

Embracing Failure in the Drama Classroom

[SOFIA LINDGREN GALLOWAY](#)

EMERSON COLLEGE

ABSTRACT

Inspired by Valerie Curtis-Newton's keynote address at the 2023 AATE conference, this piece explores the necessity of creating failure-friendly drama classrooms. In a time when students are experiencing unprecedented rates of anxiety and other mental health challenges, I argue that explicit instruction about and opportunities for failure are necessary for the social, emotional, and academic success of students. Furthermore, I address why drama educators and theatre classrooms are uniquely positioned to facilitate healthy relationships with failure. I end the piece with suggestions for ways to incorporate more failure-learning opportunities into drama and theatre education spaces.

“Prepare for the best and be secure in your ability to survive the worst,” I scrawled fervently in my notebook as I watched Valerie Curtis Newton’s keynote address at the 2023 AATE conference in Seattle (Curtis-Newton, 2023). Curtis Newton’s career as a director, educator, and champion of African-American performance in the U.S. is prolific. While she gave us, her captive audience of educators and artists, some insight into her illustrious career, she chose to focus her talk on the anxiety epidemic with which many of our students struggle and theatre’s ability to teach our students (and ourselves) to be brave. She urged us to model courage and curiosity for students. She spoke of the creative process as a balm to the wounds of self-doubt and paralyzing pessimism. She reminded us that risk and resilience are essential to the creative process.

While she never explicitly said the word “failure,” I found myself coming back to that word again, and again, scribbling it in my notebook, circling it, and tracing the letters to create deep grooves in the paper. Teaching young people to take risks and navigate the outcomes of those risks is one of the most important skills educators can offer, especially in a time of extreme anxiety. In this essay, I present the anxious context young people face, review the literature on how drama and theatre can support resilience, share some examples of successful and unsuccessful failure stories from a decade of teaching artistry, and offer some tools for drama and theatre educators that want to recenter failure in their classrooms.

STUDENTS’ ANXIOUS CONTEXT

Over the last 20 years, changes in education, access to new technologies, growing wealth disparity, and a global pandemic have created a crisis of anxiety in children and teens that is impacting the way students show up in our classrooms. In 2002, No Child Left Behind transformed kindergarten classrooms from a place of play and socialization to a place of rigorous academic pressure and preparation for years of standardized testing (Bassok, 2016). In 2010, teen depression and suicide began to spike, and research linked this decline

in mental health to screen time and social media (Twenge, 2018). Part of this spike may be due to new ways of reporting mental health crises (Corredor-Waldron & Currie, 2023), but the U.S. Surgeon General nevertheless issued an advisory about Youth Mental Health, elevating it as one of the top public health priorities in our country (*Protecting Youth Mental Health*, 2021). In October 2022, a panel of health experts recommended that all children in the U.S. over the age of 8 be screened for anxiety, regardless of whether they showed any symptoms (Pearson, 2022; U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, 2022). Research about the pandemic's effects on adolescent mental health found young people from under-resourced communities, young people of color, and young people with learning disabilities were more likely to develop anxiety disorders related to the effects of the pandemic and that intersectional approaches to their well-being will be necessary to recovery (Fortuna, 2023). This is not to say that youth do not also experience profound hope in challenging times (Gallagher, Rodericks, & Jacobson, 2020), but that the past several years have introduced significant events that can exacerbate anxious thinking.

Anxiety, at its root, is a response to the possibility of danger that does not exist. The amygdala, the part of the brain responsible for responding to basic threats, responds to anxiety in similar ways it would respond to danger known as fight, flight, or freeze. When the amygdala is activated, it 'takes over' other brain functions like critical thinking and memory (*Understanding the Stress Response*, 2011). In *The Meaning of Anxiety* (1950/2015), Rollo May describes anxiety patients "constricting" their personality and presence in the world as a way to decrease their interactions with anxiety triggers or possible conflicts. In these cases, anxiety gets in the way of the patient's productivity and ability to relate to others. May also reviews decades of research that argues for most people, a small and healthy amount of stress is essential to creativity and what Maslow called "self-actualization" (May, 1950/2015; Maslow, 1950) This means that people experiencing anxiety use excessive brain power to prevent themselves from facing any possible trigger to their anxiety.

To overcome the anxious brain's disproportionate fear of risk, people need to have prior experiences where they experienced a similar risk and learned it was not life-threatening (Explore SEL, n.d.). Additionally, people who are anxious about a specific domain of thinking, like creativity, are going to exhibit less risk-taking behavior in that

domain (Daker, 2023). This has important implications for the way we teach drama and theatre. Students who are fearful of creative tasks will exhibit avoidant behavior toward drama and theatre-related activities and will not automatically take the risks that the drama classroom requires of them. If our students are overwhelmed by getting things 'right' in creative spaces and are un-practiced risk-takers, they will not be able to take the kinds of risks art-making requires unless they can see that their risks will pay off, or at least provide a soft landing.

Readers may not be trained and licensed social workers, therapists, doctors, or school counselors; the people tasked with facilitating mental health management. Instead, I write to the educators who did not sign up to be on the front lines of an anxiety epidemic. It should not be an educator's job to reverse the negative impacts of a mental health crisis in our students. But now, more than ever, educators have a responsibility to use our position to guide students toward a healthier relationship with work and failure, and drama and theatre classrooms are uniquely positioned to do this work.

THEATRE CLASSROOMS, FAILURE, AND RESILIENCE

Drama and theatre classrooms are a perfect place to embrace what Sara Jane Bailes calls "the poetics of failure" (Bailes, 2011). Bailes argues that failure is an inclusive approach to art-making because it "operates through a principle of difference, rather than sameness" (p.2). Failure is a unifying feature of contemporary performance art and experimental theatre where performers reveal aspects of the process to the audience, thereby illuminating the new avenues it creates in artistic work. Helen Nicholson (2013b) supports Bailes' critique that theatre always has to be 'fun' and instead celebrates the opportunities presented by failure, boredom, and broken expectations in performance work, as these moments of uncertainty and doubt are precisely when new knowledge is created, making failure inherently pedagogical. Not only can failure provide opportunities for learning, but it can also strengthen the skills students need to participate in learning to begin with.

Learning to embrace failure is a necessary Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skill for students (Snyder, 2019). Practicing risk-taking is an essential component of quieting the anxious brain. Making mistakes sets off necessary brain activity (Edutopia, 2021). Learning from

mistakes can be so productive, that experiencing failure can help students recall information later on (Kapur, 2008). Failure is also essential for developing neural plasticity, our brain's ability to flex and grow with new information (Hammond, p. 42, 2015). As we craft space for failure, we must remember students' Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). When we push students to achieve things they are not ready for, or we coddle them in the safety of familiarity, we are inhibiting their ability to learn. To make language about challenges more accessible to young people, we can talk about 'Just Right Challenges' with our students (Ayres, 2005), which give learners tools for breaking down a task into pieces that are easy, challenging, and impossible so they can regulate their own engagement. Students are more engaged in their learning when they feel challenged (Fisher et al., 2018). Teachers should make this information available to students when introducing opportunities to fail in their classrooms. Once students understand their personal relationship to failure, educators can work to make failure a community norm.

Doug Lemov (2015) devotes an entire chapter to failure in his guide for teachers. He argues for establishing a "culture of error" in which students recognize mistakes as critical steps on the path of learning (p. 64). Embracing mistakes, or as Brian Edmiston (2014) calls them, "mis-takes," is an important part of building a safe classroom community. Edmiston argues that "mis-takes" are simply actions that don't fit a particular social context and offers students a chance to "re-take," their actions while prompting the classroom community to celebrate the opportunity for second chances (p. 80). He goes on to quote Bob Fecho saying classrooms should not be "*free* from risk but... *safe* to take risks" (Edmiston, 2014, p. 94 quoting *Teaching for the Students*, Fecho, 2011, p. 114). Calling classrooms "safe-spaces," while a noble goal, has been a point of contention (Hunt, 2019). Many educators and facilitators are instead moving toward a language of "brave spaces," acknowledging that "safety" can never be guaranteed (Brown, 2022). Even the term "brave space," however, is falling out of favor for erasing the daily bravery of marginalized people in privileged spaces. New terms like "accountable space," "IDEAL space" "spaces of acceptable risk," and "negotiated space" have been offered as replacements (Ahenkorah, 2023; Humiston, 2022; Macpherson, 2021; Rikard & Villarreal, 2023). In each new term and definition, however, a culture of risk-taking and potential mis-takes is implied. With each language update and cultural

norm, space is created for more people of different backgrounds to feel supported in risk-taking and failure.

Building a community that encourages risk-taking in students must encourage risk-taking in **all** students. This means an inclusive and culturally responsive approach is essential for creating a true failure-friendly classroom. According to Zaretta Hammond (2015), students who feel unsafe or unable to approach challenges in the classroom will be flooded with an overproduction of stress hormones and an underproduction of oxytocin which induces anxiety, making learning impossible. Teachers must spend time reflecting on the ways their classroom may be hostile to learners who may feel ‘othered’ due to their race, class, language, sexuality, gender, ability, or other status markers, and they must adjust their teaching practices to create a space of safe risk-taking for the most vulnerable students in the room. Hammond warns, however, that a ‘watered-down’ approach to curricula and challenges does more to harm historically marginalized students than it helps them (p. 49). Healthy challenge is necessary for building the physical elements and processing power of the brain to achieve higher-order thinking. Moreover, educators should be mindful of the educational history of ‘teaching less’ to students of color and work to dismantle assumptions about what students are capable of in a school context (Delpit, 1995/2006). Teachers interested in creating culturally responsive opportunities for failure must simultaneously encourage risk in all students while recognizing the additional burdens some students carry into the classroom.

Additionally, it is easy for artists and arts educators to fall into a ‘positivist’ trap with our work, assuming that everything we do will be successful and good (Nicholson, 2013a). This is understandable — as any opportunity to tell a positive story about arts programs feels like armor against slashed budgets. Drama and theatre educators should remember that sometimes creative work will fail and find ways to articulate how failure is productive and an essential element of the work.

I have spent a lot of time hemming and hawing about the word “failure” over the last several years. I worried about the word “failure.” Should I say “mistakes,” “risk-taking,” or something more palatable and positive? What happens if educators start accepting mistakes as opportunities for growth and essential learning? What happens when failure is a necessary part of “the process?” How might anxious students react to opportunities where they can feel free to fail? Embracing the

word failure, and all of the weight it implies, is exactly what I need to do if I want to practice carrying it. I'm trying to be reverent toward failure and to find ways of highlighting it in my teaching artist practice. Allowing failure into my classrooms, however, took intentional practice and patience.

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR TEACHING FAILURE

Drama and theatre classrooms of all kinds (high school, university, after-school programs, or one-off workshops) can become the perfect place to help students start making mistakes because the experiences are authentic. Improvising a scene, drafting a scenic design, and rehearsing a play are all opportunities for students to authentically apply skills, which is essential for building resilience in learners (Cefai, 2008). To build authentic spaces for failure, educators can consider whether their classroom or program is concerned with presenting a final product to an audience, or if it is process-based and uses performance as a tool to explore ideas and content. If a program is tied to a final product, facilitators can consider ways to build opportunities for risk-taking, maybe by reducing the importance of the final product during certain activities and encouraging playfulness. Praising effort, versus achievement, is essential for building resilience in young people (Dwyer, et al., 2015). This requires teachers to find ways to reveal students' efforts during the process of creation in product-oriented projects.

My first "real" theatre teaching job was a parks and recreation class I started in my hometown during a summer break in college. Young and inexperienced, I planned to devise plays with the young people and urged families to take class attendance very seriously. Because the program was new and families were not used to a rigid structure in the community summer programs, attendance was spotty. There probably wasn't a single week where all of the students were present. Frustrated, I pressed on, determined to present polished productions that would "wow" my supervisors and the young participant's families. As the final sharing approached, I was nervous because some students still needed scripts or to have lines fed to them and nothing had been rehearsed as much as I hoped.

In retrospect, I don't remember anything about the performance, but I remember how much fun I had writing and improvising silly plays with the students, getting to know their quirky sense of humor, and watching

their aesthetic lenses deepen and grow in the weeks leading up to the performance. What I initially saw as a “failed” project was really just the pressure to produce a “product” to other people clouding my vision and preventing me from seeing the great work that was already happening. After my first “failed” teaching artist attempt, I began to question the necessity of a final product or performance. My favorite memories from participating in youth theatre are rehearsals and classes, not performances. In fact, the thing I value most from my early theatre days is the community of friends, artists, and teachers who helped me grow as an artist and as a person.

One of the keys to a failure-friendly classroom includes building a community where students feel supported. I teach students to encounter failure with the improv game *Clams Are Great!* The rules are simple, one person stands in the center of the circle and says “*Clams are great because...*” and then finishes the sentence with anything, and I mean anything (as long as it’s kind and the language is appropriate for the context). For example: “*Clams are great because they live in the water. Clams are great because the sky is purple. Clams are great because YEET!*” After each statement, the rest of the group says “Yes” as loud as possible and claps together. This game is regularly requested in a therapeutic context I work in, where anxiety levels are high and the participants often worry about getting things “right.” However, the game has become a fun way to meet the social learning goals of the participants because it encourages risk and puts each student in a performance position supported by everyone in the room, no matter how silly or boring the statement is.

Content choice can also help students understand mistakes as an inherent part of life while providing a safe way for students to consider the perspectives of others. Jo Beth Gonzalez (2013), urges educators to put students in the driver’s seat by having them research and write their own content. She acknowledges the tension of wanting to give her students agency while worrying about “inappropriate” or offensive content making its way into the space. She recommends teachers embrace a “state of unknowing” which “keeps me both on edge and at bay, teaching from an altered position of power that centralizes students’ voices” (p. 157).

Asking students to create their own work, however, is time-consuming and not feasible for every context. As educator Joan Lazarus states in *Signs of Change* (2012), drama teachers should use texts in

their classrooms that include “realistic consequences for characters’ actions and raise questions about characters’ choices” (p. 170). By learning through someone else’s problems, students will experience failures and consequences from the aesthetic distance of drama.

Teachers looking for strategies to deepen student learning around an established text or character can consider using activities from *Drama Based Pedagogy* in their classrooms (Dawson & Lee, 2018). Drama-based pedagogy prioritizes process over product and emphasizes “affective” learning, or social, emotional, and cultural learning (p.21). For example, students can practice outcomes of potential failures through *Real and Ideal Images*, *Conscience Alley*, *Paired/Group Improvisation*, and *Voices in the Head* (Dawson and Lee, 2018). These strategies allow students to embody someone else’s journey, explore multiple perspectives, and practice success and failure in the safety of the classroom. These improvisational activities that ask students to dig into content are examples of what the Project Zero team behind the *Eight Studio Habits of Mind* (Hetland et al., 2013) would call *Stretch and Explore* moments (p. 91). Stanislavski’s magic question, “What if...” is at the core of *Stretch and Explore* thinking.

Drama classrooms can also explore content through metaphor. While facilitating a community-building workshop for incoming first-years to an academic program, I introduced an energy-passing warm-up called *Lions, Tigers, Bears*. Students were asked to pass the energy in various directions and whenever someone made a mistake, instead of getting “out”, the whole group shouts “oh my” and runs to find a new place in the circle. I was able to scaffold the reflection to reveal that when people in a community mess up, the rest of the community can hold them accountable for those mistakes without ostracizing them. The game provided both an aesthetic distance from failure, as well as a way into the conversation about how to support another.

In addition to *Stretch and Explore* thinking, the *Eight Studio Habits of Mind* asks educators to encourage a habit of *Engage and Persist* with learners, implying that a level of risk and failure is intrinsic to the artistic process (Project Zero, 2003). When I am teaching, these skills are in the back of my mind and I am always looking for opportunities to point out the moments students are using the habits of mind in their theatrical work. For example, when I see a moment for students to *Engage and Persist*, I tell students:

Creative work is like training in a weight room. It is something that requires consistent and intentional practice as well as patience. Even when the weights are heavy, lifting them is the work, and with practice, it becomes easier.

This mindset encourages students to develop a habit of working that is separate from artistic inspiration or productivity and they continue working in the face of great challenges (Hetland et al, 2013, p. 52).

Drama classrooms use games to teach rigorous content because many arts educators know that young people learn best through play (Ahmad, et al., 2016). By teaching with play at the forefront, educators can introduce a safe space for risk-taking and failure. To establish a risk-safe community, educators can try strategies from *Drama-Based Pedagogy* like *Circle Dash* or *Crumbling* to model support in their classroom (Dawson & Lee, 2018). To practice persistence and problem-solving, *Group Counting* and *Stop and Go and Jump* almost guarantee the opportunity for failure (Dawson & Lee, 2018). At a therapeutic summer camp for neurodivergent young people, I taught *Stop and Go and Jump* to several groups. While many of the young people played gleefully, some removed themselves from the game as it got harder. I asked the participants to reflect on how they were feeling and then told them, "When we make mistakes and try again, it helps our brains grow, which in turn lets us do even harder things." Then I let them play again. When reflecting, several participants expressed the same discomfort they felt at the beginning of the game, but were more willing to engage and persist because they knew the challenge had a purpose.

Additionally, drama educators should consider how exercises and games from *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (1992/2002) by Augusto Boal, can bolster conversations and opportunities for productive failure in the classroom. (1992/2002). Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed aims to reveal examples of injustice to oppressed people and give them space to rehearse interventions that liberate their communities, workplaces, and relationships with others (Babbage, 2018). The first step in his system is a process of "de-mechanization," where we must de-mechanize, or de-program our daily routines and habits so we can wake up to the oppression around us (FAQ, n.d.). In theatre classrooms, his techniques are often used as warm-ups; an attempt to shed the outside world before diving into the rigorous work of creativity and imagination. Boal's exercises, lovingly stolen from childhood playground games, also

introduce a joyful amount of risk-taking and failure. When teaching his strategies to students, I explicitly introduce confusion and the possibility of mistakes. Below is what I share with elementary and middle school students about de-mechanization:

When we play these games, we might feel a little confused or make some mistakes. That is on purpose. It's okay to feel uncomfortable but do your best to keep going. The guy who gets credit for getting theatre teachers to use these games wanted you to feel a little confused. He believed it makes your brain feel awake and more ready to learn new things or see things in a new way.

Adapting Boal's language of de-mechanization for young people gives failure purpose and reframes confusion and mistakes as intentional and necessary to learning.

EMBRACING FAILURE

Near the end of her 2023 AATE keynote, Curtis Newton shared her manifesto, *Fear and the Creative Process: A Manifesto for Creative Survival* (Curtis-Newton, 2015). Inspired by her words, and an attempt to embrace my own failures as steps toward success, I wrote my own ode to embracing failure on the plane ride home from the conference.

Failure is... A part of life. Essential. Sometimes, it is fun or even funny! // **Failure is not...** An excuse to be an asshole. A reason to give up. The end. // Sometimes, failure is your own responsibility, sometimes it is someone else's. **Give grace**, no matter who is responsible. // Sometimes, failure doesn't feel good, but **we were not built to feel good all the time**. Find what feels productive about feeling bad and go from there. // When it feels heavy, lift with your knees. **You will get stronger over time**. // Success is not the opposite of failure and you should probably just stop putting success and failure in the same thought. // Tension, struggle, and conflict are not synonymous with failure. Running away from them are. // Failure is the chance to say: So now... I can... What if... That surprised me, which means... Now I know... // **Celebrate the opportunity to revise**. Revise often, it gets easier. // **Sometimes, the detour IS the destination**, but you don't know that when you

get on the road. // Failure is the risk you take when you are curious, innovative, courageous, hard-working, and critical. // Failure is normal. Embrace it.

Drama and theatre teachers are not going to ‘solve’ the anxiety crisis students are in, and certainly not with a handful of theatre games. However, creating failure-friendly classrooms and centering the process of risk-taking strengthens the social-emotional skills students need to manage the stressful world they live in. While other educators and practitioners have offered ways to embrace risks, resilience, and mistakes, I argue that tip-toeing around scary words like “failure” only increases the fear of them. Sometimes things fail, which is not necessarily a bad thing but an opportunity for reflection, growth, and a new path forward. By explicitly using the language of failure, educators can validate the experiences of their students and normalize a culture of persistence. To create a failure-friendly space, drama and theatre teachers can use the tools already at our disposal: process-based work, building trusting communities of learners, selecting rigorous content, using games that practice SEL skills, and ample reflection time, so students can fail more, fail better, and feel great about failing.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Lindgren Galloway, S. (2023). Embracing failure in the drama classroom. *ArtsPraxis*, 10 (2), pp. 16-31.

REFERENCES

- Ahenkorah, E. (2023, October 18). [Safe and brave spaces don't work \(and what you can do instead\)](#). *Medium*.
- Ahmad, S., Ch, A.H., Batool, A., Sittar, K., & Malik, M. (2016). Play and cognitive development: Formal operational perspective of Piaget's theory. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7, pp. 72-79.
- Ayres, A.J. (2005). *Sensory integration and the child: Understanding hidden sensory challenges*. Western Psychological Services
- Babbage, F. (2018). *Augusto Boal* (First edition reissued). Routledge.
- Bailes, S.J. (2011). *Performance theatre and the poetics of failure*:

- Forced entertainment, Goat Island, Elevator repair service.*
Routledge.
- Bassok, D., Latham, S., & Rorem, A. (2016). [Is kindergarten the new first grade?](#) *AERA Open*, 2 (1).
- Boal, A. (2002). *Games for actors and non-actors* (2nd ed). Routledge.
- Brown, B. (2022, November 17). [Brené and Barrett on Building Brave Spaces](#). Retrieved August 30, 2023.
- Cefai, C. (2008). *Promoting resilience in the classroom: A guide to developing pupils' emotional and cognitive skills*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Corredor-Waldron, A., & Currie, J. (2023). *To What Extent are Trends in Teen Mental Health Driven by Changes in Reporting? The Example of Suicide-Related Hospital Visits*. National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Curtis-Newton, V., (2023, July 27). *Keynote #1*. Illumination Seattle American Alliance for Theatre and Education Conference, Seattle, WA.
- Curtis-Newton, V. (2015). [Tumblr](#) [Tumblr].
- Daker, R.J., Slipenkyj, M.S., Green, A.E., & Lyons, I.M. (2023). [Evidence for avoidance tendencies linked to anxiety about specific types of thinking](#). *Scientific Reports*, 13 (1), pp. 3294.
- Dawson, K. and Lee, B.K. (2018). *Drama based pedagogy: Activating learning across the curriculum*. Intellect, The University of Chicago Press.
- Delpit, L. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. The New Press.
- Dwyer, C., Dweck, C., & Carlson-Jaquez, H. (2015). [Using praise to enhance student resilience and learning outcomes](#).
www.apa.org.
- Edmiston, B. (2014). *Transforming teaching and learning with active and dramatic approaches: Engaging students across the curriculum*. (p. 80, p. 94). Routledge.
- Edutopia. (2021, January 7). [How to Create a Mistake-Friendly Classroom](#). Edutopia.
- [Explore SEL](#). (n.d.). Retrieved August 30, 2023.
- [FAQ](#). (n.d.). Theatre of the Oppressed NYC. Retrieved August 30, 2023.
- Fisher, D., Frey, N., Quaglia, R.J., Smith, D., & Lande, L.L. (2018). *Engagement by design: Creating learning environments where*

- students thrive*. Corwin.
- Fortuna, L.R., Brown, I.C., Lewis Woods, G.G., & Porche, M.V. (2023). [The impact of COVID-19 on anxiety disorders in youth: Coping with stress, worry, and recovering from a pandemic](#). *Child and adolescent psychiatric clinics of North America*, 32 (3), pp. 531–542.
- Gallagher, K., Rodericks, D., & Jacobson, K. (Eds.). (2020). Introduction: A situated, ethical, imaginative doing and being in the encounter of research. In *Global Youth Citizenry and Radical Hope: Enacting Community-Engaged Research through Performative Methodologies* (pp. 1–22). Springer Singapore.
- Gonzalez, J.B. (2013). *Temporary stages II: Critically oriented drama education* (Second Edition, Revised and Expanded). Intellect Ltd.
- Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin.
- Harvard Health. (2011, March 1). [Understanding the stress response](#).
- Hetland, L., Winner, E., Veenema, S., Sheridan, K.M. (2013). *Studio thinking 2: The real benefits of visual arts education* (Second Edition). Teachers College Press.
- Humiston, J. [“IDEAL spaces” are the new “safe spaces:” Here’s why](#). (2022, December 13). *Training Industry*.
- Hunt, E. (2019, October 21). [My classroom is not a safe space](#). *Human Parts*.
- Kapur, M. (2008). [Productive failure](#). *Cognition and Instruction*, 26 (3), pp. 379–425.
- Lazarus, J. (2012). *Signs of change: New directions in theatre education* (Revised and Amplified Edition, p. 170). Intellect, University of Chicago Press.
- Lemov, D. (2015). Chapter 2: Acting on the data and the culture of error. In *Teach like a champion 2.0: 62 techniques that put students on the path to college* (Second edition). (pp. 57-81) Jossey-Bass.
- Macpherson, J. (2021). [Negotiated space: A reframing of safety and collaboration in the classroom](#). *Youth Theatre Journal*, 35 (1–2), pp. 79–89.
- Maslow, A. H. (1950). Self-actualizing people: a study of psychological health. *Personality, Symposium 1*, pp. 11–34
- May, R. (1950/2015). *The meaning of anxiety* (Reissued, [in a Norton

- paperback ed. 1996]). Norton.
- Nicholson, H. (2013a). [Participation as art](#). *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 18 (1), pp. 1-3.
- Nicholson, H. (2013b). [The poetics of failure as pedagogy](#). *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 18 (3), pp. 213-215.
- Pearson, C. (2022, October 11). [Health panel recommends screening all kids 8 and up for anxiety](#). *The New York Times*.
- Project Zero (2003). [Eight studio habits of mind](#). Retrieved December 6, 2021.
- Rikard, L., & Villarreal, A.R. (2023). [Focus on impact, not intention: Moving from “safe” spaces to spaces of acceptable risk](#). *Journal of Consent-Based Performance*, 2 (1), pp. 1–16.
- Snyder, A. (2019, April 19). [Why teachers should celebrate failure in the classroom](#). *Medium*.
- Twenge, J.M., Joiner, T.E., Rogers, M.L., & Martin, G.N. (2018). [Increases in depressive symptoms, suicide-related outcomes, and suicide rates among U.S. adolescents after 2010 and links to increased new media screen time](#). *Clinical Psychological Science*, 6 (1), pp. 3–17.
- U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. (2022). [Anxiety in Children and Adolescents: Screening](#).
- U.S. Surgeon General. (2023, September 4). [Current Priorities](#). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- U.S. Surgeon General. (2021). [Protecting Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory](#). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Sofia Lindgren Galloway is a theatre-maker, educator, scholar, and a current MFA candidate in Theatre Education and Applied Theatre at Emerson College. Her scholarship examines how media, cultural institutions, and education systems can work to develop a curious, collaborative, and critically engaged society. She uses arts-integration

to explore how performance techniques can solve problems and reveal new truths about society, technology, and ourselves. Sofia has worked as an educator/facilitator in urban and rural schools, theatres, museums, and ASD therapeutic programs teaching drama and science. She has also worked as a director and producer of new works.