

## Student Work: Reflective Writing in Blackboard Blogs

### Prompt 4

#### Final Reflection

Please spend more than 15 minutes on the following questions; this is meant to be a longer assignment and requires time to mull over the questions and organize your thoughts. Try jotting down some notes to yourself in one sitting. Then, once you sit down to write, please spend adequate time to be articulate and to revise. Each question should have its own juicy and *well-written* paragraph, more or less.

Think back on the semester. Look over your blogs. What salient experiences have you had in Movement

- That feel like they have changed the way you formerly thought about and approached acting?
- That you could now call skills or tools that you possess?
- That inspired or moved you?
- That have applied to areas of life other than theatrical performance?
- That remain unclear and/or sink to the bottom of your accumulated experiences?
- That have emerged consistently and satisfactorily as themes or goals?
- How would you describe your efforts and achievements during the class, including time spent outside on reading, reflective writing, etc.?
- That feel like they have changed the way you formerly thought about and approached acting?

### Novice

#### Final Reflection:

Movement has helped change the way I approach acting. Now, instead of just looking at it from a psychological prospective, I think about it in physical terms too. I've found that using the physical body, I can explore the psychology of a character better because I can ask questions such as, "What is the character doing?" or "Why would the character want to move like that? What's in that?" It's very helpful.

I feel like I really learned the most when working with Chekhov. I really was able to, not only understand the material, but also to see how it is applicable to acting. I felt that when we were working with the molding, flowing, flying, etc. that I could easily apply what I was feeling to my work or to a piece of text. This was useful in my other classes because I could play with the molding or flowing or flying and see which worked for the scene, which made sense in context, which produced the best physical gestures (internal as well as external). It's a great tool for me.

All of our improvisational work in class was inspiring and moving, especially when we were working as an ensemble. It was so much more powerful when we were all together and we were feeding off of each other's energy. I was often inspired by what I saw my classmates doing and how they were moving and often applied that inspiration to what I was doing or how I was moving. The whole experience was very moving.

I haven't really applied our movement work to anything in my life other than theatre, but it has created an awareness in me about how I move in my day to day life or how others move and interact. It's made me much more sensitive to other people's energies and habits, as well as my own. It's a very fascinating thing to observe.

In all honesty, I felt completely in the dark for a lot of the semester. I felt like I knew what I was doing while in class and knew what was expected of me. I also listened and took in what was said in class before and after each exercise and, while I heard and understood what was being said, I seemed to have a hard time making the correlation between what we were physically doing and the theory behind it. It wasn't until recently, while trying to explain the class to my mother, that I had that "Ah ha!" moment and put it all together in my head. It's funny how in order to fully understand something, you only have to try explaining it to someone else. I don't feel like anything is remaining unclear, or at least it's just not sticking out in my mind.

I'm not really able to think of any specific themes or goals that emerged. The main thing that I saw coming up a lot was the idea that movement creates a feeling, that feeling can create another gesture, which creates more feelings. These feelings are what helps you play your character with sincerity and what give you the physicality of your character.

### **Developing**

Movement class has made me think about how acting is an expression of the body, and how movement of the body can bring impulsiveness into acting. When one looks at stage action, the face cannot always be clearly seen from the back row, so the actor will have to use large gestures to convey the emotion more clearly. For example, a character could be trying to hide how they feel in their face, but their body will give away the feeling. The most exciting part of this in class is when we made a gesture of pulling down the curtains then said the line "I love you." They way I would say it if I kept the impulse was expressive and I don't know if I could minimize my voice without the movement.

The Laban and Chekhov work is a way to get away from the actor's personal movements. I can read a script and get an idea of what my character is like, and then jump into his skin by moving in different ways until I find the character's personal movement. It also gives the actor ways to deal with situations in the character's manner.

The thing that inspired me most to move was the partner work. It is scary but extremely exciting to break the touch barrier. When we danced at the end of the movement piece to music it thrilling to compromise your movements for another person and to expand you movement pallet to keep up with another. When we started to do the mimicking work, it forced me to move in a way that I was not used to or to move in a way that I would have never thought moving. When we would do the "three part warm-up", I would follow people that moved the opposite of me.

The idea of neutral is really helpful in all of life. When I sing I can find my grounding because the neutral body stance is perfect for opening up the chest and allowing me to access my

diaphragm, which gives me more breath control. The neutral is also proud, but not a cocky, stance. When coming into a new social situation I can be in a neutral stance and feel more confident and freer to move.

When we had the guest come to talk about Laban, I did not understand what we were trying to achieve with the exercises we were doing. Laban eventually stuck for me when we came back to the efforts. Honestly, this is a wrong question for me to answer, because I forget things quickly if they don't sink for me.

The purpose for my taking the class was to help me in my performance and installation art. In performance art many artists completely change themselves in a performance. Knowing the skills of changing the body movement and finding emotion out of that can really help me convey an idea (abstract idea) to the viewers of the performance. In installation art the artist has to deal with people moving around in a space that has been designed to change. Knowing how to make people move comfortably or uncomfortably in a space can help achieve the goal of the installation.

I feel like I came into class every day with an open mind about what we were doing. Even if I didn't feel like moving that day after the warm up I was ready to get outside of my comfort zone and experiment. When I do performance art sometimes I'm doing some of the dumbest, weirdest, stuff-that can sometimes be offensive to my audience-so coming into a classroom and jumping is pure fun for me. This compared to sexually eating three bags of popcorn in below freezing weather with another artist in front of a fifty people outside the Spencer Museum of Art. I put myself out there in hope to learn as much as I can from your lessons and I think I did that.

### **Advancing**

That feel like they have changed the way you formerly thought about and approached acting?

I use to take a very intellectual approach to acting. I would work through the script and try to analysis every beat. With in those beats I would try to find what tactic I was using. This was the way that I was taught to approach a role in my acting classes. When we had scenes or monologues we had to turn in our bookwork for a grade and this was the way that they wanted it done. Looking back on it there were a lot of times where I would know what was going in the scenes and I would understand what the characters where doing but I didn't really know exactly what "tactic" they were using. I use to get very discourage because I could not find the right action verb to describe what I was doing. And even when I did find a word it never felt strong enough. A couple of days ago I was working on a song for my vocal jury and I was trying to find the emotion behind the music so I started to work with some of the Chekov principles of Flowing, Molding, and Flying. I found that when I sang the song with each of these different principles that I found the emotion in the piece. This made me realize that as a human I instinctually know what I want at all times but many times I do not consciously know what my objective is, yet I always know my emotional state. I find that it is easier to work with the Chekov technique a lot of the times because it allows me to understand what is happening in my character emotionally but I don't have to have a clear cut answer as to what he is doing at that exact moment because to be quite honest most of the characters that we play don't know exactly why they do the things they do. Acting is about being honest and the only honest thing that

human beings have are emotions it is very hard to fake emotions and I find that the work we have done in class helps me find those emotions.

That you could now call skills or tools that you possess?

First, I feel that I have a wider vocabulary to work with. I know that I can now communicate with people who are trained in Chekov and Laban technique. This will come in handy if I ever work overseas where the training is much more movement based. I feel that I am more conscious about what my body is doing on stage. I realize now that as an actor I do not want to be recognizable on stage. I want people to forget that they are watching me and to focus on what the character is doing. From doing the three part warm up I have found ways to move that I never thought of doing before. I have learned really fascinating ways to work with people. I think that is one of my favorite things about the class and one that I defiantly with take with me is the knowledge of how to work with people without having to talk about it. It is really fun to just jump in and create something with someone else without ever speaking a single word. And the intimacy that you have with that person when you connect in the moment is a really inspiring thing. I feel that I would like to work with a lot of the movement and partner techniques that we have learned in a rehearsal process if I ever direct. I now have different ways of approaching a character and I also know what it means to do something different for the sake of doing it different. I now have a way of knowing how to try something new if a director asks me too where as before I would have to stop and think about how I would make it different. I now can just pick one of the Chekov or Laban principles and apply that in the moment. I am more conscious about how other people move on stage and what their bodies are doing. I realize that an actor can have all the emotional flexibility and extraordinary insight into the text but if the body is not synced up to what is going on in the heart and mind then it does not sell as being true.

That inspired or moved you?

There have been many moments in the class that have inspired and moved me. I wish I could just say the class has inspired and moved me because the whole semester has been an eye opening experience. I have enjoyed the class so much that I have enrolled in Movement II in order to learn more. From what little Chekov we have done I am really excited about the possibility of taking the Chekov class next fall. I would say that anytime we have done the three part warm up there have been some inspiring moments. It is just really amazing to see everyone working and moving and feeding off each other for inspiration. Anytime people start flocking or copying I find it moving and inspiring. I also feel that dynamic of the class is inspiring. Everyone is really nice and respectful of each others work and everyone feels really close. Whether we hangout with each other outside of class is irrelevant. I know that when I step foot in the class that I have a connection with everyone and I feel comfortable enough around those people that I can work in what ever way I need and that I can work in a productive way with anyone of them. Some of the more moving experiences would have to be when me and my partner connected in the Spencer Museum. When we did the leading and following drill where one of us closed our eyes and the other lead us around the room. That was really cool. The weight sharing drills were really fun. I also enjoyed hearing everyone's ideas about the artwork. The first day of class was another very moving class when everyone told something they normally didn't tell people the first time they

met them. I feel that starting out with that really set the tone for the semester and allowed people to open up and feel comfortable. The whole class has really been inspiring.

That have applied to areas of life other than theatrical performance?

I have really enjoyed trying out the different techniques that we have learned in class in my Theatrical performances. I know for a fact that if I had not worked with a since of falling as my preparation for scene in Macbeth where I tell McDuff the new about his family that the scene would not have worked. If I had sat backstage and tried to bring about the emotions intellectually it would have never happened. I have also found the work really helpful in my singing. When I did my make up juries this fall I used the Chekov principle of radiating when I sang Go Lovely Rose. When I sang that piece I could feel this ball of warmth radiating from my chest and it affected my tone. I have also used the Molding, Flying, and Flowing in my music. In fact I have found one of my jury pieces that uses all three of them in one song. When I discovered this it really made the piece fun to sing. Before I started working with these three principles I use to just try and sing the ideas behind the words or the emotions behind the text. I realize now that words really do not matte at all. If the emotion is there I could make random sounds and my audience would understand what I was feeling. The only thing that words do is allow an outlet for emotions that make another person understand the emotions more clearly. When I started to work with the Chekov the emotion was there and then the text immedieatly made more sense to me because I was felling it instead of just "understanding" it. And that really is the goal. Any person can read the text and understand it but a truly great artist makes people feel the text.

That remain unclear and/or sink to the bottom of your accumulated experiences?

The only thing that I really did not like about the class was the time that we spent on the bones. I understand that it was necessary to learn and I am glad that I did learn it because I know I have a whole new way of thinking about how to move my body, but by that time in the class everyone was really cooking when it came to moving and I think we all just really hated to stop when we were in such a groove. I did not really get a lot out of the guest speaker that we had who talked about Laban just for the simple fact that the room was really cold that day. I wish it had been warmer so I could have listened better. I think that the only other things that remain unclear are just how we better put to use what we have learned in class into our performances. I know that that comes more into play in Movement II and then later in the Chekov class which is why I am really excited about taking those classes.

That have emerged consistently and satisfactorily as themes or goals?

From this class my goal as an actor is to never play myself on stage physically or mentally. To constantly strive to work more closely and intimately with the actors around me and to remember that theater is a collaborative process. These are the three main principles that I have found in the class. They are not really deep or innovative and they are very easy to forget. However, I fell that if I remember these three goals and work toward obtaining them that I can create a more rewarding theater experience for my audience, my fellow actors, and myself.

How would you describe your efforts and achievements during the class, including time spent outside on reading, reflective writing, etc.?

I feel that I have had a lot of fun in the class. I do not feel that I have worked terribly hard because I was having fun. Not one day has this class ever felt like work. Everything that we have done has been an eye opening experience and I think that is because I allowed myself to just dive in and embrace what was being taught. I feel this is one thing that has made my experience in this class rewarding. The reading was a challenge to comprehend sometimes but it was always explained in class. Being a creative person I never really enjoy sitting down and writing and that didn't really change with the reflective writing assignments. But I found that once I sat down and put my thoughts and experiences on paper that I was able to really discover a lot of the ideas that I have now about acting and what works for me and what does not and I learned a lot both inside the classroom and outside in practice. I hope the next two classes are the same way.