

PhD Spotlight: An Investigation Analysing Strategies for Teaching Group Theatre Performance in Higher Education



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PhD Project Jonny Bussell

An investigation analysing strategies for teaching group theatre performance in higher education

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Rationale behind research

- Began after submitting a paper for PAD and presented at TAPRA in 2019
- Within performance-based courses practical student productions are commonplace
- These add to the student experience, give students the opportunity to showcase skills development and offer a real working environment to help students as they progress into the sector
- Different institutions take varying approaches to these productions
- There is little research into the pedagogical approaches institutions take
- '6.12 In all cases, assessment is valid and reliable, supported by clear criteria for marking and grading, which are provided to students.' (QAA, 2021)
- Is this possible within production modules?

Research methodology

- The research will analyse where student productions fit within a degree programme using three distinct case studies;
- Lecturer-Director: When a member of academic staff directs the production (DMU)
- Student-Director: When students direct their peers (York University)
- External director: When a director from industry (and outside the organisation) is brought in to direct the production (TBC)
- Analyse programme documentation
- Interviews with Director/Lecturing staff
- Student Surveys
- Observation of rehearsals



Focus of research

- What are the key factors in selecting material for performance? For example parity of student experience, diversity of cohort, ensemble etc
- What casting processes are used to ensure the final assessment is valid and reliable?
- What are the benefits and frictions of different models for student productions?
- How to grade/reward process?
- How to ensure assessment is valid and reliable?
- How is the final production graded?



Aims and Output

- Thesis will focus on decisions made within the different approaches analysing the benefits and tensions within each approach
- To develop our approach to student productions
- To ensure our approach is in line with current pedagogical trends
- Research has already fed into periodic review and current processes on the programme



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