Constructivism in the Acting Classroom: A Comprehensive Approach to

Teaching Practical Aesthetics, Voice, and Movement

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation uses constructivist pedagogy to teach acting via Practical Aesthetics, a system of actor training created in the mid-1980s by David Mamet and his college acting students. Primarily taught at the Atlantic Theatre Acting School in New York City, Practical Aesthetics has been the focus of little academic research. The same lack of research regarding constructivist pedagogy exists in academic theatre scholarship. The author takes a step toward rectifying this situation.

Using an action research methodology, based on approximately thirteen years of teaching experience, the author suggests that Practical Aesthetics and his accompanying voice and movement exercises can be effective in training novice actors. The author melds theory and practice into the educational approach called Praxis to create specific detailed lesson plans which can be used to implement Practical Aesthetics. These lessons constitute primary research on this topic. Compatible voice and movement exercises are also included to provide a comprehensive semester length digest.

The first chapter is an introduction, the second outlines Practical Aesthetics, the third focuses on constructivism, the fourth discusses teaching acting using Constructivist Learning Design, the fifth provides narrative lessons that can be used in the classroom, and the closure provides a review as well as suggestions for further research. An intriguing point made in the closure is a call for studies that might determine Practical Aesthetics' applicability and usability in other fields such as law, business, politics, public speaking, and even non-profit work. Although the primary audience for this dissertation is secondary school and college acting instructors, any scholar studying acting theory or constructivist pedagogy may find value in its contents.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Leonard and Maryann Dobosiewicz, who made it possible for me to be

the person I am today; to my aunt Jeanette Ciesielski, a *true* symbol of perseverance;

and

to my cheerleaders over the years, Mrs. Barbara Farrelly, James McNab,

Leo Luberecki, Dr. Daniel Gerould, Dr. Robert B. Graves,

Dr. Jack C. Rang, Dr. Joyce Durham, and Dr. Patrick Gilvary.

You said I could do it!

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the mid-1990s, I began my career as a high school theatre instructor and director. At the same time I was the sole theatre instructor, albeit adjunct, at the local community college. I had just finished my Master's degree in theatre and felt I was ready to take on the responsibilities of both positions. I quickly realized, as I would guess all theatre generalists eventually do, that I was better at some parts of these jobs than others. Over the following years I worked to hone my skills in all areas of theatre instruction and production. The one area that provided the greatest challenge came from the students in my introductory acting classes. I am not talking about learning how to direct them via line readings or showing them where to stand; I am talking about really and truly guiding them to the point of becoming living, thinking, breathing, and reacting actors. I could run them through various learning activities and do every sort of standard character analysis, but what I saw in the classroom rarely transferred to the stage.

It was a distressing realization. I purchased book after book and attended meetings and conferences across the United States in hopes of finding out the secret to unlocking and developing the novice actor. In fact, my greatest hope was built on a single session led by famous adult and child acting teacher Bella Itkin.[1] The session, which was held in the late 1990s at an Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) Conference, was called something generic like "How to Teach Acting." I arrived early

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[1] Itkin "arrived in America from Russia in 1932, graduated from the Goodman School in 1943 and spent more than 50 years teaching there and at its successor, the Theatre School of DePaul University . . . She also served as artistic director of the Goodman Children's Theatre, which was for many Chicago kids in the 1950s and '60s their first exposure to high-quality live theater" (Williams, chicagoreader.com).

and sat with great anticipation as Itkin began the session. She said, "I have been teaching the 'unteachable' subject of acting for forty years." I sat there in shock; I was absolutely devastated. Itkin described several techniques but provided no complete answer. She did not use a system I could duplicate because her success was located within Bella Itkin herself. This "guru system" of acting instruction is effective, so the term is not pejorative. There just seems to be something special in individual acting instructors that resonates with acting students. I wondered if I needed to find that in myself.

My analytic mind eventually doubted this consideration. I just could not accept that only acting gurus can teach acting. I also did not believe that the key to an actor's success is some amorphous characteristic we call talent. Accidentally pairing a talented actor with an acting guru cannot be the only road to success. No. It seems more probable to me that an acting guru actually has a system; they just do not know how to articulate it or record it on paper. Current popular secondary school text books did not provide the answer either. Schanker and Ommanney's *The Stage and the School*; Taylor, Strickland, and Abel's *Theatre: Art in Action*; and Tanner's *Basic Drama Projects* provided a minimal amount of help. In addition, my ability to act was irrelevant to most of my students. I actually considered a career change because I was so frustrated.

In 2000, I decided to do a summer long intensive in New York City to see if I should use that talent and just become an actor. A friend of mine, who spent years performing on Broadway and is now chair of a university theatre department, suggested I investigate the Atlantic Theatre Acting School. She did not know a great deal about its program, but she heard that the faculty seemed to be interested in the systematic teaching

2

of acting. Atlantic's system of actor training, called *Practical Aesthetics*, was developed by David Mamet, William H. Macy, and a select number of Mamet's students from Goddard College in Vermont. I enrolled in the school.

My goal was to become a professional actor who uses the system, but something else happened because my instructors kept repeating the phrase: "Practical Aesthetics is easier to learn if you have never performed, or if you have never taken any acting classes." The teacher in me started thinking, "I'll bet my novice high school actors could learn this Practical Aesthetics system rather quickly. They would then have at their fingertips one concise, reliable, and systematic way of preparing a role and executing the performance of that role." My students at that time could complete classroom and rehearsal hall acting exercises, but they often failed to use what they learned from those exercises when they stepped on stage. This type of transfer is a major problem with novice actors. They can master theatre games, skillfully perform improvisations, and write novel length character analyses offstage, but that work fades from memory when they step on stage. I decided to keep two sets of notes during my Practical Aesthetics training at the Atlantic to address my current dilemmas: one set for Troy Dobosiewicz, the professional actor trying to improve his acting abilities, and the other set was for Troy Dobosiewicz, the high school and college acting instructor who would need to teach Practical Aesthetics.

I found myself grappling more with how to teach the system than how to use the system. Therefore, I kept track of the methods that seemed to work, modified others because I was familiar with young adults, and dismissed those not useful to the student in

3

me. I then returned to my teaching position in Northern Virginia where the call to teach was too strong. I decided to remain a full time teacher instead of becoming a professional actor, but I instituted Practical Aesthetics at the high school and college where I taught.

Since the fall of 2000, I have taught my modified system of Practical Aesthetics to both high school and college students in Northern Virginia, Northern Indiana, New York City, and Phoenix, Arizona. This system of actor training is unlike anything else I have experienced. Practical Aesthetics allows my students to excel as actors because classroom training easily transfers to the stage. My students also felt the difference and were amazed by their new found abilities. Ironically, I had no idea what was operating within Practical Aesthetics or my own teaching leading to success. I just knew it worked. It was not until a year after I began the PhD that I realized what my "teaching partnership" with Practical Aesthetics was actually doing. I was using a teaching style that complemented Practical Aesthetics. I was actually utilizing a *Constructivist* approach to the teaching of acting instead of the far too prevalent "banking concept of education" used in our schools today.

The "banking concept of education," a phrase coined by Paulo Freire in his landmark text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, is defined as follows:

> Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. . . . In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of

4

oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry. The teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence. The students, alienated like the slave in the Hegelian dialectic, accept their ignorance as justifying the teacher's existence - but, unlike the slave, they never discover that they educate the teacher. (58-59)

Constructivism is diametrically opposed to the banking concept of education. At its very heart, it requires the teacher and students to practice a give and take in the classroom. It is dialogue, not didacticism that makes Practical Aesthetics a valuable method of instruction - especially now when our schools need instructors who can teach critical thinking and not simply rote memorization. I did not force a constructivist approach onto the content of Practical Aesthetics; my pedagogy fit the system. In fact, only within the last few years at Arizona State University did I discover I was a progressive educator. I simply had a problem and found a creative solution by joining constructivist pedagogy with Practical Aesthetics. It worked so well that I decided to write my dissertation on this topic.

Unlike the few books available discussing Practical Aesthetics, this dissertation is not pure description, nor is it just for the actor to apply to his/her own work. This is a handbook for the instructor who has been searching for the same things I have, for the instructor who simply wishes to try something different in the classroom, for the actor who wishes to understand Practical Aesthetics in greater detail, and for the scholar interested in constructivist education and/or the art of acting. I constantly learn, add, and adapt my methods, but I am hopeful I have presented a theoretically sound system of

actor education that can "turn on that little light bulb" teachers always look for hovering over students' heads. In addition, I believe actors themselves can learn a great deal about the system that other texts simply do not provide. Because of this approach, my dissertation can be thought of as a presentation of *Theory*, which propels my teaching and practice, and *Praxis*, the melding of theory and practice to create a detailed system for training novice actors.

The second, third, and fourth chapters can be thought of as the *Theory* portion of my dissertation. In Chapter 2, I introduce Practical Aesthetics as an acting system by defining the system, offering a review of the literature currently available about Practical Aesthetics, and providing a descriptive analysis of the system itself. In Chapter 3, I discuss constructivism as both an epistemology and pedagogy. I also provide a review of the literature on constructivism and describe the theory itself. In Chapter 4, I look at the intersection between constructivism and Practical Aesthetics. In addition, I detail how actively using Practical Aesthetics and constructivist methods in the acting classroom can hopefully lead to successful teaching and learning.

The *Praxis* portion, Chapter 5, focuses on developing the three tools of the actor: mind, voice, and body. The first section of Chapter 5 is subtitled "Training the Mind to use Practical Aesthetics," and the second section of Chapter 5 is subtitled "Training the Voice and the Body to use Practical Aesthetics." These sections are further divided into individual lessons I have used in my classroom over the years. The lessons are presented as narratives, but each includes a constructivist analysis of the lesson itself. I have chosen

this approach so instructors can both theoretically and practically understand the lessons. This also makes it possible for the lessons to be utilized immediately in the classroom.

The last chapter of my dissertation is titled "Closure" because it contains my concluding remarks. The "Closure" is followed by appendices that contain a suggested course calendar for an acting class, constructivist teaching materials, and classroom handouts which include a performance rubric. These can be photocopied and used in the classroom. Of course, it is possible to skip directly to the *Praxis* section and implement Practical Aesthetics immediately, but I suggest reading the entire dissertation. Teachers can then utilize constructivism to frame their approach to teaching theatre while also developing new constructivist acting exercises.

I contend constructivism and Practical Aesthetics lend themselves well to fashioning an actor training system for beginning actors. When implemented using constructivist pedagogy, Practical Aesthetics allows teachers to create an integrated acting program, not a program made up of fragmented exercises that students often do not know how to integrate themselves. In addition, actors are able to transition from the rehearsal hall to the stage seamlessly due to Practical Aesthetics' transparent building block process

There are many acting instructors who are great actors, but they still have difficulty teaching others to do what they do on stage. Similarly, there are too many students who cannot fully understand why they are doing the acting exercises found in popular secondary school texts such as *The Stage and the School*, *Theatre: Art in Action*, and *Basic Drama Projects*; or popular college texts such as Hagen's *Respect for Acting*,

Cohen's *Acting One*, and Benedetti's *The Actor at Work*. I write this dissertation to help

with these problems. I attempt to put a clear, concise, and further distilled acting system,

revealed through the pedagogical methods constructivism brings to light, into the hands

of those who wish to use it.

CHAPTER 2

PRACTICAL AESTHETICS

In the early 1980s, David Mamet and several of his theatre students from Goddard College in Vermont wanted to develop a distinct system to train actors. Mamet wanted a trustworthy training system that could be easily learned and applied (Mamet, *Practical Handbook* x-xi). The system also needed to provide a clear and concise way to approach acting and directing. "Grounded philosophically in the tenets of the Greek philosopher Epictetus and psychologically in the theories of William James, Mamet developed what he later called Practical Aesthetics" (Atlantic Theatre Company).

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *practical* as "relating to practice or action, as opposed to speculation or theory . . . designating that area of a particular subject or discipline in which ideas or theories are tested or applied in practice." The *OED* defines *aesthetics* as "the distinctive underlying principles of a work of art or a genre" (oed.com). Therefore, Practical Aesthetics is an apt name for the system since the system calls for the methodical active application of a set of strategies by an actor to create and perform a role during the art of theatrical performance. Practical Aesthetics can provide a kind of "road map" for the actor from rehearsal to performance. By following its guidelines, the system systematically develops the skills of each actor at an individual level and pace so that each individual can create truthful moments on stage.

There are few sources outlining the Practical Aesthetics system. What seems to be the most compact description is an online article called *Practical Aesthetics - An Overview* by Mark Westerbrook (ezinarticles.com). This is a basic description and makes

the mistake of saying "learning Practical Aesthetics is easy," a point of view that does not

value the discipline and practice demanded for successful application of this technique

(ezinarticles.com). Similarly, another basic source on Practical Aesthetics is the chapter

on David Mamet found in Richard Brestoff's *The Great Acting Teachers and Their*

Methods, Vol. 2. Brestoff provides a limited biography about Mamet and writes about

Practical Aesthetics as if the reader was an actor in a class at the Atlantic Theatre Acting

School. This approach allows the reader to get a taste of what it might be like to be in the

classroom, but it does not facilitate a comprehensive analysis and documentation of the

system.

The most detailed source on Practical Aesthetics is Melissa Bruder, et al.'s *A*

Practical Handbook for the Actor, which has not been updated since its original

publication in 1986. That is problematic because changes have been made to the Practical

Aesthetics system since that time. In addition, Bruder's text is written by an actor for an

actor. This book attempts to teach the reader the system. As a novice, however, I did not

fully understand the book until after I trained at the Atlantic Theatre Acting School in

New York. That is problematic for the actor and the teacher who are unable to train at the

Atlantic or one of its subsidiaries.

That leaves two books available for anyone interested in learning the Practical

Aesthetics system: *Training of the American Actor* and *Handbook of Acting Techniques*

both edited by Arthur Bartow. Bartow was the artistic director of the drama department at

NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Interestingly, except for a new introductory section, the

books are the same; one was published in the United States and the second was published

in Great Britain. I was pleased to learn, however, that the chapter in each book devoted to Practical Aesthetics, "Practical Aesthetics: An Overview," was written by Robert Bella, my teacher at the Atlantic Theatre Acting School. He does an excellent job providing a full description of the system, but it is not enough to truly put it into practice or teach it to others. Bella's chapter is missing a method of instruction. In fact, that is the main reason I am writing this dissertation. I want this dissertation to become a book that can be used by acting teachers in the classroom and by students interested in learning a bit more about this technique.

There is a final book that examines the system differently. *Theatre as Life: Practical Wisdom Drawn from Great Acting Teachers, Actors, & Actresses* by Paul Marcus and his daughter Gabriela Marcus, talks about using acting techniques in everyday life. Paul Marcus is a psychologist and Gabriela Marcus is an actress. Essentially a self-help book, the authors devote several pages to critiquing David Mamet as a person before suggesting that Practical Aesthetics can be useful to the everyday person living his/her everyday life. However their practical application is not the focus of my work; I am interested in Practical Aesthetics for the theatre.

Currently, Practical Aesthetics is taught at the Atlantic Theatre Acting School which is part of the Atlantic Theatre, founded by David Mamet and William H. Macy in 1985. Theatre artists can train directly through the Atlantic Theatre Acting School or through a partnership between the Atlantic Theatre and New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. In addition, the Atlantic Theatre Acting School operates a branch in Los Angeles and another in Sydney, Australia. The existence of three branches of the

11

Atlantic and its partnership with New York University, speaks to the presence of Practical Aesthetics in today's theatrical world.

In a letter dated 21 July 1985, David Mamet wrote the Atlantic Theatre Acting Company and said, "Our company is founded not on talent, not on effect, but on discipline" (Personal Letter). Interestingly, the discipline he is referring to is the discipline espoused by the Stoic philosopher Epictetus. Epictetus' *Enchiridion* states: "Some things are in our control and others not. Things in our control are opinion, pursuit, desire, aversion, and, in a word, whatever are our own actions. Things not in our control are body, property, reputation, command, and, in one word, whatever are not our own actions" (1). Pursuit and desire could be interpreted as keywords for Mamet. Interpreting Epictetus, it is only possible to master Practical Aesthetics if one has the desire to pursue mastery through discipline. Epictetus continues:

> If you see an attractive person, you will find that self-restraint is the ability
>
> you have against your desire. If you are in pain, you will find fortitude. If
>
> you hear unpleasant language, you will find patience. And thus habituated,
>
> the appearances of things will not hurry you away along with them. (10)

Essentially, discipline can force an individual to develop habits that make it possible to face and overcome obstacles. If acting can be framed as continually overcoming obstacles, then actors must develop disciplined habits to perform effectively. The Practical Aesthetics system provides a system to develop these disciplined habits. But, success on stage is then only possible via personally understanding and habitually using the system. For my students, constructivism makes this possible.

Mamet also relies heavily on chapter IV, "Habit," from William James' *Principles of Psychology*. James believes habit to be a result of education via repetition and discipline (108). "Thus we notice after exercising our muscles or our brain in a new way, that we can do so no longer at that time; but after a day or two of rest, when we resume the discipline, our increase in skill not seldom surprises us" (110). James also believes that when learned, a habit changes the brain physiologically (109). "The most complex habits . . . are . . . nothing but concatenated discharges in the nerve-centers, due to the presence there of systems of reflex paths, so organized as to wake each other up successively" (108). By combining the theories of James and Epictetus, Mamet believes the disciplined learning and habituation of Practical Aesthetics can be the key to becoming a good actor. I believe the best way to learn Practical Aesthetics is through constructivist pedagogy. That is why I put the two together. Before I discuss this practice, however, it is important to examine the system.

The first part of the Practical Aesthetic process begins with what I will call Level I, Level II, and Level III Repetition. Although the basic concept of "repetition" was borrowed from Sanford Meisner, what follows is my interpretation and personal modification for the teaching of Mamet's Repetition exercises (Lahr 70). In Level I Repetition, actors are placed in pairs, told to focus on one another, and say the first thing they see. Chance determines who makes the first observation, but in Level I the performers can only say the first thing they see about the other performer's physical body. In addition, the statement must take the form: "You have . . .," "you are wearing . . .," "your hair is . . .," etc. It is also of utmost importance that the performers only verbalize

what can be identified. For example, one performer might say, "You have brown eyes." If the other performer does not notice something about his/her partner's physical body, he/she must repeat what the first performer said; however, it must be repeated in the form: "I have . . .," "I am wearing . . .," "My hair is . . .," etc. Therefore, he/she would respond, "I have brown eyes." The first performer would then repeat "You have brown eyes" or state another physical observation. Then the second performer would repeat, "I have brown eyes" or state a new physical observation about the first performer. The exercise allows the partners to use observation to make personal connections with one another, something all actors strive to do. This process can continue for as long as the performer or facilitator wishes. In rehearsal, if the actors are adept at this process, the facilitator will probably not need to guide them through it. If the actors are not adept, it is the job of the facilitator to keep the performers focused on the exercise. Once the performers become adept at Level I Repetition, they move to Level II repetition.

Level II Repetition requires the performers to look beyond the physical. Their observations may identify what appears to be a mental or emotional state. Observations might include: "You look nervous," "You seem angry," "You are happy," etc.. The repetition process would follow the same process discussed in Level I. The performers may also include Level I observations, but they must strive to get to Level II to create deeper personal connections. Again, if the actors are not adept at the process the facilitator must keep the performers focused on the exercise. The facilitator or teacher would judge whether the performers have mastered Level II before they are allowed to move to Level III.

Level III Repetition is the most challenging level for the performers. At Level III, performers must look beyond the physical, beyond the emotional, and make a still deeper connection. If we assume Level II Repetition requires the partners to identify emotional states, then Level III is asking the partners to identify the thought or thoughts behind those emotional states. "Thoughts" is so general a word in this case that I believe examples are best used to create a solid definition. For instance, the "thoughts" identified might be, "You are afraid you are screwing this up," "You want to stop," "You are angry at me," "You don't know what to say," "You dislike me," "You think you are better at this than I am," etc. Again, the facilitator would be the person who determines mastery of Level III Repetition. When mastered, the process must be practiced. The Atlantic Theatre Acting School suggests those using Practical Aesthetics should practice repetition for at least one hour per day. If rehearsing for a performance, repetition should be done outside rehearsal time for one hour per day.

Since Mamet believes that an actor must focus on the other person or persons on stage instead of himself/herself, the purpose of repetition is to establish a connection via a point of focus (*True and False* 111). The process also makes actors comfortable being honest and working with one another. Once focused and comfortable, Mamet believes the scene will stay "in the moment" (111). The actor, because of repetition, will be able to notice any changes in a fellow actor and modify his/her performance to stay "in the moment" with the other actor. In constructivist terms, actors are humans who know how to observe; they just need to develop or modify schema or schemata by increasing focus.

This assumption will be dealt with more completely to create better understanding, but Mamet's process of scene analysis must be profiled first.

The first step in scene analysis, after reading the play several times and breaking the play into scenes, is to determine "what the characters are literally doing" in each scene. Each performer can make his/her own decision about his/her own character, but I suggest they decide together. Deciding what the character is literally doing is often more difficult than it sounds because performers tend to over-analyze. It is essential that the performers avoid interpretation at this level. If necessary, the facilitator must insist that they "just look at the surface."

After a performer has determined what his/her character is literally doing, the next step is to determine what the character wants. This step is actually missing from Melissa Bruder's text, *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*, because it was developed later at the Atlantic; however, the step is essential for the system to work. Now, the "want" must involve the other character in some way. One cannot decide "the character wants to leave;" however, one can say "the character wants to get away from the other character." Remember, in this system an actor must focus on the other person not himself/herself. This distinction is important because it even has impact on the next level of analysis. Of course, the "want" must be clearly established before moving on to the next level of scene analysis.

Next, the performer must decide the character's "action." The term "action" is tricky and must be clearly defined according to Practical Aesthetics. "Action" does not mean simply doing something; it means "something that can be done."

The choice of actions can be tested against the following checklist of nine criteria:

1) It must be in line with the playwright's intentions.

2) It must not be an errand.

3) It must have a cap [a visible sign of completion].

4) It mustn't be emotionally or physically manipulative.

5) It mustn't predetermine an emotional state.

6) It must have its test in the other person.

7) It must be specific.

8) It must be physically capable of being done.

9) It must be fun. If the action changes, a new beat begins and a new analysis is performed. (Westerbrook)

According to the aforementioned checklist, some examples of actions are "to get someone to take a chance," "to get what is owed me," "to show someone who is boss," "to get someone to 'wake up and smell the coffee'," "to get someone to accept my special gift," or "to get someone to face the facts." Notice it is helpful to use the words "to get" or "to show" as prefixes to the actual "action." Providing this initial format allows the performer to get a better sense of what an "action" really is. Obviously the facilitator can guide a performer toward a logical "action" if the performer seems lost. It is important to remember that any change in "want" warrants a new "action." Therefore, the actors may have to play a series of "actions." This depends on the scene.

Once the "action" is chosen it is then the performer's task to determine his/her "as if." In Practical Aesthetics the "as if" literally means, "What is the action as if (or like) to

me?" In essence, the performer chooses a real life situation or an imaginary situation where he or she tried "to get someone to take a chance," "to get what was owed him/her," "to show someone who is boss," etc. A real life situation is helpful for student understanding, but the instructor should never draw upon traumatic experiences. If the performer chooses to use an "as if" he/she imagines to have taken place or wishes to take place, it must be treated as an actual event would be. I always suggest that novice performers first learning the system use an actual event because that builds a personal understanding of that specific "action" within the actor. This can facilitate the construction or modification of a mental plan/diagram, about that "action" that can be accessed when performing, but the teacher must exercise caution. He/she should not try to get a performer to use painful events for the "as if."

The facilitator's role becomes important in the system at this point. The facilitator can identify whether the chosen "actions" and "as ifs" work or fit the scene. The "actions" have to work and they must be appropriate to the scene. The "as if" chosen by an actor correlates directly to the intensity with which he/she pursues the "action." This can also be thought of as the stakes of the "action." Therefore, if the intensity is either too high or too low, the facilitator must intervene and question the "actions," "as if," and/or even the scene itself. The whole scene may have to be analyzed again, but the facilitator works with the actors to discover effective choices. It is essential that the facilitator does not tell the actors exactly what "action" to play. The actors must be able to construct their own personal "links" to the scene guided by the facilitator/instructor/director.

After choosing the "action" and the "as if," it is time for the performers to interact without using the text. Mamet calls this exercise "playing 'the as if game'" (Westerbrook). In the "as if game," the actors sit in a pair as though they were going to practice repetition. Instead of practicing repetition, the performers talk-out their "as ifs" to one another. Each performer places himself/herself into the "as if" situation based on the "action." Basically, each performer is conducting his/her own improvisation based on his/her own "as if." Each improvises the actual events of the "as if" which he/she has pulled from his/her own personal life. It is as though each is reliving that event from memory. The other actor always functions as a stand-in for the actual individual conjured from memory. The goal is for each performer to achieve his/her "action." The performers in the "as if" game are not to listen to each other. They must perform as though they have ear plugs. Each performer must try to get his/her "action" by reacting only to what he/she sees in the other person (now one sees the purpose of the repetition exercises - making a connection through observation).

A performer gets his/her "action" by using a series of what are called "tactics" that lead to the attainment of the "action" (Westerbrook). Based on what one performer sees in another, a "tactic" is used as a form of persuasion. Some obvious "tactics" might be flattery, bribery, anger, seduction, begging, bargaining, fear, etc.; however, "tactics" are not playing emotions. "Tactics" are to change when a performer needs a new way to try to achieve his/her "action." A "tactic" change is necessary when a performer literally sees that he/she is not moving toward the attainment of the "action." This stage in Practical Aesthetics is incredibly difficult and takes much practice. The facilitator must

guide the actors through this period of rehearsal. It is only after this step is mastered that

the actors are allowed to play the "as if" to get the "action" by using the actual text of the

play. This becomes clearer in application.

In order to fully understand Mamet's system, I will apply Practical Aesthetics to

an actual scene. One could apply the system to Mamet's own work, but then its general

applicability could be called into question. Given this problem, I've chosen to apply the

system to a short scene from a classic American play, *You Can't Take It With You!* by

Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman (as printed in Tanner), and the scene is between

Grandpa Vanderhof and Mr. Kirby:

Mr. Kirby: I beg your pardon, Mr. Vanderhof. I am a very happy man.

Grandpa: Are you?

Mr. Kirby: Certainly I am.

Grandpa: I don't think so. What do you think you get your indigestion from?

Happiness? No, sir. You get it because most of your time is spent in doing

things you don't want to do.

Mr. Kirby: I don't do anything I don't want to do.

Grandpa: Yes, you do. You said last night that at the end of a week in Wall

Street you're pretty near crazy. Why do you keep on doing it?

Mr. Kirby: Why do I keep on - why, that's my business. A man can't give up

his business.

Grandpa: Why not? You've got all the money you need. You can't take it

with you.

Mr. Kirby: That's a very easy thing to say, Mr. Vanderhof. But I have spent

my life building up my business.

Grandpa: And what's it got you? Same kind of mail every morning, same

kind of deals, same kind of meetings, same dinners at night, same indigestion.

Where does the fun come in? Don't you think there ought to be something more,

Mr. Kirby? You must have wanted more than that when you started out.

We haven't got too much time, you know - any of us.

Mr. Kirby: What do you expect me to do? Live the way you do? Do nothing?

Grandpa: Well, I have a lot of fun. Time enough for everything - read, talk,

visit the zoo now and then, practice my darts, even have time to notice when

spring comes around. Don't see anybody I don't want to, don't have six hours

of things I have to do every day before I get one hour to do what I like in -

and I haven't taken bicarbonate of soda in thirty-five years. What's the matter

with that? (489-490)

The first step in using Practical Aesthetics on this scene is to determine what the characters are literally doing and the second is to determine what each character wants. For clarity, I will temporarily limit my use of personal pronouns. In this scene Grandpa and Mr. Kirby are discussing their lives. That is all they are literally doing. As for their wants, Grandpa wants Mr. Kirby to see that Mr. Kirby is wasting his own life. Mr. Kirby wants Grandpa to understand Mr. Kirby is happy living the way Mr. Kirby is living. Mr. Kirby also wants Grandpa to know Grandpa's way of life is wrong. In other acting systems these "wants" might be called "objectives," and it would be with these

aforementioned "objectives" in mind that the actors would begin the scene. Mamet wants to go a step further in analysis to provide a concrete "action" for the actor instead of leaving him/her with what could be considered a more abstract "objective" (*True and False* 111).

The next steps in Practical Aesthetics are to determine each character's "action." It must be noted that there can be several correct "actions," and Mamet's interpretation of "action" is a bit different from Meisner's. For example, Grandpa could play "to get someone to see the silliness of the situation" or "to get someone to face the facts." Mr. Kirby could play "to show someone who's boss" or "to get someone to see things my way." The facilitator is again crucial at this point. Essentially, the facilitator must help the actors determine what "actions" are best for the scene and for the play. I can only offer possible "actions;" mine may not be the "actions" chosen by the actors performing the scene. Facilitators should remember they are constructing a way of acting based on personal experience and thus should never make decisions for the actors, but instead question and provide guidance in decision making. Ideally, this makes for a better performance, and functionally constructs knowledge as the system draws from within the actor while enhancing critical thinking skills.

After the "actions," actors choose their "as ifs." "As ifs" must be personal, but since this is a theoretical analysis I can only provide hypothetical "as ifs." For example, the person playing Grandpa may have been in a situation where he confronted a friend who kept trying on different shirts for a long awaited date. Or, maybe the actor confronted his sister who was hogging the bathroom. The person playing Mr. Kirby may

have been in a situation where he and a teacher were arguing over a grade, or maybe he

disagreed with a friend's vote for class president.

The only caution in choosing "as ifs" is to be sure the "as if" fits the situation. For

example, the scene would become too intense if the person playing Grandpa used an "as

if" that was based on the time he stopped his best friend from committing suicide. In

addition, the scene might not be intense enough if the person playing Mr. Kirby used an

"as if" that was based on the time he told his brother that he did not need to give back the

$1 he borrowed. On the other hand, the actor, or facilitator, might want to purposefully

suggest raising or lowering the intensity, or the stakes, to create a specific effect. The "as

if" could be modified to create absurdity, the "as if" could be changed to create comedy,

or the "as if" could even be altered to create hysteria. The only restriction is the 'as if'

should not recreate the exact situation taking place on stage; that is not necessary and can

cause an actor to replay emotions from the actual event. Other than that, the possibilities

are limitless. The "as if game" can easily be used as a way to test "actions" and "as ifs,"

too. The actors do not have to feel like they have to get it right the first time. Thinking

critically about "actions" and "as ifs" is essential in Practical Aesthetics; and making

mistakes in this system can actually be helpful for clarification. In addition, both are part

of the learning process.

What has yet to be discussed is how the actual text of a scene fits into this world

of repetition, analysis, "wants," "actions," and "as ifs." To begin an explanation, it is

necessary to repeat: *It is only after [the "as if game"] is mastered that the actors are*

allowed to play the "as if" to get the action by using the actual text of the play instead of

the improvisation originally used in the "as if game." Given this reminder, insertion of the actual text can best be explained by metaphor.

Although the boat/water analogy has been used before when discussing acting, I modify it here to fit my interpretation of Practical Aesthetics. Therefore, think of the text as a boat. The boat is solid and is not allowed to be physically altered. Think of the "as if game" as a boat launch. The boat launch is a ramp that provides momentum for the boat to enter a river. Think of the river as the pursuit of the "action," and think of the oars as "tactics." When launched, the boat slides into the river and no longer needs the launch. The boat uses the river to move forward. The oars are used to shift direction, speed up, slow down, avoid obstacles, and eventually help move the boat ashore. Using this analogy in reference to Practical Aesthetics, the "as if" gets the actor into the pursuit of the "action." The text rides the "action" in order to progress through the scene, and "tactics" control how the text is used to "get to the action" (which is on shore, but down river). Given the analogy, Practical Aesthetics seems relatively simple to learn; however, like learning how to navigate a boat in different rivers, it can take a long time to master.

CHAPTER 3

CONSTRUCTIVISM

Teaching Practical Aesthetics via constructivist pedagogy helps actors and

facilitators realize that it is a process of personal learning and habituation. It is not a

quick fix for bad acting. Therefore, it is important to look at constructivism before I apply

constructivist pedagogy to Practical Aesthetics.

With what seems to have been a boom in interest in the early 1990s,

constructivism has been on the minds and in the books of education and social science

scholars well into the new millennium. This flurry of interest has also caused a great deal

of confusion. When wading through the confusion, I have chosen five texts as scholarly

referents for my investigation. These specific texts helped me outline a spectrum of ideas

about constructivism from origin to pedagogical implementation.

The first and second, which both lie on one end of the intellectual spectrum,

examine the origins of constructivism as well as its psychological and epistemological

ramifications. The first of these, *Parallel Paths to Constructivism: Jean Piaget and Lev

Vygotsky* by Susan Pass, is about origins. The second, *Constructivism in Education:

Opinion and Second Opinions on Controversial Issues* edited by D. C. Phillips, is a

critically skeptical monograph about the theory of constructivism itself.[2] The third and

middle text on the spectrum, *Constructivism: Theory, Perspectives, and Practice* edited

by Catherine Twomey Fosnot, examines constructivism in theory and practice within the

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[2] *Constructivism in Education* is also the ninety-ninth yearbook of the National Society for the Study of
Education.

field of education.[3] On the opposite end of this intellectual spectrum lie two books that

look specifically at applying constructivism to pedagogy. The first, *Designing for

Learning: Six Elements in Constructivist Classrooms* by George W. Gagon, Jr. and

Michelle Collay, offers a road map for using constructivism in the classroom.[4] The

second, *Constructivist Methods for the Secondary Classroom* by Ina Clair Gabler and

Michael Schroeder, is a methods text for the pre-service teacher. I will be using several

other sources in this dissertation, but I call these five texts scholarly anchors because they

provide primary and critical information necessary for the novice to argue through

constructivism from its beginnings as a theory to its implementation. These texts support

constructivism as a well-reasoned epistemology that serves teachers well. Of course,

before I begin using constructivism to show how useful Practical Aesthetics can be for

the acting instructor I must define constructivism.

  Constructivism in simplest terms "is a theory that says that learning means

constructing and developing one's own knowledge; that we do this by actively

questioning, interpreting, problem solving, and creating; and that in-depth understanding

is one result of this learning" (Marlowe and Page 25). This relatively basic description

harkens back to the work of Piaget who is credited with creating the groundwork for

constructivism:

   According to Piaget, the starting point of a child's intellectual growth is his or her

   own action. As the child actively engages with the people and objects around her,

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[3] It was first published in 1995 by the Teachers College of Columbia University and later revised in 2005.
[4] Although Gagnon and Collay's *Constructivist Learning Design: Key Questions for Teaching to Standards* (2006) is partly an updated version of *Designing for Learning: Six Elements*, I prefer the earlier text for the purposes of this dissertation.

she begins to form mental constructs about what the world is like. . . It's the

child's own experimentation that leads her to this conclusion . . . the creation of a

'schema.' (Pycha, brainconnection.positscience.com)

For Piaget, a schema is

the basic building block of intelligent behavior - a way of organizing knowledge.

Indeed, it is useful to think of schemas as 'units' of knowledge, each relating to

one aspect of the world, including objects, actions and abstract (i.e., theoretical)

concepts. A schema can be defined as a set of linked mental representations of the

world, which we use both to understand and to respond to situations. The

assumption is that we store these mental representations and apply them when

needed. (McLeod, simplypsychology.org)

A human references recognizable schema (singular) or schemata (plural) in order to work

toward comprehending all experiences. This "schema theory," the systematic application

of schema based on Piaget's work but developed by Richard C. Anderson, suggests that a

new experience is compared to existing schemata to see if there is a "match." If no match

is found, a human accesses different schema that helps better understand the experience.

The new experience might then modify that existing schema accordingly, or a new

schema may have to be created based on the new experience ("The Notion of Schemata

and the Educational Enterprise" 415-430). Humans are regularly constructing, destroying,

modifying, supplementing, adding, subtracting, forming, and reprocessing schema. We

learn by personally constructing or reconstructing for understanding. ("The Notion of

Schemata and the Educational Enterprise" 415-430).

27

This means there is no objective truth sitting out there in front of us that all of us learn. This is the core tenet of constructivism, and it is how I understand and use the term. Humans construct their personal truths through schema formation and modification; however, social interaction plays a vital part in constructivism. For example, at the most fundamental level, "Lev Vygotky and contemporary social psychologist Kenneth Gergen have stressed the role played by language in shaping the individual's construction of knowledge" (Phillips 11). This brings to mind scholars such as Althusser, Lakoff and Johnson, Chomsky, Austin, and a host of others whose theories would be considered part of this societal influence on schema construction.

If we accept Positivist models that assert there are objective truths we can all know and share, it would be easy to reconcile the goals of our current education system. Teaching only this approach, we could just continue the practice of having our teachers teach *at* our students, while believing that students digest all knowledge they are given. Of course, the issue with this plan is we know there are problems with student digestion - if you will excuse the biological metaphor.

I urge educators to consider constructivism to be an epistemology for the sake of improving education. By understanding constructivism as an epistemology, or way of knowing, one can understand it as a learning theory. We can then teach according to that theory. Although cognitive science is not yet at the point of being able to scan the brain to determine how knowledge is constructed, we do know that individuals learn differently. If we assume schema formation to be individual and based on social interaction, we can tailor education to the individual instead of to the overall population.

28

According to Kenneth R. Howe and Jason Berv in their article "Constructing Constructivism, Epistemological and Pedagogical": "In epistemological constructivism, truth and knowledge are established holistically and tentatively, and are not compartmentalized into language/mind, the world, and values. There is no such thing as knowledge *uncontaminated* by any particular system of human purposes, beliefs, values, and activities" (Phillips 30). This understanding has great ramifications for the education system because it calls for a fundamental rethinking about how we understand, approach, and teach individual students in our classrooms. There are particularly germane points about constructivist learning theory and constructivist pedagogy for the teacher to consider - points I have already integrated into my teaching and promote via this dissertation:

> Constructivist learning theory has two basic premises: (1) learning takes as its starting point the knowledge, attitudes, and interests students bring to the learning situation, and (2) learning results from the interaction between these characteristics and experience in such a way that learners *construct* their own understanding, from the inside, as it were. Constructivist pedagogy . . . incorporates two premises that parallel those of constructivist learning theory: (1) instruction must take as its starting point the knowledge, attitudes, and interests students bring to the learning situation, and (2) instruction must be designed so as to provide experiences that effectively interact with these characteristics of students so that they may *construct* their own understanding. (30)

By adopting such a theoretical model teachers must treat "learning as an interpretive, recursive, nonlinear building process by active learners interacting with the surround - the physical and social world" (Fosnot 34). Practical Aesthetics is successful because it relies on this process. Practical Aesthetics requires individuals to make individual connections within the process of acting. They must look inside instead of observing the outside to create a role on stage. In her book *Signs of Change: New Directions in Theatre Education*, Joan Lazarus calls this constructivist methodology "learner center practice" and considers it a best practice in theatre education (56-62). I absolutely believe this is true. Therefore, I apply constructivist pedagogical methods to the teaching of Practical Aesthetics to provide other teachers with an example of best practices in the teaching of acting.

CHAPTER 4

TEACHING ACTING USING CONSTRUCTIVIST LEARNING DESIGN

At the end of their article, "Constructivism: A Psychological Theory of

Learning," Catherine Twomey Fosnot and Randall Steward Perry issue a challenge to

educators. They state, "The challenge for educators is to determine what this new

paradigm (constructivism) brings to the practice of teaching" (34). In *Designing for*

Learning: Six Elements in Constructivist Classrooms, George W. Gagnon, Jr. and

Michelle Collay answer this challenge: "Gagnon and Collay's CLD [Constructivist

Learning Design] aims to present teachers with a constructivist perspective on how to

arrange classroom events for student learning . . . . [They] point out that it is better to be a

guide on the side than a sage on the stage" (Schmuck x). Therefore, the first part of this

chapter examines the base "constructivist key" to Practical Aesthetics; the second part of

this chapter looks at why teaching Practical Aesthetics according to Constructivist

Learning Design is beneficial to student learning; and the third section sets the stage for

the Praxis portion of this dissertation which capitalizes on constructivist techniques in the

acting classroom.

In his rephrasing of the "Serenity Prayer" Robert Bella, my own acting teacher,

says the actor must "be brave enough to accept those things over which you have little or

no control. Apply your will to change those things you can control. [and] Develop the

common sense required to distinguish one from the other" (*Training of the American*

Actor 229). Young actors have difficulty with this. They often worry about things like

"do I look silly" or "are people making fun of me." This is the wrong choice of focus. By

focusing on what one can control, a schema forms around things that do not pull focus away from the actor in the art of performance. For example, Practical Aesthetics teaches actors to focus only on the other actor in a scene. By learning to focus on the other actor and continuing to practice this focus when in rehearsal and on stage, the schema "where to focus" leads to habitual behavior on "where to focus." In fact, this link between individual schema formations and habituation is the "constructivist key" to Practical Aesthetics. Although Practical Aesthetics is a regimented system, it teaches an individual actor how to modify and/or create his/her own acting schema/schemata based on very personal understandings of the elements of the system. It allows acting students to eventually build a single giant personal schema or a set of tightly linked schema about how to act that is/are immediately accessible in rehearsal or on stage. Accessing the schema/schemata tells an actor how to act. The more a personal way of acting is practiced, the easier it becomes; it becomes habit. A deliberate habitual activity like knowing how to act can occur by accident, but deliberately learning how to act first requires schema formation. Constructivist pedagogy can facilitate this formation.

In fact, one can use George Gagnon and Michelle Colley's Constructivist Learning Design to facilitate the formation of a student's acting schema via Practical Aesthetics. In order for a lesson to be constructivist, however, each of the elements in Constructivist Learning Design must be present. "CLD is composed of six basic parts flowing back and forth into one another in the actual operation of classroom learning: situation, groupings, bridge, questions, exhibit, and reflections" (Schmuck xi). I chose CLD as a model of constructivist pedagogy for ease of application in the classroom.

32

Therefore, I will introduce each of these terms individually, define them, and provide examples of how Practical Aesthetics is taught using CLD. CLD is present in all the lessons I provide in the Praxis section of this dissertation, but I will focus on examples from "Lesson M5 - 'Analyzing Assigned Scenes'" so the reader will know what to expect in the Praxis section of this dissertation.[5]

One key thing to remember is that some of the elements of Constructivist Learning Design may be similar to elements found in other pedagogical methods. Just because similarities exist does not invalidate the benefits of the total methodology. After all, the method must be able to be used in our existing schools. Furthermore, a totally and completely constructivist lesson would require an acting teacher to walk into the classroom daily and say, "What will we explore about acting today?" That method of instruction is obviously not possible in our present education system, nor is it prudent. The important point is that an effective constructivist lesson provides *all* six elements of the CLD. If all elements are present, the lesson can reap the benefits of constructivist pedagogy: students hopefully would develop individual and easily accessible schematic maps of what it is to be an actor. Each student could then access his/her schema effectively in rehearsal and performance and function as a skilled actor. Thus, transfer between what is taught in class and what the student uses on stage would seamlessly take place. It should follow that the student provides an effective theatrical performance. For any of this to take place, however, I contend that a lesson must contain each of the six

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[5] Please refer to the lesson narrative of Lesson M5 - 'Analyzing Assigned Scenes' if necessary.

parts of Gagnon and Collay's Constructivist Learning Design. If the six parts are present, the lesson can be called constructivist and achieve the goals I have already mentioned.

The first element of Constructivist Learning Design is *situation*. Situation means a lesson must contain a clearly articulated and easily identifiable classroom endeavor that possesses several characteristics. First, it must serve "a specific purpose" that both the teacher and students can easily identify (Gagnon and Collay, Designing 18). The teacher must share what is expected as part of the lesson, and the students must be able to understand what is expected and even repeat it back to the teacher if necessary. For example, in "Lesson M5 - 'Analyzing Assigned Scenes'," the students are learning how to analyze a scene they will soon perform. Second, it must provide "an open-ended task to accomplish" (19). A task is open-ended when it requires more than a simple right or wrong answer. In "Lesson M5 - 'Analyzing Assigned Scenes'" the students must complete an analysis sheet that identifies what their character is ultimately attempting to achieve on stage. The person playing the character must make this decision. He/she can use a sheet of examples as a guide and can discuss options with a partner, but the decision is ultimately his/hers. Third, it must require focus which "compels interest by challenging students" (20). This is achieved by making sure each student contemplates what is to be achieved. The students cannot simply shout out an answer or write anything down. In "Lesson M5 - 'Analyzing Assigned Scenes'," the students will be playing a character in the scene. This makes the stakes of the exercise high enough for the students to accomplish. Fourth, the "situation is developmentally appropriate for most students" (21). This means students in the classroom must be able to achieve an answer. If the task is

impossible, it is inappropriate. If it is too simple, the students are not engaged in deep thought. In "Lesson M5 - 'Analyzing Assigned Scenes'" secondary school and college students are capable of deciding what their character is trying to achieve on stage. They should be able to provide an answer after thinking about what is happening in the scene. Fifth, "a situation connects student learning to real-world experience" (21). It connects, in some way, what is happening in the classroom to what the students are familiar with in their lives. In "Lesson M5 - 'Analyzing Assigned Scenes'," a student actor decides what his/her character is trying to achieve on stage by considering what that "action" is like to him/her personally. This requires students to link abstract thought to what they have done in the past or to what they fantasize about doing. In fact, the final step in the analysis process literally asks "what the character's 'action' is 'as if' to me."

The second element of Constructivist Learning Design is *groupings*. Simply speaking, the teacher must purposely choose groups to fit an activity. This can mean students may work together as a whole class, in pairs, in groups of four, etc. but the groupings must be deliberate to achieve a specific goal. "The basic principle for grouping is that students work together to construct shared meaning" (38). If a teacher only works with the whole class all the time, he/she has not made a truly thoughtful grouping decision where students can work together to make discoveries. Therefore, in "Lesson M5 - 'Analyzing Assigned Scenes'," students are deliberately placed in pairs. They will eventually perform their scene as a pair, but there is also another reason. Sitting alone in a vacuum provides no check on knowledge construction. In addition, if we assume knowledge construction is social, as constructivist theory argues, knowledge construction

can best occur when the two students performing the scene together are able to discover what their characters are trying to achieve *together*. In the case of performing a scene, it also seems logical that knowledge about the interaction of two people in an actual theatrical scene is better created/understood when the two people playing those characters can provide feedback to one another.

The third element is *bridge*. It should be likened to an actual structural bridge that runs from one point to the next. In CLD, a bridge connects "prior knowledge with new learning to make both more meaningful" (53). In "Lesson M5 - 'Analyzing Assigned Scenes'," a scene from the film *Toy Story* is used to connect the knowledge students already have to the analysis process. My students at Arizona State University suggested *Toy Story* as a comparison because they were all familiar with it. If *Toy Story* is unfamiliar, the instructor can use any film all students know, or multiple films, to make sure all students have a bridge from old knowledge to new. Understanding of the film and the analysis process can then take place.

Using a bridge also "evens the playing field so that those who always have the right answer no longer dominate the public domain" (53). Students have all seen movies, so they can be used to connect the students to information being constructed. In addition, all students are then involved in learning the analysis process because using a bridge can create "community between students" as it fosters collaboration (52). Often times students will help one another remember the details of scenes and also help each other make connections. This process also "creates a shared understanding and vocabulary" that can be referenced by the teacher and/or students in the future (53). The bridge also

"gathers information about what each student knows" (53). The teacher can then determine what needs to be elaborated upon, or what information is easily understood. Students also have the ability to continually reference this example in the future when analyzing scenes, since the scene from *Toy Story* is used as a reference for understanding during the actual scene analysis process. In constructivist terms, the actors have immediate and personal access to existing schema which they can access, reference, and/or modify as they learn how to act during both rehearsal and performance.

The fourth element is *questions*. These questions are placed in four categories: "guiding questions," "anticipated questions," "clarifying questions," and "integrating questions" (Gagnon and Collay, *Designing* 66-67). These types of questions are peppered throughout the various sections of the lessons included in this dissertation. Sometimes the questions appear in the lessons, and other times they do not because it is difficult to work with questions that have yet to be asked. That is why I often say in a lesson: "I will ask if there are any questions," "I will field any student questions," or "I would ask if the students understand." The names and descriptions of these questions are included; however, because instructors need to be prepared to work with these types of questions when necessary.

Guiding questions are asked by the teacher to understand what the students currently know and help them assimilate new knowledge via schema creation/modification. They also can "create opportunities for student thinking" by being "broad enough to have multiple answers or several ways to produce an answer" (66). This leads to discussion which promotes social interaction and knowledge construction.

In addition, guiding questions can "engage or intrigue the students in the answers" because they are based in a familiar bridge that students want to talk about (66). They can also function like a puzzle students want to complete. For example, in "Lesson M5 - 'Analyzing Assigned Scenes'" the first questions I ask when examining the *Toy Story* bridge scene are "What is Woody literally doing?" and "What does Woody want?" These are also the two questions students will always ask when analyzing their scenes using Practical Aesthetics; however, the character name in the questions will change. The question about a familiar film piques student interest and hopefully coaxes them into wanting to come up with an answer. It is always fascinating when students in my class discover that they share a memory. They like to discuss it. The instructor can use that activity to guide the students into the same type of process using a scene they will perform. Once student interest is piqued, it is hoped that they will always be interested in answering guiding questions such as these present in the various steps of scene analysis.

Anticipated questions are a bit different. "Anticipated questions can help [the instructor] imagine how students will try to accomplish the task" and should be used to help identify "student misconceptions" before they take place (67). These types of questions attempt to foresee what students find confusing in a specific lesson and answer them before they are raised. In "Lesson M5 - 'Analyzing Assigned Scenes,'" this question is often raised: "I do not understand why Woody wants Buzz to realize he is a toy and not a spaceman?" I know this from past experience; however, an instructor teaching a lesson for the first time may not be able to anticipate this. That is fine at this

point. Nevertheless, the instructor can try to picture himself/herself in the student's shoes and think of what questions students may pose.

Clarifying questions are paired with anticipated questions because they are based on what questions the students have asked. When a student asks a question, the teacher must pose clarifying questions which should "not imply the answers," but "show an understanding of student thinking and probe it, [and] gently challenge misconceptions and extend thinking" (67). If in "Lesson M5 - 'Analyzing Assigned Scenes'" a student raises the anticipated question, "I do not understand why Woody wants Buzz to realize he is a toy and not a spaceman?", the teacher must use questions to discover the problem in understanding and settle the student's confusion. For example, a clarifying question in this instance might be, "Who is Andy's favorite before Buzz arrives?" The student might answer "Woody." Then the teacher could ask another clarifying question, "If Buzz is actually a spaceman, could that change the way Andy thinks about Buzz?" The student might answer, "Well, since Buzz is a spaceman he has lights and lasers and stuff which might make Andy like him." The teacher could then ask, "What would happen if Andy really liked those lights and lasers and thought Buzz was a spaceman?" The student might respond, "Oh, I see. If Andy thinks Buzz is a spaceman he might like him better than Woody." The teacher can then answer, "Right. So, what does Woody want to do to prevent this?" The student might then answer, "Woody wants Buzz to realize he is just a toy. That way Woody can remain Andy's favorite." Every time teachers sense confusion in any lesson they should raise appropriate questions to reinforce student comprehension. This is the kind of teaching that is absent in "banking models" of education where

teachers simply lecture with no regard for understanding. I often say a lesson is problematic if a teacher is able to "teach" the exact same lesson to an empty room that he/she would teach to a room containing a group of students.

Finally, *integrating* questions can come into play right before the students present their work in some way. "Integrating questions should serve as a dipstick or quick check on when to present group thinking" (67). This happens in "Lesson M5 - 'Analyzing Assigned Scenes'" when I say, "As I said at the beginning of class, I will visit each pair and check-in with your progress." When checking in with each group I could ask how the analysis process is coming along. I could ask if the pair has any questions about their particular scene. I could even help them connect the example from *Toy Story* to their work together. At this point I will not offer specific questions because they would vary group to group. The main thing to understand is that integrating questions are the instructor's final checks on understanding before a group is asked to present their work.

The bottom line about questions is this: constructivist instructors and those applying Constructivist Learning Design *must use them*. Questions are required for the instructor to enter into a dialogue with his/her students. That dialogue is what makes Constructivist Learning Design and constructivist pedagogy different, appealing, and effective. Dialogue fosters critical thinking, and critical thinking is necessary for more advanced learning and understanding. Learning is halted at a basic knowledge level if dialogue does not take place. For example, "banking model" lessons do not ask questions or provide time for questions. "Banking model lessons" simply present information as so called facts "owned" by the instructor. Students' knowledge, opinions, and questions are

not considered because the students are thought of as "inferior" to the instructor. Ignoring what the students know, what they think, and what questions they have reduces teaching to a monologue. A monologue is not an example of effective teaching because there is no way to know what students have learned. A test can be a check on knowledge, but open dialogue before a test allows a teacher to make sure there is greater student understanding. This greater understanding might also lead to higher test scores, if the constructivist instructor chooses to use testing as a form of evaluation. Nevertheless, constructivist methods place the student in the center of the learning episode (i.e., lesson) and help them form individual constructs of knowledge (i.e., schema). Students are not fighting to consume the so called "facts" the "banking model" instructor already possesses.

The fifth element of Constructivist Learning Design is *exhibit*. In an exhibit, the student groups present "the artifacts they have generated to document their accomplishment of a task" during a lesson (84). This public presentation both clarifies and solidifies student responses because each group must explain their responses/answers to the class as a whole. Teachers and other students may also ask questions to understand what the group has done. An exhibit has two results for teachers and two results for students that do not take place in a "banking model" classroom. Students can compare each group's work to their own in order to check for appropriate congruency as well as appropriate originality. Not only does this provide a social and pedagogical check on their work, it clarifies their own decisions. Instructors can immediately "determine what learning has taken place" and check that "student explanations of thinking [fulfill] . . .

41

state or national standards" (85). In "Lesson M5 - 'Analyzing Assigned Scenes',"

students share their scene analyses with the rest of the class. It important to stress that

during this time instructors should determine learning and guide it appropriately if

necessary. I did note early on in this dissertation that I was not going to align my

Practical Aesthetics lessons with state or national standards, but I am confident they

would fulfill any standards dealing with the teaching of acting. If gaps exist, teaching

professionals can modify the exercises in appropriate ways to fit those standards. This

better guarantees standards achievement, and also allows teachers to check for learning.

The sixth element is *reflections*. A reflection is a final review of what has taken

place in the classroom during a specific lesson. Instead of making individual comments

about scenes, students are now asked to synthesize what they have learned about the topic

overall. The instructor helps solidify this understanding by reviewing and linking

elements of the CLD. The students are presented with a full picture of the lesson through

the teacher's review and connection of the situation, groups, bridge, task, and exhibit.

The reflection must also include asking for any final questions and providing a preview

of the next lesson or lessons." For example, in "Lesson M5 - 'Analyzing Assigned

Scenes'," I "hold a quick overall discussion about what we have done and what this

lesson has taught us about acting." I also ask for any final questions and "mention what

we will do in our next class." Therefore, students will hopefully leave the classroom with

an understanding of the lesson, knowledge of how it fits in the course, and see how it is

connected to their previous knowledge. According to constructivist theory, the students'

existing schemata have been modified. In addition, connecting this lesson to the next

provides a lesson through line. Students are able to see why we did what we did in this class, where that will lead us, and why any of it matters. In Gagnon and Colley's words, reflection allows instructors to "connect the learning episode to big ideas and address common misconceptions" (99). None of this takes place in a "banking model" where teachers teach from bell to bell. A reflection gives students the opportunity to synthesize and can avoid students leaving confused or filled with unanswered questions.

I have presented a description of Practical Aesthetics, an overview of constructivism, and a basic analysis of the elements of Constructivist Learning Design present in each of the acting lessons that will soon follow. Left with promising theoretical models such as constructivism, scholars and practitioners can only experiment for success. In this case, pairing Practical Aesthetics with Constructivist Learning Design has proven beneficial for analysis and implementation. Application of theory is also helpful in hypothesizing about best practices in teaching and learning. It allows us to be better informed and better trained facilitators even if a theory cannot yet (or ever) be supported empirically. Incoherent systems, no system at all, or classes packed with unrelated lessons that do not take advantage of schematic understanding of the world make this type of conversation difficult. Practical Aesthetics and CLD offer a solution. The research I have provided and my own personal-practical knowledge indicate that the teaching of Practical Aesthetics acting via Constructivist Learning Design makes it a viable and beneficial option for training future actors.

CHAPTER 5

PRAXIS: THEORY IN ACTION

I have chosen to title this chapter of my dissertation *Praxis* for a very specific

reason. This section exemplifies what Philip Taylor, Professor of Educational Theatre at

New York University, notes in his book *The Drama Classroom: Action, Reflection,*

Transformation as the blending of theory and practice:

> For many years now, the word 'practice' has suggested something quite different
>
> from theory. Practice connoted the doing, the active, the process. Theory
>
> connoted the not-doing, the thinking about, the product. Unfortunately such
>
> words, theory and practice, led to unhealthy divisions between those who thought
>
> or wrote about drama compared with those who did and practised drama. The
>
> thinkers couldn't practise, and the practitioners weren't thinkers, or so the
>
> argument went. The word 'praxis', though, brings these two aspects of theory and
>
> practice together, seeing both as a part of a complex dynamic encounter. (5)

I wish to treat the second section of my dissertation as typifying this "dynamic

encounter." It is also only through the use of constructivist theory that I am able to

verbalize what learning takes place in my acting classroom. Therefore, I will rely heavily

on the constructivist elements outlined by Gagnon and Collay in *Designing for Learning*

to build specific learning episodes using Practical Aesthetics. This melding of theory and

practice in these learning episodes presented as lesson plans constitutes the "dynamic

encounter" that is Praxis.

It is important to note that not every element mentioned by Gagnon and Collay in *Designing for Learning* will be used for every lesson. That would make lesson preparation unwieldy. What Gagnon and Collay have done is provide a detailed description of constructivist teaching. They have not created a "fill-in-the-blank" lesson planning system for all teachers to use, although they do introduce a template I will utilize. In their more recent book *Constructivist Learning Design: Key Questions for Teaching to Standards*, Gagnon and Collay have created a "workbook like approach" to lesson planning in the constructivist style. This text, *Constructivist Learning Design: Key Questions for Teaching to Standards*, does an effective job providing a constructivist lesson blueprint and sufficient examples so a teacher can process constructivism and create lessons that hold true to constructivist pedagogy. As a scholar, I truly appreciate the depth with which these writers explain constructivism and turn it into a useable pedagogy. As a teacher, however, I find these texts overwhelming - so overwhelming that, if I were a classroom teacher interested in constructivism, I might stop reading both of them and go back to my own methods. Nevertheless, I offer the following solution.

A theatre teacher is always so incredibly busy that I think a more direct and simple approach to using constructivism is necessary. The trouble is that other constructivist templates which are simple and direct do not provide enough guidance, detail, or appropriate terminology. For example, Gabler and Schroeder's *Constructivist Methods for the Secondary Classroom: Engaged Minds* provides a template that lists "Rationale," "Performance Objective," "Materials," "Student Aim," "Hook," "Development," and "Performance-based Examination of" (74). To me, these

components are too similar to any standard lesson plan. This is problematic because I

want a template that keeps me in the constructivist mindset while I teach. The same

problem occurs if you conduct an Internet search for "Constructivist Lesson Plan" or

"Constructivist Lesson Template." Julie Binnicker's description of constructivist

pedagogy in comparison to traditional pedagogy, which one can link to from the Arizona

Department of Education, lists in traditional lesson plan format the elements of

constructivism:

- Student questions are valued

- Use of manipulative materials

- Students viewed as independent thinkers

- Teachers interact

- Students' point of view sought

- Assessment interwoven with teaching

- Student inquiry encouraged

- Teachers model and coach

- Focus on real-world problems

- Stress on conceptual interrelatedness

- Encourages authentic tasks

- Encourages problem-solving

- Encourages collaborative learning (azed.gov)

The problem is that her suggested lesson plan on the subject of constructivism is not

constructivist in nature. One can see that the list is meant to show teachers what

constructivist teachers do, but the lesson plan teaching constructivism does not model this pedagogy. The teacher using the plan would be teaching *about* constructivism without *being* constructivist because the lesson plan is essentially a lecture.

Some websites do a fine job summarizing the main elements of constructivist pedagogy, but lack the link between theory and practice to actually use constructivism. For example, Julie Meek's article for Pearson Education lists the basic tenets of constructivism found in Jacqueline and Martin Brooks' *In Search of Understanding: The Case for Constructivist Classrooms*:

- Students need to be able to transfer learning—applying the learning to new situations—and feel free to change their views when appropriate.

- Learning should center around key concepts, and the instructor should continually assess students' understanding of the essential concepts.

- Students' viewpoints should be sought and valued.

- Teachers may change the instructional practices to fit the cognitive development of the class, instead of rigidly sticking with a preplanned agenda.

- Feedback should be nonjudgmental, and assessment should occur within the context. (phschool.com)

In addition to these basic tenets, Meek goes on to mention the "How To's" of constructivist pedagogy, but summarizes in such a way that the reader loses the rich dimensions present in this form of teaching. The actual "How To's" from the Brooks text are extremely useful. They need to be mentioned in full detail because they offer a "user friendly" list of essential characteristics for the constructivist teacher, and they are

characteristics that can be found in my lesson narratives in the Praxis section of this dissertation. In addition, teachers should reference this list when creating their own constructivist lessons. Therefore, I include the "How To's" directly from the source, the last two chapters of the Brooks text:

1. Constructivist teachers encourage and accept student autonomy and initiative.

2. Constructivist teachers use raw data and primary sources, along with manipulative, interactive and physical materials.

3. When framing tasks, constructivist teachers use cognitive terminology such as "classify," "analyze," "predict," and "create."

4. Constructivist teachers allow student responses to drive lessons, shift instructional strategies, and alter content.

5. Constructivist teachers inquire about students' understanding of those concepts.

6. Constructivist teachers encourage students to engage in dialogue, both with the teacher and with one another.

7. Constructivist teachers encourage student inquiry by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and encouraging students to ask questions of each other.

8. Constructivist teachers seek elaboration of students' initial responses.

9. Constructivist teachers engage students in experiences that might engender contradictions to their initial hypotheses and then encourage discussion.

10. Constructivist teachers allow wait time after posing questions.

11. Constructivist teachers provide time for students to construct relationships and create metaphors.

12. Constructivist teachers nurture students' natural curiosity through frequent use of the learning cycle model. (103-118)

These twelve characteristics are part of a *Constructivist Lesson Analysis Blueprint* I include in Appendix A; instructors do not have to flip back to this page for reference. Appendix A also includes a blank Constructivist Lesson Planning Sheet that can be duplicated for classroom use. My extensive research did not reveal an adequate constructivist lesson planning sheet for this purpose, so I created my own by combining Brooks' "How-To's" with Gagnon and Collay's Constructivist Learning Design template - this task is itself a constructivist act. By creating my own constructivist lesson planning analysis blueprint using these sources, and by providing lesson plans that utilize Constructivist Learning Design, I am able to expose theatre teachers to constructivism and provide them with a methodology. Since Practical Aesthetics works well with constructivism, and the academic sources that illustrate the actual use of Practical Aesthetics are virtually nonexistent, the second half of this dissertation will be devoted to providing theatre teachers with two academic tools: constructivist pedagogy and Practical Aesthetics dynamically intertwined.

The second part of this dissertation explains the revised version of the system and provides teachers with a practical manual. The Praxis based chapters that follow will provide a series of Practical Aesthetics lesson plans using a constructivist approach. A blank lesson planning blueprint with constructivist terms explained and a list of

constructivist teacher activities can also be found in Appendix A. Teachers may use these documents to guide their own lessons in Practical Aesthetics or in their theatre courses in general. For each lesson I provide a narrative of the lesson followed by a complete constructivist lesson analysis blueprint for that lesson. Teachers who wish to use these lessons can use the lesson blueprints as references while teaching, but the teacher should read the narrative accounts in order to fully understand what I am trying to convey.

I have chosen not to complicate this dissertation with an argument of educational outcomes based on which taxonomy I believe to be most accurate. Therefore, I chose commonly used verbs associated with Bloom's taxonomy such as demonstrate, appraise, discover, and infer, to indicate the higher level learning taking place. Likewise, I have chosen to avoid an argument about high school and/or college standards, such as those currently in the draft phase by the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (originally drafted in 1994 by the American Alliance for Theatre Education in cooperation with the Educational Theatre Association). I wrote this dissertation for instructors interested in constructivism and/or using a different method for training actors, but instructors may modify these lessons to meet his/her prescribed standards. Modification, not rigidity, is important because teachers are trained professionals who can make their own decisions. I created lessons that are true to Practical Aesthetics while modeling constructivist pedagogy. In fact, it would be very difficult to teach Practical Aesthetics using the traditional behaviorist or "banking" model I addressed at the beginning of this dissertation because student opinion, choice, feedback, and discussion are necessary to the success of the system. Therefore, these lessons do not have to dominate a specific

curriculum. They are designed to be used, as needed, by the teacher who must satisfy site-specific curricular requirements and standards.

As an organizing principle for the manual, I have used what I believe to be the three tools of the actor: mind, voice, and body. These three tools must be trained and skillfully combined to become a successful actor. Yet, in my time as a high school teacher and college instructor, I found very few colleagues who taught voice and movement, at the level I would have expected, within their introductory acting courses. This makes some sense given that the major high school texts only briefly cover these topics, and college acting programs provide specific classes devoted to voice and movement. Nevertheless, it seems to me that both high school and college acting courses should spend some time on voice and movement. For example, if college students are taking acting as an elective or as part of a theatre minor they may not be exposed to an adequate amount of voice and movement. That is why I put a limited number of voice and movement lessons in this text. In fact, in my second lesson I introduce the analogy that the actor is like a piano; he/she has many moving parts that work together in precise combinations to provide "music." It is with this analogy in mind that I organized this section of my dissertation.

Although the following lessons are organized by topic, they are not meant to always be taught in the presented order. All teachers organize their classrooms in different ways, so I do not wish to dictate what lessons should be taught at what time. On the other hand, I do believe an acting class should be diverse and should also build upon previously learned skills. Therefore, I provide a series of lessons that hold true to

Practical Aesthetics and hone the actor's mind, voice, and body. I do give credit within my lessons to artists such as Anne Bogart and Rudolf Laban whose work has been used as part of the Practical Aesthetics system as it is taught at the Atlantic Theatre Acting School. Therefore, in the Appendix of this dissertation I provide a 15-Week Lesson Schedule for an introductory acting class. I have followed this schedule when I taught at both the high school and college level. I found the structure effective for teaching Practical Aesthetics to the beginning actor using its "glove to hand" pedagogy, constructivism. Readers may use this schedule or modify it according to their needs.[6]

Before moving on to the lessons, I want to leave the reader with another organizing principle that binds all of these lessons together no matter the order in which they are taught. Constructivist pedagogy grounds my approach because it allows for student opinion, choice, feedback, and discussion; and Practical Aesthetics provides a schematic or cognitive trail for the student to follow. One of my concerns about theatre education is its disjointed nature. We do mirror exercises, and then we do tongue twisters. We follow these up with trust exercises and ensemble building exercises. We may then do theatre games, Uta Hagen based improvisation, Keith Johnstone's Theatre Sports, and finally stage scenes or a full-length play. What we do not always do effectively, I contend, is link these exercises together so students get a complete picture of what it is to act.

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[6] I do believe some of my lessons fit together rather well and should be taught back to back. This will be clear to the reader. It is your classroom, however, so you may do as you wish. The system cannot be damaged by changing lesson order.

Like so many theatre teachers I verbally explained to my students what they were supposed to take from one exercise and the next. I even led some of the exercises on stage while rehearsing a play, but when they stepped on stage for a performance it was often clear that they did not truly internalize what these activities had to do with one another. I found using Constructivist Learning Design and Practical Aesthetics to be the closest thing to a solution. Practical Aesthetics taught through a constructivist approach provides space for youth to build mental schema of "actor." One way this takes place is through the cognitive trail present in Practical Aesthetics - lessons are linked and build upon one another. I propose that students taught using the following lessons will experience and internalize that cognitive trail from one activity to the next via my use of constructivism and Practical Aesthetics in this action based research. I hope acting students who take part in these exercises can easily construct their own schema and/or schemata about acting and performance in such a way that the lessons come together just like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle eventually come together to form a crystal clear picture.

Lastly, before moving on to the Praxis section of this dissertation, I consider it necessary to mention to scholars reading this why lesson plans are part of this doctoral research project and should be considered dissertation worthy. There are actually four reasons why this is the case. Each deserves brief explication.

The first reason is an in-depth pedagogical study of Practical Aesthetics does not yet exist. This means teachers and scholars do not have access to these methodologies. They certainly have descriptions of the system but no access to process. One can only be

53

exposed to its processes by enrolling at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts or the Atlantic Theatre Acting School itself, as I did.

Second, a reflective analysis on a thirteen year career of teaching acting to novice actors at the secondary and collegiate level qualifies as personal-practical knowledge gained from *action research*. Beth Lynne Brown succinctly defines action research in her dissertation *Improving Teaching Practices Through Action Research* as "a systematic research process for teachers to use to take action on ideas in practice, to broaden knowledge, and improve the processes of instruction, teaching, and learning " (12-13). It is with these goals in mind that I write this dissertation.

Third, in this particular instance lesson plans are the result of merging theory and practice. This concept of Praxis is essential to those in the arts because it locates the study of art, in this case theatre education, within the academy under the privy of the humanities. It is often from the study of ourselves that new and fascinating discoveries are made.

Fourth, Practical Aesthetics and constructivism challenge the "banking model" of education. In fact, they break this 100 year old model of education which many question as effective for educating contemporary students. Only through narrative lesson plans, fluidly and flexibly adopted by teaching colleagues, can I show the benefit of challenging such behaviorist education.

Therefore, I would like to enter these narrative lesson plans followed by a brief constructivist analysis of each into the research and historic record of our field. I have written these plans in the first person placing the reader in the classroom - an optimal

vantage point. The reader can also review this constructivist analysis from the point of

view of a teacher so that he/she may replicate these lessons in his/her own classroom. In

the words of Richard Sagor, author of *How to Conduct Collaborative Action Research*,

"If data collection is the heart of the research process, then data analysis is its soul" (11).

This dissertation, then, attempts to provide both the heart and soul of needed scholarship

in theatre education.

Training the Mind to Use Practical Aesthetics

The following lessons are devoted to training the mind of the actor using Practical Aesthetics. In addition to scene analysis and "character" creation, the student will learn how to interact with other actors on stage. Lessons are devoted to teaching the beginning actor how to handle the acting dyad, and these lessons can then be extrapolated by the actor and instructor to handle performances with varying numbers of actors.

Students of the Practical Aesthetics system must work through all the lessons in order to understand how the pieces work together, how they build upon each other, and how they function as performance tutorials. Individuals who willingly and diligently complete them will improve their skills as performers in rehearsal and on stage. The students will also have to integrate the Practical Aesthetics exercises with the voice and movement exercises that come later in this dissertation. To help learners with this integration, I suggest that each student journal about what he/she has learned after each lesson.

I offer readers an opportunity to view the overall picture of this system by briefly introducing each lesson plan before introducing the specifics. The first lesson, M1: "First Day of Class Introductions," references standard course rituals, establishes course rapport, and engages students in an activity that can help them learn each other's names in that first class period. The second lesson, M2: "Mind, Voice, Body, and Level I Repetition," familiarizes students with three tools of the actor - mind, voice, and body - and involves students in Practical Aesthetics' basic focus activity, "Repetition." The third lesson, "M3: Level I, II, and II Repetition," reintroduces "Repetition" in its three phases

as observational and active/reactive exercises. The fourth lesson, M4: "Practical Aesthetics Scene Analysis," acquaints students with its unique scene analysis procedure. The fifth lesson, M5: "Analyzing Assigned Scenes," leads students through the analysis of the scenes they will perform in class. The sixth lesson, M6: "Playing the 'As If Game'" introduces students to an exercise called the "As if Game." This exercise is meant to connect actors personally to the desires of the characters they are playing in their scenes, and it launches the scene from rehearsal into performance. The seventh and eighth lessons, M7: "Using Tools" and M8: "Shifting Tools," shows students how to use and change tactics when pursuing a specific desire within a scene. Finally, the ninth lesson, M9: "Rehearsal into Performance," is meant to teach actors how to transition smoothly from the rehearsal hall to the stage.

Constructivist instructors split their focus between thinking like individual students and thinking like a teacher. My stylistic approach that follows provides readers with a taste of that dichotomy. The analyses that follow each lesson will retain their formal tone because they are written for the teacher as a practiced professional.

Lesson M1 - "First Day of Class Introductions"

Lesson Narrative

"In the class time that remains, I would like to welcome everyone again to Acting

I in a special way.[7] In the interest of establishing a productive, respectful, and enjoyable

classroom environment, I would like to pose a challenge to show how much I value each

of you as learners and as artists. I am confident I can learn everyone's name for the rest

of the semester in the class time we have left. I can also teach you to do the same.

Please have a seat on the floor in a circle. After you are seated, I would like you to

take a few moments and think of a positive adjective that describes you. The only

requirement is the positive adjective must start with the same letter as your first name.

For example, I might choose 'terrific' Troy. Please do that now.

I would like the person on my left to go first. I have decided to use 'terrific' as my

positive adjective so would you please repeat my positive adjective and name, 'terrific

Troy,' followed by your positive adjective and your name. Go ahead and do that now.

Now, moving clockwise around the circle, I would like the following person to repeat my

positive adjective and name, followed by the positive adjective and name of the person

who spoke next, and finally your positive adjective and name. Go ahead and do that now.

The goal of this exercise is not to move as fast as we can around the circle, so do now

worry about that. Just be sure to say the correct positive adjectives and names. Let's

continue around the circle until we get back to me. I will attempt to call everyone by

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[7] The lesson narrative begins after the instructor has introduced himself/herself, taken attendance, described what the class is about, introduced Practical Aesthetics as an actor training system, and explained the syllabus. I will not provide a narrative of these standard class procedures.

name without using the positive adjective. Let's go ahead and try. [I complete the exercise by identifying each person by name alone.]

Now that we have completed this exercise and learned each other's names, I would like to tell you the secret behind this exercise. The exercise capitalizes on a mnemonic device. Our minds are able to attach a descriptive adjective to a person and the descriptive adjective, in turn, triggers our memory of the person's name. I like to do this as an opening activity because I want everyone to feel welcome and comfortable in this environment. Thank you for working with me on this exercise.

I realize we are probably running out of class time, but I would like to leave you with a word about our classroom environment. It is truly important to me that we respect one another at all times. That means we will not make fun, bully, or laugh at another person outside the context of some performance activities. I am going to ask you to risk doing some things you may not have done before. We may all look odd or strange at times, so it is important that you feel comfortable doing those things. I also ask that you share your thoughts, opinions, choices, and questions respectfully throughout the semester. If we follow these guidelines we should learn a great deal. I look forward to working with you this semester. I'll see you next class." [For a constructivist analysis of this lesson, instructors should see table 1.]

Table 1 Lesson M1 -"First Day of Class: Introductions"

Title:	Lesson M1 - "First Day of Class: Introductions" Constructivist Analysis
Subject:	Acting
Level:	I
Objectives:	The students will become familiar with course content (including rules and academic requirements) by going over the course syllabus. The students will also meet one another, learn each other's names, and demonstrate a sense of class community.
Situation:	The students must reach a basic level of comfort and familiarity with each other. The instructor should explain how important comfort and familiarity must be in an acting class. After going over the syllabus, ask each student to think of a "positive adjective" that describes himself/herself; however, the first letter of the "positive adjective" must be the same as his/her first name. The students will say their adjective followed by their name. Students will try to memorize the names of every person in class.
Groups:	The instructor will ask the students to sit in a circle on the floor or using chairs. This allows each member of the class to see one another.
Bridge:	The students will engage in a personal Bridge activity that asks them to bring what they think of themselves (using a positive adjective) into the classroom environment. This activity will be used to engage the student directly in class activity; thus providing a Bridge between individual students and classroom activity.
Exhibit:	The instructor will begin by saying his/her own "positive adjective" followed by his/her name: e.g.; "Terrific Troy." A student volunteer will do the same *after* repeating the instructor's "positive adjective" and name. The next student in the circle will repeat the instructor's "positive adjective" and name, the previous student's "positive adjective" and name, and finally his/her "positive adjective" and name. Each student continues.
Reflection:	At the end of the lesson, the instructor should ask the students what they thought about the exercise. Was it effective? Enjoyable? Difficult? Why? As many opinions as time allows should be entertained. The instructor then ends with a brief summary and look forward to what will be covered in the next class.

Lesson M2 - "Mind, Voice, Body and Level I Repetition"

Lesson Narrative

"Welcome to our second class of Acting I. You will notice that I have placed our mini grand piano in the center of the room. I would like to give the entire class the opportunity to look at the instrument and see how it works. Please come up at look inside the instrument, notice what happens when you play a black or white key, try to determine what the pedals do, and think about why the top of the piano can be adjusted to various levels. Please feel free to come up right now and do this. I will give you a few minutes to explore the instrument.

I see that some of you are on the floor looking under the instrument. Feel free to do that. In addition, I would like each person to play at least one key and see the mechanical response. Please do not pound on the keyboard at the same time, but do not be afraid to touch it. As you do so, I will pose some hypothetical questions. You do not need to answer them right away. In fact, please refrain from doing so. Just think about my questions as I ask them. We can talk about them as a group in a few minutes.

When you hit a black key, what happens inside the piano? When you hit a white key, what happens inside the piano? When you step on one of the three pedals what happens inside the piano? What do you think a combination of keys might sound like? Why are some combinations pleasant to the ear while others are not? I am going to adjust the lid of the instrument. Can you notice a difference in sound when I move the lid to different positions? Are other instruments constructed in a similar way? What else in our world is constructed in such a mechanical way? It looks as though everyone has had an

opportunity to do some investigating, so let's have a seat and talk about what we experienced. [I would hold a discussion in which we answer these and any other questions the students pose.]

Now I would like to ask you to make a comparison. If I said the human body is like a piano what might you say? [I would field student responses.] How is an actor then like a piano? [I would field student responses.] I like to think of the actor as a piano because each one of us is like an instrument. In reality, there are several mechanical instruments within us, much like the piano. I am thinking about the mind, the voice, and the body. Each of these instruments serves individual needs on stage, but function in unison as we perform. Does that make sense? Are there any questions? [I would field any questions.]

In Acting I we are each going to learn how to control our mind, voice, and body as an actor. That means we must practice. A concert pianist has to practice several hours a day to actually make music and we have to do the same. The system we are using to do this in this class is called Practical Aesthetics. [I usually provide a brief history of the system.] Practical Aesthetics provides us with a kind of 'ground map' to the training process. I know the term 'training' sounds very military-like, but it is commonly used in the acting field to describe the activities an actor does to become better at his or her craft. For example, Practical Aesthetics offers us a specific process of scene analysis, and it shows us how to approach performance and the acting dyad itself. This is considered training the mind. We also do various vocal exercises (e.g., tongue twisters, the humming series, pitch/volume/enunciation work, and others) when we are training the voice.

Finally, we will do movement based work to train the body. I will reintroduce this vocabulary as we move through the semester.

At this point in our class, I would like to walk you through a fundamental acting exercise that is essential to training the mind using the Practical Aesthetics system. I am going to walk up to you and pair you together. After I give you a partner, each of you should grab a chair and move to an open area of the room. You do not want to be right next to another pair of students. Let's do that now.

Now that each pair has found your own space I would like you to position the chairs so that you are facing one another with about two feet of space between you. You can add a little more if that makes you more comfortable. I will now talk you though what is called Level I Repetition. In each dyad I would like one of you to be Person A and the other to be Person B. Please decide that now. I would now like Person A to look away from Person B. When I say go, I would like Person A to look directly at Person B and verbally identify the first thing you see. You will then verbalize it to Person B in the following manner: 'You have blue eyes,' 'You have on a t-shirt,' 'You are wearing pants,' or perhaps 'You have your hands in your lap.' When I say go, Person A will look at Person B and make the verbal identification. Ready, go. [Person A completes the activity].

Now, Person B I would like you to repeat back to Person A what he/she said to you, but you will phrase it in the following manner: 'I have blue eyes,' 'I have on a t-shirt,' 'I am wearing pants,' or 'I have my hands in my lap.' Go ahead and repeat that back to Person A right now. Let's do that again, but this time Person A will verbalize

63

what he/she identifies and Person B will immediately repeat it back in the correct fashion. We will do that when I say go. Ready, go. [The teacher must observe and make sure students are actively participating by repeating or making new observations. The teacher can correct students if they are not.] Congratulations! You have just experienced the beginnings of the repetition exercise.

Now I would like to ask you a question. Where was your focus during the exercise? [Field student answers.] For those of you who answered, 'On the other person,' that is the phrase I would like you to take away from this beginning exercise. An actor's focus on stage is always 'on the other person.' It is from the other person that we receive body language cues and know how to react to one another. The repetition exercises help you train your mind to stay focused on the other person. Let's try this exercise again, but let's make it a bit more challenging.

This time I would like Person B to look away. When I say 'go' I would like Person B to look at Person A and identify what he/she sees immediately. I would then like Person A to repeat what Person B saw in the fashion I taught you. Person A, I would like you to repeat the same thing you said first, and Person B, I would like you to repeat what you already repeated. Let's do this several times in a row. Ready, go. [Allow this simple repetition to continue for 8-10 sets of repetitions.] You are all doing very well. You have mastered the basic activities in this early lesson. Let's go ahead and make paying attention a little more difficult.

This time I would like you both to look away. When I say 'go' I would like you to look at one another. In that moment, one of you must identify what he/she sees about the

64

other person in that exact moment. It does not matter who starts, but your partner must then repeat what you said. The person who began the repetition will then have the option to repeat the same thing over again, or he/she may identify something new about his/her partner and can say that. If something new is said, the partner at which it is directed must repeat it or identify something new about his/her partner. The goal is either to identify something new you have discovered about your partner in that exact moment or to simply repeat what you heard. One response is not better than the other, they are both equally valid responses. Let's try when I say go. Ready, go. [If there is confusion, back up and do the exercise again.] Now let's rotate partners and try this again. [Rotate partners and complete the exercise as time allows. It often takes longer than expected.]

Stop. Congratulations! You have successfully made it through Level I of the repetition exercise. If you are confused do not worry about it. You will catch up as we work together. There is no hurry at this point. Now, before class is over, I would like to process this exercise with you. What did you find difficult? What did you find easy about this exercise? Are you confused in any way about this exercise? [I would hold a brief discussion.]

We are almost out of time, so we will try this again next time. Remember, the important thing is not to be upset if you did not perform the exercise with absolute perfection the very first time. Some of you may still be confused by the exercise as a whole. What I would like you to take away from today's lesson is two-fold. First, you should understand that an actor is like a musical instrument, so he/she must practice with his/her instrument like a musician. Second, you should understand that actors must focus

on one another when in a scene. In other words, always be aware of what the other actor

on stage is doing. If you can take those two thoughts home with you today, you have

done very well. Tomorrow we will build upon this repetition exercise to continue to

develop actor focus. I would argue that focus is the most important thing you can do as an

actor right now. Thank you for your hard work and patience. I look forward to our next

class.' [For a constructivist analysis of this lesson, instructors should see table 2.]

Table 2 Lesson M2 - "Mind, Voice, Body and Level I Repetition"

Title:	Lesson M2 - "Mind, Voice, Body and Level I Repetition" Constructivist Analysis
Subject: Level:	Acting I
Objectives:	The students receive their basic introduction to Practical Aesthetics. The students will be able to appraise their "acting instrument" by comparing it to a piano. They will discover the multiple tools of the actor through this analogy. The students will also perform Level I Repetition.
Situation:	The students experience a "hands-on" lesson using a piano which allows them to compare it to themselves as actors. The students also participate in a dyad acting exercise and process their own thoughts and feelings about the exercise in front of others.
Groups:	The students will be in a large group when experimenting with the piano. They will then be placed in dyads by the instructor to conduct their first acting exercise.
Bridge:	The piano itself functions as the bridge which connects the mechanics of a musical instrument to the mechanics of the actor: mind, voice, and body. The students will also brainstorm about other mechanical instruments which come to mind and hopefully link the new information to existing schema. Likewise, they will experience the process of working closely with another actor and focusing on another actor for the same ontological reason.
Exhibit:	The instructor witnesses students in a "hands-on" learning experience. The instructor also views and coaches as necessary the dyad in the "Level I Repetition" acting exercise.
Reflection:	The instructor asks the students what they learned today and processes that with them. The instructor can ask other questions such as, "Has today's lesson changed the way you think about acting? Why or why not?" Various students will have various answers so the instructor must verbally process each response as time allows. The instructor should note who does and does not respond at the end of a lesson. By doing so, the instructor can ask those students who do not often respond to process their thoughts in future lessons. This is one way to check their levels of comprehension.

Lesson M3 - "Level I, II, and III Repetition"

Lesson Narrative

"Welcome back to class. Today we will be reviewing and mastering repetition

exercise Level I and learning what I have named Level II and III Repetition.[8] Today I

would like you to pair up with someone you have not worked with before. This will be

our normal procedure until everyone in class has worked together. If you perform

professionally, you always work with different actors so it is important to become used to

this. I also want to make sure everyone in our class feels part of our class community.

Make sure you bring a chair with you as you move to an open space in the classroom and

sit down across from one another like last time. Go ahead and pair up now.

Today we are going to spend some time working on developing more sensitive

and accurate observation skills. Our goal is to be able to react to whatever the other actor

is physically doing on stage, so it is our job to practice reacting through observation and

focus. We are going to continue with the repetition exercise, but instead of identifying

physical characteristics we are going to look one level deeper. For example, if yesterday

you said to your partner, 'You are smiling,' today you might say, 'You seem happy.' In

essence, you are interpreting what the smile might mean instead of just identifying the

smile. Again, your partner has the option to repeat what was said or to identify something

he/she observes about you in that moment. Of course, feel free to include Level I

observations, too. You never have to stop making Level I observations. If you are having

difficulty looking a level deeper, you still can still say, 'You are wearing a Polo shirt,' or

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[8] I suggest reviewing repetition exercise Level I at least twice. Be sure the students fully understand. If there is a problem, stop the students and have them work on it. Do not move on until Level I is mastered.

'You just looked away,' or 'Your legs are crossed,' but you should strive to look a level

deeper. A level deeper in each of these instances I just mentioned, respectively, might be,

'You are dressed nicely,' 'You seem distracted,' or 'You are relaxed.' Let's try this when

I say go. Please place your attention on your partner. What is true in the moment now?

Whoever observes something first in each pair will start. Ready, go.

And, stop. Some of you probably have moved on to Level II and others may still

be on their way. Remember: do not feel like you are doing something wrong by repeating

or remaining at Level I. Each individual moves at his/her own pace. The hope is you will

all catch up with one another eventually and be functioning at similar levels. If some of

you continue to have troubles after a few class periods, let me know. We can talk over

what may be creating an obstacle. For now, let's go ahead and try this exercise again.

Please begin when I say go. Place your attention on your partner; what is true in the

moment now? Ready - go.[9]

And, stop. Thank you for taking part in the exercise. We can now go ahead and

try Level III Repetition. Level III Repetition asks the actor to make even deeper

observations about his/her partner. In Level II Repetition you would observe things such

as, 'You are dressed nicely,' 'You seem distracted,' or 'You are relaxed.' In Level III

Repetition you might interpret the observations I just mentioned at an even deeper level

of interpretation. For example, you might say: 'You look like you might be attending an

important meeting,' 'You do not want to do the repetition exercise again,' or 'You think

you are going to get an A in this class.' The key thing to remember is that you should do

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[9] The exercise can be repeated any number of times if students are struggling with it. I suggest rotating
partners after doing the exercise three times to maintain variety and student interest.

your best to make possibly correct observations. If they are incorrect, you partner must still repeat what you said anyway. Therefore, if your partner is not 'attending an important meeting,' your partner cannot stop the exercise and argue with you. Your partner must repeat, 'I might be attending an important meeting' even if it is not true. This does not mean you have free reign to make up things about your partner. Absolutely not! You must do your best to make plausible observations. Similarly, you cannot make purposefully mean observations just to hurt your partner's feelings or to make him/her feel that he/she is not doing the exercise correctly. You must respect one another, no matter who your partner might be. Do you understand that? Any questions? [I would field any questions.] I would like you to rotate partners before we try this again. [I would make sure the students are attempting to go a level deeper than simple obvious observation. If not, I would provide some guiding questions such as 'What does your partner's face tell you,' 'What do you think your partner feels like right now based on how he/she is seated,' and 'What does your partner's posture tell you?' Actors need to be able to 'read' observations.] Go ahead and do that now.[10]

Now that we have rotated partners let's try Level III Repetition again. Before we do, I would like to share a brief anecdote about the repetition exercises. When I trained at the Atlantic Theatre in New York, actors were required to repeat for one hour a day, every day. If we had no one to repeat with, one of my instructors said to repeat with the television. Obviously, he did not expect the television to repeat back, but he did expect us to practice our observation skills. I am telling you this story to highlight the importance

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[10] If students are having trouble, you can repeat each level of repetition or the levels which are most difficult.

of this exercise in Practical Aesthetics. It is a beginning exercise, but it will stay with us through everything we do, even as we mount scenes on stage. If you think about it, acting on stage is similar to doing the repetition exercises. You have a set of lines you must say instead of observations you verbalize, but the way you say those lines is based on what non-verbal cues you are receiving from your fellow actor. [I would pause for comprehension and possibly repeat this statement more than once.] We will even talk more about this later, but for now let's try this exercise again. Please begin when I say go. Place your attention on your partner. What is true in the moment now? Ready, go. [I would allow the exercise to play out for approximately three minutes.]

And, stop. I let this exercise go on for three minutes. Did that feel like a long or short period of time? [I would process the answers with the students.] As you were doing the exercise, I was walking around the room and found a pair of students who are doing a remarkable job at repetition.[11] I would like to ask them if we could all watch them work though a round of Level I, II, and III Repetition. Would you let us watch? Thanks. Everyone, if you would please pay attention to [I would say the students' names]. Let's watch them just to make sure we are all doing the exercise correctly. Only one pair will be repeating while everyone else watches. The two of you should be sure to speak loudly so we all can hear everything clearly. Please place your attention on your partner. What's true in the moment now? Ready, go.[12]

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[11] If there is no pair doing a wonderful job, keep working on the exercise until a pair emerges.
[12] If the class is having trouble as a whole, the teacher can model the activity with a student who seems to have a descent grasp of the process.

And, stop. Thank you. Give them a short round of applause. Now rotate partners and try the exercise a few more times. Please rotate partners now. When we are back in chairs please place your attention on your partner and get ready to complete the repetition exercise. What's true in the moment now? Ready, go.[13]

Thank you for taking part in today's exercises. Go ahead and put your chairs back in their original positions and have a seat. Please do that now. At this point I would like to process what took place in class today. Essentially, what we are doing is reacting to body language, right? What exactly is body language? [Lead discussion on body language and its impact on human communication. Then transition the discussion to the function of body language on stage. The repetition exercises show their similarity.] It is often said that eighty percent of human communication is non-verbal. Therefore, in all those conversations we have all day, we are reading and responding not just to words, but to what we are saying with our bodies. I did some checking on the eighty percent figure. Some sources say it is fifty percent while other sources say it is ninety percent. The figure is not exactly relevant, but body language is extremely relevant. It is all around us every day, and it has a special place on stage. Through the repetition exercises we are able to practice reading and reacting to body language. We will also learn how to control our body as an acting tool, but that will come in future lessons. Right now we are almost out of time. Thank you very much for your work and attention, but before you go I would like to ask you a question. What did you learn in class today? [I would field responses.]

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[13] The exercise should be repeated as necessary for mastery.

Thank you for participating. I look forward to working with you again next time." [For a

constructivist analysis of this lesson, instructors should see table 3.]

Table 3 Lesson M3 - "Level I, II, and III Repetition"

Title:	Lesson M3 - "Level I, II, and III Repetition" Constructivist Analysis
Subject:	Acting
Level:	I
Objectives:	The students will discover the processes of Level II and III Repetition. The goal is to understand the purpose of the exercises, engage in the exercise, and be able to replicate it in the future. Therefore, the students should be able to complete the exercises and make inferences, during a class discussion, about the role of body language in our society.
Situation:	The students must participate in a dyad acting exercise and process their own thoughts and feelings about the exercise in front of others. One or more pair of students may be asked to model what the class should be learning. Reserve this task for students doing exceptionally well. If the students are having confused the teacher can model the activity with a student of his/her choice.
Groups:	The students will be paired with those they have not worked with before. One partner should rotate to another after an exercise is completed twice.
Bridge:	The students will verbally process the experience of working closely and focusing on another actor. The students are asked about "body language" and its place in the real world and on stage. By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to tell the instructor what they learned because they will be able to draw upon their knowledge of the performance event to extrapolate what the repetition exercise and body language means for the actor. The hope is a new schema about actor training will begin to take shape via the bridge created by a discussion about body language.
Exhibit:	The instructor views and coaches the dyad in Level I, II, and III Repetition. He/she may be required to model the activity, as well.
Reflection:	The instructor asks the students what they learned today and processes responses with them. Since the lesson is structured in an inductive fashion, the students may experience the exercises before understanding them. That is perfectly valid and actually encouraged.

Lesson M4 - "Practical Aesthetics Scene Analysis"

Lesson Narrative

"It is good to see everyone again.[14] Please take your chairs back to the audience

section of the room. I would like to talk to you before we do anything else. [I would wait

for them to return to the audience section.] Now that we have had a chance to warm-up, I

would like to introduce you to Scene Analysis in the Practical Aesthetics System. What

you will learn today should be used in every scene we perform as well as in each scene of

every play you perform. It will function as a roadmap for 'living truthfully under

imaginary circumstances,' as famous acting coach Sanford Meisner often said

(themeisnercenter.com). What does 'living truthfully under imaginary circumstances'

actually mean? [I would field student responses toward a solid understanding of the

acting process.] I believe Practical Aesthetics to be a distilled form of actor training that

can be learned by anyone willing to put in the time and the effort. As Melissa Bruder

states in *The Practical Handbook for the Actor*, 'Anyone can act if he has the will to do

so, and anyone who says he wants to but doesn't have the knack for it suffers from a lack

of will, not a lack of talent' (5). Therefore, I believe each and every one of you can learn

how to become an actor if you are willing to work at it. Of course, I will be here to help

you. Now let us proceed by learning the Practical Aesthetics Scene Analysis process and

then apply what we learn to a scene from a popular film.

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[14] I suggest using Repetition Exercises as a class warm-up. I do this for every lesson until I have taught
voice and movement. You may substitute theatre games eventually, but I would master Repetition before
making that shift.

I am going to distribute a Scene Analysis worksheet.[15] You will notice at the top of the worksheet that I ask you to list identifying information about the play, the scene, your character, and the other character in the scene. At this point, I would like you to leave that section blank while I explain the basic steps in Scene Analysis and write them on the whiteboard. You should take notes in a notebook or on this sheet. I always have plenty of copies on hand because I expect you to keep these in a folder for the entire semester. That makes them available for reference. If you are using a notebook to take notes, you can refer back to this sheet as needed.

The first question on the sheet asks, 'What is the character *literally doing*.' [I would write this question on the whiteboard.] What do you think this means? [I would field student responses.] This asks each actor in a scene to put into his/her own words what his/her character is doing without any deep analysis. In other words, this asks you to be very descriptive and not interpretive. For example, a character might be 'having a discussion about finances with his/her spouse,' a mother may be 'talking to her daughter about the daughter's request to use the car that evening,' or an individual might be 'talking to his/her friend about going on a trip.' You will notice that we only note what the character is literally doing. We do not try to figure out anything beyond pure description. Therefore, you should avoid any words that suggest a deeper level of analysis; that will come later. Does anyone have any questions about this section of the worksheet? [I would field questions at this time.]

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[15] The "Analyzing the Scene: Student Worksheet" can be found in Appendix B of this dissertation.

The second question asks, 'What does the character *want*?' [I would write this question on the whiteboard.] What do you think this means? [I would field student responses.] The second question does ask us to start making interpretations. This is where you, the actor, must determine what your character desires in this specific scene. Remember, we must determine what the character wants in this specific scene, not the play itself. We will look at the whole play another time. I would like to use the answers I provided to the previous question to show how we are interpreting the scene at a deeper level.

In one example I said a character 'might be having a discussion about finances with her/her spouse.' If I were to analyze this according to the character's want, perhaps the character may 'want to borrow a substantial amount of money from his/her spouse.' If we were to take the example of a mother 'talking to her daughter about the daughter's request to use the car that evening,' perhaps the mother 'wants her daughter to stay home because she wants to spend some family time with her.' In the third example, instead of saying an individual might be 'talking to his/her friend about going on a trip,' we might conclude that the individual is 'asking his/her best friend to go on spring break with him/her to Mexico.' These examples show what these characters want rather than what they are literally doing. Are there any questions about this section of the analysis? [I would field any student questions.]

There have been times when I was on stage performing, and I knew very well what my character wanted. With that in mind I tried to act the scene. What I soon found out is that just knowing the want is not enough. I simply find it very difficult to act out a

want. That is why I was so happy to discover Practical Aesthetics. It helped me understand what I should be pursuing. This brings us to our third question.

The third question in scene analysis asks us 'what is the character's *action*?' [I would write this question on the whiteboard.] This is a little more difficult to understand. You see, an actor should be trying to pursue an action rather than a want. I realize this may be confusing at first, so let me explain more about the essential action of a scene:

> By getting to the essential action of what the character is doing, the actor has stripped away the emotional connotations that might be suggested by the given circumstances of the play. . . . The essential action, then is what exists in the scene when you eliminate all ideas about what you think the author is saying the character feels at any given moment in favor of what he is trying to accomplish. . . . The scene definitely will have an emotional life, but one spontaneously born out of the actor's experience of trying to accomplish something, the degree to which he succeeds or fails, and his reactions to the other person while he is trying to fulfill his action. (Bruder 21-22)

Therefore, the action provides us with something specific we must accomplish. For now, we should discuss examples of an action. If actions are something concretely doable on stage, then I believe it is perfectly acceptable to keep a list of actions that can be used on stage. Therefore, I am passing out a handout with examples of actions on them.[16] They are not all the possible actions that can be played on stage, but they are a sampling of actions I have either discovered while analyzing scenes, reading, performing, or working

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[16] Distribute the "actions" handout from Appendix B.

with students. These are not copyrighted in anyway, but I learned many of them while studying at the Atlantic Theatre Acting School in New York. In fact, my instructors in New York often said that William H. Macy, a proponent of Practical Aesthetics, has determined that there are only seven basic actions an actor can play. I find that a little limiting, so you will see variations of what many of you might think are the same 'action;' however, shades of meaning can be very important for an actor. For example, one of the actions on the handout is 'to get someone to face the facts.' This may seem quite similar to another action on the sheet, 'to smack someone into reality'; however, each of these actions may have a different connotation to the individual actor. By starting with the examples on this handout, you can hone the actions yourselves to be better able to make sense of them on stage. Remember, the actions on this handout can actually be used on stage. When you are given scenes you can choose appropriate actions directly from this list, but we will undoubtedly modify and add actions to this list as the class progresses. Therefore, you are not bound to this list. It is just a place to start.

I should also note that although you can only play one action at a time in a specific scene, not every scene will have just one action. If you feel like you must change actions within a scene, this is referred to as a *beat change*. [I would write *beat change* on the whiteboard.] You may have beat changes within some of the scenes we examine or work with in class, but you obviously will have several beat changes in a full length play. Other times you may just play one action in a scene. It just depends on your analysis of the scene. I know you may feel overwhelmed by all of this information, but please relax. We will take our time as we work through the system. My goal is to teach you how to

perform, not to confuse you, so I will be with you through the whole process. At this point, I would like to move on to the next question on the Practical Aesthetics Scene Analysis sheet.

The next question in scene analysis asks you to determine your *as if*. I have phrased this a little differently on the scene analysis handout, but I am going to write, 'What is my as if?' on the board. [I would write this on the whiteboard.] I will soon tell you why. Please look at the scene analysis sheet. You will see that question number four refers to the as if, but I phrased the question like this: 'When did I play that same action in my personal life?' In other words, 'What is the action as if to me?' I did this so when you are analyzing a scene you would be able to more easily determine your as if by asking yourself, 'When did I play that same action in my actual personal life?' For example, if we take the action 'to get someone to face the facts,' you would ask yourself, 'When did I try to get someone to face the facts in my personal life?' Perhaps you were trying to convince your best friend that the person he/she was dating was completely wrong for him/her for several reasons. By stating those reasons, you were trying to get that person to face those facts. The only thing I ask when choosing an as if is that it must be very specific. You must be able to recall the exact event in which you were playing the as if. If that is too embarrassing to talk about, I would choose another example of imagine a fantasy that might fit. So, what are some examples in your personal lives when you tried to get someone to face the facts or what might be a fantasy you have about getting someone to face the facts? Please be very specific. [I would field responses. I would also

hold a class discussion until I was satisfied that the students knew the difference between the action and as if.]

I would like to talk about the last step in Practical Aesthetics Scene Analysis; that is your *cap*. This time, your cap is actually something you must see in your partner. Does this sound familiar to the repetition exercise where you have to react to what you see? It should because you are making an observation. Your cap is what you would see your scene partner do if you actually achieved your action. For example, we were talking about trying 'to get someone to face the facts.' Well, if you were on stage working toward this action, via an as if you have determined, what physical movement would your partner make if you actually achieved your action? This physical movement is considered your cap. For example, if we use the aforementioned example of a person trying to get his/her friend 'to face the facts and stop dating someone for various reasons,' the cap might be 'your friend nodding yes in agreement.' We like to visualize a cap, even if we never get it, because it gives us a visual confirmation of actually completing our action. We do not know if our scene partner will 'nod in agreement,' but we know that is what we would like to see. As I said, we may never get that visual confirmation, but it is something we can be working toward. You may have seen the box on the scene analysis worksheet that talks about *tools*. I would like to talk about tools after we analyze a scene that should be somewhat familiar to most of us.

I would like us to examine a pivotal scene in the 1939 movie *The Wizard of Oz.*

Has everyone seen the movie? If not, raise your hand.[17] Oh yes, please feel free to laugh

at my example! I am not using it for its great depth or fascinating plot twists; I am using

it because we all share the experience of having seen it. In addition, it provides a

relatively simple scene that we can discuss easily. I suggest that you even write down

what we come up with on your Scene Analysis Worksheet. You can refer to it in the

future when looking at more difficult scenes. Remember, I always have copies of the

analysis sheet on hand for this purpose. Ask if you need one or even a few. Just

remember to keep them all. Right now I would like to get back to the scene in *The*

Wizard of Oz.

Do you remember the scene where Dorothy gets to the Emerald City? Then,

shortly after that she and her friends finally gain admittance to the Wizard's throne room.

In that scene Dorothy asks the Wizard to grant their current desires: she wants to go

home, Scarecrow wants a brain, Tin-Man wants a heart, and the Cowardly Lion wants

courage. We want to focus on the scene with Dorothy speaking to the Wizard. That gives

us two characters to analyze: Dorothy and the Wizard. We will focus on Dorothy first.

If we analyze Dorothy according to Practical Aesthetics elements listed in my

questions we first must answer the question: 'What is Dorothy literally doing?' What do

you think the answer to that is? [I would lead a discussion on this question trying to make

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[17] A student or two may never have seen this movie. The good news is I have experienced this only three times in over forty semesters of teaching acting. You can simply poll the class and use a better example or examples. If you are not comfortable with that type of improvisation, go back to Repetition and go through those examples in the next class. Simply apologize, and say you will prepare the examples to meet their needs tomorrow. It is what a constructivist would do. You could also summarize the scene and attempt the analysis anyway. That is your professional determination.

sure the students do not become analytical.] If we really look at the surface of the scene, Dorothy is simply explaining her current situation to the Wizard. The second question: 'What does Dorothy want?' [I would lead a discussion on this question.] Yes, at the very heart of the want Dorothy wants the Wizard to send her home. This leads us to the third question: 'What is Dorothy's action?' [I would lead a discussion on this question.] If we look on our list of essential actions there are several that might work. If you were performing the scene, you would have to choose what your brain and your heart tell you. Sure, science tells us that the two are linked, but I find it helpful to reference thinking with the mind and feeling with the heart or feeling in your gut. So what does your mind, heart, or gut tell you? One possibility might be, 'To get someone to see the seriousness of the situation.' Another possibility is 'to get someone to help me;' however, for the essential action we can do some interpretation. Therefore, I like one action from the list of actions better than the rest. I prefer, 'To get what's owed me.' I think we should go with that for now because Dorothy believes the Wizard owes her and her friends the favors she is requesting. After all, he is all powerful; it is not a big deal for him to grant these favors. He owes it to them.

This brings us to the following question. In the following question we would ask ourselves: 'What is it as if to me?' The answer would again be individual for each of us. Perhaps you might write, 'It was as if I was telling my parents they owed me a college education.' That is similar to Dorothy's request in that we believe our parents owe us things simply because they are our parents. That might not always be true, but I know

83

people think that way. What might be some other similar as ifs? [I would field student responses to create a bridge to the personal experiences this question has stirred in them.]

Finally, we would ask ourselves the last question. The last question states, 'What might my cap look like?' In the case of your parents owing you a college education, they might extend their arms to hug you showing that you are correct in this estimation; they do owe you a college education. I am not saying this is true of everyone in this room; I am just using this as an example of an as if. The person playing Dorothy would have answers to all the questions on the Scene Analysis sheet.

We now need to change gears and talk about the Wizard. 'What is the Wizard literally doing?' [I would discuss this with the class.] Yes, I believe the Wizard is 'hearing the requests of his subject.' Dorothy is a visitor, but I believe the Wizard still thinks of her as his subject.

Therefore, 'What does the Wizard want in this particular situation?' [I would discuss this with the class.] I really believe, 'He wants to get rid of Dorothy.' He wants her to go away, because he does not want to have to worry about the problem.

The next question requires us to ask, 'What is the Wizard's action?' If we look at the list, I think 'to show someone who's boss' is a really great choice. The Wizard believes he can tell anyone what to do.

We then must ask, 'What is it as if to me?' If you prefer, you can ask, 'When did I play that same action in my personal life?' Again, this would be individual for all of us, so go ahead and write down a time when you tried 'to show someone who's boss'. You can simply fill in the blanks on your sheet, if this action fits according to the blanks, or

write it in the space provided. Perhaps you might write, 'My little brother was having a tantrum, and I would not deal with it. So, I showed him who's boss!' This would work nicely in this particular scene. Again, go ahead and write down your answer. [I would wait for them to write something down and ask what they wrote. This is another bridge activity.]

Finally we would ask, 'What might your cap look like?' Perhaps in this instance, your cap might be 'your brother sitting down quietly to show that he has given up.' That would be a reasonable cap for this situation. Answering that question would also end our analysis of this scene.

I think we are running out of time today. I would like to summarize the lesson before we all have to go, and I would like to mention what we will do in our next class. [I would hold a quick class summary and provide a look to the future.] Thank you very much for your work today. Before you leave I have paired students randomly and assigned you two minute scenes from plays[18] Please just read the scene several times before our next class, but *do not* try to rehearse them. More specifically, *do not try to determine how each line is said*. That will all come organically later. [I like to pass out the sheets and verbally identify each student as I distribute them.] Remember, do not practice line readings. I would like you to all say that back to me. [I would wait for them to repeat back the phrase, and we might end up laughing out loud as 'do not practice line

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[18] For the first scene, I always choose partners and the scene. This allows the students to see an example of an appropriate scene for that class.

readings' starts to be mumbled back in disjointed rhythm.][19] I look forward to working

with you next time."[20] [For a constructivist analysis of this lesson, instructors should see

table 4.]

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[19] For me, a little levity goes a long way when teaching something difficult like this. In fact, an instructor may have to repeat this lesson, or at least review it in the next class, before students try on their own.

[20] I should mention that now is about the time I can identify a few students who resist the system. Those students have always been the ones who learned acting a different way. It is especially difficult in college when you begin contradicting the teachings of a student's favorite high school theatre director. I have learned to identify these students early in order to ask that they just please try. College is about playing with ideas.

Table 4 Lesson M4 - "Practical Aesthetics Scene Analysis"

Title:	Lesson M4 - "Practical Aesthetics Scene Analysis" Constructivist Analysis
Subject: Level:	Acting I
Objectives:	The students will comprehend the specific questions asked by the Practical Aesthetics Scene Analysis Sheet. They will analyze a scene according to these questions. They will also justify their choices.
Situation:	The students will use Practical Aesthetics Scene Analysis in class. They will examine it theoretically and also apply it practically to a film.
Groups:	The teacher will lead the class as a whole in this class period.
Bridge:	The students will be asked to choose "as ifs" from their individual personal lives. They will also analyze a scene from *The Wizard of Oz*, a film with which they are already familiar. Another film may be substituted based on student response to *The Wizard of Oz*. Accessing student thoughts using a familiar film is also a bridge activity in and of itself.
Exhibit:	The students will show the teacher that they can both understand and apply the scene analysis guidelines accordingly. The teacher will have to provide extra facilitation, since it is the first time they are working with scene analysis.
Reflection:	The instructor reviews what the students learned today and processes that with them. Various students will provide different answers so the instructor must verbally process each response as time allows. The instructor should note who does and does not respond at the end of a lesson. By doing so, the instructor can ask those students who do not often respond to process their thoughts in future lessons. This is one way to check their levels of comprehension.
Assignment:	The instructor will assign two minute scenes for students to perform or allow students to choose scenes. I have used both options. The reason this is an option is because the scenes do not have to be of any specific quality. This first round of scenes should be used to learn scene analysis, not dramatic form.

Lesson M5 - "Analyzing Assigned Scenes"

Lesson Narrative

"Welcome back to Acting I.[21] Please take your chairs back to the audience section

of the room. I would like to talk to you a bit before we do anything else. Since you had

time to read over your scenes for homework, and we just warmed-up utilizing repetition,

I would like to review the steps of scene analysis. Following that review I want to give

you time to work with your partner. During that cooperative working period, I would like

you to complete the scene analysis worksheets. Therefore, by the end of class today, you

should complete one worksheet per student which corresponds to one worksheet per

character in a scene. It is especially helpful that you complete this analysis with your

scene partner. I personally believe we should not complete scene analysis sheets in a

vacuum. It is very helpful to discuss your choices with your partner. I will also be here to

offer assistance. When I give you time together, I will be visiting each pair of students

and looking at your work. The only thing I ask is that you do not complete the 'Tool Box'

on the worksheet. We will do that together during our next class period. Are there any

questions about what will take place in class today? [I would field any student questions.]

All right, I would like to review scene analysis.

This time we will use a scene from the movie, *Toy Story*.[22] I would like you to

think back to the scene when Woody meets Buzz for the first time. In that scene, Buzz

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[21] I suggest using Repetition Exercises as a class warm-up. I do this for every lesson until I have taught voice and movement. You may substitute theatre games eventually, but I would be sure the students master repetition before making that shift. As I mentioned earlier in the dissertation, it functions as a cognitive link through the system.

[22] Do not dismiss children's movies for this activity. They offer a solid bridge into the discussion.

believes he is a real spaceman who has crash landed on a foreign planet. Woody meets

buzz on Andy's bed; Andy is their owner. There is a brief greeting between the two toys,

which we can get away with playing as a simple greeting.[23] In fact, the simple greeting

then launches us into a conflict which encapsulates the scene. The conflict arises from

Buzz believing he is a real space man while Woody tries to explain to Buzz that he is a

toy. I would like to analyze this scene, immediately following the greeting. As I said, we

can play the greeting as a simple greeting since we are just beginning scene analysis.

Eventually, you can look at a scene and see if the greeting is a separate beat which

requires a separate action or if the greeting is covered by the action of the proceeding

scene.

I would like to look at Woody first.[24] What is Woody literally doing after the

simple first greeting? [I would write this on the whiteboard and field answers from the

students.] Yes, after the greeting Woody is talking to Buzz about his status as a

spaceman. [I would write this on the whiteboard.] What does Woody want? [I would

write this on the whiteboard and field answers from the students.] Yes, Woody wants

Buzz to realize he is a toy and not a spaceman. [I would write this on the whiteboard.]

What is Woody's essential action? [I would write this on the whiteboard and field

answers from the students.] As usual, several choices from our list of actions might work,

and we always have the option to make one up ourselves; however, it seems to me that

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[23] An actor can play actions for simple greetings, but I often find it unnecessary. If you want to make a clear point by having an action shift from the greeting to the scene, then absolutely analyze the greeting. The instructor can make that professional decision.

[24] Be prepared to guide students through this slow process. The students may require help working toward the following answers. In addition, instructors can provide different interpretations if they so choose.

'to get someone to wake up and smell the coffee' is a nice fit. [I would write this on the whiteboard.] Now we must ask, 'what is this as if to me?' [I would write this on the whiteboard.] The as if will change depending on the person, so the answer would vary according to personal experience. Could I have a suggestion I could write on the whiteboard? [I would field responses and write a solid example on the whiteboard.] Finally, 'What might Woody's cap look like?' [I would field responses and write a solid example on the whiteboard or use the following example.] One example might be 'Buzz putting his hands to his face indicating Woody was right all along,' since he was right. Thank you.

I would now like to look at Buzz. 'What is Buzz literally doing' after the simple first greeting? [I would write this on the whiteboard and field answers from the students.] Yes, after the greeting 'Buzz is working with his spacecraft.' [I would write this on the whiteboard.] 'What does Buzz want?' [I would write this on the whiteboard and field answers from the students.] Yes, 'Buzz wants Woody to stay out of his way' because he has to get back to outer space where he believes he belongs. [I would write this on the whiteboard.] 'What is Buzz's essential action?' [I would write this on the whiteboard and field answers from the students.] As usual, several choices from our list of actions might work, and we always have the option to make one up ourselves; however, it seems to me that 'to get someone to see the seriousness of the situation' is a nice fit. [I would write this on the whiteboard.] 'What is this as if to me?' [I would write this on the whiteboard.] The as if will change depending on the person, so the answer would vary according to personal experience. Could I have a suggestion I could write on the whiteboard? [I would

field responses and write a solid example on the whiteboard.] Finally, what might Buzz's cap look like? [I would field responses and write a solid example on the whiteboard.] Yes, one example might be 'Woody turning his back as if he was giving up the fight.' Nice work.

We have decided upon one interpretation in the scene from *Toy Story*. If you were to perform the scene you might get into rehearsal and figure out the analysis is incorrect. You can feel free to change the analysis at that point. The important point is to enter rehearsal with an analysis in mind. If it is wrong, I believe your head, your heart, or your gut will eventually tell you. Are there any questions about the analysis of the scene from *Toy Story*? [I would field questions from the students.]

At this time I would like you to move your chairs and meet with your partner somewhere in the room. Make sure there is enough room between pairs so conversations do not overlap. Go ahead and do that now. [I would wait for them to move.] First, I would like you to do a dead pan read of the scene with each other. *Do not try to perform the scene. Do not try to determine how the lines should be said*. Once we have lines memorized we can talk about delivering lines in reaction to what you observe in your partner. Until then, do not predetermine how the lines should be delivered. *It is important to learn there is no way the lines should be delivered*. Please remember that. When you are finished, you can discuss ideas with your partner. Go ahead and do a reading of the scene. I will then give you time to work on the scene analysis together. As I said at the beginning of class, I will visit each pair and check-in with your progress. The only

section you should leave blank is the tools section. Go ahead and begin. [I would move around to each group checking on the students' progress.]

I think we are running out of time today. Grab your chairs and move back to the audience section of the classroom. I would like each group to share their work. Students may ask each other various questions at appropriate times during each presentation, and I will ask questions as well. The questions can help you understand the analyses, they may help the group clarify their answers, or they may motivate some of you to change your answers. Please consider the presentation a check on your understanding. It is not a formal test. There is no penalty for being wrong or modifying your answers as we discuss them. Could I have a group volunteer to be first? [I would ask each pair to share their analysis with the whole class.]

Finally, I would like to discuss what we learned today before we all have to go, and I would like to mention what we will do in our next class. [I then would hold a quick overall discussion about what this lesson has taught us about acting. I would also provide a preview of the future lesson or lessons.] Thank you very much for your attention today. If you would, please pass your scene analysis sheets to the left. I will collect them and comment on each one of them before returning them to you in our next class.

For work outside of class, you should start memorizing your lines.[25] Do not memorize line readings; however, or even try to think about how lines should be said. *Memorize them with no vocal or physical expression*. Yes, it is harder than you think, but

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[25] Students should not read the play for the first scene because learning the system requires their complete focus. After that, students should *always* read the play and use the same analysis technique to determine the character's overriding "action." That overriding "action" can then be taken into consideration when determining the "action" of individual scenes to avoid unintentional disharmony.

I really think you can do it. I expect you to memorize only about one quarter of your

lines. You will have until next week to do this. From talking to you all today, I look

forward to seeing these scenes blossom into full production. I will see you next class."[26]

[For a constructivist analysis of this lesson, instructors should see table 5.]

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[26] In some classes, not all, the students may need more time to work and practice with their analyses.

Table 5 Lesson M5 - "Analyzing Assigned Scenes"

Title:	Lesson M5 - "Analyzing Assigned Scenes" Constructivist Analysis
Subject:	Acting
Level:	I
Objectives:	The students will interpret a scene from *Toy Story* and write their analysis on their scene analysis sheet. The students will apply what they learned in scene analysis to their own chosen scene during this class and/or in the next class. Each pair of students will explain their scene analysis to the instructor.
Situation:	The students review repetition. Students will work as a group to analyze a scene from *Toy Story*. They will then work in pairs to analyze a scene they will perform. The students will then complete one final scene analysis of the class before breaking into pairs and analyzing their own two person scenes. They would write down their findings.
Groups:	The class begins in a lecture/discussion format, but students break off into pairs. The instructor will check-in with each pair of students as they work on their scene analyses.
Bridge:	The students begin by practicing repetition. They then use their knowledge of scene analysis on a familiar scene from the film *Toy Story*. Finally, the students use their own personal knowledge to create a functional scene analysis for their two person scenes.
Exhibit:	As a group, the students will apply what was learned about scene analysis to a scene from *Toy Story*. Each pair of students will eventually share their individual scene analyses with the whole class, as well.
Reflection:	The teacher will have the opportunity to review scene analysis with the entire class. The teacher will also have the opportunity to check the progress of individual students completing their scene analysis in the dyad. It is a good idea to carry around a notebook, of sorts, where the instructor can write down student problem areas. The instructor can also note students who are confused. This should not be done to criticize the student, but to note who may require further assistance. The instructor should collect the scene analysis sheets and comment on them accordingly. The instructor can assign a completion grade, if he/she chooses.
Assignment:	Students should try to memorize scenes without predetermined line readings. They should have at least a quarter of the lines memorized. Another option would be to require the whole piece to be memorized. I do not suggest this for their first scene because students cannot help but color the lines. Once line readings are internalized, it is very difficult for the beginning actor to color them differently. Keep them to one quarter of the lines for the next class to avoid line readings.

Lesson M6 - "Playing the 'As If Game'"

Lesson Narrative

"Welcome back to class.[27] You can leave your chairs where they are, but I would

like you to have a seat with your scene partner. [I would work with a student as much as

possible if his/her scene partner is absent, or I would ask him/her to join a pair for the

day. If more than one student is absent, the students present can be paired for the day.

Scripts can be used in cases like this, but it is not ideal.] Go ahead and do that. I would

like to return your scene analysis sheets because I have written comments on each of

them. Let me pass them back, and I'll give you a few minutes to look over them. You can

discuss my comments with your scene partner *after you read all my comments*; make sure

you read all my comments. [I would return the sheets, and give the students

approximately five minutes to review them.] Are there any questions about my written

comments? [I would field any questions accordingly.] Remember, I do not want to talk

about tools quite yet. Just realize there is a part of the analysis that still must be

completed. We have to learn a very difficult lesson before we can talk about tools. I need

to ask that you please trust me as we move through this next exercise. It is difficult, and it

is confusing; but, I know you can do it. I know you are up to the challenge, and I will be

with you all of the way. At the end of the exercise we will be able to talk about tools.

Let's go ahead and try the exercise.

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[27] I suggest using repetition exercises as a class warm-up. I do this for every lesson until I have taught voice
and movement. You may substitute theatre games eventually, but I would master repetition before making
that shift.

Now that you have received your scene analysis sheets and memorized a quarter of your scenes, I would like to teach you the 'as if game.' The 'as if game' is an important way to show you how the as if functions in Practical Aesthetics. What I would like you to do is look at your actions and as ifs and memorize them. Go ahead and do that now. [I would give the students a minute or two to do this.] To help you memorize and really internalize your action and as if, I would like you to take turns telling your partner your action and explaining your as if to him/her. Remember, the as if has to be a very specific event that actually took place, so truly describe that moment to your partner. If you are using a very private as if it is fine to leave out the identifying details, but you really are going to have to be clear in your own mind who it was that you were communicating with in the as if. You need that for the scene, so try to be as honest as you can. Remember, this is a respectful environment. We do not leave this classroom and gossip about anyone else. Why not? [I would wait for responses.] We need to be honest and we need to feel comfortable to share. Do you all agree that this is true, or is it not true? [I would wait for a response. I do this because I want all people in my classes to treat each other with respect.] Go ahead and take turns sharing your actions and as ifs right now. [I would give the students a few minutes to explain the action and as if to one another.] Since have talked about our actions and as ifs, what I would like you to do is choose which one of you will be Person A and which one of you will be Person B. Go ahead and do that now. [I would wait until the students have made their decisions.] Person A, I would like you to try and recreate a moment from the past. You are going to recreate, here in our classroom, that exact moment of your as if as though it was

96

happening again in front of your eyes. How will you do this? Well, I would like you to imagine that Person B is the actual person you were communicating with in your as if; however, Person B, you do not have to act like the person in your partner's as if. You are just a bodily stand-in for that person right now. Do you both understand? [I would ask if they understand. If they do not, I would explain the situation again, preferably in a different way.][28] Person A, look at your partner. Can you *see* the person you were communicating with in your as if? Remember to do this to the best of your imagination. What I would like you to do at this point is talk out the as if. Yes you are going to talk out the exact situation you experienced with your partner as a stand-in. You will not use the exact words you used in that moment, but you must stick to the action you chose. We are just using the as if as a sort of boat launch or diving board. Again, Person B, you do not have to do anything; just sit there. Person A, when I say go I want you to talk out your as if to your partner. I will tell you when to stop. Ready, *go*. [I would let Person A talk out the as if for a minute or so.] And, *stop*.

I would like to talk about this. Person A, what was that like? Was it like you were back in the situation you noted in your as if? Could someone share his/her thoughts? [If there are no volunteers, I would have to ask at least two students to describe what it was like. If students are confused, I would repeat the exercise and ask the questions again in a different way.] Thank you for doing that. Now, I would like Person B to do the same thing Person A did. Person B, I would like you to imagine that Person A is the person you were communicating with in your as if. Person A, you do not have to act like the person

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[28] In difficult cases, the instructor may have to demonstrate. Therefore, it is good practice to have an "action" and "as if" ready.

in your partner's as if. You are just a bodily stand-in. Person B, go ahead and look at your partner. Try to *see* in your partner the person you were communicating with in your chosen as if. What I would like you to do is talk out the as if, yes the exact situation you wrote down, to your partner. In essence, you are going to recreate that moment you chose in your as if right here in our classroom. Again, Person A, you do not have to do anything; just sit there. When I say go, I would like Person B to talk out his/her as if. I will tell you when to stop. Ready, go. [I would let Person B talk out the as if for a minute or so.] And, stop. Person B, what was that like? [I would field responses from several students.][29]

Now we are going to turn this into the actual 'as if game.' That means we have to make the exercise more difficult. I still need you to trust me. This may get confusing, but just follow my directions; you will be fine. There is no harm done if we do it incorrectly; we are in this together. This time both of you are going to talk out your as ifs to one another at the same time. [The instructor should pause if he/she suddenly sees a group of wide-eyed students. The instructor can reassure them again or even demonstrate by being one of the partners.] I believe you can do this. Let's give it a try. Now, I only have two requests. First, *do not react* to anything you hear; just pay attention to what you see. Second, you *must take turns* speaking. Therefore, each of you can say maybe a sentence or two before it becomes the other person's chance to talk. You know how to do that from the repetition exercises. Are there any questions? [I would field questions.] Go

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[29] There have been times when students immediately understand what is taking place. A student might say, "Oh, I see; we will do this on stage. Each person will play an action on stage and react to the other actor like we do in the repetition exercises." Other times, they have difficulty just talking out the as if. The instructor must adapt accordingly.

ahead and place your attention on your partner. When I say *go* I want you to talk out your as ifs as if you are talking with those individuals from your pasts. Remember, right now both of you are working as stand-ins and talking out your as ifs, at the same time. Let's give this a try. Ready, *go*. [I would let the students talk out their as ifs for about forty-five seconds to a minute.] And, *stop*. What was that like? [I would field responses from the students.][30] I know it had to be somewhat strange and confusing to do this. Here we are recreating a moment from your past, but there is someone else standing in for that person. We even complicated that by having two people do the exercise together. You also could only say a sentence or two before you had to pause and let the other person speak. You know, this reminds me of something. It reminds me of what actors do on stage. Actors stand in for other people, do they not? An actor only says a few lines before the other actor has a chance to speak, right? In addition, they both have an intention; or as we say, each plays an action. Isn't that interesting? In fact, when you act using Practical Aesthetics you and your acting partner will be acting out your actions through your as ifs every time you are on stage. I would like to repeat that. Whenever you act using Practical Aesthetics you and your acting partner will be acting out your actions through your as ifs every time you are on stage. I know some of you may be confused, so let me take a moment and explain this to everyone.

In Practical Aesthetics you are going to be acting out your action using the words of the script. You will be using the 'as if game' as a sort of boat launch into the river that

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[30] Again, students sometimes explain what is going on with great clarity, sometimes no one has any idea what is going on, and other times some students totally understand while others are lost. Practice talking out the as if until you feel it is no long worthwhile.

is your action. By thinking about your as if, your brain is launched into how to go about trying to achieve your action. The difficult part about this on stage is you have to use someone else's words, the words of the script, to get your action. Right now, however, you get to use your as if to get your action. You do not have to worry about the words of the script. That is why this is called the 'as if game.'

Now, let me ask you a question or two. Did anyone want to react to what they saw the other person do? [I would field student responses.][31] Well, you actually should want to react to your partner as if he/she was that person in your as if. That is the purpose of the exercise. In fact, *both of you should want to react to one another as if the person you mentioned in your as if was sitting right there in front of you*. Just do not try to literally recreate the scene; you cannot because that person is not really here. But if it helps, try to imagine you are having a second chance at the confrontation. I would like to try this again. This time each of you may feel free to react to your partner as if he/she is the person in your as if. What I mean by react is you must try to convince that person of the correctness of your action. Let me show you what I mean. Would someone volunteer to do the game with me? You do not have to do anything, just sit there and be the stand-in for the person in my as if. You will be standing in for my best friend. [If a student does not volunteer, convince someone to do it, and take two chairs to a location where you both can best be seen.]

Thank you for volunteering. You do not have to do anything; just sit there. I will do the talking. What I would like you all to watch is how I react to what I see using my

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[31] Students usually will say "yes" at this point. If they do not, you can ask them to stay with you for a little longer. Things will become clearer as we move along with the exercise.

words. I am really going to try and convince my partner, who is standing in for my best friend, that 'she needs to see things my way.' That is going to be my action. My as if is when I had an argument with my best friend about what restaurant we were going to go to last week. Please pay attention as I do this. [I would start talking out my as if to the student. If the student looked away I might say, 'Stop looking away. I am trying to get you to see things my way.' If the person smiles I might say, 'Why are you smiling? I'm the one who is right in this conversation. You look like you are dressed up to go to that expensive Italian restaurant we always go to. I don't want Italian food. It is loaded with calories, and we just should not eat it. Stop smiling! I'm being serious here. I am concerned about our health. Ok, fine, then don't stop smiling. Now you are making me feel terrible. All I care about is our health. I don't want you to have a heart attack next year. Can you understand that? Why can't you see things my way? We always have Italian. You should let me choose this time.' Then I would say, 'How can you not see things my way?' The students should recognize what is going on as something that looks like the repetition exercises. I would then help the students make the connection.]

Now, what you saw me do looked like something we have been doing for quite a while now. In fact you did it at the beginning of class today. What was that? [The students should say repetition.] Yes, what you saw should have resembled a mix between the repetition exercise and talking out the as if. Did it look like that to you? [I would field responses. If they were unconvinced I would try to convince them of the fact. If they are not convinced, I may have to repeat my example. This time I would use different words, but I would still try to get that person 'to see things my way.'] Now it is your turn. [I

would thank the volunteer and ask her to return to her partner.] I would like you all to try this exercise again. Person A, I would like you to do just what I did; mix the repetition exercise with talking out the as if. Person B, all you have to do is sit there. Let's try this when I say *go*. Ready, *go*. [I would let Person A talk for a minute or two.] And, *stop*. Now it is time to give Person B a chance. Person B, I would like you to do the same thing; mix the repetition exercise with talking out the as if. Person A, all you have to do is sit there. Let's try this when I say *go*. Ready, *go*. [Let Person B talk for a minute or two.] And, *stop*. What was that like? [I would field student responses accordingly.] What you were actually doing was starting to work with different tactics to get your action. In Practical Aesthetics, we call these tactics tools. If you were trying to convince your partner by begging, you were using begging as a tool. If you were reasoning with your partner, you were using reasoning as a tool. If you were joking, you were using joking as a tool. If you were bribing your partner into believing your action, you were using bribery as a tool.

I would like to summarize what we just did in what we will always call the 'as if game.' Each of you was playing an action through an as if. When you shifted how you were playing the action based on what your partner was doing physically, you changed your tool to attain your action. That is the essence of the 'as if game.' Two people play the 'as if game' by trying to get their actions through and as ifs by using various tools. I actually have a list of tools that I would like everyone to have. Give me a second to pass it out. [Pass out the 'Some Examples of Tools' handout found in Appendix B.] In other words, tools are really your tactics to get your action. In the 'as if game' each player tries

102

to achieve an action by talking out an as if. When a player changes tactics to get his/her action he/she is using a different tool to get his/her action. That is the 'as if game.' You will see several tools on the list I just gave you, but this is not a list of all possible tools. This list just gives you a start like the list of actions did. You can use these tools in your scene, and you can add to the list any tools you discover. You see, the 'as if game's' function is to get us into the text of the scene, but that is for another class. I do not want to discuss that right now. I just want you to know you just learned the 'as if game.' Do you think you could do it again next class? Why? Please explain it to me [I would field responses appropriately.] We will start with the 'as if game' next time.

Right now we are running out of time. Go ahead and put your chairs back in the audience section, and give me your attention for a moment. [I would give the students time to do this.] Today's work may have been confusing and difficult. If you are still confused, please do not worry. Sometimes it takes a few days for everything to make complete sense. Remember, everyone is different; people take different times to learn different skills. What I want you to know is that each of you can master the 'as if game' eventually. The next time we meet, we will practice the 'as if game' and learn how to shift tools more easily. There is no new homework for tonight, just make sure you keep the first quarter of your scene memorized and bring your 'Scene Analysis Sheet' and your 'Some Examples of Tools' handout to class next time. Just remember two things about Practical Aesthetics. First, an actor works through the as if to achieve his/her action. Second, when the actor changes tactics to get that action, he/she is changing tools. [I would repeat these two things and ask the students to be ready to repeat them back to me

at the beginning of our next class.] I will see you soon." [For a constructivist analysis of

this lesson, instructors should see table 6.]

Table 6 Lesson M6 - "Playing the 'As If Game'"

Title:	Lesson M6 - "Playing the as if Game" Constructivist Analysis
Subject:	Acting
Level:	I
Objectives:	Each student in a dyad will explain his/her action and "as if" to each other. Each student will perform work toward the action by talking out the "as if." Each student will recognize our acting exercises as parts of the actual on stage acting experience. The dyad will be able to perform the "as ifs" at the same time. The students will be able to summarize the Practical Aesthetics acting system as working toward an action through an "as if" by using "tools."
Situation:	The students will learn a new exercise: the "as if game." The students must perform the "as if game" and understand its place in Practical Aesthetics and acting as a whole.
Groups:	The class will be a mixture of lecture/discussion and dyad exercises. The instructor will also model the "as if game" by performing it with a student.
Bridge:	The students explain their own "actions" and "as ifs" to one another. This allows them to process their own experiences or fantasies within the acting exercise. They will then perform their own experience, which will show them that they can draw upon their own experience in acting instead of trying to be someone else.
Exhibit:	Students will explain their "actions" and "as ifs" to their partners in the dyad. The teacher will evaluate the students' performance of the "as if game." The instructor will also model the "as if game." The exhibit is of utmost importance to the understanding of Practical Aesthetics, so the instructor must keep focus on each and every student. The instructor cannot let any student remain inactive. Inactivity is the only real danger in this system. If a student does not participate there is no way he/she can learn the system. The teacher must be extremely sensitive to this.
Reflection:	The key to the success of this lesson is continual reflection on what is taking place. In order to check for understanding, ask students to verbalize what they are doing and learning in the lesson.
Assignment:	The students must keep one quarter of their scene memorized, they must bring their Scene Analysis Sheets to the next class, and they must also bring their "Some Examples of Tools" handout to the next class.

Lesson M7 - "Using Tools"

Lesson Narrative

"Welcome back to class; it is nice to see everyone.[32] Today we are going to learn

another essential step in the Practical Aesthetics system: using tools proficiently. In our

last class I handed back your Scene Analysis worksheet, and I distributed a handout

labeled 'Some Examples of Tools.' I also explained tools, but I want to spend more time

on them. If you would, please go get those papers and come back to the chairs which are

already in place from repetition exercises. When you return, however, please sit with

your scene partner.

If you remember from our last class we discussed a basic definition of tools.

Would someone please share that definition with me? What do you remember? [I would

field student responses and make sure they understand the definition of tools.] Now, I

also ended our class by saying you should remember two things. What were those two

things? I am just curious about what you remember. [I would field student responses, but

expect them to be a bit unclear. I would then repeat the two things I asked them to

remember.] Well, the first concept I asked you to remember was *an actor works through*

the as if to achieve his/her action. The second concept I asked you to remember was

when an actor changes tactics to get that action, he/she is changing tools. Therefore, in

the 'as if game,' we learned how to talk through the as if with the intent to achieve our

action and possibly see our cap. If you remember, the cap is the physical gesture your

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[32] I suggest using Repetition Exercises as a class warm-up. I do this for every lesson until I have taught
voice and movement. You may substitute theatre games eventually, but I would master Repetition before
making that shift.

partner might physically do that means you achieved your action; although, you may never see that cap. Well, today we are going to do the same basic exercise, but move one step ahead. Today, I am going to teach you how to use the 'as if game' as a boat launch into the text of your actual scene. That also means we must practice using tools. If you have seen a boat launch, it resembles a ramp. A boater places his/her boat at the launch and allows the boat to slide into the water with momentum. Our goal today is to allow the 'as if game' to launch us into working toward our action with momentum provided by the as if; however, instead of improvising the words of the as if for the whole exercise, we are going to eventually use the text of the scene. Yes, we are once again making an exercise just a little bit more difficult. Just do not lose confidence; I believe you can do it. Always remember, it is perfectly fine to 'guess and be wrong' in this class. That is how we learn. Let's give it a try.

To begin, we are going to play the 'as if game' we learned in our last class. I think we should practice that once or twice before we move forward. [I would run the students through the 'as if game' at least twice.] I also asked you to memorize at least one quarter of the text from your scene. What I would like to do now is do a run-through of that dialogue. Remember, *do not act the lines*. At this point, just do an expressionless reading with your partner. [I actually might ask them to rehearse the lines twice or three times in monotone voices just to be certain they have them down.][33] Now, pay close attention as I explain the following steps.

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[33] If the students do not have their lines memorized, you have to stop and have them practice the lines. There is no way to continue with this exercise if the students do not have at least a quarter of the scene

What I would like you to do is begin the 'as if game' as we have always done. After you are well into the exercise, I will say *line*. At that exact point I want you all to shift from improvising in the as if to using the opening lines of text from your scene. Therefore, when I say *line* the partner who has the first line of the scene would say his/her first line followed by his/her partner saying his/her first line. You would go through the scene as far as you remember. The key is wherever you are vocally, physically, emotionally, or even spiritually in the improvisation of the 'as if game,' you must shift that vocal, physical, emotional, or spiritual *color* to the lines of your scene. What you are doing is using the improvised 'as if game' to launch yourself vocally, physically, and emotionally into the scene. That is why I did not want you to come up with line readings. I also do not want you to plug in emotions. They will always change depending on where you are in the 'as if game.' All you need to worry about is continuing to work toward achieving your action using your lines, which will now be colored by your as if improvisation. Does this make sense? [I would field student responses, because this is a difficult concept to grasp. It might take the students a while to understand. I may have to rephrase and repeat before going ahead with the exercise. I also may have to ask very capable students to demonstrate.] I would like you to go ahead and try.

First, place your attention on your partner. I will now start posing the following question before we begin any 'as if game:' *What is true in the moment now?* I learned this phrase from Robert Bella and Paul Urcioli, my acting instructors at the Atlantic

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memorized. This can be frustrating, so the instructor may want to assign a grade immediately for memorizing those lines. It is relatively easy to see who has the lines and who does not.

Theatre in New York. What I am asking is that you mentally identify, like we did verbally in repetition, what you see in your partner at this very moment. Essentially, what is true to you right now? For example, if you are playing the action 'to get someone to wake up and smell the coffee,' does your partner look like he/she is ready 'to wake up and smell the coffee?' If so, you can begin talking out your as if as though you have achieved your goal; your partner has 'woken up and smelled the coffee.' Your job is only to make sure he/she stays in that state of being. If he/she is in any other state of being (perhaps he/she looks as though he/she is confused) you have some convincing to do. That means you have to decide what you first want to say to try and convince him/her 'to wake up and smell the coffee.' You also have to decide how you are going to say it; however, you can only decide what to say and how to say it when you mentally identify what you see in your partner as this moment. Does that make sense? [I would field any questions and/or try explaining this again in different words if necessary.] I would like us all to try this exercise. When I say *go*, I would like you to begin the 'as if game.' When I say *line* you are to shift into the text of your scene. Get ready . . . what is true in the moment now? *Go*! [I would let the 'as if game' go on for a minute or so before saying line.] *Line*! [I would then let the scene go until the students do not remember any of their lines. It is customary for them to forget their first line even after several tries. I would just keep trying until they make the shift into the scene. It may take some time for them to do so.] And, stop. Now, let's talk about this. Tell me what that was like. [I would field student responses. There is no wrong answer.] Thank you for risking with me. That was a difficult task to complete.

I now have a question for you. When you shifted into using the lines of the scene, how would you describe the tool you were using? In other words, try to think back and recall the tactic you used to try and convince your partner. To help you remember, look at the 'Some Examples of Tools' handout I asked that you have with you. Do any of the tools listed on the sheet describe how you were coloring your lines? [I would field responses from the students. If no one answers, I would start reading down the list of tools. Sometimes recognition happens aurally rather than visually. If there is still no response, I would run the exercise again before asking about tools a second time. In fact, I would run the exercise again even if huge moments of realization happen. There is nothing wrong with doing any Practical Aesthetics exercise multiple times.] Some of you did recognize that you were flattering, reasoning, and even threatening your scene partner with some of your lines. [The examples depend upon student feedback.] I appreciate you taking the time to really think about what you were saying and how you said it. What would you say if I told you that now, instead of accidentally falling into the use of a tool, you can actually choose which ones to use? [I would pause and they may ask that I repeat the question. I would repeat the question and field responses.][34] Yes. Instead of having to stumble upon a tool, you can use any tool you want to color your lines. Well, I should not say any tool, and you absolutely must not play an emotion. Let me explain.

Do you remember back in the repetition exercises when you 'read' your partner? I am sure you know what I mean because you were able to say things like 'you are enjoying yourself,' 'you think you are good at this,' and 'you think you are winning this

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[34] At this point, I have experienced great excitement from students because they start piecing together parts of the system we have been learning all semester.

game.' Likewise, remember when we first learned the 'as if game' and you shifted how you were playing the action based on what your partner was doing physically. I said you changed your tool to attain your action. Well, what we did today was the first step in integrating all these pieces of the puzzle we have learned since we started. Today, we discovered how tools actually function. Therefore, you must choose a tool that appropriately responds to what you see in your partner. Eventually, you will become so good at this that the as if will simply function as a mnemonic to get you into trying to achieve your action by using specific tools. Instead of improvising words of the 'as if,' you will use the lines of your scene colored by tools. Again, the tools you choose will be based on what you see in your partner at that moment. For example, if you are trying 'to get what's owed me' and your partner looks like he/she is ready to cry, you might try using the lines of the scene colored by 'flattery' to get your action. On the other hand, if you are trying 'to get what's owed me' and your partner is laughing, you might try using the lines of the scene colored by 'bribery' to bribe your partner into giving you 'what's owed you.' Do you follow me? [I would field responses. Everyone might totally understand, or no one might understand; every group is different. Regardless, I would repeat this entire exercise a few more times. Even if no one understands, they have had the experience. It may become clearer to them after they think about it for a while.]

We are almost out of time. Please move your chairs back to the audience section of the classroom and have a seat. Keep your Scene Analysis Sheet and Tools handout nearby because I want to talk about them. Since we all have had the experience of using tools, take a look at your 'Scene Analysis Sheet.' Do you remember the box I told you to

111

leave blank? It is labeled, 'What are the tools you might use to complete your action or achieve your cap?' Right now, just for the sake of argument, write down three or four tools that might help you achieve your action in your scene. Do that now. [I would give the students time to write that down.] Remember, your choice of tool is dependent on how you read your partner 'in the moment' so you may never use those tools you wrote down. Nevertheless, you now understand what they are and how they work. Since you wrote them down, you can look at these examples next time to remember what tools are and how they work. For your assignment, I would like you to memorize the rest of your scenes.

You now realize how difficult it can be to remember your lines in Practical Aesthetics, so you must practice learning your lines. When we meet again, we will need the whole scene memorized because we will do the exact same activity we did today, except I will show you exactly how to switch tools in a scene. For now, if you are still confused about the work we are doing in class please do not worry about it. Just memorize your lines. The rest will come. Everyone learns at a different pace. The key is you cannot give up on the system. Practical Aesthetics is useful only if you do not give up.[35] I will be here with you the whole time.

So, next time we will play the 'as if game,' we will shift into the lines of your scene, and we will learn how to shift tools. Trust me. I realize all of this is difficult, but I

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[35] This is true for the teacher, too. You may be stumbling through the exercises yourself, and that is perfectly acceptable. It is not possible to learn how to teach this system without making errors. The key is to eventually correct the errors and learn from them. You can even tell the students you are having trouble teaching the system; they will not feel alone in the learning process. That honesty shows you are a human who struggles; however, you refuse to quit. Is that not what we want to teach students in the first place? Never give up.

congratulate all of you on your work. Acting is just plain difficult; that is why it feels so

great when you finally succeed! The only way you can succeed, however, is to persevere.

I will see you next time. Take care." [For a constructivist analysis of this lesson,

instructors should see table 7.]

Table 7 Lesson M7 - "Using Tools"

Title:	Lesson M7 - "Using Tools" Constructivist Analysis
Subject:	Acting
Level:	I
Objectives:	The students will be able to evaluate the purpose of "tools." The students will apply the "as if game" as a "launch" into the "action." The students will gain an appreciation for the use of "tool shifting" in a scene. The students will combine various class elements to work for them in the beginning stages of rehearsing a scene.
Situation:	The class will begin with a dyad of repetition. There will be some lecture discussion, but ultimately activities will be confined to the dyad consisting of scene partners. The scene partners will be expected to use the "as if game" as a way of getting into their scene and using their lines to achieve their "actions."
Groups:	The students will work in two different dyads. One for the repetition exercise and a second with their scene partners. The last portion of class will be spent with the instructor addressing the class as a whole.
Bridge:	Major bridge activities take place in this lesson. Students will once again use repetition to understand the new activities they will be completing. In addition, a cognitive link will be reinforced between what was covered in past lessons about "actions" and "as ifs" and what the students will learn about "tools" today. Lastly, individual student "as ifs" will be used to jump into dialogue. This links personal experience to the use of lines from a script. This is a base reason why I consider Practical Aesthetics to be constructivist in nature.
Exhibit:	The instructor will see the very beginnings of a dyad's scene performance. He/she will be able to evaluate their use of "actions," "as ifs," and "tools" as they begin to apply them to a dramatic text. The instructor will also be able to evaluate how well the students shift from the "as if" to the lines of the actual scene they will be performing.
Reflection:	At various points the instructor will check for student understanding. This dialogue must be frequent and non-judgmental. If the students fully understand, great. If the students have trouble, that is fine, too. The instructor must persevere with the students. He/she must push them to literally try and fail. It is through this personal student processing and trial and error that the students will become adept at Practical Aesthetics. The instructor must realize that the students may need a day or two for the brain to process various activities. The mind is complex; we must be open to its processes. A constructivist teacher is open to the active construction of knowledge.
Assignment:	The students should memorize the rest of their scenes.

Lesson M8 - "Shifting Tools"

Lesson Narrative

"Hello everyone; welcome back.[36] In our last lesson we learned how to use tools. If you remember, I said that the 'as if game' is like a boat launch that launches us into pursuing the action we have chosen in our scene. If that is the case, then tools become the oars of the boat. You would use tools to propel yourself through the actual activity of trying to achieve your action. Like oars, tools can help you change direction, move in a circle, speed up, slow down, or even stop. Therefore, today we want to learn how to use and shift tools to do these things I just mentioned.[37]

Right now, go ahead and leave the chairs where they are from the repetition exercise. Just move locations so you are working with your scene partner. [I would wait until they sit back down.] Now, you should have your scenes memorized, so before we go ahead with today's lesson, we need to do a quick run-though of your scenes. Those lines must be fresh in your mind before we begin an activity that deals primarily with tools. Again, do not do line readings. Simply say the lines to each other in monotone voices. Go ahead and do that now. [I might run lines twice for good measure.] And, stop.

I would like to get started with today's lesson. We will begin with the 'as if game.' Therefore, if you would, please place your attention on your partner. What you see in the moment now will determine what tool you use as you improvise your lines of the as if. When I say *go*, you will begin. When I say *line*, you will switch from

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[36] I suggest using repetition exercises as a class warm-up. I do this for every lesson until I have taught voice and movement. Remember to constantly change partners. You may substitute theatre games eventually, but I would master repetition before making that shift.
[37] It may seem like an extended amount of time is spent on "tools." I have found that to be necessary.

improving lines to the actual text of your scene. Remember to take the color of your

delivery with you as you shift into using the lines of the scene. For today's lesson,

though, I want you to pay special attention to shifting tools when necessary. Remember,

you shift tools because you need a new tactic to achieve your action. You decide you

need a new tactic when you partner does something that requires you to change tactics.

You make that decision based on what you see. Up to this point, I was not concerned

about you shifting because you were still learning about tools and the game itself;

however, today's lesson is about freely shifting tools when necessary. In addition, you

can finally feel free to stand and move around from this point forward - if your body tells

you to move. What I mean is: if you instinctually want to move because it is necessary to

complete your action and/or shift tools, then please do so in this lesson and future

lessons. Let's give it a try. Please pay close attention to your partner. Ready, *go*. [I would

let the 'as if game' pick up momentum before saying line.] *Line*! [I would let the scenes

move forward for as long as the students can remember their lines. I would start again if

many students had trouble with memorization.][38] And, 'stop.' Ok. How did that go? [I

would field student responses. Some may say the experience was 'great,' while others

may say it was 'awful.' We do what we can to achieve the best possible outcome.]

Thanks for your work. Now what I would like to do is ask if a pair of students would let

us all watch your scene. Are there any volunteers? [If there are none, I like to ask a pair

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[38] It is important to be lenient with memorization. The students must eventually learn the lines, but the
Practical Aesthetics process interferes with their memories. That means it might take a few runs to achieve
memorization. If the students just cannot remember their lines, I suggest stopping the process and bringing
in tennis balls. Ask each dyad to toss a ball back and forth as they recite lines. I believe this activity
rehearses doing two things at once. At this point, that is really what students are doing in their scenes.

that I have noticed doing the best job.] Thank you for volunteering. You do not have to move around; we can all see you well enough from where we are sitting.

Thank you again for volunteering. What I am going to do now is ask you to play the 'as if game' into the scene. I would like you to shift tools when you think it is necessary to move toward achieving your action. Make sure you use tools sensibly. Do not shift just to shift. While you run the scene, the rest of the class is going to look for tool shifts that did happen or tool shifts that they think should have happened. In other words, we are going to provide you with our feedback after the scene. Oh yes, if you need your tools handout, you can refer to it. [Allow students to get the handout and come back to their seats.] We are going to note tools that you used and tools that might have come in handy. This performance work is going to be difficult, but this is a safe place. If we do not do it right the first time, no harm done. We just try again. Do you understand? [I would field their responses.] Anyway, I would like you to play the 'as if game' into the scene. We are going to watch and give you some feedback after you are finished. Do the two of you understand that? [I would field responses from the volunteers.] Go ahead and place your attention on your partner. What is true in the moment now? When I say *go*, you begin the scene using an appropriate tool based on what you see in your partner. When I say *line*, you shift into the text of the scene, but keep the appropriate tool and 'coloring' because that is required. Ready, go. [I would let the scene build momentum before saying line.] *Line*! [I would watch for tools being used. I would especially note which tools were being used at which points in the exercise. Of course, let the scene run until the students are out of text. If there are errors, the exercise can be repeated.]

Thank you for your work. I think they deserve a round of applause. [I would have everyone clap.] Volunteers, what were your 'actions?' [I would let them respond.] Ok, now, everyone take turns telling the volunteers what tools you saw them use. What tools did you see in that exercise? [Allow students to give direct answers to the volunteers. Responses may be surprising. They may be spot on or totally incorrect. The instructor must craft the responses accordingly and help the students see the tools that were actually used.] Ok, thank you for the feedback. Now I will pose a more difficult question. Volunteers or audience, do you think different tools could have been used? If so, I would like you to identify why and at what point in the scene. [I would field student responses.] Thank you volunteers and audience. [If the experience was fruitful, I would ask another dyad to let the class watch them. If I felt it was not, I would repeat the exercise with that same dyad before moving on to the discussion. I have found that I prefer repeating this process, trying it with another group, and even having the next group repeat the process. This is time consuming, but necessary for students. They need examples to be able to bridge the gap between what they are doing and what is expected. This is constructivism in process.]

Now, what we did was provide suggestions on how to shift tools. What I could have done in the middle of that exercise is shouted the name of one of our volunteers and said change tool. In fact, I could have even suggested the tool to use. I found this very distracting as an actor when my acting coaches did it to me. All of a sudden, you hear this scream break your concentration and you try to fumble for the tool that was shouted at you. I just did not have the heart to do that to you right now. What I like to try first is to

work through the exercise and see if we can suggest some appropriate tool shifts after we see the scene. If we do this enough, you will start to do the tool shifting on your own. We are basically becoming familiar with the various tools, but they will change because the scenes will always change. That was the goal of today's exercise.

What I would like to do now is look at as many scenes as time allows. We can then offer the same commentary we did for our volunteers. It is import that everyone learns to perform on their own with an audience. Until this point, we have not put many people 'on the stage.' Yet, we really need to do that soon if we are going to transition from class exercise to performance. Are there any volunteers who wish go next? [I would now lead the exact same exercise as many times as class time allows. If there are no volunteers, I would choose the pairs one after the other.]

We soon run out of time. If you would, please move your chairs back to the audience section of the classroom and have a seat. [I would wait for the students to do this.] I just want to thank you all for your work today and for your respect for one another. We looked at many scenes and offered some great advice. [It would be ideal to see all the scenes. If time does not allow for it, this exercise can be continued in the following class meeting.] As I said, we must keep a safe environment if we are going to feel free to fail. Only through that freedom to fail are we able to risk, because we are amongst those who support us.

What we did today was work through tool shifting. As I said, I did not coach or direct the scenes by shouting 'tool shift' or by suggesting a tool during the scene. Now, I can do that if you would like me to, but at this point I prefer our present format of peer to

peer feedback.[39] Next time we are going to talk about rehearsing scenes for performance. I would like you to review your lines and start to think about possible scenic elements for your scene. What I mean by scenic elements is not walls, windows, or doors; I mean tables, chairs, boxes, and/or some basic props. What I would like to do next time is integrate the Practical Aesthetics system with standard stage movement. You will notice I did not use the term *blocking*. By the way, could anyone explain what blocking means? [I would field responses.][40] I prefer to talk about stage movement simply as stage movement for two reasons. First, it is difficult to block scenes in Practical Aesthetics since movement is motivated by the actor pursuing an action. Second, if I were to block your scenes, it might interfere with the natural development of the scene itself. Instead, what we are going to do next time is explore moving in space according to our chosen actions and tools. That will help us move appropriately on stage. This is our last step before we run fully integrated Practical Aesthetics rehearsals and eventually think about putting our scenes on stage. I look forward to seeing you next time. Thank you for your work today." [For a constructivist analysis of this lesson, instructors should see table 8.]

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[39] The instructor may have to do this kind of side coaching if necessary. It depends on the students.

[40] I included this question just in case the instructor has not discussed blocking. I usually talk about blocking as a basic theatrical term early in the year, but I also have waited until this point to discuss it. I suggest talking about it earlier and reminding students not to pre-block scenes. Otherwise, some students know what blocking is and others do not. Those who do often start pre-blocking before you can tell them not to pre-block. This disrupts the Practical Aesthetics system in which pursuing an action should be the foremost motivation for movement. In Practical Aesthetics, blocking can organically change each time the scene is rehearsed and performed. This allows a scene to live "in the moment."

Table 8 Lesson M8 - "Shifting Tools"

Title:	Lesson M8 - "Rehearsal and Shifting tools" Constructivist Analysis
Subject:	Acting
Level:	I
Objectives:	The students will practice repetition, the "as if game," and shifting "tools" in pursuit of an "action." The students will practice the actual lines of their scenes. The students will analyze other students' work and provide peer feedback about what "tools" were used and suggest others as need be. The students will begin thinking about integrating movement into their scenes.
Situation:	The students will all work with "tools," and how to shift "tools" within a scene, in order to work toward achieving an "action."
Groups:	Students will work in dyads. In addition, students will also be placed in the position of peer reviewer.
Bridge:	A bridge is provided by knowing the "as if game" and "tools" in addition to watching fellow students practice shifting "tools." By viewing others, the students learn how to approach their own scene work. We also reviewed several familiar terms. This type of continual review helps construct a more complex schema.
Exhibit:	The instructor will be able to evaluate each dyad as they perform for the entire class. The instructor can then comment on the proper use and shifting of "tools." The instructor will also guide peer to peer critiques, so they happen in a healthy and helpful manner.
Reflection:	The instructor frequently asks the students to process their experiences. The instructor should take care to note what the students did well and what they did not do well. He/she can then give immediate feedback or feedback during the next lesson. The instructor is also finally able to see each dyad perform alone. He/she should use this opportunity to praise and also guide the students so they perform Practical Aesthetics correctly. An instructor should never allow students to do anything incorrectly. He/she should simply explain any problems and help the students work though them. This lesson provides a perfect opportunity to assess student work. It also works as a check on how well he/she is teaching the system. The instructor must correct and/or improve his/her teaching whenever necessary.
Assignment:	The students should keep practicing their lines.

Lesson M9 - "Rehearsal into Performance"

Lesson Narrative

"It is good to see you all. Welcome back.[41] Please leave the chairs where they are, but have a seat with your scene partner. [I would wait until the students do this.] Our class today is going to be very similar in format to our last class, but we are adding elements necessary for formal performance. Essentially, today's lesson presents the rehearsal process you would follow during the days or week/weeks before a scene is presented to an audience. The same process would be followed when staging a full length play, but you would have analyzed each scene, modified actions according to the given beats, and determined a *super action* to help appropriately guide your scene by scene analyses.

A super action is simply a character's overarching action that encapsulates an entire play. The super action helps the actor make certain each scene analysis makes sense, each scene analysis does not violate the playwright's intentions, and each scene analysis does not violate the world of the play. I refrained from mentioning this earlier because I did not want to overwhelm you with having to worry about what may seem to be a grand and difficult task. Now that you have learned the Practical Aesthetics system, choosing a super action for a character you portray in a full length play will be no more intimidating than analyzing a scene for our class. Do you understand what I mean by super action? [I would field student responses if there is confusion.] If I may use a term

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[41] I suggest using repetition exercises as a class warm-up. I do this for every lesson until I have taught voice and movement. Remember to constantly change partners. You may substitute theatre games eventually, but I would master repetition before making that shift.

from the world of technology, I have been trying to make Practical Aesthetics as *user friendly* as possible. That is why we talked about scenes before tackling the super action of an entire play. I would now like to proceed with today's lesson.

Today we are going to run one scene at a time, just as we did last time, but I would like you to add needed set pieces and movement.[42] I do not expect to see Broadway perfect performances. I expect to see you stumbling over chairs, turning your back to us while speaking so we cannot hear you, not knowing where to walk, and bumping into one another. Well, let's hope it is not *that* messy; I was being hyperbolic. I just want you to feel comfortable to move from your head, heart, or gut. Listen to your instincts, of course, but do not worry about doing things 'right.' I want you to experiment. That is why we call it rehearsal. I want to see where your actions and chosen tools take you.

In addition, I want to be very clear about my role during these rehearsals; I do not want to direct you. In future rehearsals I might make some staging suggestions, but I do not want to block the scene or shout suggestions during the scene. You need to make discoveries as actors. If you are totally confused or are just having a difficult time, I will be here for you. I want to avoid meddling in your creative process; however, because you

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[42] At this point, students must have already learned stage basics (e.g., stage directions; bodily positions such as profile, ¾ left/right; simple movements such as diagonal crosses and compensating; power positions when standing and sitting; etc.). If not, you *must* stop this lesson and teach stage basics. I actually have waited until this point to teach stage basics before, but I prefer covering a few things in each class period. I know text books often suggest teaching stage basics at the beginning of the course, but this can overwhelm students who then must master Practical Aesthetics. Novice performers should be thinking in terms of Practical Aesthetics before having to worry about externals.

are now building your own understanding of what it is to be an actor.[43] Are there any questions or concerns? [I would field student questions.]

Now, before I ask for volunteers to go first, you should do a monotone run-through of your scenes. The monotone run-through helps with memorization and stops you from predetermining how lines will be delivered in performance. After you do that, talk briefly to your partner about your set. I need you to determine what furniture, or lack thereof, you might need or might eventually like to use. We can set the stage with what is available to us in the classroom and worry about the rest later. Go ahead and run your scenes. Then talk to your partner briefly about setting the stage. [I would give the students time to run the scenes and discuss setting. I like to improvise props if necessary, but I avoid miming. For example, a stapler can stand in for a phone.][44] We need some volunteers to go first. I know it is asking a great deal of you, but remember you are in a safe place. You can fail as much as you want as long as you are willing to get back up and try again. Are there any volunteers? [I would try to get volunteers. If no one volunteers, then I would choose which dyad was best prepared to go first.] Thank you for volunteering. Go ahead and set the stage as you see fit, and let me know when you are

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[43] Some may disagree with this philosophy, but it has served me well; students need to be allowed to think like actors. If the instructor becomes Edward Gordon Craig, students do become puppets. I made this mistake early in my career and, unfortunately, those students could never function without me. If they are left to "stumble," however, the eventual reward may just be great.

[44] If the instructor feels the dyads need to rehearse outside of class, or in class on their own, now is the time to do so. Simply pause at this point and call for inside or outside class rehearsals. In high school there often is time for in class rehearsals, but that is not true in college. Pick up again at this point in the lesson when you feel the students are ready to show their scenes to each other. I have never taken longer than a week at this pause point. The scenes should not be performance ready, just presentable. If you decide to pause, this is a good time to do a short unit on theatre history or stagecraft. It depends upon your required curriculum.

ready to begin. [I would let the two actors set the stage, ask any questions, and get situated on stage.] Ok, great.

Here is how this is going to work. We are actually going to run the scene twice. The first time we are going to go from the 'as if game' into the scene. The second time we are going to forgo the 'as if game' and begin the scene with your lines. You have all come a long way this semester, so you have to drop the 'as if game' training wheels at some point, right? That does not mean you forget about the as if. You keep that in mind to jump start your active pursuit of your action. With time, patience, and practice you will not even need to play the 'as if game' before you perform. For now, however, we will run the scene once with the 'as if game' and once without it. Are you ready? [I like to wait for students to provide some sort of affirmative acknowledgement before I start the scene because they are often nervous.] Please think of your action. [I would pause.] Go ahead and think of your as if. [Again, I would pause.] Place you attention on your partner. What is true in the moment now? What tool might you use to pursue your action based on what you see in your partner? When I say go, talk out your as ifs. When I say line, switch to the lines of the scene. Ready, *go*. [I would let the actors talk out their as ifs for at least 45 seconds.] *Line*! [I would let the scene come to its natural end.]

Thank you for your work. I want to go right back to the scene without discussion. This time we are going to start with the lines of the scene. Do not worry about whether or not the movement you just did was right or wrong. Let's just jump back in the scene and feel free to change any movements you wish. Go ahead and place your attention on your partner. What's true in the moment now? *Line*! [Again, I would let the scene come to its

natural end.] Thank you for your work once again. How did that feel? How do you think

it went? What was hard, and what was easy? Give us your thoughts. [I would let the

students say whatever comes to mind.][45] Audience, let's provide some positive

comments. What did you like about the scene? [I would have the students in the audience

speak directly to the students on stage.] Do you have any constructive criticisms to make

the scene better next time? [Again, I would have the students in the audience speak

directly to the students onstage.][46] Thank you! Let's have a round of applause. [I would

wait for the applause to end.] We are ready for our next volunteers. Who would like to go

next? [If there are no volunteers I would choose the next dyad to perform. I would then

repeat this exact process as long as time allows. The activity may have to be continued

during our next class or classes in order to view all scenes.][47]

     We are about out of time. Go ahead and move all the chairs back to the audience

section of the classroom, and have a seat. [I would wait for the students to move and be

seated.] I want to congratulate you all because you have finally worked your way through

the entire Practical Aesthetics Acting System. [I like to applaud, and they usually join.]

We will rehearse a little more before holding a dress rehearsal and showcasing these

scenes, but the rehearsal process will not change. This is the process we will do whenever

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[45] It has been my experience that the second run-through is much more interesting from both an acting perspective and a movement perspective. Sometimes a scene is exceptional; other times, the scene barely looks like a performance. Either way is acceptable. They are learning and will continue to learn from future rehearsals.

[46] I think it is *essential* to require positive comments first followed by constructive criticism. I then try to add positive comments to end the discussion. My classroom is a safe place, but I actively make it so. That is why this particular procedure usually works well for me.

[47] For subsequent scene work, the instructor can determine the necessity for viewing and commenting on all scenes as a "run-through" before formal performance. I usually do not do a run through like this for a third set of scenes.

we do scene work. In fact, the second time you ran through your scenes today will be exactly what we do in performance. Trust me; though, things will move much faster as you become familiar with the process. In addition, we will not always watch a single pair of students perform. The more familiar you are with the process, the easier it will be for multiple scenes to be rehearsing at the same time. When we do that I will walk around and comment on your work. Of course, we will try to have each scene complete a practice run in front of the class just so we can provide feedback; however, we will not need to spend all this time watching individual scenes. This was the first time you did scene work using the Practical Aesthetics system, so we had to take our time and learn from one another.

I must say I am very proud of your work. Do we have more to learn? Sure! Actors are constantly learning; they never stop. For example, we have to become more adept at working with scenic objects and props, we have to become used to moving with other actors on stage, we have to become more confident in pursuing our actions and shifting tools, we even need to learn how to more effectively use our voices on stage. Now that we know the basic structure of Practical Aesthetics; however, achieving these other goals becomes possible. I certainly look forward to seeing you achieve these goals. For your assignment, continue to keep your lines fresh in your minds. Take care. I will see you next class." [For a constructivist analysis of this lesson, instructors should see table 9.]

Table 9 Lesson M9 - "Rehearsal into Performance"

Title:	Lesson M9 - "Rehearsal into Performance" Constructivist Analysis
Subject: Level:	Acting I
Objectives:	The students will put the final parts of the Practical Aesthetics system together. The students will also understand the role of the "super action" in a play.
Situation:	Each student dyad will practice transition from the "as if game" to the scene itself. Each dyad will then practice running their scene without the "as if game." This is the first time the actors are called upon to rehearse in the same way they will perform in the future.
Groups:	Students will be in both dyads and a large group. They will practice the system in dyads, but then will offer compliments and constructive criticism as an audience viewing specific dyads. The class will end with a short lecture/discussion in which the students will be in a single group.
Bridge:	The students will take what they have learned from previous classes in order to complete the Practical Aesthetics Acting System. In addition, students will have the opportunity to view others and apply what they see to their own work. When fielding student responses, the instructor must keep in mind that each individual has both unique and shared experiences. Therefore, the instructor can draw from both to offer explanations and clarifications when necessary. Of course, an automatic bridge is also present because the process of rehearsal is strikingly similar to the process of performance. The cognitive link that draws everything together can easily be traced back to repetition. I suggest doing this verbally a number of times throughout a semester. That bridge helps with the transfer from rehearsal to performance that is often missing with the use of disjointed acting exercises. Drawing attention to that cognitive link helps students build cohesive acting schemas.
Exhibit:	The instructor and the class will view and evaluate individual dyads. The instructor should take care not to direct unless absolutely necessary. Students must have the opportunity to practice (which may lead to success or failure) without excessive instructor interference.
Reflection:	The instructor must field questions when necessary. He/she must also be sure to check student understanding of basic stage conventions in concert with Practical Aesthetics. The instructor can direct, but only if necessary, to keep students on track during rehearsal.
Assignment:	The students should keep their lines fresh in their memories.

Training the Voice/Body to Use Practical Aesthetics

Practical Aesthetics does not claim its own organically created voice and diction or movement training system for the stage. The Atlantic Theatre Acting School currently uses Chuck Jones' *Make Your Voice Heard: an Actor's Guide to Increased Dramatic Range through Vocal Training* for vocal training and Edith Skinner, Timothy Monich, and Lilene Mansell's *Speak with Distinction: The Classic Skinner Method to Speech on the Stage* for speech/diction. Laban and Suzuki methods are used to teach movement. When I trained at the Atlantic, my instructor used some of Kristin Linklater's techniques and the Skinner text.

For the first seven years of my teaching career, I did not use any formal voice and movement exercises. The reason was because I was never taught any in college. I simply relied on making sure actors could be seen, heard, and understood. It honestly seemed to work for me, until I discovered from my students that they really had no idea what they were doing on stage. They were not acting; they were saying lines at one another and following my blocking. I just figured they were young and did not understand. It seems to me that this type of thinking often fosters the production of mediocre to awful theatre. I was guilty of this early in my career. I do not think poor acting is linked to age. I think poor acting is linked to poor training. This is when I started searching for new ways to teach acting and found Practical Aesthetics.

When I started using Practical Aesthetics, I still had not adopted a specific voice, diction, and movement pedagogy because I found it difficult to recreate what I had learned in New York. I knew I had to make a change, so I started looking at the various

philosophies of voice and movement more closely. I began with what I was already familiar from my studies at the Atlantic. Therefore, I started to study Linklater and Skinner. I learned that

> the Linklater Approach is designed to liberate the natural voice rather than to develop a vocal technique. The basic assumption of the work is that everyone possesses a voice capable of expressing, through a two-to-four octave natural pitch range, whatever gamut of emotion, complexity of mood and subtlety of thought he or she experiences. The second assumption is that the tensions acquired through living in this world, as well as defenses, inhibitions and negative reactions to environmental influences, often diminish the efficiency of the natural voice to the point of distorted communication. Hence, the emphasis here is on the removal of the blocks that inhibit the human instrument as distinct from the development of a skillful musical instrument. I must underline at the outset that in our perception of our own voices there is a vital difference to be observed between what is 'natural' and what is 'familiar.' (*Freeing the Natural Voice* 1)

That provided me with a place to start, so I started building up a Linklater based curriculum.

I began using some of the exercises from *Freeing the Natural Voice*, but I was not getting the results I wanted. I believe this has much to do with my lack of Linklater training, but it also has to do with my incompatibility with her underlying philosophy. She believes that what hampers success is "the possible limits of talent, imagination or life experience" (2). My students had imagination, but they did not have life experience.

130

In addition, she believes talent is necessary. I disagree. I side with David Mamet in believing hard work and dedication can produce talent. Linklater is not alone in her thinking about talent. For example, in *A Challenge for the Actor*, Uta Hagen states in the first sentence of her prologue:

> It takes talent. Talent is defined in the dictionary as 'the natural endowment of a person with special or creative aptitudes.' In an actor, I believe, these endowments consist of high sensitivity and responsiveness to sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell, of exceptional sensitivity to others, of being easily moved by beauty and pain, and of having a soaring imagination without losing control of reality (xiii).

Nevertheless, approaching the beginning actor and requiring talent before doing anything else seemed absurd. I basically put away Linklater's system, for the most part, and never used Hagen in my classroom, but something interesting happened as I continued my search. I started to see how I could take pieces from different philosophies, including Linklater's, as long as I made sure they fit with my constructivist pedagogy and Practical Aesthetics. Therefore, the following lessons on voice and movement are the result of this work. I personally crafted these lessons using constructivist pedagogy to teach my students basic voice/diction and movement as part of a Practical Aesthetics based acting curriculum.

The first lesson in this section of the dissertation that follows is based on Linklater's relaxation and warm-up exercises. A warm-up is necessary *before* starting

actor training.[48] In addition, I briefly talk about diaphragmatic breath support, show the students how to identify their "centers," and help them find a pre-performance "neutral position." Again, I made sure these exercises were linked to Practical Aesthetics so as not to present my own disjointed system.

The second lesson takes a closer look at breath control as well as the use of pitch and resonance in vocal production. I use some easy to understand contemporary sources for this purpose as well as Linklater work. This is a short lesson because it allows the instructor to review the previous warm-up lesson or start with segments of the previous warm-up due to its length. Once the students became familiar with these activities, I moved on to Skinner.

Skinner is interesting because she advocates a universal "stage speech" with which many theatre artists at the present time disagree. That does not mean there are not valuable lessons to be learned in her book. When I took voice and diction, it seemed to me that all an actor had to do to speak skillfully on stage is memorize Skinner's entire text, *Speak with Distinction*. Then an actor would be able to say all words correctly and be heard in all corners of the theatre. I attempted to do this when I was training at the Atlantic, but wanted to create a more flexible system for my students. I knew my students could not. So again, I pulled things from Skinner that did not violate constructivism or Practical Aesthetics. Therefore, my third lesson covers her "Warm-Up Exercises and Phrases," "Challengers for the Actor with Good Speech," and the "Theatre Standard [for words using WH]" (*Speak with Distinction* 30-33, 334-335). These exercises were

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[48] I also discovered, from reading Chuck Jones' *Make Your Voice Heard: An Actor's Guide to Increased Dramatic Range through Vocal Training*, that Jones' work is actually distilled from Linklater.

particularly successful for students who were unaware that an audience could not understand what they were saying because of their pronunciation. It is important to note that these voice and speech activities did exist as disjointed exercises but are integrated into the Practical Aesthetics based classroom using constructivist methods.

I did the same integration with movement training. The fourth lesson focuses primarily on yoga based exercises devoted to stretching, muscle coordination, breath support, strengthening the core, and presence. I was originally exposed to most of these exercises by Laban specialist Renee Redding-Jones at the Atlantic Theatre Acting School, but I also rediscovered many of them in *Actor Training the Laban Way: An Integrated Approach to Voice, Speech, and Movement* by Barbara Adrian. I will reference the Adrian text so readers can learn more about these exercises if they wish. Only the last exercise in lesson four on "presence" did I create myself.

In the fifth lesson I introduce ensemble work. I start with a Laban based exercise on kinesphere which can be loosely defined as an individual's personal space beyond the body. Again, I learned this exercise from Renee Redding-Jones at the Atlantic, but use it specifically to lead into ensemble work. An introduction to kinesphere can help the students function well in an ensemble. The ensemble exercises that follow are derived from Viewpoints and as taught by Kelly Maurer at the Atlantic. Any instructor interested in Viewpoints will find *The Viewpoints Book* by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau extremely helpful.[49]

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[49] It is important to note that I draw upon Viewpoints only for ensemble work in already written scenes/plays. I purposely avoid discussing the value of Viewpoints for devised work because I think that would be overwhelming for the beginning actor at this point in his/her training.

Finally, I conclude this chapter by providing a lesson on improvisation to illustrate how improvisation can be used to teach movement. Students often believe the purpose of improvisation is to learn what to do if you forget a line on stage or "how to be funny." Certainly, it develops spontaneity and it can be funny; however, I use improvisation primarily to practice stage movement - especially in a beginning acting class.

Before I move on to the following six lessons, I would argue that any professionally codified and widely used speech system and movement system has its merits. One could possibly do a study arguing for the benefits of one system over the other by how each system fares in a series of tests, but that is out of scope for this dissertation. I chose my speech and movement work because each works well with my constructivist approach, and I believe teaching with an active constructivist pedagogy enhances student learning. In addition, I had to choose speech and movement systems that did not expressly violate the base philosophy of Practical Aesthetics.

If I had to provide a key reason why I use these activities in the following lessons, it would be because these speech and movement systems help the actor achieve his/her "action." That makes them compatible with Practical Aesthetics. Famous voice instructor Cecily Barry, Voice Director for the Royal Shakespeare Company for more than 35 years, summarizes this concept nicely. She states:

I became deeply aware of the physical connections between the making of the word and the emotional motive of the actor - in the terms of Stanislavski, the want/need of the character in the scene. I then began to realize that the work [of

the voice or speech] had to be in two parts: 1. the technical facility, and 2. how

this technical facility reached into, and fused with, the actor's intentions. This has

far-reaching consequences in that it could affect the presentation of the character.

(Hampton and Acker, *The Vocal Vision* 25-26)

Although she is not using terminology from Practical Aesthetics, the base meaning is

applicable: speech and movement are tools for the actor to achieve each "action." It is my

job as a constructivist acting instructor to help actors use voice and body to achieve that

"action" on stage. The speech and movement exercises that follow support that goal. The

Atlantic Theatre Acting School is doing the same thing by aligning themselves with

Jones, Skinner, Laban, and Suzuki. I am simply uncomfortable with Chuck Jones' voice

work because I have not been trained to use it, and I find Suzuki to be confusing for the

young actor if not taught by an accomplished Suzuki instructor.

Therefore, my goal is to urge the instructor using this dissertation in the classroom

to allow students to become active learners when working with speech and movement.

"According to constructivist learning theory, active learning occurs when the learner

engages in appropriate cognitive processing during learning, which includes attending to

relevant incoming information, mentally organizing it into a coherent cognitive structure,

and mentally relating it with relevant prior knowledge from long-term memory" (Mayer

188). Therefore, the instructor must help the learner link the learning of speech and

movement to previous personal experiences working with Practical Aesthetics. That way

the learner realizes he/she can call upon speech and movement in future scene work to be

seen, heard, and to pursue an "action."

Lastly, the following lessons are meticulously documented to allow teachers to use the narrative text in class and to keep participants from being injured. If narrative descriptions are vague, there is greater possibility of incorrect instruction. If physical exercises are done incorrectly, damage is possible. Therefore, for the safety of the students and integrity of the lessons themselves, I provide detailed descriptions. Once the teacher masters the exercises and the students become comfortable moving, I expect the teacher to use his/her professional judgment to modify the lessons according to the needs of his/her students.

Lesson V/B1 - "Warming Up the Vocal Instrument"

Lesson Narrative

"Welcome back to acting class. Today each actor will discover how to warm-up his/her vocal instrument for speech.[50] Interestingly enough, the first step is relaxation. If you would please find a comfortable place to lie on your back on the floor. Now, close your eyes and picture a comfortable place that is very peaceful to you (Linklater 52). This place can be a beach, your grandmother's kitchen, a park, or anyplace that you feel extremely comfortable. Take a moment to visualize that place. [I would give the students about a minute to do this.] 'Turn your attention to the tiny involuntary rise and fall of natural, relaxed breathing deep in the center of your body. Let your lips fall apart and feel the outgoing breath escape over the front of your mouth making a small 'fff' [breath] as it leaves your body [but do not create a vibrating sound]. Wait for the breath to replace in its own time' (Linklater 52). [I would give the students about a minute to do this.] Forget about any worries that you have for this time. During this time we are studying acting, so we only want to pay attention to what we are doing in this moment. Remember that I used that same phrase when we were doing repetition exercises and learning Practical Aesthetics. Being in the moment is essential for the performer [I would pause for about a minute or two.] I would like you to try alternating [the sound] 'huh-huh' and [the breath] 'fff.' (Linklater 53). Go ahead and do that. [The instructor should demonstrate/lead by making the sound.] Now that our five or six minutes of relaxation and clearing the mind

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[50] I suggest introducing this warm-up after Lesson M6. The students need to be familiar with Practical Aesthetics so they can draw from those experiences, their own personal experiences, and what they learn about voice to approach performance. The instructor can then end this lesson with repetition to keep reminding students about focus.

is up, feel free to imagine yourself being transported from the place you imagined back to our classroom. I want you to maintain the state of relaxation as you open your eyes. Go ahead and do that. [I would give them a moment to do this.] Slowly stand and come to form a circle in the center of the classroom. [I would give them a moment to do this.] I have a question for you. Why do you think an actor has to be relaxed before performing? [I would field student responses. Hopefully the word 'focus' enters into the conversation. If it does not the instructor can ask if relaxation provides 'focus' and if acting requires 'focus.']

Having gotten to a place of relaxation, we need to get our body and our vocal instrument warmed-up for today's activity. If you would put your right arm into the circle, and give it a shake for eight seconds. And, stop. Go ahead and put your left arm into the circle, and give it a shake for eight seconds. And, stop. Place your right leg into the circle, and give it a shake for eight seconds. And, stop. Put your left leg into the circle, and give it a shake for eight seconds. And, stop. Place both arms in the circle and give them just a quick shake for three seconds. And, stop.

While we are all facing into the circle, gently place your right ear next to your right shoulder; do not worry about trying to make them touch. Now gently place your left ear next to your left shoulder. In a clockwise move, gently place your chin to your chest. Then gently bring your right ear to your right shoulder. Go ahead and do that ½ circle neck rotation three times. [I would wait for them to complete the exercise.] Please do the exact same motion three times, but this time in a counter clockwise fashion. We protect the neck by not moving our head in large circles.

138

If you would, please take your fingers and massage the muscles that surround your jaw-bone. [I would demonstrate/lead.] Massage the muscles with enough pressure to warm them up, so they can be easily controlled during speech. [I would let this continue for ten to fifteen seconds.] Please release the muscles of your lower jaw so your mouth almost falls open. Without knocking your teeth together, use your hands to move your lower jaw gently up and down. [I would let this continue for eight to ten seconds.]

I would like us to work a little more on the face muscles. Go ahead and 'motor-boat' your lips. Yes, make the sound of a boat's engine starting. Please do that three more times. [Wait for the students to complete the action.] Please pucker your lips together and then pull in your lips toward your teeth to make the biggest smile you possibly can. Do that four more times. Raise and lower your eyebrows five times. Thank you.

I would now like to do something a little bit different. Please make the biggest face you possibly can. What I mean is, try to use as many muscles in your face as possible. You can even open your mouth as wide as possible. For many people this is a giant smile and for others it resembles a shocking look of surprise. Let me show you. [I would demonstrate.] It is now your turn; go ahead and do that. And, stop. I would like you to make the smallest face you possibly can. This usually looks like someone puckering his/her lips and squinting. Let me show you. [I would demonstrate.] Go ahead and do that. [I would wait for them to complete the exercise.] Thank you. Now, make a big face again. Then, make a little face. Big face. Little face. Big face. Little face. [Students may laugh at this point.] Please stop. Why did we do these exercises? [I would field responses. The instructor wants the students to engage in a brief acknowledgement

of the need for facial expressions on stage. Students will probably make this connection quickly. The instructor must then ask how facial expressions can support an actor working toward achieving an action in a scene. A short discussion can commence about the role of the face in performance. The instructor can reference the students' facial expressions from past repetition exercises (if he/she remembers) to show how the face is used for expression.]

I would like to change focus and look at the body. It is important during performance work to have what I will call a 'neutral position' of the body. The 'neutral position' is a comfortable body position that allows an actor to find his/her 'center' which also allows the spine to be aligned. I will show you how to take a 'neutral position.' If you would face into the circle and imagine that there is a string connected to the top of your head. Take your right hand and grab hold of the string and pull it up. Put your hands at your side, but please act as though the string is still connected. Keep imagining the string, but make sure your feet are hip width apart. Now I will show you how to find your center by using a quote from a strange source: *Ballet for Dummies*. I am not embarrassed to do so because it is an incredibly concise and descriptive way to help you find your center. Please make sure you check to be sure you are supporting your mid-section by 'engaging your thigh muscles, [now] straighten your knees - but without pushing back into your knee joints . . . [and] lift your abdominal muscles upward and back towards your spine' (Speck and Cisneros). That is your 'center.' In addition, your feet should stay hip width apart, your weight should be evenly distributed on both feet, and your shoulders should be in a relaxed position. Make sure your chest is not pointed out but

140

relaxed, and you should be standing straight (yet not like we are being called to attention at a military base). Also, think of the role of gravity in keeping you attached to the ground. When you pull that string from the top of your head, this 'neutral position' becomes the starting point from which the actor begins his/her work on stage. It also can be called upon by a teacher or director if he/she sees an actor slouching, keeping his/her hands in pockets, or oddly crossing his/her legs in an 'x.' Many of us do this by habit or because we are somehow trying to hide. It is odd to try and hide on stage because there is no way you can do it. Therefore, you should have a 'neutral position' which feels comfortable, finds your 'center,' and allows your body to be available to you as a performer in pursuit of an action.[51] You may have to get used to this position, but the basic idea is really to make you present in your body at the time of performance. Now relax for a second. I would like to practice going to that neutral position. Remember what it felt like?

What I would like you to do is imagine that string and pull yourself into a 'neutral position.' I will walk around and see if you are actually in that position. If you are not, I will suggest how to correct your body position. Go ahead and do that. [I would travel around the circle to make sure all students understand what was asked. Some may require help finding a 'neutral position.' I would avoid touching the student and try to explain what he/she needs to do to find a 'neutral position.'] Please continue imagining that string pulling you into a 'neutral position.'

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[51] It is important to note that some parts require an actor to use a modified "neutral" position. For example, Laura from *The Glass Menagerie* would be one of these parts. Laura would have a different "neutral" due to her having to wear a leg brace when she was in school.

Now, we are going to imagine cutting the string with a pair of scissors. When you do this, imagine that your head falls forward and your chin is close to, but not touching, your chest. From that position, I would like you to curl your spine down one vertebra at a time starting with your upper back until you are bending at the waist and your arms are dangling in front of you. When you get close to bending at the waist, release your weight a bit and gently fall into what you should recognize as 'rag-doll' position. Let's go ahead and try that. Cut the string. [I would wait until they complete the exercise.] Since we are in 'rag-doll,' roll up one vertebra at a time starting with the lower back until we return to our 'neutral position.' Complete that action at this point. [I would wait until they complete the exercise.] We are going to call this our 'spine alignment' activity. I would like everyone to do it again, so go ahead and imagine the string. Cut the string. [I would continue talking the students through the 'spine alignment' activity until we are back at 'neutral.'] So, I have a question for you. Why did we do this activity? [I would field student responses. The general reason why we do this is for preparing the body to work on stage without interference from nervous habits. Those habits can interfere with ease of movement and even how we achieve our action.]

There is still one area of the face that we did not exercise. That is inside the mouth. I would like you all to come over to the large mirror on the wall. [Students should move relatively close to the mirror and be facing it. If the classroom is not equipped with a wall mounted mirror, students can be given hand mirrors, or even required to bring mirrors into class.] I know this is going to feel silly, but I would like you to open your mouth as widely as you can and look inside. You may have to stick out your tongue a bit

to see the roof of your mouth and the opening to your throat. Go ahead and do that now. In order for us to be prepared for the sheer amount of dialogue we use on stage, we have to make sure our mouth muscles are prepared. Therefore, we have to limber them up. While looking in the mirror, I would like you to try and make yourself yawn (Skinner 31). As you do so, look how the upper back half of the mouth raises. And, stop. That area is what we call the 'soft palate.' The actual roof of your mouth is your 'hard palate.' You should see the opening to your throat, your tongue, and your teeth. You have to know what these things look like if you are going to use them on stage.

For this exercise, place your hands right below your breastbone. From way down inside you I would like you to make the sounds 'ha-ha-hi.' Let's try it. I would like you to feel what happens in the area below your breastbone when you say 'ha-ha-hi' with as much force as you feel comfortable. Please follow me. Ready, 'ha-ha-hi.' I'd like to do that again. Ready, 'ha-ha-hi.' What did you feel with your hands? [I would field student responses.] Right! That thing 'pushing-down' or 'down and out' is your diaphragm. Sound is created when the diaphragm pushes air from the lungs up through the vocal folds in your throat to hollow areas of your face and into your mouth. Those hollow spaces, your palates, tongue, and teeth help articulate that sound into speech. In order to speak with volume and control, you must learn to speak from the diaphragm like we just did. [The instructor can demonstrate this task and ask the students to do the same. I usually ask the students to tell each other what they had for dinner last night while supporting their speech with diaphragmatic breathing. It can get loud, but it shows the difference between this type of speech and speaking from the throat.] Thank you.

So let's assume the sound is coming into the mouth, but our tongue is lazy or not warmed-up. That would affect our quality of speech. This would affect whether or not we can be heard by an audience who may be sitting quite a distance from where we are performing. It also affects how we attack our action. Right? We want to be in the best form to use both sound and words to fight for our action. Therefore, let's do some tongue stretches and exercises. I know this will look and seem strange, but it is necessary.

First, fold the tip of your tongue behind your top row of teeth and push your tongue out of your mouth (Leigh, *30 Minute Voice Workout*). Go ahead and do that gently. You should feel a tongue stretch. Fold the tip of your tongue behind your lower row of teeth and push your tongue out of your mouth. Go ahead and do that gently. You should feel another type of stretch. Now stick your tongue out as far, but as comfortably, as you can. In a clockwise fashion and then in a counter clockwise fashion move your tongue in circles three times (Skinner 31). These stretches allow us to be able to use our tongue to form words and control articulation. You can relax for a moment, but remain looking in the mirror.

I know it may feel strange to stare at a mirror and do these things, but it is important for each one of us to examine his/her vocal instrument and understand what is happening to make sound. Only then can we be comfortable with what is inside our mouth. That allows us to then understand how we form words from sounds. Of course we do it naturally, but you see the things that go into making speech. We must always try to be heard and understood while on stage. In addition, being able to control our voice and speech is useful for achieving an action. How can controlling your voice and speech be

144

useful for achieving an action? [I would field student responses. The students should understand that pitch, tone, volume, etc. all color our speech. How we color our speech can affect how successful we are at achieving an action. For example, quiet reasoning may be better in some situations while bombastic screaming might be better in another. I would draw the students as close to this understanding as possible.] Please go back to the circle.

A final way we can clarify our voice is to 'shake it into place.' We are going to do this by way of something called the 'humming series.' I learned this exercise at the Atlantic Theatre in New York. It was explained to me that the 'humming series' allows the voice to settle into its natural position. If we do not do the 'humming series,' we can speak in a higher than normal tone. So, let's go ahead and 'shake our voice into place.' What I would like you to do is hum along with me at three different pitches. The first one will be the lowest pitch, the second will be a little higher, and the third will be highest. Let's practice just the pitches on a 'hum.' Ready, go. [I would 'hum' three ascending pitches and make sure the students follow me.] Now, we are going to add bodily movement and open our mouths. So, on the first pitch I would like everyone to start humming. We are then going to raise and lower our shoulders quickly and open our mouths. That will turn the sound from a 'hum' to an 'ahhh.' Let's practice that. [The instructor makes the lowest pitch hum, raises and lowers his shoulders, and opens his mouth to form a shaking 'ahhh.' The students should follow. If they do not, repeat the exercise.] On the second pitch we will do the same thing, but instead of raising and lowering the shoulders we will open our mouths and bounce our body on our knees.

145

Finally, on the third and highest pitch we will open our mouths to allow the 'hum' to become 'ahhh' and we will gently jump. Let's do all three together. Then we will do the whole series once or twice more. [The instructor and students complete the exercise.]

You should notice that my voice is crisper and clearer. There is no 'frog' in my throat, and the pitch of my voice is lower. [This is what usually happens to me when I complete this exercise.] See if that is true of your voice, too. I will pair you up into a dyad. [The instructor walks around and just points to two people standing next to each other so they form a dyad.] Will one of you turn to your partner and tell him/her what you have planned for lunch or dinner today? If you have nothing planned, just tell them what you would like to eat today. When you are finished, let the other person say the same. Go ahead and do that now. [Sometimes the students notice a difference right away and sometimes they do not. There is time for practice and listening in the future, so I am not overly concerned with making them immediately hear something different; however, it is always nice if they do discover something.] Ok, great! I know this was a pretty involved lesson, but the warm-up itself moves much more quickly once we memorize it. Go ahead and have a seat in the audience area so we can talk about what we did today.[52]

Today I led you through a series of exercises to warm-up the vocal instrument. In your own words, please tell me why we actors should bother doing this? [I would field student responses. They are usually pretty savvy about why warm-ups are necessary. What they often do not consider is the use of speech sounds to support an actor's pursuit of an action. Therefore, the instructor has to coax them along a bit to get that information.

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[52] These exercises take far longer to do than to read, so be aware of the time necessary to complete this lesson.

146

Once they make the connection, however, the instructor can ask a truly constructivist question: 'When in the last few class periods do you think the warm-up might have helped you work though our Practical Aesthetics exercises? [I would field student responses.]

Ok, we have just enough time left for a few rounds of repetition; I don't want you to forget how to do it. You can move your chairs if you like, but we have to remember to move them back at the end of class. Please go ahead and pair up with someone you have not worked with before you move your chairs. [Give the students time to do this.] I would like you to practice repetition. Place your attention on your partner. What's true in the moment now? Ready, go. [Let the repetition go on for a few minutes and repeat the exercise if there is time.] And, stop.

Thank you for work today! We have accomplished a great deal. If you moved your chair, go ahead and put it back in the audience section. [I would wait for them to do so.] For homework, continue learning the lines from your current scene; however, make sure you do not practice how to say the lines. Just memorize them in a monotone voice. Are there any questions before class is over? [I would answer any student questions.] Are there any questions about what we did in class today? [I would field any questions.] Just to check, I would like one or two people to verbalize why we did one of today's warm-up activities. [I would field student responses as time allows. I have had students argue about the need for warm-ups, so I am prepared to form an analogy using warm-ups for musicians or sports celebrities.] After we run through the entire warm-up over the next few days, I will ask one of you to take over leading the warm-up. We eventually will

work through having as many students as we can lead the exercise. This allows each student to remember, verbalize, and do what needs to be accomplished in a warm-up. This is a very important learning tool, and we must all take it seriously. Of course, I am not going to get upset if you miss elements. I expect your classmates to help you work though each element until everything becomes second nature. I'll see you next class."

[For a constructivist analysis of this lesson, instructors should see table 10.]

Table 10 Lesson V/B1 - "Warming Up the Vocal Instrument"

Title:	Lesson V/B1 - "Warming Up the Vocal instrument" Constructivist Analysis
Subject:	Acting
Level:	I
Objectives:	The students will begin to build a basic vocal instrument warm-up series for use before performance. They will infer why a warm-up is necessary. Each student will practice facial muscle exercises and become comfortable with the working of his/her voice, speech, and basic articulators. The students will elaborate on why actors need a "neutral position." The students will test diaphragmatic speech support. The students will perceive the value of the "humming series" by listening to other students after the exercise.
Situation:	Students will practice a pre-performance vocal instrument warm-up. Students are asked to process, remember, and eventually recreate an entire vocal warm-up activity for performance in future lessons.
Groups:	Students will work in a large circle. They will then work individually with a mirror. In addition, I will work one on one with a student to develop the best "neutral position" for each actor. The students will also be in dyads for testing the purpose of the "humming series" and for practicing repetition.
Bridge:	The students must identify parts of their own face and mouth. The students are also asked how voice may have affected previous performances. In the future, students will lead the warm-up. This requires the student to bridge the learning gap between application and synthesis. The students may discover a different order of exercises, but the instructor must then ask why the student chose that order. There may be a newly created valid reason (which is always exciting to discover).
Exhibit:	The instructor will view and evaluate all student activities. The instructor must feel comfortable guiding each individual student to his/her own best posture and best warm-up program. This task must be completed over time, not in one class period; however, the task begins today.
Reflection:	There is ample opportunity in this lesson for the instructor to check for understanding. If understanding is weak, the instructor must modify his/her instruction in order to adapt to the specific needs of each student. He/she must not be discouraged if errors are made in instruction. The key is to correct them, and lead the students toward active learning.
Assignment:	The students are asked to keep learning the lines of their scenes in a monotone voice.

Lesson V/B2: "Examining Breath, Resonance, and Pitch"

Lesson Narrative

"It's good to see everyone again.[53] In today's class we want to talk about breath, resonance, and pitch. First I would like to talk about breath. We need to have enough breath to manufacture sound, so grab a textbook or a book from my shelf and please lie on the floor like we did for the relaxation exercises, but this time raise your knees so you can keep your feet on the floor. [I would let the students take that position.] The following exercise, which increases the amount of breath you have to convert to sound, is from Audrey June Hunt, a vocal coach from California. We will do each activity when I pause while reading the instructions:

> Simply follow your breathing for a minute or two with your attention. . . . [Next]
> Put your hands (one on top of the other) on your belly, with the center of your
> lower hand touching your navel. Watch how your breathing responds. You may
> notice that your belly wants to expand as you inhale and retract as you exhale. Let
> this happen, but don't try to force it. . . . [Now, position the] book on the belly in
> place of the hands. This adds weight and aids in a more pronounced feeling as you
> inhale. With the weight of the book resting on your belly, lift the book as you
> inhale and hold it for about 5 seconds. Then lower the book slowly as you exhale
> all of your air. Repeat, 5 or 6 times, breathing through the nose. Repeat this
> exercise, but this time replace just holding the book for 5 seconds with singing the

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[53] I suggest using the vocal instrument warm-up as the warm-up to this lesson. Then I would complete this lesson and end with playing the 'as if game.' This lesson is shorter, 30-45 minutes, because I am accounting for the vocal instrument warm-up and practice with the 'as if game.'

numbers, 12345678910. Lower the book as you sing. [*Insert pause.*] Repeat the

above exercise and increase your singing to the number 15. [*Insert pause.*] Repeat

again, singing to 20 or as far as you can. DO NOT STRAIN [sic].

(vocalcoach.hubpages.com)

This exercise strengthens your diaphragm and develops your lung capacity. When on

stage we need both to support our speech. What I would like you to do is practice this at

home each night. This exercise will increase your lung volume so you can have increased

control over your speech on stage. Go ahead and stand up; then form a circle in the center

of the room. [I would wait for the students to do this.] Why should you bother to increase

your ability to control your speech? [I would field student responses.]

At this point I would like to turn our attention to resonance. According to the

American Academy of Otolaryngology (ear, nose, and throat doctors):

By themselves, the vocal folds produce a noise that sounds like simple buzzing,

much like the mouthpiece on a trumpet. All of the structure above the folds,

including the throat, nose, and mouth, are part of the resonator system. We can

compare these structures to those of a horn or trumpet. The buzzing sound created

by vocal fold vibration is changed by the shape of the resonator tract to produce

our unique human sound. (www.entnet.org)

Essentially, sound bounces around in the throat, nose/sinuses, and mouth before it is

modified by articulators such as the soft palate, teeth, and tongue to produce speech. As

actors, we can control where that sound is modified. We can decide to let it bounce

around in our throat, nose/sinuses, and/or mouth to modify what we sound like. You can

identify your resonators by doing the following exercises. To discover your nasal and sinus resonators, place your hands on your nose and under your eyes. Now make a 'hmmm?' sound like you are suddenly surprised by what someone said (Leigh). Go ahead and do that three times. Ready, *go*. [I would wait for them to finish.] Did you feel the vibration? Place your fingers on your lips. We can feel our mouth as a resonator when we simply hum (Leigh). Go ahead and hum for a few seconds. Ready, *go*. [I would wait for them to finish.] Did you feel the vibration? Finally, place your fingers on your throat. Go ahead and say 'huh' three times. Ready, *go* [I would wait for them to finish.] Those are your resonators. I have a question for you all. Why, as actors, should you personally care about your resonators? [I would field responses from students. Hopefully they are able to say that the resonators control expression. This means that sending the sound to the correct resonator can express a sound or line in a different way. The varied expression can have varied meaning. The instructor will probably have to guide them toward considering what this means when pursuing an action. The various meanings of expression can be used to flavor the approach an actor takes when pursuing an action.]

I would now like to talk about pitch. What does pitch have to do with an actor? [I would field responses from students. Because this is being discussed right after resonators, students usually understand that pitch can have similar effects. Therefore, pitch can be used by the actor to add a specific color to the sounds he/she makes or the approach he/she takes when pursuing an action.] Let's practice various pitches. What I would like you all to do is say 'ha-ha-hum' with me at various pitches (Leigh). We will start low and gradually increase. Ready, follow me. [I would say 'ha-ha-hum' and

152

increase pitch as high as I can go.] Let's do the same thing by motor boating our lips as we say 'bruuuum-ah' in increasing pitches (Leigh). Ready, follow me. [I would say 'bruuuum-ah' in increasing pitches as high as I can go.]

I would like to change the phrasing. This time I would like everyone to say on a pitch following me, 'mi-mi-mi-mi—may-may-may-may—ma-ahhhh?' The 'ahhhh' would swing up a few pitches like a question (Leigh). Say it like this. [I would demonstrate.] Go ahead and say it with me. Ready, go. [I would lead the students in saying 'mi-mi-mi-mi—may-may-may-may—ma-ahhhh.'] And, stop. This time I would like everyone to say on a pitch following me, 'mi-mi-mi-mi—may-may-may-may—myyyy?' The 'myyyy' would swing up a few pitches as in a question (Leigh). Say it like this. [I would demonstrate.] Now say it with me. Ready, *go*. [I would lead the students in saying 'mi-mi-mi-mi—may-may-may-may—myyyy.'] Finally, we are going do the same thing using the phrase 'key-ee,' but the 'ee' will swing up several pitches (Leigh). I will start the first 'key-ee' at a lower pitch and gradually increase, but remember that the 'ee' will swing up several pitches. Say it like this. [I would demonstrate.] Please say it with me. Ready, *go*. [I would lead the students like before.] And, stop.

So, in this lesson, what have you learned about warm-ups, breath, resonance, and pitch? [I would field responses.] The exercises we did are warm-ups, but they also show you the range at which you can use your voice. I hope you are starting to see why I think of the actor's voice as a tool for performance. He/she can always use it to add extra color to words and phrases. That extra color can mean a great deal when striving for an action. For example, the pitch of a word can indicate how important you think something is.

When I say go, I would like you to say 'hey' at a very low pitch. Ready, *go*. [The students will say 'hey.'] When I say go, I would like you to say 'hey' and at very high pitch. Ready, *go*. [The students will say 'hey.'] Do you hear the difference? What difference does the sound make? [I would field student responses.]

Before we end class, I would like to review the 'as if game.' Each of you find a chair, and sit down with your scene partner. Please do that. [I would wait for the students to take their places.] Take a moment to remember your actions and as ifs. We are going to talk out the as ifs in the 'as if game.' Go ahead and complete the 'as if game' when I say go. Ready, *go*. [The students do.] And, *stop*. Go ahead and complete one final round of 'the as if game' when I say go. Ready, *go*. [The students do.] Thank you. Go ahead and take your chairs back to the audience section and have a seat. [I would wait for the students to do that.] Again, thanks for all for your work today. Can anyone think of a situation from previous classes where better control of breath, resonators, and/or pitch would have been useful? [I would field answers and make suggestions based on what I remember from previous classes.] Are there any questions [I would field student questions.] For homework tonight, I would like you to keep running your lines.[54] I will see you next class." [For a constructivist analysis of this lesson, instructors should see table 11.]

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[54] The instructor always has the option of assigning a journal entry. The journal entry should be one half to one full page about breathing, resonance, and pitch. The students may discuss what we did in class today, but they should also focus on 'why' we did what we did today.

Table 11 Lesson V/B2 - "Examining Breath, Resonance, and Pitch"

Title:	Lesson V/B2 - "Examining Breath, Resonance, and Pitch" Constructivist Analysis
Subject: Level:	Acting I
Objectives:	The students will experiment with more vocal warm-ups. The students will use one specific way to strengthen their diaphragm and increase lung capacity to make speech easier on stage. The students will learn about their resonators. The students will theorize about the point and purpose of resonators. The students will practice exercises devoted to pitch so they can eventually determine how to add color to specific sounds, words, and phrases using pitch.
Situation:	The students will work individually to become better acquainted with parts of the body that are used to create voice and speech.
Groups:	For the majority of the class, the students will work independently yet under the direct supervision of the instructor. For the last portion of the class, students will practice repetition in a dyad.
Bridge:	The students will explain why they should personally care about breath, resonators, and pitch. They are also asked to think of a situation from previous classes where better control of breath, resonators, and/or pitch would have been useful. In addition, their journal writing provides a bridge (in a different medium) to a student's present thoughts and past experiences. Journals can actually be assigned throughout the entire course to check on understanding.
Exhibit:	Students will demonstrate, both verbally and kinesthetically, what they have learned about warm-ups, breath, resonance, and pitch.
Reflection:	The instructor asks the students to verbalize what they did in class and why they did it. This will check student learning and allow the instructor to determine how effective his/her instruction was (for future modification).
Assignment:	The students are supposed to continue learning their lines, practice the breathing exercise learned today, and journal about breathing, resonance, and pitch.

Lesson V/B3 - "Articulation and Tongue Twisters"

Lesson Narrative

"I would like to welcome you back to class.[55] Please form a circle standing in the center of the room. [I would wait for them to do this.] We are now going to discuss pronunciation and articulation. When on stage, there are several articulation and pronunciation difficulties that can pose a challenge to the actor. Today, I will introduce you to a few of these challenges in hopes of clarifying your speech when you act. Since this is an introductory course in acting, I am not trying to turn you into what many in the theatre call a 'classical actor' or a 'Shakespearean actor.' That type of training is out of scope for this level of work.[56] Instead, I have chosen to focus on some of the major pronunciation and articulation problems I have discovered in the approximately thirty full length plays I have directed.

Unless otherwise noted, the majority of the follow exercises were taken from Edith Skinner's *Speak with Distinction*. Skinner was a very famous voice and speech coach, and her students have continued her work by adding more exercises to the text. I am simply using these exercises to help you be heard and understood on stage; I am not using these exercises to fix accents or make you sound like someone you are not. I would like to begin.

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[55] I suggest reviewing Lessons V/B 1 and V/B 2 as a warm-up for this lesson. These three lessons, when combined, form the "Voice/Speech" section of the course. If the class runs long, continue with this lesson during the next class period. The students need constant review and practice; constantly overwhelming them with new information will not make them better actors (quite the contrary). Simply pick up by reviewing what was covered in the previous class, add new material, and then close by reviewing material covered earlier in the course.

[56] You can still experiment with Shakespeare, but you should not expect perfection in an Acting I course.

When on stage, a beginning actor may not pronounce Ms, Ns, Ls, Ts, Ps, Ds, Ss and the two letter combination WH in a way audiences can easily understand. Because of this, we are going to do a few exercises that will help us reinforce the habit of saying these sounds clearly on stage. This exercise from *Speak with Distinction* is called 'Edith's Favorite.' Please repeat after me when I pause at the end of each line. Here we go. 'MAH MAY MEE MY MOH MOO.' [Pause for the students to repeat.] 'NAH NAY NEE NIGH NOH NOO.' [Pause for the students to repeat.] 'LAH LAY LEE LIE LOH LOO.' [The students repeat.] We will add another series. This time I would like you to stress the syllables I do (which are underlined) in the following exercises. [I would stress the underlined syllables.] '<u>MAH</u> may me <u>MY</u> moh moo <u>MAH</u> may me <u>MY</u> moh moo.' [Pause for the students to repeat.] '<u>NAH</u> may nee <u>NIGH</u> noh noo <u>NAH</u> nay nee <u>NIGH</u> noh noo.' [Pause for the students to repeat.] '<u>LAH</u> lay lee <u>LIE</u> loh loo <u>LAH</u> lay lee <u>LIE</u> loh loo' (32). [Pause for the students to repeat. The instructor can repeat this exercise, and the following exercises, as many times as he/she would like.]

I would like to practice Ps, Ts, and Ds, as well as Ss that should make a Z sound at the end of words. We want to practice saying Ps because actors often over-aspirate them. They *are* aspirated (meaning air comes out of our mouth after we say them), but we do not want to sound like we are spitting. When it comes to Ts and Ds, actors sometimes forget to pronounce them at all. As for Ss, they can sound strange to an audience because actors sometimes like to hold the S sound so long that it sounds like a leaky tire or steam escaping. In addition, it is often the case that Ss at the end of words such as 'zippers' should sound like Z instead of S. I would like to practice these letters. It is my hope that

157

practicing them often will cause you all to pay closer attention to the way you say them in your personal life and on stage. Yes, I said your personal life because, frankly, it is difficult to turn pronunciation off and on. Therefore, please repeat the following practice phrases that came from *Speak with Distinction:*

Peter Piper the pickled pepper picker picked a peck of pickled peppers. [Students repeat.]

A peck of pickled peppers did Peter Piper the pickled pepper picker pick. [Students repeat.] Now if Peter Piper the pickled pepper picker picked a peck of pickled peppers, [Students repeat.] Where is the peck of pickled peppers that Peter Piper the pickled pepper picker picked? [Students repeat. It is suggested to repeat this entire exercise at least twice more.] (33)

Thank you. Let's move on.

I would like to practice Ws and the letter combination WH. Sometimes actors pronounce Ws and the WH combination the same way. Instead, the WH combination is often voiced; it does not sound like a single W. In *Speak with Distinction*, Edith Skinner suggests that 'when' is pronounced 'WHen' rather than 'Wen' (335). The reason for this is so the audience can tell the different between words that use a single W and those that use the WH combination. If actors do not do this, meaning can be lost. Please repeat the following phrases after me:

Whether the weather be fair, [Students repeat.] or whether the weather be not, [Students repeat.] whether the weather be cold, [Students repeat.] or whether the

158

weather be hot, [Students repeat.] we'll weather the weather whatever the

weather, whether we like it or not. [Students repeat.] (Leigh)

Thank you. Let's move on.[57]

Please think of the letter combination 'str' as in 'street' and 'tr' as in 'tree.' In

what seems to me to be within the last few years, beginning actors have been

pronouncing 'str' with an added 'h' so the word becomes 'shtreet.' Similarly, beginning

actors have been pronouncing 'tr' using the 'ch' sound found in the word 'chew.' This

causes the word 'tree' to become 'chree.' Since I have personally noticed this type of

pronunciation, I have written my own exercise to help you avoid the 'sht' sound in words

like 'street' and the 'ch' sound in words like 'tree.' I would like us to practice these

exercises right away. Please repeat the following phrases after me: straight trees grow on

the sides of the straight street near the trash trucks. [Students repeat.] What might happen

if Sheila removes the straight trees from the straight street? [Students repeat.] There

would no longer be straight trees stretching down the straight street, [students repeat] and

the trash trucks would be stressed by the sun's trying heat. [Students repeat. I would

repeat this exercise twice more; it is rather difficult.] Thank you. Let's move on.

Finally, I would like to practice some articulation exercises. These should also be

used as a warm-up before going on stage. This time I will say a word combination, and

then I would like all of us to say that word combination over and over again for several

seconds. These phrases came from Edith Skinner's *Speak with Distinction*:

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[57] Students have often joked about my "over pronunciation" in the classroom. I have used that as a teaching
moment to talk about effective stage speech.

kinky cookie [students repeat several times] . . . . philological ability [students

repeat several times] . . . eleven benevolent elephants [students repeat several

times] . . . . Topeka Bodega [students repeat several times] . . . . red leather yellow

leather [students repeat several times] . . . . unique New York [students repeat

several times] . . . toy boat [students repeat several times] . . . . sushi chef

[students repeat several times] . . . . garlic gargle, gargle with garlic [students

repeat several times] . . . (34-35)

Thank you for your work on these exercises.[58]

We are just about out of time. Go ahead and have a seat in the audience section of

the classroom. [I would wait for them to become settled.] Today we practiced effective

pronunciation and clear articulation. Effective pronunciation and clear articulation help

an audience hear us correctly, but they also help us perform effectively as actors. For

example, if we are lazy about our speech, it may seem like we are not that interested in

pursuing our action. Remember, pursuing your action is essential to a solid performance.

Before class is over, I would like you to tell me what you learned today. Did you

learn anything new today about speech and articulation? [I would field student

responses.] Why must actors practice articulation before going on stage? [I would field

student responses.] During our past exercises, or if you have been on stage before, would

better articulation have helped you in any way? [I would field student responses.] Thank

you. Are there any questions about what we covered today? [I would field student

responses.] I eventually will expect you to use these voice exercises, as well as the

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[58] If time remains, students may practice repetition.

movement exercises to come, as personal training techniques and warm-up exercises. You should practice these exercises regularly at home, and you should always warm-up before performances. If you stay involved in theatre, as I hope you will for a long time, you will eventually build an entire repertoire of these activities. For your assignment tonight, I would like you to practice as many of the warm-up exercises as possible and continue learning your lines. Remember to learn your lines in a monotone voice; do not practice 'line readings.'[59] I enjoyed working with you today.[60] Thank you for your work. I will see you next class." [For a constructivist analysis of this lesson, instructors should see table 12.]

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[59] I suggest assigning a journal entry about today's class. The journal entry should be one half to one full page about warming-up, articulation, and tongue twisters. The students may discuss what we did in class today, but they should also focus on 'why' we did what we did today. This provides a constructivist bridge between what was covered in class and the student's individual thoughts and/or past experiences.

[60] An alternate homework assignment using technology would be to provide the students with a handout of today's articulation exercises. Ask them to go home and record themselves talking through the articulation exercises. They could do this via their home computer's microphone and bring in a flash drive recording for the instructor to review and/or grade. I think it would be interesting to comment on the recording and ask the student to review the recording after viewing the instructor's comments. It may help them hear, in their own voices, why articulation is important, especially if they doubt the need for any pronunciation and/or articulation improvement.

Table 12 Lesson V/B3 - "Articulation and Tongue Twisters"

Title:	Lesson V/B3 - "Articulation and Tongue Twisters" Constructivist Analysis
Subject: Level:	Acting I
Objectives:	The students will review vocal warm-up exercises. The students will continue strengthening their breathing. The students will review resonator and pitch exercises. The students will apply what they learned about articulation to their theatre work. The students will start to deduce why articulation is so important for the actor.
Situation:	The students will practice (in order to improve) their stage pronunciation of the consonants M, N, L, T, P, D, S, W, and the two letter combination WH. They will also practice general articulation for the stage.
Groups:	For the majority of the class, the students will work on their own pronunciation and articulation. Yet, they are also under the direct supervision of the instructor. Therefore, the instructor should never feel bad telling students what they could do more effectively. If time permits, students will practice repetition in a dyad.
Bridge:	The students will explain why they should personally care about pronunciation and articulation. Their journal writing also provides a bridge which links past experiences to current knowledge construction.
Exhibit:	Each student will be asked to practice his/her articulation for the stage. The instructor can verbally evaluate the pronunciation of the group as well as the enunciation of the individual. The instructor should feel comfortable providing immediate feedback to the students.
Reflection:	The instructor asks the students to verbalize what they did in class and why they did it. The instructor also asks the students how articulation could have helped them in the past. This will check student learning and allow the instructor to determine how effective his/her instruction was (for future modification).
Assignment:	The students are to continue learning their lines, practice their breathing exercise, and journal about warming-up, articulation, and tongue twisters.

Lesson V/B4 - "Breathing, Stretching, and Strengthening"

Lesson Narrative

"Today we are going to practice breathing and some Laban movement for the stage. The following exercises are going to serve three purposes. The first purpose is to strengthen breathing so you have enough air in your lungs to accommodate your voice on stage; the second purpose is to strengthen the body's core, which will provide breath support for your vocal instrument; and the third purpose is to get you better acquainted with the various muscles of your body. You may be thinking to yourself that you already are well acquainted with the muscles in your body, but I have a feeling you might be surprised. Beginning actors often underestimate how physically draining a performance can be. While a short scene might not require a great deal of physical prowess, a full length play or musical requires a great deal. Therefore, just as an athlete must prepare his/her body for a sporting event, an actor must prepare his/her body to successfully handle the demands of the stage. This does not mean it is time to learn how to run a four minute mile or train for a marathon, but it is time to practice physical coordination. According to Barbara Adrian, a professional Laban movement practitioner, Laban movement provides 'a support for actors to know who they are as movers, [to] expand their movement potential, and [to] become their most expressive and imaginative selves' ("An Introduction" 84).

If you would, please have a seat in your own space on the floor. Go ahead and lie back extending your hands over your head until your wrists touch the floor. In addition, extend your legs so your legs and heels are in contact with the floor. Make sure there is

163

an arm's length between you and anyone else around you. [I would wait for the students to do this.] Let's begin. If you would, please give yourself a 'heel rock' by pressing your heels against the floor while alternating pointing your toes toward you and then away from you several times. Essentially, you will slightly pull your body back and forth (just an inch or so) on the floor. Let's do that several times (*Actor Training* 46). This is simply a relaxation exercise. [I would let them heel rock for 30-40 seconds.] And, stop.

If you would, please use your arms and your legs to form an 'X' on the floor with your entire body. Go ahead and give yourself a 'heel rock' with your right heel. [I would let them heel rock for 30 seconds.] Give yourself a 'heel rock' with your left heel. [I would let them heel rock for 30 seconds.] Now, by sliding your right arm and your right leg on the floor slide your right elbow toward your right knee, but do not try to make them touch. And, hold. [I would let them hold for 5-10 seconds.] Please go back to 'X.' At this point, slide your left elbow toward your left knee, but do not try to make them touch. And, hold. [I would let them hold for 5-10 seconds.] Go back to 'X.' I would like everyone do the right side again. And, hold. [I would let them hold for 5-10 seconds.] Let's do the left side again. And, hold. [I would let them hold for 5-10 seconds.] Go back to 'X.' What we are doing is strengthening the muscles around our core. That exercise requires you to engage the muscles in your midsection.

We are now going to do some abdominal stretches. If you would, go ahead and get into the fetal position on your right side. [I would let them hold for 10-15 seconds.] Staying on your right side, slide your arms over your head and straighten your legs. It is almost like you are flying like Superman but on your right side. [I would let them hold

164

for 10 seconds.] Go back to the fetal position on your right side. [I would let them hold for 10-15 seconds.] Then, go back to the 'X.' Let's go ahead and do the other side. If you would, go ahead and get into the fetal position on your left side. [I would let them hold for 10-15 seconds.] This time staying on your left side, slide your arms over your head and straighten your legs. It is almost like you are flying like Superman but on your left side. [I would let them hold for 10 seconds.] Go back to the fetal position on your left side. [I would let them hold for 10-15 seconds.] Then, go back to the 'X.'

Please place your feet flat on the floor with your knees up, and place your hands on your waist near your belly button. I would like you to go ahead and tighten your abs, then lift your right foot a few inches off the ground and hold it there for five seconds. Put your right foot back on the ground. This time lift your left foot a few inches off the ground, and hold it there for five seconds. Please put your right foot back on the ground. I would now like you to do those same two lifts two more times. Ready, go. [I would wait for the students to complete the exercise.] Place the soles of your feet together and let your knees fall out to the sides. This lifting exercise strengthens your abs, or your core, and putting the soles of your feet together and letting your knees fall out to the sides is a stretch. Go ahead and stay in that stretch for about 10 seconds. [I would wait for the students to stretch.]

I would like you to place your feet flat on the floor again with your knees again pointed up. Go ahead and do that now. Tighten your abs and lift your right leg a few inches off the ground. Hold it there and lift your left leg a few inches off the ground. Keep both of your feet elevated like that for three seconds. This is another exercise that

tones your core. I would like you to do that same lift of both your feet two more times. Remember to hold each lift for three seconds. Ready, *go*. [I would lead the students in the exercise.] Put the soles of your feet together and let your knees fall out to the sides. Go ahead and stay in that stretch for about 10 seconds. [I would wait for the students to stretch.]

For our next group of exercises I would like you to kneel on the floor and go into what yoga instructors call 'child's pose.' While you are kneeling, please sit back on your feet, lower your face near the floor, and extend your hands on the floor as far as you can reach without raising your bottom off your feet. Just remain there in a stretch for about ten seconds. Please focus on your breathing. With a deep breath, try to 'expand your back with breath' (*Actor Training*, 58). What I actually mean is 'expand your rib cage with breath,' but this particular exercise will allow you to feel how your whole center fills with breath (58). Go ahead and do that. Now exhale and just focus on your normal breathing pattern. Remember that your whole 'core' is affected by breathing. By focusing on your breath, you will become relaxed for performance, and you will also get a sense of your body's center. Just remain there focusing on your breath for about twenty seconds. [I would wait for the students to complete this activity.] And, stop.

At the moment, using your hands go ahead and pull your body forward on the floor until you are up on your knees. In this position you will have both hands on the floor and both knees on the floor. [I would wait for the students to complete this activity.] To provide a nice stretch we are going to go into what yoga instructors call 'cat' and the 'cow' position. If you would, while you remain on your hands and knees, arch your back

166

and hold. Go ahead and do that. This is called 'cat.' Now go ahead and bend the center of your back until you look as if a horse's saddle might fit nicely on your back. This is called 'cow.' As you exhale, I would I would like you to move back to 'cat,' but when you exhale move to 'cow' (60). Please breathe at a moderate pace while you complete these activities. Please begin and alternate from 'cat' to 'cow' five times (60). [I would wait for the students to complete this activity.] And, stop.

From your position on your hands and knees, we are going to do a few more traditional yoga poses. These may be a little challenging, so please do what you can. Of course, you should always try to do the exercises if you possibly can. Now, from this position on your hands and knees go back to 'child's pose.' Please do that. In much the same way as we got up on our hands and knees, I would like you to pull your body forward using your hands; however, as you pull your body forward I would like you to lift your knees off the floor, tuck your toes under and press down with your feet raising your midsection into what yoga instructors called 'down dog.' I would like you to try this. Please follow me. Pull your body forward, lift your knees, tuck your toes, and push up your midsection using your ab muscles until your body looks like a pyramid. This is called 'down dog.' Hold this pose for a few seconds and breathe normally. 'Down dog' allows us to strengthen and stretch our body. [I would check to see if all the students were able to complete the activity.]

Now, we are going to make the stretch a little bit more difficult and exercise the body at the same time. If you would, from 'down dog,' I would like you to slowly drop your knees a bit until you are in what many of us would call a 'push-up' position. Go

ahead and do that. [I would wait until they complete the activity.] Yoga instructors call this 'plank' position. If you would please bend your elbows as if you are doing a 'push-up' bringing your chest close to the floor. Yoga instructors call this pose 'chaturanga.' Go ahead and lower your 'core' to the floor and arch up like a snake. Yoga instructors call this pose 'cobra.' Next, lift your waist and go back to 'down dog.' Take a few seconds to breathe, and we will repeat the sequence. [I would wait about five seconds.] We are going to repeat the sequence. Go ahead and go to 'plank,' which looks like the start of a 'push-up,' then lower your body to 'chaturanga.' Try arching to 'cobra,' hold for a few seconds, and then go back to 'down-dog.' Now lower your knees to the floor and go back to 'child's pose.' If you would, please rest for a few seconds. [I would wait about five seconds.] Feel free to stand up and just walk freely through the space. [I would let the students walk for a minute or two.] If you would please go back to the audience section of the classroom and have a seat.

Today in class we focused on breathing, stretching, strengthening the body, and strengthening the core. We do this as actors to make the body more responsive on stage. This is necessary for the physical demands of some roles, but I argue that strong breath support and a strong body allow us to be better able to pursue our action. For instance, we use a tool to work toward achieving an action when something we see in our partner makes us choose that tool. Having a responsive and not sluggish body, or voice for that matter, allows us to make quicker tool shifts. A quicker tool shift can be the difference between an incredibly effective response in a scene or a less than effective response. More specifically, firing off a verbal 'threat' at our scene partner that fills the theatre with

a high/low pitch tone or dashing across the stage to offer quick 'physical imposition' upon our scene partner can be much more effective than softly relaying a line as a 'threat' or nonchalantly strolling over to 'physically impose' our hands on our scene partner's arms. Our voice and body must always be ready for what the scene needs in any specific moment, and we may not truly know what our scene needs in a specific moment until that very moment. Therefore, much like an athlete or a musician, we have to train our instruments. As actors, our instruments are our mind, voice, and body. In what other ways are actors called upon to use the mind, voice, and body as instruments in performance? [I would field student responses, and hold a general discussion.] Thank you for your commentary.

Next, I would like to talk briefly about our next class and give you a very short assignment. In our next class we will explore presence, the physical space around our body, and ensemble work. In order to do these things, I want to start with an activity from Chuck Jones' book. To do that activity I need you to bring a short reading with you to class. It can be as simple as a song lyric, a poem, or a few sentences from a letter you received. It just has to have some sort of special value to you. I do not necessarily want you to bear your soul to the class or share some secret song you like. I just want you to bring in something that matters to you. That means, you should not read a paragraph from a math text book (unless that paragraph is one of the most beautiful things you have ever read). Do you understand? Are there any questions? [I would field student responses.]

Thank you for your work today. I will see you next class."[61] [For a constructivist analysis

of this lesson, instructors should see table 13.]

Table 13 Lesson V/B4 - "Breathing, Stretching, and Strengthening"

Title:	Lesson V/B4 - "Breathing, Stretching, and Strengthening" Constructivist Analysis
Subject: Level:	Acting I
Objectives:	The students will demonstrate effective breathing, stretching, and strengthening activities for performance preparation. The students will further hypothesize the need for training the mind, voice, and body as instruments in theatrical performance.
Situation:	The students are asked to learn and practice warm-up activities that deal with stretching, strengthening, and effective breathing.
Groups:	Students will work individually during the majority of this class period on exercises for the body.
Bridge:	The students are asked to compare the physical requirements of a stage actor to the physical requirements of an athlete or musician. How are they similar? The point of this bridge is to draw a connection to something familiar. In the discussion segments of the class, the instructor can also note how certain muscles will be used during performance. This allows the student to think of himself/herself as an actor.
Exhibit:	The instructor will be moving throughout the room to check on each student's proper breathing, movement, and form. The student should do his/her best to complete the exercise as described by the instructor. If a student has health concerns that would keep him/her from safely completing the exercises, they should not do the exercise.
Reflection:	The instructor should note how well the students are working through the exercises. Some of these exercises require a high level of muscle understanding, so if students cannot do certain exercises, or are literally unfamiliar with how certain muscles work in the body, the teacher should note this. It may be necessary to take special care in completing specific exercises. This requires absolute concentration on the part of the teacher because he/she does not want students to get hurt or embarrassed for being unable to complete some exercises. If students are having difficulty during class, the instructor must make sure students do only the exercises that they can. In no way should the instructor force students to complete exercises they simply cannot do.
Assignment:	The students are supposed to bring a short reading to class with them next time. The reading should be of personal importance because it is going to be used to work on an exercise focusing on presence.

Lesson V/B5 - "Presence, Laban Kinesphere, and Ensemble"

Lesson Narrative

"Welcome back to class.[62] Last class I gave you an assignment to find a reading that had special meaning to you. I assume each of you brought that with you to class today. If you would, please get that ready. Place the reading on your seat and form a circle standing in the center of the room.[63] Please form a single file line against the far upstage wall so your shoulders are almost touching.[64] I am going to have a seat in the center of the audience. What I would like each of you to do is close your eyes and think about the calmest place you have ever been; we have done this before in a relaxation exercise. That place can be the beach, at a park, in the mountains for even at a beloved relative's house. Think about what that felt like. Think how warm you felt inside and how comfortable you were. While you are thinking about this place, I would like you to go to the 'neutral position' we learned in a previous class. Just take a moment and remain in 'neutral,' but feel the warmth of that comfortable place.

I would like you to think of the origin of that warmth to be your body's 'core,' the center of your body. You can actually picture the warmth as a glowing ball of light that resides in your 'core,' but the rays of light from that glowing ball shine out in all directions from your center. Really try to feel how that warmth offers you a sense of calmness, but also power. Take a moment to visualize that [I would give the students

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[62] Today's class would be best held on stage if at all possible.

[63] Because class will be physical today, I would start with a brief vocal warm-up; however, I would end with having the students practice taking the 'neutral position' they were taught in a previous class.

[64] If there are too many students, two lines (one in front of the other) can be formed. Having many students will require this class activity to be continued in a subsequent class meeting.

172

time to visualize what I asked.] If you would, allow yourself to keep that glowing ball of

warmth in your 'core,' but imagine yourself leaving that peaceful place you imagined.

With your eyes still closed, imagine yourself being transported from that place of comfort

to our classroom/stage right now. If you would, please gradually open your eyes, but

keep imagining that glowing ball of light in the 'core' of your body. As you open your

eyes, I would like you to imagine the rays of light that come from that glowing ball in

your 'core' shine out in all directions filling this entire space with light. You should

consider this light to be your presence. It is the light of your person that is filling the

entire space right.

I would like the two people in the center of our line to slowly walk downstage as

far as you can [I would call them by name]. As you do so, still imagine that light, that

presence from your 'core,' shining in all directions and filling the whole space. Go ahead

and do that. As they do so, the rest of you should step either stage right or stage left to fill

in the space that was left so we will have a straight line across the back wall. Now, for the

two of you walking downstage let that light fill the entire house. Think of your presence

reaching every member of the audience who might someday be here watching you. As

you approach as far as you can downstage simply stop when you get there and look into

the house. Imagine your presence reaching everyone as you each turn away from each

other and walk appropriately stage right or left until you come near the wings. Please do

that. As you approach the wings keep thinking of that light, that presence, filling the

space. Then, turn around at go back to take the up right or up left corner positions in the

line of your classmates. Keep imagining the light. Imagine your presence filling the room

even when you take your position in the line of your classmates. [I would wait until they complete the requested action.] Now, I would like the two current individuals in the center of our line to slowly walk downstage as far as you can [I would call them by name]. As you do so, still imagine that light, that presence from your 'core,' shining in all directions and filling the whole space.[65]

Since we each have had the opportunity to walk down center, I want you to continue thinking of that light in your 'core' as your presence. This time find your own space in the room/on stage and face downstage. It does not matter where; it only matters that there is an arm's length between you and another person both stage right and stage left of you as well as down stage and upstage of you. This may mean we have to be in staggered lines filling the room from far down stage to far upstage and far stage right to far stage left. Go ahead and find a position, but keep that light shining bright from your 'core.' Do not let your presence 'go out.' [I would let them find a place if they have not done so already.]

What you have experienced is the idea of stage presence. I want you to keep that idea of presence glowing brightly whenever you or onstage. Do you understand? [I would wait for the students to acknowledge 'yes' in some way.] Well, that presence passes from your body to all the areas of our room or a theatre, but onstage other actors come in contact with that presence. There is an area about three feet around our entire body that we call our personal space. When we are not onstage, we sometimes feel awkward when others violate our personal space. For example, someone might be what we call a 'close

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[65] Repeat the exercise until all the students have had a chance to walk down center and back to the line.

174

talker.' A 'close talker' is someone who gets too close to us when he/she begins a conversation. In addition, we might feel odd when someone stands too close to us in an elevator. When we feel odd like that, we have someone violating our personal space. They are there and we can sense it. Movement specialist Rudolph Laban called this personal space our kinesphere (Newlove 17).

When we are in a play or a scene with other actors, the other actors are going to come into contact with our kinesphere; we have to get used to that. We have to get used to what it feels like because we need to keep that sense of presence from our 'core' alive as we interact with other actors. We also want to be able to sense when other actors are around us so we can react to them as necessary. Therefore, the first step in getting used to moving closely with other actors is to determine the extremes of our kinesphere. The following exercise will help each of us identify that personal space. I simply ask that you keep your sense of presence alive as we work through the next exercise together. Since each of us has already found a space to work, please go to your 'neutral position' with your arms at your sides and your feet placed firmly on the floor hip width apart. [I would wait for them to do so.] During the exercise, do your best to follow. If you get confused, simply catch up when you can. Let's begin.

While still facing the audience please do the following in one movement: without moving your right foot, take a large step left with your left foot while extending both arms as far left as is comfortable with your palms vertical (fingers pointing up) and facing left at chest height. Now, from that position, complete the following in one movement: without moving your right foot, shift your weight back to your right foot and

take a large step downstage with your left foot while extending both arms as far down stage as is comfortable with your palms vertical (fingers pointing up) and facing downstage at chest height. From that position, complete the following in one movement: without moving your right foot, shift your weight back to your right foot and take a large step upstage with your left foot while extending both arms as far upstage as is comfortable with your palms vertical (fingers pointing down) and facing upstage at waist height. Now, for the tricky part, please complete the following in one movement: raise both hands above your head as you put all your weight on your right foot and pivot your body on your right foot until you are facing stage left and able to take a large step left on your left foot. As you take that large step left on your left foot, extend both arms as far upstage as is comfortable with your palms vertical (fingers pointing up) and facing upstage at chest height.

From this new body position facing stage left, complete all the same movements you did while facing downstage. Eventually, you will pivot on your right foot again and change your body position so you are facing upstage. Again, you will complete all the same movements you did while facing downstage. Eventually, you will pivot on your right foot a third time and change your body position so you are facing stage right. Again, you will complete all the same movements you did while facing downstage. Eventually, you will pivot on your right foot a fourth time and change your body position so you are facing downstage again. Finally, while facing downstage, you will then shift your weight to your left foot and take all the steps with your right foot as you turn clockwise through

all those familiar bodily positions until you are once again facing downstage.[66] This gives

an actor a sense of kinesphere. Now, with a new sense of kinesphere and a new sense of

presence, we can move on to some ensemble exercises.[67]

The following exercises are Viewpoints based and allow actors to become

comfortable moving and interacting with others on stage. We do these exercises after the

kinesphere exercises because they are supposed to help us gain a greater sense of the

personal space around us. To begin I would just like everyone to walk through the entire

open space.[68] Remember to move in as close to your 'neutral position' (arms by your

sides and no hands in pockets) as you can and keep that glowing sense of presence at the

'core' of your being. As you move, get a sense of the people around you. [I would let

them move through the space for a couple minutes.] Now, I would like to try something.

If you would, please stop where you are and face me.

This entire exercise is based on a Viewpoints exercise from *The Viewpoints Book*

by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau. Let's begin. In your mind, choose a direction in which

you are going to walk and a pace at which you are going to walk. When I say walk you

must walk at that constant pace in a straight line with *intention*. What I mean by intention

is 'with purpose.' I do not mean run, stomp, or do some sort of strange dramatic sweep.

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[66] Of course, I suggest personally walking the students through each and every turn of this exercise until they are comfortable moving freely without error. Only then should you move on to the ensemble exercises.

[67] In future class sessions, the instructor can (and should) make this kinesphere exercise an ensemble exercise. This is done by doing one practice run of the exercise and then telling the students they must do all of the movements together without any direction. The instructor should not even say start. This is actually a great warm-up for the following class if this class runs long. It is just difficult to tell because students have different ability levels when it comes to individual balance and working together as a group. You want to improve both in every student.

[68] If possible, these exercises should also be completed on stage. The more time students spend on stage the more comfortable they are being there.

Instead, make a decision and stick to that decision without veering. This is much the same thing as playing your action in a scene. When you play your action in a scene nothing else matters. You are simply using the text of a scene you are performing to achieve your action. Only the physical changes you see in your partner might make you shift tools, but you never shift action unless we analyzed a scene and it has several 'beats.' Liken the movement you are about to make to playing your 'action;' you are moving in a specific direction you chose to move. In your mind only decide upon the direction and pace, but do not move yet. [I would wait for the actors to choose a direction and pace.] When I say go I want you to start moving in that direction; however, there are two catches to this.

The first catch is you must always move at a constant pace in your chosen direction until you come close to the wings, the back wall of our stage area, or the seats of the audience. When you get to one of those positions, you must obviously stop, and choose a different direction. Then, simply start moving again with intention in that new direction. It can be in any direction you like, but you must again walk in a straight line and at a steady pace.

The second catch is if you are going to run into another actor, do not run into another actor. Simply stop moving just before you are about to run into that person. Because this is an ensemble exercise and we are all taking care of one another, you may not start moving again until a fellow actor taps you on the shoulder (the fellow actor cannot be the one your almost ran into). When a fellow actor taps you on the shoulder, feel free to choose another direction and walk at a constant pace in that direction until

178

you are about to run into someone else or come close to the back wall, the wings, or the audience. At the same time, make sure you keep that sense of presence alive in your 'core' and try to sense the kinesphere that exists around you. It is a great deal to remember, but actors have a great deal to remember when we are on stage. Do you understand all the directions? [I would field any questions.] When I say go, you will begin moving. Ready, *go*. [I would let the class move freely, stop near one another, tap one another on the shoulder, and change directions when required for several minutes.] And, stop. Thank you for your work.

I am going to teach you about pace. We are going to do the exact same exercise again following the exact same rules, but this time everyone must move at the same pace. I will tell you what that pace will be by saying a number from one to ten. If I say *one*, everyone will move together at a very slow pace but in different directions. If I say *ten*, everyone will move as fast as you all can together but in different directions. The other rules of the exercise still apply. If you are about to bump into someone, you must stop. The only way to start moving again is to have someone tap you on the shoulder. In addition, you must change direction if you come to the back wall, the wings, or the audience. Are there any questions? [I would field any questions.] Let's start moving at a pace of one (Bogart and Landau 36-42).[69] [I would let the actors move for a minute or two before choosing a different number.] And, stop. Thank you for your work. Go ahead

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[69] The instructor can keep this exercise going as long as he/she wishes by calling out different numbers. I prefer first starting at one and then jumping to ten. This establishes the group's two extremes, so it becomes easier for them to determine the speed of numbers in-between. Remember, the overall goal of this exercise is to get students to work together, take care of one another, and be considerate of one another on stage. This is more difficult than it sounds. Sometimes this exercise takes weeks to master; I am not exaggerating. We have a strong sense of self in today's society, but we do not have a strong sense of taking care of others. This is unfortunate when trying to build an ensemble.

and rest for a minute or two before we move on to another ensemble exercise. [I would let the actors rest and get water if that is at all possible.]

I would like to try another ensemble exercise. This entire exercise is also based on a Viewpoints exercise from *The Viewpoints Book* by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau. Again, please do your best to maintain that sense of presence emanating from your 'core' and remember the dimensions of your kinesphere around your body. We will remain standing for this exercise, so please form a medium size circle in the center of the floor. Since I will be giving directions from outside the circle, do not include me in this exercise. Please form a circle. [I would wait for the students to do this, but I would remain outside the circle.] If you would please face the center of the circle and make sure there is approximately one imaginary person's shoulder width between each person in the circle. It is important that the circle not be too small or too large because that would change the difficulty level of the exercise. In fact, a circle that is too large *or* too small increases the difficulty of the exercise. Is everyone set? [I would just wait for some sort of affirmative response.]

Please start moving in a counter-clockwise direction which means to start rotating the circle to the right. Move at a modest pace and keep your focus in the center of the circle. When I clap my hands, you will all change direction at the exact same time and start moving in a clockwise direction. If you do not all move at exactly the same time, we will have to stop and start all over again. Do you understand? [I would wait for some sort of affirmative response.] When I clap my hands, you will start moving in a clockwise

180

direction. [I would let the students continue moving for several seconds before I clap.]

Clap! [70]

When I clap my hands, you will all change direction at the exact same time and start moving in a counter-clockwise direction. If you do not all change direction at the same time, we will have to start all over again. So, listen for my clap. [I would let the students continue moving for several seconds before I clap.] *Clap*![71]

I am going to make things a little bit more difficult. This time I am not going to clap at all. As a group, you are all going to start on your own. You will then have the option to change directions as a group or stop as a group. If you stop as a group, you will also decide the direction in which you will start moving again. Let me repeat those directions. As a group, you will all begin moving on your own in the same direction. You then have the option to stop or change direction as long as you all do it together on your own. If you do not do any of these things together as a group, I will say *stop* and you must stop and start moving again. Remember, this is an ensemble exercise, so you must keep a sense of personal presence in your 'core' while keeping in mind your kinesphere and taking care of each other as a group. You are all in this together. Do you understand? [I would field any questions.] You can begin when you like (Bogart and Landau 27-28). [72] Thank you for your work. If you would, go back to your seats and we will take a look

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[70] If they do not change direction at exactly the same time, the instructor would stop and start again.

[71] If they do not change direction at exactly the same time, you would stop and start again.

[72] This is not an easy task and the students may fail miserably, but they will fail together. You may have to spend a good portion of the class period working on this activity, or it may come very quickly. I would continue practicing until satisfied that the students are working together. As a side note, this activity can also be used as a warm-up activity, especially if class time is short.

at the readings you brought in. [I would pause and wait for the students to get to their seats and find their readings.]

In Chuck Jones' book, *Make your Voice Heard: An Actor's Guide to Increased Dramatic Range through Vocal Training*, Jones shares an anecdote about famous actor John Barrymore. He heard the story from another famous actor, Anthony Quinn. Quinn states that Barrymore was about to act Shakespeare and knew his voice would not be up to the task. He sought help from voice teacher Margaret Carrington. When they met, Carrington asked Barrymore to 'pick up an apple from a bowl on her table.' She then asked Barrymore, 'Mr. Barrymore, what do you have in your hand?' Barrymore replied, 'I got a red apple.' Carrington responded, 'You have what?' Barrymore repeated, 'I got a red apple.' Carrington continued, 'I'm sorry, I don't understand.' Barrymore said. 'You don't understand? I got a red apple in my hand.' Supposedly, 'the first two or three weeks [of Barrymore's vocal training] were about making that apple sound like the juiciest, reddest apple in the world' (81).

I share this story with you because I would like you to take it to heart as each of you reads what he/she brought in to class today. For several class periods we have been warming up our voices, we have worked on breathing, we have analyzed scenes, we have examined 'actions,' we have practiced repetition, and we have even examined kinesphere and stage presence. We are now going to use those things as we read our readings. That way we will know how to use those things we learned when we perform our scenes. Therefore, you are going to go to the front of the class and read your readings as if your reading is the 'juiciest, reddest apple in the world' (81). I am joking, of course, you do

not have an apple, but you do have a reading you feel very strongly about. I find it easier to explore what we learned by applying it to something we feel strongly about before we start using everything we learned on our scenes. In order to make this easier and work with our system, I am even going to give you an action. You will be playing 'to get someone to see things my way' as you each read your readings. Can you think of a time when you had something really important you wanted another person to understand like you did? That is your as if. Take a few moments and think of a specific as if. When have you tried 'to get someone to see things your way'? [I would give them a few moments to think of a specific moment.] Trying to use everything we have learned, we are going to read our readings in front of the rest of the class. Do you have an as if for the action 'to get someone to see things my way'? [I would wait for affirmative responses.] Do you understand what I am asking you to do? [I would field student responses.] Who would like to go first? [I would let the volunteer go first or chose someone to go first if there are no volunteers. I would then have each student complete his/her reading.] Thank you all for your work.[73]

Today we worked on presence, kinesphere, ensemble work, and individual readings. Everything we worked on today is applicable to your scene work and all the work you will ever do on stage. It is important to understand that. It is also important to understand that an actor has to juggle many things at the same time during a performance. As we move forward in our class, I hope you keep this in mind. In our next class we will

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[73] If time remains (for example if the instructor took two class periods to complete this lesson), repetition should be practiced. Voice and movement exercises can be added as well, but I suggest always coming back to repetition as a closing activity or a warm-up.

look even more closely at movement. I look forward to working with you again; thank you for your work today. I will see you next time." [For a constructivist analysis of this lesson, instructors should see table 14.]

Table 14 Lesson V/B5 - "Presence, Laban Kinesphere, and Ensemble"

Title:	Lesson V/B5 - "Presence, Laban Kinesphere, and Ensemble" Constructivist Analysis
Subject: Level:	Acting I
Objectives:	The students will adapt their "neutral position" to express presence. The students practice connecting with their "cores." The students will integrate movement with presence, intention, and "action." The students will integrate movement with presence, intention, and "action" at various paces. The students will experiment with kinesphere and ensemble interaction. The students will collaborate. Each student will complete a personal performance (a reading) that will ask them to formally construct a solid performance using presence and an "action."
Situation:	The students will perform a series of exercises to understand presence, kinesphere, and working with an ensemble. These exercises can be used in future classes as a "warm-up" and/or knowledge refreshers.
Groups:	The students will work together as a large ensemble, but they will also perform individually. If the instructor chooses, or if time remains, students will also work in dyads using "repetition."
Bridge:	The students are connecting past knowledge to new knowledge about presence, kinesphere, and ensemble work. They will be asked to modify their personal "neutral position" to accommodate presence. They will also use the already learned concept of "action" and "as if" in conjunction with presence in a short performance.
Exhibit:	The students will modify the "neutral" position to accommodate presence. The students will also practice moving with presence both individually and in groups. The instructor should not expect perfection, but he/she should require participation.
Reflection:	Feedback should be given orally to individuals during class to help students grasp the concepts being taught. Feedback on paper can be given to students, but I find that a bit overwhelming. I prefer offering "positive comments" and a single "constructive criticism" verbally to every student after his/her reading. Of course, participation grades would be appropriate. The instructor must also note how he/she functioned in this lesson. Often times, directions must be modified for understanding.
Assignment:	The students are to continue learning their lines, practice their breathing exercises, and journal (if assigned to do so).

Lesson V/B6 - "Improvisation for Movement"

Lesson Narrative

"It is nice to see everyone again.[74] We have not worked extensively on movement within a performance. Today we are going to do just that using improvisation; we are going to 'begin to learn how best to balance and share the stage, how good movement and blocking tell the story as well as dialogue, and how best to put the audience's focus wherever it may belong' (Urcioli 115). You have may have seen improvisation on television. Who can tell me the purpose of improvisation? [I would field student responses.] While everything you said can happen in improvisation, I want you to think of improvisation a bit differently in this class. I would like to use improvisation to practice moving on stage during a performance. It is true we have done several movement exercises, but we have not worked with movement specifically tied to an actual performance. That is what we want to focus on today. In an improvisation, I can let you all play with moving around on stage while I offer a little help from off stage. I find that if I start talking about movement and blocking in improvisation, students take some of those ideas and create their own movement ideas when performing a scene. This does not mean that I will refrain from giving you movement tips during your scene rehearsals; I will if you need it. We just have to see. When I eventually notice you are freely moving on your own in support of your action, and only in support of your action, I will let you

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[74] At this point in the semester, I suggest warming-up with a combination of body and voice exercises learned over the course of the semester. I always end with one or two quick rounds of repetition. It is impossible to do all the warm-up activities the students have learned. Therefore, as a constructivist, I use what seemed most helpful to a particular group of students. If a class looks particularly sluggish on a certain day, I use activities that made them smile or chuckle in the past.

186

take over moving on instinct. Moving on instinct, in support of your action alone, can be very difficult. Therefore, think of my movement suggestions as you do the 'as if game:' they both are like training wheels on a bicycle. When you do not need them anymore, we can take them away.

What I would like to start with is a game called 'Dubbing.' I first learned about this exercise from my improvisation teacher in New York, Paul Urcioli ("Discovering Ensemble" 113). In this exercise we are going to have two people seated and two people moving. One of the seated participants will sit right center in a chair and another will sit left center in a chair. They will be offering the dialogue for the scene we are going to view. Standing center will be two other participants. They will be acting out the scene by providing the movement. As you may have guessed, the participant seated right center will provide the voice for the actor stage right and the participant seated left center will provide the voice for the actor stage left.[75] The idea is that the individuals who are seated only have to worry about dialogue, and those standing only have to worry about movement. You do not have to do more than one thing at a time.

I will begin by providing the seated participants with a 'who, what, where, when, and why.' I may give you an innocuous scene such as two siblings playing catch with a baseball in their yard right after school for recreation. On the other hand, I may give you something very specific, or even difficult, like a lousy magician and a TV weatherperson waiting for their food order at a fast food restaurant in Atlanta's airport before catching a

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[75] I would get two chairs and place them accordingly.

morning flight to Vermont.[76] The job of the seated participants is to provide dialogue, while the standing participants move accordingly. In this exercise, those who will be moving must keep in mind standard stage conventions such as not normally turning your back to the audience, but they must fulfill the movements required by the dialogue. Those who will be providing dialogue must provide dialogue that can lead to possible stage movement. In other words, you should not say something like 'let's jump off this mountain.' You must work to support each other. The goal is to make sure the scene makes sense, while allowing the individuals who are moving to practice stage movement. Again, the idea is not to be funny or hurtful. It is also not to stump your partner.[77] Do I have any volunteers willing to provide dialogue? [I would ask the volunteers to come up and have a seat, or I would choose participants.] Do I have any volunteers willing to try movement? [I would ask those volunteer to come up, or I would choose participants.][78]

Before we begin, I want to be clear about what I am looking for in this exercise. In a normal performance we can use both language and movement to tell a story. This exercise splits the two. Those actors who are speaking must focus on language to tell the story, while those actors who are moving must focus on movement to tell the story. Therefore, a successful performance will be generated if everyone on stage works

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[76] The instructor will have to come up with a long list of these scenarios before class. It may seem like a great deal of work, but once the list is created it can filed away for future use. I suggest starting class with at least ten, just to be safe.

[77] The teacher should also talk about not allowing "negation." If one participant says, "You look happy today," the respondent should not say, "No I don't." This stops the improvisation in its tracks and is counter to our classroom philosophy of taking care of one another. Actors should help one another; they should not hurt one another.

[78] I would cycle through the class keeping track of who provided dialogue and who provided movement. That way, roles can be reversed in the next exercise. I would work through this exercise for half the remaining class time before switching to the second activity. I would not offer much criticism, but I would provide blocking/movement hints from offstage during each exercise.

together in his/her given mediums to produce a coherent piece. This activity also forces individual actors to focus on the importance of just language or just movement on stage. That is something we all must learn to be successful performers. Are there any questions? [I would field questions.] If there are no more questions, please take your places and we will begin. Ready. Go. [I would let the performance continue for three to five minutes or until the actors seem unable to proceed.] And, stop. Thank you for your work. I would like the audience to tell us what was successful in this performance and what might need improvement. Take into consideration how each performer handled his/her given performance medium. [I would field responses while stressing the importance of both language and action in the theatre.]

The second exercise we are going to do today is called 'Japanese Rock Garden:' 'a nonverbal exercise where a group of actors go into the designated playing space and form a series of tableaux' (Urcioli 114). The audience will 'close their eyes between the pictures to maximize the effect of seeing only the tableaux leaving the transitions the business of the players only' (114). I would like five of the individuals who gave dialogue in the last exercise to come up and stand in front of the audience. [I would let those volunteers come forward, or I would choose five actors.] Those in the audience, I would like you to close your eyes while the five actors on stage are going to move and form a tableaux. Audience, please close your eyes and actors move into a position. [I would give them time to move around before calling 'stop.'] Audience, please open your

eyes. What do you see? [I would field audience responses.][79] Let's try that again.

Audience, please close your eyes and actors move into a position. [I would give them time to move around before calling 'stop.'] Audience, please open your eyes. What do you see? [I would field audience responses. The students may have to be encouraged to use their imaginations to see the stage pictures that have been formed.] I would like those actors to take a seat and five different actors who have not yet done movement today to come up. We are going to repeat what this first group did, but it is your job to choose different tableaux.[80] Thank you. Everyone can have a seat. What have you learned about stage pictures created by groups of people in this exercise? [I would field student responses. It is essential for them to realize that simple positioning of the body or bodies produces meaning for members of the audience. The students may not be consciously aware of this. Therefore, this activity helps them see why movement and positioning on stage is so important. In addition, they learn that an actor is truly in control of *meaning making* at all times when on stage. Meaning is created by more than just language and movement.]

For our final activity we are going to do today, we are going to use elements from both of these previous exercises. The activity we are going to do is called 'Two Minute Movie.' I certainly want you to enjoy the activity, but it serves a greater purpose that providing a good time or allowing you to be silly. At its base level, this activity requires you to develop aural and visual 'signposts' that allow the audience to understand the

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[79] The idea is to see what the audience comes up with and then it is the instructor's job to explain how they came to that conclusion. This examines how bodies are positioned on stage.

[80] I would do the same activity a few times before asking everyone to have a seat back in the audience.

story of the film. This means you will have to quickly choose what is most important to say and what is most important for the audience to see. If I reduce your time allotment to one minute, you will have to determine which 'signposts' need to be skipped, combined, or edited for time while also making sure the audience can follow your abbreviated version. If I ask you to do the performance in less than a minute, you will have to make further edits. This can be very difficult, but also very rewarding. The reward of the exercise is that you will get an impression of what is absolutely necessary for successful storytelling. This is a valuable lesson to learn in the theatre, because it is fundamental to impressive acting. Actors who are able to tell a story while also using all the skills they learned in training and rehearsal just to act are laudable.

Therefore, I am going to give each person a number between one and five. [I would count them all out by simply counting one through five down a row or at random.] Everyone who was given the number one should come up and meet stage left, those who were given number two meet upstage center, those who were given number three meet stage right, those who were given number four meet stage center, and those who were given number five meet downstage center. Go ahead and take those stage positions.

I have grouped you according to number because those given the same number will be working together. Therefore, everyone who received number one will work together, those who received number two will work together, etc. Right now I would like you to get together in your group and decide on a movie you all have seen. You should be quite familiar with the movie or be able to refresh the memories of those who are unfamiliar with it rather quickly because you are going to act out the entire movie in two

191

minutes. Go ahead and pick a film together. I will walk around and check on your

progress. [I would give the groups a few minutes to decide upon a movie.] Now that you

have come up with a movie, I am going to give you around five or six minutes to talk

over how you are going to improvise the movie. Remember, you have to perform the

entire movie in two minutes, so you have to be precise with your dialogue and stage

pictures. That is why we practiced with both elements just moments ago. Go ahead and

talk over your improvisation with your group. [I would give the groups five minutes to

talk over the improvisation.] I would like everyone to have a seat except for group one.

Group one has the stage.

Group one I am going to give you two minutes to act out your entire film. Please

tell the audience what film you chose. [I would wait for them to tell the audience.] When

I say go, you will have two minutes to act out the whole movie. I will give you a verbal

warning at the one minute mark, the thirty second mark, the fifteen second mark, and I

will say stop. Get ready, and *go*. [I would time the group as stated.] And, *stop*. Audience,

what did you think? [I would ask the audience to give positive comments and

constructive criticism to group one.] Thank you group one, but I want to test your

storytelling abilities a bit more. Please present your film again. This time you have to do

it in one minute. I must stress it is crucial that this activity not fall into absurdity or

nonsense. You must keep the integrity of the story by focusing on the visual and aural

signposts. Being able to tell a story with purposefully chosen words, movements, and

tableaux is what you must take away from this exercise, not how to be funny or absurd.

Nevertheless, do not misunderstand me. The exercise can be humorous, but the humor

should not come from sheer chaos. [I would ask them to do the entire movie once again in thirty seconds and finally, one last time, in fifteen seconds. Again, I would stress the importance of accurate, albeit condensed, storytelling.] Thank you group one. What did the rest of you think of group one's performance? [I would field student responses and ask them specifically about the accuracy of the storytelling.] It is group two's turn to show us their work.[81] Alright everyone, class is almost over so please have a seat in the audience section of the room.[82]

Thank you for your work. Today we worked quite a bit with both improvised dialogue and movement. This class was important because in your scenes you will also be improvising. You will not be using improvised dialogue, of course, but you will be improvising how you deliver the dialogue and the movements you choose. Your movements will be motivated by actively trying to achieve your action. While you are trying to achieve your 'action,' you also have to take into consideration things like not turning your back to the audience.[83] It is a great deal to remember, and that is why we have rehearsal both during class and outside of class. It is very important to remember that rehearsal is essential to a solid performance. In the next several days we will be repeating many of the exercise we have covered so far, you will have time to work with

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[81] I would cycle through each group asking the audience to comment on each presentation. Asking for positive comments followed by constructive criticism would still be appropriate.

[82] If time remains, or in future lessons, the instructor can coach movement using any improvisation scenarios with which he/she is familiar. My instructor from the Atlantic Theatre, Paul Urcioli, specifically mentions Viola Spolin's "Space Substance" as being useful for this. Spolin's "Space Substance" can be found in her book *Improvisation for the Theatre: A Handbook of Teaching and Directing Techniques* (81).

[83] I used to not mention "turning one's back to the audience" because it is sometimes necessary, but in the past several years I have noticed that some students are perfectly content standing with their backs to the audience for extended periods of time. I am not sure why this is a relatively new phenomena to me. Regardless, I began correcting this behavior when coaching stage movement.

your partner on your scenes, and I will expect you to do some rehearsal outside of class. I do not expect you to rehearse every day, but at least call each other up on the telephone and run lines about three times per week. Is that understood? [I would wait for some sort of acknowledgement.] Acting is not easy; it is important to remember that. For our next class, make sure you have your lines memorized. For your homework, I would like you to phone one another and run lines so you have your lines fully memorized for our next class. Remember, we are in this together. I will see you next class." [For a constructivist analysis of this lesson, instructors should see table 15.]

Table 15 Lesson V/B6 - "Improvisation for Movement"

Title:	Lesson V/B6 - "Improvisation for Movement" Constructivist Analysis
Subject:	Acting
Level:	I
Objectives:	The students will learn improvisation in order to become familiar with stage movement.
Situation:	The students will partake in three improvisation activities to become familiar with stage movement.
Groups:	The students will be in groups of four or five for today's exercises.
Bridge:	Today's class uses many of the terms we have used in class already. This provides a cognitive link between all the exercises. The students will also be able to answer questions such as, "What is improvisation?" Questions like these will help the students develop a schema that has to do with acting (or schemata that work together). The instructor can also create a verbal bridge for the students by side coaching the improvisations.
Exhibit:	The instructor will view all students in improvisations. Both positive comments and constructive criticism will be provided. The teacher must keep track of who performed what activity so every student gets a chance to do an improvisation.
Reflection:	Feedback should be given orally to individuals during class to help students grasp the concepts being taught. The instructor must also note how he/she functioned in this lesson. Often times, directions must be modified for student understanding.
Assignment:	The students are to call their scene partners on the telephone and run lines. All scenes should be memorized for next class.

CHAPTER 6

CLOSURE

This dissertation presents a constructivist approach to teaching acting at the secondary and college levels. This constructivist approach to teaching voice/diction and movement, in conjunction with David Mamet's Practical Aesthetics, can provide a thorough set of lessons focused on developing the performance skills of the beginning actor. There is a call for this constructivist approach because, as Maxine Green states in her article "On Teaching and Learning in the Arts":

> In the realm of the arts, as in other realms of meaning, learning goes on more fruitfully in atmospheres of interchange and shared discoveries. There must be those who can point out what is not yet noticed, not yet heard, people who can provoke the young to reach beyond where they are. To reach beyond is to realize that there exist a tradition and a community of knowers, of seekers none of whom has the final answer to any question, all of whom are engaged in a communal construction of knowledge. It is as much social as it is individual, as much part of a culture as it is personally, privately constructed. (116)

This idea applies to the acting classroom where individuals, dyads, groups, and entire classrooms work toward developing the skills necessary to make theatre art come alive. Granted, this is not an easy task; however, I found it almost impossible when I was trying to teach acting according to the traditional methods of education I learned in my teacher education program.

In his famous book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire refers to this traditional method of education as the "banking model" of education. It juxtaposes Maxine Greene's vision of constructivist education because in the banking model of education,

> The students are not called upon to know, but to memorize the contents narrated by the teacher. Nor do the students practice any act of cognition, since the object towards which that act should be directed is the property of the teacher rather than a medium evoking the critical reflection of both teacher and students. Hence in the name of the 'preservation of culture and knowledge' we have a system which achieves neither true knowledge nor true culture. (Freire 68)

Theatre instructors have been challenging this model for several years because of the nature of our subject. We employ various activities and exercises that do not resemble things like memorizing multiplication tables and taking a test over them, but I still felt my students needed something more. I was not simply asking students to do things like memorize lines, stand on stage, and recite lines exactly as I told them; however, asking them to simply follow my blocking was pretty close to memorizing multiplication tables. I found constructivism and Practical Aesthetics because I was searching for a better way to serve my students. I wanted my students to function as actors, not as marionettes.

Constructivism is also valuable because it does more than work against the banking model of education; it creates a different type of learning. According to Gabler and Schroeder in *Constructivist Methods for the Secondary Classroom: Engaged Minds*:

Two arenas need to be integrated to shift students from the familiar role of listener

to that of active learner: affect and constructivist methods. By *affect* we mean

state of mind and state of being, the student's belief in self-empowerment. By

constructivist methods we mean instructional templates for lessons and units that

encourage students to be critical thinkers and independent learners, with the

teacher acting as a mentor and facilitator. (xvii)

By its very basic nature, constructivism assumes that the power to learn is in the hands of

the students. This promotes self-efficacy. Essentially, students' current knowledge and

past experiences are taken into consideration and valued, students are continually asked

to process what they are learning, students act cooperatively with one another and the

teacher during lessons, student opinions are discussed, and the teacher treats each student

as a fellow human being engaged in the pursuit of knowledge. This personal

acknowledgement of the student as an active member of a class is why he/she feels

invested in the classroom. When coupled with constructivist instructional templates like

those created by Gagnon and Collay in *Designing for Learning: Six Elements in*

Constructivist Classrooms, which I have used as a template for every lesson in this

dissertation, students may also become critical thinkers and independent learners.

Certainly, the teacher must do his/her best to function as mentor and facilitator; however,

student investment plus lessons specifically tailored to foster critical thinking and

independent learning should be the goal of any teacher. For me, Practical Aesthetics

paved the way toward that goal. This is better explained by another metaphor.

Practical Aesthetics allowed me to start thinking about acting as an iceberg that I must help students *see in its totality* rather than as a storehouse of information to be deposited into currently spacious minds. I cannot take credit for creating the iceberg metaphor, but it aptly describes what I think all education should truly be like. Simply put, there is more to true teaching and true education than we often think.

For example, in his book *Meisner for Teens: A Life of True Acting*, Larry Silverberg calls upon the iceberg analogy to explain that "acting is not about the words" (56). That was my problem early in my career. I was looking only at the words, and the students were only looking at the words. Unfortunately, those words on paper or on the computer screen did not reveal everything we needed to know; words on paper are not enough to teach a student how to act. In fact, Silverberg developed the analogy from a quote by Peter Brook, author of *The Empty Space*. Brook states:

> A word does not start as a word - it is an end product which begins as an impulse, stimulated by attitude and behavior which dictate the need for expression. This process occurs inside the dramatist; it is repeated inside the actor. Both may only be conscious of the words, but both for the author and then for the actor the word is a small visible portion of a gigantic unseen formation. Some writers attempt to nail down their meaning and intentions in stage directions and explanations, yet we cannot help being struck by the fact that the best dramatists explain themselves the least. They recognize that the only way to find the true path to the speaking of a word is through a process that parallels the original creative one. This can neither be by passed nor simplified (15).

If "for the actor the word is a small visible portion of a gigantic unseen formation," I was searching for a way to teach students how to discover Silverberg's entire acting iceberg (56-57). I believe one way to uncover the acting iceberg, in a teachable way, is to use constructivist pedagogy to teach Practical Aesthetics, voice/diction, and movement.

For example, I can tell students they should focus on the other actor in a scene, but that does not mean they do it. Only through repetition exercises did my students start to realize why they had to focus on the other person rather than themselves. By focusing on another, the scene becomes alive and as Meisner would say "in the moment." Unfortunately, Meisner never wrote an acting text; I would have enjoyed reading it. He tried to write one, but he gave up because he thought it was "foolish, even wrong, to attempt to write one" (*Sanford Meisner on Acting* xvii). Nevertheless, I looked elsewhere and found exactly what I needed. I was finally able to construct a series of lessons useful for the acting instructor by combining Practical Aesthetics and constructivism with exercises in voice/diction and movement.

My series of lessons was created with the intent to construct individual, detailed, integrated, and swiftly accessible schematic maps that offer to a student how to perform as a theatre actor at any given time. I use repetition and its hopefully successful creation of "focus on the other actor" as a constant through-line. With this in mind, from being rehearsed in each lesson and constantly referenced by the instructor, students are guided through constructivist acting exercises that continue to build upon each other. For instance, the "as if game" builds upon repetition because the game requires the actor to interact with his/her partner in virtually the same fashion. The difference is that partners

must talk out their "as ifs" as they pursue their action; however, "tool" choices are still based on what they see in their partners during the various moments of interaction. Likewise, the actors are to do the same type of "tool" shifting after they memorize their lines. This means that even the actual performance of a scene on stage is quite similar to repetition, which is the very first exercise learned and constantly rehearsed in the classroom.

Similarly, the voice/diction and movement exercises are closely tied to the "as if game" and the scene performance itself. During these exercises the instructor continually reminds students that any voice and/or movement choices are made in service of the "action." They are not done at random; they serve no other purpose except to serve the actor as he/she pursues his/her "action" in the "as if game" and even on stage during formal performance.

This integration and tightly bound process of learning how to act is unlike the processes taught in many familiar texts. The processes do serve an actor in performance, but they do not always share a *schematic link*. Instead, it is believed that the actor who participates in various games and exercises will automatically transfer the material from the classroom to the stage. Using constructivist pedagogy to teach Practical Aesthetics provides transfer because each new acting exercise is built upon the previous exercise. Each exercise is inextricably linked. This link also exists between the exercises and what happens on stage during a performance. In essence, what happens in the rehearsal hall also happens on stage.

A second reason Practical Aesthetics has served me well is because students learn a limited, distinct, and useful vocabulary. Students are then able to discuss performances with one another and the teacher in intelligent ways using that vocabulary. Deep discussions are also facilitated by this vocabulary because students become part of a "language community."

A third reason Practical Aesthetics has served me well in a constructivist acting class is because of its limited breadth and great depth. Students are able to master a limited number of exercises defined by the system itself. Secondary students often receive limited breadth and limited depth because the theatre arts classroom usually only has one text. For example, *Theatre: Art in Action*, *The Stage and the School*, and *Basic Drama Projects* are each meant to be used for four years. Therefore, they must attempt to cover as much about theatre as possible in a limited number of pages. The rest is up to the teacher. I may be generalizing, but I doubt any theatre teacher would argue that any of these texts contains enough material to teach secondary students everything there is to know about theatre. Theatre teachers often end up supplementing their classes with what they learned in college. This lack of support in the form of multiple texts and teaching tools is in sharp contrast to what is available to many other departments. Secondary school mathematics departments, for instance, have books and supplemental teacher support materials for algebra, geometry, trigonometry, calculus, etc.. In addition, mathematics departments usually utilize multiple levels of texts within each branch of mathematics. Therefore, tracking in algebra, geometry, and calculus requires different texts and different sets of teacher support materials. We do not have these resources in

theatre at the secondary level. It is up to the teacher to make up for the lack of materials. I am not saying texts make or break education. I am saying that theatre teachers should have access to the same sorts of immediately available support materials that other teachers do.

On the other hand, college texts like Cohen's *Acting One*, Benedetti's *The Actor at Work*, and Hagen's *Respect for Acting* contain great breadth but face the opposite problem. They are difficult to digest completely in a semester or two. For example, I was once asked to teach Acting I at a college that required me to use Stanley Kahan's *Introduction to Acting* (3rd ed.). If one includes the glossary, the text has 367 pages. It was virtually impossible to even scratch the surface of the text while trying to teach young beginning actors how to perform. As a teacher, I would much rather tackle the limited breadth and great depth of Practical Aesthetics using a constructivist approach to teaching acting. The often overwhelming breadth of college texts and the underwhelming breadth of high school texts have not served me or my students well in the past. Therefore, I manifest, via individually created meticulous lesson plans followed by constructivist lesson blueprints my approach to teaching beginning actors.

The field is ripe for further research dealing with Practical Aesthetics, constructivism, and curriculum content in the theatre classroom. In *Signs of Change: New Directions in Theatre Education*, Joan Lazarus calls for the use of constructivism in the theatre classroom because it is one of her "Principles of Best Practice Learning" (34). Because Practical Aesthetics lends itself to constructivist methodologies I believe it can qualify as a best practice; however, that thesis needs further verification. In addition,

possible areas of research in Practical Aesthetics include an examination of who might currently be teaching it at the secondary and/or the college level; the role of the director within the system; qualitative studies on schools using Practical Aesthetics; gender in a system that can often foster competition; what texts, if any, are being used; and student reactions to the system. Since it is a professional training system, other areas of interest might be case studies of schools that train actors using a professional system, the qualifications of those teaching acting, and the role of a professionally modeled theatre program at a secondary school or college.

In addition, it is not out of the realm of possibility to suggest the use of Practical Aesthetics outside the school. Any type of sales position as well as the fields of law, business, politics, public speaking, and even non-profit work could benefit from the succinct way Practical Aesthetics trains an individual to convince others. Research could be conducted to study the system's applicability and usability in these areas. This could also lead to interdisciplinary work within educational institutions and cooperation with corporate agencies.

Areas of research that deal with constructivism itself might also be considered. These include qualitative studies on constructivist pedagogy in theatre at the secondary and college level, a study that examines outcomes from using constructivist pedagogy verses a traditional approach in the theatre classroom, and work that examines student reactions to constructivism in theatre classes. Other related studies that come to mind might deal with what theatre instructors are actually teaching in the acting classroom right now, scholarship that questions the reliance on or avoidance of theatre textbooks in

schools or colleges, and qualitative studies on what students actually want to learn in their theatre classes. In fact, what students want to learn in their theatre classes brings me back to why acting instructors might consider the approach I have outlined in this dissertation.

Essentially, the world has changed since George Pierce Baker's first drama courses at Harvard and Winifred Ward's pioneering days of Creative Drama. Over the past fifteen years, I have noticed that students enrolling in theatre classes want and need different things. They want to learn public speaking skills, they want to work cooperatively in groups, they want to gain confidence, they wish to be on the television show *Glee*, and/or they sincerely hope to someday make a film or Broadway debut. The sheer popularity of the 2013 *Sound of Music Live*, viewed by "18.470 million viewers," and the plethora of Broadway Jr. Musicals tell me students are interested in formal performance (Kondolojy). This has already been noted by academics in the popular press. According to Lynn O'Shaughnessy, a former college admissions dean, "If your child wants to major in musical theater or some other performing art, go ahead and blame it on *Glee*, *American Idol* or *America's Got Talent*" (*U.S. News & World Report*). In fact, my former acting students at Arizona State University, who are not theatre majors, made the following comments to me in writing: "I want to specifically know what separates a good performance from a bad one," "I feel as though I wasn't given the right tools for acting in high school . . . I'm relieved to know that I can be starting over fresh," and "I have had a quickly growing interest in acting for film or TV . . . . My good bioengineer friend and I spent a chunk of the past year and a half brainstorming a video game series . . . we

quickly determined it would be a much better TV show. It would be awesome to see something come of that within the next ten years or so."

Other students made it a point to address the Practical Aesthetics system: "I personally do like using the 'as ifs' coming into the scene since for me it makes acting out the scene way easier," "The 'as if' is more important than the lines itself, because without the 'as if' my lines are going to be bland," and "The concepts I've learned like practical aesthetics and actions . . . are very simple but make a lot of sense. It is a sweet and simple way to act. . . . I am really interested by this technique. I'm surprised it isn't more widespread and taught more. I definitely have a better grasp on how to perform on stage."

Finally, others commented on how my class affected their lives: "One of the most important things that I gained from this class was confidence. I became more confident with myself and I'm not afraid to take risks and just go with it," "This class is definitely the most memorable class that I have taken at ASU since I am a business major and it is so different. . . . I learned it is easy to alter someone's perception of you just by using some of the simple methods that you've taught us," and "It is safe to say that I've never been so aware that a course was actively changing the way I think, speak and act in every real-life situation. The way I approach conversations, personal interacting, even my essay writing is evolving so rapidly it's making my head spin. Ever realize that there is not a waking moment of our life we are not communicating?"

We need to be able to take students further - *where they want to go* as well as *where they need to go*. For me, this meant turning to Practical Aesthetics and

constructivism. The plan of instruction I have outlined in this dissertation can help students learn how to be performers via visible steps of instruction. In addition, Practical Aesthetics and constructivism still allow a teacher to fulfill the taxonomic requirements of the inevitable core curriculum that all schools will soon adopt.

My contribution to the field of theatre studies shows colleagues one way to teach acting. By sharing a theatrical vocabulary between teacher and student, working toward depth rather than breadth, fostering student empowerment, developing critical thinking, and providing independent and cooperative learning activities in a safe environment where students can "guess and be wrong," teachers can use Practical Aesthetics and constructivism to help students develop an acting schema. The possibility of developing an advanced acting schema can give students pride in their work, provide a sense of achievement, and continue to bring joy to performers and audience members in a society dominated by enticing algorithmic technology.

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APPENDIX A

TEACHING MATERIALS

<u>Acting Introduction - Suggested Course Calendar</u>
(lessons may also be taught in order by number or in an order that suits classroom needs)

<u>During Week 1</u>: Lesson M1 and Lesson M2

<u>During Week 2</u>: Lesson M3
     Choose Scene Partners

<u>During Week 3</u>: Lesson M4
     Three Copies of Scene #1 Due (one copy should be given to the instructor)

<u>During Week 4</u>: Lesson M5 and Lesson M6
     Scene Analysis #1 Due

<u>During Week 5</u>: Lesson V/B1 and Lesson V/B2

<u>During Week 6</u>: Lesson V/B3 and Lesson M7

<u>During Week 7</u>: Lesson V/B4 and Lesson M8
     Journal Check #1 - Seven One Page Typed Weekly Journal Entries Due

<u>During Week 8</u>: Lesson V/B5 and Lesson M9
     Choose Scene #2 Partners (this scene will function as the final exam)

<u>During Week 9</u>: Lesson V/B6
     Three Copies of Scene #2 Due (one copy should be given to the instructor)

<u>During Week 10</u>: **PERFORM SCENE #1** (effort trumps perfection in this performance)

<u>During Week 11</u>: Repeat Select Lessons M6-M9 and V/B1-V/B6 for Mastery
     Scene Analysis #2 Due

<u>During Week 12</u>: Repeat Select Lessons M6-M9 and V/B1-V/B6 for Mastery

<u>During Week 13</u>: Repeat Select Lessons M6-M9 and V/B1-V/B6 for Mastery

<u>During Week 14</u>: Repeat Select Lessons M6-M9 and V/B1-V/B6 for Mastery

<u>During Week 15</u>: Repeat Select Lessons M6-M9 and V/B1-V/B6 for Mastery
     Journal Check #2 - Eight One Page Typed Journal Entries Due

Final Exam: PERFORM SCENE #2

<u>Note</u>: Basic terms, theatre games, lessons based on instructor expertise, daily journal entries/learning logs, and/or lessons required by course curriculum are assumed to be included at the instructor's discretion.

Constructivist Lesson Analysis Blueprint

Title:
_____

Subject:
Level:
_____

Objectives: [anticipated educational outcomes]
_____

Situation: [a specific goal students must reach by working together]
_____

Groups: [configuration of students during the lesson and materials they may use]
_____

Bridge: [concept/story that illustrates how prior knowledge and new knowledge will be linked]
_____

Exhibit: [public or interpersonal presentation of what has been learned]
_____

Reflection: [students and instructor process what has taken place in the lesson][84]

- A. Constructivist teachers encourage and accept student autonomy and initiative.
- B. Constructivist teachers use raw data and primary sources, along with manipulative, interactive and physical materials.
- C. When framing tasks, constructivist teachers use cognitive terminology such as "classify," "analyze," "predict," and "create."
- D. Constructivist teachers allow student responses to drive lessons, shift instructional strategies, and alter content.
- E. Constructivist teachers inquire about students' understanding of those concepts.
- F. Constructivist teachers encourage students to engage in dialogue, both with the teacher and with one another.
- G. Constructivist teachers encourage student inquiry by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and encouraging students to ask questions of each other.
- H. Constructivist teachers seek elaboration of students' initial responses.
- I. Constructivist teachers engage students in experiences that might engender contradictions to their initial hypotheses and then encourage discussion.
- J. Constructivist teachers allow wait time after posing questions.
- K. Constructivist teachers provide time for students to construct relationships and create metaphors.
- L. Constructivist teachers nurture students' natural curiosity through frequent use of the learning cycle model.[85]

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[84] This lesson plan format was modified from Gagon and Collay (2006). "Objectives" and bracketed text have been added by the author.
[85] List of "How-To's" from Brooks and Brooks *In Search of Understanding* (1993) for reference. Letters may be placed within a section of the lesson plan to indicate when a listed teacher activity will, should, or might take place.

Constructivist Lesson Planning Sheet

Title:	
Subject: Level:	
Objectives:	
Situation:	
Groups:	
Bridge:	
Exhibit:	
Reflection:	

APPENDIX B

COURSE HANDOUTS AND RUBRIC

Name_____

<u>Repetition: the Core Exercise in Practical Aesthetics</u>

<u>Repetition Level I</u>: What do you literally see "about" your partner?
[Examples: (1) You see your partner smiling, so you say to your partner: "You are smiling."]

<u>Repetition Level II</u>: What might that which you see mean?
[Example: (1) You see your partner smiling. (2) The smile must mean something, so you say to your partner: "You are happy."]

<u>Repetition Level III</u>: What might that which you see actually infer at a deeper level?
[Example: (1) You see your partner smiling. (2) The smile must mean something. (3) You infer that the smile means something deeper than just generic happiness, so you say to your partner: "You think you are really good at this exercise!"]

Name_____

<u>Analyzing the Scene: Student Worksheet</u>

Name of the Play_____

Scene_____

Your Character_____

The Other Character in the Scene_____

(1) What is the character <u>literally doing</u>?

> What are some hypothetical "<u>tools</u>" you might use to "complete" your action and achieve your "cap?"

(2) What does the character <u>want</u>?

(3) What is the character's "<u>action</u>?"

(4) When did I play that same action in my personal life?
It is "<u>as if</u>" I _____to _____
when _____.

(5) What might your "<u>cap</u>" look like in this scene? A "<u>cap</u>"
is the physical gesture *your scene partner might make*
when you achieve your "action."

Some Examples of "Actions" Handout

"An action must:

    1. be physically capable of being done.

    2. be fun to do.

    3. be specific.

    4. have its test in the other person.

    5. not be an errand.

    6. not presuppose any physical or emotional state.

    7. not be [emotionally] manipulative

    8. have a cap.

    9. be in line with the intentions of the playwright" (Bruder, *Practical Handbook* 13-14).

"Actions" Used in Coursework or Developed in Classes Like This One

− to get someone to spill the beans

− to get someone to take a chance

− to get someone to face the facts

− to get someone to crown me king/queen

− to get someone to "bite the bullet'

− to get someone to "see the silver lining"

− to get someone to help me

− to get someone to tell me what to do

− to get someone to accept my special gift

− to get someone to "let me off the hook"

− to get someone to "look the other way"

− to get someone to see things clearly

− to get someone to "buy the bridge"

− to get someone to see things my way

− to get someone to let go

− to get someone to make the right choice

− to get someone to accept the truth

− to get someone to "buy what I'm selling"

− to get someone to "take time to smell the roses"

− to get someone to believe in himself/herself

− to get someone to "pay the price"

− to get someone to see the silliness of the situation

− to get someone to tell me what to do*

− to get someone to "wake up and smell the coffee"

− to get someone to see the seriousness of the situation

− to get someone to see the difficulty of the situation

− to get someone to show me the way

− to show someone who's boss

− to get what's owed me

− to smack someone into reality

− to let someone in on the secret

"Actions" from *A Practical Handbook for the Actor* by Bruder, et al. Page Numbers Noted Parenthetically

− "to put someone on the right track" (23)

− "to retrieve what is rightfully mine" (30)*

− "to beg a loved one for forgiveness" (30)*

− "to get someone to tell the truth" (35)

− "to prevent a friend from making a terrible mistake" (45)

− "to make a loved one 'feel like a million bucks'" (56)

Please Add Your Own New/Modified "Actions" on the Back of This Sheet

*These may cause unwanted focus on oneself.

Some Examples of "Tools" Handout

These cannot be emotions. They are tactics to help you pursue your "action."

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"Tools" Used in Coursework or
Developed in Classes Like This One

– flatter
– bribe
– seduce
– barter
– joke
– reason
– befriend
– lie
– pity
– give the "cold shoulder"
– shock
– touch (if permission given beforehand)
– use "reverse psychology"
– misdirect
– gamble
– ridicule

"Tools" in *A Practical Handbook For the Actor*
by Bruder. Page Numbers Noted Parenthetically

– demand (18)
– cajole (18)
– intimidate (18)
– hear out (23)
– scold (23)
– teach a lesson (23)
– pacify (34)
– explain (34)
– take charge (34)
– promise (34)
– appease (34)
– interrogate (35)

</td><td>

– plead (35)
– level (35)
– threaten (35)
– accuse (35)

Please Add New or Modified
"Tools" Here

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Name_____

<p align="center">Performance Rubric for Scenes and Monologues</p>

I. Proper Introduction
   - ✓ Did you introduce yourself using your first and last name?
   - ✓ Did you say, "This is a scene from the play _____ by the playwright _____, and I will be playing _____?"

   ____ / 10 points

II. Memorization
   - ✓ Did you accurately memorize the text given to you by the playwright?

   ____ / 20 points

III. Interpretation/Characterization/Interaction
   - ✓ Did you follow "Practical Aesthetics," or were you self-focused and/or simply playing a predetermined interpretation of the text?
   - ✓ Did your performance create a character?
   - ✓ Was there a relationship between you and your scene partner?

   ____ / 40 points

IV. Theatricals
   - ✓ Did you wear a suitable costume, appropriate attire, or all black?
   - ✓ Were your set pieces appropriate (if needed)?
   - ✓ Did you use the appropriate props (if needed)?
   - ✓ Was your movement appropriate, and did it help you work toward achieving your "action?"

   ____ / 20 points

V. Overall Impression
   - ✓ This may include my reaction, the audience's reaction, and other comments written on the back of this sheet.

   ____ / 10 points

Total Score: ____ /100 points