philosophy of general education resides in the relationship between democracy and an educated citizenry. According to Anne H. Stevens, in her essay on Hutchins and the general education movement, "...for a true democracy to function, all its citizens must be educated enough to make rational, intelligent voting decisions."<sup>25</sup> The generalists believed a well-rounded, liberal arts based education distinguished a well-educated person from a well-trained person. Enculturation into the habits of life-long learning and development of intellectual character should be the primary goals of the undergraduate experience. Vocationalism, job-training, and professional schools had no place in the undergraduate curriculum. R.S Crane, a member of the movement, maintained:

The ability to see problems, to define terms accurately and clearly, to analyze a question into its significant elements, to become aware of general assumptions and preconceptions upon which one's own thinking and that of others rests, to make relevant and useful distinctions, to weigh probabilities, to organize the results of one's own reflections and research, to read a book of whatever sort reflectively, analytically, critically, to write in one's native language with clarity and distinction ---the development of these powers...would seem to be to me no less the business of 'General Education' than the communication of knowledge, and I am not sure that they are not, that in the long run, the most important and valuable fruits of a well-considered 'General Education.'<sup>26</sup>

By 1960, the epistemological pendulum was swinging towards specialization and the primacy of the scientific method and away from general education. Rapidly accelerating global events such as the atomic arms race, the Korean Conflict, the cold war with Communism, and Soviet dominance in the space race accelerated changes in higher

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 173.

<sup>26</sup>J.W. Boyer, *Three Views of Continuity and Change at the University of Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) 52, quoted in Anne H. Stevens "The Philosophy of General Education and its Contradictions: The Influence of Hutchins" *The Journal of General Education* 50, no. 3 (2001): 183.

education in the United States. The public and the government perceived the country to be scientifically, economically, technologically, and militarily vulnerable and education became inextricably tied to national security. Money in the form of research grants came flooding onto college campuses to fund scientific research. The new revenue stream influenced educational philosophy, pedagogy, curriculum, course content, facilities, and faculty job descriptions. The desire for disciplinary specialization dominated and specialists were hired to teach specialized content as disciplines split into rapidly growing and increasingly specialized departments. Specialists were viewed as “professionals” in their disciplinary fields. The skills of the generalist, that is, the ability to make visible the connectedness of fields of knowledge, to point out cross disciplinary skill sets, and to provide opportunities for students to develop intellectual dispositions across the curriculum were considered “old school” and “unprofessional.” Academe was hiring “professionals.” This was no less true in theatre departments.

Briefly, during the 1960s, the epistemological pendulum swung back toward the generalists’ point of view. However, an infrastructure designed to support early specialization and research had developed; dependence on the research grant revenue stream, specialists entrenched within the tenured faculty, and facilities and curricula had been designed and built specifically to meet the needs of a scientific or research agenda. By the end of the decade, tenured faculty members on many campuses, including those in the disciplines that comprise the liberal arts, were primarily specialists in narrow subdivisions of their home discipline. By the mid-seventies, the majority of institutions of higher learning had diminished their commitment to general education.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Stevens, 185.

By the end of the 1970s, a trend in the general culture diminished public perception of the relevance of general education. A college degree was linked in the public mind with individual economic prosperity. A degree in higher education was perceived of as a consumer commodity to be purchased with some level of a “guarantee” for success on the job market. Colleges and universities facing the economic recession of the 1980s quickly surmised, “Specialization has been firmly entrenched as the most efficient and popular method by which to attract customers and facilitate lucrative programs of research.”<sup>28</sup> Personal enlightenment and seeking meaning in one’s life, two of liberal learning’s calling cards, became, at best, secondary or tertiary by-products of a college education. The perception of education as a consumer product remains dominant in our culture today.

Throughout the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century policy makers and public alike have demanded educators identify and articulate the relevance of general education. Many cannot see the link between liberal learning, responsible citizenry, and creative and practical thinking in the workplace. Carol Geary Schneider, current president of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), addressing the association’s ongoing focus on revitalizing general education notes that “The ultimate question for general education today is: what’s its purpose?”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Franklin J. Himes, *The Janus Paradigm: American Academic Theatre, the Liberal Arts and the “Massacre of Genius.”* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., 1998), 11.

<sup>29</sup>Carol Geary Schneider, “Give Students a Compass: Can General Education Rise to the Challenge?” *Liberal Education* 94, issue 3 (Summer 2008): 2.

## *Theatre in Higher Education*

Like institutions of higher learning, academic theatre grappled with issues of identity and purpose. In addition, Theatre had to prove its legitimacy as a full member of the academy. The struggle for legitimacy and autonomy occurred through a series of phases over a two hundred year period. Theatre historian Burnett M. Hobgood writes, "...putting on plays and studying drama did not hold a high priority for the nation's schools in America's first one hundred years. But by the second centennial these activities had spread so widely in colleges and schools that theatre education was the largest enterprise within the nation's theatrical scene."<sup>30</sup>

The roots of academic theatre are found in the extracurricular activities of past students. Bernard Beckerman documents the trend and comments, "Initially, play producing and performing were completely extra-curricular and not infrequently in defiance of college regulations."<sup>31</sup> A long period of extra-curricular activity gave way to a new phase at the beginning of the twentieth century during which dedicated English and Speech professors<sup>32</sup> introduced the study of dramatic texts into the curriculum.<sup>33</sup> Isolated courses in both the study and writing of plays as well as performance techniques were introduced into existing humanities programs between 1899 and 1914. Professors justified the inclusion of acting as "an effective method of learning classical literature,

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<sup>30</sup>Burnett M. Hobgood, "A Short History of Educational Theatre," *Teaching Theatre 2* (fall 1990): 13.

<sup>31</sup>Bernard Beckerman, "The University Accepts the Theatre: 1800-1925" in *The American Theatre: A Sum of its Parts* (New York: Samuel French, 1971), 340.

<sup>32</sup>Charles H. Patterson, Lucius Sherman, Brandon Mathers, George Pierce Baker, Frederick Koch, Gertrude Johnson, Thomas Dickinson, James Winans and Alex Drummond to name a few.

<sup>33</sup>Beckerman, 346.

and later, modern languages” because “to realize a play’s full literary value, it needed to be performed.”<sup>34</sup>

Theatre in higher education moved to full citizenship in the academy in 1914, when the first autonomous department of drama was established at the Carnegie Institute of Technology. Yale University followed in 1925. These two institutional types, Carnegie, an institution concerned primarily with the training of professionals, and Yale, primarily concerned with developing well-educated citizens, are emblematic of the debate that erupted almost immediately amongst theatre educators as to the purpose of the study of Theatre in higher education. Should the primary mission of Theatre, as an academic discipline, be educating students in the practices of professional theatre (vocationalism) or should Theatre be studied for its intrinsic qualities (liberal arts)? This discussion came to be known as the Craft vs. Culture (or “Context”) debate. The quest for answers and the resulting conversation can be traced through the pages of some of educational theatre’s preeminent journals including *Educational Theatre Journal* and *Theatre Journal*,<sup>35</sup> *Theatre Topics*,<sup>36</sup> and *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*.<sup>37</sup> These

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<sup>34</sup>Anne Berkeley, “Changing Views of Knowledge and the Struggle for Undergraduate Theatre Curriculum,” in *Teaching Theatre Today: Pedagogical Views of Theatre in Higher Education*, ed. Anne L. Fliotsos and Gail S. Medford (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 11.

<sup>35</sup>The *Educational Theatre Journal* was published between 1949 and 1978 by The Johns Hopkins University Press under the auspices of the University and College Theatre Association (UCTA) of the American Theatre Association (ATA), formerly the American Educational Theatre Association (AETA). In 1979, it continued publication under the title *Theatre Journal*. The mission of both journals has been to serve as an outlet for theatre scholarship.

<sup>36</sup>*Theatre Topics* was inaugurated in 1991 in partnership with the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE). Its mission is to “establish an on-going dialogue between theatre practitioners/artists/teachers. Publishing articles about theatre pedagogy is one of the areas covered in its tripartite mission.

<sup>37</sup>The *Journal of Aesthetic Education* began publishing in 1966. Its mission is to stimulate understanding of the problems of aesthetic education.



journals document some of the same concerns within the discipline regarding the essential purpose of theatre education as were/are debated at the institutional level regarding the purpose of higher education.

The “Culture” argument parallels the liberal arts model discussed earlier in this chapter. It regards the primary purpose of the study of theatre as a means through which individuals may discover their own humanity, fulfill their intellectual potential, and grapple with the complexities of the human condition producing knowledgeable and thus responsible citizens. This argument draws its strength from what some consider an important root of educational theatre e.g. the Little Theatre Movement. The Little Theatre Movement was a group of non-commercial, amateur theatres modeled on European art theatres. The Little Theatre Movement staged controversial, non-commercial “idea” scripts by playwrights such as Ibsen, O’Neill, and Shaw. When the Great Depression “put a damper on the trend and induced caution,”<sup>38</sup> theatre in higher education continued the practice by staging risky contemporary scripts as well as less commercial classics of theatrical literature making this practice a part of the mission of theatre departments.

The “Craft” argument parallels the vocational model and regards theatre curricula as an opportunity to train future professional theatre artists. This argument draws its power from several lines of reasoning. First, by the 1970s theatre in the United States had become decentralized. Professional regional theaters had sprung up in every region of the country.<sup>39</sup> Second, there is no national apprentice system in the United States for

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<sup>38</sup>Hobgood, 13.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 14.

the training of professional theatre artists and crafts persons. Some “Craft” proponents argue the academy has an obligation to train theatre students in the practical aspects of theatre in order to provide quality artists and crafts persons for the profession.

Sociologist John Horton saw this idea coalescing into a trend in academe as early as 1969:

One basic trend seems fairly well-documented: the financial and artistic future of the theatre in the U.S.A. may lie with the universities and colleges. In these institutions...theatre training and education are no longer merely entertaining extra-curricular activities or inferior appendages to the more respectable speech and education departments. The performing arts, including theatre, are forming autonomous departments. Moreover, in recent decades performance and training, theory as well as practice, have become respectable parts of the curriculum.<sup>40</sup>

Craft vs. Culture is the disciplinary conversation at the departmental level that echoes the specialists/generalists debate at the institutional level of higher learning.

Departments of Theatre became a microcosm of the larger institutional debate about “...the modern ‘multiversity,’ ambivalent about its role in American life,”<sup>41</sup> pursuing “academic goals, simultaneously general and specialized.”<sup>42</sup>

Throughout the 1950s and 60s, theatre in higher education, echoing the national trend in many disciplines, became progressively more professionalized through a series of developments. First, colleges and universities sought to transition their amateur theaters to professional status or to join with professional regional theaters to become regional centers for the arts. Second, curriculum was designed to meet the needs of a producing organization and offered more and more specialized coursework which, in

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<sup>40</sup>John Horton, “The Re-Professionalization of the Theatre: Some Thoughts on Joining the Educational Establishment,” *Educational Theatre Journal* 21, no. 4 (Dec. 1969): 372.

<sup>41</sup>Berkeley, 15.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

turn, required a faculty of specialists who were often hired from the field of professional artists:

In the early stages of this development, practicing professionals without the usual academic accreditation are finding a financial home in education. They have entered first as artists-in-residence and are now achieving the status of regular professors. They in turn are being replaced by their students, trained and degreed in academia. The very concept of educational theatre attests to the growing number of theatre people who find their lives and careers tied in one way or another to the university. The concept represents an attempt to find a definition and identity in a new situation which is neither commercial theatre, vocational training, nor ivory tower scholarship.<sup>43</sup>

Third, revenue was available for the expansion of physical facilities as state of the art performing arts centers were added to campuses across the nation.

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, professionalization and the resulting specialized curriculum enabled the “Craft” proponents to dominate the Craft vs. Culture debate. Berkeley, documenting the rise of vocationalism in academic theatre, notes, “By the mid-1960s...theatre curriculums were functioning as instruments of *social efficiency*, fully engaged with the culture of expertise and specialized knowledge. Once, an avocational expression of liberal, humanist inquiry, theatre study had assumed a vocational function.”<sup>44</sup>

### ***Summary of historical contexts***

Acting for non-majors is embedded in three contextualizing histories: (1) the history of higher education in the United States; (2) the history of the evolution of general education in university curricula; and (3) the history of theatre’s struggle to be recognized as a legitimate and autonomous field of study in higher education. Running parallel to

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<sup>43</sup>Horton, 372.

<sup>44</sup>Berkeley, 18.

one another as well as intermingling, each history chronicles a persistent movement away from the values of the liberal arts vision and towards the dominance of vocationalism and specialization.

Becoming aware of this history has helped me understand why I feel secure instructing disciplinary content but insecure in helping students develop intellectual character through content. I am a vocational specialist who has been educated by vocational specialists. There has been nothing in my background to prepare me for mentoring students towards the development of habits of mind. Further, we live in a society that values job training as the primary goal of a college education. The very nature of high-level thinking skills resulting in effective analytical, critical, creative thinking defies easy assessment and quantification. The development of intellectual character takes place over time. It does not necessarily complete itself within a semester or within one's college career. There is a reason it is called "life-long learning."

The historical survey has also helped me to define pertinent fields of investigation beyond the discipline of Theatre. During the historical research, I became aware of concepts like "habits of mind," "liberal learning," and "intellectual character." These concepts alerted me to a body of literature of which I was previously unaware. As a result, I have begun to see the interconnectedness of key concepts at the center of this study.

## Significance

Pedagogical practices of theatre educators within higher education are neither well-defined nor well-documented through data-based research. Dr. Patti P. Gillespie, Professor Emeritus of Theatre at the University of Maryland, commenting on the scarcity of research regarding theatre pedagogy in general observed, “Theatre in American universities and colleges is ubiquitous. It employs more scholars than any other kind of theatre...It educates the many to understand what it means to be human...it is one of the great ironies of theatre scholarship that what most of us do, few of us study.”<sup>45</sup> Dr. Anne L. Fliotsos and Dr. Gail S. Medford, co-editors of *Teaching Theatre Today: Pedagogical Views of Theatre in Higher Education* concur and expand on Gillespie’s observation:

While academic administrators, theatre scholars, and artists often discuss the reasons for keeping educational theatre a viable part of the curriculum, very little discussion is given to the art of teaching or the pedagogical aspects of theatre education. Despite the fact that American education...boasts of thousands of theatre programs, the instruction taking place in these programs occurs with little attention to formal pedagogical theory and practice.<sup>46</sup>

My study seeks to help fill some of this gap in the literature by identifying pedagogies in teaching acting to non-majors. The underlying assumption of my research is that educators who understand what they do, why they do it, and how they do it are better prepared to design and teach courses effectively. I am *not* seeking to formulate a prescription that dictates the best way to teach acting to non-majors. Simply, I want to

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<sup>45</sup>Patti P. Gillespie, “Preface,” in *Teaching Theatre Today: Pedagogical Views of Theatre in Higher Education*, ed. Anne L. Fliotsos and Gail S. Medford (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), ix.

<sup>46</sup>Anne L. Fliotsos and Gail S. Medford, “Introduction,” in *Teaching Theatre Today: Pedagogical Views of Theatre in Higher Education*, ed. Anne L. Fliotsos and Gail S. Medford (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 1.

make visible to teachers and researchers what the landscape currently looks like in order to stimulate a disciplinary conversation that reflects on the efficacy of our pedagogical choices given the dual mission with which we are charged as part of the general education curriculum.

Revealing pedagogies of acting for non-majors may help educators be mindful of the differing needs of majors and non-majors as well as where their needs intersect. Majors are focused on acquiring professional skill sets and developing them to a level of expertise. They are committed to a program of study that will include multiple opportunities to develop as theatrical artists within a curriculum of intersecting courses. They are intrinsically motivated to dive deep and often into the art and craft of theatre.

On the other hand, non-majors are looking broadly at the art of acting. The course will be, for most, a one-shot experience introducing them to a complex art form. For non-majors, the experience of acting may be more valuable than the level of expertise they develop. Levels of intrinsic motivation will be less homogenous within this group of students.

Institutions of higher learning have their own expectations about the role general education courses play in the total learning experience of students. They intend general education courses to focus on the development of the habits of mind that characterize a liberal education as well as exposure to content. Acting for Non-Majors, as part of a general education curriculum, is intended to provide students with broad exposure to the art of acting as well as promote a number of liberal learning behaviors. The results of this study may help theatre educators articulate to administrators *how* signature pedagogies of acting fulfill the liberal learning mission of their institutions.

## Methodology

The research strategy for this study is based on designs and methods used in qualitative research. Qualitative research strategies are appropriate because of the nature of the research question. Qualitative research asks the basic question “What is happening here?”<sup>47</sup> The question I am asking in this study; “What is the relationship between the development of intellectual character and pedagogies used to teach acting to non-majors in institutions of higher education in the United States” is a basic qualitative question. It is necessary to ask this question because this topic is under-researched.

Margaret D. LeCompte and Judith Preisle point out that a basic difference between qualitative inquiry and quantitative inquiry resides in both the philosophical perspectives and the methods of each type of inquiry. Quantitative studies isolate a phenomenon in a laboratory where it can be controlled, manipulated, and measured in an experimental setting isolated from its original context. Qualitative studies look at a phenomenon within its original context and acknowledge the complex variables that characterize it. The analysis and findings of a qualitative study are focused on sharing *an* interpretation of a phenomenon that has been studied with as little disruption in the natural setting as possible.<sup>48</sup> The focus of this study is to explore the phenomenon of acting pedagogy in context, based on data that have been gathered and preserved in documents (course syllabi) that are designed to represent “immediate and local meanings

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<sup>47</sup>Margaret D. LeCompte and Judith Preisle, “Qualitative Research: What it is, What it isn’t, and How it’s Done,” in *Advances in Social Science Methodology*, vol. 3, ed. Bruce Thompson (Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press Ltd., 1994), 141.

<sup>48</sup>Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 5.

of actions as defined by the actors [agent of the action] point of view,”<sup>49</sup> and described by an observer (the researcher).

The documents examined in this study are course syllabi, institutional mission statements, and general education goal statements. I chose course syllabi because they document, in varying degrees of completeness, overall course design through descriptions of course goals and objectives, course resources, assignments, assessment techniques, course activities, and grading philosophy. They may contain clues to pedagogical choices. I chose institutional mission statements and general education goal statements to better understand the context in which acting for non-majors is taught in the United States.

The process of content analysis was used to analyze the documents. Content analysis was developed as a research tool by early sociologists of mass media for the purpose of identifying recurring words or phrases in a text in order to discover the focus and dominant concerns of the authors of the text.<sup>50</sup> I am interested in identifying dominant (signature) pedagogies which, I hypothesize, will be revealed by the words and phrases in the analyzed syllabi. The study’s findings are reported through dense narrative and accompanied by descriptive statistics. Graphs and tables accompany the narrative as needed to summarize and clarify information.

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Lindsey Prior, *Using Documents in Social Research* (London: SAGE Publications, 2003), 21.



## **Organization of the Report**

The study is organized into five chapters including: Introduction, Research Design and Methodology, Review of Literature, Analysis of Documents, and Conclusion. Chapter one has served to introduce the central question guiding the study, define key terms, broadly introduce the methodology, discuss the significance of the study, provide an historical overview of the context in which the topic is embedded, and introduce the remaining chapters.

Chapter two outlines the details of the study's design including: (1) a rationale for the choice of qualitative research methods and the overall design as a basic qualitative inquiry focusing on exploring and describing the phenomenon; (2) the type of documents to be analyzed; 3) the method of sampling; 4) criteria for identifying information rich sites; (5) method of recruiting participants; (6) method of data analysis; (7) a discussion of the concept of trustworthiness in qualitative research results to include issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability; and (8) my qualifications to conduct this study as designed.

Chapter three comprises a review of relevant literature. The topic areas under review include: the historical roots of higher education, general education, and theatre in higher education; the concepts and behaviors characteristic of a liberally educated person; pedagogy in general and signature pedagogies in particular; and the intersection of liberal education, theatre, and acting. The literature review provided essential contextual, historical, and theoretical concepts including the nature of learning and what characterizes intelligent behavior. The literature on liberal learning, habits of mind, and

intellectual character served as a lens through which I viewed the signature pedagogies of acting for non-majors and considered how they are/could be used to fulfill the liberal learning mission of American higher education.

Chapter four contains an explanation of the collection and analysis of documents beginning with institutional mission statements and general education goal statements. The chapter continues with an explanation of the collection, selection, and categorization of the sample. Categories for analysis include both demographic and content areas. Demographic analysis includes: course titles, course constituency, number of instructional hours, number of instructional weeks, and number credits assigned. Content categories include: course goals and objectives, types of classroom activities, assignments, and assessment tools, grading and evaluation procedures, and types of required reading. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the signature pedagogies revealed by the analysis.

Chapter five summarizes the study and suggests an interpretation of the data. I begin with a review of the research problem, design, and methodology. Next, I summarize and integrate the findings from the literature review followed by a summation of findings from the document analysis. Application of the integrated findings follows. I then discuss the significance and limitations of the findings. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future investigation and final reflections.

## Chapter 2

### Research Design and Methodology

I found a scant amount of research attempting to explain the relationship between the experience of acting and the development of intellectual character and Habits of Mind (HOM). Because of the paucity of published information, I decided to start my research with an exploratory and descriptive study. Exploratory and descriptive studies are a useful place to start when little is known of a phenomenon and an exploration into its nature and characteristics is in the early stages of inquiry.

I chose a qualitative research orientation for two reasons. First, qualitative researchers “begin less with a search for answers than with an attempt to frame initial questions and theories.”<sup>51</sup> I sought to explore and describe the relationship between acting pedagogy and the development of intellectual character within the context of higher education by identifying signature pedagogies of acting for non-majors. I expected the findings to raise questions about how signature pedagogy integrates the goals of general education with the teaching of disciplinary content. The second reason a qualitative orientation was appropriate for this study is because teaching and learning occur in a social context i.e. the classroom. Qualitative inquiry embraces the complex, ambiguous, sometimes paradoxical and dynamic quality of social environments and seeks to understand a phenomenon in context.<sup>52</sup> I believe teaching and learning are dynamic, lived experiences within a fluid social context rather than fixed, stable, and objective.

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<sup>51</sup>Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publisher, 1998), 5.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

## Research Design

There are many designs in qualitative research. Sharon Merriam identifies five designs as prevalent: basic, ethnographic, phenomenological, grounded theory, and case study.<sup>53</sup> The purpose of a study and how the research question is phrased determines which design best suits the needs of the study. The basic design is the best fit for the needs of my study for several reasons.

First, basic designs “seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved.”<sup>54</sup> The purpose of this study was to discover and describe the relationship between the experience of acting and the development of intellectual character. I sought to accomplish this goal by examining course syllabi. My underlying assumption was that the course instructor created a syllabus that reflects his/her perspective or worldview, regarding the most effective way(s) to teach non-majors about the art of acting.

I have not included the student viewpoint because I was looking at pedagogical choices of instructors. One type of document I analyzed was the course syllabus, a document created by teachers. Students might influence an instructor’s pedagogical choices but the instructor, in most cases, is still the primary architect of course design.<sup>55</sup> The student viewpoint would be essential in determining the *effectiveness* of the chosen

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>On some campuses where multiple sections of the same course are taught, by multiple instructors, an institution may deem it advantageous to have the same syllabus used in all sections in order to standardize the course experience. These syllabi may be generated by one individual or a group of individuals. All syllabi in the analyzed sample for this study were generated by the course instructor.

pedagogies however effectiveness of such pedagogies does not fall within the scope of this study. In regards to gauging the effectiveness of a process, Margaret LeCompte and Judith Preisle note, “Before researchers can make affirmative statements about how the world or any part of it works, they must know what it is.”<sup>56</sup> In this sense the results of my study create a heuristic device that can be utilized by future researchers to theorize or critique the effectiveness of pedagogical practices in courses designed to teach acting to non-majors concurrent with the development of intellectual character.

Second, I chose the basic design because the findings of a basic qualitative study are a mix of description and analysis. The analysis usually results in the identification of recurring patterns that cut across the data.<sup>57</sup> Signature pedagogies, by definition, are recurring patterns. I assumed that some recurring patterns of pedagogy will be documented in course syllabi.

Third, qualitative studies seek to understand rather than predict outcomes or prove theories. I sought to discover, describe, and understand the phenomenon of simultaneously teaching disciplinary skills/knowledge while facilitating the development of intellectual character. I did not seek to predict or control outcomes or prove theories.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Margaret D. LeCompte and Judith Preisle, “Qualitative Research: What It Is, What It Isn’t, and How It’s Done” in *Advances in Social Science Methodology* vol. 3 ed. Bruce Thompson (Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press Ltd.. 1994), 156.

<sup>57</sup>Merriam, 11-12.

<sup>58</sup>These goals are better met through quantitative research designs.

## **Type of Data Analyzed**

Two types of documents,<sup>59</sup> course syllabi and institutional documents were analyzed for this study. There are several advantages to using documents as a data set. Some documents, unlike observations and interviewing, have been created for reasons other than the research at hand and as such are not subject to a participant's overt or covert agenda towards the study. Also, the use of documents does not intrude on or alter the setting of the study in a way that observation might. Further, documents are an accessible and ready-made source of data and do not require repeated access to participants. Searching for and collecting documents, with the aid of the Internet, is a relatively inexpensive research strategy. The types of documents I analyzed were available through a variety of sources including public and institutional websites. Finally, documents have the potential to provide a large and diverse sample.<sup>60</sup> Diversity in the sample was desirable for two reasons: 1) signature pedagogies are identified by their redundancy and pervasiveness within multiple and diverse educational settings; 2) diversity helps mitigate the possibility of building a study around unrepresentative examples.

Working with documents also has limitations. Documents may be incomplete or contain irrelevant material because they have not been created specifically to address the research question at hand. A document may be discontinuous; it may leave gaps in the

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<sup>59</sup>I am using the term "document" in the manner defined by Sharan Merriam in *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, that is, any written, visual, physical materials relevant to the study and in existence prior to the request for data.

<sup>60</sup>Merriam, 124-26.

chronology of the information or may not be a representative example of the phenomenon under investigation. It may not be in a form that is useful or expedient. Additional concerns arise in determining authenticity and accuracy. Documents contain biases of the author. It was my role as a researcher to identify the contexts from which documents were obtained in order for the reader to ascertain if a bias is significantly impacting the outcome of the study. Some of these limitations were mitigated in the process of moving data from the raw sample (all syllabi submitted) to the sample to be analyzed. This part of the process is explained in detail in chapter 4, “Analysis of Course Syllabi.” The remainder of this chapter will describe the methods I used to collect data, select data for the raw sample, identify information rich sites, identify potential participants, and enhance the trustworthiness of the findings.

### **Institutional Documents**

I examined the institutional mission/vision statements and general education goal statements of the institutions represented in the syllabi included in the analysis sample in order to understand the stated expectations these institutions place on their general education curricula. These expectations define another level of context in which acting for non-majors courses are taught. The selection process for these documents occurred after syllabi from the raw sample were selected into the analysis sample. Once syllabi were selected into the analysis sample, I recorded the institutional affiliation for each syllabus (75). I then accessed the websites of the recorded institutions (61).<sup>61</sup> I reviewed

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<sup>61</sup>The discrepancy between the 75 syllabi and the 61 institutions is due to multiple faculty members from the same institution submitting syllabi.

the relevant documents in the undergraduate academic catalog or promotional materials corresponding to the date on a syllabus. I deposited the information I found into a sample. Chapter four describes details of the analysis process for this sample.

### **Course Syllabi**

I collected course syllabi for courses designed to introduce acting to non-major general education students in institutions of higher education in the United States between fall semester 2001 and fall semester 2007. Course syllabi are naturally occurring empirical materials. Naturally occurring empirical materials allow the researcher to be more directly in touch with the phenomenon under investigation than researcher-instigated data such as interviews or surveys. A course syllabus is potentially a direct link to an instructor's pedagogical practices without an opportunity for the instructor to reinterpret his/her practices in light of a researcher's questions.<sup>62</sup> Pedagogical practices can be glimpsed through course descriptions, statements of goals and objectives, assignments, textbooks, assessment tools, and grading and evaluation criteria. Many of these elements should be contained in the syllabus for a course.

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<sup>62</sup>Anssi Perakyla, "Analyzing Talk and Text," in *The Sage Book of Qualitative Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2005), 870.



### Method of Sampling

The method of sampling for syllabi collection was *nonprobability* sampling. *Nonprobability* sampling collects data from information rich sites.<sup>63</sup> Collection sites are targeted, not random. It is a reasonable method when a researcher's primary goal is "...to solve qualitative problems like discovering what occurs..."<sup>64</sup> By contrast, *probability* sampling randomizes the selection process. *Probability* sampling is a useful collection method in quantitative research where goals are to predict, control, or prove a theory. It allows the researcher to generalize the results of a study through statistics. Qualitative research does not seek to generalize findings "in a statistical sense" thus "probabilistic sampling is not necessary or even justifiable in qualitative research"<sup>65</sup> Statistics are used for other purposes in qualitative research. They are used to describe some aspect of a phenomenon or in support of points described in the narrative. Descriptive statistics are included in this study's findings.

Nonprobability sampling can take several forms. A common form is *purposive* sampling. *Purposive* sampling is "based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned."<sup>66</sup> *Purposive* sampling has the following characteristics: 1) it is a criterion-based process, 2) the delineated criteria allow the researcher to pinpoint a site(s)

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<sup>63</sup>Sites most likely to have the type of data the researcher is collecting. In this case, departments housing the disciplines of Theatre, Performance Studies, Drama, and/or Communications.

<sup>64</sup>J.J. Honigmann, "Sampling in Ethnographic Fieldwork." in *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual* ed. R.G. Burgess (London: Allan and Unwin 1982.) quoted in Sharon B. Merriam *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publisher, 1998), 61.

<sup>65</sup>Merriam, 61.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

where the phenomenon under study is most likely to occur, and 3) several types of purposive sampling can be tailored to the needs of the study. The several types can be used in isolation or in combination to help the researcher gather the most effective sample available.<sup>67</sup>

*Purposive* sampling has advantages for a descriptive and exploratory study.

Criterion-based processes allow the researcher to identify those characteristics of the sample that are essential to the study and then seek data from sites which are most likely to be rich with data conforming to the criteria. The specific criteria for this study are:

- Criterion 1: All syllabi in the raw sample must be submitted by the instructor of the course or found on the Internet. Instructors were asked to submit their most recent syllabi at the time of the request for each college or university at which they were employed.
- Criterion 2: The primary function of the course for which the syllabus was designed is to teach acting to non-majors enrolled for general education credit.
- Criterion 3: The course must be cross-listed in the affiliated institution's general education curriculum for the semester/year the syllabus was in use.
- Criterion 4: All courses must have been taught between fall 2001 semester and the completion of fall 2007 semester.
- Criterion 5: All colleges or universities for which the course was taught must be located within the United State of America or the District of Columbia.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 61-62.

<sup>68</sup>The search for data was limited to these locales for several reasons. First, educational infrastructures vary from nation to nation. There is no single, global model that is in use by all or even a majority of the 193 recognized governments that make up the planet. Second, colleges and universities are the types of institutions in which I have taught, in which I am most likely to be teaching, and am most interested in studying. Third, I am specifically interested in how the concepts of liberal education are developed in the acting classroom. The right to a liberal education is one of the foundations upon which higher education in America rests. Fourth, the inclusion of syllabi from additional nations would create a scope too large and too complex to be achievable for a study of this size. Fifth, while every institution of higher learning in America has some unique characteristics, the 69 institutions included in the final sample have in common the mission of promoting the behaviors and habits characteristic of liberal learning. This

- Criterion 6: Target population for the course is undergraduate non-majors or a mix of non-majors and majors.
- Criterion 7: The syllabus must contain two or more of the areas reviewed for analysis: goals/objectives, textbook, classroom activities, assignments, assessment activities and frameworks.

The primary type of *purposive* sampling used was *maximum variation* sampling.

This type of sampling is desirable when the researcher wants to discover “how a phenomenon is seen and understood among different people in different settings at different times.”<sup>69</sup> Y.S Lincoln and E.G. Guba, pioneers in defining methodologies of naturalistic inquiry, assert “the most useful strategy for naturalistic (a.k.a. qualitative) inquiry is maximum variation sampling.”<sup>70</sup> It is useful because it

aims at capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant or program variation...Any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared aspects or impacts of a program.<sup>71</sup>

Because the purpose of this study is exploratory and descriptive, I cast a wide net in order to capture data representing the maximum range of the phenomenon within the established criteria from information rich sites.

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allows me to compare “apples to apples” in terms of broad institutional goals regarding the purpose of education.

<sup>69</sup>D. Cohen and B. Crabtree, "Qualitative Research Guidelines Project." Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, <http://www.qualres.org/HomeMaxi-3803.html> (accessed August 12, 2011).

<sup>70</sup>Y.S Lincoln and E.G Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1985) in Marie C. Hoepfl, “Choosing Qualitative Research: A Primer for Technology Education Research” *Journal of Technology Education* 9, no. 1 (fall 1997), 52 [.http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/journals/JTE/v9n1/hoepfl.html](http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/journals/JTE/v9n1/hoepfl.html) (accessed November 7, 2011).

<sup>71</sup>Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* (Newbury Park, California: SAGE Printing, Inc., 1990), 172.

*Maximum variation* sampling diversifies data in a sample in ways relevant to the research question. The data within my sample varied in relation to:

- Rank of instructor
- Size of affiliated institution
- Residential character of the institution
- Affiliated institutions basic classification in the Carnegie Foundation's<sup>72</sup> Classification of Institutions of Higher Learning 2005 Report.<sup>73</sup>
- Enrollment Profile
- Class population constituency
- Public or Private institution
- Profit or non-profit institution
- Type(s) of Degrees granted
- Geographical location of the institution

A secondary type of sampling, *snowball* sampling,<sup>74</sup> was utilized with a small degree of effectiveness. *Snowball* (also called *chain* or *network*) sampling depends on participants referring the researcher to other potential participants.<sup>75</sup> In the "Request for Data" letter that was emailed to prospective participants, I included the following sentence: "If I have sent this request to you and you do not teach this type of course or your department offers multiple sections of the course with multiple instructors could you

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<sup>72</sup>The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Learning was founded by Andrew Carnegie in 1905 and chartered by an act of Congress in 1906. It is an independent policy and research center. Its mission includes working to promote the dignity of the profession of teaching as well as develop knowledge, tools, and ideas to enhance learning in educational institutions across regions, disciplines, and levels of the education system in the United States of America.

<sup>73</sup>The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Learning was developed in 1970 to support research and policy analysis in the area of teaching and learning and was made available to researchers in 1973. It delineates significant differences and similarities among educational institutions. It is a tool whereby researchers can verify the range of institutional diversity included in a sample. It is a complex body of demographic data interwoven to produce several categories of information as well as a basic classification for each institution listed. The demographic information used to create the 2005 system came from two sources: the National Center for Educational Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the institutions themselves.

<sup>74</sup>Merriam., 63.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 61.

please forward this email to the appropriate person(s) in your department (including adjunct faculty, part-time faculty, or graduate students)?” This type of sampling yielded seven syllabi in the raw sample.

The remainder of the syllabi in the raw sample was gathered through *convenience sampling*. *Convenience sampling* means to select a sample “based on time, money, location, and availability.”<sup>76</sup> Compared to *maximum variation sampling*, *convenience sampling* is randomized and generally does not pinpoint information-rich sites. I used the Internet to locate data. The Internet search yielded twenty syllabi for the raw sample, sixteen of which were eliminated before analysis because they did not meet one or more of the criteria described previously.

**Table 2.1. Number of Syllabi Collected by Type of Sampling**

NUMBER OF SYLLABI COLLECTED BY MAXIMUM VARIATION SAMPLING	130
NUMBER OF SYLLABI COLLECTED BY SNOWBALLING SAMPLING	7
NUMBER OF SYLLABI COLLECTED BY CONVENIENCE SAMPLING	20
TOTAL NUMBER OF SYLLABI COLLECTED	157

**Identifying Information-rich Sites**

I identified sites likely to be rich with the type of data for which I was searching by working with *The College Blue Book: Degrees Offered by College and Subject 32<sup>nd</sup> edition*. The book lists theatre, performance studies, drama, and communications departments in the United States and the District of Columbia that offer undergraduate

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

degrees in theatre and/or offer a theatre minor or Associate’s degree. Categories searched included: “Drama and Dramatics/Theatre Arts,” “Drama Therapy,” “Dramatics/Theatre Arts and Stagecraft,” “Theater,” “Performance,” “Theatre Literature, History, and Criticism,” and “Theatre/Theatre Arts Management.” These categories were chosen because they listed colleges and universities with undergraduate programs. Acting for non-majors courses are a part of the undergraduate curriculum. The table below illustrates the number of institutions identified as potentially information rich sites.

**Table 2.2. Number of Institutions Identified**

TOTAL IDENTIFIED	1,022
TOTAL ELIMINATED: NO GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM	3
TOTAL CONTACTED	1,019
TOTAL CONTACTED OFFERING BACCULAUREATE DEGREES IN THEATRE	791
TOTAL CONTACTED OFFERING ASSOCIATE’S DEGREES IN THEATRE	222
TOTAL CONTACTED OFFERING BACCULAUREATE AND ASSOCIATE’S DEGREES IN THEATRE	6

**Recruiting Participants**

The next task was to identify and recruit individuals at each site who were most likely to teach/have taught acting to non-majors within the boundaries of the previously defined criteria. I searched institutional and departmental websites of the 1,019 institutions previously identified as potentially information rich in order to identify faculty members most likely to be teaching acting to non-majors. I collected the email

addresses of potential participants from each website. Instructors holding ranking or non-ranking positions, visiting, adjunct, part-time, and/or graduate teaching assistants were considered potential participants in the study. Faculty/staff members who met one or more of the following criteria received a request for data<sup>77</sup> via their institutional email account:

- Area of specialization was identified as acting, directing, or performance.
- Name was listed with a course title indicating s/he taught acting or performance.
- The faculty member was identified as the head of an acting program.
- Identified as the department chairperson. At some websites, the only contact information provided was the department chair person.
- Identified as the Dean of a division containing a theatre department when no chair or individual faculty members could be identified.
- Identified as the Head of Theatre Graduate Studies.<sup>78</sup>

In nine cases, department or division administrative assistants received the request because no contact information for faculty/staff was available via the department website.<sup>79</sup> Additionally, it was particularly difficult to ascertain course assignments in departments comprised of four or less faculty. Therefore, I sent the request for data to all members of such departments. In total, 3,154 faculty or staff members were identified. I emailed a letter of request to each of the 3,154 potential participants.

The expansive scope of the request for data has been possible only because the internet has provided a convenient, timely, efficient, and cost effective conduit for

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<sup>77</sup>The letter of request can be viewed in the appendix.

<sup>78</sup>Not all sites with graduate programs included the names, contact information and/or teaching assignments of their graduate students. In my experience, graduate teaching instructors are sometimes assigned to teach general education curricula. Heads of Theatre Graduate Studies are in the best position to identify graduate student instructors and pass the request for data to them.

<sup>79</sup>None of the syllabi in either the raw sample or the analyzed sample were submitted by administrative assistants.

communication between researcher and potential participants. The letters of request were emailed to institutional accounts between October and December 2006 and syllabi were accepted for review until the end of the spring semester 2007. The use of staggered release dates allowed time in the overall process for the sorting and storage of incoming data at a manageable rate; when responses were received, emails of acknowledgement were sent out immediately and submitted documents were stored electronically backed-up with hard copies.

Some requests for data were returned as “undeliverable.” Where undeliverable emails were the result of researcher error, second attempts were made resulting in a higher rate of delivered emails. Of the 3,154 emailed requests, 2,738 were delivered. In the end, 112 participants responded representing<sup>80</sup> 119 different institutions<sup>81</sup> in thirty-four states.

### *Method of Data Analysis*

Content analysis was the primary method of data analysis. This method has been linked with both qualitative and quantitative research philosophies. When adapted to qualitative research, the focus is on the communication of meaning in a specific context by identifying “themes and recurring patterns of meaning.”<sup>82</sup> Content analysis, as a method of inquiry, was a good fit for the needs of this study for several reasons. First,

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<sup>80</sup>112 participants resulted in 157 syllabi because some participants submitted more than one syllabus.

<sup>81</sup>112 participants represented 119 institutions because some participants were teaching simultaneously at multiple institutions.

<sup>82</sup>Merriam, 160.



the kinds of data I am looking for are identified through recurring patterns. Second, it operates directly on texts of documents without the need for interaction with the author(s).<sup>83</sup> It is particularly useful when authors are spread out over wide distances, which is the case in this study. Third, since content analysis deals directly and exclusively with text, it “usually yields unobtrusive measures”<sup>84</sup> because the author will not have an opportunity to adjust the message. Fourth, the process is adaptable to the needs of a given study.

Dr. Robert Phillip Weber, author of *Basic Content Analysis*, asserts there is no one right way to conduct content analysis and it is up to the researcher to choose those content analysis methods appropriate to the investigation of his/her research question.<sup>85</sup> Even so, Weber describes a series of steps that, broadly speaking, chronicles the process I used in this study.<sup>86</sup> First, the analyst must determine what portion of the document to analyze. Not all information in a document may be relevant to a study. For instance, syllabi often contain information instructing students in how to contact the instructor outside of class time. Information of this type is about course management practices rather than content and is irrelevant to my study.

Next the analyst determines the size of the recording unit(s) to be analyzed. A “recording unit” is a piece of data smaller than the document as a whole. Recording units can be the length of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs or sections of the document. The larger the recording unit, the more difficult it is to code. The aforementioned areas

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<sup>83</sup>Robert Phillip Weber, *Basic Content Analysis*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (London: SAGE Publications, 1990), 10.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 21-24.

of relevance are often categorized in a section of a syllabus so I began by analyzing sections.

At some point in the process, the analyst delineates categories that capture the themes, issues, concepts, or theories under investigation.<sup>87</sup> The delineation of categories must be targeted and accurately articulate the large conceptual constructs in which the researcher is interested. Critical decisions made at this point in the process guide the remaining parameters and the outcomes of the study. Will the categories be mutually exclusive? How narrow or broad should the categories be? Will the investigator create and label categories unique to his/her study or use standard categories specific to the field of study? Categories can be identified as they emerge from the data, be pre-determined by the analyst, or both.

When categories are identified as they emerge from the data this is called “open coding.” Open coding involves recognizing and naming themes in order to create a category. Marie Hoepfl notes, “The goal is to create descriptive, multi-dimensional categories which form a preliminary framework for analysis.”<sup>88</sup> Words or phrases that appear to be similar are then grouped under categories and are assumed to have similar meanings in the context of the texts.<sup>89</sup> For example, words like “journal, script analysis, and production critique” might be aggregated into a category labeled “written assignments.” The coding process is recursive and may result in the creation of additional categories once the process is underway. The categories identified in this

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Marie C. Hoepfl, “Choosing Qualitative Research: A Primer for Technology Education Researchers,” *Journal of Technology Education* 9, no. 1 (Fall 1997): 55.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

study are the result of a combination of open coding and predetermined categories. Predetermined categories were based on common labeling of sections of a syllabus and themes identified in the review of related literature on intellectual development and habits of mind.

The frequency of the code words or phrases was then calculated. The underlying assumption is that the more frequently they appear, the more important the themes, issues, concepts, or theories are to the author of the text. Frequency and redundancy are key characteristics of signature pedagogy, therefore, counting and reporting words or phrases describing pedagogy is essential to identifying it as signature pedagogy.

### **Trustworthiness of the Findings**

Every researcher must attempt to demonstrate the trustworthiness of her findings. Trustworthiness means the researcher has designed and implemented a process that is fair, balanced, rigorous, and authentic. The attempt to prove trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry is an open-ended process, "...naturalistic inquiry operates as an *open* system; no amount of member checking, triangulation, persistent observation, auditing, or whatever can compel; it can at best persuade."<sup>90</sup> Simply put, the researcher strives to "persuade his or her audience that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of."<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Y.S Lincoln and E. G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1985), 329.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 290.

One of the criticisms leveled against the trustworthiness of findings from qualitative studies is the accusation of subjectivity. Subjectivity is alleged because the primary instrument through which data is collected, organized, and analyzed is the human researcher. Its opposite, objectivity, has long been the gold standard of trustworthiness in scientific quantitative inquiry. When the controversy over subjectivity and objectivity is closely examined two essential ideas emerge. First, no research is free of human influence. A human conceptualizes the research question, shapes the way in which it is asked, determines what kind of data is relevant to answering the question, chooses a method of analysis, designs the instrument, and interprets the meaning of the findings. The researcher influences the inquiry at all stages of the process whether the methodology is qualitative or quantitative.<sup>92</sup> Second, the terms “subjectivity” and “objectivity” have become so polarizing in a debate about trustworthiness that they are useless as guides.<sup>93</sup>

Michael Quinn Patton suggests an alternative paradigm to the subjective/objective lens: focus on the common goal of all research, to “seek honest, meaningful, credible, and empirically supported findings.”<sup>94</sup> He suggests defining criteria for assessing trustworthiness in such a way that researchers aim to demonstrate the balance, fairness, and completeness of their findings. Traditional quantitative *criteria* for accessing balance, fairness, and completeness, like traditional quantitative *methods*, do not “fit the realities of qualitative research.”<sup>95</sup> Y. S. Lincoln and F.G. Guba have suggested a set of

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<sup>92</sup>Patton, 50.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

criteria appropriate to the qualitative paradigm of the nature of reality as complex, dynamic, ambiguous, and paradoxical. Their criteria for assessment are: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.<sup>96</sup> I adopted these criteria to persuade my audience of the trustworthiness of this study's findings.

### ***Credibility of the Findings***

In this context, credibility refers to the plausibility of the findings. In order to assess plausibility, readers ask the question: based on the background of the investigator, the design of the study, and the methods used are the findings reasonable? I have utilized four strategies to enhance the credibility of the findings of this study: 1) evidence of theoretical sensitivity, 2) discussion of my point of view in regard to the teaching of acting to non-majors, 3) periodic peer review of design, methods, and findings, 4) and triangulation of data.

First, I have described in detail in this chapter the overall design and methodology I used for identifying, diversifying, collecting, and analyzing raw data. In chapter four, I describe the criteria through which the raw sample was filtered in order to create the sample for analysis. The disclosure of these kinds of details help the reader to assess a researcher's "skill and readiness"<sup>97</sup> to conduct a research study and interpret data. B.G. Glaser, A. L. Strauss, and J. Corbin refer to the skill and readiness of the researcher as 'theoretical sensitivity,' "...the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to the data, the capacity to understand, and the ability to separate the pertinent from that

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<sup>96</sup>Lincoln and Guba, 300.

<sup>97</sup>Hoepfl, 50.

which isn't.”<sup>98</sup> In other words: Is the reader confident in the abilities of the researcher to be sensitive to the data and to draw reasonable conclusions?

Second, in the discussion of confirmability, I have included detailed descriptions of my biases, worldview, and theoretical orientation as a researcher as they relate to the phenomenon being investigated. The section includes information about my teaching philosophy, and my professional and personal experiences teaching acting to non-majors. A more detailed description of my philosophy of learning and teaching is contained in the appendix. Chapter three, “Review of Literature” should also serve to illuminate my perspective for the reader. It alerts the reader to the quality and type of professional literature that shaped my thinking as I worked to describe and understand the signature pedagogies of acting for non-majors can teach content and intellectual character simultaneously.

Third, embedded in the process of writing a dissertation is a periodic peer review of the study by a dissertation committee and its chairperson. Members of the committee, especially the Chairperson, have been providing feedback on the reasonableness of all elements of the study at intervals in the research process. Each draft of the dissertation has refined and sharpened my ability to define my process so that the logic underpinning my interpretation of the data becomes clearer to the reader.

Fourth, I utilized multiple sources to triangulate<sup>99</sup> the data. The review of literature, the course syllabi, and the selected institutional documents combine to create a

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<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

<sup>99</sup>The goal of triangulating data is to understand a complex phenomenon from varied and diverse perspectives in order to move towards a holistic understanding of it thereby increasing the trustworthiness of a report's findings. It is a method adapted from the field of land surveying. Surveyors used triangulation to improve the validity of a map by checking measures from different angles. (Malterud, 487) In spirit, the concept on which triangulation is founded is analogous to the Hindu parable of the elephant

multi- dimensional view of teaching acting to non-majors. Each source illuminated a different aspect of the total process. My understanding of liberal learning, habits of mind, and the development of intellectual character in the classroom was augmented by the literature review. The review also included a brief survey of the history of curriculum development in higher education which illuminated the manner in which current trends in curricular structures developed and the context in which acting for non-majors is currently taught. The institutional document analysis revealed characteristics of a well-educated person, as defined by institutions of higher education, and of their expectations of general education curriculum. The course syllabi are primary artifacts of the teaching process. Although they are a snapshot frozen in time, they allow a glimpse into intended practices.

Taken together, these four strategies: evidence of theoretical sensitivity; a discussion of my point of view in regard to the teaching of acting to non-majors; periodic peer review of design, methods, and findings; and triangulation of data, increase the likelihood that the reader will assess the findings of this study as credible.

### ***Transferability***

Transferability in this context means “the process of applying results of research from one situation to other similar situations.”<sup>100</sup> Transferability of findings is a *reader* decision not a *researcher* decision. Lincoln and Guba, who first identified transferability

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and the blind men. Six wise blind men touch different parts of an elephant in an attempt to understand what it looks like. Each describes a very different looking animal. When they triangulate their descriptions, they move closer to understanding the complex physical structure of the elephant.

<sup>100</sup>Hoepfl, 59.

as one aspect of trustworthiness, assert, “It is...not the naturalist’s task to provide an *index* of transferability; it *is* his or her responsibility to provide the *data base* that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of the potential applicers.”<sup>101</sup> Readers ask themselves: How well do the variables within the researched phenomenon align with my situation? Are there enough similarities between the context of the study and my context for these findings to be useful to me at this time? The reader may transfer some findings and not others. The reader will continue to assess the transferability of the findings as his/her situation changes over time.

Researchers may identify trends that cut across the data and suggest possible applications to other situations as part of their own interpretation, but they do not attempt to generalize findings across multiple and diverse situations or impose absolutes on the reader. The qualitative researcher is aware that findings stated as absolutes decay over time as behaviors and conditions change.<sup>102</sup> L. J. Cronbach suggests viewing findings as a working hypothesis: based on what we currently know about the phenomenon in this context, we can say this about it at this time.<sup>103</sup> I have used two strategies in this study to enhance the possibility of transferring the findings: rich thick description of the context in which the phenomenon is occurring and multisite design.

Researchers can enhance the range and probability of transfer of some findings by collecting data from multiple information rich sites through the use of purposive sampling methods and then describing the findings in rich thick narrative. The findings

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<sup>101</sup>Lincoln and Guba, 316.

<sup>102</sup>Merriam, 207.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 209.



from this study are reported through a rich and detailed descriptive narrative augmented by descriptive statistics in the form of raw numbers and percentages to record frequency. The mean, median, mode, and range in each category were calculated and outliers were identified where applicable. Consistent with the philosophies that provide the foundation of qualitative research, this study is not attempting to prove or disprove a hypothesis or theory nor discover and expose the “Truth.” It seeks, rather, to create a database representing one researcher’s reading of the pedagogical trends influencing the teaching of acting to non-majors. The study attempts to understand the phenomenon in context and then identify recurring patterns that cut across the data.

Multisite design means, “...using several sites, cases, situations, especially those that maximize diversity in the phenomenon of interest; this will allow the results to be applied by readers to a greater range of other situations. This variation can be achieved through purposeful or random sampling.”<sup>104</sup> I refer the reader to the previous section of this chapter entitled “Method of sampling” for a discussion of my use of maximum variation sampling, snowball sampling, and convenience sampling (all types of purposeful sampling) to create the raw sample for the study. Ultimately, the reader will assess the transferability of findings based on his/her interpretation of the findings and how closely the variables in the study’s context align with his/her own.

### ***Dependability***

Dependability is the consistency of the researcher’s process as well as her ability to integrate data collection, analysis, and findings into a fair and balanced report. Lincoln

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 212.

and Guba suggest dependability of a study can be enhanced with the use of an inquiry audit conducted by a qualified peer or peers who act as Peer De-briefer(s). They may examine 1) raw data, 2) analysis notes, 3) process notes, 4) personal notes, and 5) preliminary developmental information.<sup>105</sup> In my case, peer debriefing takes place by two pools of peers: 1) my dissertation committee and 2) the readers of the study.

First, the dissertation process has a built in inquiry audit. This study was reviewed by my entire dissertation committee beginning with the initial prospectus and continuing through to the final draft of the dissertation. Two members in particular reviewed the design and methodology for the study: Dr. Suzanne Burgoyne and Dr. Jeni Hart. Dr. Suzanne Burgoyne, Professor of Theatre at the University of Missouri-Columbia, is the Chairperson of my dissertation committee. I chose Burgoyne because of her expertise in teaching and research. She has received local, regional, and national awards for her teaching. She is a nationally respected creative and traditional researcher. In the classroom and in rehearsal, she models a style of teaching I find very effective as a learner and satisfying as a teacher.<sup>106</sup> Her style is also consistent with my beliefs regarding the importance of the dual function of content and the development of intellectual character. She guided the focus, design, and analysis of this study since its genesis in 2005. Her contributions to the inquiry audit include reading multiple drafts of the prospectus and all chapters, providing written and verbal feedback, and posing questions about the focus of the research question, methodology, ethics, and other

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<sup>105</sup>Lincoln and Guba, 320-21.

<sup>106</sup>I have been a student in Burgoyne's graduate classes, a collaborator in the artistic process, her teaching assistant for 2 semesters, and coauthor of a text on script analysis.

research issues. Essentially, she played the role of “Devil’s Advocate.’ I adjusted focus, methods, and materials in accordance with notes from each debriefing.

Dr. Jeni Hart, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Development at the University of Missouri-Columbia, is a member of my dissertation committee. She is my “outside” reader. I chose Hart for her expertise in qualitative research methods in the field of education. Like Burgoyne, Hart read and responded to multiple drafts of this chapter in particular. Her feedback led me to multiple sources that shaped the design of this study and deepened my understanding of the history, philosophical foundations, methods, and controversies surrounding qualitative research, higher education, and general education.

Other members of my committee, Dr. Cheryl Black and Dr. Heather Carver have read and responded to the full study. Black, Professor of Theatre, was chosen for her expertise in the teaching of acting. Carver, Professor of Theatre, was chosen for her expertise in Performance Studies.

Second, all readers of this study are potential Peer De-briefers inasmuch as they read, assess, and respond to the ideas in the study. To help both constituencies, I have included a number of documents in the appendices. These documents should aid any reader interested in re-tracing my design or assessing the fairness, completeness, rigor, and balance of the design’s implementation. These documents include: the letter of request for syllabi, my philosophy of learning and teaching, IRB approval, and. my curriculum vitae.<sup>107</sup> In addition, all syllabi submitted have been retained in an electronic

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<sup>107</sup>All of these documents are contained in the appendix.

file. This file is available for inspection upon request and pending permission of the study's participants.

### ***Confirmability***

Confirmability is the researcher's ability to demonstrate her competence and integrity as a researcher. One strategy for enhancing the confirmability of findings is the disclosure of the researcher's position, experience, perspectives, beliefs, and values relative to the phenomenon under study. Disclosing this type of information acknowledges the presence of human intervention and allows the reader to assess how the researcher, as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, may have influenced the design, analysis, and interpretation of findings. As noted by Michael Patton, "Judgments about the significance of findings are thus inevitably connected to the researcher's credibility, competence, thoroughness, and integrity."<sup>108</sup>

Explicating researcher perspective is also a form of "sharpening the instrument."<sup>109</sup> A reflexive stance towards one's research creates self-awareness, which can be an asset to the researcher throughout all phases of the study. Being aware of one's perspective can help the researcher develop empathic neutrality.<sup>110</sup> Patton, who uses the concept, explains, "Reflexivity reminds the qualitative inquirer to be attentive to and conscious of the political, social, linguistic, and ideological origins of one's own perspective and voice as well as the perspective and voices of those one interviews and

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<sup>108</sup>Patton, 64.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

<sup>110</sup>A term used by Patton, the concept attempts to define a middle ground between the researcher and the people/problem under study. It represents an ideal balance between being too involved, which can color judgment and remaining too distant which can hamper understanding.

those to whom one reports.”<sup>111</sup> Being attentive to these details can alert the researcher to moments when the balance between empathy and neutrality is being crossed. It can also help develop a novice researcher into a trusted and valued researcher. Patton comments: “This [self-awareness] is both the strength and weakness of qualitative methods, the strength in that of a well-trained, experienced and astute observer adds value and credibility to the inquiry, while an ill-prepared, inexperienced, and imperceptive observer casts doubt on what is reported.”<sup>112</sup> Reflexivity, then, is a strategy used by researchers to enhance the trustworthiness of research findings. In simple terms, “To be reflexive is to understand *what I know* and *how I know it*.”<sup>113</sup>

When the charge of “subjectivity” is viewed through the lens of reflexivity it becomes an asset to the researcher and the reader: “A credible, authoritative, authentic, and trustworthy voice engages the reader...so that the reader joins the inquirer in the search for meaning.”<sup>114</sup> Disclosure makes the researcher’s experience, or subjective stance, visible to readers and enhances the researcher’s trustworthiness. Reflexivity reframes subjectivity as the voice of experience in relation to the phenomenon under study. Patton suggests six areas of reflexivity that should be disclosed to the reader: (1) personal motivation for embarking on the study, (2) qualifications for conducting the study, (3) previous experience with the phenomenon, (4) preconceptions about the

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<sup>111</sup>Patton, 65.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 64

<sup>114</sup>Ibid.

phenomenon, (5) theoretical foundations of the researcher's perspective, and (6) how the researcher (the instrument) was changed in the course of the study.<sup>115</sup>

**Motivation.** My motivation for conducting this study was outlined in the opening paragraphs of Chapter 1; here I will recap and expand. My initial questions grew out of frustration with my own teaching, which I perceived to be ineffectual in regards to teaching habits of mind to non-majors studying acting. I felt I was doing an effective job of teaching the craft of acting at an introductory level but was failing dismally at connecting the art of acting to the development of intellectual character. I did not know how to recognize nor to make visible evidence of the deeper learning that habits of mind signify. In addition, I believe the intentional and transparent development of intellectual character is one of the major factors differentiating university education from conservatory training in my field. Development of intellectual character is the foundation of liberal learning and liberal learning is the foundation of a responsible citizenry. From my perspective, I was doing only half my job as an educator in higher education.

**Qualifications.** My qualifications for conducting this study can be divided into three large categories: (1) experience as an educator in higher education, (2) experience in the discipline of acting and (3) experience as a qualitative researcher. For detailed information regarding the first two categories I refer the reader to my curriculum vitae in the Appendix . Here, I summarize some of the relevant information contained therein.

As regards my experience as an educator in higher education, I have worked at eleven institutions of higher learning<sup>116</sup> over the past thirty-five years in six different

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<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 566.

states. I have held the ranks of: Graduate Teaching Instructor, Adjunct, Instructor, Assistant Professor (non-tenure track), and Assistant Professor (tenure track). Currently, I am a tenured Associate Professor of Theatre at a state run medium sized research intensive institution in the Midwest. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education: Certification in Speech and Theatre, a Master of Arts in Theatre, and a Master of Arts in Dance. I am completing my Ph.D. in Theatre with a minor in College Teaching. This study is my dissertation. As regards my experience in the discipline of acting, I refer the reader to my curriculum vitae in the appendix. The vita attests to the range of my experience as teacher, performer, director, and choreographer.

The reader should be aware that this is my first qualitative study. I am a novice in this methodology. This will undoubtedly have affected my choice of design and data and the way in which I have executed the collection and analysis phases of the study.

Although I am new to qualitative research, I am not new to the concept of “content analysis.” As an actor, director, and choreographer, I engage in a form of content analysis each time I embark on a new artistic project that is based on a script. Script analysis is a form of content analysis used by artists in the theatre to uncover themes, patterns, and character traits playwrights embed in their scripts. For the artists involved in producing the script, the analysis of these elements yields a meaning that they then work to convey to an audience. Theatrical artists, like qualitative researchers, recognize that there are multiple meanings in a script and that the members of an audience, like the reader of a qualitative study, bring their own experiences and ideas to a performance. Audiences, like readers of qualitative reports, construct meaning that is useful to them. I

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<sup>116</sup>The eleven institutions consist of nine public and two private.

have worked on over one hundred and fifty productions, all of which have required some level of script analysis. This type of experience points to my ability to read deeply and carefully in search of patterns and trends and then produce an interpretation for an audience to assess. I have also recently co-authored a book on script analysis, *Thinking Through Script Analysis*, with Dr. Suzanne Burgoyne which explicates a process of script analysis. I suggest that my experience in the use of script analysis as well as authoring a book on the process has helped prepare me to execute the content analysis used in this study.

**Previous experience.** I bring an emic point of view to the interpretation and analysis of the data collected for this study. I have taught multiple sections of Acting for Non-Majors over the course of ten years in three institutions of higher education totaling sixteen individual classroom experiences over a ten year period. All courses were part of the general education curriculum at the three institutions. I used a different textbook at each of the three institutions but all were grounded in the acting style of psychological realism. Class enrollment varied but all fall within the range of 14-20 students per semester. Currently, I do not teach acting to non-majors. However, I remain motivated and passionate about this research. I see universal applications that reach across the curriculum within the findings of this study.

**Preconceptions about the course.** Prior to this study, I privileged mastery of disciplinary content above all other learning experiences in the classroom. I was neither aware of nor gave any thought to the notion that students could learn habits of mind that develop intellectual character through disciplinary content. I felt comfortable privileging disciplinary content for several reasons. First, as a theatre major at the undergraduate and



graduate levels, I developed expertise as an actor. In my second area of expertise, dance, mastery of content was equally important. The assumption underlying all my programs of study was that I would be making my living, in one way or another, through my expertise as a performer. Prior to this study, I was much more the “sage on the stage” than the “guide on the side” in teaching style. Second, having had no formal preparation for teaching in higher education (prior to my coursework in the doctoral teaching minor), I mimicked the pedagogical choices of my teachers without questioning the underlying epistemological underpinnings of those choices. Third, I equated rigor with the quantity of material covered in a semester. I rationalized that more was better because it pushed students to higher levels of competency. The desire to cover disciplinary content dominated many instructional decisions.

A major preconception I had at the beginning of the study was that the majority of my peers who taught acting to non-majors were teaching it the same way I was. I originally thought I was looking for unique pedagogies rather than signature pedagogies of acting. My underlying assumption was that the pedagogy itself was the key to changing my teaching. I thought by changing one pedagogy for another I could solve my teaching problems, like changing a pair of socks. I quickly discovered there was not going to be a single solution to a contextually based complicated process like learning. The variables are too many and complex for any “one size fits all” approach.

**Epistemological foundations.** Throughout the course of the study, I find I am more and more in tune with the “constructivist” point of view about how students learn. The constructivist paradigm supports the idea that students make their own meaning based on merging what they already know with new experiences and information that

challenge their current understandings: “Learning is a complex process that defies the linear precepts of measurement and accountability. What students ‘know’ consists of internally constructed understandings of how their worlds function.”<sup>117</sup>

Consistent with the constructivist paradigm, I currently see my role in the classroom as a facilitator, “the guide on the side.” I now try to implement instructional choices that reflect five overarching goals of the constructivist paradigm: (1) to seek and value my student’s points of view; (2) to create classroom activities that challenge student suppositions; (3) to pose problems of emerging relevance; (4) to build lessons around primary concepts and “big” ideas; (5) to assess student learning in the context of daily teaching.<sup>118</sup> I also believe what we do with what we know as opposed to measuring only what we know is a better indicator of intelligence. As Ron Ritchhart has pointed out “smart” is a verb not a noun. This perception of intelligence has caused me to re-think my assessment practices. Further, I believe the current research on the science of learning supports these learner-centered goals and that, by implementing them, I am creating an effective environment for learning. For a more detailed discussion of my pedagogical worldview I refer the reader to my teaching philosophy in the appendix.

**Recalibrating the primary instrument: the researcher.** Whether a study utilizes qualitative or quantitative methods, the researcher is sensitive to new information and emerging data. She responds by making adjustments in perspectives and instrumentation. The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument and should recognize when and why her perspective changes and how these changes influence the

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<sup>117</sup>Jacqueline Grennon Brooks and Martin G. Brooks, *The Case for Constructivist Classrooms* (Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1999), viii.

<sup>118</sup>*Ibid.*, ix-x.

design, collection, analysis, and findings of a study. The inclusion of a process trail enables the reader to understand the logic behind the researcher's choices. The reader is then better prepared to assess the trustworthiness of the study's findings.

There have been many adjustments along the way in this study. For example, if the reader were to read through the many drafts of the prospectus for this study he would note a one hundred and eighty degree shift relative to the kind of pedagogies for which I ended up searching during analysis. My goal was always to identify and describe but, in the beginning stages, I thought I was looking for the atypical rather than the typical. This paradigm shift was a result of discoveries I made during the literature review about the nature of teaching and learning. Rather than listing all of the adjustments and their causes here, I have woven them into the text of the study at points where they are most relevant.

### **Summary of section**

In this section I have discussed the importance of trustworthiness in the findings of a qualitative study. Four criteria identified by Lincoln and Guba, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability enhance trustworthiness. I employed the following strategies to fulfill this criterion: evidence of theoretical sensitivity; periodic peer review of design, methods, and findings; triangulation of data; rich thick description of the context and phenomenon; multisite design, and an inquiry audit by members of my dissertation committee. Although I have attempted to enhance the trustworthiness of the study's findings, readers should recall that findings are offered as

one person's interpretation and may vary from the interpretations of the study's readers and participants.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter began with an explanation of the rationale for my choice of qualitative methodology. This study is an exploratory and descriptive study of a phenomenon that is complex, ambiguous, sometimes paradoxical, and dynamic and was studied in context. The types of data collected and analyzed are documents: course syllabi and institutional documents. The method of sampling was non-probability purposive sampling. Three specific methods were used: maximum variation, snowball, and convenience sampling. Information rich sites were identified along with those most likely to have the information I sought. The method of data analysis was content analysis because I was searching for patterns and themes. Findings are reported in rich thick narrative supported by descriptive statistics. Trustworthiness of the findings is enhanced through strategies designed to address issues of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

In the next chapter, I will summarize the review of relevant literature. This literature review provided essential contextual, historical, and theoretical concepts including the nature of learning and what characterizes intelligent behavior. The topics reviewed include: the historical roots of higher education, general education, and theatre in higher education; the concepts and behaviors characteristic of a liberally educated

person; pedagogy in general and signature pedagogies in particular; and the intersection of liberal learning, theatre and acting.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Review of Literature**

The literature review for this study required a broad review of multiple fields. The research question I posed, “What is the relationship between the development of intellectual character and pedagogies used to teach acting to non-majors in institutions of higher education in the United States” suggested several subsidiary questions including: (1) how did current curricular structures within institutional and disciplinary contexts evolve; (2) what is “liberal learning,” (3) what are the characteristic behaviors of a liberally educated person; (4) what pedagogies support the development of intellectual character; (5) what are signature pedagogies; and (6) what is the relationship between acting, theatre, and liberal learning? The review of related literature was the primary method for investigating these subsidiary questions. The review that follows includes the sources I found most influential in shaping my understanding of and perspective on the historical roots of higher education, general education, and theatre in higher education; the concepts and behaviors characteristic of a liberally educated person; pedagogy in general and signature pedagogies in particular; and the process of acting and its relationship to liberal learning.

## Historical Surveys

### *Curricular Development in American Colleges and Universities*

The purpose of reviewing the history of curricular development was to gain an understanding of how our current curricular structures evolved. Chapter one contained a brief overview of major educational philosophies regarding the purpose of higher education in America. To summarize, currently American institutions of higher education answer the central question of their identity and purpose by attempting to serve three distinct points of view: education as preparation for life-long learning and responsible citizenship, vocational education, and the development of new knowledge through research. Institutional curricular structures hold these points of view in a dynamic tension that strives to serve all three purposes concurrently. Undergraduates at four-year institutions are required to complete a general education core, a major area of study, and a series of electives.

Two texts in particular were useful in providing an overview of trends in curricular development over the past three hundred and seventy-five years. First, *College and University Curriculum: Developing and Cultivating Programs of Study that Enhance Student Learning* included three chapters I found especially helpful: “Theoretical Perspectives on Curriculum” by George J. Posner, “Liberal education: A Dynamic Tradition” by Clifton F. Conrad and Jean C. Wyer, and “Recurring Debates About the College Curriculum” by Joan S. Stark and Lisa R. Latucca. These essays seeded the discussion in chapter one of this study on why and how we educate in America. These essays provided a detailed historical overview of the most dominant perspectives

regarding the purpose of higher education still influencing curricular infrastructures today.

The second source, *The Janus Paradigm: American Academic Theatre, the Liberal Arts, and the “Massacre of Genius”* by Franklin J. Himes, was helpful in reconstructing a history of curricular development in higher education. Whereas Posner, Conrad, Wyer, Stark, and Latucca focused on examining philosophies regarding the purpose of higher education, Himes focused on the cultural and political trends that influenced the waxing and waning of the liberal arts philosophy in college curricula between 1946 and 1998. Of particular interest to my study is his decade by decade account of the debate between the generalists and the specialists for control of college curricula. Understanding this debate deepened my comprehension of my own undergraduate education which occurred in the early 1970s when disciplinary specialists were the norm in hiring practices. In part, this comprehension helped me understand why I feel prepared to teach disciplinary content but am searching for a better understanding of how to serve the liberal learning mission of higher education.

### ***General Education in American Colleges and Universities***

“The Philosophy of General Education and Its Contradictions: The Influence of Hutchins”<sup>119</sup> by Anne H. Stevens provided a survey of the roots and evolution of the general education movement over the past 110 years. Stevens describes the key players and philosophies that shaped general education curricula across the country; many of these ideas remain relevant in today’s institutions of higher learning. In her essay,

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<sup>119</sup> Anne H. Stevens, “The Philosophy of General Education and Its Contradictions: The Influence of Hutchins,” *Journal of General Education* 50, no. 3 (2001): 165-91.



Stevens includes a list of basic intellectual skills articulated by R.S Crane. I recognize an echo of Crane’s list in the Habits of Mind (HOM) described by Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick on their website at <http://www.instituteforhabitsofmind.com/> in 2004.

Whereas Stevens chronicled the historical context in which general education developed, Ernest Boyer and Arthur L. Levin in *The Quest for Common Learning: the Aims of General Education* defined its purpose in the modern era. They sought to “take a fresh look at general education, the learning that should be common to all”<sup>120</sup> because the “mission of higher education has become muddled.”<sup>121</sup> The essay was published in 1981. At that time, vocationalism and specialization had a strong hold on public perception of the purpose of higher education. The idea that students attended/attend college to become well-educated and responsible citizens takes a backseat to the drive for individual economic security. This perception, reinforced by the way higher education continues to market itself as a consumer commodity, has not changed. In 1981, Boyer and Levine asserted, “Today, there is a growing feeling across the land that, once again, we need what general education has to offer.”<sup>122</sup> I feel that need still exists on our campuses and in our society.

In an effort to ‘un-muddle’ the mission of higher education Boyer and Levine posed three questions: (1) Education to what end, (2) For what purpose, and (3) How is

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<sup>120</sup>Ernest Boyer and Arthur L. Levin, *The Quest for Common Learning: the Aims of General Education* (Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Learning, 1991), inside front cover.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., vii.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., 5.

general education essential to the accomplishment of that purpose(s)?<sup>123</sup> In response to these questions, they conclude that higher education develops two aspects of humanity: the individual and the community. General education is that place in the overall college curriculum where knowledge of and experience with the “connectedness of things”<sup>124</sup> is intended to be addressed. They find electives and courses in the major field of study serve the needs of the individual and “the mission of general education is to help students understand that they are not only autonomous individuals but also members of a human community to which they are accountable.”<sup>125</sup> Further, they propose that understanding how humans are connected through communities and how to navigate within communities may be critical to the survival of the human species.<sup>126</sup> Specifically, they assert the purpose of general education is to help students understand “they share with others the use of symbols, membership in groups and institutions, the activities of production and consumption, a relationship with nature, a sense of time, and commonly held values and beliefs.”<sup>127</sup>

Based on a literature review of the historical evolution and social context of general education during twentieth century America, Boyer and Levine noted a pendular swing between the dominance of vocationalism and general education. They concluded that interest in general education “occurred in a period of social drift and personal preoccupation ...times when war destroyed community, when political participation

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<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 22.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., 22.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., 35.

declined, when government efforts to set a common social agenda weakened, when international isolation was on the rise, and when individual altruism declined.”<sup>128</sup> The shifting balance in college and university curricula was indicative of the larger struggle in society to balance the wants and needs of the individual with the interdependency of members of a community.

I found Boyer and Levin’s conclusions very compelling and have used them as one lens through which to view my own study. I find a great deal of congruency between the purpose of my study and theirs. They were striving to define the purpose of general education within an American university system which was increasingly emphasizing specialization and vocationalism. I am striving to understand the significance and uniqueness of the experience of acting for non-majors within departments of theatre which increasingly emphasize the vocational aspects of the theatre experience. I also find many parallels between the institutional context in which Boyer and Levine produced their study and the institutional context in which I teach in the early twenty-first century.

In addition to contextual similarities, the design of Boyer and Levine’s study influenced the design of my study. They examined general education requirements listed in catalogs of two and four year colleges and universities in the United States. They analyzed “a stratified sample of 309 institutional catalogs for the year 1980.”<sup>129</sup> The study sample was created from a representative sampling of institutions included in the Carnegie Foundation of the Advancement of Teaching’s typology entitled “Carnegie Classification of Institutions in Higher Education.” This typology became a central resource in the creation of the sample for my study. Also, an examination of college and

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<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 61.

university catalogs became central to the completion of this study as I sought to understand the institutional contexts in which Acting for Non-Majors is embedded.

In summary, Boyer and Levine's essay revealed the significance of the general education curriculum and its relationship to liberal learning. According to the authors, liberal learning is an over-arching philosophy of the well-educated citizen, the teaching of which should stretch across the breadth of the curriculum including but not the exclusive domain of general education courses. The major purpose of general education is to emphasize the connectedness of things through a pedagogy that allows students to exercise, and thereby habituate the skills, attitudes, and behaviors of a liberally educated person as well as understand the unique ways in which a given discipline helps students to know the world through diverse modes of inquiry. Finally, Boyer and Levine's work was instrumental in pointing me towards a body of literature that acquainted me with the historical background of the development of general education and the diversity and complexities of the interaction of academic theories with social realities.

Fast forward twenty years to a report commissioned by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) entitled *The Status of General Education in the Year 2000: Summary of a National Trend* (hereafter referred as *Status of Gen Ed.*). The fact that this study was commissioned testifies to an ongoing interest in Boyer and Levine's work and a desire to restore the integrity of general education on campuses across the United States. Data for the study were collected via two related questionnaires sent to two types of administrators, Chief Academic Officers (CAO) and General Education Administrators (GEA). The surveys were received by 521 four-year institutions who were members of AAC&U. CAO's and or GEA's from 279 institutions

responded. Institutional diversity approximated the percentages of like institutions in the Carnegie Classification categories. The response rate for the CAO's was 54% and for the GEA's 69%.

The authors of the report conclude that concern for the efficacy of general education remained a high priority on the majority of campuses surveyed and had transformed from an episodic occurrence to a commonplace and ongoing part of academic review of curricula on many campuses:

Boyer and Levine (1981) regarded attention to general education as episodic...we suggest that an emphasis on general education is constant, with repeated efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning, strengthen the operations of programs, assess results, recruit and support the development of faculty and do all the things that can lead to better learning by students. Although most institutions only occasionally make major instructional changes in the general education program, most are more or less constantly working to improve their offerings. Reviewing and revising general education is what quality institutions do all the time.<sup>130</sup>

At the time of the study, 64% of the CAO's responding reported that general education had increased in institutional priority between 1990 and 2000, 33% reported no change, and only 2% reported it had become less of a priority.<sup>131</sup> The content, goals, and implementation of a cohesive general education curriculum were still a significant concern and challenge for administrators in American higher education in 2000.

Like the Boyer and Levine essay, both the content and design of *Status of Gen. Ed.* influenced my study. The designers of *Status of Gen Ed* utilized the internet to request and gather data. Taking a cue from these designers, I used the internet to

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<sup>130</sup>Jerry G. Gaff, D. Kent Johnson, Steven M. La Nasa, and James L. Ratcliff, *The Status of General Education in the Year 2000: Summary of a National Survey* (Washington D.C. Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2001), 17-18.

<sup>131</sup>*Ibid.*, 7.

disseminate the request for data and then to gather, organize, and store raw data. By using the internet, I was able to reach across the breadth of institutional types thereby maximizing the potential for institutional diversity in the sample for my study.

### ***Theatre in American Colleges and Universities***

Several sources were significant in tracing the history of theatre in higher education. I became acquainted with the early history of academic theatre through a collection of essays published in 1971 under the title *The American Theatre: A Sum of its Parts*. Two essays in particular, “The University Accepts the Theatre: 1800-1925” by Bernard Beckerman and “The University Theatre Begins to Come of Age: 1925-1969” by James H. Butler, contributed significant and foundational information to my understanding of Theatre’s struggle for autonomy in academe. These essays provided richly detailed accounts tracing the evolution of Theatre in higher education from its earliest days as an extracurricular activity through its years as an appendage of Speech, Communication, and English departments to its final fulfillment as autonomous departments in colleges of Fine Arts, Humanities, or Arts and Sciences.

Several other essays, journal articles, or book chapters reiterated or filled in chronological gaps in the history as outlined by Beckerman and Butler. In 1951, Sawyer Falk contributed an essay to *The Universities and the Theatre* entitled: “Drama Departments in American Universities.” In this essay, Falk describes the state of theatre curricula in the United States mid-way through the twentieth century, “Drama is a respectable academic subject and as a practiced art has found its place on the schedules of

most colleges and universities throughout the United States.”<sup>132</sup> As regards an emphasis on craft or culture, Falk comments, “It should be said at the start, then, that there is general agreement among teachers in drama departments that a university is first and foremost a place where the intellect holds sway: where the mind is allowed to extend itself.... We are not devoting our principal energies, as is sometimes erroneously supposed, to the turning out of men and women merely fitted for jobs.”<sup>133</sup> Falk makes a reasoned argument for the inclusion of performance courses not because they are vocationally centered but because they enhance the liberal learning mission of American higher education: “Performance courses need not necessarily be relegated to the vocational schools, as some contend.”<sup>134</sup> He turns to the words of George Kernodle, University of Texas, to flesh out the idea that performance courses can focus on ideas beyond craft:

We are trained to forget that individual human beings have pains, sorrows, hopes and joys, and deal with them only as statistics, Gallup Polls, party labels. We learn how to handle external, objective, inhuman facts, but neglect the subjective, the immediate experience. The result is that we may know a great deal about things outside ourselves, but we have no values, no rich experiences *inside* ourselves.<sup>135</sup>

Performance courses were viewed as a rich field of study through which the liberal arts/liberal learning mission of higher education was served by Theatre.

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<sup>132</sup>Sawyer Falk, “Drama Departments in American Universities,” in *The Universities and the Theatre*, ed. D.G. James (London: George Allen and Unwin, LTD., 1951), 8.

<sup>133</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup>*Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>135</sup>George Kernodle, quoted in “Drama Departments in American Universities,” by Sawyer Falk in *The Universities and the Theatre* ed. D.G. James (London: George Allen and Unwin, LTD., 1951), 11.

*Theatre Education: Mandate for Tomorrow*, published twenty –five years after Sawyer Falk’s summation of the field, revealed an academic discipline that, while departmentally autonomous, was still engaged in defining and defending its identity and purpose within educational institutions at every level. What began as a response to “a threat to curtail programs in children’s’ drama at several colleges and universities in the United States”<sup>136</sup> resulted in a series of introspective essays urging theatre educators to, among other things, “discover our true uniqueness,”<sup>137</sup> “develop ammunition to support our claims for that uniqueness through intensive research”<sup>138</sup> and “relate theatre education to all education.”<sup>139</sup> The work of two essayists in particular helped me focus this study.

Oscar G. Brockett’s “Drama, A Way of Knowing” helped me to focus macro-centrally and micro-centrally on the teaching of acting. From a macro-centric perspective Brockett reminds the reader that vocational and cultural trends, and academe’s response to them, come and go but there should be more to higher education than vocational training: “We also need to be concerned about what people are to do once they have achieved a measure of material security. Are they merely to accumulate more money and consume more goods? Education should seek to assist students in developing

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<sup>136</sup>Jed H. Davis, “Afterword,” in *Theatre Education: Mandate for Tomorrow*, ed. Jed H. Davis (New Orleans, Louisiana: Anchorage Press, Inc. and Children’s Theatre Foundation, 1985), 47.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid.



their potential for moving beyond hedonistic and materialistic goals.”<sup>140</sup> From a micro-centric perspective, Brockett points out,

Of all the arts, drama has the greatest potential as a humanizing force, for it asks us to enter imaginatively into the lives of others so we may understand their motivations, aspirations, and frustrations. Through role-playing we come to see ourselves in relation to others and to understand who and what we are...Many educators do not seem to understand that drama is a way of knowing—and often a more stimulating way than that offered through the distanced, abstract learning provided by a purely intellectual approach.<sup>141</sup>

From this perspective, understanding and using the experience of acting as a mode of inquiry, i.e. a “way of knowing,” is a significant humanizing experience. More should be going on in an acting class than just the transference of disciplinary content.

Brian Hansen’s “Of Condors and Cockroaches” deepened Brockett’s notion of drama as a way of knowing and identified one specific way in which acting functions as a way of knowing: the development of empathy. In this essay, Hansen is seeking to identify that which makes theatre education unique amongst the arts. He concurs with Brockett’s essential premise that one critical purpose of education in general is “the enrichment of human life, not vocational training or consumer education.”<sup>142</sup> Regarding the uniqueness of the theatrical experience he says:

Taking our cue from Suzanne Langer’s famous phrase, the subject of theatre education would be ‘virtual history,’ or more accurately, ‘virtual autobiography.’ The special power of theatre would be the experiencing of alternate lives...to

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<sup>140</sup>Oscar G. Brockett, “Drama, A Way of Knowing,” in *Theatre Education: Mandate for Tomorrow*, ed. Jed H. Davis (New Orleans, Louisiana: Anchorage Press, Inc. and Children’s Theatre Foundation, 1985), 1.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>142</sup>Brian Hansen, “Of Condors and Cockroaches,” in *Theatre Education: Mandate for Tomorrow*, ed. Jed H. Davis (New Orleans, Louisiana: Anchorage Press, Inc. and Children’s Theatre Foundation, 1985), 39.

function as a socially acceptable laboratory in which people are allowed to explore alternatives to their present condition.<sup>143</sup>

Other authors and texts that contributed an immense amount of detailed information to my understanding of the evolution of academic theatre include Franklin Himes, author of *The Janus Paradigm: American Academic Theatre, the Liberal Arts and the Massacre of Genius*; Patti P. Gillespie and Kenneth M. Cameron, co-authors of “The Teaching of Acting in American Colleges and Universities, 1920-1960”; Anne Berkeley, author of “Changing Views of Knowledge and the Struggle for Undergraduate Theatre Curriculum”; and Burnett Hobgood, author of “Theatre in U.S. Higher Education: Emerging Patterns and Problems” and “A Short History of Educational Theatre.” Their work confirmed, expanded upon, and updated the work of Beckerman and Butler from 1971. Their scholarly efforts also enhanced my own by acquainting me with many of the journals, professional associations, and scholar/artists who carried the craft vs. culture conversation forward into the twenty-first century.

My review would not be complete without including the journal article that initially ignited my curiosity about how the study of theatre functions as a mode of inquiry to develop intellectual character by developing artistic sensibilities. In 1997, I was an assistant professor of theatre in a small, rural liberal arts college in the Mid-west teaching acting for non-majors. The department in which I taught offered BFA degrees in various aspects of theatre. That year I read Thomas W. Loughlin’s article, “University Theatre Departments Are Showing the Dark Side of Success” in which he documents the continuing dominance of what he termed the “pre-professional juggernaut.” He concludes, as had others before him, that a major assumption underlying academic theatre

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<sup>143</sup>Ibid., 40.

training at the end of the twentieth century “is that success in the professional world of theatre, film, and television is the only meaningful success...The desire to study theatre as a liberal art and to master its philosophies, traditions, and literature to enrich one’s artistic vision and sense of creativity has been relegated to second-class status.”<sup>144</sup>

Loughlin asserts theatre departments are failing their disciplinary majors because majors “cannot articulate any understanding of the material they work with, nor are they capable of expressing their own artistic sensibilities. In short, they have well-trained bodies, but shallow artistic souls.”<sup>145</sup> One year later, playwright Tony Kushner sounded a similar chord in his keynote address to the Association of Theatre in Higher Education when he commented,

I am generally tremendously impressed with the students I meet and talk with, and generally unimpressed with what they know, and among those impressive and impressively undereducated students the worst, I am sorry to say, are the arts majors. And it isn’t that they seem remarkably non-conversant with the pillars of Western thought, with the political struggles of the day, with what has been written up in the morning’s paper---these arts majors knew shockingly little about the arts.<sup>146</sup>

Although Loughlin and Kushner are talking about theatre majors, their ideas made me think of my non-majors. I began to question whether it was in the best interest of my non-majors to study the intricacies of acting technique, if so, *why*, and finally, *how* should my instruction of and goals for the class differ from an introductory class for theatre majors (or should it)? It would be several years before I would actively seek answers to

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<sup>144</sup>Thomas W. Loughlin, “University Theatre Departments Are Showing the Dark Side of Success,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 11, 1997, B4-B5.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid.

<sup>146</sup>Tony Kushner, “A Modest Proposal,” *American Theatre* (January 1998), 87.

my questions but Loughlin's ideas and questions set my mental wheels in motion and continued to nag at me.

Taken collectively, the evolution of three trends in educational theatre is chronicled in the references mentioned above: 1) a movement from the generalist to the specialist within the ranks of departmental faculty, 2) a movement by a number of institutions to offer programs in specialized and craft-centered areas resulting in a flood of pre-professional Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) and Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degrees, and 3) a movement towards a belief that the primary purpose of departments of theatre is to train the next generation of theatrical artists:

Indeed, theatre in education moved to an emphasis on craft at the time when the growth of theatre education reached a height in the 1970's. Specialization in curricula intensified as elaborate sequences of classwork, particularly in performance and production techniques, replaced a few survey courses intended to expose students to the rudiments of acting and stagecraft. At the college level rising enrollments encouraged this trend and universities endorsed BFA and MFA degrees that marked the completion of craft-centered programs of study. Concomitant shifts in faculty qualifications transpired because teachers with more detailed knowledge and experience with performance and production techniques were needed as staff for altered purposes.<sup>147</sup>

### ***Liberal Learning, Habits of Mind, and Intellectual Character***

The literature review on the topic of liberal learning, Habits of Mind (HOM), and intellectual character was significant in shaping both my analysis of and response to the data gathered for this study. Prior to this review, I had neither the awareness of nor the language through which to articulate the relationship between liberal education and the art of acting.

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<sup>147</sup>Burnett Hobgood, "A Short History of Educational Theatre," *Teaching Theatre* 2 (Fall 1990), 15.

The following sources were significant in forming the philosophical foundation for my analysis of data and my conclusions.

The essays I read by Blumenstyk, Brooks, Connor, Freedman, Gerdes, Glenn, Gioia, Golden, Humphreys and Davenport, Hutton, D.A. Jones, Keeling and Hersh, Kindelan, Kolowich, Lemann, Nussbaum, Schwen, Shoenberg, Unger, and Wick and Phillips began to fill in the gaps in my understanding of the concept of liberal learning. However, the website of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) proved to be the most comprehensive source for all things relating to liberal learning. The work of Arthur L. Costa<sup>148</sup> and Bena Kallick<sup>149</sup> was critical in shaping my understanding of behavioral characteristics and attitudes characteristic of a liberal education. Finally, Ron Ritchhart's book, *Intellectual Character: What It Is, Why it Matters, and How to Get It*, is the dominant work shaping my perspective on and

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<sup>148</sup> Arthur L. Costa is a Professor of Education, Emeritus from California State University, Sacramento, where he taught graduate courses to teachers and administrators in curriculum, supervision, and the improvement of instruction. He edited the book, *Developing Minds: A Resource Book for Teaching Thinking*; is the author of *The Enabling Behaviors, Teaching for Intelligent Behaviors and Supervision for Intelligent Teaching*; and is co-author of *Cognitive Coaching and Techniques for Teaching Thinking*. He has also written numerous other articles and publications on supervision, teaching strategies and thinking skills. Active in many professional organizations, Dr. Costa has served as president of the California Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and as president of the national A.S.C.D. from 1988 to 1989. For more information about Dr. Costa, please visit the website he has founded with Dr. Bena Kallick at <http://www.habits-of-mind.net/>

<sup>149</sup> Bena Kallick, Ph.D. is a private consultant providing services to school districts, state departments of education, professional organizations and public sector agencies throughout the United States. Dr. Kallick received her doctorate in educational evaluation with Union Graduate School. Her areas of focus include group dynamics, creative and critical thinking and alternative assessment strategies in the classroom. Her written work includes *Literature to Think About* (a whole language curriculum published with Weston Woods Studios), *Changing Schools into Communities for Thinking*, North Dakota Study Group, University of North Dakota, *Assessment in the Learning Organization*, co-authored with Arthur Costa, from ASCD, Sept. 1995. Her audio tapes include *Creative and Critical Thinking: Teaching Alternatives* and *Collaborative Learning: Strategies to Encourage Thinking* (with Marian Leibowitz). For more information about Dr. Kallick, please visit the website she founded with Dr. Arthur L. Costa at <http://www.habits-of-mind.net/>

definition of intellectual character as well as the relationships among liberal learning, HOM, intellectual character, and acting as a mode of inquiry.

### **Liberal Education**

The AAC&U articulated the most concise and yet comprehensive explanation of liberal education as a philosophical concept. As noted in chapter one, the pursuit of a liberal education is the foundation upon which higher education in America is built. It is defined by the AAC&U as “An approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change... A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.”<sup>150</sup>

A source that enriched my awareness of the significance of a liberal education was *We're Losing Our Minds: Rethinking American Higher Education* by Richard P. Keeling and Richard H. Hersh. They declare the important transformative effects of a liberal education by stating, “The notion of a liberating education arises from both the goals of releasing the mind from the shackles of limited knowledge and narrow or untested perspectives and from the learner’s progress towards self-directedness.”<sup>151</sup>

When I understood the concept of liberal learning as an umbrella concept guiding higher education in America, I began to see the art of acting from a new perspective.

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<sup>150</sup>Association of American Colleges and Universities, “What is Liberal Education?” Association of American Colleges and Universities [http://www.aacu.org/leap/What\\_is\\_liberal\\_education.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/leap/What_is_liberal_education.cfm) (accessed September 29, 2008).

<sup>151</sup>Richard P. Keeling and Richard H. Hersh, *We're Losing Our Minds: Rethinking American Higher Education* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 131.

## *Habits of Mind*

Defining “liberal learning” was an effective place to start my review but in order to answer my research question I needed a deeper understanding of the goals and objectives of liberal learning. I needed to be able to recognize and articulate behaviors associated with liberal learning outcomes. Costa and Kallick have developed a list<sup>152</sup> of sixteen attitudes, behaviors, and skills known collectively as” Habits of Mind.” HOM are “disposition[s] towards behaving intelligently when confronted with problems the answers to which are not immediately known: dichotomies, dilemmas, enigmas and uncertainties.”<sup>153</sup>

HOM create a point of view towards problem solving that is effective when one is struggling to find answers to complex and challenging questions. It is important to note that the attitudes, behaviors, and skills transcend disciplinary boundaries as well as class, gender, generational, racial, and national borders:

These Habits of Mind transcend all subject matters commonly taught in school. They are characteristic of peak performers in home, schools, athletic fields, organizations, the military, the government, churches, and organizations. They are what make marriages successful, learning continued, workplaces productive, and democracies enduring. The habits seek to explain how and what do humans do when they behave intelligently.<sup>154</sup>

The sixteen habits of mind developed by Costa and Kallick are listed and defined below.

For a more extensive discussion of the attitudes, behaviors and skills characteristic of each habit, please go to <http://www.habits-of-mind.net/>.

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<sup>152</sup>Costa and Kallick caution that their list should not be interpreted as complete but rather serve to initiate the collection of additional attributes.

<sup>153</sup>Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick, “What are Habits of Mind?” <http://www.habits-of-mind.net> (accessed October 21, 2008).

<sup>154</sup>Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick, “Describing 16 Habits of Mind” <http://www.habits-of-mind.net> (assessed October 21, 2008).

- Persistence: Persistent learners stick to a task until it is completed by forming multiple strategies, structures, and systems to attack the problem. They are able to evaluate success and reject what is not working.
- Managing Impulsivity: Learners who are able to deny impulse for the purpose of reaching a goal. They take time to think before they act and weigh possible alternatives decreasing the need for trial and error problem solving.
- Listening to Others with Understanding and Sympathy: The skills involved here include paraphrasing, clarifying, giving an example of another point of view, and reading non-verbal cues. Understanding the subtext as well as the text of a communication encounter. This includes the ability to suspend one's own values and biases in order to listen to and be open to another person's point of view.
- Thinking Flexibly: Learners who can think macro-centrally,<sup>155</sup> micro-centrally,<sup>156</sup> and allo-centrally<sup>157</sup> as well as know when to shift perceptual positions. Lateral thinkers who are willing to approach a problem from a new angle or novel approach.
- Metacognition: Learners who think about the way they think. It is a conscious awareness of how and how well the self solves problems and meets challenges. Reflection is a key activity of metacognition.
- Striving for Accuracy and Precision: Characteristic attributes of this habit are a desire for craftsmanship, mastery, economy of energy, keen focus, exactness, and fidelity.
- Questioning and Posing Problems: Effective problem solvers know how to ask key questions about the phenomenon under study in order to solve the problem. They ask questions of varying function: What is the supporting data for this solution? What are the alternative viewpoints? What are the causal relationships? What if...?.
- Applying Past Knowledge to new situations: Intelligent humans learn from experience.

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<sup>155</sup> The bird's eye view of a situation: it enables the ability to discern themes and patterns from an assortment of information.

<sup>156</sup>The worm's eye view; it enables the ability to examine individual and sometimes miniscule parts of a whole phenomenon.

<sup>157</sup>Allo-centric is the ability to perceive a situation or phenomenon through another's orientation to it.



- **Thinking and Communicating with Clarity and Precision:** Language refinement plays a critical role in developing a learner's cognitive maps, which in turn enhances the ability to think critically and creatively. A reciprocal benefit is derived from this habit. Thinking clearly and precisely with specificity produces clear communication and vice versa. Learners with this habit support their ideas with explanations, comparisons, quantification, and evidence.
- **Gathering Data through All the Senses:** Information gets into the human brain through the senses. Learners who are mindful of all the senses absorb and reflect upon more information about a phenomenon. Fully participating in experiences that activate the multiple senses is important to intellectual development.
- **Creating, Imagining, and Innovating:** Humans have the capacity for creative thinking but like other forms of intelligence it must be developed. Creative people look for alternative solutions, take risks, and push back boundaries. They are intrinsically motivated and are open to critique.
- **Responding with Wonderment and Awe:** Learners with this habit are life-long learners. They seek out mysteries and problems to solve. They are enthusiastic and passionate about the process of learning.
- **Taking Responsible Risks:** Learners with this habit see confusion, ambiguity, uncertainty, and risk of failure as a natural part of the process of solving problems. They take responsible risks and know when risk is not worth taking.
- **Finding Humor:** Humor is a unique attribute of humans. Humor can liberate creative thinking and provoke higher level thinking skills. Learners with this habit see the incongruity, absurdity, irony, and/or satire in situations, the human race, and themselves.
- **Thinking Interdependently:** Humans seek social connections. Some problems facing humans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are so complex no one person has all the information or skills needed to solve them. Cooperation strengthens everyone. Learners who are team players understand group dynamics and benefit from the give and take of constructively delivered critique.
- **Learning Continuously:** Learners with this habit understand that life and the circumstances surrounding it are always changing. They make a space for doubt, are unafraid of not knowing everything and seek to continue to develop and grow as human beings.

Costa and Kallick's HOM build on the work of Benjamin S. Bloom. Bloom (1913-1999), an educational psychologist, developed a hierarchical classification system

identifying kinds of thinking and arranging them in ascending order.<sup>158</sup> His goal was to facilitate communication amongst professional educators by “developing a precise definition and classification of such vaguely defined terms as ‘thinking’ and ‘problem solving.’”<sup>159</sup> Bloom envisioned his taxonomy as a step towards a better understanding of the relationship between learning goals and learning experiences.<sup>160</sup> Whereas Bloom’s taxonomy delineates the kinds of thinking goals we have for our students, Costa and Kallick’s HOM identify specific behaviors, dispositions, and attitudes that promote higher level thinking.

Bloom’s use of a hierarchical structure implies an orderly and progressive ascension from low level to high level thinking; however, learning can be a messy process. HOM are unranked. Costa and Kallick envision the learning process as an organic and recursive connection of behaviors, skills, and attitudes occurring concurrently rather than in an orderly system moving lockstep from one level to the next. HOM reflect the simultaneity inherent in the learning process. Ultimately, HOM provided an effective lens through which to analyze the goals and objectives recorded on syllabi in the analysis sample of my study.

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<sup>158</sup>Bloom’s Taxonomy of educational objectives, in ascending order, as developed in 1956, is Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation. Others who continued his work re-ordered steps five and six and revised the language of the taxonomy by replacing nouns with verbs: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating.

<sup>159</sup>Benjamin Bloom, ed., *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Handbook 1: Cognitive Domain* (New York: Longman, 1956), 10.

<sup>160</sup>*Ibid.*

### *Intellectual Character and Learning Dispositions*

Building on the work of Costa, Kallick, and others (Faciones and Sanchez; Ennis; Paul; Perkins, Jay, and Tishman, and Marzano), Ron Ritchhart developed a model for “intellectual character” that subsumed HOM. He defines “intellectual character” as “...the overarching conglomeration of habits of mind, patterns of thought, and general dispositions toward thinking that not only direct but also *motivate* [emphasis added] one’s thinking oriented pursuits.”<sup>161</sup> In other words, HOM facilitate higher level thinking and, when used in conjunction with general dispositions toward learning, they motivate continued and more frequent use of higher level thinking. Ritchhart’s ‘dispositions’ emphasize the integration of multiple HOM during learning. HOM act in concert with one another rather than isolated from one another, a view shared by Ritchhart, Costa, and Kallick.<sup>162</sup>

Ritchhart defines ‘dispositions’ as “Acquired patterns of behavior that are under one’s control and will as opposed to being automatically activated. Dispositions are overarching sets of behaviors, not just single specific behaviors. They are dynamic and idiosyncratic in their contextualized deployment rather than prescribed actions to be carried out...Dispositions motivate, actuate, and direct our abilities.”<sup>163</sup> Ritchhart’s 6 dispositional categories are: curiosity, open-mindedness, metacognition, seeking truth and understanding, strategic thinking, and skepticism.<sup>164</sup> Ideally, when one is faced with

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<sup>161</sup>Ron Ritchhart, *Intellectual Character: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How to Get It* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), xxii.

<sup>162</sup>Costa and Kallick, <http://www.habits-of-mind.net>

<sup>163</sup>Ritchhart, 31.

<sup>164</sup>Ibid.

a question s/he cannot answer, the dispositions motivate the HOM which are the thinking attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors we use to investigate the unknown.

Ritchhart's argument for the development of intellectual character through HOM in every classroom comes into focus when we understand his perspective on what it means to be intelligent. The traditional view of "smart" is based on the speedy acquisition of knowledge and the ability of the student to regurgitate said knowledge. According to Ritchhart, "We might call this the 'game show' view of intelligence, in which the winners of the intelligence game are always fast with the facts."<sup>165</sup> Ritchhart suggests an alternative paradigm in which intelligence is viewed not as a noun but as a verb:

We can gain new perspective and rethink what it means to be smart by simply asking ourselves a few focused questions: what does intelligence look like in action? What are the qualities of thought and characteristics of mind we expect to see when someone is acting intelligently? What are the patterns of behavior and attitudes that we associate with someone who acts smart? These questions shift our attention from being smart to acting smart. They move us from accepting intelligence as a state of possession to considering intelligence in terms of various states of performance.<sup>166</sup>

How one views the nature of intelligence influences all aspects of teaching including course goals and objectives, assessment devices, assignments, and the purpose and form of feedback provided to the student. For example, in the category of assessment, IQ tests, so-called "objective" tests (multiple choice and fill in the blank), SATs, and ACTs are considered measures of intelligence under the traditional paradigm whereas more qualitative measures such as student portfolios, capstone projects, and peer critique would be viable types of assessment strategies under Ritchhart's view of

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<sup>165</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>166</sup>Ibid.

intelligence. From Ritchhart's perspective, acting smart, by demonstrating intellectual dispositions with HOM, would be more reflective of an individual's intelligence.

### **Pedagogy and Learning Theory**

After reviewing the literature on liberal learning, HOM, and intellectual character, I began a review of relevant literature regarding pedagogy and learning theories. This review led me to the literature on the concepts of dual purpose of content, signature pedagogies, pedagogy for non-majors, and product vs. process (a rewording of the craft vs. culture discussion).

#### ***Dual purpose of Content***

Maryellen Weimer's discussion of the dual function of content in her book *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice* was the next step in my progression towards understanding the relationship between disciplinary content and the development of intellectual character. While the scope of Weimer's book exceeds the scope of this study, she identifies a variable in the learning process, the function of content, which I found significant. This concept complicated my thinking about the uses of disciplinary content in a very productive way.

Weimer notes instructors invest "long years in course work developing content expertise"<sup>167</sup> and have a strong allegiance to content. We, as faculty members, are comfortable teaching others how to become expert in disciplinary specific skills because

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<sup>167</sup>Maryellen Weimer, *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 47.

that is exactly what we have spent many years doing. Faculty members are often hired for their expertise in a specific area of departmental curriculum. Many of us have not spent as much time training to be teachers. According to Weimer, “What we know about pedagogy pales in comparison to what we know about content.”<sup>168</sup> As a result, course content is often utilized for one purpose: to train students to a level of disciplinary expertise.

The concept of dual function of course content suggests that the delivery of disciplinary content can be designed to fulfill simultaneously more than one purpose.<sup>169</sup> Content can be a vehicle through which students practice, and over time habituate, liberal learning behaviors, attitudes, and skills while at same time learning unique disciplinary modes of inquiry and skills. Course instruction is designed in such a way as to provide a balance between the coverage of content and the development of intellectual character. In regards to this balance between content and HOM Weimer notes, “Using content to develop a knowledge base and prowess as a learner makes for a more complex and connected relationship between content and learning. A kind of synergy makes the two together more than each was separately.”<sup>170</sup>

A balanced emphasis on disciplinary content and the development of intellectual character also serves to teach students how to adapt, find, and connect knowledge of a particular discipline within and across disciplines by helping students “acquire a repertoire of strategies, approaches and techniques...ones uniquely associated with the

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<sup>168</sup>Ibid.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>170</sup>Ibid., 52.

acquisition of a particular kind of content.”<sup>171</sup> Students need to understand how to use disciplinary modes of inquiry to connect learning experiences for future problem solving.

### ***Signature Pedagogies***

Dr. Lee S. Shulman, educational psychologist and past president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (1996-2008), coined the term “signature pedagogies.” He delineated characteristics of signature pedagogies in his 2005 essay, “Signature Pedagogies in the Professions.” He defines them as dominant methods of teaching disciplinary content that “define how knowledge is analyzed, criticized, accepted, and discarded” within a discipline.<sup>172</sup> In his essay, Shulman cites ubiquity as an essential characteristic of signature pedagogies, commenting, “Signature pedagogies are important precisely because they are pervasive.”<sup>173</sup> They have become routine. For example, a signature pedagogy for interns in the medical profession is making daily rounds with a skilled practitioner.

According to Shulman, signature pedagogies have three dimensions: (1) a surface structure, (2) a deep structure, and (3) an implicit structure. The surface structure consists of “concrete, operational acts of teaching and learning;”<sup>174</sup> in other words, that which is observable. The deep structure consists of “a set of assumptions about how best to impart a certain body of knowledge and know-how.”<sup>175</sup> This structure is not always

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<sup>171</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>172</sup>Lee S. Shulman, “Signature Pedagogies in the Professions,” *Daedalus* (Summer 2005): 54.

<sup>173</sup>Ibid.

<sup>174</sup>Ibid., 55.

<sup>175</sup>Ibid., 56.

explicitly discussed among professionals/educators in the discipline. An implicit structure consists of “a set of beliefs about the professional attitudes, values, and dispositions”<sup>176</sup> of the discipline. Because these beliefs, attitudes, values, and dispositions often are not visible to the student and have become routinized for the faculty they remain un-interrogated by both constituencies. Identifying the surface structure of the signature pedagogies used in acting for non-majors could be the first step towards identifying and interrogating the deep and implicit structures of those pedagogies. This in turn could open a conversation between instructors and students about how acting functions as a unique mode of inquiry into the nature of humanity.

Routinization is both the greatest strength and greatest weakness of signature pedagogies. They are advantageous in the classroom because, once they are learned and become internalized “we don’t have to think *about* [emphasis added] them; we can think *with* [emphasis added] them.”<sup>177</sup> They form thinking habits specific to the type of inquiry required in a discipline. The habit helps students to transfer foundational knowledge and skill within disciplinary study from “class to class, topic to topic, teacher to teacher, and assignment to assignment.”<sup>178</sup> Signature pedagogies create a cognitive scaffold, a comfort zone, which allows students to adapt and critique new, novel, and sometimes contradictory information.

The use of signature pedagogies also has disadvantages. Pervasiveness is no guarantee of effectiveness as Shulman notes, “...the very utility of habit that is a source

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<sup>176</sup>Ibid.

<sup>177</sup>Ibid., 56.

<sup>178</sup>Ibid.



of signature pedagogies' power also contributes to its most serious vulnerability: ...they persist even when they begin to lose their utility, precisely because they are habits with few countervailing forces."<sup>179</sup> Because they are pervasive in the teaching of a discipline, the usefulness and currency of signature pedagogies may go un-interrogated for generations of teachers and students. Shulman cautions signature pedagogies should be examined periodically for their effectiveness and currency within an ever-changing educational and professional landscape. As educators, we can become copies of copies of copies separated by generations from the original model, the original context, and the rationale that first created pedagogical methods.

The concept of disciplines having pedagogies that become routinized was helpful to my study. A search for signature pedagogies provided a way to start categorizing the what, why, and how of instructional goals and strategies for teaching acting to non-majors. Also, the notion that signature pedagogies should be interrogated and adapted to changing times and contexts was useful because it provided an opportunity to re-think their effectiveness in light of the dual purpose of content. Identifying signature pedagogies may help teachers make informed decisions about the effectiveness of their work in their particular contexts.

### **Pedagogical Practices for Non-majors**

A search of *Theatre Journal*, *Theatre Topics*, *Educational Theatre Journal*, *Players*, and *Teaching Theatre* yielded one article that was directly on point, i.e.

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<sup>179</sup>Ibid., 56-57.

pedagogy for acting for non-majors. The single article is entitled “Beginning Acting and the Non-Major”; written by David P. Hirvela.<sup>180</sup> It appeared in *Players: The Magazine of American Theatre*<sup>181</sup> in 1975. Hirvela differentiates between instruction for majors and non-majors with two models: (1) “acting as a fine art” for majors and (2) “acting as experience” for non-majors. As regards differences in course content between the two models, he notes, “A description of this course [for non-majors] would reveal few content changes from a beginning acting course.”<sup>182</sup> While content may not change, Hirvela does suggest teaching acting to non-majors should be framed differently in at least two important areas of course design: goals and assessment techniques.

Goals for a course designed to emphasize “acting as experience” include the development of: a sense of self, self-discipline balanced with a sense of spontaneity, the creative self, collaborative skills by working in groups, and greater insight into the perspectives of “others” through characterization.<sup>183</sup> This list shares a remarkable congruence with the sixteen habits of mind developed by Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick. Hirvela further notes that evaluation for non-majors should be based on process not product: “‘acting as experience’ recognizes involvement and commitment to class activity plus an understanding of basic concepts as the primary evaluative criteria.”<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>180</sup>Hirvela was an Assistant Professor of Speech and Theatre at the University of Cincinnati where he taught acting and dramatic literature at the time the article was published.

<sup>181</sup>*Players* was published by the National Collegiate Players and Associate Collegiate Players “for the purpose of recognizing outstanding theatre work in higher education.”

<sup>182</sup>David P. Hirvela, “Beginning Acting and The Non-Major” *Players the Magazine of American Theatre* 50, no. 1-2 (Fall/Winter 1975): 36.

<sup>183</sup>*Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>184</sup>*Ibid.*, 37.

Hirvela's approach to working with non-majors is echoed in the work of dance<sup>185</sup> scholar Jacqueline M. Smith-Autard.<sup>186</sup> Like Hirvela, Smith-Autard distinguishes between the *art* and the *experience* of her discipline. Like Hirvela's "acting as fine art" model, the *art* of dance focuses on the "production of objects for aesthetic enjoyment,"<sup>187</sup> while the art of dance in *education* emphasizes "the *process of dancing and its affective/experiential contribution to the participant's overall development as a moving/feeling being* [italics original]."<sup>188</sup> Smith-Autard advocates what she calls the Midway Model for students who are not preparing to be professional dancers i.e. non-majors. Like Hirvela's "acting as experience," the Midway Model focuses on the experience of dance and the development of "creativity, imagination, and individuality"<sup>189</sup> through the experiential study of dance technique and improvisation. In the Midway Model, content remains the same for the major and non-major but, as in Hirvela's "art as experience" model, the goals of the course and the assessment methods differ between the two constituencies. Both models stress assessment tools that evaluate the student's process rather than product.

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<sup>185</sup>The teaching of dance and acting are similar in several ways. Both require: technical training taught in a studio setting and based on the concepts of experiential learning. In addition, both are performance arts that use the physical, spiritual, and mental attributes of the performer as the conduit for sharing and exploring ideas about human nature with an audience. They have similar goals achieved through somewhat different media.

<sup>186</sup>Smith- Autard is acknowledged nationally and internationally as an expert in dance education. She is a dance education consultant to five campuses in Great Britain.

<sup>187</sup>Jacqueline M. Smith-Autard, *The Art of Dance in Education* (London: A&C Black, Limited, 1994), 1.

<sup>188</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>189</sup>*Ibid.*, 26.

Hirvela and Smith-Autard suggest the goals and assessment pedagogies should be different for non-majors courses in performance. If goals and assessments are to be different, how does that impact other key areas of course design e.g. content, textbooks, classroom activities, assignments, grading rubrics? The sparseness of relevant research by teacher/scholars in Theatre into such a significant and ubiquitous course prompts me to conclude there is a serious gap in the literature on this topic.

### **Theatre, Acting, and Liberal Learning**

The work of multiple scholars contributed to my emerging understanding of the relationship between liberal learning, theatre, and acting in particular. The published works of Brockett, Davis, Engar, Falls, Fletcher, Gronbeck-Tedesco, Hanson, Hobgood, Horton, Loughlin, Morrison, and Roberts contributed significant information. I was most influenced by the work of Thomas Gressler. In his text, *Theatre as the Essential Liberal Art in the American University*, Gressler argues for theatre as one of the most effective disciplines through which students practice and acquire life-long learning skills (HOM) as well as understand the shared nature of communal societies. He echoes Boyer and Levine's concern regarding the balance between individualism and community in a society when he comments, "People have lost their sense of communal purpose and are losing the sense of the value of life itself."<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>190</sup>Thomas Gressler, *Theatre as the Essential Liberal Art in the American University* (Lewiston, New York: Edward Mellon Press, 2002), ii.

Gressler's primary goal is to demonstrate how the study of theatre in all its complexity and variety is, in itself, a complete liberal arts<sup>191</sup> education. He suggests that signature pedagogies used in the study of theatre are a perfect match for developing multiple intelligences, positive and productive character traits, multiple perspectives, habits of inquiry, and problem solving skills. He reasserts the idea that a primary role of theatre in higher education is to examine the relationship between the art and its society, and in doing so, he is a contemporary voice for the "Culture" argument in the "Craft vs. Culture" debate dating back to the 1920's. Like his predecessor Sawyer Falk, Gressler advocates for culture learned through craft. Like Hirvela and his contemporary colleague in dance Smith-Autard, Gressler argues for a balance between process and product. More specifically, in the context of an acting class, he argues that creation of technical expertise is not the goal of a course designed from a liberal arts perspective, saying, "It's not that you learn *how* to act or design or build, but *what you learn while you are learning* to act or design or build that is at the heart of a liberal arts theatre education."<sup>192</sup>

Gressler articulates several ways in which the study of acting contributes to the goals of liberal learning. He posits, "If the goal of all liberal arts [liberal learning] is to help students understand themselves in relation to others and their values compared to those of others, if the goal is to help them become integrated human beings, then I can see no other course which has the potential to do all that than acting."<sup>193</sup> His ideas

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<sup>191</sup>I believe in the context of Gressler's argument, he uses the term "liberal arts" synonymously with what I have been referencing as "liberal learning."

<sup>192</sup>Ibid., 37.

<sup>193</sup>Ibid., 40.

suggest a method for creating an acting course designed to meet the needs of general education students rather than incipient professionals.

Finally, Gressler identifies a number of behaviors and attitudes regularly exercised in the creation of a character including: cooperation, vulnerability, handling critique, self-discipline, sensitivity, diplomacy, flexibility in point of view, quick-thinking and problem-solving.<sup>194</sup> When Gressler's list is compared with Costa and Kallick's list (see pages 78-79 of this chapter) of behaviors forming HOM, we see a connection between the two. An acting course can be fertile ground for content to serve more than one purpose.

### **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

A review of selected literature in the categories of (1) historical roots of higher education, general education, and theatre in higher education; (2) the concepts and behaviors characteristic of a liberally educated person; (3) pedagogy in general and signature pedagogies in particular; and (4) acting and liberal learning served to heighten my awareness of how liberal learning interacts with the art of acting. The historical surveys revealed how the developing trends of consumerism and vocationalism in higher education have resulted in a (1) a movement from the generalist to the specialist within the ranks of departmental faculty across the academy, (2) continued fragmentation of the curriculum in higher education into ever more discrete disciplinary specializations in an attempt to market professional degrees; and (3) a diminished understanding and

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<sup>194</sup>Ibid., 45.

articulation of how the philosophy of general education is essential to the goals of liberal learning. It also acquainted me with the work of scholars who have preceded me and were also interested in acting as a mode of inquiry. The concepts of dual focus of content and signature pedagogies began to ground my study in observable phenomena that could be used to help analyze the syllabi in the analysis sample. The work of Hirvela, Smith-Autard, and Gressler concretized the application of the previous concepts and began to demonstrate applications in the area of acting.

Chapter four begins with a description of the process and findings of the analysis of institutional documents. The chapter continues with an explanation of the process for creating the analysis sample from the raw sample. The explanation includes: (1) a review of the overall collection process that created the raw sample, (2) the criteria for inclusion in the analysis sample; (3) the diversity of institutional types within the analysis sample; and (4) an identification of disciplinary centered and interdisciplinary centered syllabi as two broad categories into which the syllabi in the analysis sample were sorted. Next, is the analysis of the disciplinary centered syllabi in the following open coding categories: (1) course demographics; (2) course goals and objectives; (3) activities, assignments, and assessment tools; (4) grading and evaluation procedures. The analysis of the syllabi in the interdisciplinary centered sample using the sample open coding categories follows. An identification of signature pedagogies based on the preceding analysis concludes chapter 4.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Analysis of Documents**

Chapter two, “Research Design and Methodology,” detailed the overall design of this study and introduced the reader to the types of data I collected and analyzed, i.e. documents. This chapter will focus on the analysis of the two types of documents I gathered and reviewed: institutional statements and course syllabi. First, I will review the analysis of the institutional documents. Next, I will review the analysis of the course syllabi selected from the raw sample described in chapter two and included in the analysis sample. Third, I will explain an interpretation of the data.

#### **Institutional Documents**

I chose to analyze institutional documents in order to understand the institutional and curricular contexts in which acting for non-majors is taught at the institutions represented in the syllabi analysis sample. The institutional statements I chose to analyze are institutional mission statements and general education goal statements. I chose institutional mission statements because they are designed to communicate core values and the central purpose(s) of the institution. Liberal learning is at the heart of American higher education. Institutional mission statements describe the characteristics and desired outcomes of an education that liberates. I chose general education goal statements because they define the role of general education within the total curriculum of an institution and are rich sources of detailed information about goals and objectives of a general education curriculum.



### ***Institutional Mission Statements***

Most colleges and universities in the United States have designed a curriculum intended to serve two broad and complementary purposes: a broad base in liberal learning and depth of knowledge in a specific discipline. All sixty-one institutions in the institutional sample included a statement of support for liberal education in their mission statements. Many of the documents referenced wording included in the AAC&U's position paper "Statement on Liberal Learning"<sup>195</sup> which details attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes characteristic of a liberal education. All the institutions in the sample provided a broad statement of support for the development of intellectual character with references such as "developing the whole person" or "promoting the life of the mind." Some institutions stop at this level of description and provide neither a detailed description of the attitudes, behaviors, and skills that characterize such development nor any direct connection to specific disciplines that are the most likely sites to develop them. Other institutions describe the attitudes, behaviors, and skills characteristic of habits of mind (HOM) but do not ascribe the teaching of particular learning outcomes to any specific domain.

### ***General Education Goal Statements***

General education programs are designed to provide a student with a broad and balanced educational experience in a variety of traditional cognate domains such as Mathematics, Science, Social Sciences, Humanities, Communication, and Fine Arts.

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<sup>195</sup> Association of American Colleges and Universities, "Statement on Liberal Learning" [http://www.aacu.org/about/statements/liberal\\_learning.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/about/statements/liberal_learning.cfm) (accessed October 1, 2008).

Some institutions use a different name for their general education programs such as “Core Curriculum,” “The Cornerstone Curriculum,” “Liberal Arts Essentials Curriculum,” “Distribution Requirements,” and “Foundation Curriculum.” Regardless of titling, all programs reviewed for this study fit within the parameters of the AAC&U’s definition of “General Education” as: “Broad exposure to multiple disciplines and forms the basis for developing important intellectual and civic capacities.”<sup>196</sup>

In the liberal learning model of education, preparation for citizenship is achieved by developing the full potential of the whole person via the cultivation of HOM. Many institutions, including the sixty-one in this sample, position the major responsibility for introducing HOM within the general education curriculum. This placement implies that HOM are foundational skills that will impact a student’s efficacy in his/her disciplinary major as well as his/her efficacy in all life’s endeavors. Courses in the general education curriculum are primary sites where HOM can be introduced while courses in the major are poised to deepen the use of them in pursuit of mastery of course content.

Every institution in the analysis sample describes learning outcomes based on the sixteen HOM described previously. Some institutions provide a long list of learning outcomes such as “Explore how the past shapes the present and the reasons behind the changes.” “Comprehend issues from a variety of perspectives and to understand how different academic disciplines ask questions about the world” and “Speak and write clearly and effectively.” Sometimes more detailed information is provided in program descriptions. At this level of description institutions group disciplines together in cognate domains. For example Art, Music, Film, and Theatre might be grouped together as the

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<sup>196</sup>Ibid.

“Fine Arts” domain. Disciplines may be grouped together in a domain because they share similar research/creative scholarship methodologies, because they have been traditionally grouped in this manner, or because of some other perceived similarity, for instance, “Modes of Communication.”

The next level of description was of the most interest to my study. At this level, some institutions reorganize the traditional domain categories and re-shuffle disciplines into domains the institution believes can support the teaching of specific learning outcomes. An analysis of this detailed description revealed five learning outcomes commonly expected of domains in which Theatre was subsumed. Not all outcomes are expected at all institutions.

**Performance as a mode of inquiry.** In this category, emphasis is placed on acting as a lens through which to explore the world and the human condition. Domain designations in this category include: “Aesthetics,” “Artistic Mode of Inquiry,” “Artistic Performance,” and “Aesthetic Expression.” Institutions organizing disciplines under these domain designations describe the domains’ primary learning outcome as follows: “Students should negotiate between conceptual ideas and spontaneous application and discovery,” “Students should develop an understanding of the ways in which humans have addressed their condition through imaginative work,” “Students...through critical and or creative activity come to experience art with greater openness, insight, and enjoyment,” and “By studying and working in at least one form of the fine or performing arts, students learn to understand and articulate the relationship between artistic form and expression.”<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>197</sup>All quoted material in this section, “Programmatic Statements: General Education” are from institutional documents published by the institutions identified in the analyzed sample. Further

The term “aesthetic” in this context means an education which “recognizes the interconnectedness of body, mind, emotions, and spirit. Enabling students to express perceptions, feelings and ideas through reflective shaping of media including...spoken and written word and bodies in motion.”<sup>198</sup> Through experiential engagement with the tools, concepts, and structures of art forms students are expected to be able to “feel from the inside what the arts are like and *how* they mean.”<sup>199</sup>

**Cultivate and understand the creative process.** In this category, acting for non-majors courses act as a vehicle for developing the students’ understanding of and capacity for the creative process. Domain designations included in this category included: “Creating in the Arts,” “Creativity Explored,” and “Creativity and the Arts.” Institutions organizing disciplines under these domain designations describe the domains’ primary learning outcomes as follows: “Understanding the creative process and the role of imagination in it,” “Students engage in study that stresses the use of imagination and the acquisition of basic skills to produce a work of art,” and “To introduce an understanding of the creative process through individual performance and demonstrate skills in such activities as...theatre...”

**Mode of Communication.** Domain designations included in this category demonstrate the range of human activities that are considered communicative. Some domain names, like “Oral Communication,” emphasize the spoken word. Other designations go even further in encouraging the courses in this category to develop the

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identification of specific sources would be a violation of the promise of anonymity in the “Letter of Request” sent to faculty across the country.

<sup>198</sup>“Aesthetic Education” [www.learnnc.org/reference/aesthetics+education?style=print](http://www.learnnc.org/reference/aesthetics+education?style=print). (accessed November 10, 2008).

<sup>199</sup>Lehman College and Lincoln Center Institute, “What is Aesthetic Education?” <http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/deanedu/aestheticcd.html> (accessed November 10, 2008).

intrapersonal communication skills of students with designations such as “Communication, Self-Awareness, Reflection and the Artistic Experience” suggesting an interrelationship of the four activities listed. Still others leave the focus of coursework in a broad context such as “Human Expression” and “Arts/Expression.” One goal under which all of these diverse designations can unite is to develop the ability to communicate clearly and effectively through multiple media. The descriptions of the learning objectives under this domain designation delineate a range of activities that develop the ability to communicate in multiple, and sometimes simultaneous, ways. The learning outcomes include: “...the development, understanding, and awareness of non-verbal artistic communication and our aural and visual environment;” “Develop the student’s awareness of the deep sources of art, both individual and communal, and the relationship between disciplined technique and creative freedom;” “to explore human communication and how individuals express meaning;” and “Prepares students to identify their personal strengths, areas of growth, and personal and professional goals.”

**Continuity.** In this category, acting for non-majors is a vehicle for developing an understanding of the connection between the present and past, abstracting meaning from the relationship, and applying it to new and novel situations. Domain designations included in this category are, “Continuity,” “The Western Heritage,” and “The Foundations of Culture.” Examples of primary learning objectives for this domain are, “to explore visual and performing arts within historical contexts or from creative points of view,” and “examine how art records, reflects, and shapes the temper of its time and place of origin.”

**Preparation civic responsibility.** In this category, acting for non-majors becomes a vehicle for developing understanding of the active and powerful role theatre can play in recognizing and practicing civic responsibility. While there were no specific domain designations reflecting the central goal of this category there are allusions to the arts as sites of social change contained in other domain descriptions and general education goal statements. Sample statements supporting this conclusion are: “General education requirements specifically intended to prepare students as citizens who must make informed judgments about issues that go beyond the narrow area of their academic specialization,” and “Graduates are ...artists... who are uniquely prepared to live in and shape a global society.”

### **Syllabi**

I chose to analyze course syllabi because the syllabus is an instructional tool through which an instructor communicates essential information about course design to students. It sets the tone for a class and creates expectations. A syllabus should answer questions such as: what content will be explored; what are the goals and objectives for this course; how does this content relate to the institutional curriculum; how will content be delivered and developed; to what level must a student achieve in order to receive a passing grade, how will achievement be assessed. The answers to these questions can be analyzed for the purpose of exploring and describing pedagogical practices of individual instructors. Examining a series of syllabi designed to teach similar content, in this case acting for non-majors, may help reveal signature pedagogies within a discipline.

### ***Collection Process***

Chapter two described in detail the collection process that resulted in the *raw* sample for this study. To review, I used nonprobability sampling because I wanted a holistic view of the phenomenon. I chose purposive sampling, one form of nonprobability sampling, because it is criteria based which allowed me to identify and concentrate my efforts on sites I believed to be rich with the kind of data that met my criteria. I utilized three methods of purposive sampling: maximum variation, snowball sampling, and convenience sampling. In total, one hundred and fifty-six syllabi were submitted for analysis. Next, I sifted the submitted syllabi into two groups, those to be analyzed and those to be discarded, in order to analyze the most relevant examples. The selection process that created the *analysis* sample is described in the following section.

### ***Selection for Analysis Sample***

In order to be included in the analysis sample a syllabus had to meet the criteria outlined in chapter two under “Method of Sampling.” Raw sample syllabi were determined not to have met the criteria under the following circumstances:

- The content of the course was not compatible with the focus of the study, e.g. theatre appreciation survey courses in which instruction in the craft of acting was a small part of the course content
- The title and/or course number do not appear in the affiliated institution’s catalog for the semester/year appearing on the syllabus
- The time-frame in which the course was taught, as defined in the request for data email, could not be verified in the syllabus, online, or through contact with the affiliated institution’s registrar
- The academic catalog of an institution was not available online for the year in which the syllabus was in use, so I could not collect institutional mission statements or verify other selection criterion

- The course was intended for theatre majors only
- The course was intended for non-majors but was not included in the affiliated institution's general education curriculum for the semester/year the syllabus was in use
- The course syllabus identified the section for which the syllabus was intended was a "majors only" section of the course
- The course syllabus indicated non-majors were accepted into the course but the course would be taught as if it were for majors only<sup>200</sup>
- The syllabus contained less than two of the categories designated for analysis
- The E-file could not be opened or was corrupted in some manner.

At the conclusion of the sifting process, 81 syllabi were ejected from the study and 75 syllabi were retained for analysis. These 75 were divided into two groups based on two overarching pedagogical orientations: disciplinary and interdisciplinary. Seventy syllabi were grouped under the heading of "Disciplinary Centered Course" and five were grouped under the heading "Interdisciplinary Centered Course." Sixty-one institutions are represented by the 75 syllabi in the analysis sample. The table below summarizes the institutional diversity<sup>201</sup> among the sixty-one institutions.

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<sup>200</sup>I did accept syllabi with a blend of majors and non-major for courses that were an the institution's general education curriculum and did not claim to be taught for students who were acting/theatre majors.

<sup>201</sup>For a detailed description of the categories used in this study, I recommend the Carnegie Classifications website at <http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/>.



**TABLE 4.1: DIVERSIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL TYPE IN THE ANALYSIS SAMPLE: N= 61**

<b>BASIC CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>CONTROL</b>	<b>SIZE</b>	<b>ENROLLMENT PROFILE</b>
<b>Research Very High = 5 (8%)</b>	<b>Public = 21</b>	<b>LGE. 4 yr = 11</b>	<b>Exclusively Undergraduate= 18</b>
<b>Research High = 6 (10%)</b>	<b>Private NFP = 40</b>	<b>MED. 4 yr = 17</b>	<b>Very High Undergraduate = 17</b>
<b>Doctoral Research = 3 (5%)</b>	<b>Private FP = 0</b>	<b>SM 4 yr = 25</b>	<b>High Undergraduate =13</b>
<b>Masters Large = 6 (6%)</b>		<b>V. SM. 4 yr = 4</b>	<b>Majority Undergraduate = 13</b>
<b>Masters Medium = 8 (13%)</b>		<b>V. LGE. 2 yr = 1</b>	
<b>Masters Small = 6 (10%)</b>		<b>MED. 2 yr = 3</b>	
<b>Baccalaureate A&amp;S = 18 (30%)</b>			
<b>Baccalaureate Diverse = 5 (8%)</b>			
<b>Associate = 4 (5%)</b>			

The next step in the analysis process was to pool the information most pertinent to this study into the following open coding categories: 1) course demographics; 2) course goals and objectives; 3) activities, assignments, and assessment tools; and 4) grading and evaluation procedures.

### **The Disciplinary Centered Sample**

#### ***Course Demographics***

Included in this category is information about course titles, class constituency, total number of instructional hours, number of weeks bounding the instruction, and number of credit hours assigned to the course. This type of information is relevant to the study because it demonstrates the contextual similarities among the syllabi within the analysis sample. While it may not be possible to demonstrate that the study compares “apples to apples” in the strictest sense, it is important to demonstrate that the syllabi share significant characteristics of “apple-ness.” Demographic information can

demonstrate there are enough shared characteristics among the syllabi to pool them into a single sample for analysis.

**Course constituency.** This information was determined through two sources. First, information was gathered from course title, course description, or goals and objectives statements. Second, when target constituency information was not included in a syllabus, institutional documents such as academic catalogs and departmental websites were searched. Descriptive statistics in this section are based on an *N* of 70. Sixteen (23%) of the syllabi identified the course as designed for non-majors only. The remaining 54 (77%) courses were required of theatre majors or minors but open to non-majors to fulfill a general education requirement. These 54 syllabi differ from those syllabi rejected from the analysis sample based on criterion eight, “The syllabus indicated non-majors were accepted into the course but the course would be taught in a manner that accommodates the needs of the major,” in that the instructors did not explicitly exclude the point of view or needs of the non-major in fulfilling a general education requirement.

The prevalence of the blended constituency<sup>202</sup> course may point to a predominant trend. Such a trend could, at first glance, seem problematic if both constituencies are to be served equally well in one classroom. I will address the advantages and disadvantages of the homogenous versus the blended student population in the classroom as it interacts with course content, assessment practices, and grading policies in Chapter 5:

“Conclusions.”

**Number of instructional hours in a semester/quarter.** No other demographic category had a wider variance between values than the number of instructional hours per

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<sup>202</sup>Non-majors and disciplinary majors enrolled in the same course.

semester/quarter of instruction. The primary source of information for this demographic was the calendar of class meetings found in the syllabi. A secondary source was institutional websites containing academic calendars for the year matching the syllabus. Factors taken into consideration were: number of cancellations due to national, religious, or local holidays, e.g. Labor Day or Martin Luther King Day; institutionally generated breaks in study, e.g. reading day or spring break; and instructor initiated cancellations due to professional or personal obligations e.g. attendance at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival or religious observance not observed institution-wide. Not all syllabi or institutional websites included the type of information collected for this demographic. I was able to verify the number of instructional hours per semester/quarter of instruction for fifty-one syllabi.

In order to determine the central tendency<sup>203</sup> of the sample, the mean, mode, median, and range<sup>204</sup> were calculated. The median number of instructional hours was 37 hours and 30 minutes; the mode is 37 hours and 30 minutes, the mean is 44 hours and 20 minutes, and the range is 56 hours. The mean value is severely skewed when compared to the median and mode and does not accurately represent the central tendency of the sample. This skewing can be accounted for by looking at the range, 56 hours.

Outliers<sup>205</sup> of 74 hours and 45 minutes, 80 hours, and 86 hours, representing the largest numbers of instructional hours in a semester/quarter, are double the number of hours for

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<sup>203</sup>The central tendency is a set of measures that determine various kinds of mathematical averages within a data set. The most common measures are the mean, median, and mode. The goal of central tendency is to find the single score that is most typical or most representative of the entire group.

<sup>204</sup>The mean is the sum of the values divided by the total number of values; the median is the halfway point in the data set; the mode is the value that occurs most often; the range is the difference between the largest and smallest values.

<sup>205</sup>An outlier is a value much greater or much less than the other values in a data set and can skew the mean average.

the mean and mode and have skewed the median and given a distorted picture of the central tendency. Seventy-five percent of the sample has a mean of 36 hours and 34 minutes and this is probably a more accurate representation of the central tendency for this variable in the sample.

**Number of instructional weeks.** Like the previous section, the primary source of information for this demographic was the calendar of class meetings found in the syllabi. Secondary sources were institutional websites containing academic calendars for the year matching the syllabus. Information collected included number of days the class was in session and how many days a week the class met. The total number of class days was divided by the number of days per week the class was scheduled to meet to determine the total number of instructional weeks. One class period for the week of finals was added to complete the totals.

All institutions in the disciplinary centered sample (70) were on the quarter or semester systems but not all syllabi or institutional websites included the type of information collected for this demographic. Descriptive statistics in this section are based on an *N* of 59. The median was 15 weeks, the mode was 15 weeks, and the mean was 14 weeks. The range was seven weeks. There were two outliers of 10 weeks (occurring 4 times) and 17 weeks (occurring once). When these were removed the mean was 14.5 weeks bringing it closer to the mode and median values

**Number of Credits Hours Assigned.** Data for this demographic was collected from syllabi, from institutional documents such as academic catalogs, and departmental websites where course credits were included in program/course descriptions. Not all institutions in the sample were on a system that depended on the student accruing a set

number of credit hours for a degree to be conferred. Ten institutions in the sample accrue a set number of courses rather than credits. At these institutions the course was allotted one course credit for a semester/quarter of passing work. Descriptive statistics in this section are based on an *N* of 61. The median is 3, the mode is 3, the mean is 3, and the range is 2.

**TABLE 4.2: COURSE DEMOGRAPHICS: DISCIPLINARY CENTERED  
SAMPLE**

<b>CATAGORY</b>	<b><i>N</i></b>	<b>MEDIAN</b>	<b>MODE</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>RANGE</b>	<b>OUTLIERS</b>
No. of Instructional Hours	50	37.5	37.5	44.33	56	74.5; 80; 85
No. of Instructional Weeks	59	15	15	14	7	10 & 17
No. of Credit Hours	61	3	3	3	2	0

***Course Goals and Objectives***

Defining and stating course goals and objectives serves many purposes: forecasting content; identifying key concepts to be included in the course; contextualizing the course within the larger curriculum of the institution; motivating students; indicating the scope of the course; and/or indicating the order of progression of content and concepts. Course goals and objectives can also reveal the pedagogical perspective of the instructor. Overall, they contribute to shaping student expectations of the course.

Goal statements, sometimes called aims, are statements that identify broad educational outcomes of a course of study. Instructors design courses around the goals and objectives they desire their students to achieve and may include goals in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Course goals are based on the

instructor's perception of what is important for students to know, understand, demonstrate, appreciate, or reflect upon by the conclusion of a course.

Course objectives differ from course goals in that objectives describe behaviors that lead to the accomplishment of goals. Objectives are “concrete measures by which aims [goals] will be realized usually expressed as relationships between specific concepts.”<sup>206</sup> Objectives, being more detailed than goal statements, contain three key elements:

- Behavior: An observable act a student does to demonstrate a level of learning. They are most effectively stated with action verbs.
- Criteria: The given circumstances or conditions under which the action will take place.
- Mastery: The level of achievement the student is expected to attain.

One purpose of the general education curriculum is to provide opportunities for the development of intellectual character through cultivation of HOM. Sometimes instructors are challenged by students to justify how and why a course is relevant or how content is significant to a student's overall education. Stating course goals and objectives in a way that intentionally and transparently explicates the connection between disciplinary content and the development of intellectual character can shape students' expectations and motivate them to engage with content. Students, especially those young in their intellectual development, need specificity and transparency to see how ideas, modes of inquiry, and skills connect across disciplines.

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<sup>206</sup>Michael J.V. Woodlock, “Pedagogical Course Goals? Their Purpose and Formulation.” *The Teaching Exchange* 2, no.2 (Brown University: January 1998): 1-2.

Administrators expect courses to align with the institutional liberal learning mission of creating life-long learners, savvy problem-solvers, and independent thinkers: “In most courses we are concerned about helping our students in a lifelong learning process; that is, and we want to develop interest in further learning and provide a base of concepts and skills that facilitate further learning and thinking.”<sup>207</sup> General education courses are sites where the balance between disciplinary content and HOM is weighted towards HOM. The goals and objectives section of a syllabus is one place where instructors can communicate how course goals align with institutional goals for general education courses. The more transparently instructors illustrate the connection between content and learning habits the more easily students and administrators can recognize that the course aligns with the liberal learning mission.

**Goal statements.** Goal statements were derived from several sources. The first source of information is the syllabi sample. Many syllabi self-identified statements as goal statements. This source could also be confusing. Many syllabi had headings such as “Goals and Objectives” which conflated goals, broad statements of course intent, with objectives, detailed behavioral characteristics, and a third category, course activities. Often the analysis process was one of disentangling the three categories. Course descriptions were also efficacious sources of information about course goals. Catalog course descriptions are brief and broadly stated beliefs regarding the overall purpose or goals of a course. Some syllabi included the catalog course description. When a syllabus did not include the catalog description, I searched institutional websites for catalogs matching the academic year in which each course was taught. Departmental websites also

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<sup>207</sup>W.J. McKeachie, *Teaching Tips; Strategies, Research, and Theory for the College Teacher* 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1994), 10.

provided course descriptions that occasionally differed from those provided by either the syllabus or the institutional course catalog. Because these descriptions are contained on disciplinary websites, the goals, while still broad, tended to be specific to the discipline.

One final source appearing on the individual syllabi was statements created by the author and labeled as “course description.” These statements often elaborated on the catalog descriptions but were sometimes sufficiently broad to be considered goals and also hinted at the pedagogical perspective of the instructor. In all, four sources of information contributed to the analysis of course goals and objectives: Statements identified by the instructor as course goals and objectives, catalog course descriptions included in the syllabi, catalog course descriptions from institutional websites, and course descriptions on departmental websites.

Goals statements were separated into four broad categories. The first category contains statements that are disciplinary centered and do not explicate any direct relationship to HOM. The second category contains statements that are HOM centered and do not explicate a link between HOM and disciplinary content. The third category contains statements that reference both disciplinary content and HOM but segregate the two perspectives. The fourth category contains statements that integrate the two perspectives and indicate a link between the disciplinary content and HOM.

Category 1. The first category, disciplinary centered, includes 44 syllabi or 63% of the syllabi of the disciplinary centered sample ( $N = 70$ ). Syllabi falling into this category do not mention or infer any connection between disciplinary content and HOM. Most of the 44 syllabi included one or more of the following goals:

- To introduce the fundamental (basic, essential) process of the art and craft of acting (25)



- To develop a method for creating a character (15)
- To develop a basic understanding of the Stanislavsky technique of acting (7)
- To expose the student to a variety of acting theories and practices (4)
- To expose the student to the ethical dimensions of the acting profession (3)
- To expose the student to dramatic literature (2)
- To introduce the student to the history of acting (2)
- To introduce the student to the variety of jobs in the acting profession (2)

*Category 2.* The second category includes 2 syllabi or 3% of the disciplinary centered sample ( $N = 70$ ). Course goals are predominantly described in terms of behaviors characteristic of HOM but the goals are not integrated with disciplinary specific goals. Goals from this category include:

- To increase self-awareness (1)
- To increase sensitivity to others (1)
- To increase understanding of the relationship between the self and the world (1)
- To increase ability to think critically and analytically (2)
- To increase ability to think creatively (2)
- To develop the ability to work collaboratively (2)
- To increase facility in interpersonal communications (1)
- To expand awareness of emotional intelligence (1)

*Category 3.* The third category includes six syllabi or 9% of the disciplinary centered sample ( $N = 70$ ). This category contains examples of goals from both the disciplinary perspective and the HOM perspective; however, they are listed in a

segregated manner in the syllabi. Some syllabi quote verbatim from institutionally generated explanations of general education categories. These syllabi state or infer there is a connection between the goals of general education and the disciplinary goals of the course but do not indicate how the connection takes place. The general education goals are as follows:

- Experience art as an integral part of life (1)
- Learn to work collaboratively (2)
- Learn to think critically and analytically (2)
- Develop the ability to accept and provide thoughtful critique (2)
- Learn to listen to others with empathy (3)
- Communicate ideas with clarity (4)
- Think creatively (3)
- Become more self-aware (2)
- Increase range of emotions (1)
- Understand acting as a form of human expression and mode of inquiry (1)
- Appreciate products created through creativity and imagination (1)
- Understand the significance of historical, social, and cultural context in understanding others (2)
- Develop the ability to think flexibly (3)

The disciplinary specific goals are phrased in much the same way as the disciplinary specific goals in category one or the instructor includes content specific information in the form of course objectives, which are more specific and detailed than course goals. Content goals include:

- To develop a method for creating a character (2)

- Introduce the student to the variety of jobs in the acting profession (1)
- Practice, and/or develop the art and craft of acting (2)
- Appreciate the art of acting (2)
- Explore a variety of tools and methods for the actor (1)

*Category 4.* The fourth category includes 18 syllabi or 26% of the disciplinary centered syllabi ( $N = 70$ ). The syllabi included in this category predominately stated course goals in a manner that integrated behaviors characteristic of HOM and disciplinary specific skills thereby implying the complex relationship between content and HOM. Most appear as dense descriptions intertwining content and intellectual behaviors in a tapestry of complementary elements. There is a great deal of variety within this pool of the sample and, since the point here is to demonstrate integration of content with HOM, it would be counterproductive to parse out the components of each statement or to aggregate them into a collection of like-minded statements. It will be more informative to share examples verbatim from some syllabi in this category.<sup>208</sup>

- “There is nothing quite like the Theatre’s process of collaboration to exemplify the necessary virtues of teamwork, open debate and collective pursuit of common goals thereby sharing the truth of the human condition with others of our species. Students immersed in such a process, crafting and rehearsing their own original performance pieces will learn how to effectively collaborate, problem-solve, and prioritize in a visceral and meaningful way.”
- “Through active exploration of the art and craft of acting the student will develop a greater personal capacity for creative risk and collaborative imagination, and increase self-awareness.”
- “In class you will be directly engaged in the process of acting...the problems of intention, focus, clarity, tone, rhythm, looking, listening, and feeling which are critical to your work as an actor obviously have connections to work in other art

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<sup>208</sup> All syllabi were collected with the guarantee of the author’s anonymity; therefore, I am unable to credit each author as I quote them here.

forms...By an intensive exploration of the actor's art and craft, I hope you may come to a visceral as well as intellectual understanding of what it means to be an artist in any field."

- "Your attitude toward your work is just as important as your talent. You must start out with enthusiasm, and learn to cooperate, to work for a common objective. One person cannot make a play into a work of art; it is a group that can. The theatre must have actors with a code of ethics and a sense of discipline, just as it must have actors with talent who have mastered their professional technique."
- "In this class, I will introduce a number of different ways of working, Based on your own vision of theatre and your own goals for this class, you will take these exercises and develop your own method of working. You will also develop your physical and kinesthetic intelligence, your emotional, physical, and vocal flexibility, and, most importantly, your ability to give and take with other people."
- "This course is designed to be a practical introduction to some of the principles, techniques, and tools of acting...we will use theatre games and improvisation exercises to unleash the actor's imagination, expand the boundaries of accepted logic, and encourage risk-taking."
- The goal of this course is: "for the student to be exposed to the fundamental aspects of acting, such as the importance of focus, concentration, develop trust, intensity, and availability to/with other actor-students, to make flexible the mental" and "to tap into his/her own creative source and inspiration, to experience the creation of his/her own performances individually and in collaboration, to develop critical and reflective thinking about acting and performance by observing the art of fellow actors, seeing plays, journal writing and discussion."

The fact that there is a relationship between content and the development of intellectual character is more transparent in these goal statements than in the previous goals statements. They also hint at the complex nature of teaching and learning content and HOM concurrently.

**Course objectives.** The vast majority of the objectives in the disciplinary centered sample was stated in list form and rarely contained any reference to level of

mastery expected or circumstances under which the student was expected to perform.<sup>209</sup>

I have listed below the top twelve disciplinary specific objectives for the 70 syllabi along with the number of syllabi containing each objective in order to indicate the breadth of the field and the frequency of some objectives.

- The student should demonstrate growth in his/her ability to express him/herself through physicality as well as understand how to tune and maintain his/her physical instrument (48 or 69%).
- The student should demonstrate growth in his/her ability to express him/herself vocally as well as understand how to tune and maintain his/her vocal instrument (44 or 63%).
- The student should be able to use script analysis to determine a character's objectives and choose effective tactics (32 or 45%).
- The student should develop his/her imagination for the purpose of creating characters (28 or 40%).
- The student should be able to understand and communicate ideas using theatre "jargon" (28 or 40%).
- The student should be able to use script analysis to discover the underlying structure of the script (25 or 35%).
- The student should be able to use script analysis to discover the given circumstances of the character's environment (25 or 35%).
- The students should understand how to work with an ensemble of actors (25 or 35%).
- The student should be able to use the skill of observation in the service of creating a character (21 or 30%).
- The student should develop facility in the skill of improvisation (16 or 23%).
- The student should develop his/her ability to use emotional recall and increase his/her emotional range (14 or 20%).

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<sup>209</sup> Another document where level of mastery and circumstances under which the student is expected to perform is recorded is a detailed assignment document. It could be instructors are recording such information there and find it redundant or inappropriate to include it in a syllabus.

- The student should be able to use sensory recall/sensory awareness in the service of creating a character (10 or 14%).

Also, included in the objectives of the majority of syllabi is recurring language describing intellectual behaviors and attitudes. Sixty-seven (96%) syllabi made some reference to behaviors indicative of intellectual habits the student needed to utilize in order to complete a course objective. In many cases the terms and phrases used in the syllabi objectives were similar to the terms used by Costa and Kallick in the titling of the sixteen habits of mind they describe.

A desired behavior described as an objective could be indicative of more than one HOM. For instance, the term “focus” appeared in the objectives of five course syllabi. The ability to focus could be categorized as an observable behavior for the HOM “Persistence.” As Costa and Kallick point out, people who persist are focused on their work and do not let themselves be side-tracked. The ability to focus is also an attribute of people who can manage their own impulsivity, another HOM. Persistence and an ability to manage one’s own impulsivity are goals that can be reached, in part, by behaving in a focused manner. Further, there is a causal link between impulsivity management and persistence for which the ability to focus is a catalyst: a person who can focus his/her impulses can then persist in a task on which s/he is focusing. A complex HOM such as listening for understanding and empathy requires a cluster of intellectual behaviors: “These behaviors are seldom performed in isolation. Rather, clusters of such behaviors are drawn forth and employed in various situations. When listening intently, for example, one must employ flexibility, metacognition, precise language, and perhaps

questioning.”<sup>210</sup> Furthermore, context is critical in determining which HOM or cluster of intellectual behaviors to use in a situation: “Employing ‘Habits of Mind’ requires a composite of many skills, attitude cues, and past experiences, and proclivities...it implies choice...it includes sensitivity to the contextual cues in a situation.”<sup>211</sup> Understanding the given circumstances of a situation is as critical in life as it is when creating characters on the stage.

Disentangling one intellectual behavior from another in order to rank the frequency of occurrence within a group of like documents requires sensitivity to context and complexity of the intellectual task. The following ranked list ( $N = 70$ ) is my interpretation of terms that coincide with Costa and Kallick’s descriptions of behaviors that characterize the sixteen HOM. I have “clustered” some behaviors that can then be categorized under a larger umbrella category. For example, “self-regulation” is an umbrella category I created from information in the sample. Clustered under the umbrella are control, commitment, focus, concentration, confidence, spontaneity and/or relaxation. No syllabus mentions all of these behaviors (although some contained more than one) but all of the behaviors listed are reflective of the category “self-regulation” and are mentioned in a number of syllabi. The most frequently mentioned intellectual behaviors included as objectives in their own right or as part of descriptions of disciplinary centered objectives are as follows:

- Manage self-regulation by exhibiting control, commitment, focus, concentration, confidence, spontaneity and/or relaxation (54 or 77%).
- Think critically and/or analytically (43 or 61%).

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<sup>210</sup>Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick, “Describing 16 Habits of Mind” <http://www.habits-of-mind.net> (assessed October 21, 2008), 2.

<sup>211</sup>Ibid., 1.

- Encourage imaginative thinking and apply it to solving problems creatively (29 or 43%).
- Increase self-awareness (26 or 37%).
- Communicate clearly orally, in written forms, and physically (25 or 36%).
- Work collaboratively to create solutions (22 or 31%).
- Understand acting as a form of inquiry for knowing the world (20 or 26%).
- Develop sensory awareness (19 or 27%).
- Explore/take risks with new ideas and solutions (18 or 26%).
- Develop the ability to appreciate a work from an aesthetic point of view (16 or 23%).
- Connect and synthesize bodies of knowledge over time, disciplines, and experiences (11 or 16%).
- Develop sensitivity to others (10 or 14%).
- Develop emotional intelligence and/or range (10 or 14%).

### ***Learning Experiences: Activities, Assignments, and Assessment***

Course activities, assignments, and assessment tools<sup>212</sup> are the means through which course goals and objectives are developed and level of achievement is measured. They are the building blocks of learning that rise from the scaffold of course goals and objectives. Just as architects design forms and choose materials appropriate to the needs of a building, instructors design learning experiences to meet the needs of goals, objectives, and students. Classroom activities, assignments, and assessment tools create

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<sup>212</sup>The term “assessment” is used here to indicate the use of assessment as a formative and summative experience.



opportunities for students to connect knowledge with course goals and objectives as well as practice intellectual habits.

Caveat lector!<sup>213</sup> Activities, assignments, and assessment tools may be more fluid than goals and objectives. A course syllabus is a “living document.” Learning is a fluid process and every class has its own chemistry and unique needs. What is recorded in a syllabus is a statement of intent to include certain types of learning experiences; however, instructors have the discretion to adjust learning experiences to meet the emerging needs of their students. Learning is contextual, and any number of variables within a context can create a need for change. Some activities and tools may need to be deleted from the master plan; others may need to be created to fill unexpected gaps in knowledge or experience. With this caveat in mind, what follows is a description of learning experiences included in one or more syllabi in the disciplinary centered sample.

**Attendance: classroom.** One hundred percent of the sample syllabi ( $N = 70$ ) contained statements defining attendance policies. Sixty-one syllabi (87%) included a numerical rubric whereby a student could calculate the impact of absences on his/her final course grade. Of these sixty-one, thirteen instructors established a “zero tolerance” policy. Points or full/fractions of letter grades are deducted from the very first absence. Six of the thirteen zero tolerance instructors distinguished between excused and unexcused absences and penalties are accrued only for unexcused absences. Attendance policies are tied to assessment of participation. If you are not in attendance then you are not participating.

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<sup>213</sup>“Let the reader beware!”

**Attendance: departmental productions.** Sixty-two (89%) of seventy instructors require their students to attend one or more departmental productions during the time they are enrolled in the course and respond to the production in some manner. Fifty-two (83%) of sixty-two instructors assess compliance by requiring the submission of a formal paper that responds in some way to the performance. Ten (16%) assess compliance through journal entries, class discussion (participation grade), or a test/quiz.

Forty-one (67%) of the sixty-two instructors assign a numerical value to this activity relative to how it is weighted in calculating the final grade for the course. Sixteen percentage points represent the range within the numerical values ranging from 4% of the final course grade to 20%. The mean is 11%, the median is 10%, and the mode is 10%. One instructor allows attendance at departmental productions as extra credit.

**Participation.** All 70 syllabi in the sample relied on a student's participation in classroom activities as a major indicator of learning. Fifty-six instructors identified how much of the weight of the final course grade was calculated from a student's participation in class activities. Participation was weighted between 3% and 90% when calculating the final course grade. The mean was 23%, the median was 20% and the mode was 10%. The range of this numerical indicator was 87 percentage points on a 100 point scale. With outliers of 3% and 90%, the mean, median, and mode are severely skewed.

All instructors sought to define quantifiable behaviors and positive attitudinal qualities of effective learners as well as the type of studio activities subject to assessment under the umbrella of "participation." Some of the quantifiable behaviors included attendance,<sup>214</sup> punctuality, appropriate dress for the day's activities, homework handed in

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<sup>214</sup>Grading of attendance in relation to participation grading occurred in three contexts: attendance separate from participation, attendance as one aspect of participation, or points deducted from a daily

complete and on time, performance work prepared and presented on due dates, application of course concepts to course activities and assignments, memorization of lines, taking notes, and volunteering to participate in class activities. Class activities under the umbrella of “Participation” included large and small group discussions, peer critique, rehearsal (in and outside of class time), acting exercises, improvisations, warm-ups, and any collaborative/ensemble effort in small or large groups. Finally the quality of the student’s participatory work was a factor in grading participation. Characteristic behaviors of students engaged in meaningful learning were listed as:

- Exhibiting an ability to focus and concentrate
- Listening empathetically
- Critiquing peers respectfully and constructively
- Exhibiting enthusiasm for content and process
- Exhibiting reliable and responsible behavior when engaged in collaborative activities in and out of the classroom
- Posing insightful questions about content and process
- Demonstrating progress and a willingness to apply critique
- Being emotionally as well as physically available
- Contributing generously to the synergy of the class work
- Exhibiting a willingness to take responsible risks with his/her work.

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participation grade in conjunction with the lowering of a final course grade to create a double indemnity situation.

**Writing: journal.** Journal writing, also referred to as a class notebook, is a required activity in 28 (40%) syllabi. The kind of material included in journal entries is quite varied and includes the following:<sup>215</sup>

- Responses to an instructor’s weekly prompts through posed questions, e.g. “What moves me emotionally?” “What can be improved about this class?” and “How does where and how I stand onstage affect me?”
- Notes and responses to readings, classroom lectures, and activities.
- Questions the student might have for the instructor regarding course content or his/her progress as an actor.
- Daily personal observations and discoveries connecting readings, course work, and experiences outside the classroom to the art and craft of acting.
- A repository for all formal and informal written assignments for the course including: peer critique, analysis of viewed performances, in-class writing assignments, analytical and creative writing as it applies to script analysis and character development.
- Self-assessment reflections on the student’s progress towards learning content as the course progresses.
- Rehearsal log.
- A reflection of the student’s personal theory regarding the process of building a character for performance.
- A record of class room exercises including warm-up exercises.
- Reflections on any significant event including experiences, books, ideas, movies, or events.
- Description of how the student prepares for each class.
- Summary of each reading assignment.
- Newspaper articles on a topic of interest to the student and the student’s reaction to the topic.

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<sup>215</sup>Once again, I am in some cases using the words of a syllabus’ author but cannot credit the source due to the promise of anonymity in the study.

- Observations of people the student has observed and what types of characteristics of observed persons might be useful for creating a character.
- Reflections on any ideas about theatre.
- Reflections on anything the student finds problematic about the class.
- Reflections connecting course activities to the objectives of the course.
- Reflections regarding the rehearsal process while viewing rehearsals of departmental productions.
- Rehearsal log for out of class rehearsal of performance work.

Seventeen of the 28 instructors assigned a numerical value to this activity relative to how it is weighted in calculating the final grade for the course. Twenty-two percentage points represent the range within the numerical values ranging from 8% of the final course grade to 30%. The mean is 16%, the median is 15%, and the modes are 15% and 20%. Another five instructors include the journal writing in a larger category, such as “writing assignments,” and assign the numerical value to the entire category. The remaining six instructors require journal writing but do not include its numerical value in the syllabus. Some indicate that the journal itself is not graded but the notes and reflections recorded in the journal become the supporting materials for formal written assignments which are graded.

**Writing: creative.** Seven (10%) of 70 instructors require or provide as an option the use of creative writing in the course. Students may write their own scenes or monologues for performance. It does not appear there is any assessment of the writing itself but the student is assessed on his/her performance of the student created script.

**Writing: analytical/critical/research.** Sixty-four (91%) instructors in the sample require some form of analytical, critical, and/or research writing. Activities and

assignments which fall into this category are peer critique of classmate performances, critique of departmental or non-departmental productions, self-evaluative statements, script analysis in relation to monologue and scene work, reports on assigned readings, and research on styles of acting. Assessment of written work was often absorbed into the grading of a larger project e.g. monologue and scene performance with script analysis as a percentage of the overall grade or peer critique as a contributing element of the participation grade. In some syllabi it was evaluated under the general heading “written work” and could be weighted as high as 50% in calculating a course grade.

**Reading assignments.** Reading assignments include required reading from a variety of sources including textbooks, excerpted material from textbooks, instructor generated handouts, journal articles, and plays. Forty-nine (70%) of seventy instructors assign readings. None of the 49 instructors listed a numerical value to the readings themselves but all listed multiple assessment activities through which compliance with the reading assignments could be assessed. Some of the assessed activities which do have a numerical value assigned to them and could include the influences of the reading assignment include test/quizzes, class discussion (participation grade), journal writing, script analysis, and performance work.

**Tests/Quizzes.** Thirty-nine (56%) of 70 instructors administer one or more written tests/quizzes during the term. Twenty-six (67%) of the 39 instructors who administer tests/quizzes assign a numerical value to this activity relative to how it is weighted in calculating the final grade for the course. Forty-two percentage points represent the range within the numerical values ranging from 5% of the final course grade to 47%. The mean is 17%, the median is 13%, and the mode is 10%. Four instructors

test/quiz but did not assign a numerical value to the tool and nine instructors absorb the numerical value for the test into larger categories such as “Participation”.

**Performance: scene work.** Sixty-nine (99%) of the instructors in the sample require students to perform one or more scripted scenes. Seven (10%) of the 69 do not record a numerical value for the experience. Sixteen (23%) instructors absorb the experience into larger categories with other learning experiences, e.g. participation, and record the numerical value as a value for that category. Forty-six (67%) of instructors record a numerical value for this activity relative to how it is weighted in calculating the final grade for the course. Forty-five percentage points represent the range within the numerical values ranging from 10% of the final course grade to 55%. The mean is 29%, the median is 30%, and the modes are 20% and 30%.

**Performance: solo work.** Fifty-five (79%) instructors require solo performance work in their courses. Fifty-three (96%) of these instructors define that as the performance of a scripted monologue while one defines it as solo masque work and one other defines it as presenting a report in front of the class.

**Performance: public.** Five instructors (7%) in the sample require their students to perform their final scene/monologue before an audience other than their peers within the class.

**Video viewing.** Four (6%) instructors in the sample require the viewing of performance videos as a part of the course work. No specific assessment tool or numerical value for the experience is mentioned but student learning from this activity may possibly be accessed through journal entries, participation grades, or class discussions.

**Audition for departmental productions.** Four (6%) of seventy instructors require their students to audition for departmental productions. All teach to a blended class population of majors, minors, and non-majors. There is no information regarding whether the students are required to accept roles if cast. One instructor provides this experience as an option for extra credit.

**Build/Crew/Usher a departmental production.** Three (5%) instructors in the sample require students to help build/crew/usher a departmental production. Two teach to a blended class population of majors and non-majors while the other teaches a non-majors only course. One of the blended classroom instructors offers this experience as an option for extra credit.

**Grading and evaluation policies.** Grading and evaluation policies are of intense interest to students enrolled in a course. Students want to know the work load they will be expected to carry, what kinds of activities and assignments they will be expected to complete and how much each will contribute to the calculation of a final course grade. They also want to know the criteria upon which their work will be judged and the level of mastery required for each level of grading. Grading and evaluative policies that were analyzed for this study include three kinds of information: 1) the form in which the final grade will be reported; 2) how each activity/assignment is weighted in calculating the overall course grade; 3) and rubrics explaining the criteria and/or level of mastery expected for each type of assignment. All seventy instructors included some level of information for one or more of the elements listed. It should be pointed out here that the syllabus is not the only method of delivery for information on grading and evaluation. Verbal explanations at any time during the course as well as subsequent documents may



be utilized to give information in this area. Some instructors may feel it is more appropriate, timely, and effective to give assessment information at the time when each assignment/activity is introduced to the student.

**Form in which the final grade is reported.** Thirty-three instructors (47%) indicated final grades were recorded on an A through F scale, twenty (29%) indicated the use of an A through F scale with plus and minus designations, and ten (14% of full sample) referred to the final grade as a “letter grade.” One (1%) instructor indicated the final grade for the course is recorded as “Pass/Fail.” One other instructor reported the option of the final grade being recorded as either “pass/fail” or as a letter grade using the A through F designations. Five instructors did not indicate what designation represented the final grade.

**How each activity/assignment is weighted.** Sixty-three (90%) instructors provided a weighted scale of assignments and activities. Some scales were very specific and gave detailed information as how the individual parts of an assignment were weighted in the assignment grade as well as how the assignment was weighted in the overall course grade. Other scales were very general in nature and included only very broad categories under which multiple assignments were included. Seven instructors did not include in the syllabus any information for weighting of course grades.

**Rubrics explaining the criteria and/or level of mastery expected.** After finding out how much and what kind of work they will be doing, students want to know how their work will be evaluated. Rubrics are a standard device used by educators to communicate the criteria, levels of mastery, and scoring strategy utilized in assessing student work. All seventy of the instructors in this sample have created rubrics for the

element of “attendance” identifying it as an assessed activity, the number of absences that are tolerated, and the resulting grading scale per number of absences. All seventy also provide a less formally shaped rubric for the element of participation. For example, behaviors such as “focus,” “concentration,” or “commitment” are criteria indicative of participation. Level of mastery is not defined but it is implied to be 100% of the time.

A review of the assignments/activities listed in a previous section of this chapter points to the complexity of assessment in a performance class given the many types of experiences that are assessed. No single rubric is likely to cover all of the work the student creates for assessment. Each type will call for a different set of assessment criteria. For example, three very diverse types of assessment activities are written reflection papers, performance of scenes or monologues, and written tests. In addition, performance activities may include written work such as script analysis and support of character development.

Three types of formal rubrics were evident in the sample syllabi. Thirteen (19%) instructors included a rubric for written work. Three of those thirteen writing rubrics contained information regarding criteria, levels of mastery, and scoring strategy while ten contained criteria only. Fifteen (21%) instructors included a rubric for performance work, eight of which contained information regarding criteria, levels of mastery, and scoring strategy with seven containing criteria only. Finally, twelve (17%) instructors included a general rubric to frame course work as a whole. Eight of these contained criteria, levels of mastery, and scoring strategy while four contained criteria only.

**TABLE 4.3: FREQUENCY OF LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THE  
DISCIPLINARY SAMPLE: N = 70**

<b>LEARNING EXPERINCES</b>	<b>RAW #</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION: CLASS</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>ATTENDANCE: DEPARTMENTAL PRODUCTIONS</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>89%</b>
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>WRITING: JOURNAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>WRITING: CREATIVE</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>WRITING: ANALYTICAL/CRITICAL/RESEARCH</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>91%</b>
<b>READING ASSIGNMENTS</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>VIDEO VIEWING ASSIGNMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>WRITTEN TESTS AND/OR QUIZZES</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>PERFORMANCE: SOLO</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>PERFORMANCE: PARTNERED SCENE WORK</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>99%</b>
<b>AUDITION FOR DEPARTMENT PRODUCTIONS</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>BUILD/CREW/USHER A PERFORMANCE</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>PERFORM FOR THE PUBLIC*</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7%</b>

\*Persons other than course peers.

## The Interdisciplinary Sample

The five syllabi in this sample were submitted by the same instructor and represent one interdisciplinary model for teaching acting to non-majors. Each syllabus offers interesting examples of how interdisciplinary pedagogy has been applied to the exploration of a theme or topic across two or more disciplines. In the aggregate, they create one type of design template for interdisciplinary course design for teaching acting to non-majors.

The syllabi in this sample describe courses that intentionally and transparently use acting as a mode of inquiry. Acting is seen as a methodology for understanding the human condition in a way that only participating in the live-ness of performance can achieve: deeply, sensitively, and kinesthetically. Further, acting as a mode of inquiry interacts with other disciplinary methodologies, knowledge, and points of view to create a mixed methods research model that crosses disciplinary boundaries. In the syllabus for a course entitled *War* the course instructors explain the integrative learning philosophy that is the foundation of their interdisciplinary approach,

“*War* combines drama, psychology and political science into a single course. We’ll explore the causes, conditions, and consequences of human conflict from the perspectives of our own disciplines. Working together as a group promotes the trust, self-confidence, and cooperation that enhance your learning experience. The result is a greater coherence in your studies and an awareness of the value of diverse opinions. Complex problems do not have simple answers.”<sup>216</sup>

Courses are combined in two, three, or four course bundles. Course design was a collaborative effort by the course instructors. Each instructor determined how the topic

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<sup>216</sup>I am unable to cite the source of this information in a more detail because of the agreed upon anonymity of the sample contributors.

under study would be explored through the point of view of his/her discipline. In some examples of this model it appears that all instructors are present at each class period and that threads of each discipline are woven through each day's lessons. One instructor may take the lead for a lesson but the other instructors augment the lesson with applicable knowledge and skill sets from their own disciplinary perspectives. When taken as a whole, the five courses in the sample provide one model for integrating the teaching of acting into an interdisciplinary philosophy of learning. In the analysis below, I will refer to the five syllabi in the aggregate while citing examples from individual syllabi.

### *Course Demographics*

In order to facilitate reader understanding of the demographic data in this section, a bit of institutional and curricular context is needed. The institution where these courses were taught is a small (3,200), public, not-for-profit, two-year institution in a rural area. It grants associate degrees and prepares students to transfer to four-year institutions. Students do not major in disciplines but there are disciplinary programs and students may choose an area of "focus" around which to organize their studies. There is a "focus" area for dramatic studies. The drama program offers a range of course work including autonomous courses in acting, stagecraft, costume design, and practicum, and produces three shows annually. The courses for which the syllabi in the sample were designed were part of a general education curricular structure based on an integrative learning (IL) model:

Integrative learning comes in many varieties: connecting skills and knowledge from multiple sources and experiences; applying theory to practice in various settings; utilizing diverse and even contradictory points of view; and, understanding issues and positions contextually. Significant knowledge within

individual disciplines serves as the foundation, but integrative learning goes beyond academic boundaries. Indeed, integrative experiences often occur as learners address real-world problems, unscripted and sufficiently broad to require multiple areas of knowledge and multiple modes of learning, offering multiple solutions and benefiting from multiple perspectives.<sup>217</sup>

**Course titles.** Titles for this type of course work communicate the thematic topic the course will explore, sometimes hint at the disciplinary frames within which the exploration will occur, and sometimes suggest a research question that will guide the exploration. Examples from the sample include:

- Image and Reality: How do individual experiences, everyday stories, and media shape our perception of self?
- War: Examining the causes, conditions and consequences of human conflict
- Race, Class, Sex, and Gender: Difference, Identity and Inequality in America

**Course constituency.** Although the drama program's classes are open to all students, "The Drama (theatre) program includes classes of general interest to all students as well as classes for drama majors,"<sup>218</sup> there is a distinction between those who are taking courses designed for a "focus" in drama and those who take the IL courses to meet general education requirements. Students who are taking an IL course as part of a focus requirement are in the same class with students who are in the course to satisfy general education requirements thus it is a mixed constituency in the same way that majors and non-majors can be mixed in the same classroom for the courses analyzed in the disciplinary sample.

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<sup>217</sup>Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching "A Statement on Integrative Learning," A joint statement prepared by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and developed in conjunction with the national project, *Integrative Learning: Opportunities to Connect* [http://www.aacu.org/integrative\\_learning/pdfs/ILP\\_Statement.pdf](http://www.aacu.org/integrative_learning/pdfs/ILP_Statement.pdf) (accessed February 20, 2012).

**Number of instructional weeks.** The institution where these courses were taught is on the quarter system. Classes met for ten instructional weeks. Mean, mode, and median are all ten. There is no range.

**Number of instructional hours in a semester/quarter.** The syllabi appear to require students to meet 4-5 days a week for three hours each class day.<sup>219</sup> This would mean there were 120-150 class hours which, if divided equally between three disciplines is 40-50 hours of instruction from each discipline per quarter. The reality is that these numbers cannot reflect the time students spend thinking about each discipline's contribution separate from the others. The whole point of structuring courses in this manner is to emphasize the interrelatedness of the human experience. To parse the learning experience out in this manner is counter to the pedagogical philosophy guiding the design of integrative learning experiences.

**Number of credits hours assigned.** In the syllabi analyzed, students can earn up to fifteen credits in an integrative studies course. Five credits for each of three courses bundled together or ten credits for two bundled courses and an additional five credits for a complimentary course of their choice. Students receive credit for a full course in each of the bundled disciplines.<sup>220</sup> Students have the capacity to meet the general education requirement for entire domains of study (e.g. Humanities) or for multiple domains (e.g. Humanities and Social Sciences) by taking one bundled course. In some of the integrative studies syllabi, students had a range of options as to which specific course they could

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<sup>219</sup>The range is the result of syllabi representing three different "bundle" models. Fewer classroom hours are required for bundles with fewer disciplines included.

<sup>220</sup>Other models that I have seen for interdisciplinary courses have structured a course for three credit hours and meet for 3 one hour sessions a week. Presumably, each discipline accounts for one third of a full course.

include in a bundle depending upon which domain they were seeking to satisfy. Students could choose from a range of drama courses to combine with an art appreciation course to complete requirements for the course. In some integrative courses students had the option of completing additional work so the course satisfied a capstone requirement in one of the bundled disciplines.

### ***Course Goals and Objectives***

The course goals and objectives for three of the courses are organized into three tiers of learning: knowledge, skills, and attitudes and values. Theme specific goals listed on the knowledge tier include: “To better understand how concepts in *Image and Reality* are aspects of the history culture, psychology, drama and literature in America,”<sup>221</sup> or “To better understand how aggression and conflict are interpreted in dramatic form.”<sup>222</sup> The skills and attitudes and values tiers contain goals related to habits of mind such as “To improve your ability to speak and write more effectively,”<sup>223</sup> and “You should be able to be curious and inquisitive about the world around you.”<sup>224</sup> This formula was consistent for three syllabi; in fact, the skills and attitudes and values tiers were identical on all three documents while the goals and objectives for the knowledge tier were adapted for each individual theme. The syllabus for each of the remaining two courses conflated the HOM goals with thematic and disciplinary specific goals: “Students who successfully complete *Searching for Shakespeare* will use the historical Shakespeare text to comprehend the

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<sup>221</sup>From the IL syllabus for *Image and Reality*, “Course Outcomes,” 1.

<sup>222</sup>From the IL syllabus for *War*, “Goals and Objectives,” 1.

<sup>223</sup>From the IL syllabus for *War*, “Goals and Objectives,” 1.

<sup>224</sup>From the IL syllabus for *Race, Class, Sex, and Gender*, “Goals and Objectives,” 1.



classical acting process,”<sup>225</sup> or “We will explore how other cultures use the mask and the part the mask plays in those various cultures.”<sup>226</sup>

***Learning Experiences: Course Activities, Assignments, and Assessment Tools.***

**Attendance: classroom.** All five syllabi indicate attendance is an assessed activity. It is a part of the participation grade for the course. No distinction was made between excused or unexcused absences and no accommodation was made for particular types of absences. Two of the five syllabi contained a rubric for grading attendance. Three to five initial absences were tolerated before any reduction in grade occurred after which the earned final grade for the course was dropped by one letter grade per each additional 3-5 absences.

**Attendance: departmental productions.** All five syllabi indicate attendance at all departmental productions which occur in the quarter in which the student is enrolled is an assessed activity. It is part of the participation grade for the course. A written critique of the production is required. Students attend as a group on the evening when there is a “talk back” session scheduled with cast and crew.

**Participation.** All five syllabi indicate participation is an assessed activity. Student participation in class activities is critical to the success of IL courses just as it is in disciplinary centered courses: “Integrative studies...is the creation of a community of scholars and for that to happen everyone must be immersed in all areas of study.”<sup>227</sup> Just

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<sup>225</sup>From the IL syllabus for *Searching for Shakespeare*, “Course Objectives,” 1

<sup>226</sup>From the IL syllabus for *Hide and Seek*, “Purpose,” p. 1.

<sup>227</sup>From the IL syllabus for *Searching for Shakespeare*, “Course Philosophy,” 1.

as with the disciplinary centered courses reviewed earlier, IL courses have a wide variety of experiences that are grouped under the category of “participation.”

- Daily moments of silence: Each class begins with five minutes of silence followed by ten minutes of writing. Students are free to think about anything they wish during the silence and then to write about anything. The writing is required but not graded. No prompts are provided by the instructors.
- Online Forum: Students are required to participate weekly in online discussions with fellow students and respond to online instructor prompts. The online site is considered an extension of the classroom.
- Seminar: IL courses require a seminar component. Seminars appear to be utilized for the purpose of providing a weekly experience integrating the classwork and experiences across the disciplines in the course. “In this small formal discussion group instructors act as facilitators while you take personal responsibility for your learning. In seminar you ask questions seek deeper understanding of the course material and share insights with other students,”<sup>228</sup> and “Seminar is a collaborative process: it questions, clarifies, and finds connections within material.”<sup>229</sup> Students participate by posing questions, engaging in small and large group discussions, and making presentations.
- Body Works: Body Works is one of the primary methods by which the IL students learn about acting. It was taught in all five courses whose syllabi were reviewed. It appears to be an all-encompassing title for course activities that are designed to teach physical principles of acting. The drama instructor describes it thusly: “Body Works is an exploration of your own body, which leads to interaction with other students. It helps to align the body and offers ways to help release tension. We start with stretching, progress to body movement and end with relaxation. Understanding your body leads to the ability to make physical and emotional connections to your thought processes.”<sup>230</sup>
- Improvisations: Some improvisations, designed to break the ice and orient student to the process, were standard across the five IL syllabi. Others were chosen to explore the specific theme of a course and were developed into presentations which were performed at designated times.
- Course Evaluations: Course “evaluations are required for you to receive your grades in each class but are not part of your grade. Credit is given when turned

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<sup>228</sup>From the IL syllabus for *Image and Reality*, “Seminar,” 2.

<sup>229</sup>From the IL syllabus for *Searching for Shakespeare*, “Seminar,” 4.

<sup>230</sup>From the IL syllabus for *Searching for Shakespeare*. “Body Works,” 3.

in...but not read until after grades have been assigned and turned in.”<sup>231</sup> Course evaluations are used for the purpose of improving future iterations of the course.

**Writing: journal/private notebook.** All five syllabi indicate journal writing is a course activity. Students record their personal thoughts about anything they choose for ten minutes after the five minute moment of silence that begins each class. Date, time, and location are required for each entry. Required but not graded. Students are free to add to their journal writing at any time. Journals may also contain drawings.

**Writing: public notebook.** Students keep notes from class lectures, discussions, videos, seminars, and Body Works experiences. These notes become reference points for weekly reader response papers. This notebook is graded.

**Writing: reader response papers.** Due weekly, this assignment accesses and integrates information the student has explored through reading assignments, classroom lectures, and videos in a given week: “Note the major points that the authors, speakers, directors are making, what questions the materials provoke, and find connections between the materials and your own personal experiences.”<sup>232</sup> The paper contains three parts: an objective summary of source materials; a subjective personal reflection on the materials; two questions about the readings that will then be shared during the seminar. This appears to be a site where students can acknowledge and begin working out the contradictions, ambiguities, and complexities within the course materials. This assignment directly nurtures the formal essay process discussed next.

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<sup>231</sup>From the IL syllabus for *Hide and Seek*, “Course Evaluations,” 3.

<sup>232</sup>From the IL syllabus for *War*, “Reader Response Paper,” 3.

**Writing: formal essay/writing project/portfolio.** A formal written project is due every other week. The instructors provide a prompt in the form of a question. Students are challenged to engage with materials via the writing of a formal mini-thesis. Emphasis is on the ability to communicate ideas in a formal written document observing accepted writing standards including: an introduction including a thesis statement, a body that develops the thesis through paragraphs that address one point at a time and utilize appropriate support materials as well as cite sources, a conclusion that highlights the insights about the thesis the student has learned in the process of writing about it; and a works cited page. “This is a place of intellectual discovery where you write about the connections among ideas, yourself, and the world.”<sup>233</sup> The use of multiple drafts is expected and emphasized.

**Writing: Play review.** Students attend a drama department production as a group and the post show talkback session. They then write a production review incorporating notes from the talkback session. Prior to writing their review, students receive additional information in class regarding how to review actors and what to look for when viewing a play.

**Writing: research paper.** Students who have enrolled for capstone credit are required to write a research paper. A portfolio containing research notes and related materials is part of the process. Several drafts are expected and one class day per week is set aside for Capstone conferences with the instructor(s).

**Writing: Self Evaluations.** Students reflect upon and write about their own awareness of how well they have learned disciplinary content and skills as well as their ability to connect information across discipline.

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<sup>233</sup>From the IL. syllabus for *War*, “Formal Essay,” 4.

**Reading assignments.** All five syllabi indicate reading assignments are an assessed activity. Students are assigned readings from a wide array of sources. Each discipline contributes to the required reading list printed in the syllabus as well as providing additional hand-outs during the course. Readings are assigned to ignite student discovery. Students are expected to use what they have read to inform their writing and seminar discussions. Selected plays and *The Dramatic Imagination*, by Robert Edmond Jones, were standard reading material for the theatre component.

**Tests/quizzes.** There are no references to this type of assessment in any of the five syllabi analyzed.

**Performance: scene work.** Students perform scenes chosen from scripted work that relate to the central theme of the course. Scene work seems to begin with either a full read-through or partial read-through of the chosen script with the whole class participating. The course entitled *Race, Class, Sex, and Gender: Difference, Identity, and Inequality in America* utilized *The Laramie Project*, *The Vagina Monologues*, and *Twilight Los Angeles* as thematically linked resources for scene work. For a course that bundled English and Drama, entitled *Searching for Shakespeare*, the primary sources of scenes were *Hamlet*, *Henry V*, *The Tempest*, and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. In the integrative course design model, plays are transparently used as case studies one purpose of which is to explore the course theme from various points of view. There was no mention of formal script or character analysis. However, there were several learning experiences embedded in the content and methodologies of the disciplines bundled with acting that could allow students to make cross-disciplinary connections that would elicit the kind of information that traditionally is discovered through text analysis and character

biography. For instance, in *Image and Reality*, students study about the nature and uses of memory as well as psychological disorders. Students are prompted to explore early childhood memories by accessing their senses. In *Searching for Shakespeare* part of their exploration of English is to look at the precision of language and imagery. Students are developing skills used in script analysis through the lens of a discipline other than theatre.

**Performance: presentations.** Presentations evolve from the classroom improvisations. Students perform both during the class in which the improvisation was introduced, in the raw, and also later as part of a final presentation. Possibly some polishing and rehearsing has taken place in the interim between the two events but this is not clearly stated in the syllabi.

**Performance: simulations/role playing.** The use of simulations, a type of performance experience, was mentioned in two of the five syllabi, *War* and *Image and Reality*. Here is how simulations and role playing worked in the *War* classroom:

You are assigned to the foreign policy making team of a country and take on a particular role. You then research the country, its international relations, and prepare a 'Guide for Action' for your nation and a 'Character Profile' for your personal role...Teams use the information they have gathered and respond to the actions of other countries on a hypothetical scenario.<sup>234</sup>

Students met on a designated Saturday from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. to share information and discuss strategies with teammates and then run the simulation. Debriefing of the simulation occurred during regularly scheduled class periods. In addition, role-playing was a feature of some weekly seminars. No details were given as to how or how often role-playing was implemented in the seminars.

**Performance: public.** There was no indication that performing for an audience beyond course peers and instructors was required

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<sup>234</sup>From the IL. syllabus for *War*. "Simulations," 4.

**Video viewing.** A video was viewed in one course. It provided context for a discussion of the course topic.

**Audition for departmental productions.** Auditions for departmental productions were announced but there was no requirement to participate.

**Build/Crew/Usher a departmental production.** There was no requirement to participate in these activities.

**Grading and evaluation policies.** All five courses reviewed recorded letter grades with plus or minus designations for the course grade. Four out of five syllabi awarded the same grade to each of the courses that were bundled together. Separate grades were recorded for the two course bundle. Three of five syllabi warned there would be no incomplete grades recorded. Formal writing was weighted between 45% and 60% of the final grade. Participation and attendance was weighted at 20% of the final grade for four courses and at 70% for one course which bundled two studio courses together, Art and Drama. Seminar was weighted between 15% and 25% of the final grade. Miscellaneous, including informal writing, drawings, and presentations, was valued at 10%.

**TABLE 4.4: FREQUENCY OF LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THE INTERDISCIPLINARY SAMPLE:  $N = 5^*$**

<b>LEARNING EXPERINCES</b>	<b>RAW #</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION: CLASS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>ATTENDANCE: DEPARTMENTAL PRODUCTIONS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>WRITING: JOURNAL**/PUBLIC NOTEBOOK</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>WRITING: CREATIVE</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>00%</b>
<b>WRITING: ANALYTICAL/CRITICAL/RESEARCH***</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>READING ASSIGNMENTS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>VIDEO VIEWING ASSIGNMENTS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>WRITTEN TESTS AND/OR QUIZZES</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>00%</b>
<b>PERFORMANCE: SOLO</b>	<b>****</b>	<b>****</b>
<b>PERFORMANCE: PARTNERED SCENE WORK</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>AUDITION FOR DEPARTMENT PRODUCTIONS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>00%</b>
<b>BUILD/CREW/USHER A PERFORMANCE</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>00%</b>
<b>PERFORM FOR THE PUBLIC*****</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>00%</b>

\*In all five syllabi, the same instructor designed the material relating to teaching acting.

\*\*Required but assessed not assessed.

\*\*\*Formal writing: research papers, play reviews, self-evaluation, reader response papers.

\*\*\*\*Undetermined: some students performed in pieces which evolved from classroom improvisations and some of these may have been solo pieces. The performance of a monologue was not indicated as a course requirement or activity.

\*\*\*\*\* Persons other than those course peers

### **Signature Pedagogies Emerging from the Data**

#### ***Review: Concept of Signature Pedagogies***

One focus of this study is to identify and describe signature pedagogies used to teach acting to non-majors. By making these pedagogies visible, teachers can be mindful of their teaching and make intentional, informed decisions about the effectiveness of their work in their particular contexts. I provided a definition of signature pedagogies in



chapter one. In chapter three, I discussed the concept in some detail as well as its relationship to the development of HOM and intellectual character. I review the concept's key characteristics here in order to contextualize the analysis of the data in this chapter.

Dr. Lee S. Shulman, educational psychologist and past president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (1996-2008), introduced the term and defined characteristics of signature pedagogies in 2005 in his essay, "Signature Pedagogies in the Professions." In his essay, Shulman cites ubiquity as an essential characteristic of signature pedagogies: "Signature pedagogies are important precisely because they are pervasive...They define how knowledge is analyzed, criticized, accepted, and discarded"<sup>235</sup> in a discipline. Further, Shulman advises they should be examined periodically for their effectiveness and currency within an ever-changing educational and professional landscape. Shulman's essential characteristic of ubiquity is the criterion I will use to determine which pedagogies in the combined sample<sup>236</sup> are signature pedagogies.

### ***Signature Pedagogical Orientation***

The reader may recall at the conclusion of the selection process the remaining seventy-five syllabi were divided into two groups. This division was based on two overarching pedagogical philosophies governing curricular organization: disciplinary and interdisciplinary. The syllabi in the disciplinary sample represent courses taught as

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<sup>235</sup>Lee S. Shulman, "Signature Pedagogies in the Professions," *Daedalus* 134, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 54.

<sup>236</sup>The sum of the disciplinary and interdisciplinary samples combined

“stand-alone” courses, i.e. content is taught as a body of knowledge bounded into a “discipline.” The implication of this type of curricular organization is that course content is best introduced and/or mastered when it is segregated from the content knowledge of other disciplines. The syllabi in the interdisciplinary sample represent courses designed to introduce and/or master diverse disciplinary content areas concurrently. The focus of such courses is to connect and integrate diverse modes of inquiry, ways of thinking, and bodies of knowledge across disciplinary boundaries. The implication of this type of curricular organization is that course content is best introduced/mastered in conjunction with multiple kinds of disciplinary content interacting with one another.

With an *N* of seventy-five, 93% (70) of the syllabi in the combined sample were categorized as “disciplinary” while 7% (5) were categorized as “interdisciplinary.” At this point it is prudent to recall that an *N* of 75 is quite small relative to the number of requests for data (3,154 emails to faculty at 1,022 institutions) emailed to prospective teachers of acting for non-majors. There are many possible variables that might explain why so few examples from the field represent an interdisciplinary pedagogical perspective. For example, instructors who teach acting within an interdisciplinary model may not be housed in Theatre Departments. They may be housed in Interdisciplinary/Integrative Studies Programs or Honors Programs on some campuses and did not receive a request for data email. Additionally, those instructors of acting who are housed in Theatre Departments and did receive the request for data may feel they are not teaching acting so much as using the craft of acting to interrogate an interdisciplinary topic/question. They may have self-selected out of my study because they felt their work did not fit the parameters outlined in the request email. Without more data, all that can

really be said is, for this sample, the signature pedagogical philosophy guiding curricular organization is the disciplinary model.

***Signature Pedagogies in the Sample***

Descriptive statistics in this section are based on an *N* of 75 representing syllabi in the combined sample. The table below identifies three broad categories based on the ubiquity with which learning activities occur in the combined sample. The first category, “Frequently Occurring Pedagogies,” contains those pedagogies which occur in at least 90% of the combined sample. The next category, “Less Frequently Occurring Pedagogies,” contains those pedagogies which occur in a majority of syllabi. The third category, “Scantly Occurring Pedagogies,” contains those pedagogies occurring in 10% or fewer of the syllabi. Only those pedagogies in the category “Frequently Occurring Pedagogies,” were determined to be signature pedagogies.

**TABLE 4.5: OCCURANCE OF PEDAGOGIES: COMBINED SAMPLE:**

*N* = 75

<b>FREQUENTLY OCCURRING PEDAGOGIES</b>	<b>RAW #</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>CLASS PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>PERFORMANCE: PARTNERED SCENE WORK</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>99%</b>
<b>WRITING: ANALYTICAL/CRITICAL/RESEARCH/REFELCTIVE</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>96%</b>
<b>ATTENDANCE AT DEPARTMENT PRODUCTIONS</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>LESS FREQUENTLY OCCURING PEDAGOGIES</b>		

<b>PERFORMANCE: SOLO</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>READING ASSIGNMENTS</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>WRITTEN TESTS AND/OR QUIZZES</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>SCANTLY OCCURRING PEDAGOGIES</b>		
<b>WRITING: CREATIVE</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>PERFORM FOR THE PUBLIC</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>VIDEO VIEWING</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>AUDITION FOR DEPARTMENT PRODUCTIONS</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>BUILD/CREW/USHER A PERFORMANCE</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5%</b>

Based on the analysis of the seventy-five syllabi in the combined sample, four categories of practices have emerged as sites of signature pedagogies: participation, partnered scene work, writing: analytical, critical, research, and reflective, and viewing departmental productions.

***Signature pedagogy #1: Experiential learning a.k.a. Participation***

Experiential learning is an overarching philosophy of education that professes students learn deeply and significantly when they actively engage with course content through activities designed to apply knowledge or challenge their understanding of it. It requires students to be active participants in their education rather than passive recipients of it. The learning is in the doing. The essence of this pedagogical philosophy is reflected

in the words of Confucius (551-479 BCE):<sup>237</sup> “I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.” The instructors whose syllabi are included in the analysis sample use the term “participation” to indicate this type of pedagogical approach to instruction.

One hundred percent of syllabi identify experiential learning, a.k.a. class participation, as a primary requirement for passing a course that teaches acting to non-majors. Attendance requirements make it clear that students are expected to be present and actively and productively engaged every class period in instructional activities. All of the instructors whose syllabi I analyzed used a wide array of course activities designed to engage students in experiential learning:

- Physical Warm-ups
- Vocal Warm-ups
- Relaxation techniques
- Acting exercises
- Acting Improvisations
- Large and small group discussions
- In-class rehearsals
- Presentations/Performance/Simulations/Role-Playing
- Peer mentoring
- Peer critique

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<sup>237</sup>Confucius was a Chinese philosopher, political figure, educator, and founder of the *Ru* School of thought. His ideas form the foundation of much of subsequent Chinese speculation on the education and comportment of the ideal man. His influence on Chinese history has been compared with that of Socrates on Western thought.

The experiential approach to learning requires frequent and consistent engagement in course activities; but engagement, or participation, has another dimension beyond the physical execution of a learning activity. The quality of the engagement is also important. It is in the descriptions of the qualitative aspects of participation that instructors in the combined sample identified desirable behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes of the student towards the work. These descriptors often overlap with descriptors of HOM. Some of these descriptors with a corresponding HOM<sup>238</sup> are:

- Committed---“Persistence”
- Focused—“Managing Impulsivity”
- Self-aware---“Metacognition: Thinking about Thinking”
- Willing to take risks—“Taking Responsible Risks”
- Enthusiastic---“Responding in Wonderment and Awe”
- Collaborative---“Thinking Interdependently”
- Reliable: ---“Thinking Interdependently”
- Cooperative---“Thinking Interdependently”
- Generous spirit--- “Listening to Others with Understanding and Empathy”
- Respectful--“Listening to Others with Understanding and Empathy”
- Listen—“Listening to Others with Understanding and Empathy”

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<sup>238</sup>The linking of a descriptor with a single HOM should not be construed to mean the trait described fits within only one HOM. HOM often share traits and overlap. For example, from the list above “focused” is a trait needed for being both persistent and managing impulsivity.

## ***Signature pedagogy #2: Performance: Scene Work***

One specific type of experiential learning activity was dominated the analyzed syllabi. Ninety-nine per cent of the instructors in this study identified the performance of a scene with one or more partners as an essential experience for non-majors learning acting. Students must engage in collaborative work in order to complete this activity successfully. This pedagogical choice aligns well with Chickering and Gamson's second principle of good practice, "Develops Reciprocity and Cooperation among Students":

Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others increases involvement in learning. Sharing one's own ideas and responding to others' reactions sharpens thinking and deepens understanding.<sup>239</sup>

Some of the kinds of activities in which students may engage to complete scene work successfully include:

- Choosing a scene
- Script analysis
- Artistic negotiations
- Organizing their time together
- Rehearsals (multiple drafts of the performance product)
- Research
- Application of skills and techniques practiced in the classroom
- Peer mentoring
- Performance
- Critique

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<sup>239</sup>Chickering and Gamson.

The kind of skills and intellectual character required of partnered scene work also aligns well with Costa and Kallick's fifteenth HOM, "Thinking Interdependently":

Cooperative humans realize that all of us together are more powerful, intellectually and/or physically, than any one individual. Probably the foremost disposition in the post- industrial society is the heightened ability to think in concert with others. Problem-solving has become so complex that no one person can go it alone. No one has access to all the data needed to make critical decisions; no one person can consider as many alternatives as several people can.<sup>240</sup>

### *Signature pedagogy #3: Writing*

Experiencing alone does not create learning. It is but one of a series of steps that, theoretically, leads to learning. In addition to participation in an activity, students must "talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. They must make it a part of themselves."<sup>241</sup> Writing is one mechanism through which students can complete a requisite step in experiential learning. The analysis of the seventy-five syllabi in the combined sample revealed there is an abundance of required writing in the acting for non-majors courses included in this study. Ninety-six percent of syllabi included one or more writing assignments. The analysis also revealed a broad spectrum of types of writing including analytical, critical, reflective, and research writing. Different kinds of writing cause students to exercise different kinds of thinking. John Dewey (1859-1952), educational philosopher and leading proponent of the experiential education movement, noted a non-educative

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<sup>240</sup>Costa and Kallick, 11.

<sup>241</sup>Arthur W. Chickering and Zelda F. Gamson, "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education," <http://www.uis.edu/liberalstudies/students/documents/sevenprinciples.pdf> (assessed June 22, 2011).



experience is one in which the learner has not done any reflection.<sup>242</sup> Writing is a practice which can make learning visible to the student, his peers, and the teacher. It must be noted that writing is not the only tool through which a student can reflect but it is an effective one.

Writing, when viewed from an HOM perspective, is a tool for language refinement.<sup>243</sup> It is utilized to develop HOM number nine, “Thinking and Communicating with Clarity and Precision.”<sup>244</sup> Being able to communicate clearly and precisely “plays a critical role in enhancing a person’s cognitive maps and their ability to think critically, which is the knowledge base for efficacious action. Enriching the complexity and specificity of language simultaneously produces effective thinking”<sup>245</sup> Writing, then, can be an effective tool for teaching disciplinary content and developing intellectual character concurrently.

#### ***Signature pedagogy #4: Observing Performances***

Ninety per cent of the syllabi in the combined sample require non-majors to attend one or more department productions during the semester in which they are enrolled. Performances are a type of demonstration. Demonstrating is a pedagogical process whereby teaching, and ideally learning, occurs through a practical display of techniques, processes, and concepts in action. The traditional way to think about demonstrations is to think of the course instructor as the demonstrator. However, the

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<sup>242</sup>John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier Books, 1938).

<sup>243</sup>Costa and Kallick, 8.

<sup>244</sup>Ibid.

<sup>245</sup>Ibid.

pedagogy of demonstrating is applied differently in acting classes. When viewing department productions, the course instructor is, most likely, not the demonstrator; multiple demonstrators are usually necessary in order to perform the production. Additionally, in the context of the acting studio, the instructor as demonstrator could be a deterrent to learning. Instructors are in a position of authority in the classroom. By demonstrating his own interpretation, an instructor runs the risk of implying that this is the one right interpretation of a role thereby quashing student creativity and/or willingness to engage in creative risk-taking. Acting is a creative art form in which the artist/actor creates a character through the filter of her own perspective. Each actor's performance of a character is unique.

The experience of observing a fully-produced full length script contains many learning opportunities for an acting student. First, it places the practice of acting in a "real-world" context. Consider for a moment the student's performance experience in the context of the acting studio. The experience is fragmented and decontextualized relative to the performance of an entire production. In the combined sample for this study, fragments of scripts (scenes and monologues) are performed but not entire scripts. The fragments are performed without the benefit of the surrounding context in which the fragments live. When students attend a full-length, fully produced production of a script, they have the opportunity to experience the structure of the script in its fullness and see how all the structural fragments fit together to tell one story. They may begin to understand viscerally what they have only been discussing theoretically in the classroom. All the connective tissue of the story is "lived" by the characters in a full production. The student may begin to connect the complex skillsets, both disciplinary and in terms of

intellectual character, required to create a fully realized character in a fully produced production and begin to synthesize them into an aesthetic process.

Second, attending a performance can provide an opportunity for the student to experience the power of theatre and the role of acting in producing that power. Because theatre is "live" observers not only see and hear the performance they also feel the performance by connecting with characters kinesthetically. This kinesthetic connection creates an empathic response in the viewer. When we connect with ideas in a personal, felt way, we learn at deeper levels and our reflections about ideas and how they affect people are more complex: "Some psychologists believe that the ability to listen to another person, to empathize with, and understand their point of view is one of the highest forms of intelligence."<sup>246</sup>

Third, the "liveness" of a full performance allows the acting student to see how actors who are more experienced than herself apply practical skills of performance in order to guide and manage the performance. Acting students perform in front of an audience of their peers. Their peers are likely to be predisposed towards sympathy for their performing fellow student because they share a common struggle i.e. passing the course. The audience in the real-world of theatre has no such common goal. Performers must *earn* the empathy of their audience. The ability to connect with an audience by managing the unexpected moments that occur in every performance is a skill in its own right. Holding for laughs, dealing with scenic and/or costume malfunctions, going "up" on lines, ignoring distractions created by audience members are all performance conditions that may occur in the course of a live performance.

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<sup>246</sup>Ibid.

For the student who can think flexibly, that is, shift perspective from being a member of the audience to observing the relationship of the audience to the performance, rich lessons can be learned. Costa and Kallick describe flexible thinking as an HOM: “Flexible thinkers are able to shift, at will, through multiple perceptual positions... While there are many possible perceptual positions—past, present, future, egocentric, allocentric, macro centric, visual, auditory, kinesthetic—the flexible mind is activated by knowing when to shift perceptual positions.”<sup>247</sup> They identify flexible thinking as an essential skill when working with diverse societies because it facilitates the ability to recognize other people’s ways of meaning making.<sup>248</sup>

Fourth, a fully produced production reinforces on a large scale lessons learned in the acting studio about collaboration. Actors do not collaborate only with one another. They collaborate with a large number of designers, directors, and crew members in order to create and perform the production. Experiencing the role of collaboration in the larger context of a full production further reinforces the importance of the HOM “Thinking Interdependently.”

In summary, the pedagogy of demonstrations within the context of observing performances allows students to experience acting on a scale not possible within the acting studio. Performances have the potential to inspire students to see from a new perspective, generate new insights, and try new applications without dictating interpretation. Additionally, the experience of viewing a performance allows students to strengthen aspects of their intellectual character.

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<sup>247</sup>Ibid.

<sup>248</sup>Ibid.

## **Summary of Chapter**

In this chapter, I shared the analysis of the seventy-five syllabi in the analysis sample. These seventy-five were further subdivided into two samples based on two overarching pedagogical philosophies: disciplinary and interdisciplinary. Seventy syllabi were grouped under the heading of “Disciplinary Centered Course” and five were grouped under the heading “Interdisciplinary Centered Course.” The categories of 1) course demographics; 2) course goals and objectives; 3) activities, assignments, and assessment tools; 4) grading and evaluation procedures were analyzed for all seventy-five syllabi in the analysis sample. I concluded the chapter by identifying four signature pedagogies that had emerged from the analysis and discussing briefly their relationship to some habits of mind.

Chapter five summarizes the study and suggests an interpretation of the data. The chapter begins with a review of the research problem, design, and methodology. Next, I summarize and integrate the findings from the literature review followed by a summation of findings from the document analysis. Application of the integrated findings follows. I then discuss the significance and limitations of the findings. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future investigation and final reflections.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusions**

**“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.”**

**Marcel Proust**

Marcel Proust’s thought imaginatively captures my purpose in embarking on this study. I sought to discover pedagogical common ground between disciplinary content and the goals of general education curricula. I was interested in this terrain because I was familiar with disciplinary content but not the goals of general education. I formed the following research question in order to guide my exploration: What is the relationship between the development of intellectual character and pedagogies used to teach acting to non-majors in institutions of higher education in the United States. I began my ‘voyage of discovery’ by identifying two types of sources I believed would contribute significant data to my investigation: relevant literature by scholars in fields related to the topic and institutional documents i.e. course syllabi, institutional mission statements, and general education goal statements.

In this chapter, I integrate findings from ‘new landscapes’ discovered at the intersection of the literature review and the document analysis. I view the ‘new landscape’ with ‘new eyes’ created by the lens of habits of mind (HOM), the development of intellectual character, and the goals of general education as stated in institutional documents. When I look at the terrain through this lens, I am led to reflect upon and make suggestions about ways in which acting for non-majors courses might

better be designed to fulfill the goals of liberal education while simultaneously preserving the disciplinary signature pedagogies through which disciplinary content is taught.

I begin the chapter with a review of my research orientation, design, and methodology in order to map out the route used to explore the landscape. The chapter continues with a summary of the literature review, a summary of the document analysis, and limitations of the document analysis. I then turn to a discussion of the integration of the findings wherein I hypothesize one possible relationship between the experience of acting and the goals of liberal education as articulated in institutional documents. Next, I suggest the potential significance of the findings and the limitations of the findings. I conclude the chapter with suggestions for future investigation and final reflections.

### **Review: Research Design and Methodology**

I concluded that a qualitative orientation to the phenomenon was the most appropriate perspective to pursue. I chose a qualitative orientation for the following reasons. First, the literature review revealed an absence of published information about teaching acting to non-majors. Qualitative methodology is appropriate when little is known about the phenomenon under scrutiny because the focus of a qualitative study is not to prove a hypothesis or predict behavior but to shed more light on a subject in order to frame questions and theories. Further, I concluded that more information describing the phenomenon was needed to understand the pedagogical status quo. I needed to identify and describe current practices before I could understand how the experience of acting can develop intellectual character. Second, a qualitative orientation is appropriate

because teaching and learning are fluid processes taking place in a social context. Phenomena occurring in social contexts are complex, ambiguous, sometimes paradoxical, and dynamic. A basic qualitative study seeks to capture the fluidity and dynamism of its subject in the exploration and description of the phenomenon.

I gathered two types of information to analyze in order to answer the research question: (1) course syllabi to describe signature pedagogies currently in use in acting for non-majors courses; and (2) institutional mission statements and general education goal statements to understand the context in which acting for non-majors is taught in the United States. I used open coding content analysis to explore the documents. Open coding led to the creation of categories into which I sorted relevant material.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

I designed the review of literature to augment my understanding of five key areas of the phenomenon: (1) the complex and interactive web of educational contexts in which acting for non-majors courses is taught; (2) the concept of liberal learning and the behaviors and attitudes characteristic of a liberally educated person; (3) relevant pedagogical and learning theory (4) current pedagogical practices in teaching acting to non-majors; and (5) the intersection of theatre/acting, pedagogy, and liberal learning.

First, I reviewed literature documenting the historical evolution of higher education in the United States, the evolution of general education in university curricula, and the history of theatre's struggle to be recognized as a legitimate and autonomous field of study in higher education in order to understand current curricular constructs in



context. The literature traced the dominance of the ideals of liberal learning encased in the liberal arts curriculum in the eighteenth century through to the marginalization of liberal learning goals in higher education in America in the twenty-first century. The trends of specialization and vocationalism, exacerbated by materialism and displayed through consumerism, contributed to a fragmentation of the liberal learning goals of higher education and its curriculum. General education curricula became the fragment into which the content of a liberal arts education and the goals of liberal learning were deposited. Boyer and Levine proposed the central concern of general education courses should be to develop in the student an awareness of the connectedness of things. This concern does not mean the goals of liberal learning are/should be the exclusive domain of general education curricula. It does mean there is a well-articulated link between the goals of liberal learning and the purpose of general education. This assertion is supported by the findings of the review of institutional mission statements and general education goals.

The historical survey shed light on both *how* and *why* the theatre curriculum in higher education has developed as it has. *How* and *why* provided important contextual clues and pointed to ways in which the past continues to influence the present. Revealing these influences has been useful in determining how the questions I am asking now regarding acting pedagogy and its relationship to liberal learning are connected to “dilemmas that developed at its beginning.”<sup>249</sup> As a result of the historical survey, I began to see how the three historical strands braid together to create the current academic

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<sup>249</sup>Lynne Greeley, “All Things to All People,” in *Teaching Theatre Today: Pedagogical Views of Theatre in Higher Education*, ed. Anne L. Fliotsos and Gail S. Medford (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 126.

context in which acting for non-majors is embedded. As a result, I began a deeper interrogation of my own assumptions and pedagogical preferences when teaching acting to non-majors.

I also investigated the concept of liberal learning and the behaviors and attitudes characteristic of a liberally educated person. At this point in the study, I began to experience a paradigm shift. The shift caused me to question my responsibilities as a teacher of the art of acting in a general education context.

This part of the review revealed specific attitudes and behaviors expected of a liberally educated person. Costa and Kallick's detailed narrative of behavioral characteristics of habits of mind (HOM) provided pivotal information. When I integrated HOM with the five overarching sets of behaviors labeled 'learning dispositions',<sup>250</sup> by Ritchhart, I began to understand the synergy amongst HOM. This realization caused me to reexamine an essay entitled "Of Condors and Cockroaches" by Brian Hansen. I realized Hansen and I were seeking similar kinds of information. He was seeking to identify the way in which *theatre* functions as a mode of inquiry into the human condition. I am seeking to identify the way in which the *experience of acting* functions as a mode of inquiry into the human condition.

I believe a critical piece to the puzzle I am trying to solve lies at the intersection of Costa and Kallick, Ritchhart, and Hansen's ideas. The ideas of these four scholars converge in the descriptions of at least two of Costa and Kallick's HOM, Ritchhart's disposition towards open-mindedness, and Hansen's identification of "the experiencing

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<sup>250</sup>Dispositions are overarching sets of behaviors rather than single behaviors.

of alternate lives”<sup>251</sup> as a mode of inquiry within the experience of acting. The first HOM that is relevant to this intersection is “Listening to others with understanding and sympathy”:

Some psychologists believe that the ability to listen to another person, to empathize with, and to understand their point of view is one of the highest forms of intelligent behavior. Being able to paraphrase another person's ideas, detecting indicators (cues) of their feelings or emotional states in their oral and body language (empathy), accurately expressing another person's concepts, emotions and problems—all are indications of listening behavior (Piaget called it "overcoming ego-centrism")... They [people who listen with understanding and sympathy] are able to see through the diverse perspectives of others...Senge and his colleagues (1994) suggest that to listen fully means to pay close attention to what is being said beneath the words... You listen not only for what someone knows, but also for what he or she is trying to represent... We often say we are listening but in actuality, we are rehearsing in our head what we are going to say next when our partner is finished... We wish students to learn to hold in abeyance their own values, judgments, opinions, and prejudices in order to listen to and entertain another person's thoughts. This is a very complex skill requiring the ability to monitor one's own thoughts while, at the same time, attending to the partner's words. This does not mean that we can't disagree with someone. A good listener tries to understand what the other person is saying. In the end he may disagree sharply, but because he disagrees, he wants to know exactly what it is he is disagreeing with.<sup>252</sup>

The second HOM relevant to this intersection is “Thinking Flexibly:”

They [flexible people] have the capacity to change their mind as they receive additional data. They engage in multiple and simultaneous outcomes and activities...knowing when it is appropriate to be broad and global in their thinking and when a situation requires detailed precision... They envision a range of consequences...They consider alternative points of view or deal with several sources of information simultaneously. Their minds are open to change based on additional information and data or reasoning, which contradicts their beliefs...flexibility of mind is essential for working with social diversity, enabling an individual to recognize the wholeness and distinctness of other people's ways of experiencing and making meaning. Flexible thinkers are able to shift, at will, through multiple perceptual positions...*allocentrism* is the position in which we

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<sup>251</sup>Brian Hansen, “Of Condors and Cockroaches,” in *Theatre Education: Mandate for Tomorrow*, ed. Jed H. Davis (New Orleans, Louisiana: Anchorage Press, Inc. and Children's Theatre Foundation, 1985), 39.

<sup>252</sup>Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick, “Describing Sixteen Habits of Mind?” <http://www.habits-of-mind.net> (assessed October 21, 2008), 3-4.

perceive through another persons' orientation. We operate from this position when we empathize with others feelings, predict how others are thinking, and anticipate potential misunderstandings... While there are many possible perceptual positions--past, present, future, egocentric, allocentric, macro centric, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic—the flexible mind is activated by knowing when to shift perceptual positions.<sup>253</sup>

Costa, Kallick, and Ritchhart recognized HOM operate in concert with one another by working concurrently, consecutively, and recursively. They are not isolated skill sets. Ritchhart's disposition towards open-mindedness subsumes the behaviors of listening to others with understanding and sympathy and thinking flexibly:

Open-mindedness works against narrowness and rigidity, two common pitfalls in thinking. ...being open-minded is not about mere acceptance of new ideas or others' positions; it implies being flexible, willing to consider and try out new ideas, generating alternative options and expectations, and looking beyond the given and expected... A subordinate disposition that fits here would be what is known as perspective taking: looking at things from different perspectives, attitudinally as well as physically, is a tool for opening up one's mind.<sup>254</sup>

Hansen's ideas intersect with HOM and intellectual character because he identifies a methodology unique to theatre, and acting in particular, which facilitates listening to others with understanding and sympathy and thinking flexibly, thereby nurturing open-mindedness. Hansen identifies the experiencing of alternate lives as a mode of inquiry through which people, including the actor, can “explore alternatives to their present condition.”<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>253</sup>Ibid., 4-5.

<sup>254</sup>Ron Ritchhart, *Intellectual Character: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How to Get It* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 27-28.

<sup>255</sup>**Brian Hansen, “Of Condors and Cockroaches” in *Theatre Education: Mandate for Tomorrow*, ed.**

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Jed H. Davis (New Orleans, Louisiana: Anchorage Press, Inc./Children's Theatre Foundation, Inc., 1985), 40.

To summarize, Costa and Kallick identified, described, and categorized observable behaviors characteristic of intelligent persons while Ritchhart emphasized the synergy of multiple HOM to “motivate, activate, and direct our abilities.”<sup>256</sup> Hansen identified a methodology which he theorized was the unique way in which theatre acts as a mode of inquiry. When I look at the work of all four scholars, I identify the empathy as that which enables people, by listening with understanding and experiencing alternate lives, to think flexibly and develop open-mindedness. Further, I hypothesize that the development of empathy through experiencing alternate lives is one significant mode of inquiry that may be developed by the experience of acting.

The review of literature relevant to liberal education coupled with Ritchhart’s explanation of what it means to be intelligent brought the details of my emerging paradigm shift into sharper focus. I saw my role as an educator expanding from disciplinary specialist interacting with departmental colleagues to an educator connected to faculty members across the campus. I began to feel connected to a larger professoriate working towards educational goals and objectives that transcend disciplinary specialization. I feel “a part of” rather than “apart from.”

Third, I reviewed literature detailing relevant pedagogical and learning theories. The work of Maryellen Weimer and Lee Shulman was helpful in identifying pedagogical practices upon which to build my new praxis for acting for non-majors. I discovered the concept of dual function of content through Weimer’s work. She identified multiple ways in which content can be framed in the classroom to accomplish more than one purpose. She recommends teachers “Aim not to cover content but to uncover part of

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<sup>256</sup>Ritchhart, 31.

it.”<sup>257</sup> In light of Boyer and Levine’s conclusion that the central concern of general education courses should be to develop in the student an awareness of the connectedness of things, I would amend Weimer’s statement to: Aim not to cover content but use it to uncover channels of connectedness within human communities and the natural world.

I was introduced to the concept of signature pedagogies through Shulman’s work. Open-coding content analysis coupled with Shulman’s ideas about the existence and significance of signature pedagogies provided a methodology for categorizing relevant data in the syllabi and then determining the frequency of categorized pedagogies. Shulman identifies ubiquity as the core characteristic of signature pedagogy but cautions ubiquity is not a guarantee of effectiveness; however, identification of ubiquitous pedagogical choices is the first step towards an opportunity to reflect upon effectiveness.

Fourth, I reviewed the literature regarding current pedagogical practices in the teaching of acting to non-majors. As noted in chapter three, I found exactly one essay directly on point. I then re-directed my attention towards two related topics: (1) literature describing pedagogical practices in teaching acting, and (2) literature describing pedagogical practices in teaching other kinds of performance and visual arts to non-majors. The search on these two topics yielded significant ideas. One, changing the focus of a performance technique course for non-majors from achieving technical proficiency to exploring the experience of performance can be more meaningful for the student in the long term.<sup>258</sup> The focus of the course changes from mastery of skill sets to the use of skill sets as a mode of inquiry. Oscar Brockett concisely captures the concept

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<sup>257</sup>Ibid., 46.

<sup>258</sup>See Hirvela and Smith-Autard.

of acting as a mode of inquiry: “Drama is one way of knowing; it presents human action and behavior as its subject and uses live human beings (actors) as its primary means of communication.”<sup>259</sup> Two, educators in the arts should emphasize intrinsic rather than instrumental arguments to explain value to students and administrators. Lois Hetland et al describe an instrumental argument in the arts as one in which the value of an artistic endeavor is to enhance a student’s performance “in traditional academic subjects that ‘really count,’ such as reading and mathematics.”<sup>260</sup>

Based on the information I learned in this part of the literature review, I began to see a new set of goals emerging for my acting for non-majors classes. My focus shifted away from teaching towards a beginning level of mastery of the skills of acting and shifted towards exploring ways in which acting can be a mode of inquiry into questions, problems, and themes that connect students to their humanity and community.

Finally, I reviewed relevant literature regarding the synergy between the objectives of liberal learning and theatre/acting. The work of Thomas Gressler stands out as pivotal to the completion of my paradigm shift. Gressler suggests acting, and the study of theatre in general, are a good fit with the core goal of general education to explore the connectedness of things, people, and bodies of knowledge. For example, he contends signature pedagogies utilized in the study of theatre are a near perfect match with the learning theories of Howard Gardener (multiple intelligences), David Kolb (experiential learning), and David Goleman (emotional intelligence). Gressler maintains

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<sup>259</sup>Oscar G. Brockett, “Drama, A Way of Knowing,” in *Theatre Education: Mandate for Tomorrow*, ed. Jed H. Davis (New Orleans, Louisiana: Anchorage Press, Inc. and Children’s Theatre Foundation, 1985), 4.

<sup>260</sup>Lois Hetland, Ellen Winner, Shirley Veenema, and Kimberly M. Sheridan, *Studio Thinking: The Real Benefits of Visual Arts Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2007), 1.

that only in the arts do students have an opportunity to explore emotions in an experiential way for the purpose of learning how emotions influence human lives.

Gressler reminds the reader that the core activity around which all aspects of the theatre experience revolves is the telling of a story. Stories are case studies through which we work out the big issues in in our lives. Shared storytelling in the form of a theatrical event connects humans as a community of seekers who want to understand their humanness. The theatrical conventions of how the story is told may vary over time, across cultural traditions and national borders, and reflect cultural trends but regardless of the theatrical conventions employed people share stories in order to explore their humanness. If, as Boyer and Levine suggest, the purpose of the general education curriculum is the development of the individual's full potential as a human being within a community, then theatre/acting is indeed a vehicle through which this purpose may be accomplished. Acting is an essential element in that process. As I reflect on Gressler's assertions, I see the heart of my redesign will reside in clearly articulated connections between the mission of liberal learning, supported by the goals of general education, and explored through disciplinary content.

In conclusion, the literature review as a whole was a paradigm shifting experience. I became acquainted with educational concepts and contexts I needed to understand in order to see the 'landscape' of acting for non-majors through 'new eyes.' I took a 'voyage of discovery' through the concepts of liberal learning, Habits of Mind (HOM), disciplinary HOM, intellectual character, signature pedagogies, and dual function of content. Based on the discoveries I made, I constructed a new lens through which to view my teaching. The new lens shifted my point of view from seeing myself



as an autonomous, isolated teacher of a complex technique preparing students to be appreciative consumers of my discipline's art to a member of a team of educators facilitating the intellectual development of students by helping them understand how the experience of acting can help them make meaning in their lives.

### *Summary of Document Analysis*

#### *Institutional Documents*

I reviewed the institutional mission statements and general education goal statements of all sixty-one institutions represented by the seventy-five syllabi in the analysis sample in order to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual web in which acting for non-majors is embedded. I chose mission statements because they document the outcomes institutions value. The overall outcome documented in all the mission statements reviewed is the production of a well-educated human being who embraces the values of life-long learning and civic responsibility. All sixty-one mission statements articulated liberal learning experiences and some form of HOM as characteristics of a well-educated human.

The mission statements I reviewed placed the major responsibility for introducing and practicing behaviors characteristic of liberal learning and HOM within the general education curriculum. Disciplinary content in general education courses is expected to serve a complex and connected dual function. The use of signature pedagogies facilitates the achievement of the dual function because they “define how knowledge is analyzed,

criticized, accepted, and discarded” in a discipline.<sup>261</sup> In a general education context, understanding the modes of inquiry that characterize a discipline through its signature pedagogies is more important than mastering the content. Students learn “to *think like* experts in the discipline, as opposed to becoming a professional in the discipline, as well as dispel myths about the discipline. Signature pedagogies model disciplinary habits of mind. Their transparent and intentional use creates a conduit through which passes disciplinary content as well as disciplinary ways of thinking.”<sup>262</sup> Learning a variety of modes of inquiry benefits the student because it equips the student with tools through which s/he may connect bodies of knowledge across the university curriculum. When students use disciplinary modes of inquiry across disciplinary boundaries, they may compare and contrast the disciplinary modes of inquiry. This process may bring disciplinary modes of inquiry into sharper focus. Students may also apply a mode from one discipline to solve a problem in a different discipline in a new and unique way.

The second type of institutional document I analyzed was general education goal statements. The analysis of general education goal statements revealed five learning outcomes commonly expected of general education courses whose content is in the fine arts domain: using performance as a mode of inquiry; enhancing creativity and imagination; enhancing the ability to communicate clearly and accurately through multiple kinds of media; exploring cultural heritage and ensuring continuity of cultural legacy; and learning and practicing civic responsibility.

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<sup>261</sup>Lee S. Shulman, “Signature Pedagogies in the Professions,” *Daedalus* (Summer 2005), 54.

<sup>262</sup>Nancy L. Chick, Aeron Haynie, and Regan A. R. Gurung, “Forward” *Exploring Signature Pedagogies: Approaches to Teaching Disciplinary Habits of Mind*, ed. Regan A. R. Gurung, Nancy L. Chick, and Aeron Haynie (Sterling Virginia: Stylus, 2008), xv.

## *Syllabi*

I analyzed syllabi in order to identify pedagogies. I hypothesized pedagogy is a tool that could be designed to implement the dual function of content. Further, I hypothesized some disciplinary- specific pedagogy would be documented in course syllabi. I chose to identify signature pedagogies because, according to Shulman, signature pedagogies are the dominant methods of teaching disciplinary content within a discipline.<sup>263</sup> I then hypothesized the identification of the first dimension of signature pedagogies, surface structure,<sup>264</sup> could lead to an investigation into the deep<sup>265</sup> and implicit structures,<sup>266</sup> and might reveal how the experience of acting functions as a mode of inquiry.

Initially, two pedagogical orientations, disciplinary centered and interdisciplinary centered, emerged from the sample. I sifted the seventy-five syllabi selected for analysis into two categories: disciplinary centered orientation (70) and interdisciplinary centered orientation (5). After this initial placement, I used open-coding content analysis to establish sub-categories into which I sorted relevant data from the syllabi. The coded sub-categories were: (1) course demographics; (2) course goals and objectives; (3) activities, assignments, and assessment tools; and (4) grading and evaluation procedures. I also explored and recorded demographic information contained in the syllabi in order to demonstrate a level of contextual similarity among the diverse institutions included in the

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<sup>263</sup>Ibid.

<sup>264</sup>Concrete, operational acts of teaching and learning.

<sup>265</sup>A set of assumptions about how best to impart a certain body of knowledge and know-how.

<sup>266</sup>A set of beliefs about professional attitudes, values, and dispositions.

sample. The data sifted into the sub-categories revealed four signature pedagogies used by the sixty-one instructors whose syllabi comprised the entire analysis sample: experiential learning (100%); performance with a scene partner (99%); writing (96%); and attendance at productions (90%).

Additionally, an interesting, but not totally unexpected, piece of information emerged from the syllabi review. An analysis of course demographics in the category “course constituency” revealed, in an *N* of 75, 21% of courses enrolled non-majors only while 79% enrolled a mix of non-majors who receive credit towards their general education requirements and theatre majors or minors who receive credit towards their program of study. Just as current institutional curricula are multi-purpose and multi-dimensional structures, so too, are acting for non-majors courses at the majority of institutions in the analysis sample. It seems to be the “craft vs. culture” dilemma played out at course level. Course design must negotiate a productive space between the two poles where the expectations and goals of both constituencies can be served equally well.

On the face of it, the constituency data would seem to complicate course design; however, I see it as an opportunity to resolve tensions between craft and culture. Whether a student is a disciplinary major or non-major, s/he is attending a university for an education not just training. Playwright Tony Kushner, in a keynote address to the members of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education in 1998, spoke to this point,

What we call education in the arts is mostly *training*; it is, in fact, vocational training. And vocational training is not what I mean when I talk about education....Education, as opposed to training, I think, addresses not what you do,

or will do, or will be able to do in the world. Education addresses who you are, or will be, or will be able to be.”<sup>267</sup>

All university students, regardless of disciplinary major, benefit from wrestling with who they are, will be, or aspire to be. The challenge for the instructor of the acting for non-majors course with a mixed constituency is to design every activity, assignment, and assessment experience as an opportunity to develop craft and intellectual character concurrently. Majors still learn their craft at a beginning level of expertise and are ready to advance to the next level but with an augmented, rich, and more complex perspective on the potential of their art to change the world. This perspective will serve them well as they focus on technical proficiency in later course work. Non-majors benefit by having experienced a unique mode of inquiry and developed a tool that may facilitate problem-solving in other disciplines.

### *Limitations of the Syllabi Analysis*

Two limitations surfaced during the syllabi analysis: the necessity for ubiquity and inconsistent levels of detail among the syllabi in the sample. Ubiquity is the essential characteristic for identifying which pedagogies are signature pedagogies. None of the literature I read regarding signature pedagogies defined specific level of frequency required for pedagogy to be classified ubiquitous. My solution was to establish a threshold of 90%. This seemed reasonable. 100% seemed a standard unlikely to be met by more than one or two pedagogies. Lower than 90% seemed to be too low. Perhaps it's the academic in me that thinks less than 90% of anything is below "A" level and thus undesirable. In order to achieve the critical mass of 90%, category descriptions became

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<sup>267</sup>Tony Kushner, "A Modest Proposal," *American Journal* (January, 1998): 80-1.

more generalized. The signature pedagogy of writing is a good example. There were multiple and specific kinds of writing documented in the syllabi; reflective, critical, analytical, creative, etc. No single kind of writing came close to achieving the 90% threshold, but taken together, they argue for the act of writing, in its multiple forms, as a significant pedagogy used by the teachers in this sample. I refer the reader to the analysis in chapter four for more details regarding specific kinds of writing teachers are requiring of their students. What is important here is that writing is a tool used by 96% of the teachers in this study to teach content. Therefore, in order to design a course that intentionally reveals the modes of inquiry in my discipline concurrent with the development of craft, I need to look at how writing contributes to that goal. Further, I must make the connection between writing, the experience of acting, and thinking like an expert in acting transparent to my students. I cannot assume the student will make the connections.

Exacerbating the ubiquity issue, the 75 syllabi in the study had varying levels of detail. Length of syllabi ran from one page to more than twenty-pages. Not all syllabi contained data relevant to all coded categories. Since the level of detail from syllabus to syllabus varied so extensively, the more detailed my categories became the more difficult it was to meet the signature pedagogy threshold of 90%.

In conclusion, given the limitations of the syllabi and the design of the study, I don't believe the analysis supports the identification of more detailed categories as signature pedagogies. However, this limitation does not render these findings insignificant for two reasons. First, two signature pedagogies, performance of scene work and participation in studio activities, emerge as powerful delivery systems for

experiencing two specific HOM, “listening with understanding and sympathy” and “thinking flexibly,” potentially facilitating the development of empathy. The signature pedagogy of writing, in its many forms, creates opportunities for the student to deepen the performance experience through documented analysis, critique, and reflection. Observing the performance of others in department productions offers the student an opportunity to experience the power of a performer to induce empathy in others thereby exploring empathy from a different perspective. These signature pedagogies can facilitate the design of a course in which signature pedagogies deliver content in such a way as to satisfy a dual function: facilitating craft training and facilitating an awareness of the experience of acting as a mode of inquiry.

The second reason these findings are significant despite their limitations is that identification and description are the first steps towards deeper investigation. This study may be a stepping stone towards more detailed investigation of signature pedagogies in a future study. I will address this issue more fully in the section entitled “Recommendations for Future Investigation.”

### **Application of Findings**

#### ***Empathy as a Mode of Inquiry***

The findings from the review of literature, particularly the literature on HOM and intellectual development, lead me to conclude that empathy can be a powerful mode of inquiry and facilitate the transformation of knowledge. I believe empathy is a mode of inquiry because, when we empathize, we develop deeper, more complex layers of understanding than through observation and reasoned argument alone. Empathy can be a

method for transforming objective knowledge (observations, facts, and figures) into understanding. It is a method to “internalize knowledge”<sup>268</sup> and “understanding comes from internalizing knowledge.”<sup>269</sup> Understanding “is most complete when you are not you but the thing you wish to understand.”<sup>270</sup> Objective data can take you only so far along the journey to understanding an idea or an ‘other.’ Empathy is the path into the ‘deep woods.’

The experience of empathy can be a method for connecting self to self, self to others, self to community, self to past and present, and achieving the kinds of connections suggested by Boyer and Levine as being the purpose of general education. Jeremy Rifkin, founder and president of The Foundation on Economic Trends, echoes Boyer and Levine’s concern regarding an imbalance between the interests of the individual and the welfare of the community in today’s institutions of higher learning: “Maybe it is time to ask the question of whether simply becoming economically productive ought to be the *primary* [emphasis added] purpose of American education. Shouldn’t we place at least equal attention on developing students’ innate empathic drives, so we can prepare the next generation to think and act as part of a global family in a shared biosphere?”<sup>271</sup>

As suggested by Gressler, Brockett, and other theatre scholars, the experience of acting may be an effective means through which to experience, explore and habituate

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<sup>268</sup>Robert and Michelle Root-Bernstein, *Sparks of Genius: The 13 Thinking Tools of the World’s Most Creative People* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), 186.

<sup>269</sup>Ibid.

<sup>270</sup>Ibid., 201.

<sup>271</sup>Jeremy Rifkin, “Empathic Education: The Transformation of Learning in an Interconnected World,” <http://chronicle.com/article/Empathic-Education-The/65695/> (accessed June, 9, 2010).



empathy; in some styles of acting,<sup>272</sup> actors are taught to feel what the character feels and use empathy in performance and rehearsal for the purpose of creating a fully dimensional character. Performance ‘puts a face’ on an issue and functions like a case study in the exploration of contentious, paradoxical, ambiguous, and confusing issues about life. When we empathize with a character, whether as audience or performer, we feel what the character feels and see issues and situations through the character’s eyes. Putting on a character is like putting on a pair of glasses through which we view an issue from an alternate perspective.

Two of the four identified signature pedagogies, performance of scene work and experiential learning, suggest a method for experiencing, developing, and habituating empathy. The other two, writing and observing the performances of others, offer opportunities for continued exploration of the experience from outside of it thereby gaining an alternate perspective on the study of empathy. Thus my research suggests classes in acting for non-majors would better serve general education goals by placing visible emphasis in course design on the exploration of empathy as a mode of inquiry equal to that placed on the development of craft.

### ***Definition of Terms***

Empathy is not the same as sympathy. When we sympathize we *recognize* another's suffering but do not necessarily share in it. Empathy is often characterized as the ability to ‘put oneself into another's shoes.’ When we empathize we *understand*,

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<sup>272</sup>Stanislavski’s System of Acting.

become aware of, and are sensitive to others (present or past, fictional or real) because we experience their feelings and thoughts.

### ***Empathy and Higher Learning***

Higher learning is transformative learning. The ability to confront ethical/moral dilemmas is “deeply fundamental to a transformative education”<sup>273</sup> and a goal of liberal education. If we are to live moral and ethical lives we must respect and care about the perspective of others. Empathy is a transformative emotion which facilitates our ability to perceive the world through the perspective of others. The experience of acting may generate empathy for others and/or facilitate our ability to understand the perspective of others:

In a world given increasingly to violence, the value of being able to understand and feel for others as human beings cannot be overestimated, because violence depends on dehumanizing others so we no longer think of their hopes, aims, and sufferings but treat them as objects to be manipulated or on whom we vent our own frustrations. We may learn much about human behavior through social studies, literature, and science, but drama [acting] requires we feel our way into the situation of others.<sup>274</sup>

### ***Empathy: Understanding Self with Others and the World***

Molly Smith, artistic director of Arena Stage in Washington D.C., asserts, “From the moment we are born there are boundaries between the world and us. The rest of our lives are spent negotiating, bridging, bumping up against, and discovering these

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<sup>273</sup>Richard P. Keeling and Richard H. Hersh, *We’re losing Our Minds: Rethinking American Higher Education* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 144.

<sup>274</sup>Brockett, 3.

boundaries.”<sup>275</sup> As humans who live in community with one another, we need to habituate patterns of behavior which negotiate, interrogate, and excavate otherness and boundaries if we are to live secure and productive lives. Empathy is one such pattern of behavior. Empathy creates bridges that transcend the boundaries of otherness. Empathic bridges are built of tolerance and appreciation, tolerance for the differences we feel from others and appreciation for our similarities. These tolerant and appreciative bridges allow us to “handle diversity positively and constructively.”<sup>276</sup>

The experience of acting is adept at excavating emotional terrain and building bridges between the inner landscape and the outer world, between self and others. Within the experience is an opportunity to practice “listening to others with understanding,”<sup>277</sup> an essential empathic skill. Empathic listening automatically takes in the perspective of ‘other’ thereby opening the mind to alternative perspectives. Over time, a habit is formed to listen and which quells the impulse to speak over:

The ability to empathically take the perspective of another person does not arise mechanically from a diversity exercise or single encounter with someone unlike yourself. The developmental changes we hope to see in students’ minds, hearts and attitudes are ultimately built cumulatively, gradually, and collectively from multiple intentional experiences inside and outside schools and classrooms.<sup>278</sup>

Listening empathically develops “the capacity for perspective taking—the ability to accurately apprehend and reflect another’s thinking, emotions, and motivation in a given situation.”<sup>279</sup> Further, perspective taking is “an integral developmental outcome of

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<sup>275</sup>Molly Smith, “Creativity and Crossing Boundaries” *Liberal Education* (Spring, 2002): 42.

<sup>276</sup>Keeling and Hersh, 59.

<sup>277</sup>Costa and Kallick, 3-4.

<sup>278</sup>Keeling and Hersh, 77.

<sup>279</sup>Ibid, 59.

college education central to the formation of social and moral competence and capacity for intimacy.”<sup>280</sup> Gressler sums up the significance of learning to empathize when he notes, “Learning to empathize with other human beings may well be the single most important life skill one can learn from educational activity.”<sup>281</sup> The experience of acting allows students to experience and habituate empathy deeply and often in ways other disciplines cannot.

### ***Empathy: Understanding Self***

Keeling and Hersh maintain, “Higher learning requires not only intellectual mastery by students but also a journey into themselves; only through that journey can each student really make meaning of new knowledge.”<sup>282</sup> When we journey into ourselves to examine our feelings and motivations, we engage in *intrapersonal* communication for the purpose of developing our emotional intelligence. An individual with a highly developed emotional intelligence is able to recognize an emotion as it happens and manage emotions to cope quickly and effectively with adverse circumstances.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>280</sup>Ibid., 60.

<sup>281</sup>Thomas H. Gressler, *Theatre as the Essential Liberal Art in the American University* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellon Press, 2002), 119.

<sup>282</sup>Keeling and Hersh, 43.

<sup>283</sup>Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer, “Emotional Intelligence” in *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality* 9.3 (1989-90): 185-6.

A helpful construct in understanding how empathy relates to the development of emotional intelligence is the Johari Window. It is a communication model developed by Joseph Lutz and Harry Ingham in 1955.<sup>284</sup> It identifies four levels of self-awareness and represents them as four panes of a window. Information is sifted into each pane according to who knows what about whom. The type of information allocated to the lower right hand frame, “Unknown Self: Things neither we nor others know about us,” is the most difficult kind of information to uncover yet discoveries in this window are potentially the most transformative.

<p><b><u>KNOWN SELF</u></b></p> <p>Things we know about ourselves and that others know about us</p>	<p><b><u>HIDDEN SELF</u></b></p> <p>Things we know about ourselves that others do not know</p>
<p><b><u>BLIND SELF</u></b></p> <p>Things others know about us that we do not know</p>	<p><b><u>UNKNOWN SELF</u></b></p> <p>Things neither we nor others know about us</p>

**FIGURE 5.1: JOHARI WINDOW**

Our ability or inability to empathize with others, or select others, can shed light on motivations, behaviors, and prejudices heretofore hidden from ourselves and others. The experience of acting, as we create a diverse array of characters different from ourselves in

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<sup>284</sup>Joseph Lutz and Harry Ingham, “The Johari Window: A Graphic Model of Interpersonal Awareness” Proceedings of the Western Training Laboratory in Group Development: University of California, Los Angeles 1955.

temperament, time, and culture, can be a powerful provocateur for reflection. Reflection on our ability or inability to respond empathically to characters can increase our self-awareness and open our minds and hearts in new and different levels of tolerance.

‘Know thyself,’ an idea first credited to Socrates, is the keystone around which some of the strongest arguments for liberal learning are built. Hubert Heffner, theatre educator and past president of the American Educational Theatre Association (AETA), noted the link between the study of theatre and liberal education in 1964 when he wrote, “Self-knowledge is the last, best knowledge that the educated man attains, and it is the most difficult to come by.”<sup>285</sup> The experience of acting facilitates self-knowledge through the experience of empathy.

### ***Empathy, Signature pedagogy, and Course Design***

The cumulative result of the syllabus analysis, institutional mission statement analysis, general education goal statement analysis, and the literature review is the formation of a series of suggested criteria for designing a course in acting for non-majors.

The individual criteria are:

- Implement the concept of dual function of content, intentionally and transparently, to design course goals, objectives, activities, assignments, assessment tools, grading, and standards of evaluation to create a balance between disciplinary content and the development of intellectual character.
- Communicate to the student that empathy, created through the experience of acting, will be used as a mode of inquiry into the human condition.
- Design course activities, assignments, and assessment tools around the signature pedagogies revealed by the syllabus review.

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<sup>285</sup>Hubert Heffner, “Theatre and Drama in Liberal Education” *Educational Theatre Journal* 16, no. 1 (March 1964): 23-24.

- Align course goals with institutional goals for general educational curricula in contextually appropriate categories including: demonstrate how the art of acting is a mode of inquiry; promote responsible citizenship; develop creativity; provide a link to cultural continuity over time; and foster diverse modes of communication.
- Build on the work of Boyer and Levine by challenging student to use the experience of acting to connect self to self, self to other(s), self to culture, to past, and to ideas and bodies of knowledge across disciplinary boundaries.
- Design course goals, objectives, activities, assignments, assessment tools, grading, and standards of evaluation that serve the needs of both non-majors and majors in the same classroom.

### *Summary of Applications Section*

Empathy as a mode of inquiry is but one topic around which acting for non-majors courses could be designed. In my reading of the findings of this study, I find very compelling the relationship between the experience of acting, the development of empathy, and the goal of general education to develop connectedness very compelling. However, other eyes seeing this view of the landscape may focus on different aspects of it. These findings may support multiple alternative perspectives regarding how the experience of acting functions as a mode of inquiry.

### **Significance of the Findings**

This study investigates the connections between disciplinary content and the development of intellectual character. I have been seeking to explore and describe ways in which the experience of acting can be a life-long mode of inquiry into the connectedness of humans to themselves, to each other, to the environment, and across

bodies of knowledge. Currently there is an imbalance between the hegemony of vocationalism and specialization and goals of connectedness. I believe balance can be restored and that restoration can begin at course level. However, if disciplinary specialists are to design courses that provide balance, they first need to be aware of their own pedagogical preferences and practices. Change must flow from the bottom up as well as the top down in order for higher education to fulfill all of its responsibilities to its students, the public, and the nation.

Theatre educators may find value in the findings of this study for several reasons. Educators may be prompted to be mindful of their own pedagogical choices. In so doing, some may recognize among their choices signature pedagogies identified in the findings of this study. They may be prompted to create their own research studies around the efficacy of the identified signature pedagogies. Signature pedagogies, as we recall, are routinized, deeply ingrained practices that need to be examined periodically in light of changing contexts, new technologies, new discoveries in the science of teaching and learning, and changing goals and objectives in a discipline.<sup>286</sup>

The trends towards vocationalism and specialization make it difficult for students, whether majors or non-majors, to imagine the study of theatre arts in any frame other than vocational or recreational. The findings from this study may provide interested educators with concepts and language to articulate to their students how the experience of acting integrates with HOM and the development of intellectual character to create a method by which people can better understand the world and their place in it.

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<sup>286</sup>Chick, Haynie, and Gurung, xv.



The findings from this study may be useful in aligning disciplinary courses with the university curriculum in which they are embedded. When an institution seeks to serve multiple visions of the purpose of higher education through curricular fragmentation, it is important for teachers and students alike to understand which courses are positioned to support which educational vision. Courses included in the general education menu of an institution are meant to reflect the liberal arts vision and guide students through common, interconnecting, broad based learning experiences. Understanding that general education is rooted in the liberal arts mission of educating students to be citizens allows instructors to re-vision the goals and objectives for teaching acting to non-majors in order to align classroom goals with the goals of the university curriculum.

The findings from this study may help theatre educators' articulate arguments for the continuation of their programs and departments when administrators or external agencies argue for curtailment or termination. In times of economic distress any discipline may be required to defend its continuation as a valid member of academe. Beyond arguing for the value of training a new generation of theatrical artists, Theatre has defended its place in academe through instrumental arguments. It is not my goal here to denigrate or dismiss vocationally centered instrumental arguments; however, if the study of theatre as an academic discipline is to survive as a top tier discipline of study, as it should be, we need to articulate stronger arguments than vocationally centered instrumental arguments.

Persistent, intentional, and transparent instruction in HOM through disciplinary content could function as a type of connective tissue between the general education

curriculum and the disciplines. Fully one third of an undergraduate's college career is absorbed by general education curricula. Stark and Lattuca report, "[T]he average general education requirement was 33-40% percent of the baccalaureate degree."<sup>287</sup> If teachers of general education courses articulate the connections previously described, students may be motivated to commit the same time, attention, and resources to this part of their education as they do to the study of their major. Students might begin to recognize that the purpose of general education "links with and continues through the majors and that the goals of general education are shared with those of the disciplines."<sup>288</sup>

Additionally, the intentional and transparent application of HOM for the purpose of developing intellectual character allows students to 'get their money's worth' from their undergraduate career. Keeling and Hersh argue, "Our colleges and universities are failing to deliver true higher learning--learning that prepares the graduates to meet and excel at the challenges of life, work, and citizenship."<sup>289</sup> They believe a commitment to higher learning "requires that faculty members accept responsibility and accountability for demanding practice in and mastery of those [writing, critical thinking, problem-solving, and ethical/moral development] desired competencies in all courses and for providing timely and appropriate feedback on those competencies to students in their courses."<sup>290</sup> They suggest students benefit from experiencing a 'cognitive

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<sup>287</sup>Joan S. Stark and Lisa R. Lattuca, "Recurring Debates About the College Curriculum" *College and University Curriculum: Developing and Cultivating Programs of Study that Enhance Student Learning*, ed. Lisa R. Lattuca, Jennifer Grant Haworth, and Clifton F. Conrad (Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2002.), 74.

<sup>288</sup>Keeling and Hersh, 172.

<sup>289</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>290</sup>*Ibid.*, 144.

apprenticeship' concurrent with their disciplinary apprenticeship during which they build  
HOM:

In the initial, foundational stages of apprenticeship in higher learning, the student relies heavily on professors and advisors for initiating practice in essential skills of thinking, acquiring and applying knowledge and self-assessment—for introducing and reinforcing habits of mind, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors that, when developed and reinforced over time, help one acquire and demonstrate the hallmarks of an educated person.<sup>291</sup>

### **Limitations of the Findings**

All studies have limitations to their findings dictated by design and interpretation. This study represents a snapshot intended to capture the status quo in pedagogical practices in courses teaching acting to non-majors, a relatively under investigated yet ubiquitous course on campuses across America. This study explores and describes pedagogical practices in context, based on data that have been gathered and preserved in documents i.e. course syllabi and institutional mission statements and program goal statements. The study was augmented by a literature review which acquainted me with the concepts of liberal learning, habits of mind, and intellectual character. Without more data, and other types of data, conclusions are limited. This study represents a step towards understanding how acting is taught to non-majors in colleges and universities in America as part of general education curricula at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Although I have attempted to enhance the trustworthiness of the study's findings, my conclusions here are one interpretation of the data and may vary from the

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<sup>291</sup>Ibid., 117.

interpretations of the study's readers and participants. I do *not* seek to formulate a prescription that dictates the best way to teach acting to non-majors. I do not seek to predict outcomes or prove theories. I offer an interpretation I hope will stimulate questions and discussions about how teaching acting to non-majors upholds the integrity of the art while motivating students to use acting as a mode of inquiry for making meaning throughout their lives. I don't presume these findings will be applicable in every context. Readers will determine how transferable these findings are to their circumstances.

### **Recommendations for Further Investigation**

The results of this study highlight a number of related issues worthy of investigation. First, the syllabi sample revealed one institution supporting inter/multidisciplinarity and one of its instructors designing and teaching acting for non-majors within an inter/multidisciplinary context. Although this finding is an outlier in this study, it deserves further investigation because many of the scholars and professional organizations whose work I reviewed suggested inter/multidisciplinary course design as an effective pedagogical strategy to achieve integrated learning. Boyer and Levine have posited that the unique purpose of the general education curriculum is to connect, or integrate, knowledge across disciplines. In 2003, the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) partnered with The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to create a three-year initiative entitled "Integrative Learning: Opportunities to Connect." The purpose of the initiative was to "create resources,

networks, models, and evidence –based arguments”<sup>292</sup> to promote integrative learning. The underlying assumption undergirding the report is that “Fostering student abilities to integrate their learning will give them the habits of mind needed to make informed personal, professional, and civic decisions throughout their lives”<sup>293</sup> and that this goal “is one of the most important goals and challenges of higher education.”<sup>294</sup> The initiative and its resultant report are focused broadly on the entirety of the undergraduate experience whereas Boyer and Levine, as well as my study, are focused more narrowly on the general education curriculum. However, general education is a subset, and no small part, of the undergraduate experience. Boyer and Levine and the Integrative Learning Initiative concur on at least one point: students need to develop the ability to “see connections and integrate disparate facts, theories, and contexts to make sense of our complex world.”<sup>295</sup> Inter/multidisciplinary is one pedagogical strategy for achieving integrated learning.

Second, the review of institutional documents revealed that institutions group disciplines together in cognate categories. Disciplines may be categorized together because they share similar research/creative scholarship methodologies, have been traditionally categorized together, or because of some other perceived similarity. Acting

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<sup>292</sup>American Association of Colleges and Universities, “Highlights from the AAC&U Work on Integrative Learning” *Peer Review* (Summer/Fall 2005): 29.

<sup>293</sup>Michael Flower and Terri L. Rhodes, “Integrated Learning, E-Portfolios, and the Transfer Student,” *Peer Review* (Summer/Fall 2005): 21.

<sup>294</sup>“Integrative Learning: Opportunities to Connect.” Public Report of the Integrative Learning Project sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Edited by Mary Taylor Huber, Cheryl Brown, Pat Hutchings, Richard Gale, Ross Miller, and Molly Breen, [https://www.aacu.org/integrative\\_learning/pdfs/ILP\\_Statement.pdf](https://www.aacu.org/integrative_learning/pdfs/ILP_Statement.pdf) (accessed July, 2011).

<sup>295</sup>Debra Humphreys, “Why Integrative Learning? Why Now?” *Peer Review* (Summer/Fall 2005): 30.

for non-majors courses, then, are embedded in a category defined by a cognate goal with a menu of courses representing multiple disciplines. Students choose one course to satisfy a general education requirement for that category. Each discipline has its own unique mode of inquiry; however, is there a mode of inquiry common to all the disciplines represented in the category? If so, would the student be better served by learning both the unique mode of inquiry the experience of acting provides *and* the mode of inquiry common to all the disciplines in the category? How would theatre specialists prepare to teach the mode of inquiry of a different but like-minded discipline? Would an inter/multidisciplinary approach be more effective than a disciplinary centered approach to teach both? How would theatre specialists prepare to teach within an inter/multidisciplinary context?

Third, I have theorized that one mode of inquiry unique to the experience of acting is the development of empathy. At this point in time my assertion is based on rational arguments rather than empirical evidence. What I present here is a hypothesis. More conclusive assertions are hampered by a paucity of empirical studies investigating the relationship between the development of empathy and actor training. Thalia Raquel Goldstein, an assistant professor of developmental psychology at Pace University and Ellen Winner, Chair of Psychology at Boston College and a senior research associate at Harvard Graduate School of Education for Project Zero, have begun a program of research designed to explore whether the experience of acting leads to growth in both empathy and theory of mind. They define *empathy* as “the tendency to match one’s

emotions to the emotions perceived in others,”<sup>296</sup> while *theory of mind* is defined as “the cognitive understanding of what another is thinking or feeling.”<sup>297</sup> As regards the dearth of empirical studies investigating the relationship between actor training and the development of empathy, they note, “Although many researchers have suggested that acting training should lead to an increase in empathy, and although this seems intuitively plausible, there has been too little empirical investigation into this question.”<sup>298</sup>

Goldstein and Winner have completed two quasi-experimental studies investigating the link between training in acting and the development of empathy and theory of mind.<sup>299</sup> The population for the first study was older children (nine year-olds) and the population for the second study was adolescents (fourteen year-olds). Participants in both studies were pretested for skills in empathy and theory of mind. A post-test was administered after ten months of actor training. The findings of the studies indicate that participants in both studies who received training in acting “showed significant gains in empathy.”<sup>300</sup>

Goldstein and Winner concluded that their study “is the first to show that arts intervention—training in acting—may lead to growth in the social cognitive skills of empathy and theory of mind, and is one of the few studies (along with Schellenberg

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<sup>296</sup>Thalia Raquel Goldstein and Ellen Winner, “A New Lens on the Development of Social Cognition: The Study of Acting,” in *Art and Human Development*, eds. Constance Milbrath and Cynthia Lightfoot (New York: Psychology Press, 2010), 237.

<sup>297</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>298</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>299</sup>For more details of the design and methodology of Goldstein and Winner’s studies, I refer the reader to “Enhancing Empathy and Theory of Mind” in *Journal of Cognition and Development*.

<sup>300</sup>Thalia R. Goldstein and Ellen Winner, “Enhancing Empathy and Theory of Mind,” *Journal of Cognition and Development* 13, issue 1 (January-March 2012): 19.

[2004]) demonstrating possible transfer of learning from an art form.”<sup>301</sup> They also note, “Actors learn to mirror others’ emotions (empathy) and reflect on what others are thinking and feeling (theory of mind). Role playing beyond childhood may be a route by which humans come to develop enhanced empathy and gain greater insight into others’ beliefs and emotions.”<sup>302</sup> Here, Goldstein and Winner are referring to actor training in a specific style, Stanislavski’s System of Actor Training, of which there are many variations as taught in the United States; however, one central principle of Stanislavski’s theory of acting requires an actor to recognize and experience the emotions of her/his character within a set of given circumstances in order to create a “truthful” portrayal.

In an earlier publication in which they hypothesize about the relationship of acting and the development of empathy, Goldstein and Winner draw a sharp distinction between those actors who are trained in what they refer to as Technique acting, identified by an outside in approach to characterization, and Method acting, identified by an inside out approach to characterization. They hypothesize that Method actors are more likely than Technique actors to develop empathy because Method actors “spend far more time trying to feel the emotions of their characters than do Technique actors”<sup>303</sup> and as a result “become better able to feel the emotions of their characters and hence perhaps better able to feel the emotions of others offstage.”<sup>304</sup>

Goldstein and Winner’s distinction is significant to my study because there is support in the syllabi analysis for the assertion that Stanislavski’s System of Acting, a

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<sup>301</sup>Ibid., 32.

<sup>302</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>303</sup>Goldstein and Winner, “A New Lens on the Development of Social Cognition: The Study of Acting,” 240.

<sup>304</sup>Ibid.



hallmark of which is an inside out approach to characterization, is the dominant style of acting taught to non-majors. The activity of reading surfaced as a pedagogy during the analysis of the syllabi; however, it did not reach the 90% frequency threshold to be considered signature pedagogy.<sup>305</sup> Forty-nine (70%) of seventy instructors assigned readings. Amongst the syllabi of those forty-nine instructors, twenty-two different texts designed to teach a theory of acting were listed as required. In order to better understand what theories of acting were being taught in non-majors acting classes in the sample, I familiarized myself with the texts. Reading entire texts was beyond the scope of this study so I read the following select sections of each text because authors are likely to define their pedagogical point of view in these sections. The sections are: the “Forward,” “Introduction,” “Translator’s Notes,” or “Preface” along with the table of contents. When the author of the text did not provide information in these sections regarding his/her perspective, I read the first chapter. One hundred percent of the reviewed texts were designed to teach some elements of Stanislavski’s system of actor training either exclusively or inclusively with alternative methods. Therefore, in 70% of the syllabi analyzed, some interpretation of Stanislavski’s System emerges as the dominant theory of acting being taught to non-majors. According to Goldstein and Winner’s reasoning, actors who study the inside out approach, Stanislavski’s theory of acting, are more likely to develop empathy than those who study Technique acting methods.

An examination of the methods Stanislavski devised in support of his theory of acting could provide more specific information regarding *how* acting functions as a method for enhancing the development of empathy. Theoretically, these exercises enhance an actor’s ability to empathize with the characters s/he will perform in scenes

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(signature pedagogy number two at a frequency of 99%). His methods, the magic ‘if,’ inner monologue, identifying and playing objectives, the use of sense and emotion memory, etc., are designed to facilitate the actor’s ability to live ‘inside the skin’ of an ‘other.’

Goldstein and Winner’s studies do not provide conclusive proof that actor training enhances empathy, but their work does suggest that training in acting enhances the development of empathy “beyond early childhood”<sup>306</sup> and merits further investigation into the relationship between the experience of acting and the development of empathy. The results of my study lead me to conclude that universities and colleges which offer multiple sections of acting for non-majors courses, thereby offering opportunities for multiple control groups and experimental groups, may be primary sites where this theory could be tested. Further, courses intentionally and transparently designed to develop empathy through the signature pedagogies of acting represent one type of experimental intervention that could be explored.

Finally, investigation into the methods utilized by Technique teachers to train actors may also uncover rich sites for enhancing empathy. These methods and their connection to developing empathy may be less recognized because: (1) styles of Technique acting may be taught less in universities, colleges, studios, and conservatories in the United States and (2) the dominance of Method acting in films, in live performance, and in other media may hamper the public’s development of the sensitivity required to understand empathic connections through Technique acting. The converse may also be the case; Technique acting may not be a productive site for developing

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<sup>306</sup>Ibid.

empathy through the experience of acting. Whether and how the methods used by Technique acting enhance the development of empathy is an under researched topic and should be explored further in order to see the whole landscape of acting for non-majors.

### **Final Reflections**

I began this study knowing little about where it would lead and absent a language to describe that for which I was searching. At its conclusion, I have hypothesized some connections and formed additional questions. The paradigm shift I experienced has transformed my teaching across the breadth of the curriculum I teach. I now understand my responsibility as an educator in higher education includes helping my students connect their new and emerging perspectives and skill sets beyond the acting studio, across disciplinary boundaries, and beyond their undergraduate careers. As I conclude this study and reflect on its significance I recall and embrace the ideas expressed by Oscar Brockett: “Of all the arts, drama [acting] has the greatest potential as a humanizing force...In a world given increasingly to violence, the value of being able to understand and feel for others as human beings cannot be overestimated because violence depends on dehumanizing others.”<sup>307</sup> Empathy is an antidote to dehumanization. Further investigation of the relationship between the experience of acting and the fostering of empathy through the identified signature pedagogies is the most significant goal I could pursue with my students in acting for non-majors classes.

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<sup>307</sup>Brockett, 3.

# APPENDIX

## *Appendix*

### **“REQUEST FOR DATA” LETTER**

Dear Colleague,

My name is Patricia Downey. I am an Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts at the University of North Dakota-Grand Forks. I am currently engaged in a research project in the area of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and am contacting you to enlist your aid in data collection. If you would be interested in contributing to this study please read below. If not, thank you for taking the time to consider contributing to the study. If you have received this email multiple times due to membership in one or more national or regional theatre organizations, please accept my apology for any inconvenience this may have caused you. I hope I can include your work in this study.

#### Synopsis of Study

I am interested in studying courses designed to teach the process of live aesthetic performance to general education students in university and college curriculums and how resources and methods interact with general education goals and institutional mission statements. Courses of this type are often labeled as “Acting for Non-Majors,” “Introduction to Acting,” “Fundamentals of Acting,” “Beginning Acting” and “Acting I,” although other titles may also be in use such as “Creative Process” or “Fundamentals of Performance”. I am interested in courses that are designed for **non-majors** only or may have a **mixed population of majors and non-majors**. The data to be analyzed for this research consists of course syllabi, institutional mission statements, course descriptions found in institutional course catalogs, institutional goals for general education

curriculum, and a review of required or recommended reading materials. If you teach or have taught within the last five years at any institution of higher learning a course that fits the aforementioned criteria and are willing to share your work for research purposes, I would appreciate it if you would forward your course syllabus to me via email at [pkd392@mizzou.edu](mailto:pkd392@mizzou.edu) or simply hit “reply” to this email and attach the document.

The study is designed to be exploratory and descriptive and will focus on identifying and describing large overall pedagogical trends. Your participation in this study is strictly confidential and voluntary. All information relating to the identity of the author of the syllabus or the institution of origin will be deleted from the final written report. Based on the preceding information, I do not see any risks, discomfort, or inconvenience to those who choose to contribute their work to this study beyond the initial time it takes to read this email and attach your syllabus.

This project is monitored by the University of Missouri-Columbia’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) and has received IRB approval. For additional information regarding human subject participation in research, please feel free to contact the UMC Campus IRB Office at 573-882-9585. If you should have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me, Patricia Downey, at 701-777-4075 or [patricia.downey@und.nodak.edu](mailto:patricia.downey@und.nodak.edu) or my dissertation advisor, Dr. Suzanne Burgoyne at 573-882-0528 or [burgoynes@missouri.edu](mailto:burgoynes@missouri.edu). By attaching and returning your course syllabus you are consenting to the inclusion of your materials in the study.

If I have sent this request to you and you do not teach this type of course or your department offers multiple sections of the course with multiple instructors could you please forward this email to the appropriate person(s) in your department (including adjunct faculty, part-time faculty, or graduate students)? If it is easier, just reply to me with contact information and I can forward the information directly. Thank you for taking the time to read and consider this request for research data. I look forward to including you as a collaborator in my research.

Sincerely,

Patricia Downey

## TEACHING AND LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

I seek to facilitate the development of healthy, intelligent, responsive, pliable, durable, and creative performers who are fluent in the visual and kinesthetic languages of movement and dance for the purpose of exploring ideas about humanness with others through the medium of performance. The work of David Kolb, in learning theory, MaryEllen Weimer in student-centered learning, Arthur L. Costa, Bena Kallick, and Ron Ritchhart in intellectual character, and Liz Lerman in assessment in the arts are but five of the scholars and practitioners whose work I integrate with my experiences in the studio, classroom and stage to form a philosophy of learning and teaching.

David Kolb's work is grounded in the assumption that learning is the transformation of experience into knowledge. He devised a model illustrating learning as an upward, spiraling, cyclical process containing four key elements: concrete experience, reflection, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Kolb's model can also be read as a typology of learning styles but has been more useful to me as a model of the learning process. Kolb's model acts as an umbrella over the design of all my courses. My own experiences as a student confirms my commitment to experientially based pedagogical practices that reflect the wisdom of Confucius, "Tell me and I will forget. Show me and I may remember. Involve me and I will understand."

Maryellen Weimer is the author of *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice*, a comprehensive guide to exploring how teaching style and pedagogical choices impact student learning. Weimer's ideas served to formalize, expand, and validate my experiences as a learner and teacher. I believe the needs of the



student should inform all the important decisions I make as a teacher including balance of power in the classroom, content, delivery, responsibility for learning, and assessment.

Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick have assembled a typology of dispositions or behaviors that lead to effective problem-solving. Collectively these behaviors and dispositions are referred to as Habits of Mind (HOM). Ron Ritchhart concludes Habits of Mind that are acculturated in the classroom result in the formation of intellectual character. My students live in a world that is changing rapidly and in which knowledge is expanding exponentially. Beyond the performance skills necessary to successfully work in musical theatre, they need skills that promote the kinds of intellectual character described by HOM's. In this way, they will be better able to transform knowledge into solutions to unanticipated problems in challenging environments. As Weimer points out, course content must serve a dual purpose and teach both disciplinary skills and habits of mind. I embrace this philosophy and intentionally include course activities designed to provide students with an opportunity to practice habits of mind through engagement with disciplinary content.

All students need constructive and formative feedback to help them assess how well they are achieving their goals. In the performing arts, our goal is to nurture talent. Talent is not undisciplined, serendipitously endowed in a chosen few, nor developed through chance encounters. Talent thrives when encouraged and when students feel safe enough to risk being unique and vulnerable in the presence of others.

Assessment/Feedback should focus on helping each student develop the tools and skills s/he needs to bring unique artistic visions to the stage. I believe assessment in the arts should be student-artist centered. When assessing an artistic work in progress, I have

found guidance in the work of Liz Lerman, choreographer and 2002 Macarthur “Genius” grant recipient. Her method, entitled Critical Response Process, engages students and teachers in a facilitated dialogue through four steps: statements of meaning from viewers, artists generated questions to the viewers, neutral (not generated by judgment or opinion) questions asked by viewers, opinions of the viewers if requested by the artist. The student artist receives information about how his/her artistic choices have been interpreted by viewers and can compare the responses with his/her intended goal for the art work. The focus is on process not product and can help the student think through how effectively s/he has used tools and skills in the service of communicating an idea through a performance medium.

In conclusion, I believe learning is an upward spiraling cyclical process containing four key elements: concrete experience, reflection, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. I believe my job as a teacher is to facilitate my students as they mature into self-directed, lifelong learners who have acquired the disciplinary specific skills they need to prosper in their chosen professional field and the habits of mind they need to be effective problem solvers. I believe the act of facilitation is best accomplished when the student is at the center of activity in the classroom, feels respected and safe in taking emotional and intellectual risks, is presented with a well-designed and articulated course structure that is flexible enough to accommodate “teachable moments” when they arise, and when we all experience a passion for the course content.

# IRB Training Certificate

IRB Certificate

[http://irb.missouri.edu/eirb/quiz.php?action=Display\\_Cert&userid=p..](http://irb.missouri.edu/eirb/quiz.php?action=Display_Cert&userid=p..)


**University of Missouri  
Institutional Review Board**

Certifies That:


**Patricia Downey**

Has Successfully Completed  
MU's Web-Based Educational Training:

**Educational Training Quiz**



**Research**



03-25-2006  
Robert D. Hall, Ph.D.  
Associate Vice Provost for Research &  
Compliance Director

## IRB Approval

### **Downey, Patricia Kay (UMC-Student)**

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**From:** Bryant, Erin Lea [bryantel@missouri.edu] **Sent:** Mon 10/15/2007 2:03 PM  
**To:** Burgoyne, Suzanne; Downey, Patricia Kay (UMC-Student)  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Campus IRB: Project #1074257  
**Attachments:**

DATE: 10/15/07

Name of Investigator: Patricia Downey  
Department: Theatre  
Address: 610 Leawood Drive

RE: IRB # 1074257 (Title : ``AN EXPLORATORY AND DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF PEDAGOGICAL AND CURRICULAR TRENDS IN THE TEACHING OF LIVE AESTHETIC PERFORMANCE IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM)

Dear Investigator:

Your file was selected for internal audit by the Campus IRB. The application was originally reviewed at the Expedited level. The audit result determined that your research activities:

Do not meet the definition of "research" requiring IRB review. Your file will be withdrawn and assigned to the CIRB permanent file reservoir for storage in accordance with our policies and procedures. You will not be required to submit further Continuing Review Reports to our office for this file.

Your record has been updated in our eIRB database accordingly. If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact Janelle Greening, Quality Assurance Associate, at (573) 882-8984.

Michele M. Reznicek, R.N., M.B.A., J.D.  
Campus IRB Compliance Officer  
Campus Institutional Review Board

## **FACULTY CURRICULUM VITA**

**NAME:** Patricia K. Downey

**DEPARTMENT:** Theatre

**RANK AND/OR TITLE:** Associate Professor

### **I. EDUCATION:**

<b><u>YEAR</u></b> <b><u>INSTITUTION</u></b> <b><u>EARNED</u></b>	<b><u>AREA OF</u></b> <b><u>SPECIALIZATION</u></b>	<b><u>DEGREE</u></b>
University of Missouri-Columbia	Theatre Minor: Dance	Ph.D.
The Ohio State University	Dance	M.A. 1983
Central Missouri State University	Theatre	M.A. 1976
Missouri Western State University	Speech & Theatre	B.S. Sec. Ed. 1975
Stott Pilates: Toronto, Canada	Mat Pilates	Certification 2001

### **II. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

<b><u>FIRM/INSTITUTION</u></b>	<b><u>POSITION/TITLE</u></b>	<b><u>DATES</u></b>
University of South Dakota	Assoc. Prof. of Theatre	8/07 - present
University of South Dakota	Interim Coordinator of Musical Theatre Specialization	4/09 - 8/10
International Performing Arts Institute	Coordinator of Dance Studies and Company Choreographer	7/08 – 8/08

City of Maples Repertory Theatre	Choreographer (3 seasons)	6/07 – 8/07 6/06 – 8/06 5/04 – 7/04
University of North Dakota	Visiting Asst. Prof. Theatre	8/05 - 6/07
University of Missouri-Columbia	Instructional Development Associate and Conference Coordinator for the Program for Excellence in Teaching	1/04 - 6/05
University of Missouri-Columbia	Graduate Instructor	8/02 – 6/05
Performing Arts in Children’s Education	Choreographer/Dance Instructor	6/04 - 7/04
Theatre Reaching Young People & Schools (TRYPS)	Choreographer/ Fight Dir.	4/03 – 5/03
Northwest Missouri State University	Guest Artist: Choreographer	2/00 – 3/00
Missouri Valley College	Asst. Professor of Theatre	8/96 – 6/02
	Department Chair	8/97 – 8/99
University of Toledo	Adjunct Instructor: Dance	8/93 – 6/97
Toledo Community Theatre	Choreographer	1/96 – 4/96
Manhattan Dance Company	Instructor of Dance	9/94 – 8/96
University of Michigan-Flint	Adjunct Instructor: Dance	8/88 – 6/91
Flint School of Performing Arts	Instructor of Dance	8/88 – 6/93
	Director: Youth Dance Ens.	8/91 – 6/93
	Director: Children’s Performance Workshop	8/90 – 6/93
Michigan Dance Center	Instructor of Dance	9/88 – 6/93
Oberlin College	Adjunct Instructor: Dance	8/86 – 6/87
Creative Arts Productions	Choreographer (15 seasons)	7/86 – 7/02
Tarkio College	Asst. Professor of Theatre	1/85 – 6/86

Missouri Western State University	Adjunct Instructor: Dance	8/84 – 6/86
East Carolina State University	Adjunct Instructor: Dance	8/83 – 6/84
The Ohio State University	Graduate Instructor	8/81 – 6/83
Centennial Playhouse	Performer/Choreographer	5/79 – 7/81
The Goldenrod Showboat	Performer	8/78 – 4-79
One for the Road (Tour Company)	Choreographer/Performer	7/76 – 7/78

### III. SPECIAL HONORS OR RECOGNITIONS

- Nominee for Belbas-Larson Awards for Excellence in Teaching, University of South Dakota, 2009.
- Educational Theatre Association (ETA) Annual Teacher’s Conference: Invited Workshop Presenter, “Whirling and Twirling and Landing on Your Feet.” Chicago, Illinois, 2008.
- Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Region V 2008: Invited scene from *The Comedy of Errors*, University of North Dakota. Co-Director and Movement Coach.
- Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Region V 2008: Certificate for Meritorious Achievement in Movement and Clowning Choreography for *The Comedy of Errors*, University of North Dakota.
- Alice T. Clark New Faculty Scholars, Invited Member, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, 2006-07.
- Troubling Violence Performance Project, Invited Member and Performer, University of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia, MO. 2003-05.
- Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, Region V 2003: Certificate for Meritorious Achievement Fight Choreography for *Survival Dance*. University of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia, MO.
- Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, Region V 2003, Irene Ryan Scholarship Nominee for the role of “Older Annie” in *Survival Dance*. University of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia, MO.
- Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, Region V 2003, Festival Showcase  
Production: *Survival Dance*: Choreographer/Combat Choreographer / Performer. University of Missouri-Columbia.

- Off-Broadway debut of *Survival Dance*, York Theatre, New York City, September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2003. Choreographer/Combat Choreographer/ Performer.
- University of Missouri-Columbia: Graduate Assistantship to teach, choreograph, and direct. 2002-2005.
- Nominee for the Winifred Bryan Homer Scholarship, University of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia, MO., 2002.
- Who's Who Among America's Teachers, 1998 (nominated by former student).
- Choreographic Commission, Flint School of Performing Arts to choreograph *The Key*, an original full-length ballet for children, Flint, MI., 1989.
- Founding Director, Dance Ensemble, University of Michigan, Flint, MI. 1989.
- Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Region V 1985 Festival Showcase Production: *The 1940's Radio Hour* : Choreographer, Tarkio College, Tarkio, MO.
- Jacob's Pillow International Summer Dance Intensive 1985: auditions held in six major cities including Chicago, New York, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, and Paris, France. I was selected as one of 24 dancers in five out of the six programs being cast.
- The Ohio State University: Graduate Assistantship to teach, design costumes for the University Dance company and perform in the University Company, 1981-83
- Central Missouri State University: Graduate Assistantship to teach undergraduate courses and choreograph department productions as needed, 1975-76

#### IV. TEACHING AND ADVISING

##### A. Grants Applications to Support Teaching:

- Center for Teaching and Learning Improvement Grant, University of South Dakota: March 2011. Liz Lerman Dance Exchange Summer Dance Institute in Takoma Park, Maryland. Seminar : "Giving and Getting Useful Feedback: The Critical Response Process." **Funded.**
- Center for Teaching and Learning Teaching Improvement Grant, University of South Dakota: September 2010. Collect naturalistic data revealing student reaction to soon-to-be-published educational materials. Denied.
- Center for Teaching and Learning Teaching Improvement Grant, University of South Dakota: Bush Foundation Grant; October 2007. Requested funding to bring master jazz dance artist Frank Hatchett to campus to teach a series of jazz dance workshops. Denied.

##### B. Classroom teaching:

The following list contains the titles of courses I have taught at the University of South Dakota (USD), 2007-2011.

- Voice and Movement I (Movement section)



- Voice and Movement II (Movement section)
- Voice and Movement III (Movement section)
- Voice and Movement IV (Movement section)
- Acting for Non-Majors
- Ballet I
- Ballet II
- Jazz I
- Jazz II
- Tap I
- Tap II
- Ballroom
- Choreography
- Musical Theatre Styles
- Modern I
- Modern I

**C. Non-classroom teaching:**

- THEA 494: Internship
- THEA 491/791: Independent Study (I.S.):
- THEA 498: Senior Project:
- Production Process: Through production work students integrate their course work and artistic vision into an artistically coherent product for public viewing. As the department choreographer and one of several directors, I work with students in production process a minimum of four productions a year; more if I am called on to serve as a movement coach or fight choreographer.
- Field trips to area performance venues such as the Washington Pavilion in Sioux Falls, S.D. as well as annual trips to the Region V ACTF.

**D. Advising and Mentoring:**

- Served as a University Coyote Mentor: five freshmen assigned for 2010-2011.
- Currently serving as academic advisor to 15 Musical Theatre Specialization majors.
- Currently on the Honor Thesis Committee for one Musical Theatre Specialization major.
- Fall 2010: advised and mentored three Theatre majors in grant writing procedures to apply for mini-grants from the University of South Dakota Council for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (CURCA). All three were funded. All three presented the results of their creative scholarship/research at IdeaFest, 2011.

- Served as faculty mentor to 5 Musical Theatre Specialization majors for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival: Region V Professional Auditions and Interviews, 2010-11.
- As the Interim Coordinator of Musical Theatre (March 2009- August 2010), I was the academic advisor to all 30 Musical Theatre Specialization majors.
- 2008-2009: served as academic advisor to nine Musical Theatre Specialization majors.

## V. RESEARCH/CREATIVE SCHOLARSHIP

### A. Creative Scholarship

\* Productions with an asterisk were peer reviewed by a regional respondent from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival.

#### 1. International:

- **Choreographer:** *Broadway to Beethoven*, International Performing Arts Institute, Kiefersfeldon, Germany, July, 2008.

#### 2. National:

- **Choreographer:** *All Shook Up*, The Black Hills Playhouse, July, 2011.
- **Choreographer:** *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, The Black Hills Playhouse, June, 2011.
- **Choreographer:** *Dames at Sea*, City of Maples Repertory Theatre, Macon, Missouri, June, 2007.
- **Choreographer:** *Godspell*, City of Maples Repertory Theatre, Macon, Missouri, July, 2007.
- **Choreographer:** *My Favorite Year*, City of Maples Repertory Theatre, Macon, Missouri, June, 2006.

#### 3. University

- **Choreographer:** *Children of Eden*, Black Hills Playhouse, Summer 2013 (contracted.)
- **Choreographer:** *Rent*, University of South Dakota, April 2013 (in progress)
- **Choreographer,** *USD at the Pavilion*, Sioux Falls, SD, February, 2013.
- **Co-Director and Contributing Choreographer:** *Musical Theatre Showcase Fall 2012*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, December, 2012.
- **Choreographer:** *Brigadoon*, University of South Dakota, December, 2012.
- **Choreographer:** *The Drowsy Chaperone*, Black Hills Playhouse, Summer 2012.

- **Co-Director and Contributing Choreographer:** *Musical Theatre Showcase Spring 2012*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, May, 2012.
- **Co-Director and Contributing Choreographer:** *Musical Theatre Showcase Fall 2011*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, December, 2011
- **Director and Contributing Choreographer:** *Dance Showcase Spring 2011*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, May, 2011.
- **\*Choreographer:** *The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, April, 2011.
- **Director and Contributing Choreographer:** *Choreographer's and Dance Showcase Fall 2010*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, December, 2010.
- **\*Choreographer:** *Evita!*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, October, 2010.
- **Director and Contributing Choreographer:** *Dance Showcase Spring 2010*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, May, 2010.
- **\*Director/Choreographer:** *A Chorus Line*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, February, 2010.
- **Director and Contributing Choreographer:** *Dance Showcase Fall 2009*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, December, 2009.
- **\*Choreographer:** *The Rocky Horror Show*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, April, 2009.
- **Choreographer:** *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Department of Music, University of South Dakota, Dec. 2008.
- **Director and Contributing Choreographer:** *Choreographer's and Dance Showcase Fall 2008*, Department of Theatre, Dec. 2008.
- **\*Choreographer:** *A Christmas Carol*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, December, 2008.
- **\*Movement Coach:** *Voice of the Prairie*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, October, 2008.
- **\*Movement Coach:** *The Rivals*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, April, 2008.
- **Choreographer:** *Dance Showcase Fall 2007*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, December, 2007.
- **\*Choreographer:** *Chicago*, Department of Theatre, University of South Dakota, December, 2007.
- **\*Co-Director and Movement Coach:** *The Comedy of Errors*, University of North Dakota, Department of Theatre Arts, April, 2007.
- **\*Combat Coach:** *True West*, University of North Dakota, Department of Theatre Arts, spring, 2007.
- **\*Voice and Movement Coach:** *A Doll's House*, University of North Dakota, Department of Theatre Arts, December, 2007.

- **\*Choreographer:** *Dames at Sea*, University of North Dakota, Department of Theatre October, October, 2007.

## B. Textbooks or other teaching scholarship

1. **Textbook:** *Thinking Through Script Analysis*. Publisher: Focus Publishing R. Pullins Company, Inc. Newburyport, Massachusetts. Co-author: Dr. Suzanne Burgoyne, University of Missouri-Columbia Percentage of authorship: 50% Status:
  - Contract signed June 4, 2009
  - Manuscript submitted: September 30, 2010
  - Revised manuscript submitted May, 2011
  - Projected date of publication: Fall 2011
  - Representative chapters included in a later section of this dossier

## C. Other activities (abstracts, presentations, book reviews, patents, etc.)

### 1. Book Review:

- a. Book reviewed: *Electric Salome: Loie Fuller's Performance of Modernism* by Rhonda Garelick. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007. Review published in the journal *Theatre History Studies* Vol. 29, 2009. Pages 218-220.

### 2. Presentations and Workshops:

- a. **Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Region V**, Ames, Iowa, 2011. Workshop Title: "You Can't Stop the Beat: Transforming Social Dance into Performance."
- b. **Washington Pavilion Husby Performing Arts Center Insight Series:** Guest presenter for pre-show discussion for a performance of The Trey McIntyre Project, a contemporary Ballet company, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010
- c. **Washington Pavilion Husby Performing Arts Center Insight Series:** Guest presenter for pre-show discussion for the performance of *Time Capsule: A Century of Dance* performed by the Repertory Dance Theatre, January 17<sup>th</sup> 2009.
- d. **Educational Theatre Association (EDT) National Teachers Conference**, Chicago: September, 2008. Invited presenter.
- e. **International Thespian Festival**, Lincoln, Nebraska, June 2008. Workshop presenter: "Whirling and Twirling and Landing on Your Feet."
- f. **Association for Theatre in Higher Education Annual Conference:** New Orleans, 2007. Panel presenter: "Classroom Stewardship: An Introduction to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning."

## VI. SERVICE AND ENGAGEMENT

### A. EXTERNAL SERVICE

#### 1. Extramural Review Panels

- Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) Region V: **Production Selection Committee** 2010-2013.
- KCACTF Region V: Production **Respondent** 2009-2013. I have responded to eight productions over the last two academic years.

#### 2. Other Activities

- **KCACTF Region V Conference Management Team.**
  - ❖ Professional Auditions and Technical Interviews Associate Coordinator 2009-2013.
- **Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE): Panel Co-Convener, “Classroom Stewardship: An Introduction to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.” ATHE Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2007.**
- **Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE): Senior Co-Chair for the ATHE Pedagogy Sub-Committee of the Professional Development Committee (PDC), 2006-07.**
- **Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE): Member of the task force exploring the relationship between ATHE and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), 2006.**

### B. UNIVERSITY SERVICE

#### 1. University

- **Chairperson: Council for Undergraduate Research and Creative Scholarship (CURCS), 2012-2014.**
- **University Strategic Planning Committee 2012-2017, 2011-12.**
- **University Assessment Committee member representing the College of Fine Arts, 2008-2011.**
- **Vice-Chairperson: Council for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (CURCA), 2010-2011.**
- **CURCA Member representing the College of Fine Arts, 2008-2010.**
- **CURCA Assessment Committee member, 2008-2010.**
- **CURCA Mini and Travel Grant Committee member representing the College of Fine Arts, 2010-2011.**

- **IdeaFest Committee member, 2008-2011. Ideafest is an annual two-day conference showcasing graduate and the undergraduate research and creative scholarship of USD students.**
- **Center for Teaching and Learning Faculty Advisory Board, 2008-2011.**
- **Task Force for Recruiting Sponsors for the Fine Arts, 2008-2009.**
- **Center for Teaching and Learning Task Force, fall 2007.**

## **2. College of Fine Arts (CFA)**

- **Alternate to Faculty Senate for College of Fine Arts, 2009-2010**
- **Faculty Senate March 2009-May 2009 finishing the term of a departing faculty member.**
- **CFA Recruitment Committee, 2008-2009**
- **CFA Curriculum and Instruction Committee, 2010-13.**

## **3. Department**

- **Search Committee member: Scene Design Position, 2012-13**
- **Search Committee member: Movement Position, 2009-10**
- **Search Committee member: Music Theatre Vocal Position, 2010**
- **Interim Coordinator of Musical Theatre: March 2009-August 2010. Chair: Post-Production Feedback Committee, 2007.**
  - ❖ Charge: Explore and recommend a process for self -evaluation of production process after each major departmental production.
- **Recruiting 2007-2013:**
  - ❖ International Thespian Festival: Festival for High School students. Attended auditions of over 400 candidates annually and maintained the recruitment table, 2009-2011
  - ❖ C.F.A. Recruitment Committee member: 2009
  - ❖ Governor's Camp 2010: Guest artist in dance instruction.
  - ❖ In-house recruitment calls from Admissions lists
  - ❖ Available upon request to present workshops in dance to regional high schools for recruiting purposes.
  - ❖ Attendance at all on-site recruiting auditions for new and transfer students into to the Department or the University.
- **Design and deliver programming for Theatre/Musical Theatre Forums 2007-2011**

## **VII. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- A. Liz Lerman Dance Exchange Summer Institute, Takoma Park, Maryland July 25-29, 2011.**
- B. Liz Lerman Dance Exchange Critical Response Process Seminar, Takoma Park, Maryland July 30 2011**
- C. Center for Teaching and Learning (USD): D2L Boot Camp May 9-12, 2011:**
- D. Center for Teaching and Learning (USD) Teaching Excellence Workshop January 10-11, 2011: *FIDES: Developing the Academic Promise of our Student Veterans.***
- E. Center for Teaching and Learning (USD) Faculty Workshop November 16-17, 2010: *Teaching Generation Next: A Pedagogy for Today's Learners..***
- F. Center for Teaching and Learning (USD) Faculty Learning Circle: fall, 2009:**
- G. Center for Teaching and Learning (USD) Faculty Learning Circle: spring, 2009:**
- H. Center for Teaching and Learning (USD) Faculty Workshop, fall 2008: *Principles of Civic Engagement Workshop:***
- I. Center for Teaching and Learning Faculty Community of Purpose fall 2008:**
- J. Center for Teaching and Learning (USD) Teaching Excellence Workshop January 10-11, 2008: *A Student Centered Approach to Course Design.***
- K. Center for Teaching and Learning (USD) New Faculty Learning Community, fall 2007:**
- L. Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) Conference, New Orleans, 2007.**
- M. Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) Institute: Developing Scholars of Teaching and Learning, Columbia College, Chicago, June 7-9 2007:**
- N. Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) Pre-Institute Forum, Columbia College, Chicago, June 7, 2006:**
- O. Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) Institute: Developing Scholars of Teaching and Learning. Columbia College, Chicago, June 8-10 2006.**
- P. Association for Theatre in Higher Education Leadership Institute (ATHE) Chicago, 2006.**
- R. Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) Conference, Chicago, 2006.**

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## VITA

The research question around which this study is organized grew out of frustration with my own teaching, which I perceived to be ineffectual in regards to teaching habits of mind to non-majors studying acting. I did not know how to recognize deeper learning that habits of mind signify or how to use that learning to develop intellectual character in my students.

My qualifications for conducting this study can be divided into two large categories: (1) experience as an educator in higher education (2) experience as a qualitative researcher. As regards my experience as an educator in higher education, I have worked at eleven institutions of higher learning<sup>308</sup> over the past thirty-five years in six different Midwestern states. I have held the ranks of: Graduate Teaching Instructor, Adjunct, Instructor, Assistant Professor (non-tenure track), and Assistant Professor (tenure track). Currently, I am a tenured Associate Professor of Theatre at a state run medium sized research intensive institution. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education: Certification in Speech and Theatre, a Master of Arts in Theatre, and a Master of Arts in Dance. I am completing my Ph.D. in Theatre with a minor in College Teaching.

I have taught multiple sections of Acting for Non-Majors over the course of ten years in three institutions of higher education totaling sixteen individual classroom experiences over a ten year period. All courses were part of the general education curriculum at the three institutions. Currently, I do not teach acting to non-majors.

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<sup>308</sup>The eleven institutions consist of nine public and two private.

However, I remain motivated and passionate about this research. I see universal applications that could reach across the curriculum within the findings of this study.

As regards my experience as a qualitative researcher, this is my first qualitative study. Although I am new to qualitative research, I am not new to the concept of “content analysis.” As an actor, director, and choreographer, I engage in a form of content analysis each time I embark on a new artistic project that is based on a document: a script. Script analysis is a form of content analysis used by artists in the theatre to uncover themes, patterns, and character traits playwrights embed in their scripts. I have worked on over one hundred and fifty productions, all of which have required some level of script analysis. This type of experience points to my ability to read deeply and carefully in search of patterns and trends and then produce an interpretation for an audience to assess. I have also recently co-authored a book on script analysis, *Thinking Through Script Analysis*, with Dr. Suzanne Burgoyne which explicates a process of script analysis. I believe my experience in the use of script analysis as well as authoring a book on the process has helped prepare me to execute the content analysis used in this study.

My epistemological orientation is that of a “constructivist.” I see my role in the classroom as a facilitator, “the guide on the side.” I try to implement instructional choices that reflect five overarching goals of the constructivist paradigm: 1) to seek and value my student’s points of view; 2) to create classroom activities that challenge student suppositions; 3) to pose problems of emerging relevance; 4) to build lessons around primary concepts and “big” ideas; 5) to assess student learning in the context of daily teaching.<sup>309</sup> I also believe what we do with what we know as opposed to measuring only

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<sup>309</sup>Ibid., ix-x.



what we know is a better indicator of intelligence. I believe the current research on the science of learning supports learner-centric teaching and that, by implementing them, I am creating an effective environment for learning.