

The Encyclopedia Show:
Community-Based Performance in Pursuit of Classroom Interdisciplinarity

by

Michelle Hill

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Stephani Etheridge Woodson, Chair
Jessica Early
Jennifer Linde
Tamara Underiner

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ABSTRACT

In May 2014, The Encyclopedia Show: Chicago performed its last volume. Like all others before, the Show was a collection of performances devised by artists, musicians, poets and playwrights all performing various subtopics surrounding a central theme, taken from “an actual Encyclopedia.” The final show was Volume 56 for Chicago; the founding city ended their six year run with an amassed body of work exploring topics ranging from *Wyoming* to *Alan Turing*, *Serial Killers* to *Vice Presidents*.

Perhaps more impressive than the monthly performance event in Chicago is the fact that the show has been “franchised” to organizers and performers in at least seventeen cities. Franchise agreements mandated that for at least the first year of performance, topics were to follow Chicago’s schedule, thus creating an archive of Shows around the world, each that started with *Bears*, moved to *The Moon*, onto *Visible Spectrum of Color*, and so on.

Now that the Chicago show has ended, I wonder what will happen to the innovative format for community performance that has reached thousands of audience members and inspired hundreds of individual performances across the globe in a six-year period.

This project, like much of my own work, has two aims: first, to provide the first substantive history of The Encyclopedia Show for archival purposes; and second, to explore whether this format can be used to achieve the goals of “interdisciplinarity” in the classroom. In an effort to honor my own interests in multiple academic disciplines and in an attempt to capture the structural and performative “feel” of an Encyclopedia Show, this dissertation takes the shape of an actual Encyclopedia Show. The overarching topic

of this “show” is: *Michelle Hill: The Doctoral Process*. In an actual Encyclopedia Show, subtopics would work to explore multiple perspectives and narratives encompassed by the central topic. As such, my “subtopics” are devoted to the roles I have played throughout my doctoral process: *historian, academic, teacher*. A fourth role, *performer*, works to transition between the sections and further create the feel of a “breakage” from a more traditional dissertation.

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The current student body of Arizona State University hovers around 82,000. Therefore, it is important to find academic homes and allies on campus.

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To those who taught me to write and to those who taught me to teach—many of whom overlap.

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INTRODUCTION

In the Fall of 2011, I arrived at Arizona State University, ready to become the first student to complete both concentrations in the Theatre doctoral program: Theatre and Performance of the Americas and Theatre for Youth. My path to the doctoral program was comprised of a Bachelor's Degree in English paired with countless hours spent in the School of Communication competing on a highly competitive forensics (speech and debate) team at Illinois State University; two years of teaching ninth grade English and coaching speech and debate in Albuquerque; and a Masters of Arts in Theatre for Education and Outreach from The University of New Mexico.

In my statement of purpose, I discussed the then-79 plays that had been awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, as well as plays from the Federal Theatre Project of the 1920s and radio dramas of the 1950s. I proposed adapting these texts, both as a means to "save" them from being forgotten and to utilize them to speak to a new time and place. I nodded to my own interest in Interdisciplinarity, noting the same classrooms, speech teams and academic departments mentioned above.

Over the five years that have followed in Arizona, my coursework and earliest dissertation proposals have run the gamut from Mormon "Mom Blogs" to the Common Core. I've worked in new play development at The Kennedy Center, taught an unexpected semester of fifth-grade reading, become a certified Teacher Consultant with the Central Arizona Writing Project, served as an elected-committee member on the ASU Disability Advocacy and Awareness Committee and produced 28 incarnations of The Encyclopedia Show: a variety show that has been described as "adult Sesame Street." Along the way, I completed coursework for both concentrations in Theatre and assisted

or taught multiple courses in the School of Theatre, Dance and Film. I've found my mentors and allies in various disciplinary homes: Theatre (as expected), but also English Education and Communication. Some of my most formative development has existed in the movement between these academic homes.

When I wrote that initial statement of purpose, I latched onto the word interdisciplinary because it seemed to encompass not only where I had been and what I had done, but who I was. I understood “interdisciplinary scholar” to mean: someone interested in finding the connections between multiple academic homes; and/or someone who gets bored easily, thrives on change and wants to meet as many people as possible.

In my comprehensive exams, I was asked to note the differences between interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary. The full results are elucidated in Chapter 1, but I've begun to realize that “transdisciplinary” is a far more fitting label for the work that I have done here, and the work that this document hopes to catalyze. While “interdisciplinary” works to combine two or more disciplines, *transdisciplinary* transcends disciplinary boundaries, existing as something new, albeit with evidence of the fields from which it has emerged. The theatre historian in me is reminded of playwright August Strindberg, who believed people (and his characters) to be “walking scrapbooks”—based on the experiences they have had and the people they have encountered along the way (Strindberg 160).

Whether I've realized it or not, the work that I have done to produce The Encyclopedia Show has most encompassed my work as a transdisciplinary scholar. It cannot be constrained by neat disciplinary boundaries, nor should it. Instead, it relies

heavily on multiple skill sets, new ways of thinking and modes of knowledge. When it “works”, something new emerges.

It is *community-based art*, as defined by Jan Cohen-Cruz, “A field in which artists, collaborating with people whose lives directly inform the subject matter, express collective meaning” (Cohen-Cruz 1).

It is *radical pedagogy*, as defined by Paulo Freire, “who spent a lifetime shouting to the educators of the world that we learn by doing, not by being told or even being shown” (Rohd xvii).

It is *performance*, as defined by RoseLee Goldberg, who in writing the first history of the term noted that it, “defies precise or easy definition beyond the simple declaration that it is live art by artists” (Carlson 84).

And (as Goldberg alluded), it is *also* something that cannot be fully bound by definitions or disciplines. For years, I worked to separate my hours of work with The Encyclopedia Show from my coursework in Theatre and my teaching. However, I now believe that it is the closest physical representation of who I am at this point: a person with more skills and interests than five years ago; but still a theatre historian, passionate about the preservation and generation of the written word, working towards educational innovation and reform.

Much like my attempt to separate my work with The Encyclopedia Show from my academic work, I first attempted to remove my voice from this document in pursuit of what I deemed to be a more scholarly approach. Surprise, surprise...an inauthentic document was created. Therefore, at times, I will insert myself into this narrative because the act of creating the initial concept for the show was not mine, but individual

performances have been. The hope to integrate it into classrooms was not mine, but the execution has been. I cannot tell the story of The Encyclopedia Show, one that I believe must be told or forgotten, without myself. So, I hope that my own voice will join the voices of creators, mentors and scholars in creating a narrative about what the Show has been and what I believe it could be in the future.

This document seeks to discuss the obsession with *interdisciplinary* in higher education and *Project Based Learning* in the K-12 setting, formally document The Encyclopedia Show as historical performance event and explore the question, “Can The Encyclopedia Show find a new home in the world of education that proves beneficial to both the artistic event and the students I believe are so interested in ‘learning, but not being taught’¹.” The effort to mingle terminological and disciplinary history, performance history and educational action research into one document has been challenging, but I hope to have created something new. Too, this document serves as my own walking scrapbook, cataloguing the last five years in my roles as scholar, performer, teacher, arts advocate and reflective practitioner.

Early drafts of this document have followed the standard format of a dissertation with three-to-four overarching chapters encompassing smaller subheadings. In an effort to both document the structure of an Encyclopedia Show (for those who may never witness) it and to create an authentic record of my work in various disciplines, I have largely kept this content but, instead of chapters, have created subtopics...mirroring the format of an Encyclopedia Show. My insertions into this document as “host” are inspired by the writings of Performance Studies scholars, including Della Pollack, who

¹ “Children love to learn, but hate to be taught.” -Jeff Church, Producing Artistic Director, Coterie Theatre

argues, “Performative writing is an important, dangerous, and difficult intervention into routine representations of social/performative life. It has a long and varied history in anthropology, feminist critique and writing about performance, taking much of its impetus from the cross-disciplinary ‘break’ into post-structuralism (Pollack 75-76).

Using this alternative structure, I borrow both format and verbiage from actual Encyclopedia Shows. The catalyst for the original Encyclopedia Show in Chicago was the idea that the Encyclopedia can hold information, but was vastly in need of expansion to encompass personal narratives and alternative ways of knowing. So, without further ado:

Thank you so much for joining us for this special installment of the Encyclopedia Show. For those of you visiting us for the first time, The Encyclopedia Show is semi-educational, always entertaining, variety show where we examine the ambiguous border between truth and fact. Each month, the show tackles a central theme taken from an actual encyclopedia. So far we’ve covered everything from The Moon to Dinosaurs to The Periodic Table of Elements. After we select our central theme, we invite local and national artists, poets, teachers, students, historians, scientists, puppeteers (your usual group of dilantants) to join us and provide their unique insight on that theme. Why do we this? Are not history, truth, and facts carefully collected and categorized into books and databases already? Has not the market on non-fiction been adequately cornered? No, we say! Truth cannot just be a collection of facts or a history written and rewritten by the victorious. There are stories untold, perspectives unheard. If we allow those voices to remain silent, then

*truth will almost always assuredly allude us. And with the premature death of the actual encyclopedia, the market is wide open.*²

So now, we welcome you to our special installment: Michelle Hill: The Doctoral Process.

I'm your host, Michelle Hill. When I appear in this document, my words will be in bold italics. Finding performers for this show was a challenge, so I'll be covering not only hosting responsibilities today, but also our three major subtopics: Historian, Academic, and Teacher. Additionally, due to some cutbacks (the Arts, you know!) I'm also the Fact Checker of this show, in accordance with Encyclopedia Show guidelines, established in Chicago eight years ago. When Fact Checks are necessary, they'll be bolded and red and underlined with "Fact Check" preceding.

Fact Check: Game on.

Everyone tackles the role of Host differently, but I find myself thinking about the words of Ron Pelias who wrote:

Whenever we engage in research, we are offering a first-person narrative.

Even our most traditional work is someone's story. Notice:

Review of Literature: I had been reading about this subject...

Research Question: I really wanted to know what was going on...

Procedure: ...I would collect some information...

Results: I added up all their responses...

Interpretation: I can explain what everyone said... (Pelias 7-8).

² Standard Encyclopedia Show: Arizona opening.

Pelias, like my own faculty advisers, seems to believe that academic writing can and should be personal, so I hope you're ready to hear about the last five years of my life in a doctoral program, where I worked to combine the roles of scholar, performer and teacher.

Fact Check: And?

Speech Coach?

Fact Check: And?

Girlfriend-turned-wife?

Fact Check: And?

Recent (January 2015) Multiple Sclerosis patient?

Fact Check: And?

Very recent (November 2016) mother?

Fact Check: That'll do.

It has been a busy five...

Fact Check: Ahem.

It has been a busy five and a half years.

Fact Check: Better.

SUBTOPIC ONE: HISTORIAN

I consider myself a dyed in the wool history nerd. When I visited Paris on my honeymoon, I was moved most not by the romance of place/circumstance or the taste of brie after being dairy-free for a year, but by the Pantheon, a church-turned mausoleum that serves as final resting place for some of the most revered French citizens. Most interestingly, the people entombed there do not include any political figures, but are all cultural giants.

I wasn't always like this. I slogged through history in school, memorizing dates and names and wondering why some facts stuck more than others (Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin is a fact I will take with me to my own final resting place). I became interested in history when I became interested in Theatre History. Finally, an entry-point! When I wanted to know why a play written in the late 1960s radiated tension, I studied the Cold War. To understand the Federal Theatre Project, I became well-versed in the New Deal, the Roosevelts and Joseph McCarthy.

I now believe that a large part of Theatre history is the production and discussion of historical plays and the continuous documentation of theatrical events. Couple that with the nostalgic feelings I have for... anything that Ken Burns wants to talk about and...well, there's a reason this section has an underlying subtext of, "Save it now before it goes away!"

Fact Check: This is true. Once, Michelle's boyfriend-now-husband said, "Wait a second, are you crying on the couch just *thinking* about The Gettysburg Address?"

It was only 272 words! Kids still memorize it today! 'The world will little note'...I mean, come on!

Fact Check: Tell the good people about Eva.

When I was in the seventh grade, I was invited to a costume party with a DJ. I have distinct memories of classmates dressed up as Waldo (as in, Where's...), Indiana Jones, multiple Catwomen... but I seized the opportunity to keep the memory of Eva Peron alive in the hearts and minds of the seventh graders in El Paso, Texas. Even when I threw my hands up in the air, balcony style, no one really got it.

Fact Check: Didn't you once wax poetic about the history of theatre for an actual Encyclopedia Show about...Obsolete Diseases?

Maybe.

Fact Check: Seems like a bit of a stretch.

I was actually talking about FDR, The Federal Theatre Project...and polio. I said:

Ten years before he died, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was working to cure the country of an illness that paralyzed, wounded and killed Americans: The Great Depression. Searching for an antidote, he established The Federal Theatre Project in 1935. It was a way to keep actors, musicians, artists and writers in work when they would otherwise be literally starving to death.

At a time when our country was facing destitution, he saw the need to protect free, public theatre and the people that created it. He believed that theatre could be a cure for a world struggling with financial issues, political divisiveness and ignorance.

But FDR But he didn't have time to see his project through. He died at the age of 63 due to complications of polio.

I wonder what he could have done if his disease had become obsolete sooner
(Hill, November 2012).

Fact Check: Okay, that's maybe less of a stretch than I remembered. Why don't you talk about some of your other pieces?

Because I have to get to the History!

Fact Check: Aren't your pieces usually about *your* history? Aren't they a part of the Show's *history*?

Yeah, fine. Sure. But the whole purpose of me writing this is so that the Show is documented for archival purposes. If I don't write about the history of the Show, who will? This is the closest it is going to get to being in a textbook.

Fact Check: You've spent thirteen years in higher education and you're still trying to write history *objectively*? One of the problems with most textbooks is that the authors don't foreground their own interests and biases. Doesn't the Encyclopedia Show work to supplement "what counts as knowledge" with lived, human experience?

Yes, but I cover that in the following section.

Fact Check: [Preview it here.](#)

For our show about The Zodiac, I wrote about Ai Wei Wei and my desire to witness art so that I could talk about it later, pretentious though that may be.

For Fast Food, I talked about how my Dad took me to Arby's every Wednesday. There, we saw other single dads with their kids, eating fast food on state-mandated visitation night.

For Exercise, I shared a story about how almost failing P.E. kept me from attending The University of Texas at Austin.

Fact Check: So...those aren't the most obvious subtopics for the shows themes.

You've made your point.

Fact Check: No, you have. Proceed.

Because The Encyclopedia Show has been performed in dozens of cities for hundreds of audiences and thousands of audience members, I do believe it has a place in the annals of theatre history. I do believe that formal documentation matters.

Fact Check: Wait! Why is the title of this subtopic "Historian" instead of "Dramaturg"?

The book Dramaturgy and Performance begins with an essay from editors Cathy Turner and Synne K. Behrndt explaining that "dramaturgy" resists definition. But after reading the essays included, it seems that much of the work of dramaturgy exists inside productions. I'm able to provide internal dramaturgical analysis for the Arizona Show, but take a more birds-eye view approach to the Chicago iteration. It is my hope that future projects will heed the words written in my first Theatre History textbook:

The theatre historian will consult all the primary sources available and seek new evidence. She will ask whose history has not been told. She will ask about the gender, race, and class of the eyewitness who left us a written account or sketch of a production. She will ask who benefitted from the prevailing ideologies of the age—the visible and not so visible value systems—and who did not. She will ask why previous historians

asked some questions and others. Ultimately, she will be a part of the evolving process in which we are all engaged to better understand those in the past and ourselves (Zarrilli, McConachie, Williams, Sorgenfrei xxv).

I feel that I can currently answer many of these questions about the Arizona show; but using the guidelines above to excavate the archive of other Shows around the world is a worthwhile future pursuit.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA SHOW

The first line of Joseph Roach's article, "Theatre History and Historiography" begins, "Historians often begin their accounts of the discipline of theatre history with the same anecdote of irretrievable loss" (Roach 191). He goes on to explain the anecdote, but I find myself thinking about the function of this anecdotal repetition. When historians choose to begin with any "anecdote of irretrievable loss," they raise the stakes for the history that they write. I too, feel the impulse to raise the stakes for the historiography of The Encyclopedia Show. If not written about, if not catalogued in some formal way, it will be forgotten. To me, this would be a profound loss.

Originally created in 2008 by two Chicago-area performers and then extended to cities around the world,

The Encyclopedia Show is a monthly, multi-genre, age-integrated presentation of creative performances on a central theme taken from an ACTUAL encyclopedia. Each contributor is assigned a specific subset of the central theme on which to write and perform. Participating artists perform poems, monologues, songs, rants, etc... Quirkiness and creativity is welcomed, as are fashionable falsehoods ("The Encyclopedia Show").

The Encyclopedia Show is informed by critical performance pedagogy and methods of community-based performance. Following Conquergood, the performance attempts to de-stabilize academic and cultural knowledge that prioritizes mental and rational thought (Conquergood). (Re)occurring roles of "Host" and "Fact Checker" represent simultaneous gate-keeping and critique of gate-keeping. Multi-genre artists from academic and extended communities provide embodied responses to each month's topic;

de-centering authoritative proclamations of knowledge (traditional representative Encyclopedia) and troubling established audience perceptions of learning. The diversity of performance styles and informational standpoints, as well as the troubling of these standpoints by way of Host, Fact Checker and Audience creates a chaotic performance space that Goltz would underscore as “an orientation to chaos [that] opens us to the fractal and rhizomatic knowledges that are (re)iterated through embodied engagement and not only through linear and hierarchical arguments” (Goltz 220). It is called The Encyclopedia Show in part to draw attention to the fact that the traditional encyclopedia is lacking. By inviting diverse performers, topics and styles, the idea of what counts as knowledge and should be archived is expanded.

In addition to creating new and chaotic epistemologies, The Encyclopedia Show operates as a form of community based performance. Community members within and outside the academy co-create a performative space for reflection and provide opportunities to reveal local struggles and engage in dialogue (Cohen-Cruz 440). The multi-city format of the show, coupled with new topics monthly, allows the performances to take up the stories and experiences of diverse communities and reflects knowledge and experience unique to that community and location.

A theoretical analysis of The Encyclopedia Show reveals what I believe is one of the most unique aspects of the performance event: it exists both in the realms of structuralism *and* post-structuralism. In his early work with structuralism, Barthes explored “conventions that make literary works possible” (Culler 124). There are a number of conventions that make The Encyclopedia Show possible, many are nonnegotiable agreements made when “franchising” the show for a particular location.

In any Encyclopedia Show around the world, there are familiar conventions and roles. A show in Seoul will have a Host and a Fact Checker, as will a show in Albuquerque, Tempe or Austin. Additionally:

- For at least the first season, topics will remain the same in cities around the world. This means that every city that has performed an Encyclopedia Show has started with Bears, moved on to The Moon, then to Visible Spectrum of Color.
- Each show will be comprised of performances from community members and will strive to be diverse in form and representation. These Shows are distinctly not poetry slams or storytelling events, but ideally combination of many genres.
- Performances are assigned from a list of subtopics generated by the organizers.
- Performances are asked to stay within a five-minute time limit.
- The show is typically around 90-minutes, performed without intermission.

In these ways, the format of the show is familiar no matter where you see it, no matter what topic it explores.

However, when the individual performances are added to the analysis, a post-structural event emerges. While de Saussure and (early) Barthes were interested in structures, conventions and intention, post-structuralist philosophers argue that intent is far less important than the *effect* on the reader, or in this case the audience. Foucault, Derrida and (later) Barthes believed that the meaning made by the audience was far more interesting and important than intended effect. I extended this argument to the invited performers of The Encyclopedia Show. After being assigned a subtopic, they are asked to research, devise and create meaning from a seemingly banal topic. Then, they share their work with an audience. Because each show is performed only once and rarely

rehearsed, performers do not have a chance to edit their work after seeing how it interacts with the overall narrative or their fellow performers. The Show is a 90-minute event that is never repeated. Keeping with the tenets of post-structuralism, the author's intended meaning (or the intent of the show producers with regards to topic and performer assignment) are far less palpable than what actually happens when invited performer and specifically devised piece are seen by an audience for the first—and only—time.

Because the show has existed in 18 cities³ and has been performed for hundreds of audiences, a detailed analysis is necessary. In their foundational text “A Paradigm for Performance Studies” Ronald J. Pelias and James VanOosting discuss the disciplinary chasm between “performance studies” and “oral interpretation.” While Performance Studies is now embedded in both Theatre and Communication departments, the 1987 article highlights the importance of clear definitions in a “discipline in transition” (Pelias, VanOosting 219). Their article works diligently to elucidate the differences and overlaps between performance studies and oral interpretation, and I cannot help but be reminded of the overlaps in language and philosophies of Interdisciplinarity and Project Based Learning.

To begin Pelias and VanOosting explain, “Performance studies asserts a theoretical orientation framed squarely within the discipline of human communication and enriched by such fields as anthropology, theatre, folklore, and popular culture” (219). This enrichment fulfills Klein's definition of transdisciplinary, because something new (the field of Performance Studies) is being created. They continue, “It is based in art, carries epistemological claims, posits methodological procedures and calls for new

³ Chicago, Austin, New York City, Boston, Providence, Albuquerque, Minneapolis, Indianapolis, Omaha, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Seoul, Vancouver, Berlin, St. Paul, Oklahoma City, Portland and Tempe

pedagogical approaches” (219). These four criteria are all clearly met by The Encyclopedia Show.

Most helpful for analysis of The Encyclopedia Show are the four areas they establish for analysis of Performance Studies pieces: *Text, Event, Performer* and *Audience* (222).

Because there is almost no written discourse surrounding The Encyclopedia Show, my writing is heavily informed by my own experiences as a producer of The Encyclopedia Show: Arizona (ESAZ) from 2011-present (currently Fall 2016). Almost immediately upon enrolling as a doctoral student at Arizona State University, I was asked to perform in the show (then Season 2: Volume 4) and subsequently to serve on the production team. I have been intimately involved in the production of 28 shows over the past five years. Additionally, I have access to the original show creators, Shannon Maney and Robb Telfer, so my analysis primarily focuses on the original Chicago show and the Arizona iteration. As I attempt to create an honest account of the Show, I rely heavily on Michel de Certeau and his ideas surrounding the nature of historiography, which he states, “bears within its own name the paradox—almost an oxymoron—of a relation established between two antimononic terms, between the real and the discourse” (de Certeau xxvii). By inserting myself into my document, I hope to avoid at least some of the “breakage” he catalogues when he discusses the rupture between subject and object.

The amount of material created in the past eight years by Encyclopedia Shows around the country is an archive far larger than this document can hold. Therefore, for the purpose of analyzing under the Pelias/VanOosting criterion of *text, event, performer*

and *audience*, I analyze 2-3 examples from the ESAZ under each of their categories. These examples have been chosen not because they represent the “best” or even my “favorite” pieces in our archive, but because these are the pieces that have been talked about repeatedly, both by the production team and by audience members of the Arizona show. Hundreds more examples of performances under these categories can be found by combing physical and digital archives of shows around the country, but the examples that follow hope to be representative of the diverse approaches to topics and subtopics in the Show.

Text

Pelias and VanOosting write, “Performance studies takes a liberal position toward what constitutes a text. Moving beyond canonical texts and authors calls into question the nature of literariness...the privileged canon gives way to a broader catalogue of texts” (222). The Encyclopedia Show has no set script, no words to be catalogued and repeated, analyzed and preserved. However, one of the first franchise agreements made was that all shows had to follow the Chicago order for at least the first season. That means that, in every city that it reached, the first Encyclopedia Show was Bears, followed by The Moon; Visible Spectrum of Color; Explosives...and so on.⁴ Chicago ended their run after 56 shows in May 2014 with The Prairie.⁵⁶ Austin ended four months later in September 2014. Arizona, still going, closed our sixth season in April 2016 with the 32nd

⁴ The Future; Vice Presidents; Dinosaurs; Mythical Beasts; Serial Killers; The Zodiac; Hockey; Obsolete Diseases; Explorers; Fast Food; Insects; Wyoming; The Circus; Periodic Table of Elements; Civil Wars; Suburb with a Funny Name. (Chicago: Schaumburg. Austin: Pflugerville. Arizona: Ahwatukee); Exercise; Brains; Punctuation; Video Games; Creation Myths; Christmas; Saints; Invasive Species; The Railroad; Mesopotamia; Candy; The Supreme Court.

⁵ <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/encyclopedia-show-ends-its-run-shanny-jean-maney-robbie-telfer/Content?oid=13161710>

⁶ <https://chicagoliterati.com/2014/06/09/the-last-encyclopedia-show-by-joshua-lukasik/>

volume: The Supreme Court. The Shows' creators Maney and Telfer established the guidelines surrounding topic areas in the hopes that an "alternative Encyclopedia" could be created including voices that moved beyond those of stereotypical academic knowledge, confined to dusty tomes.⁷ Suddenly, by including personal narratives, original songs, visual art, games, etc. the ideas of "what counts as text" and "what counts as knowledge" expands.

Performers in The Encyclopedia Show are guided by an intentionally limited set of "rules." The most important of which is that performances, whatever shape they take, should be confined to a five-minute time limit. Additionally, when asked for guidelines about "acceptability" the producers of the Arizona Show have told performers that we are an "adult Sesame Street format...that tries to stay within PG-13 guidelines." In this way, the texts are mediated by both the performer and the production committee, echoing the ideas of Giroux who wrote, "texts are always mediated in some fashion by human subjects" (Giroux 89). While we have never sought to intentionally censor performers, having the PG-13 criterion has proven helpful in advertising and explaining the Show to potential audience members.

Analysis of "text" in the Encyclopedia Show can be broken into two categories: analysis of the show as a whole, and analysis of individual performance pieces within the larger structure. With regards to individual pieces: performers are invited to propose subtopic ideas, but can also be assigned topics from a list generated by the Production

⁷ The Encyclopedia Show: Arizona is the only Show that is tied to an academic setting (funded and housed through The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication). Playing with (and at times upending) the stereotype of "dusty academic knowledge" has been especially fruitful in this setting.

Committee. For the 2013 season finale, the ESAZ tackled *The Circus*.⁸ The Committee was approached by community member and previous performer Meg Howell-Haymaker, a 53-year-old English teacher from Mesa, Arizona with a subtopic proposal: *Circus Freaks*. In the weekly meeting, we raised our eyebrows while reading her proposal email and immediately said, “Yes!” Howell-Haymaker, who many of us know as a National Speech and Debate Association Hall of Fame coach, was born with severe scoliosis and is 4 feet, 4 inches tall. Her piece included candid photos from childhood of her brothers literally shelving her with stuffed animals and multiple theatrical reviews from her time as a Theatre major at the University of New Mexico, where she was repeatedly cast in productions as the witch. Meg’s commitment to family, teaching and coaching leave her with little time to write and perform but she submitted multiple drafts of this piece for feedback and ultimately was one of our most memorable performances ever.⁹ Our initial “yes” was fueled by curiosity, but also reflects a policy of the ESAZ Production Committee: say yes whenever possible. We offer a call to performers at the end of every show and Meg’s performance was clear evidence that, when people have a story to tell, they respond. Though the text of her performance fulfills Aristotle’s tenets of a well-made play and contains the five elements traditional dramatic structure (fitting for an English teacher and speech coach), a viscerally memorable aspect of her performance was watching her body perform in front of a screen bearing images of both her body throughout the years and “Circus Freaks” from actual encyclopedias. Hearing Meg alternate between joking about herself and sharing painful stories of childhood teasing in

⁸ <http://howlround.com/the-encyclopedia-show-arizona-a-successful-community-theater-model>

⁹ Full text and photos included with permission in appendix.

front of images of Joseph Merrick, first exhibited at a freak show as “The Elephant Man” is an image I will not soon forget.

In the same show, we assigned the topic of *Clowns* to Paul Davis, a friend of the Show who we knew would be visiting from Los Angeles. Davis is a writer and filmmaker, with a keen interest in horror films. *Clowns* broke all of our rules: it lasted about 25 minutes, was in no way PG-13...and it was one of the most talked about and remembered pieces we’ve ever featured.¹⁰ The piece did, however, epitomize one of the central goals of The Encyclopedia Show, which is to add layers of meaning onto single words. It is not a stretch to suggest the noun “clowns” appear on a brainstorming list under the monthly topic, “The Circus”, but Davis complicated the meaning of the term by sharing three distinctly different stories of the literal role of clowns in his own life.

He starts by discussing “the circus” of his family life and soon continues, “Once I went to school...I became the class clown” (Davis, Appendix C). Accordingly, he regales the audience with stories of clowning in school, getting the attention of girls, the admiration of peers, and the disdain of teachers. The role sticks with him throughout college and onto a job where his boss introduced all faculty members by their accomplishments. He writes:

I happened to have more competitive success in the activity than any of the other faculty members at his camp, so I was curious as to what he was going to say to all of these students to hopefully make them have some respect for me. And when he got to my introduction, all he said was, ‘And our next faculty member...is a CLOWN! Paul Davis.’ And that was it. It was belittling,

¹⁰ Full text included with permission in appendix.

patronizing, and it was clearly because he didn't take me seriously" (Davis, Appendix C).

By that point in the performance, Davis's use of humor throughout his personal narrative had endeared him to the audience as he went on to share his third and final story about being employed as a birthday party clown shortly after moving to Los Angeles to pursue a career in film. He remembers, "...for that first year in L.A. my mantra was pretty much, 'Fellini was a clown, Fellini was a clown, Fellini was a clown. If one of the most important filmmakers wasn't above being a clown, then you're not either.' So that was how I dragged my ass through most parties. But then one day I had a party that was actually pretty special." (Davis, Appendix C). After tracing recurring image of "clowns" through his life, "I, Clown" climaxes in an incredibly moving story about "a good day to be a clown" (Davis, Appendix C). While many performers likely have stories that could have fit the assigned subtopic "Clowns", the use of *multiple* stories and definitions in Davis's narrative worked to enrich our contribution to the Encyclopedia. Though some performers come forward with their own ideas, others are highly motivated by assignment, eager to complicate the meanings and associations of their assigned subtopics with their own personal experiences and associations.

While the Show is often heavy on personal narratives (like those of Howell-Haymaker and Davis), we welcome other types of texts as well. In student reviews, a moment that seemed to stand out from the April 2014 show on Video Games was the topic assigned to Adam Jarvie, a community member. Jarvie was tasked with *Donkey Kong*. More specifically, *beating* Donkey Kong Country (for the Super Nintendo System) during the course of the Video Games show. While the Show went on as it

normally does, complete with Host, Fact Checker and multiple individual performances, Jarvie sat, stage-right on what he remembers to be, “a slightly larger version of the typical blue-plastic/metal chairs we all sat in during kindergarten” in front of a television that faced the audience furiously playing the videogame on mute (Jarvie). Surprisingly, the constant performance alongside individual performances was not at all distracting. At slow moments or breaks between performers in the Show, audience members could be seen glancing towards Jarvie’s back to see where he was in the game, but his task never interrupted the flow of the show. Jarvie remembers standing to stretch a few times and “during a really frustrating part that was chewing a lot of time, I moved to the floor...childhood instinct, I’m sure.” A few times, host Nick Klemp verbally checked in with Jarvie, but it wasn’t until the final moments of the show when Klemp could be witnessed delivering his final remarks at a snail’s pace that it became clear to those familiar with the game that he was trying to give Jarvie just a little more time. Even 2.5 years later, Jarvie recalls, “I was really nervous at first, but eventually that gave way to focus. It’s like muscle memory for me, I love that game.” Those familiar with the game cheered uproariously when Jarvie finished; but even uninformed audience members (myself included) knew something cool had happened in The Empty Space. Jarvie recalls, “the time I had—1 hour, 25 minutes—on performance night is in the upper five percent. As far as I can tell, my personal best time is about the 100th best world wide.” I had no idea (until interviewing Jarvie this month) that his time was competitive with people around the world. I simply knew that he set out to do something that none of us could predict the outcome of—and succeeded. This performance more than most others also speaks to the unpredictability of the theatrical event. While Howell-Haymaker and

Davis had personal narratives that may or may not have “landed” with an audience, there was much less of a guarantee that Jarvie’s performance would “work.” He recalls:

I was nervous going in because I kept getting 1:45 times, couldn’t get it down to a Show’s length. On Encyclopedia Eve, I got an hour and ten minutes, called that good enough and went for it. But, there are always certain levels [of the game] that I fear because I have certainly broken controllers in the past and that would be embarrassing in a theater under pressure. Also I only brought one controller. In hindsight, that could have ended things quickly. I’m also a yeller. Not reacting...so as not to distract the audience from the performers was difficult. But honestly, for the last third, I sort of forgot the audience was there (Jarvie).

Other notable performances (some will be discussed in overlapping categories) in Arizona have included original poetry, scenes, songs, raps, dances, visual art and cooking demonstrations; but the overall framework text of each Show must be included in the analysis as well. For the first four Arizona Shows, there was a topic, a Host, a Fact Checker and individual performances surrounding subtopics. However, the fifth show dedicated to “The Future” marked a change. At one point in the Show, a gimmick was created with a time machine. After one of the characters in the show was “killed”, others had to travel back in time to prevent his untimely demise. Moments from already-seen performances were recreated, the dialogue prior to the incident was repeated, and a character stepped in at the last moment to save the day. It wasn’t Shakespeare...but from that show onward, the idea of creating a central narrative around the show was a priority for the Production Team. In *Obsolete Diseases*, our performance space was quarantined; *Fast Food* put The Hamburglar (and fast food in general) on trial; *Hockey* featured a

lockout/contract negotiation with Arizona State University. Our faculty adviser, Professor Jennifer Linde has stated that one of the reasons she looks forward to coming to the shows is to see what the Production Team has come up with for that show. Of course, some have worked better than others (no one on the Production Team remembers exactly what we did for *Explorers*, beyond vague statements about the search for knowledge); but adding this extra layer of textual performance makes the show feel more like a theatrical event and less like a themed open-mic night.

Event

Fittingly, the second category Pelias and VanOosting suggest for analysis is *event*. They write, “Performance studies envisions theatrical events in more contexts than the traditional proscenium or arena” (223). Since arriving in Arizona, the ESAZ has been housed in The Empty Space (an intentional nod to Peter Brook) a seventy-seat performance space, sponsored by The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication, on the campus of Arizona State University. The website notes, “Performance projects at The Empty Space serve to realize, in part, the mission of the Performance Studies Area: “to foster theoretical and practical explorations of performance and performativity with a humanistic focus on social discourse” (*The Empty Space*). The setting and location of the event have been hugely significant in all facets of the show, from funding to audience. Unlike every other venue around the world, the ESAZ has never charged admission and is funded by The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication, allowing a modest budget for props and costumes and the occasional opportunity of visiting guest performers. Additionally, because we are sponsored by ASU, our faculty adviser Jennifer Linde has continuously appointed and funded a Communication graduate

student to serve on the Production Committee. While these associations certainly could have been fraught in other circumstances, they have served as invaluable resources to our Show. Additionally, performing on a college campus—in Arizona—has often informed the narratives or subtopics of a show.

During the Serial Killers show in April 2012, then-ASU students Dwayne Holmes and Andie Flores created a two-person script about The Baseline Killer. Over the course of 13 months in 2005 and 2006, Mark Goudeau (now serving a 438-year sentence) committed nine murders, fifteen sexual assaults, eleven kidnappings and several robberies in a small geographic area of Tempe and Phoenix (Keifer). Initially known as The Baseline Rapist, Goudeau's moniker became even grimmer as evidence mounted. When Flores and Holmes performed, those in the audience did not need this context, as anxiety surrounding The Baseline Killer remained raw and palpable around the campus. In their piece¹¹, Holmes relies on a personal narrative, stating:

...Baseline was utterly deserted as soon as nightfall hit.

No cars, no pedestrians. Baseline was completely devoid of any signs of life. I lived on Baseline during the time of the killings. I worked at Target, which was on Baseline and McClintock, and lived in a townhouse a short distance from there (Holmes, Flores, Appendix D).

He then discusses leaving work, seeing a young woman and feeling compelled to protect her by walking her home. Though this is not Flores' own story, including her body and voice as an actor in the story raises the stakes and serves to create a more animated narrative of memory. The Serial Killers show featured performances with names more

¹¹ Full text included with permission in appendix.

familiar than Mark Goudeau, but to those in the audience who had experienced the anxiety generated by a serial killer whose very nickname invoked a street that runs parallel to campus, the piece by Holmes and Flores seemed to answer the oft-asked theatrical questions, “Why here? Why now?” with each tense breath.

A year later, the Show embarked on a bit of a departure from the scheduled list of topics. In every city, topic of the twentieth show has been _____ (Suburb with a Funny Name). In Chicago, the twentieth show was *Schaumberg*; Austin: Pflugerville; and in Arizona: Ahwatukee. Ahwatukee is a suburb of Phoenix that is almost a caricature of an American suburb. In fact, the poster for the show featured varying shades of beige and literal cookie cutter houses.¹² While the 2010 United States census notes that Phoenix is a relatively racially diverse city (40.8% Hispanic), Ahwatukee is sometimes colloquially called All White Tukee. The narrative of that Show consisted of two of the members of the Production Committee (who are both fair-skinned and light-eyed), looking to buy a house in Ahwatukee. Boisterous laughter erupted from the audience as they introduced themselves as “The Whites.” This joke likely would not have landed with those outside of the Phoenix metropolitan area. In the same show, Grishma Singh, a Teach for America Corps Member and math teacher at Sierra Linda High School¹³, performed on a subtopic she proposed: “The Other Side of the Mountain.” Singh’s piece¹⁴ begins:

Ahwatukee. What a bunch of snobs. Rubbing their Audis in everyone’s face.

Building their houses high on a mountain so everyone can see their infinity pools

¹² Reprinted in appendix with permission of artist Andie Flores.

¹³ Title-I school (with 96% minority enrollment) in Phoenix, Arizona

¹⁴ Reprinted in appendix with permission.

and be reminded that they just have a regular pool that looks like a hole in the ground.

But you know who has more reason to hate them? My students. The 220 Latinos I teach in Phoenix on the wrong side of the mountain. The 220 14-year-olds who go to a school that can't afford rulers. Or textbooks. Or printer paper. The 14-year-olds who sit in a class of 45 because, hey, their school can't afford enough teachers, either.

My students will start a fight if you look at them from a weird angle. Or if they're just bored. The others will record the fight on their phone. And they're practically going to write this piece for me. I couldn't wait to find out what THEY thought about the people who live in Ahwatukee (Singh, Appendix F).

As she continues, the expected narrative does not emerge. Her students do not see the same problems with Ahwatukee that she anticipated. The piece ends, "They're not jealous. They're not upset. They're not resentful. They're better than that. They have nothing snide to say about the people who live in Ahwatukee. So I guess I don't, either" (Sing, Appendix F). During a show that made a local suburb the butt of *many* jokes, this piece forced a moment of reflection for both the Production Committee and audience members—some of whom are from Ahwatukee. While the Arizona audience probably would not have appreciated the jokes and insider information about Schaumburg or Pflugerville, exploring Ahwatukee (and the nature of suburbs in general) generated the place-specific discourse that is so often a goal of Performance Studies.

Finally, in the more traditional interpretation of the term *event*, the fact that the ESAZ has provided 32 evenings of free entertainment for the community cannot be

overlooked. Many professors in both The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication and The School of Theatre, Dance and Film *require* students to attend performance events. The fact that the show is free—to anyone—not just students has impacted the event as a whole. While ASU students are sometimes able to obtain free tickets to other performances on campus, there are few performances that they can attend with friends from the community without payment.

Scholarship surrounding the Show has often come from students providing reviews for their classes. Faculty adviser Jennifer Linde occasionally offers feedback to the Production Team that begins, “Personally, I liked _____, but was especially interested that _____ resonated with my students.” It is especially rewarding when students who once attended to fulfill requirements are spotted at shows in subsequent semesters, and truly heartening when these students contact the Production Committee with an interest in performing.

The Encyclopedia Show as *event* has also served as an important bridge between ASU and the larger community. Performers include faculty members, the slam-poetry community, alumni, et cetera.

Performer

The most difficult responsibility of the Production Committee includes securing performers for every show. This is certainly not unique to the Arizona show, as show creator Robb Telfer noted in an interview about the final Chicago show:

One of the biggest reasons that we are not doing the Show anymore is that a lot of really kind and nice people have donated their time and their brilliance to put this together these last six years...I don't want to ruin the friendships, so we have

decided to not ask each other to do an insane amount of work every month (Lukasik).

The ESAZ Production Committee has fluctuated between 3-6 members, all of whom have been both performers *in* and performance recruiters *for* The Show. Pelias and VanOosting highlight the need for performer analysis when they write:

Performance Studies views the performer not only as artist but within additional frameworks as well. First, the performer may be conceived as social actor...Second...may authorize personal consciousness before textual autonomy...Third: performer to be cast as social activist...especially giving voice to the culturally silenced. Fourth...performer's special ability to take on or adopt the role of others allows for ethnographic insights¹⁵ (224-225).

Our own performers essentially fall into three categories: members of the Production Committee, ASU students/faculty/staff, members of the outside community. ASU students/faculty/staff (Flores, Holmes) and members of the outside community (Singh, Howell-Haymaker, Davis) have already been covered above, but the Production Committee remains.

Nick Klemp, host of 26 shows, has been on the Production Committee from the very beginning. When then-graduate student Scott Boras originally brought the Show to Arizona, he invited some of his friends from the speech and debate community to be involved. Klemp was one of these people. When Boras defended his dissertation and

¹⁵ I struggle with this piece of the Pelias/VanOosting model. Written in 1987, their piece provides a foundational text for analysis of performance studies pieces, but this fourth criterion elides the fraught nature of representative practices. However, familiarity with their work suggests that they are talking about the work of artists like Anna Deveare Smith, who uses her voice, body and performance acumen to "adopt the role of others for ethnographic insights."

moved away in Summer 2012, Klemp took over hosting responsibilities. Klemp's role as host is notable, in part, because of his commitment to establishing The Host as a background role, constantly working to showcase performers. At each Show, Klemp sits onstage, literally behind the performers at a desk reminiscent of late-night television. He stands to introduce performers and then fades into the background until they are finished, then thanking them for their performances. Since accepting Host responsibilities, Klemp has made a conscious effort to promote the outside work of performers—offering dates to upcoming performances that the performer might be featured in or information about books that they have to sell. Occasionally, Klemp has also interviewed performers or guests during the Show, most memorably his own mother (in-person) and her twin sister (remotely) for a special segment on “Gemini” in the *Zodiac Show*.

Though his work on the Production Committee and his reoccurring role as Host have been invaluable in sustaining the show, Klemp's *own* performances are major fan favorites for repeat audience members. At multiple Shows when I've been working the door, audience members (some of whom I've never met) have asked, “Is Nick doing a rap tonight?” One of Klemp's “special abilities” is his talent in creating parody raps. During the very first show (*Bears*, February 2011) Klemp took an existing rap song (Young MC's “Bust a Move”) and rewrote all of the lyrics. “Bust a Move” became “Build a Bear.”¹⁶ There have been nearly a dozen raps created specifically for the Arizona Show; and Klemp's own notebook (see fig. 1) highlights one of the main goals of the Show: research-based performance.

¹⁶ Full text included in appendix with permission.

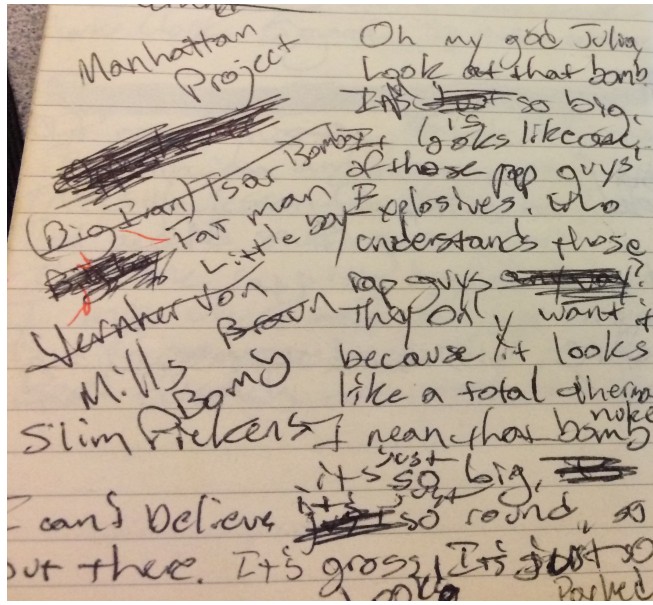


Figure 1: Klemp's preliminary research notes for "Baby Got Bombs."

For the show dedicated to *Explosives*, Klemp repurposed Sir Mix A Lot's "Baby Got Back" to "Baby Got Bombs."¹⁷ For me, this parody rap epitomized research-based performance. From his notebook, you can see that, after researching explosives, Klemp wanted to include: "Oppenheimer", "Wernher Von Braun", "Manhattan Project" and more. What started as brainstorming notes became lyrics:

To the terrorists who think they're scaring me

You ain't scaring fleas

Better find an Oppenheimer

Cause right now you're all just small timers

*

A word to Wernher Von Braun

I want to get with y'all

And talk about missiles

¹⁷ Full text included in appendix with permission.

*

If Uranium's weapons grade

And you got what it takes to get made

Then research the Manhattan Project and kick those nasty

thoughts

Baby got bombs (Klemp, Appendix H).

The performance was unquestionably entertaining; but it was also highly educational, both for the performer and for the audience. Klemp (as Host) is conscious of being inclusive toward all potential performers, calling for interested parties to contact us at the end of every show and offering the topic for the next. However, his willingness to create and demonstrate what can be an “ideal” performance (in terms of research and creativity) is perhaps his greatest strength as a member of the Production Team.

Audience

While the struggle to recruit performers has been constant, one of the many advantages to being a free show on a college campus has been the blessing of a built-in audience. Like our performers, our audiences also fit into categories almost identical to those mentioned in *performer*. Our *audience* is comprised of: performer-related (families and friends of people in the Show); ASU students/faculty/staff; and community members looking for a free event.

Additionally, as part of our constant quest to move the Show away from an open-mic surrounding a central theme, the ESAZ works to actively involve the audience with games or audience participation whenever possible. As Pelias and VanOosting remind us, “The level of audience participation within any theatrical event may best be seen on a

continuum from inactive to proactive” (226). As with most theatrical events, the audience is largely inactive throughout much of the show, but we have occasionally worked to traverse the continuum. During preparation for the January 2014 *Exercise* show, the Production Team stumbled across a YouTube phenomenon called “prancercise.” Prancercise seems to be a parody of 1980’s aerobic exercise videos, featuring a woman who chooses prancing as her form of athletic engagement. The first video on YouTube boasts over 12 million hits, as of October 2016.¹⁸ So, in January 2014, we projected the video during the Show and then instructed the audience to...prance. Ridiculous as it was, every member of the audience moved away from their seats and began skipping around the space, back and forth across the stage, down the aisles and even behind the curtains. Because *everyone* in the cast and the audience participated, no one faced the dreaded, “Oh, I hope they don’t call on me” feeling that often accompanies games or audience participation in theatrical events. As Pelias and VanOosting note, “Implicit in a move from inactive to proactive levels of participation are a number of issues. First, questions of power arise when deciding who (performer and/or audience) may be given (or denied) the right to initiate an aesthetic interaction” (227). While Host Nick Klemp initiated the aesthetic interaction, everyone in the 70-person space took part. Suddenly, “the stage” had no meaning because every inch of The Empty Space was filled, every audience member now an actor. Afterwards, as performers, on-stage cast and audience members eventually migrated back to their seats, there was a great deal of laughter followed by a collective, “What the hell did we all just

¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-50GjySwew>

do?” feeling that was echoed in post-show conversations, performance reviews and memories today, three years later.

The Show has also provided a notable bridge between campus and community. The Empty Space is located at the corner of Rural and University, two streets that border campus. As such, the Space is *on* campus, but on a bordering corner. It literally exists as both a part of campus and a part of the larger civic community. The fact that parking is free (on a campus where daily parking is \$12-\$15) is no small part of the Show’s attraction as event. Not only is the Show completely free to attend, it is also convenient.

Perhaps because the audience includes a healthy contingent that is not directly tied to ASU, other community associations have been made as well. In January 2014, the Show received an email from MeetUp, “the world’s largest network of local groups.”¹⁹ MeetUp asked if they could make that month’s Show one of their advertised events, for social and community networking. While the organization often brings people together for volleyball games and beer festivals, the appeal of a free, community theatre event had appeal as well. The audience of that same show also featured the usual suspects: friends and family members of performers and Production Team, students fulfilling course requirements, and a dozen-or-so members of Campus Crusade for Christ, also there in search of a free, close-to-campus event.

Several educational partnerships have been made as well. The ESAZ Production Committee was commissioned to create a special show for a book-release party for *Young Authors of Arizona Bloom: Best Teen Writing of 2014*, a paperback anthology showcasing award-winning work across genres from high school students. While we

¹⁹ <http://www.meetup.com/about/>

weren't entirely sure what we were getting ourselves into, hundreds of students, parents and educators were exposed to the Show that night. At the end of that brief Show, we extended our normal call for community performers and had gifted high school writers performing in The Empty Space the very next month. Additionally, at least two local public school teachers (Grishma Singh, Tracy Weaver) have worked to incorporate writing and/or performance for the Show into their K-12 classrooms.

Future of The Encyclopedia Show

When the Chicago show ended in May 2014, the audience was abuzz with questions about what would happen to the Show in other cities. Telfer and Maney both said that they were happy to see it continue (or even start) in other cities. However, as of January 2017, the longest running shows (Chicago, Austin, Arizona) have either paused or ceased production entirely.

Fact Check: Why?

I think that the things that make the Show unique and wonderful are also what make it extremely difficult to sustain. Community-based performance depends on (often) the same community to attend, support, and in our case, perform in shows. Many months, I wrote a last-minute piece to fill time and space in a show that was lacking. Additionally, though we have been blessed with a built-in audience of students from ASU, our friends and families would probably enjoy supporting us in different endeavors, rather than witnessing the same format month-after-month.

Fact Check: The people who should actually be writing this chapter are host Nick Klemp's parents, who have never missed a Show!

Further, it is incredibly disheartening to send dozens of emails reaching out to new communities, never to have them returned. For the shows with the most “academic” themes, I personally attempted to contact historians, scientists and researchers on our own campus. Almost all of these emails went unanswered; and even those that were never resulted in a performance.

Fact Check: Maybe “the ask” needed more finesse?

Of course; but I also believe that asking non-actors to “perform” in a “show” is intimidating. Our production committee meetings often featured the lament, “If they could just see a Show before coming to one, they’d understand that...”

Telfer, Maney and organizers in other cities have moved on to other projects; but the ESAZ has faced a unique challenge. Though the production committee features both students and non-students, there is an academic cycle at work. Scott Boras, the Show’s very first host completed a doctorate and moved to the Midwest for an academic job. Fan favorite fact-checkers Eric Dern and Ben Horowitz have left Arizona. Undergraduates (Andie Flores, Chelsea McCasland, Daniel Lennie, many others) who once attended the show for extra credit and then became regular performers have graduated, never to be seen at a show again.

Fact Check: And ...you?

Although my time as a student is ending, I believe that the next act for The Encyclopedia Show is in a place I have spent a lot of time: the classroom.

SUBTOPIC TWO: ACADEMIC

As host, one of my duties is to introduce each subtopic and performer. So: Michelle Hill, the academic, gravitates toward the theoretical lenses and frameworks of: historiography, feminist pedagogy, constructivism and structuralism/post-structuralism.

Fact Check: It is way more interesting to start at the beginning. Her first grade report card notes, “She needs new markers because on Friday, 10-15, she removed the cap and colored her tongue completely blue. Additionally, she is in need of a new Elmer’s Glue bottle because she has enlarged the opening on the orange cap, thus leaky glue.”

Further, she is thrilled by Ron Pelias’ assertion that even the Review of Literature can be personal if you look at it under the lens of “I had been reading about this subject...” because the pages that follow can get a little dry if you read them without knowing why they’ve been included. This document questions whether incorporating The Encyclopedia Show into classroom environments can work to achieve the ideals espoused by the idea of Interdisciplinarity (at the higher education level) and Project Based Learning (at the K-12 level). These ideas have recently reached a sort of holy grail status in the world of education and Michelle, “had been reading about this subject...” as part of her comprehensive exam process. In an effort to “start at the beginning”, she uses this section to trace the history of the term Interdisciplinary and the educational ripples catalyzed by Interdisciplinarity and Project Based Learning.

Fact Check: Why are you writing about yourself in the third-person?

Because most academic writing uses third person point-of-view to establish a formal tone, Michelle has chosen to use third-person for this subtopic.

Fact Check: You're just going to detach completely for the academic section?

Because most academic writing uses third person point-of-view to establish a formal tone, Michelle has chosen to use third-person for much of this subtopic, inserting herself into the prose for occasional commentary and transitional material.

Fact check: Better. Not perfect, but better.

As funding for the Arts continues to disappear and teachers (particularly those in the Humanities) are asked to do more with less in their classrooms, the word “interdisciplinary” appears more and more often on job descriptions. This section hopes to offer a historical timeline for both the term and the ideology espoused by interdisciplinarity, while paying careful attention to the idea of “discipline” before connecting it to Project Based Learning in theory and practice.

INTERDISCIPLINARY & PROJECT BASED LEARNING

In the introduction to his 1976 *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Raymond Williams offers two definitions for “keywords.” The first, he defines as: “strong, difficult and persuasive words in everyday usage” (Williams 14). The second includes: “words which, beginning in particular specialized contexts, have become quite common in descriptions of wider areas of thought and experience” (14). Williams makes a strong argument for further unpacking words used frequently to move beyond the simple definitions found in dictionaries. Williams argues that we should be working towards a vocabulary, rather than a dictionary (26). In 2005, *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society* was published. Marketing materials for the book state:

Over 25 years ago, Raymond Williams' *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* set the standard for how we understand and use the language of culture and society. Now, three luminaries in the field of cultural studies have assembled a volume that builds on and updates Williams' classic, reflecting the transformation in culture and society since its publication (“Amazon”).

Continuing, the marketing material states, “[*New Keywords...*] assembles a stellar team of internationally renowned and *interdisciplinary* social thinkers and theorists” (“Amazon”). Interestingly, the material does not reveal *how* the authors (Lawrence Grossberg, Meaghan Morris, Tony Bennett) are interdisciplinary social thinkers, though university websites suggest that they are all currently working in various Cultural Studies Departments. Additionally, although the book features 142 word entries,

interdisciplinary is not among them (nor was it one of the 1976 originals). However, because it fits both of Williams' original definitions of a "strong, difficult, persuasive word in everyday usage" and "common in descriptions of wider areas of thought and experience" it warrants further exploration. For the purposes of this analysis, I will first explore the history of the word *interdisciplinary* and the idea of Interdisciplinarity, then discuss separate distinctions/definitions of the word interdisciplinary and its counterparts *multidisciplinary* and *transdisciplinary*, before finally exploring why it is relevant to my own questions surrounding incorporation of "the arts" into non-arts-based classrooms.

Part One: Interdisciplinary/Interdisciplinarity

In 1990, Wayne State University Press published *Interdisciplinarity* by Julie Thompson Klein. The book is an encyclopedic overview of its titular idea and was revered in a number of academic and popular publications. In a review published in *Dianoia*, philosophy professor Bruce Janz writes:

The great virtue of Klein's book is that it addresses [complicated questions of Interdisciplinarity] without boosterism or fanfare. She recognizes that, as disciplines develop, they will necessarily overlap with other disciplines in a variety of ways. Interdisciplinarity, therefore, becomes a more pressing concern and holds forth more hope as time goes on. At the same time, she is well aware of the spotty history that interdisciplinary efforts have had, due to latent territorialism, bureaucratic suspicion, and well-meant misunderstanding of the process (Janz 135).

I argue that no other scholar has crafted a more thorough analysis of the idea of Interdisciplinarity or the field of interdisciplinary work than Julie Klein, a past president

of the Association for Integrative Studies. Though the book was published in 1990, she has since published seven more books on the topic. Therefore, this section of my document largely depends on Klein's work.

While the 200-page book does much to complicate the idea of "interdisciplinary", Klein contends that the meaning of the word is actually quite simple. Borrowing Richard Pring's 1972 definition, Klein contends, "*Interdisciplinary* simply refers to the use of more than one discipline in pursuing a particular inquiry" (Klein 27). The rest of the book is spent complicating the term through narrative around its use and evolution both inside and outside of the academy. Klein argues that the term itself is not complicated, but its use and implementation have provided a source of tension since it was first used. Early in the book, she explains:

All interdisciplinary activities are rooted in the ideas of unity and synthesis, evoking a common epistemology of convergence. Educators, researchers, and practitioners have all turned to interdisciplinary work to accomplish a range of objectives: to answer complex questions; to address broad issues; to explore disciplinary and professional relations; to solve problems that are beyond the scope of any one discipline; -to achieve unity of knowledge, whether on a limited or grand scale. Given this range of activities it is hardly surprising that interdisciplinary is a concept of wide appeal. However, it is also one of wide confusion...First, there is a general uncertainty about the meaning of the term....Even today the interdisciplinary approach is often praised with no clear indication of what it is....The second major reason for confusion stems from

widespread unfamiliarity with interdisciplinary scholarship....Third...is the lack of a unified body of discourse (11-13).

Just over ten pages into the book, Klein highlights three major issues with the widespread use of the term and idea. She argues that “it” (interdisciplinarity) is universally praised without many people understanding what “it” is, much less how to create or replicate “it.” She then turns to a chronological narrative to explain the origins of the idea, giving credence to both earliest origins and then a brief history of the word/idea in the twentieth century. She explains:

For some [the concept of interdisciplinarity] it is quite old, rooted in the ideas of Plato, Aristotle, Rabelais, Kant, Hegel and other historical figures who have been described as *interdisciplinary thinkers*. For others it is entirely a phenomenon of the twentieth century, rooted in modern educational reforms, applied research, and movement across disciplinary boundaries. The actual term did not emerge until the twentieth century (19).

Klein then uses prose to situate the idea of interdisciplinary decade-by-decade throughout the twentieth century. For my purposes, condensing this information to an opening narrative explaining the origins of disciplines in the Middle Ages followed by a chronological table provides a helpful roadmap of where more research is warranted—both around the historical time period and sociocultural situations where the term began to achieve prevalence.²⁰ I believe this timeline is an important part of my document

²⁰ I have used the work of Klein and other authors on the subject of disciplinary/interdisciplinary studies to situate my own understanding of the etymology of the word and evolution of the idea. Bold chronological markers and headings are my own and reflect trends that I observed from this chronological ordering. Quotations are from Klein’s book unless otherwise noted.

because of the zeitgeist around interdisciplinarity. I am interested not only in how we got to a place where it is used as a Keyword, but also how it is almost invariably positive.

Middle Ages: Disciplines & Their Opponents

It is impossible to understand the formation of interdisciplinarity in education/the academy without understanding the idea of *disciplines*. In his book, *The Medieval Universities: Their Development and Organization*, A.B. Cobban writes:

By the late Middle Ages, the term *discipline* was being applied preeminently in three areas: at Paris, to theology and the arts; at Bologna, to the law; and at Salerno, to medicine. Both the legal and medical facilities were responding to pressures to harness education to professional, ecclesiastical and governmental needs. These demands for specialization were *external* to educational institutions, in contrast to later divisions promoted by the *internal* growth of knowledge in the 19th century (Cobban 8).

Klein extends this idea to the modern university. She writes, “As the modern university took shape, disciplinarity was reinforced in two major ways: industries demanded and received specialists, and disciplines recruited students to their ranks” (Cobban 21).

However, this movement was not without opposition. “Bacon, Descartes, the French Encyclopedists, Kant, Hegel, Comte...each expressed concern about the fragmentation of knowledge, and each, in his own way, articulated a vision of the unity of knowledge” (Cobban 20-21). Although some of those now thought of as the greatest thinkers of all time vociferously disagreed, a forward march took place that worked to “formalize” the pursuit of knowledge. For the approximately two hundred years that

followed, the necessity for both organization and innovation would dictate both education and government policy in the United States and Europe.

When	What	Commentary
Early 1800s	The University of Berlin is founded under Wilhelm von Humbolt's concept of "universal education." It faces enormous problems, some reminiscent of those we face today: "the structural organization of universities, the politics of individual disciplines, the question of whether connections can be made between individual disciplines and the question of whether any one concept could be so general as to include all the disciplines" (Voskamp 17-36).	
Late 1800s/Early 1900s	Formalization/curriculum design begins to take place. The departmentalization of disciplines can be dated: History 1884, Economics 1885, Political Science 1903, Sociology 1905 (Mayville 25-26).	
1920s: Problem-Based Interdisciplinary Work during Wartime	Social Science Research Council is formed under the argument that "problems in the postwar period were larger than the scope of any one discipline."	This introduces an important distinction. There is interdisciplinary work for the sake of being interdisciplinary (borrowing the best from multiple disciplines, appealing to more than one type of learner, etc.) and then there is "Problem-Based" interdisciplinary research and work. The government and physical sciences are fond of using the latter approach.
1930s-1940s: Integration & Science	"Marked by an effort to integrate scientific inquiry." Explorations of Encyclopedism/Area Studies (23-24).	
	"Integration" as key term/movement (27).	Interesting that this word is chosen given the time period and move towards desegregation in schools, Brown vs. Board of Education (1952), et cetera.

World War II/Mid-Century	“A number of synthetic theories were also having an impact on the structure of inquiry at mid-century” (29).	Marxism, General Systems Theory, Structuralism...
	“Interdisciplinarity was also being promoted by a rich variety of cross fertilizations still visible today” (30).	Most notably, the American Studies movement, joining English and History departments (30).
	World War II produced a need for people who could do a little of everything (32).	
	“In the years after 1945, the voices of methodological reintegration were still rather isolated, but they were to grow. In Europe interdisciplinary research was promoted as the model for a regenerated study of literature and, by the mid-1950s, similar voices were being heard in the United States” (32).	
	Burke “drew on Marxism, psychoanalysis, and Gestalt theory. Burke’s concept of symbolic action appeared subsequently in a number of different fields, including poetry, theology, metaphysics, diplomacy and historiography. There has been no single interdisciplinary approach in any of these fields” (31-32).	
	Manhattan Project (1942-1946): “cooperative effort among science, industry and the United States Army” (34).	
1960s-1970s: Major Funding & Name Recognition	“A slot in history when innovations could get support.” –Don Anderson, Sweden, 1984.	
	“Many people are inclined to associate the very concept of Interdisciplinarity with that remarkable era” (36).	
	Educational programs: “experimental, cluster, satellite.” “Majority were alternatives to traditional curriculum” (36).	
	“Interdisciplinarity was born of a sudden demand for the	

	universities to renew themselves.” -Ingemar Lind	
	Variety of US Agencies supported Interdisciplinarity activities: NSF, Carnegie Foundational, National Endowment for the Humanities, Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education.	
	1972: A book is published detailing the findings of the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation investigation. “Interdisciplinarity: Problems of Teaching and Research in Universities, the book is dominated by general systems and structuralists thinking of the seminar’s major theorists, among them Jantsch, Berger, Piaget, Apostel...Most widely cited reference on the subject of Interdisciplinarity...Across the disciplines teachers and scholars began reflecting on their own interdisciplinary activities aided by a new theoretical framework and typology of definitions for ‘multidisciplinary’ ‘pluridisciplinary’, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work” (37).	Big year!
	NSF organized a program called IRROPS Interdisciplinary Research Relevant to Problems of Our Society (34). Eventually evolved into the Research Management improvement Program (RMI). By the time its funding was terminated by the US Congress, RMI had distributed \$3,880,000 across 35 projects, almost half of them interdisciplinary. They also sponsored the first international conference on interdisciplinary problem-focused research in 1979 (35).	
	1979-1980: Second major book: <i>Interdisciplinarity and Higher Education</i> . “Essays by participants in a postdoctoral	

	<p>seminar on Interdisciplinarity held under the auspices of the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in the Humanities at Pennsylvania State University...definitions of Interdisciplinarity, interdisciplinary methodology, problems of designing and sustaining interdisciplinary research projects, historical perspectives on interdisciplinary education, and critiques of structuralism, general systems, and the unity of science movement as foundations for an adequate theory of Interdisciplinarity” (37).</p>	
	<p>“Chubin, Rossini and Porter found the literature on interdisciplinary problem-focused research is just over thirty years old, dating from a 1951 paper on problems of collaboration between an anthropologist and a psychiatrist. After 1969, however, the literature grew significantly: doubling from ’69-’72, then growing 120% from 1973-1977, and an additional 95 percent from 1978-1982.”</p> <p>“Interdisciplinarity: How Do We Know Thee?—A Bibliographic Essay,” in Interdisciplinary Analysis and Research (Mt. Airy, MD: Lomond, 1986). p. 427-429.</p>	
	<p>“The ‘reformists’ who support interdisciplinary movements are far outnumbered by ‘traditionalists’ who support interdisciplinary work but have doubts about interdisciplinary programs” (39).</p>	

Table 1: Interdisciplinary Timeline

Fact Check: Wow, that was a lot. And, when is the last time you actually close-read a table [that wasn't about a newborn sleeping schedule]? Elevator speech, please?

The creation of disciplines in the late 1800s led to both highly trained individuals (specialists) that populated academic departments, named for subject areas. This trend largely went unexamined until there was a need for cooperation in order to solve big problems caused by threat (and later reality) of war. And, although the way we fight evolves (trench warfare out, chemical and energy conflict in), conflict has been constant in America for the last century; and experts from vastly different areas remain in high demand. When resources are stretched thin, creative, multi-skilled thinkers become incredibly attractive, the hope being that one interdisciplinary person can fill many roles.

Fact Check: Why does your timeline end in the 1980s?

After the word and idea became prevalent in academia, there was less attention paid to establishing its existence. Instead, the focus shifted toward implementation, a process still complicated by terminology.

Part Two: Interdisciplinary ≠ Multidisciplinary ≠ Transdisciplinary

While it seems that defining interdisciplinary is neither especially difficult nor contentious, the practical implementation of the idea is both. Klein argues that part of the confusion around the idea may depend on the verbiage. She writes, “Terminological hierarchy has played a major role in shaping the way people think about Interdisciplinarity; and there is a general agreement on two core distinctions: between “multidisciplinary” and “Interdisciplinarity” and, in turn, between “Interdisciplinarity and “transdisciplinarity” (56). She explains that perhaps the wrong words are being used repeatedly, arguing “most purportedly ‘interdisciplinary’ activities are not ‘interdisciplinary’ but ‘multidisciplinary or pluridisciplinary.’ ‘Multidisciplinary

signifies the juxtaposition of disciplines. It is essentially additive, not integrative” (56). In other words, multidisciplinary can mean combining disciplines without actually doing the work required of interdisciplinary cooperation.

I see this happening frequently in educational situations. In pursuit of the benefits of interdisciplinary education, classes are combined without thought about how students from two (or more) disciplines can do equal work and enrich both their own learning experiences and those of their peers. In my own world, all too often, Arts Educators are invited into classrooms to supplement curriculum or provide diversionary elective experiences. This is not only insulting to “the Arts” as standalone disciplines, and the Arts Educator as a trained specialist, it is simply not interdisciplinary. Instead of achieving the highly sought-after label of interdisciplinary, these “discipline combining” situations fulfill Thompson’s definition of multidisciplinary.

Conversely, “Transdisciplinary” approaches are “far more comprehensive in scope and vision” (65). Citing Raymond Miller²¹, Klein explains, “Transdisciplinary approaches are conceptual frameworks that transcend the narrow scope of disciplinary world views, metaphorically encompassing the several parts of material handled separately by specialized disciplines.” In this approach, “disciplines become irrelevant, subordinate or instrumental to the larger framework” (66). She continues, “Some have also used the term ‘transdisciplinary’ to signify the breadth of certain fields...rhetoric, cultural futuristics, human population biology, peace research, anthropology” (66).

²¹ A professor of Social Science and former head of an interdisciplinary doctoral program at San Francisco State University.

In 2002, Michael Crow became the president of Arizona State University and quickly launched an initiative aimed at molding ASU as the New American University. Like many inter/multi/transdisciplinary endeavors, it is hard to define what exactly the New American University proposes to do or be, but the ideas of fusion and cooperation permeate the rhetoric surrounding the project. Promotional material features phrases like “knowledge enterprise” that combine terms often seen in business and education (“New American University”). Additionally, Crow has pledged to support various “knowledge initiatives” on campus that seek to combine individuals and resources from various departments on and off campus. For example, The Office of Knowledge Enterprise Development, “helps make discovery possible. [The Office works to]... promote innovation and entrepreneurship, and share what we learn in the community and the world.” A flow chart detailing the scope and work of the Office includes a section for “Transdisciplinary Institutes and Initiatives” (ASU Knowledge Enterprise Development). This inclusion signals the fact that Crow and others put stock into the idea of transdisciplinary work, but also works to serve a practical purpose: no organization gets left behind or overshadowed (as is sometimes the case in multidisciplinary work). Other examples of this work on ASU’s campus include Project Humanities as well as the public mission statement of The School of Sustainability. These three examples represent the execution of a stated commitment at ASU to what is often hailed as interdisciplinary thinking and practice, but actually fulfills Miller’s definition of transdisciplinary. Moreover, they mark a sort of zeitgeist in 21st century education. Williams might remind us that it is not only important that the ideas have garnered steam, but also that the words themselves appear with increasing regularity as well.

Specificity and avoiding confusion are the most obvious reasons for separating the terms *multidisciplinary* and *transdisciplinary* from *interdisciplinary*. However, using the words interchangeably (or incorrectly) is a deeper theoretical problem. Once again, Klein summarizes, “Any nomenclature, Kenneth Burke once pointed out, acts as a ‘terministic screen’ that filters, directs and redirects attention in certain directions rather than others. Thus terminology is not only a *reflection* of reality but, by its very nature, also a *selection* and a *deflection* of reality” (56). While I believe that most incorrect usage of the terms occurs without malice, misuse allows *interdisciplinary* to always be associated with positive intent rather than representative of practical application. Just as “multiculturalism” becomes problematic when used as an undefined positive, individuals and organizations using *interdisciplinary* as a catch-all idea that will “save” education are often selecting and deflecting, rather than understanding the nuance necessary to achieve the most positive aspects of the ideology.

K-12’s Interdisciplinarity = Project Based Learning

In Thompson’s narrative, the *problems* created by wartime necessitated the *solution* of interdisciplinarity. There is a similar problem/solution narrative at work in the case of K-12 education and Project Based Learning.

Seven years ago, I moved directly from standing in front of the K-12 classroom to sitting around a graduate seminar table. Perhaps because I had no break between the two, I was keenly aware of both the overlaps and divides between K-12 and higher education. While I never noticed a push toward (or even usage of the term) interdisciplinarity in the high school where I taught, the words that did achieve keyword-like status in our meetings were “engagement” and “Project Based

Learning.” I now argue that the confusion and altogether positive associations surrounding the word interdisciplinary in higher education are mirrored in K-12 by the phrase “Project Based Learning.” Because both terms are often seen as antidote for ills of the educational system, some explanation of how we got into a position that so desperately needs repair is warranted.

The Problem: According to Historians

Sir Ken Robinson has achieved an almost baffling degree of fame for an academic and author. Combined, his four TED talks have been watched over 58 million times (“TED Ideas Worth Spreading”). Though a British citizen, he extends his arguments to the entire Western educational system. He explains:

The problem is that the current system of education was designed and conceived and structured for a different age. It was conceived in the intellectual culture of the Enlightenment and in the economic circumstances of the Industrial Revolution (Robinson 2).

Here (and in numerous other speeches and interviews) he explains that, “schools are still pretty much organized on factory lines: ringing bells, separate facilities, specialized into separate subjects” (Robinson 3). Because Robinson has gained some degree of popular appeal this explanation can be read as simplistic; but provides a useful overview of the ideas of Michel Foucault and others who have written about the formation of the current educational system in an era so different from our own.

Foucault reminds us that there are some potentially *dangerous* practices reinforced everyday within the school system. David Chester writes, “Schools are what Foucault (and others) call *normalizing institutions*. In part Foucault means that, if only

because it is organized around the task of educating vast numbers of children, the secondary school setting is institutional and regimented...” (Chester). Chester, summarizing Foucault, offers multiple examples of this institutional regimentation including: precise schedules, rigidly designed physical spaces and control over the physical body (mealtimes, bathroom breaks). Repeated daily, the structure reinforces colonial discourses of power and status. Children are stripped of self-efficacy when they enter traditional classrooms. Those that question structures or refuse to conform to expectations are labeled as “problematic.” As a result, they are not intrinsically motivated to succeed, but rather encouraged to quietly behave in order to “progress” to the next level. Educator Ron Berger summarizes:

Most students, I believe, are caught on school treadmills that focus quantity of work rather than quality of work. Students crank out endless final products every day and night. Teachers correct volumes of low-quality work; it is returned to students and often tossed in the wastebasket. Little in it is memorable or significant, and little engenders personal or community pride (Berger 9).

While Robinson and Foucault write about Western education, US American historian Steven Mintz echoes Klein when writing about war as a source of upheaval. Mintz devotes a significant amount of space in *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* to the decade immediately following World War II, approximately 1945-1955. He explains that, in 1945, Charles Prosser, responsible for the Prosser Revolution argued that only 20% of American high school students should be trained/prepared for college, 20% should be educated in skilled trades and 60% should receive “more general education” in the fields of home economics and mechanics (Mintz 288). What Prosser did not do was

lay out any sort of plan for determining which students had access to which training and resources. That came two years later, when the Educational Testing Service was established in 1947, replacing essays for college admission with the standardized, multiple choice tests that we still use today (290). Both the Prosser Revolution, vociferously advocating for vocational education and the establishment of standardized tests were precursors to the most significant event of the decade: The Baby Boom. In 1952, 50,000 new classrooms sprung up across the North American landscape, with daily attendance up by 2 million (287). Resources were unquestionably tight, but given the tumultuous and fearful climate caused by the Space Race, President Eisenhower funneled a billion dollars into education...but only to those courses and classrooms that could support Science, Mathematics and Foreign Languages. Mintz does not explicitly make the argument that this is when our modern-day troubles with education began, but he does highlight the stress caused by the dual issue of thousands of new students, coupled with contrasting ideas of what they should actually be learning and doing in classrooms. Because Klein, Robinson, Foucault and Mintz identify (or are identified) as historians, it is not their work to propose solutions to the problems they illuminate. However, narratives of the dysfunctional, overburdened educational system (particularly in the United States) are historically often followed by intervention responses.

The Solution: Theory & Practice

In the early 1900s, John Dewey used his Laboratory School at the University of Chicago as a physical site of practical and theoretical intervention. Inspired by the ideas of Rousseau, Dewey hoped the classroom would be a democratizing space, where students could become active participants and agents of change in their communities,

rather than cogs in the assembly line system described by historians. In 1919, The Progressive Education Association was founded in the hopes of reforming American education, based largely on ideas in Dewey's 1916 book *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. In the hundred years since, multiple interventions and ideas have grown from the work of Dewey and other Progressive Educators, including: the Montessori Movement, Constructivist Learning Theory (the idea that students build their own knowledge from experiences and interactions, rather than rote memorization and regurgitation), Piaget's Learning Cycle Model and more. Each of these movements/ideas are worthy of both analysis and critique, but they share the idea that the system can be made better if students are allowed freedom for discovery.

Fact Check: These are some cool people and great ideas, but it seems like none of them have exactly “stuck.” Despite these interventions, our educational system is still in peril. What now?

As a teacher, I certainly gravitate towards Foucault's analysis and the interventions proposed by Dewey and Progressive Educators. And, today, I think that the intervention that is gaining the most steam marries both the theoretical ideas of Dewey and the practical approaches required by school boards and curriculum designers: Project Based Learning.

In any reform movement, there are buzz-words that continue to reappear. In the world of Progressive Education Reform, some of these words include: *creativity, pedagogical innovation, transformation, paradigm shift and interdisciplinary education*. Due to the ever-transient trends in educational theory, few of these words actually reach Keyword status, but serve as important markers of both dated and ideological time

periods. For the purposes of this exploration, I contend that the conceptual term *interdisciplinary* is being practically implemented in K-12 education as *Project Based Learning* (PBL). Although inter/multi/transdisciplinary efforts cannot “save” higher education and PBL is not a quick fix for K-12, the ideas contained in their theoretical and practical implementation seem to address at least some of the issues (normalization, forced structures, unmotivated students) plaguing our US educational system.

According to Edutopia, a website published by The George Lucas Educational Foundation, “Project Based Learning is a dynamic approach to teaching in which students explore real-world problems and challenges. With this type of active and engaged learning, students are inspired to obtain a deeper knowledge of the subjects they’re studying.” This definition, meant for public consumption is extended by educational scholars Krajick and Blumenfeld in *The Cambridge Handbook of the Learning Sciences*:

Project-based learning allows students to learn by doing and applying ideas.

Students engage in real world activities that are similar to the activities that adult professionals engage in. Project-based learning is a form of situated learning and it is based on the constructivist finding that students gain a deeper understanding of material when they actively construct their understanding by working with and using ideas (Krajcik, Blumenfeld 317-318).

Until recently, PBL has been utilized by *some* classroom teachers for *some* classroom projects. Because PBL depends on collaboration between students and academic disciplines, it is difficult to implement on a larger scale. However, in schools and

classrooms where it is being implemented on a large-scale, impressive results are occurring.

Large-Scale Case Study: High Tech High

In 2000, business leaders from around San Diego partnered with The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to establish High Tech High, a charter school that began with 200 ninth and tenth grade students. Now, 13 years later, the school encompasses a network of schools serving all K-12 grades, has a teacher certification program and most recently, opened a graduate school. The school is hailed as a model for PBL and frequently hosts visitors from schools around the country hoping to learn about this new model for education.

In the Fall of 2012, Brophy College Preparatory (Phoenix, Arizona) sent two teams of ten faculty members to study the work of High Tech High. In a personal interview, Ryan Hubbell, coordinator of Service Learning at Brophy, described his impressions of High Tech High. Asked about the physical space of the school, Hubbell observed:

Remember those dividers that your elementary school probably had? Well, High Tech High has those too; but they are almost always open. Every classroom becomes this wide-open space where multiple teachers are always present. The classrooms I observed had a science teacher, a math teacher, a humanities teacher and a member of the arts department working together with students on projects. There weren't really lectures—if something needed to be told to all students, it

was more of a mini-lesson. I guess you could just say there was lots of doing.

Oh! And art. There was art everywhere. All over the walls, in every classroom.

Amazing, amazing art (Hubbell).

As Hubbell showed me photographs of student art, he noted: “it is ironic that a school named High Tech High puts art at the center.” Not only does the name of the school reflect a strong relationship with technology, the school website is explicit about the history and founding mission of the school. It notes:

High Tech High was originally conceived by a group of about 40 civic and high tech industry leaders in San Diego...who met regularly from 1996 - 1998 to discuss the challenge of finding qualified individuals for the high-tech work force. In particular, members were concerned about the “digital divide” that resulted in low numbers of women and ethnic minority groups entering the fields of math, science, and engineering (“School Models Project”).

So, it is interesting that the website features portfolios of student work (often with a strong arts-emphasis) under the explanation, “These projects are examples of the work that is done at all of the High Tech High Schools. It is our record of what we have done and how to get there.” One high school project, entitled “Superhero in the Making” is summarized as:

This project integrates language arts and physics standards while tapping into students’ interests in comics and anime. Student pairs researched physics concepts such as magnetism, entropy, waves, thermodynamics, gravitation, and momentum to create superheroes or super-villains whose special powers embodied these concepts. They then developed short stories—and ultimately, colorful bound

comic books—starring their characters

(<http://www.hightechhigh.org/unboxed/issue1/cards/1.php>).

Students are personally invested in their work, partially because it is interesting and partially because the stakes are high. At the end of every year, students give “demonstrations of learning” which follow the format of TED Talks. In these performances, students discuss their work over the course of the year and offer examples, performance reviews from their peers and teachers and ideas for future innovation. Like actual TED Talks, these performances are attended by cultural and economic leaders across disciplines. In their 2011 annual report, High Tech High reported that 790 students have graduated from the school since 2003. 100% of graduates have been accepted to college, 80% to four-year institutions and 99% attend a college or university the Fall following graduation. Though it doesn’t appear that they have published an annual report since, the current website (last accessed June 2016) boasts “96% college acceptance, 66% to four year institutions.” Additionally, they’ve added, “34% of all graduates major in STEM, as compared with 17% nationally.”

Classroom-Sized Case Study: Ron Berger’s Sixth Grade

In his book *An Ethic of Excellence*, public school teacher Ron Berger describes his own experiences implementing PBL in his sixth grade classroom. Of one conference presentation of his work, he writes:

I show slides of my sixth-grade students managing a scientific project done to test the town’s homes for radon gas... After being featured in the media, the report was requested by towns all over the state, by the state radon commission, and by the federal radon commission. The slides show a classroom transformed into

something like a non-profit company... They did the analysis, wrote the report, responded to inquiries, and when the phone rang—whether it was a concerned family, the town lawyer, the media, or real estate agents—it was students who went down to the office to do the talking. How can kids be trusted with such important work, someone asks. Let me tell you, I say. Sometimes I need to be a tyrant for accuracy and quality in my classroom. Not this time. The students were scared to death. Scared that any possible error in their math would jeopardize the safety of a real family in town. Scared that their page in the report might have a grammatical or statistical error. Scared that the school would be in legal trouble if real estate values changed or if families moved based on mistakes in their data. These students checked their math, their spelling, their language, and their reasoning twenty times over before they rested easy. They begged me to check their work over again. This was not an exercise: It was real, important work that mattered to the world. Anything short of excellence would be intolerable (Berger 16-17).

Berger is no longer a classroom teacher, but an employee of Expeditionary Learning, a company dedicated to PBL education that operates schools in 30 states. This is especially significant because the company is a for-profit enterprise. A tab on the website stating “What We Offer” contains drop-downs for: Whole School Transformation; Professional Learning; Instructional Resources; Transformational Literacy Partnership. School districts, charter schools and homeschool collectives are willing to pay thousands of dollars in search of the narratives reminiscent of Berger’s

sixth graders and the students of High Tech High.²² Likewise, as a K-12 teacher, I have had positive experiences implementing PBL into my classrooms at a variety of grade levels. Each of the experiences has things that overlap: the ideas of stakes and reality appear, albeit in differing degrees. For students of High Tech High, there is a very real possibility that Bill Gates will be in attendance at an end-of-year Demonstration of Learning Talk. The work of Berger's *sixth graders* was used by state commissions to explore environmental issues. This work has nothing to do with rote memorization, regurgitation of facts or a march through standardized curriculum. Instead, it is dependent on student engagement and choice. In current literature surrounding literacy, "choice" is a crucial issue. Reporting the results of a 2001 study, literacy researchers Ivey and Broaddus noted that, "Adolescents ranked their classrooms as one of the *least likely places* to find the materials they want to read" (Hayn 63). They continued, "What most motivates adolescent readers in the English classroom? Free reading time, read-alouds, interesting materials, and choice" (73). ***I argue that these same principles apply to all K-12 classroom learning.*** Free time to explore and share, interesting materials, choice, agency and responsibility are foundational elements of PBL. 'When students are engaged and interested, they will generate meaningful work' is an idea that seems to be proven time and time again in schools like High Tech High and classrooms like Ron Berger's.

²² I include this to highlight the complicated nature of "solutions" to educational problems. Due to mounting frustration and little widespread change, school districts and concerned individuals are willing to outsource innovation in hopes of a "fix." Few students will benefit from the implementation of radical pedagogy in one classroom, one school or one district.

Fact Check: High Tech High and Berger are doing interesting work, to be sure.

However, these are two case studies...and you're arguing that these strategies could upend and improve the American educational system? How?

Implementing PBL on a large-scale is enormously difficult, but I believe the work being done by teachers like Ron Berger and employees of High Tech High reaffirms the idea that students who are engaged and motivated will demonstrate higher learning outcomes. However, in education journals, a pattern emerges when articles are published about PBL in classrooms. The article often features a first person narrative of one particularly successful project (Berger's radon gas project). While I believe that these narratives showcase excellence in teaching, I wonder what happens when those showcased students moved through the educational conveyor belt to a new subject or grade. High Tech High works, in large part, because of total adoption of PBL pedagogy. Small incremental changes and singular class projects are not enough. Returning to Ken Robinson, "Reforming education isn't enough. The real task is transformation. America urgently needs systems of education that live and breathe in the 21st century. This is a large task and it can't be put off" (The Huffington Post, 2-11-09).

Fact Check: So, Project Based Learning and Interdisciplinarity are the transformations we need?

Could be. Certainly worthy of further exploration and action research.

Fact Check: Say more about that. In your own words, please.

Not (My) Standard Conclusion: Problems & Questions to Consider

Because of my own training in debate and persuasive speaking, I know to introduce a problem with a relatable narrative (here, Raymond Williams's *Keywords*), situate the problem in a time and place (feeling of excitement around the concept of Interdisciplinarity as a solution to the current educational crisis catalyzed by the Industrial Revolution and/or World War II) and propose a concrete solution (Project Based Learning).²³ To conclude, I should reiterate the urgency of the idea ("this is a large task and it can't be put off") and return to the relatable narrative (re-quoting Robinson). This is how I have been taught to organize and present my thoughts. It has largely served me well over the course of my K-21 educational career. However, completely transforming the educational system does not honestly fit into a three-point argumentative structure.

I do believe that PBL is closely tied to the often hailed, but frequently undefined, ideas of interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary education. I also believe it is exciting, innovative and has the potential to address issues of boredom and unmotivated students in classrooms across the United States. However, there are unanswered questions and issues that I cannot succinctly explain in an argumentative essay.

First, any change is going to be met with resistance. Changing a system that has been active and operational for centuries will be met with difficulty and perhaps

²³ A survey of educational reform literature suggests that problems are met with solutions. As White and Lowenthal note, "The rhetoric of each major epoch in American history has carried with it a fervor for reforming schools..." (White, Lowenthal 1). However, the very use of the term "failing schools" is worthy of rhetorical analysis. When a school or educational system is described as "failing", the source of the problem is obfuscated. Are teachers failing? Students? Administrators? Physical buildings? How?

resentment. Though curriculum can be designed and standards can be created, PBL in the classroom will require the most work and implementation from teachers, and this may require a new skill set. High Tech High extensively trains their *own* teachers, hiring individuals directly out of college/graduate school who were not Education majors. Not only does the widespread implementation of PBL change the landscape of K-12 education, it changes the entire system: what happens to college departments of Education? How will student teaching work? Does full-support of PBL necessitate devaluing the work of Education departments at universities across the country?

Additionally, because much of PBL is skill-based, the idea of finding your talents and passion is vastly more important than performance on a standardized test. Will this be the solution to the ever-growing issue of fewer employees being trained for technical jobs and too many people going to college because it is an expected “next step?” How will students explain to their upper-middle class parents that, through PBL, they have unearthed a passion for landscaping and wish to professionally apprentice rather than following the family legacy to Harvard Medical School?

Second, I worry and wonder about the “falling through the cracks” effect that PBL may have on certain subjects and certain students. If a school implementing PBL was to hire a disproportionate amount of teachers with math/science backgrounds, would the arts be underrepresented? Conversely, if the makeup of school faculty was heavy on liberal arts experts, would students become deficient in the areas of math and science? If given the agency to choose my own projects as a K-12 student, I would have always volunteered to be the researcher, writer or speaker in a group, rather than one of the technical experts responsible for building something or conducting trial and error

experiments. On the other hand, I yearned to have educational agency long before college. From an early age, I knew that I would grow up to do something that had little to do with math, so felt no need for anything beyond simple addition, subtraction, multiplication and division skills. When teachers told me that I would use math every day, I believed that I would use the skills necessary to balance a checkbook or “half” one of my grandmother’s enormous recipes—but little beyond that. While this seems like the internal monologue of a petulant child—I was correct. Still, there is value in exposing students to all areas of curriculum. With teachers and students having the freedom to work primarily in the areas of their passion, will they neglect to find areas outside of their comfort zones that might surprise them?

Third, because of the time commitment required for projects like those of Ron Berger’s class or the students of High Tech High, there is newfound depth to education, but loss of breadth. In describing the potential problems associated with PBL, Hubbell noted, “There are some people who think the amount of material covered becomes condensed. For example, some kids at High Tech High may graduate and never study World War II. They are big on giving you skills and not content.” Because we have been operating from an Enlightenment-era position of “essential” knowledge, it is difficult to imagine US American students graduating without knowing things about World War II. However, for advocates of PBL, memorization of historical facts is little more than preparation for Jeopardy.

There are certainly questions and complications involved with a new educational system. However, it seems to me that PBL is the closest we can come to true transdisciplinary education that puts students at the center of their own knowledge

acquisition, using constructivist ideas to scaffold their own learning. The examples I have studied reflect that PBL is a way to give students agency over what and how they should be taught. It is also a way to incorporate arts techniques and skills into systems and subject areas that have never fully acknowledged their value. There are more arguments to be made and more questions to be asked; but like PBL, revolutionary reform must start with a problem, then inspire exploration before finally teaching us all that there is value in asking the questions without already knowing the answers.

SUBTOPIC THREE: TEACHER

Well, class we've about reached the end of our Show. Today, we've covered the history of a theatrical event that has reached thousands as well as a great deal of background information about the educational system in a time of potentially perilous—or exciting—transition.

Fact Check: Why are you talking like that?

Please don't interrupt. Do you have a question?

Fact Check: Why are you using the "I'm an adult and I'm done voice?"

I'm just really not sure what there is left to cover.

Fact Check: Why. Does. This. Matter. When. Am. I. Ever. Going. To. Use. This.

Oh! I get it. Annoying questions you ask a teacher.

Fact Check: That's what I'm here for.

Sub-Fact Check: not really.

My involvement with the ESAZ has run parallel to my time as a doctoral student in Theatre for Youth and Theatre and Performance of the Americas at Arizona State University. As such, much of my work with the Show has focused on Theatre and Education. In the pages that follow, I will explore the original question of "Can The Encyclopedia Show be implemented into classrooms to achieve the goals of interdisciplinarity?" while discussing both my procedure and results.

Fact Check: Wouldn't it be more fun if you just told them the story of when you accidentally said the F-word at the chalkboard in your ninth grade classroom?

That is not within the scope of this project.

CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION: BROPHY COLLEGE PREPARATORY

In the Spring of 2014, I was approached by administrators at Brophy College Preparatory School²⁴ with an opportunity to teach a for-credit summer class in United States History to students who would enter eleventh grade in the Fall. To fulfill state credit requirements, the class would meet for 4.5 hours a day, 5 days a week, for 5 weeks. My own background is *not* in United States History, but I do have a great deal of knowledge and passion surrounding the subject. I was approached, in part, *because* I do not have a background in the subject. Encouraged by administration to think outside the box, I was provided curriculum as a starting point, but not expected to follow it.

The first day of class very much set the tone for the rest of our month together. I was open with students that I wasn't delusional enough to believe that five weeks of 4.5 hour days of US History would be "fun"; but that one of my core principles as a teacher has two parts: Don't be bored, don't be boring. We entered into a sort of contract to remember those tenets.

After brief introductions, I asked students to read the Introduction and Conclusion to James Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*. Loewen's introduction masterfully sets a tone for a history class that hopes to be engaging, progressive and different. He explains several hypotheses for why students hate history, largely blaming the problematic nature of history textbooks (Loewen). In their written responses, my students latched on to this idea. They also added that they learned the same things every year; and were lucky to get to Civil Rights and the 1960s before the school year ended...every year. I distinctly remember one of my

²⁴ Jesuit; Catholic; all-male; grades 6-12; 2016-2017 tuition \$14,650; 1275 high school students.

students writing something to the effect of, “I have learned about the Great Railroad Strike at least three times. You are *never* going to make me care about the Great Railroad Strike.”

Next, we moved on to a “Chalk Talk.” During a Chalk Talk, a question is posed on the chalkboard (or, in our case, dry erase but not as jaunty a rhyme) by the teacher. Then, students circulate four or five dry erase markers, responding to each other and adding new ideas only in writing. Ideally, a chalk talk should be silent. Mine asked students to complete the phrase, “As a scholar of US History, I want to know/we should know...” For over twenty minutes, students wrote and passed dry erase markers back and forth to each other and added information to our board including: Civil Rights leaders and their motives, Underground Railroad, Why England wanted to expand but not let people have control, Why/How/When the Cold War started, How the Industrial Revolution shaped America, Who killed JFK... and on, and on, and on (see figure 2).

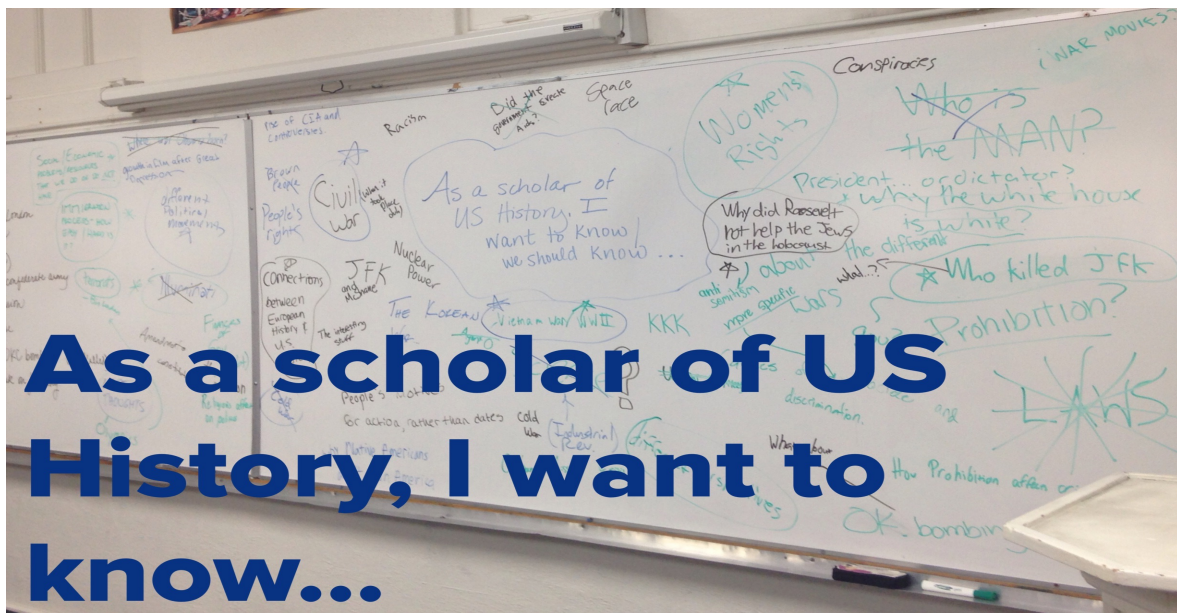


Figure 2: Day One Chalk Talk, Brophy College Preparatory, Summer 2014.

It was immediately clear that these students were both informed and curious; and above all, excited at the prospect of not being bored in Summer School United States History.

From the beginning of my interactions with the administration and even now, I am surprised by the amount of freedom I had to design my own curriculum, assessments and even standards. The greatest challenge in the course was also a gift: the amount of uninterrupted time with these students. 4.5 hours a day, 5 days a week, 5 weeks. I knew when designing the final project that students could complete most of the work during class time.

During my sophomore year of college, I learned the phrase “intrinsic motivation” and it was a light bulb moment into understanding myself as a learner. I knew immediately why I did better in some classes than others—levels of care and investment. In short, if I care, I’m going to work hard. I suspect that the same is true for most students, whether they know the term or not. While preparing to teach thirty boys in summer school, I knew that I wanted their final projects to be largely self-motivated at all levels, from initial topic choice to format decisions regarding final projects. Around the same time, I was also wrestling with how to fuse the dozens of hours I was spending on campus working on The Encyclopedia Show with the dozens of hours I was spending in Theatre and Education doctoral coursework. I began to realize that The Encyclopedia Show offers both framework and freedom, two elements I have observed facilitate actual education in classrooms I admire.

Methodology & Procedures

Having already had a few preliminary conversations with teachers who were audience members and fans of the show, I had been thinking about a simple set of

Guidelines to Create a Classroom Encyclopedia Show:

1. Pick a topic and title the show. Ours would be “United States History: What the Textbook Forgot.” An English class could choose “Poetry 1900-1950.” Science: “Periodic Table of Elements.” Math: “Women in Geometry.”
2. Ask students to propose subtopics, either as a classroom brainstorming activity or individual writing exercise.
3. Set practical guidelines, including time limits for individual pieces.
4. Optional: choose a “host” or emcee for the show. This will help the students have agency, and make the show their own, rather than something you have to moderate.²⁵
5. “Program” the show. Once drafts start coming in, arrange performances to vary in genre (art, poetry, narrative, research presentation).
6. If time allows, contextualize the history of The Encyclopedia Show and watch some example videos. Explain the idea that their own knowledge and contributions will now enter into a larger volume, with people around the world who have performed in this sort of research-based performance.
7. Deliberately limit rehearsal of the complete Show. Students should be surprised and entertained by what they see for the first time.²⁶ This is not to suggest that individual

²⁵ This absolutely fell through the cracks during *United States History: What the Textbook Forgot*.

²⁶ With a class of 30 students, the run-time of our final Show was 2+ hours, so keeping interest was necessary.

student performances/shares should not be rehearsed, but consider small groupings or acts rather than the complete show.

8. Invite “outsiders” to the performance. This raises the stakes and takes the spotlight off of teacher as official (an issue also helped by #4).

During week two at Brophy, I introduced the final project by distributing a handout and answering subsequent questions. The header of the handout read: *The Encyclopedia Show: What the US History Textbook Forgot*. It detailed the first assignment, which would be an Initial Proposal. It explained, “For our final project, you and your classmates will create a variety show about the untold stories of United States History. The show will have eight ‘acts’ under the themes²⁷ of our class” (Hill, Appendix I). After listing the class themes, the handout provided questions for consideration and requirements for the Initial Proposal, including examples. “I am looking for a one-page document that details: What object/person/idea you are thinking about for your final project. Be as specific as possible. ‘Sports’ is not specific. Sports, specifically the importance of horse racing during the Great Depression, is getting there!” (Hill, Appendix I).

After reading and discussing the handout, I answered a handful of questions and went on with the business of the day. The barrage of questions came the next morning, both before the school day began and when I asked for questions shortly after class

²⁷ The eight themes of United States History at Brophy College Preparatory are: Colonial America; Role of American Government; America’s Evolving Demographics; Struggle for Equal Rights; Insurrection in America; American Expansionism; Mobilization of America (action in wartime); America’s Relationship with the World. Instead of marching chronologically through history, these topics are used as framework and readings from the textbook are used to supplement lessons, not guide the order of the class. This framing seems far more progressive and effective than the way I remember 11th grade US History.

commenced. It was clear that the students had ruminated the night before, and even talked about the project with parents who provided ideas from their own historical interests and family histories.

A few days later, I provided a second handout *Final Project Guidelines and Requirements: The Encyclopedia Show US History: What the Textbook Forgot*, (Hill, Appendix J) that detailed logistics, including: a work schedule, how much class time would be dedicated to the project, presentational and grading logistics and source requirements. Without telling students, I designed the entire assignment with Common Core State Standards in mind. Though Brophy is a private school and the freedom I was allowed did not necessitate meeting Common Core standards, I constantly asked myself, “Could this creative project be replicated in more traditional classrooms across the country?” As such, my requirements emphasized and mandated the incorporation and analysis of both primary and secondary sources, a major emphasis of the eleventh grade History/Social Studies standards.²⁸

From the time that I introduced the project to the time when students presented the projects, three weeks had elapsed. During this time, I talked to students casually about my own experiences with The Encyclopedia Show and we watched example videos of five-minute performances from cities across the United States, which are widely available online and searchable via YouTube. We watched some of my favorite performances, which are usually either uproariously funny or deeply moving; and others which are, in no way, standouts. I didn’t want my students to feel like they had to be *performers* to be successful in their own classroom Encyclopedia Show. Watching the videos from across

²⁸ <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/>

the country served multiple purposes. First and most practically, it made their understanding of timing more concrete. Students initially balked at the idea of “performing” for 5-7 minutes, but quickly noted that this is not actually a great deal of time. Second, it helped students feel like a part of something bigger, connecting them to performers in cities across the world. Though I am not certain they internalized the idea of being part of an encyclopedia that acknowledges diversity of experience and narrative, they very much felt like this project had more real-world application and effect than their typical classroom assignments. Finally, these examples provided mentor texts that celebrated non-literal, creative, out-of-the-box thinking. Watching a performer pontificate about “Cheese” in the show dedicated to The Moon provided not only some chuckles, but also freedom and artistic license to create.

Assessment

Check-ins throughout the entire process were a major part of my own assessment of the classroom implementation of the Show. I asked students to provide proposals of material, rough and final drafts and eventually, a critical self-assessment of their own work and also their notes on other performances. Perhaps because the final project itself drew from multiple disciplines, I found myself having to create all assessments from scratch. In their article “Assessing Interdisciplinary Learning”, authors Field, Lee and Field note, “No standard curriculum provides an index against which students’ acquisition of knowledge can be measured” (Field, Lee, Field 70). While they are discussing Interdisciplinary *programs*, they continue: “While the lack of a standard curriculum in interdisciplinary programs is usually thought of as a major disadvantage for the assessment of interdisciplinary education, it may be a major advantage in that it

requires us to focus on the development of intellectual capacity in the student rather than on a fixed body of information (70-71). In short, there was no quick checklist or rubric for grading these assignments. Instead, I made my expectations clear at various points throughout the process and asked students to frequently report back on the status of their projects. While this likely created more work for all of us, it also created more investment on the part of the students.

The *Final Project Self Assessment* (Hill, Appendix K) asked students to elucidate upon: strengths and weaknesses of their projects and the assignment as a whole, what they would do with more time²⁹ and memorable presentations by peers. It also asked them to enumerate how many points of their grade should come from each area (Creative, Written and Oral/Presentational). Because agency and choice were major factors of the entire project, it was important for me to include them at the end as well.

Outcomes & Results

On the final days of class, I reserved the black box performance space at Brophy for final presentations. While our classroom probably would have provided adequate space for most presentations and performances, I felt that a change of venue would raise the stakes. Not only were students pleased to leave our classroom space, an air of formality was added by the change of venue. Additionally, a few administrators and faculty members dropped by to see what we'd been up to for the past few weeks.

²⁹ I was first asked "What would you do with more time?" on a self-assessment in a college English course taught by Professor Ann Green at Saint Joseph's University. Professor Brian Herrera of The University of New Mexico also often asked this question when we would turn in "piles of pages" at the end of each semester rather than "final papers." Each time I am asked, it seems revolutionary to me. The idea that evaluation occurs at a predetermined point rather than having something to do with "doneness" is a lesson I constantly work to internalize.

It has now been over two years since *The Encyclopedia Show United States History: What the Textbook Forgot* opened and closed in a black box theatre at Brophy College Preparatory School in Central Phoenix. However, there are still projects that I remember. Edward, a self-identified jock who probably would have rather been anywhere else than summer school United States History, organized and facilitated an entire Ping-Pong tournament under his chosen topic: *Ping Pong and America's Relationship to China*. Several students created board games dealing with American Expansionism that we played during the last days (and minutes) of class. Matt and Max, extremely gifted and funny students with major loyalties to the Phoenix Suns self-published *Your Guide to Wheat and Corn Throughout the American Wars: A Cookbook* and provided some very...dry...homemade samples to their audience. Joe, speech and debate nerd after my own heart, created a radio play about the history of medical interventions in the United States. Carter, a quiet student, asked me if he could be scheduled to present after a 10-minute break and if the performance space could be cleared (myself included) during that break. When we returned to the black box, the space had been transformed into an art gallery. Mounted photographs lined the walls, while stark, projected text read: *Photography in War*.

Of course, there are also performances and projects I can now only recall because I saved their written components and self-evaluations. Jorge was particularly passionate about the role of John Deere during American Expansionism, but his passion was not easily translated to an audience. Interestingly, the projects that I most remember are not always the projects that made an impression on students. The final question on the *Final Project Self Assessment* (Appendix K) reads, "Of all the presentations...which stuck out

to you as particularly well done? Which made you think/which will you remember and why?" The diversity represented in these answers is a point of pride for me. While I promptly forgot about Jorge's love of John Deere, someone else in the class found it incredibly informative.

In the Appendix, I have included all of my original materials for introducing and evaluating the project. Across the board, it seems that my students found themselves engaged in the project and in the creation of a Show. The final days of our class had stakes raised far beyond those of a final exam or standard oral presentation. Because students were given so much freedom with all facets of the assignment, presentations and performances were personal. No one could blame a weak final project on boredom with the topic or assignment, as all facets were individually student driven.

While there are certainly things I would attempt to add or do differently in the future, I also believe that this work can be replicated in classrooms across the country and that the replication is not dependent on someone with a connection to The Encyclopedia Show. As an arts educator, I believe strongly that my job lies in providing artistic and pedagogical support, while respecting the disciplinary expertise of other classroom educators. I also know that "the arts" should never be used as a diversionary extracurricular, but incorporated into every facet of a classroom in the interest of creating something new—hopefully even, something transdisciplinary.

I believe that The Encyclopedia Show "worked" in my classroom and I believe it can find new life (without much difficulty) in others. My metric for assessing that "it worked" involves student engagement, intrinsically motivated final products and Common Core standards that were met. It is more difficult to quantify the feeling that

happened in the room when I saw boys who seemed to hate summer school smile and laugh while impressing all of their classmates with knowledge of aviation in post-World War II conflicts. In Theatre, Joseph Roach talks about the “It” factor. Some performers have “it” and some do not, and what “it” is resists description. Similarly, Victor Turner writes of the “liminal zone”—a space that exists in the in-between where theatrical magic can happen. The boys in my classroom noted that this final project was unlike others they had been assigned. I’m certain that not *all* students found it magical, but there was a breakage from the expected that resulted in some discomfort, some growth...and, hopefully for some, magic.

Feminist philosopher bell hooks notes, “As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another’s voices, in recognizing one another’s presence” (hooks 8). Not only did students work to create text surrounding their own individual interests, they were then required to share it—and thus, themselves, with a larger classroom community. Eleventh grade boys chose what they wanted to write about and then were directly responsible for transmitting it to an audience in an interesting way. Additionally, the freedom I was granted by private-school administration facilitated what Henry Giroux would call an *emancipatory pedagogical environment*. He writes:

It is important to stress that unless teachers have both the authority and the power to organize and shape the conditions of their work so that they can teach collectively, produce alternative curricula, and engage in a form of emancipatory politics, any talk of developing and implementing progressive pedagogy ignores

the reality of what goes on in the daily lives of teachers and is nonsensical (Giroux 107).

I know that few classroom teachers have *carte blanche* with regards to shaping curriculum or even daily classroom agendas. However, because I challenged myself to implement the Encyclopedia Show under Common Core standards and because it can serve as a vehicle for delivering more rigid content and curriculum, I believe it has the potential to create a classroom that exists in a liminal zone—somewhere between rigid state standards and a truly exciting, emancipatory environment.

While Roach, Turner, hooks and Giroux write with varying degrees of specificity when discussing ideal conditions for teaching, learning and performance, my own less-eloquent theory remains: “don’t be bored, don’t be boring.” Standards can be achieved. A practice of freedom can be created. And, maybe someday, someone will craft a performance that makes us all care about the Great Railroad Strike.

CONCLUSION

Well, we've reached the end of our Show. As is custom, I'll turn it over to the Fact Checker to see how we did on the side of Truth today.

Fact Check: Well, if my calculations are correct, it looks like you first introduced yourself and explained your last five *and a half* years in Arizona; then discussed The Encyclopedia Show as a theatrical event that warrants space in the archive; then tracked the rise of Interdisciparity in higher education and Project Based Learning in K-12 classrooms while subsequently arguing that the Encyclopedia Show could serve as a mechanism for achieving the ideals of these ideas; before finally describing and analyzing work you did in a high school United States History classroom with 30 boys in 2014.

When you list it all out that way, it sounds so dry.

Fact Check: Well, those are the Facts. Isn't that what you wanted in the first place? A document that did those things while removing your body, experiences and voice?

But listing it that way misses the way I finally told the story. I included myself in the document in the hopes of creating a more truthful narrative, representative of not only what I've done and what is important to me, but also how I moved through the process.

Fact Check: (*Fumbles through papers, looking for an outline*) I'm lost. What section is this? Are you Historian? Academic? Teacher?

Yes.

Fact Check: Which?

All. And.

Fact Check: And?

Yes. And. I identify myself in this document as historian, academic and teacher; but that doesn't cover all that I've done in the last five years with The Encyclopedia Show or graduate school...much less life.

Fact Check: Do you need to add another subtopic? Another role you've played?

Student? Writer? Reader? Performer?

Yes. And.

When I started my teaching career in the ninth grade English classroom and was tasked with creating my own curriculum, I devised the theme, "The way we craft our narratives." More simply, I explained to students on that first day in Albuquerque, "the different ways that stories are told." That year, we moved through a variety of texts: graphic novels, documentaries, plays, flash fiction...all excursions in the different ways of telling a story. It is my hope that this document, in a variety of different voices, tells the story of The Encyclopedia Show, interdisciplinarity and arts-based research in the non-arts-based classroom.

I hope that this writing performs an authentic narrative of my work. Della Pollack explains, "Performative Writing is subjective...[a] relation of being and knowing that cuts back and forth across multiple 'divisions' among selves, contexts, affiliations" (Pollack 86). Perhaps because I am a product of an educational system that still creates disciplinary boundaries, I have divided my whole self into the categories of historian, academic and teacher. While they are helpful for organizational purposes, the intersections of these roles is where the exciting work of transdisciplinarity—the act of creating something new—happens.

Continuing, Pollack explains that one way to attempt performative writing is as: “...A drama or iteration among voices divided up into separate characters or selves” (88). The “selves” represented by the subtopics in this document are Historian, Academic and Teacher; but also Performer and Writer, based on how I have chosen to tell the story. Though I resisted including my own voice into my research for years, I have begun to realize that leaving it out is akin to knowing that evidence exists and failing to include or acknowledge it because the fit is not always exact.

Returning to Pelias, “My search for form is an autobiographical quest that uses the data of everyday life, real and imagined, to articulate a self, to find a self’s center. It lets me become a traveler who is always asking how I might make sense of what is before me and how I might fit in” (71). I am grateful to the homes I have found in history, academia and education for helping me to define a self. I am grateful to writing and performance for giving me the voice to articulate that self.

Fact Check: You asked your Brophy students what they would do with more time...so, what’s next for you? Add to this pile of pages.

Today, I find myself increasingly interested in the way we talk about our schools and classrooms in the United States. It seems that politicians (and even famous people giving TED Talks) love to talk about failing schools and why we should compare our classrooms to those in Finland, but this seems to be narrative trope or political bargaining chip rather than call to action. Even when used most altruistically, very little is catalyzed by the rhetoric of failure. I believe that language and word choice matter and I’m interested in exploring how the stories of US classrooms are being told.

Also, I have realized in the past decade that my career trajectory is not a clear path. When I entered the doctoral program in Theatre, I imagined that I would eventually seek employment as a professor at a Research I university. I'd write books about theatre history and teach upper division classes. Because of my recurring assignment teaching Arizona State University's Theatre and Film foundational major class (Dramatic Analysis) and my own history in middle and high school classrooms, I have learned that I love teaching students "the basics." Perhaps the most energized I ever was in the classroom was when I asked a group of ninth graders if they knew what logos, pathos and ethos were. They all looked at me with baffled faces and a few managed to shake their heads and I was so excited to be the first person to teach them a concept I have used so often in both school and life. The same feelings have been aroused by mini-lectures on sentence construction, proofreading and thesis statements.

Fact Check: So you're headed back to the high school or undergraduate classroom?

Ideally, the career that I find allows me to analyze and/or develop curriculum and educational policy while keeping a foot in the classroom. I also hope to utilize my writing and performance skills along the way. Finally, I'd like some flexibility to sometimes work from home for health and family purposes.

Fact Check: I don't think that job exists.

Yet.

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APPENDIX A

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA SHOW

PERSONAL EMAIL EXCHANGE: MICHELLE HILL & SHANNON MANEY

Questions: Michelle Hill

Answers: Shannon Maney, Co-Creator of *The Encyclopedia Show*

June 23, 2016

-Why did the Show start? What gave you and Robb [Telfer, co-creator] the idea for it?

The show started soon after I had moved back to Illinois from Ithaca. Robb and I had been talking about starting some sort of something even before we moved, and he mentioned the idea for the show. The concept was all Robb, lightly stealing from Jonathan Messinger's show called The Dollar Show (?), in which people were given a random object from a dollar store about which they needed to write a piece.

The reason that we started it was because we were really hoping to bring communities together. Like anywhere, a lot of the literary scene in Chicago was fragmented and isolated, whether by genre or style or age or aesthetic. We wanted a space where a 15-year old poet could share a stage with a 60-year old playwright, a 30-year old comedian, a 40-year old musician, etc. And it largely worked.

-When cities asked to join the EShow, what agreements did they make? All cities were asked to follow the same topic list for the first year, yes? Anything else? Were they required to have Fact Checkers/Hosts?

Hmmm, I bet I could scrounge up some old emails about this. The format had to be the same--host(s), fact checker, topic order, the general aesthetic. For a while, we tried to keep the logos and branding all the same. Above all else, our rule was "no assholes"-- no one who was an asshole could run a show or have a large stake in the show or perform in the show. That was hard to enforce because sometimes you don't know who's an asshole until it's too late.

-What cities had shows? Any other groups?

I hope this is a complete list: Chicago, Austin, New York City, Boston, Providence, Albuquerque, Minneapolis, Indianapolis, Omaha, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Seoul, Vancouver, Berlin, St. Paul, Oklahoma City, Portland and Tempe For a few years, we did a show at the National Poetry Slam. Robb hosted a couple at Brave New Voices. We ran shows at the Wisconsin Book Festival, Chicago's Printer's Row Festival, a number of colleges and events. Robb did a couple in Germany. We did a show for the Atlanta Science Festival. I'm sure I'm missing a ton--there was a spell where it felt like we were prepping a few shows a month, which is a huge amount of work.

-Any constant struggles?

I think the largest struggle was maintaining the huge workload while trying to leave enough energy to be creative and inspired enough to keep pushing for new and more ideas. Each show requires a huge amount of prep work, from conceiving of the theme to researching topics to communicating with each contributor, to manning each element of the show, to making sure we're selling enough tickets to pay for the space, and so on. The hardest part for us was trying to get each step of it done and still trying to push ourselves. Personally, it was extremely challenging by the end--I lived 2+ hours from Chicago, worked 6 days a week as a teacher/coach, so the only day I could meet (electronically) was on Sundays, which I also needed to use for grading. It was exhausting.

-Most proud of (for show as a whole)?

There are a lot of individual shows that stick out in my brain as being particularly transcendent--not because of anything we did, but just because of the work that the contributors did. Robb used to describe the perfect topic as being not one of the cool

kids--the less acknowledged, under-appreciated facts and features of recorded knowledge. I think the show is a nice flashlight to explore those concepts and ideas. Beyond that, we really and truly did achieve our goal of mixing communities and exposing people in the city of Chicago to people and work that they might not have seen otherwise. I like thinking about the moments right after each show, when people would beeline toward each other to express their appreciation for one another, to request more information, to buy a book or a CD from someone. It was a wonderful tool for helping build community. That's probably what I am most proud of.

-Any hopes for what you'd like to see for the Show in the future? Or what you hope it is remembered for?

This is tricky. I am still at a point where when I remember The Encyclopedia Show, I get tired. :) It was so much work. There are so many things that could still be done that we never had time to do--compiling a few anthologies of work produced for Encyclopedia Shows, editing our old audio for radio, I always feel like there is the potential for a great webcast or something? But it's easier to think about legacy. I really hope that people remember it like this special, weird, funny and cool thing that happened. For it to inspire creativity for people. Heck, I don't know. I just want it to have been good.

These answers are terrible. I had to use a dictionary to make sure I was saying what I meant. Let me know if there are obvious holes.

APPENDIX B

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA SHOW ARIZONA

“CIRCUS FREAKS” BY MEG HOWELL-HAYMAKER

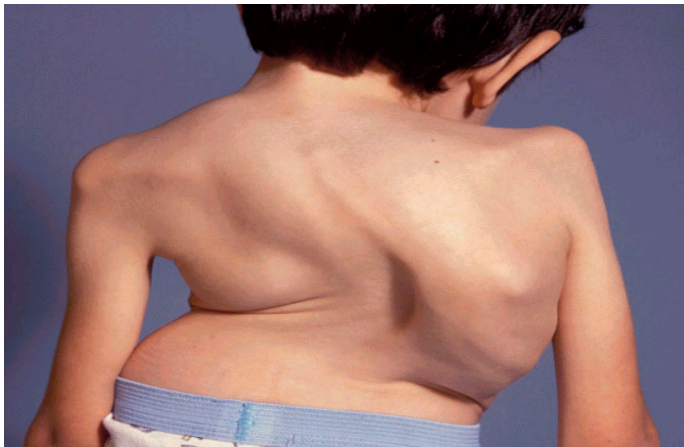
Circus Freaks

Meg Howell-Haymaker

The Encyclopedia Show: Arizona. The Circus. May 2013.

(Pictures signify slides to accompany performance, to be projected behind performer as she narrates).

Welcome. I am your teacher this evening. My name is Ms. Meg Howell-Haymaker. At the beginning of every school year, I begin each class with a bit of information about myself. For those of you who may have never seen me around campus, I saw that look in your eye when you walked in. The eyes said, “Oh my gosh, is that the teacher?”



There is no need to worry...it isn't contagious, I wasn't injured in a car accident or by some wacko chiropractor. I was born this way. It is called kyphoscoliosis. It is at this point where those 14 year old kids I teach who have been told they have scoliosis start having heart palpitations. “Oh my God, am I going to end up looking like that?” No, I was born this way; with all these wonderful curves. Now that the introductions and fears are out of the way, let's begin the lesson.

Tonight's topic is the Circus Sideshow Freak. Something not many of you may not have much experience with because you are all so beautiful...well, you may understand what I am talking about.



Freak shows began making appearances in the mid-16th century in Europe as exhibitions. For the first time in history, deformities and the deformed were seen as curiosities instead of as spiritual omens, witches or the cursed (being punished for wrongs done in a prior life). Man-o-man, I am glad I was born when I was.

Previously hidden from society, enslaved, imprisoned and often tortured to death, life for the deformed slowly began to change with the advent of the freak show. People would come from miles away to stare at the giant man, the 4 legged girl, the dog-faced boy, and the elephant skinned woman. It was by no means a normal life but these sideshow freaks

were actually proud they could support themselves and their families even if it meant exhibiting their oddities for the curiosity or pleasure of others. By the way I just want to thank Nick so much for inviting me and assigning me a topic I know so much about. We aim to please.



One of the earliest freak shows occurred in the court of Charles I when Lazarus and Joannes Baptista Colloredo, conjoined brothers born in Genoa, Italy visited England. In fact Lazarus, who was considered quite courteous and handsome, traveled all over Europe to make a living exhibiting himself and his parasitic brother who dangled from his chest.



Here we have the Little Man from Nuremberg. Now don't be too quick to judge by the appearance of Matthew Buchinger. He was quite the man. He supported himself by traveling throughout Europe as a musician and artist (this is in fact a self portrait. He was also quite the ladies' man. He was married 4 times and fathered at least 14 children with

8 women although it is rumored that he fathered children with up to 70 mistresses. In fact, he made such a name for himself that during the 1780's the term Buchinger's boot was a euphuism for the vagina. You see, Mr. Buchinger's only lower limb was his penis.

The freak show finally reached maturity as a successful financial enterprise in the 19th century in both England and the United States. Two of the most famous were Tom Norman's Traveling Exhibition in England and PT Barnum's American Museum in the United States. They were known for italicizing the Sideshow Freak to increase business. But it wasn't long before polite society found it distasteful to stare at people with physical deformities.



It was Tom Norman's exhibition of The Elephant Man, Mr. John Merrick that caused people to view Norman as cruelly exploiting Merrick for his own personal gain.

I can't imagine making my living this way, but I do know what it is like to be stared at and laughed at. I have been teased, tortured, and tormented. You would think that times would have changed by now, but people, and it doesn't matter their age, willing exhibit their cruelty and ignorance daily.

I learned this early in life.



I don't think my parents purposefully put me on exhibition, but it happened frequently.



It was probably my own deep seeded desire to be the center of everyone's attention. Most of my life has been as sweet as a box of chocolates, but there are times I feel like a freak. My earliest memory of cruelty was at the hand of a 3rd grade classmate named Ricky. He started following my cousin Cindy and I home from school. Every few steps he would throw a rock. He had a pretty good aim. I told my mom who put us into the car, and drove us over to his house. His mother answered the door, immediately went on the defensive and with one look at me said, "Well, you can't blame him, he doesn't like lookin' at her." I am sure my mother threw down a threat of legal action, because the bullying ceased.

The next memorable moment in the development of my thick skin came in the 8th grade when I was running for student council.



My opponent, Travis, actually put up posters that said Elect Travis for Student Council Vice President Not the Crippled Freak. I won!

I didn't date in high school, college was a different story. But it wasn't until I moved back home after college to teach at my old high school that I learned why. I was out at a

bar with some friends, drinking and dancing when one of the guys I went to high school with leaned over and said, “I hope you know you are beautiful.”

“Thank you, but that was kind of out of the blue, why did you say that?” “Well, I was just sitting here looking at you and wanted you to know that lots of guys in high school always thought you were beautiful. We thought you might be fragile, or that everything might not work.”

“I guess you will never know the truth.” (To Randy in the audience: Honey, are you a happy husband? His response, “Well, I didn’t marry you for your cooking!”)

I should have become a chef but received my BFA in Theatre Arts from the University of New Mexico.



And while I willingly put myself on stage to be watched, I don't believe I had ever been used or had anyone use my birth defect as a selling point until college.

Meg Howell stars as 'Puck' in UNM Shakespearean play

ALBUQUERQUE — The dervish leaps across the stage, splays her hands and pronounces imprecations against the enemy. Then in a flash she turns and runs for her master for further instructions before dashing off to perform some other bit of trickery.

The dervish is "Puck" from Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," being played in the University of New Mexico Department of Theatre Arts production by Mary Margaret "Meg" Howell. Miss Howell, of Alamogordo, has a birth defect called scoliosis or curvature of the spine.

"She's doing a wonderful job," Brian Hansen, director and chairman of the department, said. "Before I cast her I knew I wanted a very physical production with a lot of running, climbing and floor work. I asked her how fragile she was and she said, 'No more than anyone else.' I took her at her word and she's proven to be as tough and fearless as anyone else in the cast.

"How often can you find a 73-pound 'Puck?' Because of her size she can ride the shoulder of her master 'Oberon'. She combines energy and natural grace very well."

Miss Howell is nonchalant about the role.

"I've always been energetic and used to roughhouse with my brothers. I also used to play football with the boys on my

street at home," she continued.

She has appeared in other plays at UNM, including "Rhymers of Eldritch," "Pullman Car Hiawatha" and "Jacob Comes Home."

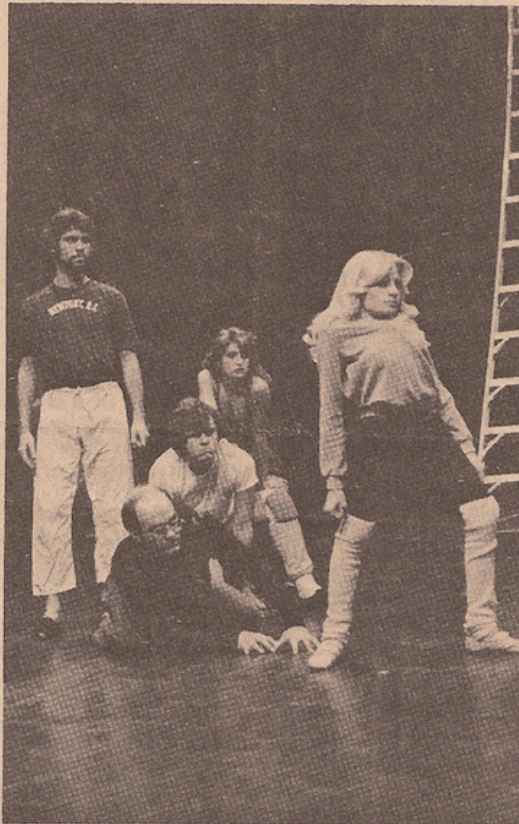
"I find for me that the

parts aren't limited, but for the theatre the parts are narrow. For myself, I could play any part but I don't know how the audience would accept me," she said.

Miss Howell, a junior with a 3.2 grade average, plans to

graduate next year and then return to get certified to teach theatre and speech. She plans to teach for a while and then enter the field of directing.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" will be in Rodey Theatre tonight and Friday and Saturday nights at 8 p.m.



Meg Howell, at stage right, rehearses a scene from the UNM production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Both *The Albuquerque Tribune* and the local TV Stations did spots showcasing me as the "star" of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* during my junior year. The director was interviewed about why he chose to cast me and if he had any concerns. I was interviewed

about why I chose to study theatre and what kind of roles I frequently got. I wish I would have known then what I know now because my answers might have been different. I don't believe I was naïve, I knew I was never going to make it big in LA or NY, but I never thought I was going to be cast as a witch as many times as I have. If you are casting a play and need a witch, just give me a call. "I'll get you my pretty!" "Double, double toil and trouble..." yeah, I already know all of the lines.

I have been called skinny, fat, crooked, a gargoyle, a bruja (a witch) and the hunchback. I have made people trip, gasp, and look away. I have been ignored. It is a rare day that I don't feel like a sideshow freak. People stare, laugh, tease, and some have even run away screaming at the mere sight of me, but luckily they were not my students.

<End>

APPENDIX C

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA SHOW ARIZONA

“I, CLOWN” BY PAUL DAVIS

I, Clown

Paul Davis

The Encyclopedia Show: Arizona. The Circus. May 2013.

Here's something I wrote about clowns. Growing up in a house with four boys and no sisters, things were frequently hectic. To abuse the circus metaphor right out the gate, it was sometimes...like a circus. My dad was the lion tamer, trying to keep unruly children in line. My brothers were amalgams of both the strongman, constantly trying to prove how tough they were, and really bad acrobats, attempting to see how long they could hold onto school or a job or sobriety, before losing their grip and dropping to the safety net below. And my mother...was the bearded lady. No, my mom was the safety net, making sure that nobody fell too hard, that they were safe and could get back up again to try and swing through the air once more, hoping this time, that the trip would be longer before plunging back down. Growing up in the chaos of this Davis Circus, I quickly realized that the easiest way for me to get attention was to make people laugh. So I filled in the role of the clown. Now anyone who's funny can probably tell you that if you can make your parents laugh, then you will become your parent's favorite child. I'm sorry, I know that sounds terrible. But it's the truth. If you're listening to this and you're not funny and you have a sibling who is...I'm sorry. You're not the favorite. But It wasn't like my brothers had a ton of accomplishments for me to try and overcome. When you're the youngest but still the first of your generation to graduate from high school, you don't really have to do much to impress. My brother's didn't set the bar very high. It was like, down there. "Okay, that was easy. Was that it?"

Once I went to school, I took with me the role that I played in my family and became the class clown. It wasn't like my jokes were brilliant or anything, it was just that other kids didn't seem to know how to try and make a joke. I remember one joke I made in elementary school where I was actually taken aback at how positively my classmates responded. I had this terrible teacher, Miss Stuart, who was just a mean ol' bitch. And she was a bigger lady. So one day she had to excuse herself from class and step outside, presumably to let out a giant fart, and once she closed the door behind her I said, "The UFO has left the building. I repeat, the unidentified FAT object has left the building." Like I said, not the most sophisticated brand of comedy, but still I was shocked at how hard my class was laughing. They were going apeshit. It was like an audience on Def Comedy Jam. For a few moments, I was their fucking king. So getting reactions like that from my peers was what I strove for.

I also learned very early on from "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?" that Jessica Rabbit, the sexiest carton character ever, was in love with Roger because he made her laugh. That had a huge impact on me. So I had a game-plan: I was gonna be the funniest motherfucker that I possibly could and people would love me and girls were going to come flocking. It didn't exactly work out that way. Girls like the funny guy cause he makes them laugh, but they REALLY like the funny guy's best friend because they can take him seriously. People don't take the clown seriously, and some people just flat out resent him. Teachers don't like the class clown. Well let me preface that by saying shitty teachers don't like the class clown. Because he can hold the interest of his peers in a way that shitty teachers can't. So I was constantly being punished by my shitty teachers, in sometimes kind of cruel, 'I'm gonna teach this clown a lesson' type ways. I once had a

teacher walk by my desk when I wasn't even talking, pick up a picture I had drawn on my own time, and then rip it up. People don't take the clown seriously. Now this is something that I've actually struggled with for a long time, all through school, through speech, and even in my life today, if you are someone that just naturally strives to make people laugh, you will often not be taken seriously. I have a prime example of that. I was working at a speech camp, where college students and graduates coach high school students in competitive acting, and the guy running the camp was introducing EVERY faculty member by their accolades in the activity. "So and so has a quarter-final at nationals! This person has two semi-finals. This other person has made it to a national final," and so on. Now I happened to have more competitive success in the activity than any of the other faculty members at this camp, so I was curious as to what he was going to say to all of these students to hopefully make them have some respect for me. And when he got to my introduction, all he said was, "And our next faculty member...is a CLOWN! Paul Davis." And that was it. It was belittling, patronizing, and it was clearly because he didn't take me seriously. So as much as I enjoyed making people laugh, it was not always a good day to be a clown. This is also the role of the clown or jester or fool throughout literature and cinema, from King Lear all the way to fucking "Cabin in the Woods," the clown knows everything...but people don't listen. Think of your political role models. Chances are pretty good that for a lot of you, they're comedians or funny talk show hosts. People who make you laugh as they bring up points that you agree with. You laugh, they hit you with the truth, then they make you laugh some more. Chances are also good that the people you look up to politically are not politicians. But the comedians get written off

by any "serious" people in politics, simply by implying that the funny-man doesn't actually know what he's talking about.

I've always been fascinated by clowns. I know it's popular to be afraid of clowns, and I saw Stephen King's IT when I was 5 years old just like everyone else, and it scared me, but it did not make me perpetually afraid of clowns. Clowns aren't scary. They're fascinating and complex and multilayered, but they're not scary. If I see a clown walking down the street, it's not gonna freak me out. If a clown walks into a video store and rents "Silver Linings Playbook" and "House at the End of the Street", only one detail in that scenario bothers me, and it's not the clown. It is his interest in shitty Jennifer Lawrence movies. I mean, if I see a clown somewhere that a clown absolutely should not be, okay, then it might be creepy. Like if I'm camping in the middle of the woods. Seeing a clown then might be unsettling. Or if I'm walking into my apartment building's garage and I see a clown hiding beneath my car, waiting for me to approach, that'd be kind of spooky. Or if I woke up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom, and when I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror I was completely dressed up like a clown with my face painted. Then I stared into the mirror in fright and started vomiting into the sink, but it's not actual throw up, instead I'm vomiting colorful silk scarves all tied together, one after another, and they just keep coming out of my throat like a magic trick. Then the sound of an evil laughter fills my ears and then I wake up again! Panting, I roll over to my girlfriend for comfort, but it's a clown! That is the third, of only three scenarios, in which a clown would scare me. But in general, they're not scary. Apparently one of my brother's disagrees, because he recently visited me in LA, and while we were walking down Venice Beach, we saw a clown making balloon animals for some kids. And being the

perpetual Strongman from the circus, constantly needing to prove himself, he had to tell this clown exactly what he thought of him, which was, "You're creepy." So the clown is like, "You're an asshole." And he's like, "Nu-uh! But you're creepy!" And they just started arguing. And that is unfortunately a true story. And you do not know embarrassment until you're standing on Venice Beach, with hundreds of people walking past, as your adult brother argues with a clown. That's a real 'hang your head in shame' type moment.

During a handful of pivotal moments in my life, for one reason or another, the theme of clowns has resurfaced. Once, in elementary school, we had an assignment to draw a picture and write a story to accompany it, and the next day volunteers could read their stories out loud. My story was about a traveling circus where all of the performers are ghastly and macabre, and they lure in audiences and kill them. It was a funny, scary little story called, "The Gravest Show On Earth." The story started with two clowns from the deadly circus that had been arrested and they needed to escape prison to get back before the circus left town. Now I guess I wasn't exactly aware of the conventions of prose or traditional storytelling at the time, but my story was essentially written as a radio play and was told entirely through dialogue and sound effects. So when I was reading it to the class it was basically like, "Creeeak, thump, thump, thump. Hey, get back here! See ya suckers! (guns) Oh! He shot me. Lou, don't let those clowns get away. I won't, chick-chick, come back here you clowns! Not on your life coppers, honk honk!" And so on. I was really into reading the story to my class and started off with so much energy, but about halfway through I realized that nobody was laughing. They were all just staring at me like I was insane and had no idea what I was doing. I started getting really self-

conscious and losing enthusiasm while reading my story. By the time I was near the end, I was so embarrassed that it was tough for me to finish. That was the first time that felt like an audience had turned on me. These were my loyal classmates who laughed so hard when during roll call, instead of saying "here" or "present," I made a fart noise. But they didn't like my story. The creepy circus idea was actually going to be a series of stories that I was going to write, each story focusing on different members of the circus, and this was just the first installment about the clowns. Ideally I was going to read each one to the class and they could follow along as I finished each one like a serial. But I never wrote any more of those stories because I suddenly thought it was a bad idea. And that sucks, because today I think it would be really cool to be able to go back and read all of those stories. So it wasn't a lesson I learned that day because I quit something based off of a reaction I got, but looking back, that day was the first difficult lesson of not sticking to your guns because people don't believe in you. It was also the first time I realized that an audience isn't always going to like what you're doing, so I always have to like what I'm doing. I let the audience make my story lose momentum and end with a little whimper instead of being proud and reading it as such. I let them prevent me from writing any more of those stories.

That story is kind of unfortunate, and probably wasn't even very enjoyable to listen to, so this last story is nicer. When I first moved to LA, the first two screenplays I wrote were each centered around a clown, and the first job that I got was actually as a clown for little kid's birthday parties. And I am not being modest when I say this, I was the worst fucking clown in the world. Truly, I was terrible at it. It was usually just parties for snotty kids. I remember I upset this one little fat girl who was like, "Mr. Clown!" And

I was like, "First off, my name is Paul. Mr. Clown is my father. Second, what do you want?" Then she said, "I want a balloon." So I said, "Okay, what kind of animal do you want?" And she was like, "I want a baby!" Now my balloon animal making skills were pretty limited, I could pretty much do a dog or a cat, and even those pretty much looked the same. So I was like, "Well I can't make a baby. Wouldn't you rather have a dog or a cat?" And she started getting really bitchy and was like, "No, I want a baby!" So I was like, "You know what, then why don't you get pregnant. Don't you dare tell your parents that I just said that, or I'll come back here tonight when you're sleeping and I'll slit your throat! I know where you live, I'm standing in your living room right now!" Okay, I didn't say all that stuff at the end, but the point is, kids suck. Usually they were either too young to want a clown and would cry when I got there, or they were too old and were embarrassed that their parents paid me to come. So it was a pretty dreadful job. There was a great filmmaker named Federico Fellini who actually used to be a circus clown for years before he started making movies, so for that first year in LA my mantra was pretty much, "Fellini was a clown, Fellini was a clown, Fellini was a clown. If one of the most important filmmakers ever wasn't above being a clown, then you're not either." So that I was how I dragged my ass through most parties. But then one day I had a party that was actually pretty special.

I knocked on the door and this young Mexican couple answered. And they looked exhausted. They were clearly a poor family living in a small house in a really low income neighborhood. So they let me into the house and I immediately realized they looked so exhausted. They had this six or seven year old kid who was severely autistic. Right off the bat I was thinking, "Oh God, this party is going to be a nightmare." There were only

three kids there, a cousin of the kids, the autistic boy, and a little girl. The party was for the little girl and she was turning four or five. So right away my heart is breaking that this brother and sister have no friends to invite to their party except their cousin, but I walk over to the little birthday girl to start doing some clown shit with her. She sees me and her face just lights up and she runs over to me, and in sign language asks, "Can I have a balloon?" And then I really realize why this young couple looks so fucking exhausted, and it's because they have one autistic child and one deaf. Now at the time I was relatively fresh out of college, and while I was in college I had randomly taken a couple years of sign language. I wasn't the best and I had forgotten quite a bit already, but I was about on the same level as a four or five year old girl. So I see the mother coming over, looking exhausted, ready to spend the next hour telling this clown what her daughter is saying and then telling her daughter what the clown is saying, and the little girl is like, "Can I have a balloon." So in sign language I said, "Yeah, what color?" And I still remember the look on that mom's face. Just a look of pure relief and disbelief at having hired a clown that happened to be able to talk to her daughter. And the woman just starts crying, and her husband is holding her, and it's all I can do to keep from breaking down myself, because it was this totally moving moment. Even thinking back on that event now still gets me choked up. But I held it together, cause I figure the last thing this family needs to see is a clown crying in their living room in front of their retarded kids. And I talk to the daughter and the cousin in sign language, and even the autistic kid knows a couple words too, and the parents just sit there and relax. And it was one of those totally profound, life affirming moments, that simultaneously makes you grateful for what you have and also grateful to be at the exact spot you're at. And I didn't really do anything that

special, but it made me feel like, out of all the shitty parties I had been to, I had finally made a difference at one. That was a good day to be a clown.

<End>

APPENDIX D

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA SHOW ARIZONA

“THE BASELINE KILLER” BY DWAYNE HOLMES & ANDIE FLORES

The Baseline Killer

Dwayne Holmes & Andie Flores

The Encyclopedia Show: Arizona. Serial Killers. April 2012.

Lights are super dim throughout most of this piece. On the screen behind us is white static with different news clips of the baseline killer playing OR a little recorded intro by us talking about the killer. All of them suddenly end with a gunshot.

Dwayne: When The Baseline Killer started his killing spree across parts of Tempe and Phoenix, the atmosphere was thick and tense. After school programs were cancelled, parents were keeping their kids in after dark, and baseline was utterly deserted as soon as nightfall hit. No cars, no pedestrians, - baseline was completely devoid of any signs of life. I lived on baseline during the time of the killings. I worked at Target, which was on baseline and McClintock, and lived in a townhouse a short distance from there on baseline and lakeshore. My mother was freaking out at the time, as a few of his killings happened a short distance from her job and as such, she rarely let me walk to or from work. But one night they kept me for a late night shift, letting me out at about 11 because they couldn't keep under-age workers longer. So I'm walking along baseline when I see her. This gorgeous, but nervous looking girl, clutching her backpack tightly and moving across the street, walking down baseline. And my first thought was "the fuck is wrong with her?" but then, I don't know, I felt this overwhelming need to protect her? So I ran over to her...

Dwayne: Uh, ma'am

Andie: Uh, hey

Dwayne: I'm sorry to startle you. It's just, it's really late, are you on your way home?

Andie: Yeah, I live just a short distance down Baseline.

Dwayne: Sweetie, with all the killings and such happening, you shouldn't be walking alone. Let me walk you at least half way.

Andie: No, no I'm fine.

Dwayne: I'm safe! I'm gay, I won't attack you or anything!

Andie: (Laughs) it's not that. You're young, you should be on your way home too.

Dwayne: I'm fine, I don't live far from here. Come on.

Andie: And so I let this strange boy walk me home that I've never met or seen before in my life but he seems... Safe? We jump at noises from alleys, and almost instinctively, he puts me behind him when a weird van drives by, slowly, the inhabitants peering at us. He's warm, comfortable even. I don't know him but we talk as if we've know each other forever, as if our last words can't come fast enough. Words fall out of each of us and eventually we find ourselves holding hands before finally getting to the corner outside my house, near a 7/11.

Andie: Hey, I'm going to go get something to drink. You can head home, I live literally right behind the 7/11.

Dwayne: You sure?

Andie: Yes, literally (points) right there, that first house.

Dwayne: Oh okay.

Andie: You got a long way to go home?

Dwayne: No gurl, just a few blocks past the Target, and I can take alleys and shortcuts the entire way there if I want to.

Andie: You sure? You could stay until daytime if you wanted

Dwayne: Hahah no. My mother would lose her shit. I'll be fine darling.

Andie: Okay, well, thank you so much, you have a good night

Dwayne: You too. *(Lets go of hands like it's painful to do so)*

As I started home I thought of her walking next to me, and it was comforting as I quickened my pace and headed in and out of shortcuts until...

Andie (Simultaneously): As I started home, I thought of him walking next to me and it was comforting as I quickened my pace from the 7/11 until...

(GUNSHOT SOUND EFFECT)

Both: I heard a gun shot in the distance. And instantly, a burst of adrenaline took over me but my first instinct was to turn back and run for him/her. But then reason kicked in and I shot off as quick as I could home.

Dwayne: Later I searched for her face.

Andie: *(same time)* Later I searched for his face.

Dwayne: In newspapers

Andie: Online

Dwayne: On TV lineups of his victims

Andie: In crowds of people

Both: Never seeing his/her face, but knowing or at least - hoping - he/she wasn't a victim.

(In this part, we could do an alternating statistics of who was killed/how many were killed)

NEWSPAPER

Andie: The Baseline Killer is believed to have committed nine counts of first degree murder (8 women, 1 man), in addition to 15 sexual assaults on women and young girls, 11 counts of kidnapping, and a number of armed robberies.

Including:

D: a preschool teacher snatched from a bus stop

A: a stripper from a devoutly religious family

D: two women cooking in a food truck,

A: a woman washing her car

D: a prostitute

A: a man and a woman leaving their shift at a restaurant.

D: a mother left dead in her bathtub who was discovered by her young son

Both: Even though I never saw him/her again,

D: I didn't see her here.

A: And that's what mattered.

D: But I'll always feel

B: Connected.

D: The Baseline killings that occurred between September 2005 - ____ 2006 shook the entire state to its core. But from this tragedy, a sense of community was created between people who may not have ever spoken otherwise. It instilled a sense of responsibility and caring for others

Both: That I honestly have not felt since.

<End>

APPENDIX E

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA SHOW ARIZONA

AHWATUKEE POSTER BY ANDIE FLORES

Ahwatukee Poster

Andie Flores

The Encyclopedia Show: Arizona. Ahwatukee. November 2013.



APPENDIX F

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA SHOW ARIZONA

“THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN” BY GRISHMA SINGH

The Other Side of the Mountain

Grishma Singh

The Encyclopedia Show: Arizona. Ahwatukee. November 2013.

Ahwatukee.

What a bunch of snobs. Rubbing their Audis in everyone's face. Building their houses high on a mountain so everyone can see their infinity pools and be reminded that they just have a regular pool that looks like a hole in the ground.

But you know who has *more* reason to hate them? My students. The 220 Latinos I teach in Phoenix on the wrong side of the mountain. The 220 14-year-olds who go to a school that can't afford rulers. Or textbooks. Or printer paper. The 14-year-olds who sit in a class of 45 because, hey, their school can't afford enough teachers, either.

My students will start a fight if you look at them from a weird angle. Or if they're just bored. The others will record the fight on their phone. And they're practically going to write this piece *for* me. I couldn't wait to find out what THEY thought about the people who live in Ahwatukee.

(I took journalism for about a minute when I was high school, which means I got really good at asking... oh what do you call them... "leading questions")

My students walked into math class last week and saw the following question on the board:

1. What do you think about the people who live in Ahwatukee? Write a full page or you will get a 0.

They looked at the board for a minute. Then looked at their paper. They took a second to gather their thoughts. And then a hand went up already.

“What do you mean?”

And then I said, “What do you think their lives are like? Write it down.”

My Freedom Writers got to work. They started thinking about their own lives, their own experiences and juxtaposing them with what could be different if they just lived in a different neighborhood.

And as I was walking around reading over their shoulders, I saw the following:

“Kids in Ahwatukee probably have regular lives. I think they go to school and hang out with their friends. I think their schools have clubs too, so maybe some of them are in clubs. Some of them probably do sports.”

Maybe they misinterpreted my question. So I clarified. “*Guys*, I’m not talking about stuff they do in school. Think about, you know, think about their lifestyle.”

More blank looks. I had to be more explicit.

“Well, let’s start with this. Do you think they go to better schools than you do?”

Oh now they had a lot to write. Stuff like:

“Our school’s the best! Go bulldogs!”

Not quite what I meant... So I said, “Guys, how about this. Do you think they’re at an advantage because of where they live?”

They took a second. And then they started writing. They said:

“Well Brophy’s basketball team has a lot of money, but we practice as much as they do so I don’t think it matters.”

Those aren’t the advantages I meant... So then I said, “Guys, would you want to trade lives with them if you could?”

This did it. I got real, honest, self-reflective feedback:

“No, because nobody makes enchiladas like my mom.”

They weren't taking the bait. I mean here I am, trying to draw arbitrary boundaries between the various subsets of middle class in Phoenix, and they're giving me *nothing*. My students think people are people. My 14-year-old students are more mature than I am. They're not jealous. They're not upset. They're not resentful. They're better than that. They have nothing snide to say about the people who live in Ahwatukee. So I guess I don't, either.

<End>

APPENDIX G

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA SHOW ARIZONA

“BUILD A BEAR” BY NICK KLEMP

Build a Bear (Parody of “Bust a Move” by Young MC)

Nick Klemp

The Encyclopedia Show: Arizona. Bears. February 2011.

This here's a toy for all the children
Who want pet bears that will not kill them
If making friends is something you're not skilled in
Stop making friends...start to build them
That's right smarty, there is a party
At your mall where you can build a bear's body
Maybe if you have some bears to sit next ta,
You won't be a psycho killer like you was on Dexter
This toy's function, for a munchkin
To take part in their own bear's production
With the hope the child won't decide
To set fire to a toy they've designed
This invention, deserves attention
Born in St. Louis in '97
And now there's no toy that can compare
You know what to do...just Build-A-Bear
(Chorus)
We're on a mission and we're wishing
Someone could cure our teddy addiction

Build a bear shops in all the right places
Zoos, ball parks...soon in spaceships
It's domination of our nation
A bear epidemic and we're all the patients
And for those of you who've never been
This is what happens in the den of sin
Choose a color, brown or other
Record a voice that says "I hate you older brother"
Shove your empty bear on the end of a tube
Stuff it and dress it from shades to shoes
Mine be nerdy, yours be dirty
I've even seen one dressed like a turkey
Any season, holiday, or care
There's something for each at Build-A-Bear
(Chorus)
Like s'mores need Hershey's, sports need jerseys
Each good story needs some controversy
Payless Shoes president Maxine Clark
Found a new business venture on which to embark
Now the money is flowin, Build a bear's growin'
But the idea wasn't hers, it was stolen
Basic Brown Bear Factory started in 96
Clark was gonna buy it, but the deal got nixed

Clark said foey, went back to Louis
Started Build a Bear, and everyone got sue-y
Being a gangsta, Clark was the richest
And copyrighted everything down to the stitches,
Now before stitchin', first please listen,
Avoid a law suit and get Clark's permission
The rich get richer, it may be unfair
But you're only option now is to Build-A-Bear

(Chorus)

Your best friend Harry has a brother Larry
He's infertile and he just got married
He and his wife discussed the options
And chose Build-A-Bear instead of adoption
With elation named him Nathan
And both signed the birth certification
Each one says stuffed with love
Maxine Clark's signature is right above
You can be opportunistic, materialistic
Steal an idea but remain optimistic
These are the lessons that's I have learned
That and fuck with Build-A-Bear and you'll get burned
That's me rappin' how this happened
And in the end I hope you're all clappin'

But if you all hate me I just won't care

Cause best friends are made at Build-A-Bear

(Chorus)

<End>

APPENDIX H

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA SHOW ARIZONA

“BABY GOT BOMBS” BY NICK KLEMP

Baby Got Bombs (Parody of “Baby Got Back” by Sir Mix-a-Lot.)

Nick Klemp

The Encyclopedia Show: Arizona. Explosives. October 2011.

Oh my god, Julia. Look at that bomb. It looks like one of those rap guys' explosives. Who understands those rap guys? They only want it because it looks like a total thermo-nuke. I mean that bomb it's just so big. I can't believe it's just so round, so out there. It's gross. Look! It's just so packed.

I like big bombs and I cannot lie
You other chemists can't deny
When a gas expands at a rapid rapid pace
And you put it in a really small space
It explodes!
Want to blow up the sun
Just to watch the sky light up
I'm deep in the casing it's bearing
Hooked and I can't staring
Oh, Einstein, I want to get with him
And plan some fission
The Germans tried to warn us
But that bomb he made is so enormous
Ooh, Alfred Nobel, you say you invented dynamite

Well fuse me, fuse me
Cause you ain't that average TNT
See I like napalm
But I love the A-bomb
And I'm ready
Set
To drop it from a jumbo jet
I'm tired of magazines
Saying nuclear ain't the thing
Take an average American and ask him that
He'll probably want to nuke Iraq
So fellas
Yeah
Fellas
Yeah
Does your country have the guts?
Hell yeah
Then tell 'em to drop it
Drop it
Drop that giant nuke
Baby got bombs
(Chorus)
I like bombs round and large

And if I was in charge
I just couldn't help myself
I'd be actin' like a Roosevelt
Droppin' bombs and making cities melt
I want to light a fuse
And boom!
Blow it up!
Boom! Boom!
I ain't talkin' bout fireworks
Cause light shows and noise are made for nerds
I want real sick explosion
That reduces towns to rubble
Nicks-a-lot's in trouble
If the number of bombs doubles
I'm watchin' Green Peace videos
Save the whales and to nukes say, "No?"
You can keep your blow holes
I'll take my weapons like Rambo
A word to Wehrner Von Braun
I want to get with y'all
And talk about missiles
But I'm straight when I say I want nuclear fallout till there is no dawn!
Did you know the Tsar Bomb

Is literally the "King of Bombs?"

Russians tried to quit it

So there's only one "Big Ivan"

But it's long and strong

And yields 100 megatons

So ladies

Yeah

Ladies

Yeah

Do you think we'll blow ourselves to Hades?

Hell yeah

We'll turn around

Duck and cover

That'll save you from the mushroom cloud

Baby got bombs

(Chorus)

I used to build model rockets

My dad helped me with the projects

But my docket didn't have a warhead atop my rocket

"This model project won't get done unless you got bombs, son!"

So know you know the set-up

Of how I learned to love the bomb

Some fellas want to have their bombs small

So it's something that they can hold
And toss it or heave it
Like grenades or an IED hit
But a bomb in a backpack
I ain't down with that
Cause the explosions small and kills some civilians
But it should be millions
To the terrorists who think they're scaring me
You ain't scaring fleas
Better find an Oppenheimer
Cause right now you're all just small timers
The diplomats are irate
Cause I want to proliferate
Drop bombs till no one's kickin'
Ride the last one down like Slim Pickens
If uranium's weapon's grade
And you got what it takes to get made
Then research the Manhattan Project and kick those nasty thoughts
Baby got bombs
(Chorus)
<End>

APPENDIX I

UNITED STATES HISTORY: SUMMER 2014

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA SHOW: WHAT THE U.S. HISTORY TEXTBOOK FORGOT

ASSIGNMENT 1: INITIAL PROPOSAL

Final Project Assignment #1: Initial Proposal

For our final project, you and your classmates will create a variety show about the untold stories of United States History. The show will have eight “acts”, under the themes of our class:

- 1-Colonial America
- 2-Role of American Government
- 3-America’s Evolving Demographics
- 4-Struggle for Equal Rights
- 5-Insurrection in America (catalyst for war)
- 6-American Expansionism
- 7-Mobilization of America (action in wartime)
- 8-America’s Relationship with the World

For this assignment, I am looking for a one-page document that details:

1. What object/person/idea you are thinking about for your final project. Be as specific* as possible. If you have multiple ideas and aren’t sure which might work, I’d love to hear about them and help you narrow things down.

*“Sports” is not specific. “Sports, specifically the importance of horse racing during the Great Depression” is getting there!

2. Your rationale for choosing this.

While your own personal interest is a good start, why do you think we should devote class time to this particular subject? Why do you think it has been left out of the US History that you’ve learned in this class and others?

3. What “act” you think your proposed topic might fall under and why.

4. How you might approach your final assessment. A formal research paper, lesson plans, a board game, a film, a play, et cetera.

Remember that these ideas can change, but it is time to start brainstorming and getting feedback!

APPENDIX J

UNITED STATES HISTORY: SUMMER 2014

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA SHOW: WHAT THE U.S. HISTORY TEXTBOOK FORGOT

FINAL PROJECT GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

Final Project Guidelines & Requirements

Final Projects due Wednesday, July 2, 2014

- Each project will have a written, analytical component AND some sort of creative component. *You* get to determine how much weight they each carry. Many of the guidelines are flexible—I am not looking for you to complete a rubric, I am looking to be impressed by your work.
- Each project must make a strong argument. You are persuading us that your chosen topic should be studied in US History. We need to know why (and perhaps why it has been previously left out). Your audience for this project consists of your classmates and me.
- Each project will have a Bibliography/Works Cited. Your project must include at least *ten diverse sources*: traditional historical research, electronic and paper sources, historical fiction, primary source documents, interviews with experts, artistic representations and more. Two of your sources must be classified as Primary Sources. I am looking to see you *use* these sources, not simply list them on a bibliography.
- Don't be bored. Don't be boring.

Work Schedule

Thursday, June 26:	60 minutes of in-class work time.
Friday, June 27:	60-90 minutes of in-class work time.
Monday, June 30:	60-90 minutes of in-class work time.

Tuesday, July 1: Rough draft of creative and written work due for peer review and feedback, dry run of presentations in Black Box theatre, 60-90 minutes of in-class prep time.

Wednesday, July 2: Presentations of Final Projects and all materials due.

Logistics

- On Wednesday, July 2: You will present your presentations in the Black Box theatre. Each person will speak to the class, but some will use more time than others.
- Before we begin on Wednesday, I will ask you each to give me a point breakdown for yourselves. You will assign yourself points for:

____ Written Component

____ Creative Component

____ Class Presentation

These points will total 100 and can be in any value 10 or greater.

- For highly creative presentations, your written component might consist of two pages explaining what you learned/why you chose this project and how you used your sources.
- For research papers, your creative component might be a 3 minute explanation of things you learned from the assignment and your research and 2 minutes of questions from the class.

APPENDIX K

UNITED STATES HISTORY: SUMMER 2014

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA SHOW: WHAT THE U.S. HISTORY TEXTBOOK FORGOT

FINAL PROJECT SELF ASSESSMENT

Final Project Self Assessment

Name: _____

Object/Topic: _____

Methods: (Paper, Board Game, PowerPoint, etc.). _____

1. Spend some time reflecting on what it was like to approach US History this way. Did you like spending your time focusing on one object/untold story? Hate it? Find it difficult? I am interested in your honest feedback.
2. What do you think the strengths of your project are?
3. If you had more time, what would you add to this project or do differently?
4. Did you experience any obstacles along the way?
5. If you had to do it all over again, would you have chosen the same object? Made any adjustments to it?
6. Anything else you'd like to add about the project or course as a whole?
7. Of all the presentations that were presented today, which stuck out to you as particularly well done? Which made you think/which will you remember the most and why? Feel free to discuss as many as necessary, but at minimum 4. Feel free to use the back.

_____:Creative

_____:Written

_____:Oral/Presentational

(Must total 100).

APPENDIX L
IRB EXEMPTION

4-18-2014



EXEMPTION GRANTED

Stephani Etheridge Woodson Film, Dance and Theatre, School of - swoodson@asu.edu

Dear Stephani Etheridge Woodson:

On 4/18/2014 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	"The Encyclopedia Show Brophy: United States History: Can the variety-show format achieve Interdisciplinarity in a non-arts-based classroom?"
Investigator:	Stephani Etheridge Woodson
IRB ID:	STUDY00000982
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• parent permission and assent, Category: Consent Form;• Performance Feedback Consent Form, Category: Consent Form;• Hill IRB Social Behavioral April 2014 (2).doc, Category: IRB Protocol;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (1) Educational settings, (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 4/18/2014. In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator