NYU | STEINHARDT

ARTSPRAXIS

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ARTSPRAXIS provides a platform for contributors to interrogate why the arts matter and how the arts can be persuasively argued for in a range of domains. The pressing issues which face the arts in society will be deconstructed. Contributors are encouraged to write in a friendly and accessible manner appropriate to a wide readership. Nonetheless, contributions should be informed and scholarly, and must demonstrate the author's knowledge of the material being discussed. Clear compelling arguments are preferred, arguments which are logically and comprehensively supported by the appropriate literature. Authors are encouraged to articulate how their research design best fits the question (s) being examined. Research design includes the full range of quantitative-qualitative methods, including arts-based inquiry; case study, narrative and ethnography; historical and autobiographical; experimental and quasi-experimental analysis; survey and correlation research. Articles which push the boundaries of research design and those which encourage innovative methods of presenting findings are encouraged.

The third issue of *ARTSPRAXIS* reflects on and responds to the issues raised during *The NYU Forum on Educational Theatre* (2016). This forum was part of an ongoing series NYU is hosting on significant issues that impact on the broad field of educational and applied theatre. Previous forums have been dedicated to site-specific theatre (2015), teaching artistry (2014 and 2005), developing new work for the theatre (2013), theatre for young audiences (2012), theatre for public health (2011), citizenship and applied theatre (2010), theatre pedagogy (2009), Shakespeare (2008), drama across the curriculum and beyond (2007), ethnotheatre and theatre for social justice (2006), and assessment in arts education (2003). The NYU Forum on Educational Theatre invited the global community to propose workshops, papers, posters, narratives, and performances around one of the following topics:

- Drama in Education (i.e., studies in drama/theatre curriculum, special education, integrated arts, assessment and evaluation)

- Applied Theatre (i.e., studies in community-based theatre, theatre of the oppressed, the teaching artist, diversity and inclusion)

- Theatre for Young Audiences and Play Production (i.e., studies in acting, directing, dramaturgy, playwriting, dramatic literature, theatre technology, arts-based research methodologies)

Cover Photo from *Twelfth Night*, directed by Jonathan P. Jones © Chianan Yen, 2014

ARTSPRAXIS

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Editorial

JONATHAN P. JONES

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

It is with great enthusiasm that I present this third volume of *ArtsPraxis*. In 2003, I worked as a research assistant for Philip Taylor cataloging the extant journals in the arts, arts education, and arts therapies disciplines in order to demonstrate the need for the first volume of this publication. To find myself now as Editor is both humbling and gratifying, given the time and attention that I have contributed to this journal over the years.

This volume features a number of articles that were presented in some form at the Forum on Educational Theatre in April 2016, for which I served as manager. The Forum celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Program in Educational Theatre at New York University: building on the past and looking towards the future. The event was a fine testament to the legacy of the Program's founders, Lowell and Nancy Swortzell who began the Program in 1966. All told, with presenters, performers, staff, volunteers, and delegates, the participant pool exceeded 400 individuals, demonstrating the strength of the field and a commitment from colleagues the world over to come to New York, share their work, and celebrate this milestone.

I first came into contact with the Program in Educational Theatre

during my freshman year at NYU. I was a student in the College of Arts and Sciences with an undeclared major. At the time, I had dreams of transferring into the Tisch School of the Arts to study musical theatre, but as students were not eligible for internal transfers in the middle of their first year, I had to wait. And that wait turned fortuitous as I took my first class in the Program in Educational Theatre that spring: Acting I with Craig Duke. In that acting class, Craig spent quite a bit of time talking about "Ed Theatre" and trying to clarify what the Program in Educational Theatre was about. I can't say I understood then, but I did find that I had a connection with the people in the course and, as such, developed a curiosity about the field.

As the semester drew on, we were encouraged to attend a performance of *Young Eugene*, written by Lowell and directed by Nancy, and I did so on opening night. This would be my first encounter with the historic Provincetown Playhouse on MacDougal Street, and my first exposure to theatre for young audiences. While the production itself failed to make much of an impact on me, the after-party in the downstairs lobby certainly did. I quickly got a sense that there was something special about this group of people—a people whose passion extended from the faculty to the students to the stage and beyond. As I made my way back to the dorm that night, I recognized that something had shifted: I had found my place in Educational Theatre.

Eighteen and a half years have elapsed since that fateful night at the Provincetown, the walls of which are now adorned with images from the performance history of the theatre, known to be the historic home of Eugene O'Neill and the Provincetown Players. I was the chief researcher and curator for the installation, and hanging high above are two key images: one of Eugene himself, looking on at all the work that followed his own, and on the opposite side of the wall, a very large image from that production of *Young Eugene.* Down below, centered at eye level is an image of Lowell and Nancy together outside the Play-house. Much has been made of the renovations of the theatre over the years, but in many ways, the Playhouse has become a second home for the Program in Educational Theatre. And given my history with the Program, I now feel very much that the Program has become a second home for me.

One of the highlights of the Forum was an alumni celebration. At the event, distinguished Program alumni John Patrick Shanley was

interviewed by Philip Taylor. In his closing remarks, John noted that above all else, he loved the theatre. Sitting in the audience, preparing to present the Swortzell Innovator Awards, I thought to myself: professionally speaking, what do I love above all else? And as I made my way to the podium and thanked Philip and John for their time and reminiscences, I looked out into the audience of current students, alumni, faculty, and Forum delegates, and it became all too clear: above all else, I love the Program in Educational Theatre. As such, in the spirit of building on the past and looking towards the future, I present this volume.

IN THIS ISSUE

Following the Forum, I asked the presenters to consider sharing their articles with a wider audience through publication in this journal. I hoped that we would get a range of material covering the scope of the Forum which was meant to mirror the three areas of specialization that the Program focuses on: Drama in Education, Applied Theatre, and Theatre for Young Audiences and Play Production. The articles that follow do indeed represent that range, but also, the authors represent the diverse range of practitioners and researchers in the field.

The first article grew out of one of the plenary experiences at the Forum which comprised a three-day lunch time podcast recording session, each of the three on a separate topic. The first podcast was about mentoring, a topic so central to the experience of established practitioners and researchers in the field, and the relationships they develop with subsequent generations. The experiences shared by **Juliana Saxton**, **Carole Miller**, and **Monica Prendergast** seemed so universal, that I jumped up as the recording came to an end asking them to consider writing up their discussion as an article for this issue.

In the Drama in Education section, **Roger Wooster** begins by questioning the current state of Theatre in Education (TIE) which was once so central to the field though it has seemingly taken less prominence in recent years. Wooster questions what the future holds for the methodology while making an impassioned plea to keep it alive. **James Mirrione** provides a reflective piece detailing his female Muslim students' experiences as they study *The Taming of the Shrew.* Kate's reversal in the play is controversial to many contemporary students looking at the play through a feminist lens, but how do Mirrione's

students feel about it and to what degree does the reversal resonate with their lived experience?

In the Applied Theatre section, **Ross Prior** investigates a selection of graduate and post-graduate applied theatre programs in service of identifying themes from the represented coursework. **Trent Norman** and **Rebecca Brown Adelman** (two of four recipients of the 2016 Swortzell Innovator Awards at the Forum) partner with **Ligia Batista Silverman** to detail some of their innovative approach to facilitating applied theatre work in Colorado. Thereafter, **Anne Smith** explores her arts-integration work with *Creative English*, an applied theatre program focused on supporting English language development for adult refugees and migrants in the UK.

In the final section on Theatre for Young Audiences and Play Production, **Sonya Baehr** recounts the experience of devising an original theatre piece with her high school students in Brooklyn which subsequently traveled to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. In the last article, **Jim DeVivo** surveys young playwrights programs in the United States, providing both a historical overview as well as documentation of currently active programs.

LOOKING AHEAD

During the next few months, we will accept papers under the same headings (drama in education, applied theatre, and theatre for young audiences) looking to engage members of the Educational Theatre field who may or may not have been present at the Forum yet want to contribute to the ongoing dialogue: where have we been and where are we going? The call for papers has been released concurrently with this volume and the submission deadline is February 1, 2017.

"A Kick in the Pants" or Mentoring as "A Brain to Pick, an Ear to Listen and a Push in the Right Direction" (John C. Crosby 1859 – 1943)

JULIANA SAXTON

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ABSTRACT

The elegant phrases of John Crosby to describe mentoring have been amended and added to over the years to include, "a shoulder to cry on and a kick in the pants" (Josefowitz, 1980). This paper is a follow-up to the podcast the authors engaged in with Edie Demas as their moderator at the NYU Forum on Educational Theatre, April 2016. Here on the editor's invitation, we expand on our conversation, moving from our personal experiences of mentoring/being mentored to examining the confusions that arise over the application of the term itself, what is effective mentoring and how it may be derailed. We begin with what we said (slightly modified) about our own experiences of mentorship to set the context.

Edie Demas (Moderator):

… the next thing on the list is who are your mentors. So it would be remiss of me to be in these rooms and not think about Lowell and Nancy Swortzell who were very powerful mentors to me throughout my life. We made that shift from student to teacher and, you know, without Lowell doing that thing…what was the phrase in your lovely quote about giving you a kick in the pants…? Without Lowell doing that, I would not have my PhD. I think it's… there's something about that shared commitment…somehow you know that even when it's bumpy or the power dynamics are murky, you hang in there and figure them out. And…and there's a give and take in that that has to make that possible. That's the important thing.

Carole Miller:

Yes. I started with Barbara McIntyre; she was my teacher in 1961—she was my first teacher—the first class I went to at the University of Pittsburg. And she was my teacher all through those four years and then, when I graduated, she became more of a mentor and gave me those pushes out the door and into a bigger context. She encouraged me to do other kinds of work. Years later, she came to Victoria and the relationship shifted again. It became a much more collegial relationship at that point. . . . She once asked me for advice about something—an academic issue— and I realized it was that "click-click" which totally shifted things again. I knew her for over thirty years and our relationship went through an incredible arc to become colleagues and dear, dear friends throughout my adult life, certainly.

That recognition of our altered relationship was extremely power- ful and really changed my own view of how we are in the world with each other.

Monica Prendergast:

I think a mentor sees something in you that you might not see in yourself. . . . I was very fortunate to work with Brian Way some

years after he came to Canada and worked at the Globe Theatre in Regina. I came out of my BFA in theatre in the early eighties, and worked for a season at the Globe with Brian. I didn't know who he was. I had no idea. Why would I? I mean I was an actor. I didn't know anything about drama education. I went to the Regina Public Library and got out his book and read it 'cause I knew I was gonna be working with this man. I thought, "This is really interesting." I worked with him and we created performances and toured them to schools and of course, he did all of his creative drama workshops that he'd been doing for umpteen years at that point 'cause it was late in his career. But he was a marvelous teacher and a wonderful role model, as Juliana said. But there was one moment of mentoring from Brian that I will never ever forget because, in hindsight, he saw something in me that, at the age of twenty-two, I was not able to see in myself. It was close to the end of my contract and we were in the green room at the Globe theatre and we were having a drink and chatting, and he said, "Monica," in that very gruff sort of way— "Monica, there's a teacher in you." And I just went, "Phh." I completely rejected that notion. What?…I don't want to be a teacher. I'm gonna be an actor. I'm going to Toronto and I'm gonna be an actor.

But he was absolutely right. He could see my energy, how I loved working in schools and how much energy I got from the kids. He saw that in me. He saw that identity that I didn't even know was there. I wish I had been able to track Brian down before he died a few years ago, just to thank him for that. And then, twenty years later. . . I went through the same process with Carole and Juliana because I only planned to do my master's and then I was gonna go back to be a high school teacher.

I would go to meetings with Carole and Juliana and they'd be going through my thesis and saying, "Well this bit can go in the PhD. Oh, this bit…you can take this bit out and we'll keep that for the PhD." They kept saying this to me and finally I got my gumption up one day and said, "Are you telling me that you think I should do a PhD?" And they both went, "But absolutely, Monica, there's no reason why you shouldn't."

I think that notion of identity is really important. That a mentor sees something emerging from someone they're mentoring and… gives it a shape and names it. Carole and Juliana saw an academic in me that I didn't know was there…because my identity at that point in my life was fully formed as a teacher. So these mentors, twenty years apart, were able to name something in me that I had no idea was there. And the work continues. . .

Juliana Saxton:

Gavin Bolton was my mentor and I knew that the relationship had shifted [from teacher/guru/whatever] because he was staying at my house and he came in one morning in his dressing gown and bedroom slippers, bringing me a cup of tea—and I was still in bed. He sat on the end of my bed and we talked drama, and I thought, "we're friends—we're friends now"—because we were seeing each other really at our un-best. So it is all about identity.

Mentoring is a lovely word. It has a softness and musicality that signals to both user and receiver that its meaning embraces kindness, interest and good will. It is not surprising that it is a word that has been adopted to describe a multiplicity of other but different relationships: supervision; coaching; teaching; and training, to name a few—all of which should include those qualities but, often, do not. In preparing for the podcast, we found ourselves deeply interested in these differences and the blurring of these definitional boundaries. Mentoring is used as an umbrella term for what we would consider to be job descriptions that imply some sort of professional relationship such as manager, consultant and role model. But, in fact, they are more accurately descriptors for performance-based relationships that have to do with the betterment of an organization or business; all involve some kind of evaluative component and monetary compensation.

Although a mentor may have a number of mentoring relationships, each is a one-to-one pairing. They may, particularly in the initial stages, involve helping organize, offering advice and serving as a role model but these activities are offered generally without any thought of a longer-term association. These initial connections can, however, serve as important opportunities to "suss" each other out and may be foundational in building a mentoring relationship. We found it useful to remind ourselves of the kinds of functions that relationships other than

mentoring involve in order to be clearer about what we see as mentoring.

Supervision: "to direct and inspect work or workers or the operation of an organization" (Oxford Dictionary, 1983, p. 678). Supervision often includes motivating and inspiring but always involves power-over with an evaluative component. The goal is one that is broader than the individual: it aims at the improvement of the organization.

Coaching: "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential" ([Coach Federation](#)). Coaching is a paid position that requires skill and experience, but there are exceptions as with community volunteers for school teams (the professionalism of unpaid youth coaches is exemplary). Today many businesses use coaching to help develop their employees' skills and future leadership capabilities. A "high-level" activity, the relationship is not a friendship; it is exclusively focused on the clients' goals (Pagliarini, 2011, np).

Teaching: to show, point out, declare, demonstrate, to give instruction, train, assign, direct, warn and persuade are just a few of the synonyms drawn from the on-line etymological dictionary ([Etymonline](#)). More succinctly, Merriam-Webster ([Merriam Webster](#)) tells us that it is the imparting of information or skill so that others may learn. Teaching generally is with groups, and ideally all should be taught equally. When one is singled out for special attention, it can cause issues with relation-ships within the classroom. In addition to being paid for their work, teachers are in both power-under (administration) and power-over (students) positions, and working within a context where assess-ment is a requirement.

Training: like teaching, involves the imparting of knowledge and skills but is particular to a specific, useful competency, and to a set of skill levels pertinent to a job or activity. Training is a much narrower definition of teaching with an emphasis on individual performance ([Business Dictionary](#)); it will, as well, involve a

monetary exchange.

Unlike many of the relationships mentioned above, mentoring is, for us, fundamentally different. As educational psychologist Ray Carr (2001) pointed out, mentoring emphasizes learning in *general* and the *reciprocal* relationship of that learning. That is to say, mentoring is not directed at skill- or performance-building but, rather, at a more mutual and global understanding of "how the world wags". With mentoring, the mentor *holds no stake* in the outcome, there is no payment and there is no evaluation. In mentoring there is always an openness to learning from one another because each partner brings his or her own strengths to the relationship.

For all of the above descriptions, the focus is always on best practice, but a good mentor has a broader view of the field and should not think of him or herself as a gatekeeper, standing somewhere ahead of the mentee. Rather, in mentoring both partners are walking alongside each other, sharing the view, listening deeply, giving a hand to one another when needed. Changing places in order to see another perspective is a gift of the mentoring relationship. For the mentee, it is a way for him or her to access the *phronesis* or experience of the mentor; in turn, the mentee, because of his or her unique qualities, can add to and expand the mentor's view and often does so, even inadvertently. In other words, the heart of a mentoring relationship is that each learns from the other through a mutuality of interests, shared commonalities and diversity of experiences within a context of professional and personal respect.

According to the APA Presidential Task Force on Mentoring (2006), in order for the relationship to thrive, the mentor needs to be "clear and up front about what the mentee can expect from the mentoring . . . [he or she] guides the process, sets appropriate boundaries . . ." and creates an environment of sensitivity and equanimity that serves both partners (p.12-13). But, for us, many of the qualities of an effective relationship such as promptness, reliability, independence and self-motivation are established in the earlier stages of supervision or teaching and are what, for us, create the environment in which mentoring can evolve and flourish into collegiality and friendship. Generally, boundaries are unspoken and negotiated over time in ways that are particular to each relationship.

We see mentoring as something informal that grows and evolves

when power-over and assessment are no longer components for consideration. We do not see examples of "bad" mentoring (APA, 2006) as being mentor relationships at all; but role confusion can occur when duties such as supervision and management are *seen* as mentoring. Even while it is difficult for us to think of a "bad" mentor or mentee, that is not to say that the relationship cannot be tested; even the best partnerships have times of tension and misunderstandings. However, if the relationship is strong, reflective and open, it can be repaired and often emerges more resilient than before.

It may be useful to consider some of the reasons why relationships break down in these rather close one-on-one associations. Of course, we cannot be inclusive because there are as many examples are there are mentor partnerships, but drawing from the research, our own experiences and those of colleagues, we offer the following examples as possible sites for derailment:

Confidentiality is breached: All good relationships are built on trust and when that is compromised, it is difficult to rebuild.

Inappropriate sexual intentions: When the professional relationship moves to a personal one, it can lead to a sexual one that may disruptive (APA, 2006, p.15).

Personal or professional boundaries of respect are breached: This may occur because the boundaries of the "job" description have become blurred or a familiarity is assumed by one for which the other is not yet ready—the balance between professional and personal shifts uncomfortably.

Feedback on either side is seen as criticism: For a student, a supervisor's criticism is an expectation and can be offered quite directly. But a mentoring relationship can become strained when offers of help are misinterpreted as power-over criticism rather than suggestions for consideration. In mentoring, criticism comes from a more reflective stance in which the "critical friend" (Aubusson, Ewing & Hoban, 2009) lays out his or her experience for the other to consider (Schön, 1990). Swami Radha's (n.d.) personal advice "to keep the ring under your tongue" is something we try to hang onto in moments of vigorous discussion.

Free labour: There are occasions in which the mentee perceives him or herself as being "taken advantage of" by the mentor. These can happen in academia or in business where there is a tendency for the "senior" to take first author or to simply ignore the mentee's contributions by taking ownership of the ideas.

Confused expectations: Expectations are more appropriate to the customer-service model of higher education, but as part of the preliminary stages of a mentorship (Endersby, 2010, np), they can arise during its development. A mentoring relationship requires partners to be aware of the possibility of inequality of responsibility and the potential for feeling that one or the other is being taken for granted.

Expert/Expertise: A misunderstanding of the difference between these two words (the first referring to "knowing it all" and the second to "having a breadth of experience on which to draw") can place undue responsibility on the mentor.

Dependence: On either side, dependence or neediness can be a deterrent to a productive mentoring relationship. New relationships, positions or family demands may take one or the other individual in a new direction. In the long-term, both partners need to be aware of these possibilities and to respect and maintain a healthy life-work balance.

Passivity: Mentoring is an active relationship for which both need to take responsibility. This does not mean that the connection can't go "quiet" for months or even years, but it can, at any time, resume with that mutual sense of engagement and affinity.

> When we [are] harnessed together as a team, we respect each other's space; adapt our rhythms; recognize that when the ground is uneven, it makes different demands upon each of us; and know that there is nothing more satisfying and enjoyable than when we are pulling together and that it is the journey that matters to us. (Saxton, 2006, p. 159)

Mentoring has, for the three of us, been an organic process, one that we never actually discussed or considered consciously. It is something that has evolved over the years of knowing each other and sharing our passionate interest in drama and theatre, as audience, participants and teachers. So, when Phillip Taylor invited us to contribute to the podcast series of the NYU Forum on Educational Theatre, we agreed happily— really knowing nothing about it! When we realized that it might be long half-hour for our listeners, we decided we had better do a bit of research. And what we discovered was that our relationships were never official appointments and that, indeed, when mentoring becomes "official," it changes the dynamic. In a funny kind of way, the appointment itself can compromise the emotional landscape that nurtures the reciprocity fundamental to healthy mentoring relationships. Our thinking appears to be supported by Ragins and Kran (2008), whose work offers a substantial analysis of the multifaceted aspects of mentoring:

> [E]ven as mentoring is accessible when framed within our own experience, scholars continue to struggle with understanding the complexity of this pivotal, life-altering relationship. In a nutshell, we know it works; we are still grappling with why, when, and how. (p. 4)

With that in mind, we had a look at Goleman's (1997) *Emotional Intelligence* as a guide not only for ourselves but also for others who may or may hope to, find themselves in a mentoring relationship. Here is what we discovered (though we claim no sainthood in any of the following): Firstly,

- We trust one another to think about what is best for each other.

- We try to think before we speak, but we know that sometimes what blurts out can be what we need to hear. While there must always be some kind of balance, as Bill Doll (1993) reminded us, don't let it turn into stasis!

- Considering the variety of our ages, we are pretty adaptable, but we also believe in and practice *conspectus* when we face

tensions. That is to say, we hope we listen deeply, keeping in mind that objections and differences may be the grit that makes the pearl.

• We are pretty comfortable with new ideas and approaches and see change in a positive light; we understand that it is inevitable and that we have a responsibility to make better.

• Lastly, we take ownership of our mistakes (oh, this is a hard one!) and recognize that what we are engaged in together is bigger than all of us.

While the spirit of mentorship may infuse any number of more structured learning relationships, we believe it is something that is not up for dissection—though this paper has certainly been a kind of reflective dissection. Now, we can forget about all that and go back to accepting mentorship as a holistic happenstance for which we are, have been—and continue to be—so very grateful.

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Juliana Saxton is professor emeritus, Department of Theatre, University of Victoria and honorary professor in the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, Australia. Author and co-author of a number of texts on drama/theatre in education, applied theatre and drama, and the seminal text, *Asking Better Questions* (with Norah Morgan, Pembroke, 2004), she is a recipient of the University of Victoria Alumni Teacher of Excellence, a Campton Bell Lifetime Achievement Award from American Alliance for Theatre and Education and three AATE Distinguished Book Awards (2005, 2009 and 2013). In 2013 the Canadian Association of Theatre Research recognized her research and mentorship with an Honorary Membership.

Carole Miller, professor emeritus, University of Victoria, Canada, holds an honorary appointment in the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, Australia. The recipient of an excellence in teaching award, she is a co-author of *Learning to Teach Drama: A Case Narrative Approach* (Heinemann, 2000) and the AATE award-winning text, *Into the Story: Language in Action through Drama* (Heinemann, 2004). Articulating the relationship of literacy and drama

practice to current issues of social justice and ethical behaviour, her most recent co-authored text *Into the Story 2: More Stories! More Drama!* (Intellect, 2016) explores drama pedagogy through real and fictional conversations of experience.

Dr. Monica Prendergast, Associate Professor of Drama/Theatre Education, Department of Curriculum & Instruction, University of Victoria. Her research interests are varied and include drama-based curriculum and pedagogy, drama/theatre in community contexts, and arts-based qualitative research methods. Dr. Prendergast's books include *Applied Theatre* and *Applied Drama* (both with Juliana Saxton), *Teaching Spectatorship*, *Poetic Inquiry*, *Staging the Not-yet*, *Drama, Theatre and Performance Education in Canada* and *Poetic Inquiry II*. Her CV includes over 50 peer reviewed journal contributions, numerous chapters, book reviews and professional contributions. Monica also reviews theatre for CBC Radio Canada and writes a column on theatre for *Focus Magazine.*

Theatre in Education: It's a Critical Time for Critical Thinking

ROGER WOOSTER

ABSTRACT

Theatre in Education emerged in the 1960s from roots in progressive education and new wave theatre and developed a pedagogy heavily influenced by drama and education philosophy. At the heart of this theatre/education hybrid was a belief in the necessity for children to become critically engaged with the world. The best TIE offered children the tools to understand and to shape their world. This progressive approach to education has been marginalised during the last forty years. This article charts this descent into utilitarianism and asserts the need for Applied Theatre and TIE to enhance students' critical thinking skills rather than offering didactic messages and exercises in socialisation. The obstacles to working authentically with TIE are multifarious. Alongside issues of funding, timetabling, access to students and appropriate working space, there are problems associated with appropriate training in TIE praxis. Professionals no longer have the access to the necessary research and rehearsal time where facilitation skills can develop. The 'authentic teaching' lauded by Heathcote is out of favour at the time when critical thinking skills are of paramount importance. This article asks if there is a way for TIE to adapt to the new realities of how children learn and play so that again it can offer a

theatrical safe haven where critical thinking skills can be honed in order to equip young people with the critical skills to shape their own futures.

This article has been adapted from a paper of the same title given to the Educational Theatre Forum at NYU Steinhardt on 22nd April 2016.

When my abstract for the paper from which this article is drawn was accepted for the NYU Educational Theatre Forum, I was surprised to learn that it had been the only proposal to address the genre of Theatre in Education. A similar forum twenty, or even ten, years ago might have had a range of inputs on this approach to educational theatre. Theatre in Education, in the manner in which it evolved from the early experiments at Coventry in the mid-60s, has now largely been subsumed within a plethora of other educational applications of theatre. I want to champion this endangered species, whilst fearing that I am actually offering a eulogy for a beloved and eccentric relative recently departed.

In fact, in 2016, some fifty years after the 'birth' of TIE I even feel a need to offer a definition in order to proceed with my argument. My broad definition is 'using theatrical tropes in order to educate.' This definition takes in the wider applications of Applied Drama and Theatre. But I have a narrower definition of what is often called 'classic' TIE. This is the TIE of *participation* where young people are engaged at a personal emotional level, and yet protected into that participation by a theatrical construct. This is not the educational theatre that instructs and insists but rather it facilitates thought, presents dichotomy and frees young people to undertake critical analysis; it 'difficultates.' The TIE I am going to focus on is not an educational theatre that offers dire warnings, it is not children's theatre (with its primary aim of entertaining) and it is not even Youth Theatre (for which I have a huge amount of respect). Above all it is not about teaching theatrical techniques. TIE programmes are not acting classes. TIE is about an approach that uses the skills of actor/teachers (trained in both disciplines) in structured projects with young people that enable, non-judgementally, critical thinking.

It is generally accepted that TIE began in mid-sixties with Coventry

Belgrade's work in schools in the UK ([Coventry Belgrade](#)). The genesis of the work was enabled by a fortuitous combination of social and educational conditions. Following the Second World War parents wanted a more egalitarian approach to education that nurtured as well as informed the young. Old style rote learning was being questioned and the undercurrents of educational philosophy coming from the likes of Montessori, Pestalozzi, Holt and Dewey were increasingly respected and gaining credence. Piaget and child psychology became central to teacher education and these ideas blended together to offer approaches based on group-work, child-centred learning, learning through play, heuristic education: progressive education. In drama the ideas of Caldwell Cook and Harriet Finlay-Johnson from the beginning century were taken up and systematised by Peter Slade and Brian Way.

Theatrical influence came from Brecht and from the desire of young actors to re-form theatre as a social art form outside the bourgeois red-velvet curtained provincial traditions, acknowledging the influence of the agit-prop theatre of the inter-war years. This was the era of Pinter, Beckett, Arden, Bond, Rudkin, Wesker and many others. The catalyst for these social, artistic and educational elements was the fire in the bellies of post-war actors and teachers who wanted to build a better world after the horrors of their parents' lives, their deprivations and the ever present threat of nuclear annihilation. That being said, TIE did not spring fully-formed into the world but rather developed over the next fifteen years. In that time the pedagogy underpinning the TIE programmes became increasingly sophisticated. Whereas originally the roles of actor and teacher were separate, each coming from their own training backgrounds, in time the roles became fused within a new discipline (predicted by Peter Slade in 1954) of 'actor/teacher (Slade, 1954, p. 272). Companies, of which there were scores by the mid-70s, insisted on both acting- and teacher- training for company members.

The funding regime also facilitated the growth and development of TIE. Monies were ring-fenced by Arts Councils to be spent on TIE and additionally the projects were educationally valued as is evidenced by the awarding of funds from local authority education budgets. A system grew up of partnership funding where both arts and education monies supported TIE in equal measure. This was to prove a great strength when either source of funding came under pressure for the loss of monies from one source would be doubled by the loss of the matching funds and companies were able to argue for the economic benefits of

their work to the local economy. The work of the companies in schools was largely respected and welcomed as part of the educationally progressive 'quality of life' agenda.

Not that funders always knew what they were buying. Fifty years on one will still meet teachers or members of the educational bureaucracy who think they are funding 'plays in schools' when they fund TIE. (And, to be honest, perhaps today they are.) But what *really* goes on when a group of children work with actors on a project in school remains a mystery to them. 'Classic' TIE has always been, of necessity, a hidden art form. The presence of visitors to programmes was discouraged since it detrimentally turns the children into performers. Additionally, in the early years, the technology did not exist to record the sometimes tentative responses of the children satisfactorily. Whilst it would be technically much easier today, we are beset by concerns about the exploitation of children through the use of their images. So, persuading themselves that TIE is just a theatre 'treat' for children, Arts and Education funders have, in more recent decades, found it easy to justify the removal of funding. I will return to the effect this has had on the development of educational theatre.

In Britain the companies that emerged in the 70s and 80s prided themselves on the developing sophistication of their pedagogy. Through the influence of Drama in Education (Heathcote, Bolton and others) often interrogated through the annual conference of the Standing Conference of Young People's Theatre, companies encouraged themselves to hone their praxis and it was here that the work of Boal was introduced to companies by Chris Vine and ideas from Freire, Bruner and Vygotsky were shared and applied to the theoretical lexicon underpinning the work.

Despite its accepted value and contribution to the educational life of the child, there were always threats to the work and during these years companies came and went as funding ebbed and flowed. One of the greatest threats was the suspicion that the work was, at least in some cases, politically motivated. But this goes to the heart of the argument I want to present, for central to the progressive education movement of the 50s and 60s was the idea that we should be teaching children to think. And that, I'm afraid, is always going to be a political act. As Freire puts it:

[Education] will always be in the service of either the 'domestica-

tion' of men or of their liberation…. Neutral education cannot, in fact, exist. It is fundamental for us to know that when we work on the educational curriculum… we are engaged in political acts which imply an ideological choice. (Freire, 1972, p. 174)

TIE often failed to accept the consequences of the fact that teaching children to think critically, to question, to analyse and to reflect upon what *could be* rather than accept what *is,* was going to be seen as politically aggressive. This failure, along with the necessary isolation of the funders from the product, was to prove to have terminal consequences. Those who fund our arts and our education are not always interested in getting young people to look at the world afresh:

Education must be conceived as aiding young humans in learning to use the tools of meaning making and reality construction, to better adapt to the world in which they find themselves and to help in the process of changing it as required. (Bruner, 1996, p. 19-20)

The notion of changing the world for the better may have been acceptable in the years following the salutary horrors of World War Two and were even reflected to an extent in schools' curricula post-War, but as the consumerist agenda embedded itself from the 70s such idealistic concepts increasingly became mere electioneering slogans whilst the demands of realpolitik demanded that children think *inside* the box.

There has always been a tension between the economic need to have a literate workforce and the concern that once people can read they will access new ideas and, dangerously, start thinking. These were the perceived threats during the nineteenth century as demands for universal schooling grew, and they remain the arguments today, though in a more subtle form. The increasingly sophisticated consumerist market that evolved in the post-War years was not being served by the ideas of progressive education. These were increasingly seen as irrelevant, even dangerous, and much of the social and industrial unrest of the 60s and 70s was blamed on 'soft' educational ideas and a lack of school discipline. Industry demanded a trained workforce that could support and respond to the developing needs of the market. This utilitarian strain has always been present in education but, from the mid-70s onwards, governments of all colours were

demanding that education should serve industry and the wider economy directly. The mood of the time was epitomised by the Labour Prime Minister, Jim Callaghan who initiated 'A Great Debate' about education in 1976. When Thatcher was elected in 1979 her earliest priority was to under-mine trade union power, but then she too turned her attention to education and in 1988 the Education Reform Act (ERA) was passed. It was to change the culture of education in Britain completely and, incidentally, totally undermine the foundations on which TIE stood. Edward Bond maintains that this attack on TIE was not only incidental but deliberate. The establishment, he argued, would ensure that the 'radical innocence' of the young was thwarted: "That is why they want to *stop* you and they *do* want to stop you… It is *necessary that you are stopped*" (Bond, 1989, p. 16).

ERA's primary aspect was to introduce a National Curriculum to British schools which divided schools years into four Key Stages with a list of Learning Objectives for each of the Core subjects. Drama was *not* one of these core subjects and became subsumed within English. The core subjects were separated and their delivery outcomes highly prescribed. Group or cross-curricula work was discouraged – and this alone made the approaches of TIE companies suddenly irrelevant. But there were additional factors at work. ERA also introduced the Local Management of Schools by which monies were taken away from the local governments and put at the disposal of the headteachers. Unless headteachers worked together to fund their local TIE company the funding would be dissipated and the match funding from Arts bodies would also disappear. TIE is not cheap and only through central 'top-sliced' funding could it be viable to provide the free service to schools that had become the norm. In the years following ERA many companies disappeared because their cross-curricula approach was not acceptable, because their funding disappeared or because they just had ideological objections to the new curriculum. Perhaps, above all, headteachers prioritised other resources over 'having a theatre group in to entertain the children' – such was the level of ignorance of the work in many cases.

By the end of the 1990s TIE had changed a great deal. There were many fewer companies and most were working in very different ways. Many had been forced to start charging schools. This was a painful concession for socially aware TIE companies to accept, for only the most privileged schools or pupils could afford to pay. It was felt

therefore that those who would most benefit from the work were the first to be excluded from it. The methodology too came under immediate pressure. Hitherto the ways of working had usually (though not always) involved children working with the companies in their class groupings. A small group of actor/teachers working with thirty children in role is a very different educational experience from that which now emerged. Economies of scale meant that 'audiences' (for such they quickly became) might involve a whole year group of perhaps 200 children. In this way the financial contribution of the children or school could be minimised and justified. But the praxis could not survive this change. End of show workshops or discussions became the norm with the children bereft of any protection into role. If they had an opinion to share they had to do it as themselves and in front of all their peers. There was little opportunity for critical thinking and analysis. It provided exactly what the education system was now designed to provide – easy responses to difficult questions and not the tools to shape the world.

If we accept (and I do not) that education is about fitting children to a predetermined role in the economic machine then some justification for this can be offered. In the 50s and 60s we were sold a vision of the future that was to be one of automated luxury and the prevalence of leisure time in which we could explore ourselves as creative human beings. What happened to *that*?! Automation and the digital revolution continue, but those in work are working harder and longer at more tedious jobs whilst those without jobs struggle with unnecessary poverty and the wealth gap widens. Are today's children being pre-pared for tomorrow's jobs? My adult life has seen the proliferation of occupations that did not exist when I was in formal education. I have little idea what many currently advertised jobs actually are. They were certainly not 'taught' at school. There was nothing on the curriculum called 'research analysis' or 'digital project management' or 'database support management' or 'campaign optimisation management'. So how do we prepare young people for *their* futures – when tomorrow's jobs will, inevitably, be different from today's?

Well, we could leave it to chance. As today businesses will complain that school-leavers don't have the skills they need; that they have not been taught the right things. But in the last fifty years what was the right thing to teach? Given that most of the jobs of the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s no longer exist in the form that they did, what should

we be teaching? I think we should be teaching adaptability, creativity, critical thinking. We should be offering the wherewithal for children to shape their world – to mould it rather than be moulded by it. As Giroux has pointed out, currently schooling is not being measured by its ability to teach the 'skills of democracy' but is measured against the need to reproduce, "values, social practices and skills needed for the dominant corporate order" (Giroux, 1997, p. 119).

It will be clear where my argument is going; 'classic' TIE was uniquely placed to offer this holistic approach to examining and understanding the 'skills of democracy'. TIE (and especially participatory TIE) enables children to 'muse' upon possible futures, to conceptualise problems and envisage solutions. The imaginative use of play to place ourselves empathetically into the thought processes of another has given rise to the art form of theatre, but it also offers humans this continuing tool of self-development. 'What if' underpins all creative endeavour, enabling the visualisation of alternative outcomes. It is this second function of play that TIE exploits, whilst also drawing on the *theatrical* application of play to create a cauldron in which ideas and imagination are exercised in a catalytic fusion.

In a well-facilitated piece of Forum Theatre, for example, the young people will usually start as audience spectating a theatrical stimulus. From there they will offer, from their own subjective responses, an analysis of what is happening and why. They will start then to move into an objective analysis – supposing what may or should happen. Finally some of the audience will become players in the theatrical construct – *not* as actors, but as interpreters and conduits for the ideas under scrutiny.

The processes involved in a piece of participatory drama similarly draw on theatrical tropes but additionally those of play. Vygotsky has explained to us how it is the function of effective education to identify where children are in their conceptual maturity and to offer guidance to attain an understanding marginally beyond their reach. With the help of pedagogic scaffolding children can work within this Zone of Proximal Development to climb to more sophisticated understanding. In a piece of participatory TIE the scaffold is offered by the safe narrative theatrical construct offered by the actor/teachers. It is a 'real' theatrical situation into which the young people are invited. Here, in role, as observers, as commentators and advisors, they can explore, investigate and test out ideas and opinions without threat. In

Heathcote's terms they are working in a 'no-penalty zone'. Above all they are not 'acting'. They are themselves within a fictive situation but are free to explore ideas. They are not responsible for the story's outcomes but they can help shape them. Very often they will be dealing with historical situations where the outcome is known but they are able to explore the reasons for the outcome. They will consider 'why' and 'how' rather than the simple 'what' that a history curriculum will often require.

In doing so they are testing their own understanding against the motivations of the characters in the play, implicitly relating events to their own lives and experience. The narrative provided by the actor/teachers is explored by them in a way that offers a door to universal connections. In Vygotskian terms the children are scaffolded within a safe theatrical construct to connect what they know into the wider, universal, implications of their knowledge. They are enabled to move from the particular to the universal. And this insight is the first step to taking control and seeking change.

Such projects are now extremely rare. In my recent book[1] I have described some examples that are to be found in the UK, USA and Eastern Europe, but funding and pedagogical imperatives have made this work 'irrelevant' to the modern education curriculum which increasingly seeks to marginalise arts and humanities in favour of commercially relevant content. Alongside these issues of funding and curriculum there are also associated problems of timetabling, access to students (who must not be taken away from their examination studies!) and appropriate working space. Additionally there are problems associated with adequate training of practitioners in the disciplines of *both* performance and pedagogy. Professionals no longer have the access to the necessary research and rehearsal time and it is rare to find secure companies where a 'house' style – along with a 'house pedagogy' and facilitation skills are enabled to develop. In companies in Britain in the 70s and 80s it was not uncommon for team member-ship to be stable for many years at a time. In place of these close-working teams we now have disparate TIE workers (perhaps with no teacher training) who are presented with a commissioned script written by a playwright who has been asked to *say* something (rather than *ask* something) that they have to present and (possibly) workshop with

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[1] Wooster, R. (2016). *Theatre in Education in Britain: Origins, development and influence.* London: Bloomsbury Methuen.

large groups of students in inadequate spaces. These are some of the challenges to offering what Heathcote called 'authentic teaching'. There are companies which still acknowledge the need for an authentic teaching approach (such as [Big Brum](), [Leeds TIE](), [Spectacle Theatre](), and [Theatre Company Blah Blah Blah]() in the UK). Of these Big Brum and the Blahs continue to develop praxis within schools though under constant pressure from funders and perceived educational priorities. Spectacle and Leeds TIE increasingly take their methodology beyond the school gates into community situations where the constraints of formal education can be avoided. In addition to such companies though there are also a large number of mushroom organisations which appear overnight, grab some funding from a source with a narrow vested interest and then tour schools with a piece of 'don't do this' theatre; *plays* which tell us what to do and how to behave. These didactic pieces, perhaps including a workshop, with the help of a quick questionnaire, can assure the funders that 'measurable behavioural change' has been achieved. Children know that smoking and bullying are bad and don't need a play to tell them. Rather, they need a way of exploring how smoking is made attractive and why we feel impelled to bully. Education is a process and we are constantly climbing the scaffold to better knowledge and maturer wisdom. So much of the work that goes under the name of TIE seems to me to be glitz without substance; mere trumperies.

Some such projects emanate – and here I am going to tiptoe very gently into the lion's den – from the more recent disciplines of Applied Drama and Applied Theatre. I have no intention of attacking these (more than I implicitly have already!) but I do want to note a few of the educational traps that lie in wait. If we can agree that education should be about empowering the young to develop their lives and their interests to the limits of their potential; if it is about enabling change and not settling for the status quo; if it is about facilitating the growth of humanness; about expanding horizons rather than socialising – then projects that just tell me what to think are *not* educational. They are also likely to be less satisfying artistic constructs and could actually undermine appreciation of theatre as an art form. TIE and other work in schools is often a child's first (possibly only) exposure to theatre. They deserve to have something that will stimulate artistically and intellect-ually without patronising.

If TIE in its 'classic' form can no longer be afforded then the use of

theatre and drama in education is impoverished – and that does seem to be where we are. Additionally, it can be argued that young people now learn in very different ways. They play in different ways. The internet is the source of all knowledge and its 'facts' are unquestioned. There is a desperate need for critical analysis of this material but the forums for this analysis seem not to exist. Education has become a binary experience rather than a group exploration. However if the educational precepts of enabling the fullest development of potential remain in place then we must strive to create new forms of applied drama and theatre that respond to the economic realities and the digital environment without losing sight of the need for this authentic education. It is not enough to teach facts – whosoever those facts belong to – but to use TIE, Applied Drama and Theatre as catalysts for critical analysis and the moulding of a humanistic social reality. As Giroux tells us, critical thinking 'must be seen as a fundamental, political act' (Giroux, 1997, p. 26). Governments on both sides of the Atlantic seem intent on narrowing education and our discipline – theatre – is one of the surest ways to challenge that, since it is rooted in our basic human need to learn through play.

I still have moments of optimism when I think that sometime in the future an educational philosopher will sit down with a theatre director and come up with an idea for a fantastic new approach to arts and education in which the power of theatre is brought into play to enable children to understand the world in a way that is safe yet challenging. This new approach will perhaps draw on the methodologies of classic TIE but also embrace the digital world of gaming and social media[2]. There are dangers here since on-line games cannot currently reflect the creative solutions of the unfettered human mind. 'Solutions' will be framed by those that the programmer has menued into the software. Critical thinking has never been more crucial to the humanness of human development. Is the Applied Drama and Theatre community able to develop approaches which engage the digital generation and then facilitate an authentic exploration of a world that we will moulded by them, not for them?

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[2] Applied Theatre Consultants have begun to experiment with these ideas.

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Roger Wooster, based in South Wales, has had two careers: first as a TIE actor/teacher and director, and then as an academic in a range of performing arts disciplines. He has contributed to numerous conferences in the UK, and internationally, as part of IFTR. He has contributed many articles about TIE for journals such as *Research in Drama Education, The Journal of Arts and Health* and the *Journal of the National Association for the Teaching of Drama* and *Drama.* He published *Contemporary Theatre in Education* in 2007. His new book, *Theatre in Education in Britain*, was recently published by Bloomsbury Methuen.

Kiss Me Khatema: Kate's "Capitulation" in *The Taming of the Shrew* as Seen by Female Muslim University Students

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ABSTRACT

Shakespeare's plays, especially those that have a modern day resonance to the issues of the modern world, are indeed elastic in their ability to speak across generations and cultures. This paper provides a number of sample responses by young Emirati female students at United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) from courses taught by the author, who was in residence there as the Drama and Theatre specialist from 2005-2014. Over the course of several semesters, these female Muslim university students' verbatim comments reveal how Kate's final words moved them to respond in the varied ways they did. These responses demonstrate the emotional tightrope that the students seem to be navigating; one that originates in tradition while also clashing with modernity. The Taming of the Shrew*, and the journey of Kate as she is confronted by the challenges of an arranged marriage within a patriarchal society, is one that speaks to these students. As a non-Muslim practitioner of theatre and drama, the challenge was to see which of these two personas would win out - a*

Kate or a Khatema—which turns out to be the subject matter for a larger societal investigation of the roles of men and women in the United Arab Emirates.

Since the 1960s, if not before, Katherina's humbling of herself at the feet of Petruchio in the last scene of *The Taming of the Shrew* (5.2) has been a political embarrassment, a source of anxiety for critics, and a challenge to the assumption that great art transcends time and culture. "Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper," Katherine tells the other women in the play:

> Thy head, thy sovereign: one that cares for thee,
> To painful labor both by sea and land.
> To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,
> Whilst thou liest warm at home, secure and safe,
> And craves no other tribute at thy hands
> But love, fair looks, and true obedience –
> Too little payment for great a debt . . . .
> My mind hath been as big as one of yours,
> My heart as great, my reason haply more,
> To bandy word for word and frown for frown;
> But now I see our lances are but straws,
> Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare,
> That seeming to be most which we indeed least are.
> Then vail your stomach, for it is no boot,
> And place your hands below your husband's foot.
> In token of which duty, if he please,
> My hand is ready, may it do him ease. (Shakespeare, 5.2., 146-155; 170-79)

Kate's words may make most of us uncomfortable, but how would they sound to women in the Arabic world? Act five, scene two, of *The Taming of the Shrew* is a touchstone for testing social values across cultures.

Starting in 2005, as part of a new theatre initiative begun at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) in Al-Ain, I included Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* in a course that surveyed theatre with an emphasis on strong female characters often in conflict

with their society's mores and traditions. As it pertained to an all-female student population of Emirati undergraduates, I was struck by the particular resonance that Kate held for young Arab women; especially in regard to such issues as arranged marriages, a female's status in society, marital obligations to a father's dictates and male patriarchy in the home and workplace. This article focuses on how these issues coalesce around Kate's final monologue, in which she apparently succumbs to Petruchio's will after resisting it for much of the play's action.

This apparent contradiction and sudden transformation in Kate's personality puzzled some of the students, while others accepted it with a surprising degree of resignation. These differing attitudes led me to collect the varied responses of my students to the monologue by posing three choices:

> Comment on the closing monologue by Kate by choosing one of the following tasks: (1) rewrite the lines in a contemporary style that a young Emirati woman might say if she agreed with the lines, (2) imagine how an Emirati man might say these lines, or (3) rewrite the lines in a contemporary style that a young Emirati woman might say if she disagreed with the lines.

Of the approximately 300 interrogatives I have reduced the usable number to 75 covering the years 2006-2010. These responses can be divided into three dialectical categories according to (1) repetition versus revelation, (2) informational response versus inspirational response, and (3) compliance versus catharsis. In their responses one group of women merely narrated the content of the dialogue (repetition) or else gave evidence of being conflicted by Kate's words (revelation). Another group accepted the words (informational response) or else exhibited new thinking as to Kate's motives (inspirational response). A third group capitulated to the same constructs that Kate seems to accept (compliance) or else was moved by pity and fear (catharsis). The result of my investigation suggests both similarities and differences between sixteenth-century England and twenty-first-century life in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

THE ARABUC BACKGROUND

There are two Arabic sayings or axioms that provide a cultural framework for my investigation:

First marriage and then love.

First ride the camel and then pick the saddle.

As these relate to the UAE and the sample of students cited herein, these words mirror the dualistic and often confusing intent of Shakespeare's heroine Kate and the many plot turns that occur in the play. Thus, an overview of some of the critical context about this work is needed in order to better understand the responses of the women in this study.

Albert Hourani in his classic *History of the Arab Peoples* gives an important insight into the resiliency of these mores and norms some rooted in religion and others mere accretions that over time have been enhanced by custom, when noting the advent of Arab cultures in the modern age: "Even when laws changed, social customs did not change with them" (p. 441). This is an especially helpful starting point to understanding the mindset that the Emirati female students, whether consciously or unconsciously, possessed when confronted by Kate's monologue and the subsequent questions in the interrogative.

Hourani also allows us to reference how the Padua of the text was not so different from the customs of the Arab *Maghrib* (North-west Africa). Thereby the "Arabic" social roles of the characters in the play are called to mind when he observes:

According to *shari'a*, every woman should have a male guardian— her father, brother or some other member of her family. A woman's marriage was a civil contract between the bridegroom and her guardian. A father as guardian could give his daughter in marriage without her consent, if she had not reached the age of puberty. The marriage contract provided for a dowry (*mahr*) to be given to the bridegroom to the bride; this was her property, and whatever she owned or inherited also remained her property. (pp. 120-121)

It is a single line in Hourani that is most telling as to what might explain

the culturally pre-conceived thinking of the Emirati female students to the character of Kate: "The wife owed her husband obedience," even though this obligation carried with it the implicit exchange in the manner of a return by the man, "suitable clothes, lodging and maintenance, and . . . sexual intercourse" (p. 121). Ultimately, Hourani indicates that the deck is indeed stacked against the woman, historically in Arab society:

> The inequality was shown too in the laws of inheritance, also derived by the *shari'a* from the words of the Qu'ran. …The provision that daughters would receive only half as much as sons echoes another stipulation of the *shari'a*: in a legal case, the testimony of a woman would have only half the weight of that of a man. (pp. 121-122)

MARRIAGE CHANGES EVERYTHING

Kate's monologue thus addresses the cultural conditions of the Emirati students and the similar conditions represented in Shakespeare's play and opens up both to critical scrutiny. About the role that Kate seems to adopt, H. J. Oliver wonders, "Does she in fact ever assume one? Perhaps she merely learns that in certain circumstances certain kinds of behavior do not work" (p. 38).Oliver's observation brings to mind the way some of the Emirati female students identified with Kate's stratagems, first by dealing with her father Baptista's demands and then the psychological battle of wits with Petruchio, her patriarch's choice for her hand. As one female Linguistics student put it:

> After marriage, everything changes. And, when I am married, I am finally left alone and no longer have deal with the constraints of many males in the family: father, brothers, uncles, etc. and now only have one male authority figure to contend with – my husband.

Sadly, the most recent statistics about marriage and divorce in the UAE seem to contradict the efficaciousness of such an approach. As the *Khaleej Times* reported, the 2005 divorce rate in the UAE stood at 46% compared to Qatar at 38%, 35% in Kuwait, and 34% in Bahrain (*Khaleej Times,* September 16, 2005).

The question of the dowry must have also been in the background

or perhaps forefront in these female students minds when father (Baptista) and arranged husband (Petruchio) begin their negotiations. Not lost upon them might have been the speed by which Katherina's price is settled. As Brian Morris has noted: "Petruchio and Baptista… begin the second contest, a brisk bargaining about Katherina's dowry they are like merchants chaffering over a parcel of goods" (Morris, p. 105). As a contrast to this observation I gave the students in my class an article from the *Khaleej Times* that noted that the price of an Emirati wedding in 2006 was approaching 300,000 AED ($81,566):

> The average cost of a wedding in the UAE now stands at 300,000 AED, according to a leading exhibition company. The survey carried out at this year's Bride Show in Dubai shows that 43% of respondents who were planning a wedding proposed to spend more than 100,000 AED ($27,158) on their nuptials with 12% planning to shell out 500,000 AED ($135,943) or more. (*Khaleej Times*, October, 27, 2006)

The article concludes with an almost direct comparison to Morris' critique of Baptista and Petruchio: "Other parents regard their daughters as merchandise, on which they have spent a lot of money and are therefore reasonable in their profligate demand."

KATE AND THE QU'RAN

A non-Muslim theater practitioner and teacher, constantly immersed in a classroom populated by Muslim women and using dramatic texts from mainly a Judeo-Christianity canon, can easily forget both the overt and subtle frames of reference that religion exerts over the lives of the female Emirati students in this study. Classroom discussions of *The Taming of the Shrew* were refracted through the principles of the Holy Qu'ran, which has much to say about the rights and roles of men and women in society. If we line up sections of Kate's monologue from Act Five, scene two, with sayings from the Qu'ran we discover some surprising similarities. An attempt to do so might look like this:

> *Katherina*: Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper... (5.2.147)
> *Qu'ran*: Men are practitioners and maintainers of women… (4:34)
> *Katherina*: And for thy maintenance; commits his body… (5.2.149)

> *Qu'ran*: ... because God has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means... (4:34)

> *Katherina*: Such duty as the subject owes the prince,/ Even such a woman oweth her husband… (5.2.155-156)
> *Qu'ran*: Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient… (4:34)

> *Katherina*: And when she is forward, peevish, sullen, sour—and not obedient to his honest will… (5.2.157-158)
> *Qu'ran*: As to those women whose part you see ill conduct… (4:34)

> *Katherina*: What is she but a foul contending rebel… (5.2.159)
> *Qu'ran*: … admonish them. (4:34)

While by no means exhaustive, these parallels point up how women are regarded in the two cultures and how any glint of disobedience towards men is an affront to the King (Shakespeare) and Allah (Qu'ran). Rasha El-Haggan draws inferences from the words of the play that can be compared to surahs in the Holy Qu'ran; however, the intention is one of squaring Shakespeare's text with the correctness of Islam and the Holy Book. El-Haggan begins with a quotation from the Qu'ran which characteristically seems to contradict Petruchio's claim of male superiority while at the same time giving him, the man, the ultimate upper hand: "The wives' rights (with regards to their husbands) are equal to the (husbands') rights with regard to them, although men have a degree of advantage over them" (2:228).

El-Haggan immediately qualifies this surah by stating, "Although this verse from Surat Al-Baqaia might sound discriminatory towards women at first glance, it is in fact full of hidden wisdom" (El-Haggan, p. 1). This "wisdom" turns out to be a parallelism to modern society, but one which El-Haggan seems to be stretching back in order to find a justification for her previous statement:

> Every school has a principal, every city a mayor, every state a governor, and every country a president. Why should marriage be any different? In fact, as much as marriage is an important project,

the emphasis on leadership should be greater…The man has been given the right to be obeyed because he is the leader and not because he is superior" (pp. 1-2).

El-Haggan's emphasis upon the man as "the leader" mirrors the personal/political prism of obedience that joins both the home and state into one unit essential for the mutual survival of both institutions, which demands not only0 loyal citizens but also equally loyal wives; a dictum perhaps not unfamiliar to the female Emirati students who responded in differing ways.

WHAT A CONTEMPORARY EMIRATI WOMAN MIGHT SAY

In this selection of 45 versions of what a young Emirati woman might say if she agreed with Kate, there were examples of repetition which are all variants of Kate's opening line, "Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper" (Shakespeare, 5.2., 146):

Thy husband is the king.

Husband is everything in the life of the wife.

The husband is the head of the home; he is the keeper and can save his wife.

The husband is like the king, he can control . . . everything.

He is the soul of his wife.

The husband is a holy person for the wife.

In another response the reference to the husband switched to the personal:

My husband is my world, my life, my ideal, my sovereign; one that cares for me. My husband is my life, the man who provides me with everything.

In other student responses associated with this category, the variation

took on an explanatory tone as to why they found agreement with the stated ideas of Kate's last monologue. The following example harkens back, albeit in a more convoluted manner, to some of the explanations or justifications made, respectively, by Hourani (1991) and El-Haggan (1998):

> As a young Emirati woman I agree with Katherine because in our religion and culture the women think they should respect their husbands, and they think if the wife is a slave for her husband there will be a reaction for this, and that the husband will be a slave for his wife. Also, in the Emirati religion whether the wife has a job or not the husband has the responsibility to give her money. In general, Emirati women think that their husbands are the half of their life and they need them and if they marry they complete the half of their religion.

This particular response moves us closer to seeing what degree of compliance came about in student responses that began as repetitions of Kate's words and then moved to a more explanatory mode. Because all the previous examples show acceptance of Kate's final words, they could be categorized as informational and evidentiary items for repetition and compliance and, as a window into their thinking about the roles of men and women in Emirati society. In the example below, one student captured the elements of the informational, repetition and compliance in personal and somewhat poetic terms:

> I feel safety with you.
> No one around my world can protect me like you…
> You are all my life.

In the same vein, yet at an even greater intensity, another student declared what, as a woman, she is prepared to do for the man:

> I swear that I will be faithful to you and to our love. I'll be your friend, mother, sister and lover… The first and most important reward is obeying you blindly... I am ready to kiss your head and be your soul forever, because you're my life, my keeper and my property. You are the Lord of our happiness kingdom.

A final entry from a student in this category was, ironically, one of the only examples of paraphrasing Kate's most submissive line, "And place your hands below your husband's foot" (Shakespeare, 5.2., 177). The student's version was, "I will put my hand under my husband's feet." Thus, whether any or all of the observations of repetition, compliance, and information are emblematic of Emirati society as a whole, or at least the status of women in that community, the material submitted in this first category are strongly indicative of what this homogeneous group of young Emirati women thought, felt, prescribed and believed were the proper attributes of a woman's role when it applied to men and marriage. That Kate's final monologue would produce such responses is compelling given that those same words would elicit differing reactions in the other two remaining categories.

WHAT A CONTEMPORARY EMIRATI MAN MIGHT SAY

For this question I initially assumed that I would find some of the same levels of repetition and compliance that were demonstrated in the first category. While there was evidence for that pre-conception there were also some fascinating takes on the content of the supposedly male speaker; being, as it was, written by a female student. One such compelling reversal was this submission:

> The wife is like the lord, like life, like property. It is hard labor, labor working so hard in life to get what they want in the middle of all these difficult situations, while they only need a safe home and someone to take care of them. The truth is that too many work so hard and get…little salary.

While this may be wishful thinking on the part of the female author who would like to conceive of a man breaking ranks with his contemporaries, it nevertheless does approach the dialectical and moves us from mere repetition to some degree of revelation; from only the informational to some evidence of inspirational; and, from compliance to at least a nascent sense of catharsis.

Others, written by young Emirati women as if they were a man, followed a more traditional set of instructions that marked them as latter-day Petruchios:

> The husband is the king… My wife, there is no fear from me, stand beside me forever, don't leave me alone; share everything with me and look after me as a little baby… Wives should respect and obey their husbands even if he is wrong.

However, three responses were the most conservative in their instructions to women. The first offered submission as a useful tactic for survival and even as an indirect way for women to become the true catalyst in the marriage: "Being weak sometimes is good, but you have to use this weakness to reach a goal indirectly."

The second response came in the form of a rationale by a man as if he was speaking to a group of fellow compatriots:

> We are the men who provide the shelter for our women, feeding them, finding them a good shelter, being their protectors (and we) work for them; so it would be a good thing if she obeys him (the husband) by being his servant… Putting their hands under their husbands' feet won't hurt them as long as they (the women) are living his (the man's) will.

The final example, in this last set of three, is perhaps the harshest version of how an Emirati man might say Kate's final words. That it also captures the logical extension of the Elizabethan understanding of marriage as well is not without its irony:

> The wife is the servant… She should not show her beauty to other men and only in her house and with her husband. Men become weak when he sees his wife doing something wrong and he may kill her.

WHAT A CONTEMPORARY EMIRATI WOMAN WHO DISAGREES MIGHT SAY

This last category of seventeen responses was by far the most developed in terms of original ideas and showed the most variations as to inspiration, revelation and catharsis. This was due, in great part, because these were the young Emirati women who wrote in a contemporary style and disagreed with Kate's last monologue. As a consequence, the responses were not tethered as much by the

prevailing social, tribal and religious norms evident in many of the responses of the two previous categories. However, as a matter of degree, the interest lies in seeing how far these students strayed from comfortable and learned ways of thinking and ventured out, instead, into new critical areas of discourse. Three responses were particularly noteworthy.

One student emphatically established her independence from any version of a modern day Emirati Petruchio by declaring:

> I can live without a special person. I can (take) care of myself without any help from anyone. I don't like the relationship between men and women. I can depend on myself. I can wake up in the morning for myself only.

Another student turned to her interpretation of Islam as a buffer against what men might use to obligate women to behavior that was contrary to the spirit of the Qu'ran: "Islam obligates wives to obey their husbands, but not all the time… [and] not…. bad opinions or actions which are against Islam."

The aforementioned submissions in this category represent the most revelatory insights as to Kate's reversal of philosophy at the end of the play; which in turn showed a more mature level of inspirational writing by the students which was instigated, in great part, by their ability to place themselves, their society, religion and customs into the matrix of contrast and comparison. In conclusion, I will quote one final entry from this category because I found it to be the most lucid and it suggested areas of reform after establishing the parallels that this student found in Emirati society and the world of *The Taming of the Shrew.* Whether it proves to be both past and prologue is unknown.

> In fact, the story in *The Taming of the Shrew* is real and it is the same story which happens in UAE society, because our society is controlled by men. They are the ones who have the authority. Moreover, most leaders in our society are men and there are few women leaders. Also, I want to talk specifically about the idea of marriage. It is completely controlled by men. The father of the bride and the groom discuss and decide everything about the marriage, like the money and the place for the party as an example. So, it really shows that the power is in men's hands.

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From 1978 to 2005, Dr. James P. Mirrione was the playwright-in-residence for the Creative Arts Team (CAT), the resident educational theatre company at New York University. As author of nineteen plays for the company, he established himself as one of the leading writers of Theatre-In-Education (TIE) plays for American audiences.

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From 'Discovered' to 'Constructivist' in Applied Theatre Programmes: Preparing Postgraduate Students as Future Artist-Educators

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ABSTRACT

Applied theatre as a named field is still relatively new yet 'the range of applied theatre practice is vast; it happens all over the world as part of a grassroots movement involved in social change and community reflection' (Prendergast & Saxton, vi: 2009). This article explores the underlying teaching philosophies inherent in the published course descriptors of a sample range of eight graduate/postgraduate programmes in applied theatre across three countries. The selection of these programmes, although somewhat random, has been based upon their prominence within academic parlances and those that provide programme documents in English. Consequently the representative sample survey is across one cross-section of postgraduate provision and is analysed in order to extract a range of philosophical themes underpinning learning and teaching. In distilling these philosophies the article presents a discussion of how the subject knowledge of applied theatre work ranges from 'discovered' to 'constructivist' in nature. In turn these themes are interrogated against published research in the

field and postulate on how applied theatre programmes might further consider the ways in which they adequately prepare their students as future artist-educators to work in this diverse and challenging field. An outcome of the survey revealed grand claims made in the published programme descriptors.

INTRODUCTION

Within the last two decades we have seen the proliferation, albeit modest compared to other disciplines perhaps, of university applied theatre programmes at both undergraduate and graduate/postgraduate levels. Within more generalist drama programmes we have also seen the inclusion of modules or units on applied theatre to be studied at all levels of higher education. Finding a purpose for drama outside of more traditional theatre environments has kept drama/theatre academics occupied both in their theorising and in their community-based practice. However it is this term 'applied theatre' that has continued to particularly capture the special attention of educationally or socially-focussed academics rather than performance theorists *per se*. Monica Prendergast and Juliana Saxton's comprehensive text *Applied Theatre: International case studies and challenges for practice* bring together a broad survey of the field. They acknowledge that 'the range of applied theatre practice is vast; it happens all over the world as part of a grassroots movement involved in social change and community reflection' (Prendergast & Saxton, 2009, p. vi).

With the global interest in applied theatre the marketplace of universities offering such programmes has grown considerably. In the United Kingdom there are currently around ten Master's programmes that have 'applied theatre' in the title, even if only a pathway of a more general master's degree in theatre or drama. There seems to be less obvious MA in applied theatre provision in the USA and Canada. Across the UK, USA, Canada and Australia there are many more undergraduate programmes on offer than Master's programmes that address applied theatre either as a full degree or form a component of the degree. Most of the UK acting conservatoires now offer alternative undergraduate programmes, and applied theatre features strongly amongst them with a perhaps unsurprising emphasis on practical work rather than theory.

It is the purpose of this article to explore the underlying teaching philosophies inherent in the online published course descriptors of a sample range of eight graduate/postgraduate programmes in applied theatre across three countries: UK, USA, and Australia. Consequently the survey is not meant to be exhaustive but rather a sample representation across one cross-section of postgraduate provision in order to extract a range of philosophical themes underpinning learning and teaching within the field.

The range of programmes in this study, broadly speaking, share similar concerns, although each contain their own distinctive nuances that will be explored later in this article. According to Prendergast and Saxton (2009) 'Applied theatre works overtly either to reassert or to undermine socio-political norms, as its intent is to reveal more clearly the way the world is working' (p. 8). Using the Prendergast and Saxton definition this article seeks to identify a range of epistemological assumptions about applied theatre education through the published MA programme descriptors. Whilst these brief descriptors do not fully inform us of each programme's detail, they do offer us a headline summary of what it is that makes each programme both distinctive and possibly appealing to potential students.

Before revealing the analysis of the data gathered from the online published programme outlines, it is helpful to briefly examine some of the encompassing educational and philosophical assumptions generally made in the field of applied theatre literature.

INFLUENCING MODELS OF EDUCATION

There has been a growing orthodoxy in educational thought that has led to the proliferation of applied theatre as an alternative theatre form. Prendergast and Saxton (2009) remind us that 'across many cultures and traditions over time we can trace patterns and instances of groups of people using the stage as a space and place to tell their stories and their lives' (p. 7). Tony Jackson (2006) says of applied theatre's antecedent Theatre in Education (TIE):

> …it has excited and inspired, and at times unnerved, actors and teachers alike, and has marked out for itself a territory that over-laps the domains of theatre and education in ways that are important and unusual. It is moreover part of a much wider

development that has taken place across the world in the latter decades of the twentieth century as the theatre looks for new audiences and new ways to speak to those audiences. (p. 1)

From these basic beginnings applied theatre has gained popularity with those who have a belief that change or transformation takes place within individuals when they participate in an applied theatre event. It is not the role of this study to validate or in invalidate this premise. However, the philosophical assumptions surrounding applied theatre provision is of key interest.

Experimentalist Education

Fundamentally, 'applied theatre', as a term, has grown out of TIE, drama education and community-focused theatre, which in turn broadly grew with the philosophy of Experimentalism, an explicit and systematic theory of education stemming essentially from the work of US educational philosopher John Dewey. He and others of his time gave us insights into the practical nature of knowledge – that by *doing*, we can come to *know*. He urged educationalists to understand that the business of education is to replace randomly chosen tasks or chance activity with activity that leads to genuine knowledge and to fruitful understanding (1938). Experimentalism places the importance of *direct* experience in education. According to H. Gordon Hullfish (1963) 'intelligence, operating in quite human ways in relation to quite human problems, will give the answers that are needed to bring the newly born infant to maturity' (p. 11). He goes on to suggest:

> The experimentalist believes also that the values which men [sic] have developed in their past are the values with which they must start at any given time. Because of this interrelationship of the individual and the transmitted culture, the experimentalist further affirms that the quality of the relationship in society will be reflected in the quality of the individual human experience. Thus, the experimentalist asks what kind of social structure, of social values, provides what is best for the most people. (Hullfish, 1963, p. 11)

This overall approach to education, espoused in the early 1960s, clearly resonates with today's values and philosophical beliefs evident

in the broad principles of applied theatre. As Philip Taylor in 2003 writes:

> Applied theatre became a particularly useful description given it encompasses the breath of work that theatre programs were creating inside and outside of educational settings, mostly in nontheatrical environments for diverse purposes – raising awareness, posing alternatives, healing psychological wounds or barriers, challenging contemporary discourses, voicing the views of the silent and marginal. (p. xxi)

What applied theatre offers in its ideals is a motivation to change or at least critically reflect from multiple perspectives using role and audience involvement. Knowledge within this context, therefore, is thought to be constructed through the act of participation and critical observation.

THE SURVEY DATA AND ANALYSIS

Eight MA programmes in applied theatre were selected for review in this study. The basis of selection was arrived at by a simple Internet search, one that any potential student may carry out to locate prominent MA programmes in applied theatre. This method of selection has allowed the study to examine the most prominently placed programmes in the English-speaking sector. The number of sites reflects the number of programmes most apparently obvious using the search term 'MA Applied theatre'. Of course cognate programmes will exist and may adopt variant degree or programme titles. The delimitations of this project are, as a result, confined to UK, USA and Australia. Further, the study is only concerned with the outward advertising and does not seek to examine detailed programme curriculum beyond that which is presented by each institution in the promotion of their respective programmes in order for potential students and the wider public to make judgement.

 The various MA Applied Theatre programme descriptors in this study (Table 1) appear to reflect the interests and understandings of their undisclosed authors. At one end of the spectrum the descriptors reflect a theoretical bias and at the other end the descriptors emphasise practice and the skills required to be a practitioner.

However all descriptors make mention of the importance of both theory and practice within their programmes. The combined theoretical and practical position has long been an accepted practice in applied theatre education.

Institution	MA Degree Title
1. UK	Master of Arts in Applied Theatre
2. UK	MA in Applied Theatre: Drama in Educational, Community & Social Contexts
3. UK	MA Applied Theatre and Intervention
4. UK	MA in Applied and Participatory Theatre
5. USA	Master of Arts in Applied Theatre (MA)
6. USA	Applied Theatre Arts (MA)
7. AUS	Master of Applied Theatre Studies
8. UK	MA Applied Theatre & Community Drama

Table 1: Programmes surveyed (numbering is used for on-going reference)

How Applied Theatre Is Described/Defined

Most of the descriptors studied provide either an explicit definition of applied theatre or an inferred definition. These descriptions (Table 2) generally show an agreed way of defining applied theatre that is frequently very broad but distinguishes the work from mainstream theatre practices. Applied theatre is widely purported to be a direct agent of personal and social change. There is some considerable lack of distinction between applied theatre and applied drama with one definition explicitly including drama in education (applied drama). Institution 3 makes its programme distinctive to the rest by claiming it takes an 'interventionist' approach. There are frequent mentions of health related uses of applied theatre. Institution 6 mentions therapy as being included under the applied theatre umbrella.

1. transformative and rehabilitative **1.** make a difference to people by engaging with issues, dramatising relevant stories, representing role models **1.** possibilities for action, and involving participants in processes that they find useful, informative or exciting
2. Applied theatre is an umbrella term for a range of exciting worldwide performance forms concerned with personal and social change. **2.** The term embraces: theatre of the oppressed, community theatre, theatre-in-education, drama in education, theatre for development, prison theatre, intercultural arts, intergenerational arts, theatre in museums, archives and heritage sites, story-telling, reminiscence theatre, conflict resolution. The work often moves across art forms. This is not a definitive list, as it is a field that is dynamic and changing. **2.** theatre and performance is created by diverse groups of people in a variety of community, social and educational settings: in schools or on the streets, in children's homes and elderly care, in conflict zones, conferences, crèches and youth clubs, pupil referral units and prisons, women's refuges and refugee centres, hospitals and hostels – anywhere groups of people meet and interact.
3. The programme's focus on intervention signals a distinctiveness that separates it from other applied theatre programmes. The emphasis here is on the potential of theatre and performance to interrupt, confront, subvert, transform, transcend, reconfigure and re-imagine. **3.** applied theatre in all of its forms including community theatre, theatre-in-education, theatre and health, prison theatre, theatre for development and the arts therapies.
4. Applied drama/theatre is an umbrella term, which includes the practice of drama in a wide range of settings. These include drama and theatre education, young people's theatre, drama, health and healing, reminiscence and heritage theatres, theatre in prisons and theatre for development.
5. Applied theatre is a specialized field that uses theatre as a medium for education and social development. It involves the use of theatre and drama in a wide variety of non-traditional contexts and venues - in teaching, the justice system, healthcare, the political arena, community development, museums, social service agencies, and business and industry. **5.** Applied Theatre involves the use of theatre and drama in a wide variety of non-traditional contexts and venues, such as in teaching, the justice system, health care, the political arena, community development, museums, and social service agencies.
6. Applied Theatre Arts explores the intersection of theatre and cultural fieldwork, encompassing the fields of theatre and therapy, theatre in education and theatre for social change/community based theatre. **6.** Practitioners of applied theatre arts supplement their work as classroom teachers, therapists, social workers, case managers, community organizers and social activists to engage public groups to obtain their goals and desires by using the tools of theatre to expedite dialogue and foster an atmosphere of greater critical consciousness and increased agency.
7. [No definition provided however inference is made in the following] A Master of Applied Theatre Studies allows you to refine your professional and academic skills. Examples of careers that can be assisted through a Master of Applied Theatre Studies include professional theatre direction and production, arts management, the teaching of theatre and performance and entrepreneurial theatre making.
8. It encourages the research and practice of theatre and performance that engages in non-traditional and/or community sites, and combines artistic exploration with a social, political and educational focus. **8.** We particularly support theatre projects that engage with issues relating to transformation, critique and social responsibility.

Table 2: Applied theatre descriptors (numbers correspond to institution)

Key Skills/Knowledge Claimed to Be Developed

There is mention in the descriptors of various skills (Table 3) although the precise nature of these in many of the programmes is unclear. History, theory, practice and politics are generally flagged as areas of study. Attributes such as being a reflective practitioner, having technical and creative skills are highlighted. Given these are Master's level degrees there is predictable emphasis upon the development of research skills in many of the descriptors. Programme 5 grandly suggests it will contribute to students 'becoming future leaders in the field of applied theatre'; how this is achieved is unclear from the descriptor however.

1. support current practice at work, or a particular field of interest in applied theatre and drama. **1.** learn key practices in applied theatre, **1.** engage with new ideas in the field, **1.** undertake project-based study examining specific professional work with a range of client groups, or specialise in working with people whose lives have been affected by the criminal justice system.
2. develops your ability to contextualise, critique and create. **2.** prepare students to be collaborative, responsive, imaginative, politically engaged and culturally aware artist practitioners. **2.** An advanced understanding of the history, theory and practice of Applied Theatre practice **2.** each student's development as a critically rigorous, reflective practitioner who has the vocabulary and skills to make and reflect on Applied Theatre practice.
3. The programme will provide students with the opportunity to study Applied Theatre and Intervention **3.** New approaches to radical interventionist practice…as well as the more conventional pedagogical contexts associated with applied theatre will be explored and developed. **3.** You'll gain a broad understanding of some of the wider issues faced by applied theatre practitioners including ethics, boundaries, evaluation, policy and funding and have the opportunity to apply your learning in a placement context. **3.** Core modules will look at practice-based workshop techniques and the development of facilitation skills; concepts and theories underpinning applied theatre and interventionist practice; and research training.
4. will inform and be informed by the core courses where you'll experience radically different approaches to performance-making in both conventional theatre spaces and in non-theatrical settings. **4.** enable you to consider the relationship between innovative performance practices and work in applied drama. **4.** theoretical issues **4.** opportunity to develop the practice and research aspects of applied theatre in which you're particularly interested **4.** develop your own practical project
5. scholar practitioners to become future leaders in the field of applied theatre.
6. training practitioners in the art of popular theatre with primarily marginalized communities.

Table 3: Key skills/knowledge claims (numbers correspond to institution)

7. Students will be able to extend their knowledge and skills in the areas of theatre production, dramaturgical research, and academic writing.
7. This is a creative practice as research course integrating theoretical and practical study.
7. Students take part in a performance or other theatre event as playwright, director, actor or designer, and produce a short dissertation which builds on the knowledge and understanding gained during the practical work on the production.
7. allow students to further develop their academic skills in writing, contemporary theoretical approaches, research methodology and/or the study of theatre history.
7. Knowledge of a Discipline: Graduates will be able to demonstrate an advanced and integrated understanding of theatre theory and production and apply knowledge at an advanced level in professional contexts or to solve problems.
7. Communication Skills: Graduates will be able to demonstrate expert cognitive, technical and creative skills in theatre and performance to interpret and transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
7. Information Literacy: Graduates will be able to research, analyse and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories and apply established theories to different bodies of knowledge or practice.
7. Life-Long Learning: Graduates will be able to show initiative in exploring career and further learning pathways and opportunities with a high level of personal autonomy and accountability; consistently take responsibility for seeking improved learning and maintaining accurate evidence of learning achievements from within formal course experiences; and demonstrate the ability to plan a course of action for further learning and continuing professional practice.
7. Problem Solving: Graduates will be able to plan and execute a substantial research based performance project, capstone experience and/or piece of scholarship.
7. Social Responsibility: Graduates will be able to demonstrate professional and ethical conduct in their theatre practice and in providing balanced and accurate research.

8. research methods course and an advanced performance theory and practice course that explores contemporary and historical examples of applied theatre
8. gain experience in a 'real-world' applied theatre context; a number of MA study options; and a 'directed reading' course.
8. enhance students' capacity to engage in advanced research and practice in theatre and performance, both on an independent basis and in collaboration with their peers.
8. The programme will prepare students for further academic study and/or employment in the field of theatre and performance and applied theatre practice.
8. The MA fosters students' skills in critically evaluating current and advanced scholarship and practice in applied theatre: students learn how to develop critiques of that scholarship, and offer original, independent responses.'

Table 3 Continued: Key skills/knowledge claims (numbers correspond to institution)

Learning and Teaching Processes

Unsurprisingly, practical workshops, group learning, lectures, seminars, tutorials, fieldwork and independent learning all feature in the programme descriptors (Table 4). Institution 7 in Australia was a notable exception to the other programmes in the class's integration; however as it is delivered off-campus via distance education, this is understandable. Institution 7 also mentions directing school plays, which is unusually included as applied theatre.

Programmes purport to be student-led, staff-led, and visiting

tutor/practitioner-led with much emphasis being placed upon the practical side of applied theatre study. Implicit in the various descriptor texts is that knowledge and understanding is constructed through the act of doing. The connectedness to real life practice is a continuous theme throughout and may reflect the applied nature of the work.

Programmes generally appear to be broken down into thirds with the first part being delivered on campus with lecturers, the second part is generally a placement with an applied theatre company or self-directed project and the final third is generally a written dissertation that may be based on practice.

1. designed to support current practice at work, or a particular field of interest in applied theatre and drama.   **1.** Students will participate in workshops and seminars to explore practices   **1.** undertake project-based study
2. Together we explore…   **2.** programme structure employs a range of learning and teaching methods to support the learning outcomes: seminars, mini-lectures, presentations by visiting practitioners, tutorials, practical workshops led by staff and visiting tutors, laboratory workshops led by students, placement project; and the dissertation.   **2.** The programme is augmented by selected visits to theatre companies, productions, workshops and public seminars and debates. The programme takes full advantage of its London location and of the work that is happening in and around the city. We have a number of highly experienced and innovative Applied Theatre professionals who support the programme as Visiting Tutors.   **2.** Student led practice is fundamental to each student's development as a critically rigorous, reflective practitioner who has the vocabulary and skills to make and reflect on Applied Theatre practice.   **2.** students will be expected to organise ways to continue to reflect on areas that they have encountered on the programme, to share their specific skills with each other and to negotiate a space to test and develop new ideas.
3. Students following this programme will benefit from those relationships, finding placement opportunities, internships and potential career paths as a result.   **3.** It is envisaged that new approaches to radical interventionist practice that address the wider frames of the political, the social, the personal and the artistic as well as the more conventional pedagogical contexts associated with applied theatre will be explored and developed.   **3.** Through practice and theory you will explore applied theatre   **3.** We use a range of teaching and learning methods including practical workshops, group learning, lectures, seminars, tutorials and fieldwork. Independent learning is central to this programme, allowing you to integrate your learning and develop your understanding and skills.
4. develop your own practical project in your chosen field. For this project, you're encouraged to be creative and innovative, and to apply your understanding of drama and theatre to specific educational contexts, communities, sites or settings.   **4.** reflect these theoretical issues by considering drama as a social intervention, questions of place and community and the aesthetics of participation.   **4.** the opportunity to develop the practice and research aspects of applied theatre in which you're particularly interested and to share your research findings with others.

Table 4: Learning and teaching processes (numbers correspond to institution)

5. Practice actor-centered, collaborative approaches to leading creative teams and playbuilding original theatre **5.** Study a range of artistic, educational, and social theories that inform progressive practice **5.** Collaborate as a member of a student ensemble to support creative risk-taking **5.** carefully sequenced courses with an emphasis on the unity of theory and practice **5.** Devise and perform theatre-in-education interventions **5.** Develop work alongside the renowned XXXXX Team **5.** Research, implement, document, and evaluate an original applied theatre thesis project.
6. This combined area of study weaves all three disciplines together under the aegis of training practitioners in the art of popular theatre with primarily marginalized communities. **6.** A written and oral examination is required upon completion of course work. **6.** All students will participate in an international externship during the summer following their academic year. This externship takes place in an approved overseas site where the practice of applied theatre arts is well established, with whom the university has a contractual agreement for supervised observation. This externship intends to provide a supervisory, logistical and theoretical container for students to explore cultural fieldwork in the international arena.
7. This course is only available off-campus (distance education). **7.** Candidates are required to take a creative role in a practical theatre project as part of their studies. In the case of school teachers this could involve working with pupils in a school production (of an appropriate scale); for theatre practitioners it could involve taking part in a production with an established theatre company. The XXXXX cannot provide facilities or resources off campus for the practical component of the course - it is the responsibility of the candidate to arrange this.
8. Mandatory elements (totalling 60 credits) include a research methods course and an advanced performance theory and practice course. **8.** You then select a further 60 credits drawn from the following: a 'Professional Practices' course, offering an opportunity to gain experience in a 'real-world' theatre or applied theatre context; a number of MA study options; and a 'directed reading' course (independent study with one to one supervision). MA study options based in Drama typically include (depending on staff availability): Performance and war; Creative learning; Making culture; Staging the New Sex; Popular theatre and entertainment 1820-1890; Body and text in contemporary theatres. **8.** Finally, you complete a 12-15,000-word dissertation on an area of your choice. Your dissertation can involve practical research, with a shorter written component accompanied by a practical project. **8.** Students are taught in seminars, small group tutorials, workshops and surgeries, offering opportunities for lively and engaged discussions. **8.** One-to-one supervision is offered on all dissertations.

Table 4 Continued: Learning and teaching processes (numbers correspond to institution)

Knowledge Types Evident in Applied Theatre Programmes

Whilst there are many knowledge types in general existence, there are two generic knowledge types that are frequently seen to be evident in the applied theatre programmes reviewed in this study; they are 'discovered knowledge' and 'constructivist knowledge'. Both knowledge types combine to underpin both the philosophy and practice of applied theatre programmes.

Discovered Knowledge

Discovered knowledge or Discovery learning, advanced in various forms by the likes of Jerome Bruner (1961), Jean Piaget (1972) and Seymour Papert (1980) is a theory that suggests that a body of knowledge is available, and that teachers/lecturers can help students discover this knowledge for themselves by implementing pedagogical tasks in the classroom, studio or through independent but guided learning tasks. Bruner (1961) argues that 'Practice in discovering for oneself teaches one to acquire information in a way that makes that information more readily viable in problem solving' (p. 26). This 'learning by doing' approach is pivotal in drama education and has by extension made its way to applied theatre practice. It is therefore perhaps less than surprising that we see this approach being used as a philosophy of education and as a teaching method in the programmes reviewed.

Pure discovery learning would be without lecturer assistance, however the practice in the applied theatre field has been to offer guidance and sign-posting by the facilitator-instructor. The tenants of the applied theatre draw upon critical pedagogy and constructivist methodology bringing the participants into direct engagement with their own learning experiences, and as adult learners these same participants bring a wealth of perspectives that further affect how they interact with an applied theatre experience (Dawson et al 2011).

Constructivist Knowledge

Constructivist theory, a theory describing how learning happens or knowledge is internalised, is generally attributed to Jean Piaget (1972) where play and exploration are essential components of a student's cognitive development. As Prendergast and Saxton (2009) assert, 'participation throughout all stages of a performance project is an ingredient that makes applied theatre work markedly different from mainstream theatre' (p. 187).

In describing how learning happens, this theory operates regardless of whether or not learners are using their experiences to understand a formal lecture or, for example, by following the directives of the instructor-facilitator in creating an applied theatre event. Essentially constructivists suggest that we cannot be certain of any

absolute truth but rather people construct, or create, knowledge based on their lived experience or interactions within their experiential reality. Perceived 'truth' or 'knowledge' is socially constructed and arrived at when people agree on particular values that appear to be consistent with their collective experiential reality and may, of course, vary with different groups and may vary over time. Therefore these 'truths' are not 'universal truths' as such, but maybe quite particular from which generalisations may also be made.

As far as it relates to applied theatre, constructivists would argue that the collective set of rules, conventions/procedures, and underpinning beliefs we use to understand the application of 'applied theatre' are also not, in fact, universal truths but rather mutually agreed upon constructions derived from the applied theatre and drama community rooted in both theory and practice. It might be argued that the strong advocating rhetoric used in the advertised postgraduate programme descriptors point to applied theatre as something akin to a panacea for curing all social and personal problems. This point was not entirely missed by Prendergast and Saxton (2009) either when they state 'Applied theatre practices tend to be seen as always beneficial and certainly, it is unlikely that anyone would want to engage in a social practice that was not so' (p. 188). Whilst it is acknowledged that these programme descriptors form punchy advertising copy, it is none-the-less significant to understand the importance placed on the use of language and the subsequent accepted messages that these descriptors send out more broadly.

IMPLICATIONS FOR APPLIED THEATRE EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Considerable knowledge in applied theatre processes is predicated on discovery learning as the learner is positioned to draw on his or her own experience and prior knowledge. Whilst this may be a legitimate process for learning there are questions surrounding the previous knowledge and undergraduate experience students bring to the Master's programmes in this study. It is likely that many have undergraduate drama or theatre arts experience but when these Master's programmes mention 'intervention' and 'therapy', can we be confident that students are being adequately prepared in a limited number of modules? How are these Master's programmes adequately

preparing students to engage with the disciplines of sociology, psych-ology, therapy, and public health? Are students naively being led to believe they are 'qualified' to address these issues? The language used in these programme descriptors run the risk of over simplification and do not provide immediately clear distinctions between applied theatre and therapy.

Prendergast and Saxton (2009) raise further important and related questions:

> …how do we value what we do? By what criteria do we judge the effectiveness of the work? What are the implications of short-term results when laid against what traces remain years later? What claims can we make for "transformation" when the money has run out, the project is over and the facilitators have moved on? What is the language we are using to describe what we do and how is it helpful? (p. 188)

There is also a question of ethics. Philip Taylor (2003) raises more questions than answers on this issue of ethics. He, like Prendergast and Saxton (2009), believe there are enormous ethical considerations surrounding the use of applied theatre. Following James Thompson (2000), Taylor finds it useful to see that 'a central principal in applied theatre is its break with certainty, that rather than pushing a moral platitude or a statement of political correctness, the applied theatre practitioner is working toward ambiguous and incomplete moments' (2003, p. 98).

There is a need to carefully examine the language applied theatre uses to describe what it does and how broad this might be. It would seem that the field may be better served by higher education institutions offering more specialist applied programmes rather than using the umbrella term of applied theatre as the general or generic programme title.

Of equal interest is the nomenclature of those engaged in deliver-ing applied theatre work. Taylor (2003) uses the term 'teaching artist' to describe the practitioners, bringing 'both the skills of presenting theatre work and the rare ability to act as educators who can help process the program's teaching points with diverse groups' (p. 53). Taylor goes on to state that:

> In the applied theatre, the artists' teaching skills are just as important, if not more so, than theatrical presentation for it is in the teaching ability of the artists that the *applied* nature of the work will be realized. (p. 53–54, original emphasis)

No matter how you wish to frame or term applied theatre practitioners, the *educational* or *teaching* (pedagogical/andragogical) aspect of applied theatre practice would seem to be a necessary component. Therefore any higher education programme might essentially need to contain thorough preparation for education and training along with the individual possessing the necessary personality to become an artist-educator. However distinctions between therapy and education should be made, and in the case of therapy it would be imperative that programmes demand particular personal qualifications which were not immediately evident or transparent in the programme descriptors surveyed in this study.

CONCLUSIONS

This brief study has sought to distil the defining qualities of graduate/postgraduate applied theatre education and the advertised learning and teaching philosophies referenced in the online programme descriptors used by eight Universities across three countries. Overall, these higher education applied theatre programmes universally model approaches of moving from discovered to constructivist modes of knowledge acquisition.

On the evidence drawn from the programme descriptors it was further revealed there are some significant gaps between the advertised aspirations of Master's level applied theatre programmes and the type of preparation required to achieve those ambitions. Whilst it would not be expected that the online course information would provide all the details that module, unit or course documents might, it does raise issues of transparency and how clear the advance details of the programmes might be for prospective students.

If the field is to adequately prepare professionals for future practice, there will need to be greater regard given to the component parts of programmes and the essential appropriate prerequisites for the types of programmes on offer. If Master's programmes are making therapeutic claims then adherence to codes of conduct by registering

bodies and strict attention must be given to the relevant cognate disciplines that should likely inform a deeper understanding of therapy. Can generic applied theatre programmes claim to adequately prepare graduates for therapy work? On balance, it is doubtful they can or should.

In support of moving toward a less 'evangelical' view of the work, Taylor (2003) states clearly that:

> Applied theatre workers cannot be conned into thinking that they are the saviours of the community. It seems clear that the issue of sustainable change in people's lives is not going to be adequately addressed through isolated applied theatre demonstrations. (p. 99)

Currently the somewhat grand claims being made in these advertised university programme descriptors are in very real danger of over-stepping an authentic qualification to engage in the work they purport to do. It may also seem prudent to suggest that applied theatre practitioners, or teaching artists, first possess an educationally focussed qualification before qualifying at Master's level in applied theatre as the work has strong pedagogical and andragogical foci. These are all-important considerations if we are to adequately and honestly prepare students as future artist-educators using the applied theatre form.

SUGGESTED CITATION

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Facilitating Social Justice Dialogues after Interactive Theatre Performances: An Introduction to Our Methodology

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ABSTRACT

Applied theatre performances that address social issues can inspire feelings and reactions. In this article, we draw from our experience working together as facilitators since 1999 as examination of the challenges we have encountered and the importance in holding space for difficult – yet productive – conversations. Working from a framework of inclusive justice, we merge social justice practices in applied theatre and inclusive education. We share with the readers our experiences with the role of self as facilitator and the concept of holding space; we challenge the idea of neutrality in facilitation, and advocate for the facilitator as instrument to change. We are not offering a manual of instructions – we offer, instead, a few ingredients that other facilitators

may also find helpful in their practice.

During our session at the 2016 NYU Forum on Education Theatre, a participant asked, "Do you have any information on how to do this (indicating the facilitation of the session)? I want to turn you inside out and learn how to do what you do." The central theme of this request is one that we receive often – how do I learn to facilitate difficult conversations?

Facilitation is, at its core, a social interaction. Maurianne Adams and colleagues define a socially-just society as one where all members participate in the management and direction of that society as full and equal members (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997). They acknowledge that the vision of a socially-just society is one that requires an understanding of what it takes to move a culture forward, as well as continue to strive toward that goal. They emphasize the need for guided interactions when addressing stereotypes; their work is based on a pedagogical model where the facilitator directs, interprets, and analyzes. Additionally, Omar Swartz's (2012) view of social justice includes "an equitable distribution of social resources, including nutrition, shelter, healthcare, and education" and we seek to do so by facilitating positive interpersonal relationships through theatre-based techniques. Our practice is rooted in social justice education and resonates with these definitions.

As such, we strive to make our performances accessible to audiences by using relatable characterizations to address forms of oppression; we also strive to humanize those characters to build empathy for others. We use interactive techniques to engage audience members in the fabric of the scene as well as the larger social issues the scenes address.

Facilitation is a blanket term meant to cover a breadth of activities that include working with groups in a job or psychoanalytic setting, strangers working on a common problem, mediation, or to describe leadership qualities (Kolb, Jin, & Song, 2008; Borštnar, M., Kljajić, M., Škraba, A., Kofjač, D., & Rajkovič, V., 2011). While facilitation is crucial in applied theatre, the definition of facilitation is not singular. Kolb (2004) notes that "people called in to facilitate groups may be expected to lead, mediate, train, present new information, make process suggestions, serve as peacemakers, take notes or simply be there in

case their expertise is needed" (p. 207). This wide range of definitions and applications has led to a lack of empirical research on the importance of who fulfills the role of facilitator and an agreement of what is expected of someone in that role (Neidermann & Volkema, 1999). Our aim is to discuss how we use facilitation linked to theatrical presentations that are about identity and social justice.

Applied theatre performances that address social issues (such as race, class, gender identity, sexual identity, etc.) can inspire reactions that manifest as denial, resistance, defensiveness, feelings of guilt, anger, hostility, and outrage (Neihus, 2005; Dawson, 2013). These reactions prevent many from engaging in the discussions necessary to address the issues at hand, short-circuiting the opportunity to learn and work towards a more just world (Dawson, 2013). It is not responsible to create a powerful, interactive piece of applied theatre without the ability to facilitate the dialogues that can come from the performance. One can be so invested in using theatre to create change that we don't focus enough on how to live in the discomfort that our performances create.

Applied theatre educational programs should emphasize the skills of a theatrical practitioner as well the dynamics of complex facilitation. Scholar Michael Balfour (2010) argues that this is a large task and there do not appear to be frameworks that will allow for the benefit of the student and the audiences who participate. Michael Rohd further asserts "...facilitation is not making a scene activating… it is actually getting to the meat of this work and playing through the dialogue that results from real activation" (Rohd, 1998, p. 112). The focus on the content and context of the actual scene is an important part of our process, and, as Rohd reiterates, the true "work" comes from the dialogue and interaction(s) inspired by the work.

We have been in this practice since 1999 and experience has shown us that becoming a facilitator is like following a cooking recipe – it has basic ingredients, and varies depending on taste, resources, situation, and desired outcome. Some of those ingredients are harder to find, difficult to measure for any given situation, and can produce very different results depending on when they are used and in what quantity. The question of how to use these ingredients becomes even more pertinent when exploring and addressing identity within these difficult conversations.

We will outline some of the ingredients we use when facilitating a

dialogue about identity. We will share those that have been shaped, refined, and polished from our experience. We offer this recipe to you because we must; our experiences are influenced by our own mentors and grown from years of experience of many brilliant individuals. In that spirit, we also offer our own understandings as a means to continue sharing.

INGREDIENT 1: YOU DON'T MATTER

You, as the facilitator, do not matter. Facilitation is done in service to the space and the people in it. Your ego must be left outside the space – preferably several years before you enter as the facilitator. When we say you don't matter, we are talking about the part of you that thinks you are important and have a lot to share about social justice. Your passion for equity or ending discrimination has to be among what leads you to the work, but this cannot dominate your facilitation. Having your own agenda or holding on to a specific outcome is not facilitation, but teaching or activism.

We are not the first to mention this quality. In the context of facilitation in theatre, for example, Augusto Boal spoke of the Joker or coringa as a "midwife, whose task is to facilitate, but not control" (Babbage, 2004). It is in this sense that we say that you don't matter. You need to be able to acknowledge your individuality, while simultaneously placing yourself in a central yet invisible place among others. If your passion enters the room when you facilitate, you are not a facilitator in that moment – you are an activist or an educator. A lecturer. When you decide to take the role of the facilitator, you're the guide, not the leader. And that distinction matters.

INGREDIENT 2: FLOW

As facilitator you will be responsible for all sides of every issue. Your skills must foster a place where all (well, mostly all) viewpoints can be expressed and heard as valid for the people who hold them. There will be exceptions, and negotiating those exceptions is part of your journey as a facilitator. This means "holding space" for the people who have views that may be contrary to yours. Genuine "space holding" requires that you have the ability to name, validate, and honor differing points of view. The facilitator coaches and guides by "offering gentle, non-

judgmental support and guidance" (Plett, 2016). This does NOT mean that you are neutral. Ingredient number one might lead some to believe that; however, that is not the case. Holding space means that you are willing to walk a journey with another person, without making them feel inadequate, trying to fix or correct their attitudes and beliefs (Plett, 2016).

To facilitate dialogue, interaction, or conversation – where heated community issues are at the forefront and where identity matters – you have to be willing to engage in holding space for various viewpoints. This is one of the most challenging aspects of facilitation. Particularly when those opposing viewpoints may appear to challenge yours (or other participants' core beliefs, including basic rights or in some cases the right to exist). This is the situation that causes anxiety in a group setting (Phillips & Phillips, 1993) and that which is challenging for new facilitators. As the facilitator, you've got the entire room to consider, as well as the rest of your time. In our experience, intentionally and virulently shutting down a voice that is challenging, contrary or, "troll-like," might be an appealing place to go; however, it often has the consequence of shutting down more than the person (or persons) making those comments in the moment. This does not mean that challenge and disagreement do not happen, it does mean that space has to be given to hold those disagreements in a respectful manner.

INGREDIENT 3: WHO YOU ARE IS INFINITELY IMPORTANT

The first ingredient and this one have to occupy the same space. There is a fine line between where you don't matter and where you are absolutely integral to the process. On that line there is a space where a facilitator balances between different viewpoints, experiences, and perspectives of the participants, and their own identities. Sometimes you have to be the role model of how to deal with dissenting ideas. Sometimes you have to validate the comment by someone whose experiences or opinions are opposite to that of the rest of the group (or maybe even contrary to your own). You have to find the common ground, and make the facilitation space a welcoming place for all participants. The facilitators use themselves in the space to allow others to learn through them. This can mean role modeling vulner-ability, naming difficult emotions, actions or beliefs; or allowing oneself to be challenged in an action or opinion that may not have happened

(in the space) or one in which the facilitator does not own. The facilitator's task is the ability to put the needs of the group ahead of ego and play a role that moves the group forward. As Bell, Goodman, & Ouellett (2016) point out, the presence of different viewpoints in the space you are holding will likely challenge, clarify, and extend every-one's perspectives (p. 82). Undoubtedly, this task is extremely difficult, and is one of the most challenging, albeit crucial aspects of being a facilitator.

The social identities that the facilitator holds will also be significant. As much as we strive for a society where the playing field is level, facilitation of those very conversations requires deeper understanding and acknowledgement of the concepts of privilege and oppression as social constructs. We hold these as paramount because they have a role in the experiences of others in the room. Our practice acknow-ledges that people have different experiences based on identity (race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, religion, national origin, etc.). A facilitator must be aware of how others will perceive them (justified or not) based on their social identities, and be able to speak to those identities with some comfort. This is one of the major reasons we co-facilitate, particularly across identity. We have found it impactful to have a male facilitator during our performances exploring sexual assault to ask difficult questions about male privilege or to have a white facilitator during our performances on race assist the audience in exploring white privilege. It is significant to the dialogue when the facilitator who has an identity that is a part of a dominant group can name it and the privilege associated with it. Your understanding of your own self with dominant and subordinated identities will be extremely important when facilitating discussions about privilege.

INGREDIENT 4: SELF AS INSTRUMENT TO CHANGE

Expanding on the previous ingredient, number 4 implies that the facilitator must be willing to show a vulnerability that can enlist the ideas, viewpoints, and experiences of the participants in the process. This requires that the facilitator has done some exploration of the issue(s) associated with the facilitation and that the facilitator is ready to "extrovert" the good, the bad, and the ugly around the issue(s) salient to the facilitation – which is particularly important when stressing a place of privilege. On teaching about racism, Brookfield

(2014) noted that teachers should examine and share their own personal process to model their own learning, to make their experience public, and engage others in how to address the issue. We actively seek to speak about our experiences from our privileged identities in an effort to engage those who share that identity group to also engage in self-examination and understanding of the social constructs of oppression.

Acknowledging your vulnerability is key to feeling compassion and empathy towards others with whom you work in a facilitation setting. As organizational psychologist Roger Schwarz has proposed:

> If you act out of compassion [. . .] you are able to move beyond defensiveness and to be vulnerable. This vulnerability in turn enables you to create conversation in which you can mutually learn. (Schwarz, 2002, p. 48)

You, yourself, are instrumental to change because through vulnerability, as a facilitator, you invite others into the arduous task of engaging in dialogue.

INGREDIENT 5: YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW SHIT

Change, progress, and movement demand a confluence of factors in order to happen. The "simple change model" (change requires awareness, knowledge, and skills to be effective), is a helpful framework; especially when a group goes directly into problem solving. This model suggests that the intermediary steps of gaining knowledge and skills are required for understanding the complexity of the problem and emphasizing skills necessary for changes to occur. We have found when a group gets disheartened or resorts to finding solutions right away, as a way to avoid the challenging aspects of the issues, using the change model is a good way to redefine the conversation and keep participants focused and engaged.

There is value in this model as a framework to understand how to address the issues that can come up during facilitation; however, the challenge lies in applying knowledge and skills to lived experience. For instance when dealing with issues of identity there are mountains of data that are important to have as a portion of the understanding around those issues, AND those are not the sum of lived

experience(s). It's an old epistemological roadblock: learning how/learning to, versus knowledge/experience.

As the facilitator, you have to live in and hold the space where BOTH of those things are truthful, valid, and worthy of exploration – especially where those things are in direct opposition. To hold space while living in it with the group at hand is to participate. Applied theatre scholar Sheila Preston has discussed a similar idea:

> If genuine participation exists through co-intentionality, the relationship nurtured by the facilitator or artist is crucial and therefore their sensitivity and skill in working 'with' participants and enabling democratic ownership of creative mediums is key. (Preston, 2009, p. 129)

This idea of genuine participation and co-intentionality also exemplifies the idea that this is a journey and a destination. There will never be an end to the conversation when talking about our social identities, including our perceptions and experiences related to those identities. We must pay attention to where we are going as well as how we are getting there, and assume we "know it all."

INGREDIENT 6: THE SECRET SAUCE

There are skills that can be helpful albeit not written in stone, and can be just as harmful as helpful depending on the situation. We call them the secret sauce because they are often used in combination and in varying amounts. This is where your personal skills and experience come into play; where the needs of the group are balanced and you as the facilitator need to be willing to lean into a difficult situation, make a challenging decision, and fully reflect on the outcomes. The skills that comprise our notion of the secret sauce are reflective listening, challenging opinions, digging for gold, noticing and naming out loud, and slowing and pulling the stick out of the mud.

Reflective listening is a skill borrowed from psychology, defined as "a way of responding to another person to communicate empathy" (Craighead & Nemeroff, 2004). By using reflective listening, facilitators attempt to code what a member of the group has said into their own words (Rautalinko, 2013) and offer it back to the others. The reflective process can also be infinitely important in making sure that other

participants are heard and understood in the room. The reflections can be a powerful tool in nurturing understanding between participants as well as validating voice. In our practice, we have found that reflective listening and open-ended questions help guide the group, particularly in difficult conversations around identity.

A skillful facilitator can challenge a participant's opinion or widely held belief in a way that invites further examination. Michael Rohd refers to this as "exploring communication and how the life experience of each character (and every person) brings to it an interaction that affects their choices and their ability to follow through on those choices" (Rohd, 1998, p. 127). Thus, through the story of the theatre, the intention is to invite critical thought of subject matter with facts, data, AND lived experiences. During a performance and facilitation of *Just Another Party,* a performance about sexual assault and alcohol, we would often hear from audience members about a "friend" who was falsely accused of sexual assault. We typically wouldn't challenge that participant's experience, but rather would point out the statistics of false reporting and invoke the stories of sexual assault survivors as a way to temper the undertone the comment might imply. In doing so, we would invite everyone to think critically and to weigh the scrutiny of reporting a sexual assault versus the low numbers of false reports.

In a group facilitation setting, open-ended questions are a vital tool as well, particularly with challenging statements. We call this "digging for gold." Phrases like "Tell me more?" or "Where did that come from?" Using questioning, without being invasive, allows for dialogue and sharing of viewpoints and stories. This idea has also been discussed by the International Association of Facilitators, albeit in a different context: that open-ended questions are essential to framing a dialogue that forwards critical thinking and allows for possible responses – and, by extension, shared experiences and viewpoints (Schuman, 2005).

Phrases like "Do we all agree?" or "I see people nodding in agreement," "I see what look like some different opinions," and "What other experiences might be present in this conversation that we're not hearing?" are also a good condiment to have at hand, as is reminding participants to speak from "I" statements. We mention that it is hard to argue someone else's experience. We also remind people that as facilitators we may push on their understanding of that experience, but the idea is to get participants moving from phrases like "We all know…" or "Everyone does..." to "I know" or "I've seen." This is also where the

facilitator may introduce facts, data, testimony, or other known quantities to add to the conversation.

Noticing and naming, out loud, around group identities and group dynamics is another important skill. Phrases such as, "I'm noticing that all of the women have been speaking as we talk about sexual assault, and we've not heard much from the men" can be an avenue to open up the conversation to other voices. The same is true for naming the emotional temperature of the room by stating, "It seems like this conversation got really challenging. Everyone has gone silent and I notice a few people looking down. How is everyone feeling?" or "Wow. That was a pretty heavy statement that was just said. It makes me feel anxious. How are you all feeling?" Lastly, we also own experiences and reactions (when appropriate): "This can be hard work. I know I'm feeling anxious right now," or "This was hard for me to hear as a man and I've learned a lot by being patient and listening." By doing so, narratives may foster empathy, as theatre scholar Anne Bogart has discussed before (Bogart, 2014, pp. 92-105).

Facilitating these types of dialogues can become a track meet – where individuals in the room, or indeed the entire room itself, take off in one direction leaving the other people or the agenda behind. Or, it can be an effective tactic to "change the subject" to avoid a difficult portion of the conversation or to push a particular idea or need into the conversation. Slowing down the conversation is a great technique for making sure that the intent of the session, a point of view, or an impactful moment doesn't become lost. Phrases like: "I want to go back to what we were talking about before," or "I know we are going in one direction, but let's not lose sight of...," or "This is a great conversation, and I want to hold on to our original subject / idea / intention," or "There is so much to know here, and let's remember our intent here is to talk about..." can be effective ways to redirect the facilitation.

There may be times when it is important to stick with a topic because the group might be struggling or there might be some insights being offered to consider. There will be other times when the group might be going down a rabbit hole, and it is time to move on. Gauging this is a balance of time, agenda, and engagement of the group. The concept of the "parking lot" (using a space on a chalkboard to list topics that may not be addressed during that session) can be useful or simply telling the group, "This is great conversation but we need to

move on," or "We seem to be a bit stuck here. Let's shift the focus a bit." Unfortunately there is no formula. It is also important to recognize that YOU might be the stick in the mud – and might need to get out of the way.

INGREDIENT 7: IT IS *ALWAYS* A LEARNING JOURNEY

Any opportunity to be in a space where there is interaction on difficult issues is a learning opportunity. There will be new perspectives and ideas shared, leading to the possibility of new personal insights that will come from the interactions, both for the participants and for the facilitator. Facilitation is, at its core, a learning opportunity for ALL involved and must shape the foundation of any facilitation. In their research, Kolb, Jin, & Song (2008) interviewed self-identified facilitators. Those facilitators reported that they all learned through self-guided learning, mentoring, and second chair opportunities. As you construct your own recipe for facilitation, it is important to know that learning about (and studying) facilitation are limited and one truly becomes a facilitator by doing. The ingredients and mixtures that work for individual facilitators can be useful but truly understanding how to facilitate requires an exploration of the ingredients necessary. Each must be personally understood, experienced, and blended into their own practice as facilitator.

INGREDIENT 8: POST-MORTEM

The concept of the post-mortem is not new to theatre, and has a place in the world of facilitation as well. Often called a de-brief, the concept is the same: "Every play and every group is different and has individual problems peculiar to it; but the need for growth and creative expression must be recognized in all" (Spolin, 1963, p. 363). This recognition ascends from collaboration. In turn, post-mortem is inherently connected to collaboration, as a means to both examine the production and "ensure healthier collaborations in the next production" (Roznowski & Domer, 2009). We understand the same to be true in our practice, in terms of growth and creative expression. It is important to review the flow of the experience, receive and give your co-facilitator(s) feedback (if you have them), and reflect on success to polish for the next time. While no two facilitations will be the same,

there is learning that can be applied from one scenario to the next.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Since we began working together in 1999, we have encountered as many obstacles as we have met opportunities to learn. As educators and facilitators, our work is strongly influenced by social issues (race, social class, gender and sexual identity, etc) and gravitates towards creating meaningful engagement with those subjects. Throughout this article, we outlined *some* of the principles and guidelines we use in our practice. The ingredients we have mentioned in this article pertain to the facilitator's role within these complex conversations – who you are, where you are, which parts of yourself you bring to the group, and what matters to you as a facilitator as well as to the group. We cannot emphasize enough the fluid nature of this type of work and the need for those who wish to engage in this practice to be mindful that no one formula will work every time for every situation. The fluid nature of working with groups of people requires that those who take on the mantle of "facilitator" be willing to do that work where ambiguity and multiplicity are the norm.

These ingredients are a sampling of the depth and breadth we have found useful in facilitating dialogues about identity and social justice. As with any good recipe, one must do some actual cooking. The goal of becoming a fluid facilitator requires practice, reflection and, if you can find it, solid mentorship. A foundation of our practice is to remember the crucial idea: if people can move towards one another within their differences, that is where progress lies.

SUGGESTED CITATION

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"They Have Become My Family": Reciprocity and Responsiveness in a Volunteer-Led Program for Refugees and Migrants

ANNE SMITH

FAITH ACTION

ABSTRACT

Creative English *is an applied theatre program that supports English language learning for adult refugees and migrants in the UK. The program is shaped by an ethic of care, focused on responsiveness, reciprocal relationships and empowering individuals to take action. This article identifies challenges and opportunities highlighted by the rapid expansion of a project governed by these values and delivered by volunteers.*

Immigration has long affected the UK. The first migrants arrived in the 5th century and the first refugees were documented in the 12th century (Panayi, 1999; Kushner, 2006). The Commission of Human Rights (1998) defines migrants as those who have freely taken the decision to leave their country of origin for reasons of "personal convenience" and without "the intervention of an external compelling factor" (United Nations, 1951, p. 16). The United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) defined a refugee as a person forced to leave their country as a result of "a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" (p. 16).

Despite a long history of immigration, integration remains a challenge for refugees and migrants at the start of the twenty-first century. Atfield, Brahmbhatt and O'Toole (2007) found the ability to contribute to society was the key aspect of integration. The ability to speak English and negotiate systems in the UK is central to integration. In the 2011 census, however, around 850,000 migrants self-reported that they could not speak English well or at all (Paget, 2014). In 2013, the UK government's Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched a competition to find innovative ways of teaching the English language and increasing engagement in the community for those who had not previously accessed English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. *Creative English,* administered by FaithAction, was one of six winners.

Creative English is an applied theatre program that supports English language learning for adult refugees and migrants in the UK. The methodology developed through practice-based research in partnership with 53 women in East London. The research focused on using drama, shaped by an ethic of care, to facilitate belonging. Framed by the care theories of Held (2006) and Pettersen (2008), it focuses on responsiveness, reciprocal relationships and empowering individuals to take action. Barnes et al. (2015) believe an ethics of care connects values, practical help, support, and policy, recognising and privileging essential relationships when circumstances are challenging (p. 233). *Creative English* combines these personal, practical and, through its government funding, policy objectives.

Creative English consists of 38 sessions, consonant with an academic year, which are themed around everyday experiences. Participants improvise as fictional characters in an on-going storyline. The storyline provides opportunity to practice the language, builds

confidence in participants' ability to communicate beyond words and creates the sense of fun which characterise the sessions and has resulted in the project's tag line: "Laugh your way to confident English" (*Creative English*, 2016). Facilitators receive a case containing props, costume, puppets and visual aid cards to support communication and encourage a sense of play in the sessions. Using playful improvisation and archetypal characters, participants gain confidence to use English in everyday situations, including talking to doctors, teachers and landlords. The plotline for the drama features a number of families, who live on the same street. Family relationships have a universal quality and help participants find common ground, as similar feelings and pressures are shared regardless of cultural background. As part of its responsiveness to the needs of individuals, the program is designed to accommodate the erratic attendance of the most vulnerable, as each session is self-contained with its sense of continuity generated by the on-going plot. Participants may engage with as much or as little of the program as they wish, which helps them progress as appropriate to their needs and desires. Some participants simply need the confidence boost to move onto formal ESOL or employment, whereas others benefit from a long term context to make friends and develop skills.

The DCLG funding resulted in *Creative English* being delivered in 36 'hubs' across 22 areas nationally. Between 2013 and 2015, 2,432 learners participated in the program. Over 85% of learners were women, 75.4% were from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian or Somali backgrounds and more than 70% were Muslim (CTPSR, 2015, pp. 3-4). In addition to measuring increases in confidence and language proficiency, the program sought practical engagement with the wider community as its outcome, demonstrated through engagement with new community activities, health services, formal education and employment. The program over delivered significantly on targets set. For example, the target for learners to engage with further education including ESOL after taking part in *Creative English* was 492 learners. The final total was 1,148. (CTPSR, 2015, p. 14). 725 learners on the program have made progression towards work whilst taking part. This is against a target of 461 and so, again, represents a significant over-achievement (p.15).

The partnership with FaithAction was important in enabling the program to reach those who had not previously accessed ESOL. FaithAction is a network of about 2,000 organisations and individuals,

representing the nine recognised faiths in the UK, involved or aspiring to be involved in social action. As a result, the program was facilitated by trained volunteers in a range of settings familiar to learners, including community centres, mosques, churches and gudwaras. Volunteer facilitators, motivated by a desire to make a difference in their communities, were recognised to go out of their way to make people feel welcome and to create a relaxed environment conducive to learning (CTPSR, 2015, p. 19).

The faith sector is particularly effective in engaging those traditionally considered hard to reach (Dinham, Furbey and Lowndes, 2009). Many migrants place greater emphasis on religious and cultural traditions from their countries of origin, which means places of worship are often the first point of community connection for new arrivals (Fortier, 2000; Griffiths, Sigona, & Zetter, 2005). Responding to learners' need to be able to access the program in a safe, familiar space and adopting a drama-based methodology which focusses on the oral suits those who are illiterate in their first language and have no formal education. Although *Creative English* benefits a diverse range of participants, including those with professional qualifications, it also empowers women, some of whom have been in the UK for 20 or 30 years, to experience greater levels of personal independence. Responsiveness to the needs of individuals not traditionally served by formal education in the development and setting of the program is crucial in its success with learners. The sense of community built between learners who attended regularly caused terms relating to 'family' to be used by participants to describe other members of the group. This article will explore family, reciprocity, responsiveness and empowerment as a small project is upscaled.

AN ALTERNATIVE 'FAMILY'

Beyond the fiction, program participants and volunteers frequently refer to other participants within the project as "family". This association with family is perhaps not surprising in a project shaped by an ethic of care, as care has always been synonymous with family (Philips, 2007); that said, the relationship between care and family has also always been contested, particularly as traditional notions of the nuclear family have changed, postmodern emphases on individualism and selfishness have evolved, and geographic separation grows more pronounced,

which is particularly pertinent in the case of migrants (pp. 56-59). This applied theatre project offers an alternative 'family', as the safety of facilitated workshop spaces and the challenges of specific group tasks accelerate the development of relationships.

Philips (2007) found that shared histories, ongoing relationships, reciprocity and knowledge of the preferences and values of members are central to notions of care amongst families. Similarly, duty, power and obligation are commonly cited as foundations of care within family relationships, as are love and, sometimes, altruism (p.64). When participants talked of peers from the applied theatre project as family, their focus was on certain idealised benefits: unity in shared experiences, despite differences, and its substitution for relationships currently unavailable to them. One participant explained:

> "Family means to me: these are the people I want to be with. We are very different but we are the same. We have [the] same problem[s], same laugh[s], same hope for [our] family. I have big family in my country – I miss very much. This class make my family here." (*Creative English* participant. Personal Interview. 2015, November 8)

Tidyman, Gale, & Seymour (2004) indicated that acute senses of isolation and marginalisation may be experienced by refugees and migrants, as a result of feeling detached from both their host communities and people from their own backgrounds. They also found that isolation is linked to the highest levels of mental health problems, and highlighted that importance "of building on and supporting people's survival skills and resilience" (p. 26). Eaves (2015) found such isolation even applied to those on spousal visas, facing the challenges of re-establishing social networks in the UK in a very different culture. A common focus on a shared arts task is an ideal context in which to build friendships with people one might typically consider "other". Working alongside one another is a non-threatening way to find out about one another's preferences. The overall goal – in this case the development of a plot to improve one's English language – supports ongoing relationships. In one session, for example, the group collaborate to help the woman playing the mother get her lazy teenage son to school. Participants from Poland and Pakistan support one another in the fiction with threats of punishment and bribery. There was

laughter at the physical embodiment of a surly teenager from the slight Algerian woman, who was in role as the son, and a sense of triumph when the son was finally pushed out the door. In a subsequent week, the same two women were observed sharing their real life concerns about their children's behaviour in school. Participation in creative tasks provides a shared history, however short term, as well as reciprocity that can be found in the creative process itself. These characteristics mimic those that form the foundations of care within a family. Collaboration and celebration of one another's successes and concerns helps to build a sense of community within the project.

In addition to creating a culture of reciprocity and empowerment through the arts activities, it is important to encourage interaction outside the creative, as this may be sustained when the project itself is over. Structured time for what Muir (2009) described as "loose interaction" is important, including: coffee breaks, shared food and trips into the community, as these encounters cement and support emerging relationships. These friendships encourage more engagement with society outside project. Activities facilitated outside the arts project provide opportunities to redistribute power and generate a bridge between the safety of the workshop space and the real world, encourageing further independent interactions. For example, it appeared a trip to the Olympic Park would go unattended, as no-one had replied to the facilitator's text. Upon departure, however, a large group of participants and their friends arrived. Although the project facilitator had proposed and planned the outing, the participants themselves organised one another. One participant explained that, because her peer invited her, she 'had to come'. A familial sense of obligation is at work here, exerting a pressure to engage without an uneven power dynamic. At the end of the outing, the group subdivided and went shopping rather than travelling home with the facilitator all together. One of the women who didn't typically leave home without her husband was asked if she would be ok to travel back. "Yes, of course! My friends will help," she smiled. Previously nervous to make the short walk to the workshop alone, she was now comfortable managing crowded public transport, a double buggy and two children under the age of five. Her relationships with others in the group freed her of certain dependencies. She could make the choice herself, and in doing so opened up the possibility of other trips out. She later attended a parent and toddler group for the first time with one of these women.

As another participant explained: "Here [in *Creative English*] I have friends for help not just for fun" (Smith, 2013, p. 138). The help offered by friends was not limited to the hours of a workshop. Reciprocal relationships multiply the capacity for support well beyond what any professional service can offer.

'FAMILY' FOR VOLUNTEERS

Creative English volunteer facilitators also chose the word "family" to describe their relationship with workshop participants. This particularly applied to volunteers who themselves may not have conventional families. Angela has been a volunteer on *Creative English* for 3 years. She explained:

> For myself, as a single person with no immediate family, they have become my family. We have been laughing so much this morning, it's a complete tonic to come here. You could never regard it as work. It's just a sheer pleasure to come and be with these people and just be able to help them in something that is so easy for us and see them progress. (*Creative English* Alliance, 2015b)

hooks (2003) spoke of political resistance engendered through 'service' as the foundation of teaching, particularly because it eschews the notion of reward (p. 91). However, for the volunteer facilitator the reward is clearly in relationships and enjoying others' successes. A phrase like "complete tonic" suggests significant impact on Angela's own well-being. Celebration of one another's successes is again characteristic of the idealised family. Another volunteer framed her feelings of satisfaction as being the response of a mother:

> These ladies have become like my children. When they tell me about their successes – how they have been able to go places and do things they never thought they could before, I'm so proud I could burst. It's so lovely to see. I never thought I'd feel like a proud mum, but I do. (Volunteer facilitator. Personal interview. 2016, January 12)

While the experience of unconventional motherhood is clearly an option within the applied theatre project's alternative family, the project

may also offer opportunities to escape from traditional family roles, reaffirming independent identities. Fahema, a volunteer, explained:

> I didn't want to be stuck at home alone after my kids went to full time school and it gave me a good opportunity to help others who have a lot less English. It makes me feel good to do it. It's lovely to see them develop and improve and go on to better things after it. (*Creative English* Alliance, 2015b)

Consonant with the experiences of program participants, a multiplicity of motivations and needs may be satisfied by involvement as a volunteer facilitator. Reciprocity is demonstrated in the participant's desire to share the outcome with the facilitators, who both gives and receives affirmation in their response.

With reference to the role of the applied theatre facilitator, Thompson (2015) noted that "the 'professional' cannot be sustained ethically without a commitment to the potential for it to blur dynamically with the personal" (p. 432). Working alongside one of her learners as a volunteer, Griffin (2014), a professional *Creative English* Trainer, described how Yasmin was "slowly becoming a friend", indicating that focus on a shared creative task builds relationships between staff and volunteers as well as learners. The informal nature of *Creative English* workshop sessions encourages natural relationships on all levels; the blurring of professional and personal is particularly heightened in the role of volunteer facilitator. The lack of financial reward means motivation is closely linked to the needs and values of the volunteer. Volunteers' personal motivations may include gaining professional experience, combatting one's own isolation and/or a desire to see change in their community; engagement is magnified when the volunteer belongs to the community they serve. Unlike the professional facilitator, who usually maintains the status of guest for the duration of the project, the volunteer facilitator is likely to maintain a long term connection with individuals and have in depth knowledge of barriers and opportunities faced by participants. They may engage with participants regularly outside the parameters of the applied theatre project, which may both increase individuals' potential to meet participants' needs and limit their expectations, as they are subject to the same cultural norms. One volunteer explained:

> In our culture men and women must always be separate. We can play the games from the session plans but we must do it in separate rooms or, at least, different ends of the room. It is just how it is in our culture. […] Friendships between men and women do not happen. (Volunteer facilitator. Personal interview. 2016, January 14)

Creating safe spaces that remain sensitive to cultural demands is crucial when supporting people as they access the applied theatre project and facilitators who are from those communities can play an invaluable role. Moreover, once these barriers are overcome, there is value in the workshop space as a safe context to engage with those from different communities. As one community leader explained:

> It's good to meet people who are different to them. This, for many, is the first time – first time to speak to English people, peoples of different background/country. They are learning we are all people. We are the same. We do not have to be scared. (Volunteer facilitator. Personal interview. 2016, February 10)

The applied theatre workshop acts as a liminal space in which relationships can be redefined. Trust, however, has to be present to enable people to engage in the first place. Trust develops through relationships over time.

CHALLENGING POWERLESSNESS

An ethic of care foregrounds the importance of empowerment and ensures that individuals are not positioned passively as the *cared-for* (Pettersen, 2008). One of the most significant elements in the success of the program has therefore been providing opportunities for former participants to transition into volunteer facilitators, promoting a further increase in feelings of confidence and belonging. Migrants and refugees often experience feelings of helplessness due to language barriers, the asylum process and lack of understanding related to the host culture and system, which leaves parents feeling incapable of caring for their children (Furukawa & Hunt, 2011) and refugees in need of using their skills and qualifications (Tidyman et al., 2004). *Creative English* combats powerlessness by encouraging different degrees of

volunteerism – some formalised and some informal. Taking full responsibility for the class takes a measure of confidence and commitment. However, former participants have been able to get alongside current ones – interpreting, encouraging, demonstrating activities and facilitating small groups, which has significantly enhanced the program's ability to support diverse learners. Addition-ally, shared personal experience can be an inspiration to new arrivals and encourage empathy. As Maria, a lead-facilitator explained: "As a refugee I feel I can understand what other vulnerable migrants are experiencing when they move to the UK and I want to put my experience to good use" (Smith, 2016, p. 13). The intermediate steps to becoming a lead-facilitator provide opportunities for deepened relationships, strengthened applied theatre skills and cultural awareness. While such training will always develop facilitation skills and creativity, it is important to recognise that for many would-be-facilitators, cultural practice (in terms of pragmatic skills, such as how to book a room, organize participant contact information, manage a budget and send an invoice) is equally important to address. As Paget and Stevenson (2014) identified, migrants have complex needs and benefit from an approach that is holistic. Applied theatre is well positioned to do this; it equips volunteers with a range of transferable skills and experiences.

To facilitate the transition toward volunteerism, lead facilitators had to hone their capacities to recognise those who would benefit from further personal development. Kavita, for example, studied IT in English at university in India, so her knowledge of English was excellent. However, in practice, she was lacked the confidence to speak to people, and left the house once a week. She attended one *Creative English* class and volunteered as a teaching assistant for another; in this role her self-esteem soared. Becoming a volunteer is a reciprocal process, benefitting both the project and the participant. In fact, a number of volunteers went on to do formal teaching qualifications. hooks (2003) identifies the importance of a supportive mentor as well as the importance of "serving" students in university education, rather than perceiving them as subject to a professor's will. Additionally, lead facilitators need to adopt the role Miller refers to as "enlightened witness": the person who "stands with someone being abused and offers them a different model of interaction" (p. 89). While "abuse" in this context may simply refer to the potential to be

disadvantaged through lack of language or understanding of culture, internalised feelings of helplessness and powerlessness can form a type of self-abuse whereby one limits one's own opportunities through failing to recognise one's own strengths and capabilities. The enlightened witness can combat internalised powerlessness by recognising successes and fostering reciprocal relationships where all can give as well as receive. A willingness to be open about one's own mistakes and challenges can break down participants' "fear of being less than perfect" avoiding the "despair and self-sabotage" that result, replacing them with hope and possibility (hooks, p. 89). In the case of Kavita, the informal interactions with the facilitator, who drove her to and from the project venue, may have been as significant in her raising her self-esteem as her capacity to help others in the sessions.

CARE FOR THE CARERS

The project's rapid expansion from 78 participants with one facilitator to over 2,400 participants and 43 facilitators generated significant challenges in terms of maintaining the original ethos with its focus on responsiveness to individual need. A level of care and support needs to be modelled for the volunteer facilitators if they are to feel empowered enough to replicate such care for the participants in the project. The geographical spread, costs of travel and intensity of establishing the program resulted in limited contact time being spent with the volunteers initially, who received one day's training at the start and a second day mid-way through the program. The success rate of volunteers moving on to employment also disrupted engagement with the project; as with the migrants themselves volunteers' participation could be of a transitory nature (CTPSR, 2015, p. 14). More contact time with volunteers and more effective use of digital communication channels to develop supportive relationships between hubs in the network will be important areas of development in future.

A project shaped by an ethic of care that values reciprocity, responsiveness to individuals and empowerment should also engender volunteer ownership over sessions. To achieve this, volunteer facilitators were initially encouraged to bring their own expertise into sessions by introducing their own activities. However, in practice Coventry University (2015) found this compromised the quality of the experience for learners, as volunteer facilitators did not necessarily

have the skill or experience to navigate cultural appropriacy or the educational value of activities. This was the inevitable consequence of a small amount of training; facilitators who internalised the values of the project were most effective. To ensure care for participants while maintaining respect for the research participants who shaped our methodology, it became necessary to give some level of authority to the session plans as written though the format remained flexible.

Applied theatre in challenging contexts also seems to generate a sense of responsibility, which can have both positive and negative consequences for participants and facilitators, as it becomes 'emotional labour' (Preston, 2013). One example has to do with the sense of guilt and responsibility a specific *Creative English* community felt, when they discovered one participant (who struggled with learning difficulties) hadn't seen anyone for the 3-week period during which the center was shut. This anecdote reiterates the importance of moving beyond formal provision into natural, self-sustaining friendships that are not limited by working hours or academic terms. A volunteer described the impact hearing a participant's life story had on her:

> I hadn't heard it before. She'd only hinted. It was so hard to hear – awful – what they'd done. I find that…when I hear people's stories I find it really hard not to get overwhelmed by the hopelessness of it. […] You think what can I do in the face of it? It's so dark. It's so good to have X to talk it though with, who's heard lots of these stories before. (Volunteer facilitator. Personal interview. 2016, February 24)

Because the program is powered by playful situations and functional knowledge about life in the UK, this woman's story would not likely be told during a *Creative English* session. The focus on laughter in the sessions reduces Preston's (2013) "emotional work" of switching from a negative to a positive frame of mind (p. 232). In fact, the volunteer only heard this woman's story because they had attended a referral session together. The volunteer facilitator is technically outside the remit of the project, but with access to the support and expertise of colleagues she is able to get appropriate support for the emotional consequences of this work. As in the field of health, there is a pressing need to recognise facilitators as providing care, and to then "care for the carers" (Manea, 2015, p. 207), ensuring appropriate practical and

emotional support is available to everyone. As the blurring of the 'professional' and the 'personal' becomes more pronounced, supportive structures and appropriate training are necessary to protect facilitator well-being.

CONCLUSION

Shaped by an ethic of care, the *Creative English* methodology has responsiveness to individuals' needs embedded into the structure of the program. Reciprocity is part of a collaborative creative process; as it is not dependent on language skills or cultural awareness, all participants can contribute. However, to ensure all have the capacity to contribute equally, there is also value in recognising sharing food and supporting one another outside the sessions as forms of reciprocity, which combat the sense of helplessness many migrants experience. Being able to make a contribution to society is important in achieving emotional integration. While these interactions would not take place without the accelerated relationships and increased confidence generated by the arts, it is important that activity around the arts tasks themselves are recognised to have an impact of longer term personal development for participants. Feeling empowered to help others in small actions, like helping a friend to use a bus, opens up the possibility of making bolder choices: enrolling on a formal language course; visiting an unfamiliar area or challenging your landlord about poor quality accommodation. The impact of the combination of rehearsal for life in arts activities, confidence building and generation of a supportive network of friendships is illustrated in the fact that 78% of participants engaged in new community activities after joining the program (*Creative English* 2015c). Arguably, facilitating these 'family' relationships are as important as the arts activities which make them possible in bringing about sustained change in people's lives.

Despite the projects' focus on learners, these qualities are equally important for the volunteers who deliver the project. In interview, they too used language which suggested a familial relationship with participants, which often rewarded them through pleasure at learners' achievements, especially being able to act independently. Although some formal structures are necessary to ensure learners are protected by a certain level of quality in the sessions, building responsive, empowering, reciprocal relationships between the professional

facilitation team and volunteers are equally important. As *Creative English* begins a new chapter of delivery, closer relationships with the volunteer facilitators will be a priority. While volunteering is often considered a sign of acculturation more likely to take place after 5 years in the UK (Bloch, 2002), the initial delivery of *Creative English* suggests that there are significant benefits in empowering participants to join the facilitation team after a relatively short period. Helping others may enhance volunteers' self-esteem and sense of belonging. Providing opportunity for participants and volunteers to develop genuine friendships is key to long term impact beyond the drama workshop.

SUGGESTED CITATION

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Anne Smith is an applied theatre practitioner and researcher with over twenty years of experience working in formal and informal education contexts. She is currently working as Lead Trainer at FaithAction, who administer the *Creative English* project. The *Creative English* model was developed in partnership with workshop participants as part of practice-based research for her PhD on using drama to facilitate a

sense of belonging for adult refugees and migrants, awarded by Queen Mary University of London in 2013. Her research interests include: the use of drama to facilitating community, language acquisition, family learning, health literacy, and well-being.

Secondary Students Confront Issues of Identity through Devising and Performing a New Play at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe

SONYA BAEHR

POLY PREP COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

ABSTRACT

In 2014, secondary students at the Poly Prep Country Day School began an eleven-month project with their acting teacher and a professional playwright that culminated in performances at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August of 2015. The goal was to premiere a new play created out of the concerns and challenges facing these young Americans as they wrestled with their national identity in an increasingly interconnected world. The students also dealt with issues of race, class, and sexual identity as they refined dialogue and characters in daily rehearsal sessions. The director's process of building Americans in Breshkistan *was modeled on that used by professional companies when they workshop a new piece with a playwright. The students created choreography and stage combat, as well as nonverbal movement sequences in which they worked together as an acrobatic team. The project united and engaged thirteen students of various races, classes, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and personality types. Students were responsible for creating and realizing*

the lighting and sound designs and for running the show. This project could serve as a model for schools to adopt into their regular curriculum, connecting high-level, student-created productions with performance possibilities at local professional theater venues.

In the summer summer of 2015 I traveled with a small group of acting and technical theater students to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, under the auspices of the American High School Theater Festival, to premiere *Americans in Breshkistan*, an original play. The Fringe is known as a venue where new theater companies and young professionals premiere original work (Fisher, 2012) and make connections with others in their profession. Therefore, in order to give the students an experience similar to that of a professional company, we took an original play we had developed ourselves. The artistic challenge of creating a new work of art that would be judged on par with professional and amateur work from around the globe set a high bar for my students. Like the members of professional theater companies, they had the experience of work-shopping a new piece with a playwright. By helping to create the themes and characters of the play, they became deeply invested in the project. From their work in their class preparation and in Edinburgh, the students learned first-hand what it meant to create, revise, discard, recreate, and revise yet again. Together, we developed all the aspects of this new production, including set, props, costumes, sound and lighting design. The students participated equally with the professional adults in generating an artistic statement that belonged to all of us. This investment created a powerful commitment in each member of our company to achieve the highest possible level of artistic excellence.

The students were recruited for this project in the spring of 2014. Most had participated in the extra-curricular, after-school theater program for several years, in which they had performed as actors in both contemporary and classic plays by well-established playwrights. They had all signed up for an acting class that ran two semesters and their families had committed themselves financially to the trip the following August. We had two workshop performances scheduled for the spring and summer before we would take the play to Edinburgh, where we would make further adjustments to our work. Our group included students from a wide variety of means, from those scholarship students who paid next to nothing for the trip, to those whose parents

covered all their expenses. The school supported us financially, allowing us to use ticket revenue from our regular after-school season's shows as well as sales of donated items at school functions to cover the expenses of the students on scholarship. We also received significant donations from other parents who supported the theater department. Additionally. the headmaster of our school agreed to commission playwright Monica Flory, a former drama teacher at our school whose work had been published and premiered in theaters from Seattle to New York. Flory was willing to write something within the technical and time constraints demanded by the Fringe. She also agreed to come to New York to hold a series of workshops with our students in the fall, so she could get to know them and establish issues that were of concern to them.

The American High School Theater Festival (AHSTF) offers selected high schools from around the country the opportunity to perform a show at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe four times over a ten day period at one of the established Fringe venues. In each of the Fringe venues it manages, the AHSTF maintains a staff that includes technical directors, electricians, and stage managers who are all experienced in working with high school performers and are also first class theater professionals. Tickets to our show could be purchased at the Fringe box office and we had our own spot in the thick Fringe program book. In creating our show, we had specific limits set by the Fringe administration on all Fringe productions. Each company is only allowed a two hour time slot, which must include their load in, set up, the show's running time, and the complete strike. This meant that if we had wanted to do a full-length play we would have had to severely cut it, or perform only a portion of it. We were not allowed to ship over set pieces. Anything we brought had to be packed in our suitcases or checked as luggage on the plane and carried with us from London to Edinburgh via train. Once in Edinburgh, we could have rented set pieces but this would have been costly and they might not have met our requirements. All our sound had to be pre-recorded onto computer. Therefore, it became clear early in the process that we needed a minimal set with minimal props and preferably no furniture.

Before working with secondary students, I had years of experience both as a director of professional actors in the context of Off-Broadway theater, and as a deviser of original material with middle school students in a summer program I created in 1990 at the Poly Prep

School. Over a period of twenty years, using the ideas of Spolin (1985, 1999), Book (2002), Boal (2002), Brown (2000), Close (Halpern, Close, Johnson, 2001) and others, I was quite comfortable creating original exercises to fit the particular devising task. Flory had some ideas she wanted to explore and we developed a process that began with the fall workshops. Our goal was to combine the valuable devising process that can occur in secondary school social issues theatre classes (Gonzalez, 2013) with the mature craft necessary for the production of a polished work of art. In our workshops we sought to elicit from the students issues that were important to them, develop characters they could play that would be real to them, and explore the dynamics that might exist between these characters. In collaboration, Flory and I created the series of exercises that comprised our early workshops.

One of the first exercises we created together was a nonverbal improvisation involving all the actors. After writing on a card a description of the person they thought their parents wanted them to become, they entered the stage one by one, embodying these ideal personas. They could interact with each other, but without using language. The goal was to discover how it *felt* to become their parents' ideal rather than get distracted by storytelling. Immediately after, we asked them to describe the person that would be their parents' worst nightmare of who they might become. This was also followed by an embodied improvisation. Afterwards, one of the actors said she didn't like the "nightmare" persona she had embodied, but that playing the role had made her feel very free. After discussing the choices the students had made, we continued to explore different ways of knowing each other. Everyone sang a solo song, even if it was only "Happy Birthday." In duos and trios, sharing their weight, everyone participated in creating creatures that crossed the stage using new forms of locomotion. This prepared the students for later exercises where they would be required to physically support each other in a variety of ways.

Working with video she had taken of our workshop, Flory was ready with the first working draft of *Americans in Breshkistan* by January 2015, when my acting students and I began our work on the script. The script was initially written with twelve actors in mind, evenly divided by gender. Unfortunately, two students had to withdraw from the trip within the first few weeks of January. This gave our cast their first experience in revising a script. Two characters had to be written out of the play and the show had to be recast. Throughout the rest of

the creative process, Flory would submit pages, and I would bring them to the actors. In read-throughs, the actors sometimes discovered lines that sounded awkward to them and insisted that their characters would never say such things. During scene work, actors would provide critiques of character development, identifying actions that did not ring true to them, or relationships that they felt needed to be developed further. These critiques would then be conveyed to the playwright to negotiate a change. Flory welcomed their input, and in the eleven months of our work together the collaboration between students and playwright resulted in many changes to the original script as the students took greater ownership of their characters and of the play as a whole. By the time we took the play to Edinburgh, we had gone through nine versions of the script.

Due to the demographics of our student body, our cast consisted of a very diverse company: two African-American females, four Caucasian females, one Hispanic male, one Chinese-American male, one Italian-American male who held dual citizenship, and one Caucasian male. Our production crew consisted of three male Caucasian students, who served as stage manager, lighting designer, and sound board operator, and two adults, myself as director and Carlos Aguilar, our set and costume designer. The students who served as our tech crew were very different personality types from the actors. They were not as outgoing, or physically self-confident. However, throughout the process of developing and performing our show, the more socially adept performers accepted them as valued members of our group.

Ten of the students in our company had strong ties to countries outside the U.S., with either one or both parents having emigrated from another country, and some students spoke English as a second language. Many of these students identified first as New Yorkers, then as global citizens, and finally as Americans. As New Yorkers, the students were very aware of the issue of global terrorism. Through our school's annual "Community and Diversity Day" programming: a series of workshops, speakers, and open-forum sessions created to increase sensitivity and diffuse racial tensions inherent in living in a diverse school, our students had developed language with which to engage these issues. They were also dealing with typical adolescent identity issues such as establishing their own sexual identity and sexual orientation and experimenting with drugs and alcohol. Indeed, one of

their classmates had died from an overdose only a few months before, and the loss was felt throughout the school. These issues formed the themes of the play that we developed through those initial workshops and our subsequent work on the script together. The show's premise was summarized in the publicity description we created for the Fringe website:

> Ten American teenagers, strangers to each other, have all been traveling abroad and suddenly wake up to find themselves captives in a small, windowless room. Have they been kidnapped by terrorists? Are they in some strange reality T.V. scenario? Or are they part of a reeducation program in which their parents have enrolled them, without their knowledge or consent? As they attempt to escape through drug-induced hallucinations, they explore the landscape of the American body, the dream of claiming one's identity, and the hope of finding a promised land.

As we did our work in acting class on the backstories of the characters, my students' own struggles and experiences deeply influenced the script. One of the characters, Dylan, came from a wealthy family, had problems with drugs and hid his despair under a brash and joking exterior. Phillip, a middle class character, despised Dylan for his freedom to get "trust fund wasted" every weekend. Dylan had been banished from his home by his mother because of his addiction. The student who played Dylan struggled to find a positive take on the character and finally came to me, deeply upset because he felt that, "No one pays a price for anything." The playwright responded to this feedback by changing the ending so that Dylan shed his surface bravado and revealed his desperate need for his parents to allow him to come home again. The character Sophie had a highly sexual affect, but wanted to be seen as a full person rather than as a "hot" item. Yet at the same time, she couldn't help reveling in her knowledge of her own physical beauty. Conflict between characters stemming from racial and economic tensions played out in the script as well. The characters were often cruel to one another, even to the point of physical violence. However, our actors, who came from a variety of races, ethnicities, classes, and sexual orientations themselves, were able to play out these conflicts onstage and yet remain united offstage. They respected each other and formed a caring and supportive community.

The African-American character Emily was strong and outspoken like the actress who played her. She was impatient with Sophie's attitude, but also with Phillip, who wanted to enlist in the army to fight terrorism, and was full of unconscious racism. The students pushed Flory to develop the conflict between Emily and Phillip but also to find a way for the two characters to reach an understanding. Another of the characters discovered and accepted her homosexuality over the course of the play, an issue that several members of the cast and crew were in the process of exploring themselves.

Americans in Breshkistan was set in a stark, prison-like room with no doors or windows and only a few old blankets on the floor. A single, overhead lighting fixture served as the hiding place for a mysterious bottle labeled "eat me" that contained four pills. As four of the characters decided in turns to each swallow one of the pills, the play morphed into a sequence of surrealistic dream scenes during which the characters attempted to learn something about their situation through their hallucinations. These scenarios revealed both personal and larger truths to the dreamers, bringing moments of transcendence to some of the characters, but also generating even greater anxiety and tension within others. The structure gave our actors the opportunity to play a variety of larger-than-life dream character roles in addition to their named characters that were still trapped in the room. The dream characters' qualities spilled over into the realistic sequences, giving each actor's persona an added resonance and complexity.

My acting pedagogy is based on physical theater training. I studied Asian physical theatre under Leonard Pronko (1967), along with Grotowski (1969) technique at Pomona College. I admire Jacques Lecoq's work (2001) and have used his exercises. I was delighted that the hallucination sequences and our limited set gave us an opportunity to explore staging and choreography that relied on the actors' bodies to create dream landscapes. Students with experience in dance and acrobatics took leadership roles in helping to create the staging. In rehearsal, I used a number of exercises including Boal's Greek Exercise (2002, p. 64) in which actors are physically supported while they move through space. In addition, the script called for sections of chanting and for a lullaby during the character Abe's dream that needed to be sung in Mandarin because the character is a recent immigrant from China. I researched and found a Chinese lullaby (Ong,

2016) and members of the cast rehearsed and developed it on their own. Abe's dream became a way for him to transcend the cacophony of a high school of English speaking students who had little understanding or sympathy for someone still struggling with their language. Abe climbed a stairway of actors during the lullaby and lifted by them, he soared above the conflict arriving at a place of self-acceptance and comfort.

Because they were all trapped and were afraid of the possibility that terrorists had kidnapped them, the characters were confronted with the possibility of imminent death. As we developed the play, we decided that some of the characters would begin spontaneously bleeding, as if Ebola had suddenly been introduced into the sealed room. This heightened the fear of the immediate possibility of death. The character Sophie began bleeding first, and as the blood flowed down her leg it evoked the powerful image of menstrual blood. After her, each actor who began bleeding had to decide where it would come from. One actor decided to begin bleeding from her palms, referencing stigmata. The possibility of contamination further divided the captives as Phillip tried to keep himself separate from those who seemed to be infected. Other characters decided instead to reach out and clasp hands with those who were bleeding, in solidarity with them.

In a desperate attempt at some sort of legacy, each of the characters placed a bloody handprint on the "wall" of their prison as they made a final statement. The play was open ended, leaving audiences with the intriguing possibility that there was no single explanation for what had happened to the trapped young people. Rather, the experience had meant something different to each one of them.

Our larger soundscape consisted of both live music, musical sequences created by one of the students using the Garage Band program, and sound effects created live by the actors and recorded by our technical crew. Our student composer began work in March, but continued to revise his soundscapes right up until our July performance. It was the first time he had done such work and the process was arduous, fraught with both technical and musical difficulties. The end result included some very haunting sequences that opened and closed the show and set the emotional tone for what was to follow.

The play presented a formidable acting challenge because each of the ten actors was onstage for the entire seventy minutes of the play.

At no time could they break out of character, and this made their own personal relationships even more demanding. Probably due to the exhausting nature of the show we had one emotional breakdown in Edinburgh. One actor slipped out of the final rehearsal before our opening, went to her room and refused to come out. Several students took it in turns helping her through it. Everyone recognized that we were only as strong as our weakest member. Every member of the team had embraced the discipline of a rigorous schedule of rehearsals and shows. Each member of our company was integral to the team. If someone was careless and didn't support their fellow actor in a physical scene, it could result in injury. When one actor was late and missed the bus to the theatre for a show it affected us all. There was no replacement and we just had to hope that she would get there by herself, which she did.

My fellow chaperone was our professional set and costume designer and he asked each of the actors to help choose what their characters would wear. One of our students designed the lights and our team had to solve many technical problems together, including the realization that we would not be able to use any solid walls to create our prison space. We decided to define the "walls" of our playing area with light, but we had no exact knowledge of the number and quality of lighting instruments we would be able to access in Edinburgh. When we arrived in Edinburgh, we had just two hours for our technical rehearsal in the Church Hill Theatre. All of us were assigned different tasks, and I had to let go of any directorial control and just trust the students to do their jobs. Our student lighting designer immediately went to work with the theatre's resident electrician and recreated our new lighting design. The actors learned the backstage parameters from the resident stage manager and established where we could store our few props. Because there were no scene changes and no actors were ever off stage, our student stage manager was free to run the follow spot, and our sound operator adjusted our computer adaptors to U.K. electric outlets.

We used quite a few blood packs in the show, and everyone had to learn how to work with stage blood. It was our designer's recipe and he carefully prepared the packs for each show, but their placement and the subsequent cleaning of the used blood from the stage floor had to be meticulously done for each performance. We were required to leave the stage bare, clean, and dry for the next show's load in, which began

immediately after we vacated the space. So everyone was involved in cleaning up the stage floor, and collecting the props and costumes. Throughout the process of working on this show, the responsibility and initiative had to come from the students, just as it would have with any adult company bringing a new piece to the Fringe.

The students were also required to publicize our show, and actively engage in recruiting an audience, just like the professional performers at the Fringe. We had a performance time slot on one of the open stages on the Royal Mile. From there we advertised our show to the crowds of people that passed by. The students went out in groups of three or four, busking through the streets, handing out publicity cards, engaging with the masses of tourists from all over the world, and putting up posters around the city. One of our students took responsibility for creating a Facebook page and Twitter feeds for the show, and she "followed" certain Fringe publications so that our show would develop a profile within the larger Fringe conversation. She also created our show logo after incorporating suggestions from all of us, and we used her design for our poster and program.

Any professional theater experience includes reviews, and we were very lucky to have our performance reviewed by BroadwayBaby.com, one of the major Fringe publications (Hobbs). We received a four star rating out of a five star maximum. The review affirmed that not only had the process been a valuable learning experience for the students, the product we created together was exceptional. For the students, the review served as a validation of their work as serious artists in the world of adult professional theater.

Our experience could provide an alternative, collaborative model for students to work with professional theater artists on pieces that express students' concerns about their world to the larger community while learning high-level design, production, and presentation skills. For example, during the summer before Scotland was to vote on whether to leave the United Kingdom, a Scottish youth theater group performed an original piece at the Fringe expressing their opinions on the issue. Their show was deemed important enough to be reviewed by *The New York Times* (McElroy, 2014). Productions in professional spaces validate students' experiences in the larger, adult world and provide an outlet for them to communicate their concerns to the wider community outside their school. The in-school residencies that many professional theaters have developed are based on the arts integration

model, in which the art form is the subject of study and is engaged with as another way to connect to previously established curriculum content. Theater artists lead students in research, workshops, writing exercises, and performance of short scenes taken from content chosen by adults. Surveying the in-school residency programs from the websites of the Alley Theatre in Houston, the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, the Inside Broadway Company and Roundabout Theatre in New York, and the Chicago theaters with which Senn High School collaborates, it is clear these programs do not engage students in actually creating and producing plays as a part of their *in-school* curriculum. There is a difference between theater as an art form and theater as a learning tool. The artistic space is "a space of risk, uncertainty, chaos, and questioning." (Falconi, 2015, p. 161) The educational space is often more concerned with limits, and safe structures. Our experience with *Americans in Breshkistan* suggests that students are more than capable of entering the artistic space and collaborating with adult artists to create their own content, form their own company, and realize a theatrical production at a mature, professional level. A theater class designed to create and perform original work in a professional context teaches students discipline and offers authentic assessments built into every stage of the experience as students and teachers hold themselves accountable to adult standards of artistic excellence.

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Sonya Baehr teaches theater in a performing arts program which she created at Poly Prep School in Brooklyn, New York. She has taken theater students to Edinburgh, Hong Kong, France, and Cambodia. She has presented papers on curriculum at numerous conferences including the International Drama/Theatre and Education Association World Congresses in Paris, Hong Kong and Ottawa; at AATE conferences in Chicago, Lexington, KY, and Washington, D.C.; and at many New York University Theater Education Forums. She has published in numerous journals including IDEA's "2004 Dialogues" and AATE's journal, "Stage of the Art." She serves as Director of Projects

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Mapping the Field of Young Playwrights Programs in the United States

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ABSTRACT

The production of plays written by young people has been in practice at theatre companies and arts organizations in the United States for nearly forty years. However, while young playwrights programs have emerged across much of the country in the past decade, the field has not been adequately addressed in the literature. This paper addresses the scope and variety of young playwrights programming and compares the praxis of organizations engaged in the work.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last 35 years, opportunities for young artists aged 18 and under have grown considerably in the United States. These young playwrights programs seek original scripts written by experienced and novice youth writers for adjudication and potential production performed by amateur and professional actors in front of a local or national audiences. Additionally, arts organizations engaged in this

work have anthologized select student pieces. Scholars made note of the young playwrights field as programs emerged in the 1980s (Swortzell, 1983; Tanzin, 1983) and marked the importance of the developing field (McCaslin, 2006; Swortzell, 2000). Organizations like the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE) and Young Playwrights, Inc (YPI), have in the past produced online documents that encompassed the field, but these resources were limited by time and availability of information and an update was warranted.

Two years ago, I sought to literally map the field by creating an online resource that would readily provide information about and access to the variety of programs available to young playwrights across the United States. Beginning with a resource compiled for AATE, I conducted an internet search to gather details about the programs previously listed in addition to opportunities found through a Google Alert that gathered news about programs that included the search term: *young playwrights*. I contacted the administrators of these programs via email and asked them to verify or update the data via an online survey and the results were published in a Google map in April 2015. This map was updated one year later, and it is from this resource that I compiled the following information about how these programs define and carry out their work with young playwrights.

BACKGROUND

As American composer Stephen Sondheim tells the story, it began once upon a time, in the late 1970s, something "exhilarating" happened as he attended the theatre in London. The production was the annual Young Writers' Play Competition at the Royal Court Theatre, about which he had previously read and tried to create a similar program in the United States as president of the Dramatists Guild. That attempt failed so severely that Sondheim lost hope in the project. However, seeing the young playwrights in action at the Royal Court brought him back to the States with a "renewed vigor" to try again (Sondheim, n.d.). To ensure the success of the program, Sondheim hired Gerald Chapman, the leader of the festival at the Royal Court Theatre. Under Chapman's guidance, the National Young Playwrights Festival debuted in 1982 and surpassed the composer's expectations (Sondheim, 1983, p. vi-vii).

The Festival sought original scripts from students aged 18 and

younger from the New York City area, but received 732 scripts from young people in 35 states (Chapman, 1983, p. 1). Submissions doubled the following year (Chapman, 1986, p. 11). According to Chapman (1983), the festival plays were "produced at the highest possible professional standards" at Circle Repertory Company, "a theatre with a recognized national reputation" (p. 1). This involved pairing young playwrights with a professional playwright who mentored the student through a five month process of development. After an initial script consultation and series of revisions with the mentor, the young playwrights arrived in New York for a reading of the script by professional actors before an invited audience. After the reading, the young playwrights worked on revisions of their scripts until they were ready for production at the festival (Chapman, 1986, p. 12-18).

The National Young Playwrights Festival was a groundbreaking event as Chapman (1986) would later recall: "Never before in this country had the work of a child or teenager been staged with such professional experience" (p. 8). Chapman's (1983) rationale for this level of rigor was to match the depth of a child's natural "status of their creativity" (p. 6) in creating a play and to emphasize the impact of that act of creation on each young writer (p. 7). It is important to note that while Chapman's work would have a major impact on the field as many theatre companies looked to him for guidance in the development of their own young playwrights programs, his was not the first to produce plays written by American youth. The Marilyn Bianchi Kids' Playwriting Festival, produced by the Dobama Theatre in Cleveland, Ohio, predates Chapman by four years having been in operation since 1978 with a mission to "[encourage] kids to celebrate the fun and joy of live theatre" (Dobama Theatre, n.d.). Chapman similarly sought to capture the joy of theatre by introducing young people to playwriting via acting, which he recognized as being inherent in the ways that children played. He also saw the professional productions of the Young Playwrights Festival as "a clarion call to the theatre community" (1983, p. 7) meant to inspire them to take up the work of young writers with the same professionalism as afford to adult writers to provide children with a venue that both encourages their personal growth and creates a forum dedicated to their special desires and needs; "an alternative structure to children's theatre as a way of making the theatre real and alive for children, a place of their own" (p. 9). In addition, Chapman expressed that the encouragement of young artists could only benefit

the future life of the art (p. 10).

Chapman's philosophies about young playwrights' work and his productions done with the Guild prompted a number of regional theatres and artists within the United States to seek out his input in developing their own regional programs (Janney and Galbraith-Jones, 1986; Philadelphia Young Playwrights, n.d.). Within a few years of the first national Young Playwrights Festival, similar series sprouted in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, San Diego, Massachusetts, and New Jersey. Additionally during this time, the Guild's program was incorporated into a new play development company focused on student-written work named Young Playwrights, Inc. (YPI), which would produce the national competition for years to come.

Educational theatre scholars quickly took note of the success and impact of the program at Young Playwrights, Inc. In an article about the first festival, Tanzin (1983) echoes Chapman's claim by noting how:

> The Young Playwrights' Festival [is] designed, not only to help young playwrights in learning their craft, but to take them seriously. It is a way of saying that there are adults who believe in what young people have to say about their lives. [...] By giving young writers an opportunity to express their fears, concerns, fantasies and joys through theatre, we are enriching their lives as well as our own. As one adult playwright in the project said, 'I wish they had this program when I was a kid. (p. 11)

Swortzell (1983) also observed the success of the program remarking that:

> The majority demonstrated that these are genuine plays by true dramatists with an exciting range of subjects and important concerns. Their works are of interest to general audiences from Off-Broadway to the gang on the local street corner. We applaud Gerald Chapman and the Dramatists Guild for this splendid beginning and for proving the Young Playwrights Festival can happen here. (p. 26)

More than a decade later, Swortzell (2000) would return to the topic of the Young Playwrights Festival and consider its impact on theatre for young audiences by suggesting that plays written by children may offer

professional playwrights with examples of what young people would most like to see on stage (pp. 685-86). In the eighth edition of her seminal work, *Creative Drama in the Classroom and Beyond*, McCaslin (2006) lauds the growth of young playwrights programs and the recognition of children's writing as literature (pp. 270-71). Additionally, she suggests that, "It is too soon to tell whether or not this is a trend, but some unusual opportunities have been made available to both elementary and secondary school students and their teachers to learn more about this form of writing" (p. 270).

The growth of the field demonstrates that programs for young playwrights are more than a trend, but an established field within the larger educational theatre community. While data on the founding years of programs listed on the Young Playwrights Map are incomplete, it is estimated that a little more than half of these program were created in the past 15 years (DeVivo, 2015).[3] Early programs derived their structures and procedures from Chapman's model at YPI, but is that model exclusive to the field or have these newer programs developed other means? How do the script solicitation, adjudication, selection and performance processes of these programs compare with one another? How are youth engaged in the process of rehearsing a script? Is there a common definition for young playwrights programs across the United States? To better understand the field I first turned to existing online resources including a list of playwriting opportunities for high school students published by the AATE Playwriting Network on their website. The document, which is no longer available online, had not been updated for at least a decade.

Using the AATE document as a guide, I conducted an internet search for updated information about each listed program. I also created a Google Alert for news about any program that used the term: *young playwrights*. Connections to these programs were made via email and Twitter where the hashtag *#youngplaywrights* proved particularly useful in gathering data and interest. My plan was to publish a list of young playwrights programs, but after speaking with some of the student writers in the New Jersey Young Playwrights Festival, I realized that the information might be better used in a more interactive and visually-pleasing medium. Using Google Maps, I uploaded the details about each program for young writers: company

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[3] This is current as of September 2016.

name, program name, age and location restrictions for eligibility, submission deadline, performance publication deadlines, contact information, and a link to the program website. After months of searching and data entry, the first Young Playwrights Map went live in April of 2015. After the initial publication, I contacted each organization listed on the map and asked a program administrator to confirm or update the data provided. The map has been updated twice since it debuted: once in the fall of 2015, and again in April of 2016. At that time the map included 69 individual organizations offering playwriting programs for youth across 33 states.[4]

Using the April 2016 update of the map, I gathered information from the website of each listed program in an effort to survey the field. I took particular interest in discovering how the programs define the scope and goals of a young playwrights program, how scripts are created by or collected from young writers, the process of selecting plays for presentation or publication, and how those plays are publicly presented. What follows are brief summaries of my findings.

DEFINING A YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS PROGRAM

When creating the map, I found that the ways in which organizations approach the work created by young playwrights extend from the same tenets Chapman expressed, but with varying degrees of involvement by youth throughout the rehearsal and production processes. However, the definition of a young playwrights program, as framed by criteria I set forth when creating the map, includes any opportunity for youth ages 18 and younger to write and submit an original theatrical script for production and/or publication by an arts organization.[5] There is a rich history of playwriting in the classroom that requires further consideration (McCaslin, 2006, p. 270), but for the purpose of the map, which is a resource for young writers seeking opportunities, those classroom programs cannot be included here.

Theatre companies with young playwrights programs are more likely to produce the work through an education/outreach department than as part of the production season. However, there are four

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[4] Individual programs have been added through July 2016 as I have become aware of them; however, a formal update of all map data will not occur again until January 2017.
[5] Omitted from this definition are school- or classroom-based programs that are not affiliated with an outside organization.

companies dedicated to producing only youth-written work: Young Playwrights, Inc., Philadelphia Young Playwrights, Young Playwrights Theatre (Washington, DC), and Semicolon Theatre (New York). Semicolon Theatre is further differentiated as an organization founded and administered by two young people who created their own company after participating in the national festival produced by Young Playwrights, Inc. (Semicolon Theatre Company, n.d.).

SCRIPT SUBMISSIONS AND SELECTION

Competition-style adjudication of student written work is a hallmark of most young playwrights programs. Scripts received via an open call for submissions are judged by staff members and/or artists from these organizations. Most programs provide written feedback to playwrights whether or not the script is selected for presentation.

Most young playwrights programs use age range and geographic location limitations for submission. Age ranges vary widely with some programs focused on specific grade levels or groups, whereas, according to the theatres' websites, organizations like the Dobama Theatre, CenterStage, Florida Studio Theatre, and the Prescott Center for the Arts accept plays from students in grades Kindergarten through 12. The most recent call for submissions from the Playwrights Project (San Diego) calls for scripts from "Californians under the age of 19 as of June 1", though, it is unclear if there is a minimum age requirement (Playwrights Project, n.d.).

Organizations like ACT: A Contemporary Theatre (Seattle), Boston Playwrights' Theatre, and The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis hold a modified contest of plays from local schools that participated in the theatre's writing residencies (ACT: A Contemporary Theatre, n.d.; Boston Playwrights' Theatre, n.d.; Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, n.d.). Similarly, the Madison Young Playwrights Program run by Writers Theatre of New Jersey offers free after-school playwriting residencies to students in their local community schools (Writers Theatre, n.d.).[6]

Workshops and classes are offered by a number of organizations to help students generate ideas, learn playscript format, and further develop their stories. These programs can be offered as a courtesy, or as a class with a fee. There are a few organizations that require

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[6] While those plays are submitted to the statewide New Jersey Young Playwrights Festival, there are also in-school presentations produced by the theatre.

attendance at a workshop before a student can submit a play. The Coterie Theatre (Kansas City) requires students to apply for admittance into the Young Playwrights Roundtable where scripts are written and developed under the direction of theatre staff (Coterie Theatre, n.d.). Similar participation is required of playwrights who participate in the Young Playwrights Workshop at Young Playwrights Theatre and in the Youth Company (at MCC Theatre). The difference here is that Workshop and Company members perform the work created by their peers whereas at Coterie, the actors are professionals (MCC Theatre, n.d.; Young Playwrights Theatre, n.d.).

While most young playwrights programs solicit scripts from individual writers, new projects like Young Playwrights for Change, a partner program of TYA/USA and the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE) receives plays written by middle school students via member organizations from the United States and Canada. According to the program rules, member companies from AATE and TYA/USA, including any associated non-profit organizations, host a local playwriting competition for students in sixth through eighth grades and nominates one play for consideration in the national competition (TYA/USA Assitej, n.d.). This arrangement is unique to the prevailing model, but has roots in the early history of Young Playwrights, Inc. when independent regional programs like the New Jersey Young Playwrights Festival (NJYPF) had previously forwarded local scripts to YPI's national competition (NJ Teen Arts, 1985).[7] It is not clear how many other regional young playwrights programs may have forwarded scripts to YPI in the past; similarly, it is not clear how many do so now. However, the practice is reemerging. This method is also employed by Curious Theatre Company in Denver, Colorado which accepts up to six plays from partner organizations for the annual Curious New Voices National Collective. Playwrights accepted into the Collective spend one week in residence at Curious Theatre Company and participate in a series of workshops and discussions that are meant to spark insights into and revisions of the original script. Each play is given a staged reading by professional actors at the end of the week intensive (Curious Theatre Company, n.d.).

In 2014 and 2015, Philadelphia Young Playwrights was a partner

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[7] Forwarding NJYPF scripts to the national competition is only mentioned in the 1985 report. The reports from 1984 and 1986 do not mention this practice.

organization for the National Collective at Curious Theatre Company. In addition, Philadelphia Young Playwrights (PYP) conducted its own intensive workshop called the Paula Vogel Mentors Project, which ran for three seasons. Each year, five young playwrights are paired with professional playwrights who guide the young writers through the development of an original work over the course of a year. Public readings of the playwrights' works in progress are given at the midway point of the residency; a culminating reading of the finished work is then presented in June. In the first two seasons, young playwrights were selected from local schools. For 2016, PYP requested nominations of writers from other young playwrights programs within the region. The Paula Vogel Mentor Project is curated by Quiara Alegría Hudes, a Pulitzer Prize winning and Tony nominated playwright and alumna of the Philadelphia program. The Project completed its final season in 2016 (Philadelphia Young Playwrights, "Paula Vogel Mentors Project," n.d.). This year, PYP will conduct a new program in which selected young playwrights will work on a new play in-residence at the theatre. This program, which is similar in structure to the Vogel Mentors Project, is the first of its kind and will provide unprecedented long-term access to the resources and benefits of a professional theatre company (Philadelphia Young Playwrights, "Become a Resident Playwright!" n.d.).

DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Two common production elements are evident in the programs included on the Map. First, playwrights often receive some kind of mentorship prior to and/or during the rehearsal period. Frequently, young playwrights are paired with a theatre professional who prepares the writer for the rehearsal process. This may be a playwright, but the young writer may also be paired with a director or dramaturg, or, in some cases, a combination of the three. It is not clear from the information provided by young playwrights programs as to how often the young playwrights and mentors meet prior to rehearsal, nor how involved the playwrights may be during rehearsal. The Texas Young Playwrights Exchange at Alley Theatre in Houston specifically mentions that students will "develop their dramatic writing skills through online mentorship with a professional playwright" (Alley Theatre, n.d.). The details of online mentorship are unclear, but they are of interest as

the program at Alley Theatre is the only one to specifically mention this work being done digitally.

Second, plays written by young people are most often produced as readings or staged readings performed by professional actors. A few exceptions to this model include the youth companies previously discussed, as well as programs at Philadelphia Young Playwrights, Syracuse Stage, and Michigan State University's Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, each of which employ actors from affiliated collegiate theatre programs. Moreover, programs such as the Arkansas Young Playwrights Competition and Kitchen Dog Theater's Playwrights Under Process (PUP Fest) cast high school students.

Whether performed by students or professionals, the plays written by young playwrights are described by the producing organizations as readings or staged readings, in which scripts are prominently featured in the actors' hands during performance. Full-scale productions of young playwrights' works are rare. Only Florida Studio Theatre, The Blank Theatre Company (Los Angeles), and Pendragon Theatre (Lake Placid) mentioned full productions on their websites.

CONCLUSION

The proliferation of young playwrights programs across the United States over the last 35 years is evidence that Chapman's clarion call was resoundingly received. From the first young playwrights programs at Dobama Theatre and Young Playwrights, Inc. to the newly founded playwriting festival at the Theatre of Greater Lafayette (Indiana), the primary focus of a young playwrights program in the United States is the development of young writers' scripts through professional mentorship and public production. Each organization maintains an individual approach to soliciting, developing, and presenting these plays, however, the sense of importance about the work across the field adheres to Chapman's (1983) original goals for engaging this work. It can be easy to marginalize young writers because of their age, but placing young people into a creative process equitable to those experienced by professional playwrights emphasizes the value of their work and seeds the field for future development. These programs expose young people to the rigors of writing and developing a play while emphasizing the importance of the playwright within the future of theatre making.

Collecting, adjudicating, and publicly reading student-written plays requires a minimal amount of resources from an organization that seeks to engage youth and their families within the artform. This work is greatly eased by digital means, which I foresee bringing a greater amount of opportunities to young writers everywhere. This is particularly true when the definition of a young playwrights program is expanded to include opportunities for student writers within a school setting. In the past two years, I have spoken with an increased number of teachers and organizers who are interested in creating young playwrights programs within their classrooms, schools, and larger networks. These requests are particularly interesting when considering their timing coincides with the implementation of PARCC standardized testing in New Jersey public schools. I am left to wonder how these phenomenon might be linked and what these requests may mean for the future of standardized testing, if anything?

Looking away from schools and into the professional field, it would be beneficial to study how young playwrights programs have impacted our current and future existence. Google Alerts often bring me news of adult playwrights whose biographies list their past participation in a young playwrights program; however, it is not clear how prevalent this youth experience may be among today's professional playwrights. As such, a study of the frequency with which this occurs would be highly beneficial. Of equal interest are the potential connections between formative experiences in a young playwrights program and professional work in theatre for young audiences. That question is of particular interest in light of Chapman's (1983) idea that young playwrights programs may help create a "real and alive" place for children (p. 9), a concept that Swortzell (2000) echoes by stating that young writer's work may offer a glimpse into the kind of plays young audiences want to see on stage. In this light, it was surprising to see very few theatre for young audiences (TYA) companies engaged in young playwrights programs. Young Playwrights for Change marks a significant movement toward joining these two types of youth-driven programs. If more TYA companies would pick up the mantle of young playwrights work, we may then gain a better picture of how each impacts the other.

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