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James D. Hart
Southern Methodist University

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Utilizing the Stanislavski System and Core Acting Skills to Teach Actors in Arts Entrepreneurship Courses

James D. Hart

Southern Methodist University

Abstract

With insight into key pedagogical approaches of theatre training, an understanding of research regarding common psychological characteristics of actors and awareness of identified parallels between arts entrepreneurship and acting course content, arts entrepreneurship instructors can, in their classrooms, increase the likelihood of relating to acting students and subsequently, leverage their students' inherent and developed skills. Research-based psychological characteristics of actors are offered, as are suggestions to appeal to actors' general sensibilities (and how they may wish to be engaged). The Stanislavski System is the most popular approach to actor training; its critical structural components are discussed in addition to various offshoots of the original technique. Unique features of acting training such as encouraging imagination, reflection, openness to experience, emotional connections, pursuit of goals and the importance of soft skills are emphasized.

SECTION I

Know Before Whom You Speak

We in the theatre have our own lexicon, our actors' jargon which has been wrought out of life. We do use, to be sure, certain scientific terms too, as for example 'the subconscious,' 'intuition,' but we take them in their everyday, simplest connotation and not in any philosophical sense.¹

Though there is little consensus in the literature, a number of researchers have identified common personality features of actors. Extraverted, lively and expressive, actors are generally more open to experiences than non-actors and are also believed to be more

¹Constantin Stanislavski, *Stanislavski's Legacy* (London: Routledge, 2015), 30.

emotional than others.² On emotional creativity, they score high on authenticity/effectiveness (can express emotions well), novelty (capable of unique emotional expression) and preparedness (ability to perceive one's own and others' emotional states when attempting to "understand emotions and to work on emotional development"). They are thought to be ambitious and more prone to risk-taking than non-actors.³ Hammond and Edelmann note actors are more prone to self-consciousness and demonstrate more sensitivity concerning expressive behaviors, both within themselves and others they observe, than non-actors do.⁴

When Acting Training Begins

The careers of professional dancers are often shorter than the careers of other types of artists, as age comes to have its effects on their bodies. Many dancers begin dance classes quite young, sometimes as two or three-years-olds. Actors' careers, on the other hand, can potentially last a lifetime. Noting this, there is no typical age actors begin training. If not introduced to acting when young, they may discover acting classes in junior high or high school. Some actors do not begin training until they are in college or later.

SECTION II

Who Was Constantin Stanislavski and How Did He Influence American Theatre?

"... We shall never go back to our pre-Stanislavski naïveté about acting in the theatre."⁵

Constantin Sergeyevich Alexeyev (1863-1938) used Constantin Stanislavski as his stage name.⁶ He was born in Russia to an affluent and cultured family and was exposed to theatre early in life, joining his first theatre company at fourteen, a company organized

² See the following for a discussion of actor extraversion and expressiveness: Arkun Tatar et al., "Examination of Personality Characteristics of Theater Actors in the Framework of the Five Factor Model and Construction of their Personality," *Turkish Journal of Psychology* 28, no. 72 (2013): 17; Sanna M. Nordin-Bates, "Performance Psychology in the Performing Arts," *The Oxford Handbook of Sport and Performance Psychology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 81-114. An actor's openness to new experiences is discussed in: Paula Thomson and S. Victoria Jaque, "Testimonial Theatre-making: Establishing or Dissociating the Self," *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 5, no. 3 (2011): 230, and Daniel Nettle, "Psychological Profiles of Professional Actors," *Personality and Individual Differences* 40, no. 2 (2006): 375. In support of actors potentially being more emotional than non-actors, see Ellison M. Cale and Scott O. Lilienfeld, "Histrionic Personality Disorder and Antisocial Personality Disorder: Sex-Differentiated Manifestations of Psychopathy?," *Journal of Personality Disorders* 16, no. 1 (2002): 55.

³ Barbara Kangas, "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors Contributing to Career Development in the Dramatic Arts" (Ph.D. diss., New School University, 2001).

⁴ Jacqueline Hammond and Robert J. Edelmann, "The Act of Being: Personality Characteristics of Professional Actors, Amateur Actors and Non-Actors," in *Psychology and the Performing Arts*, ed. Glenn D. Wilson (Swets & Zeitlinger, 1991), 130.

⁵ John J. Sullivan, "Stanislavski and Freud," *The Tulane Drama Review* 9, no. 1 (1964): 88.

⁶ Constantin Stanislavski, "Improvisation," in *The Improvisation Studies Reader: Spontaneous Acts*, ed. Rebecca Caines and Ajay Heble (New York: Routledge, 2015): 63. There are multiple variations in the English spelling of his name. One common variation is Constantin Stanislavsky.

by his family. Naturalistic acting and perception of truth in performance—some of the goals of his system—were a reaction to the then-popular aesthetic of melodrama. Before he developed the Stanislavski System, actors typically performed in heightened fashions, a performance style contemporary audiences often view as over-acting.

Stanislavski was not alone in his pursuit of naturalism in theatre. Multiple theatres in America and Europe also dedicated energy to the pursuit of truthfulness and simplicity in performances and productions. However, a replicable, codified system for actors was the result of Stanislavski's work.⁷ In addition to theatres' varied efforts towards more naturalistic performances, several playwrights also committed to the emerging form. Some include Chekhov, Strindberg, Ibsen, Shaw and Gorky.

The principal objective was to generate, within an audience, the perception they were experiencing real life through the actors' staged performances. However, Stanislavski did not view his technique as only being useful in naturalistic plays; he believed it could be implemented in a wide array of production styles. A keen advocate for (A)rt, Stanislavski valued the art form of theatre more than box office tallies.⁸ In 1898, with the help of Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, he built a theatre that has both stood the test of time and exerted a profound impact on the history of theatre: The Moscow Art Theatre.⁹

The Moscow Art Theatre toured stage productions in the United States, which attracted the attention of many theatre artists. However, it was Richard Boleslavsky and Maria Ouspenskaya, former Moscow Art Theatre members, who were primarily responsible for introducing the U.S. to what is now known as the Stanislavski System (also referred to as the Stanislavski Technique/Approach). In 1923, Boleslavsky and Ouspenskaya formed the American Laboratory Theatre (ALT). Boleslavsky taught classes out of ALT's school and influenced Lee Strasberg, Harold Clurman and Cheryl Crawford, who were responsible for establishing the Group Theatre, a company dedicated to American plays.¹⁰ Two notable Group Theatre figures who developed techniques based on the Stanislavski System included Sanford Meisner and Uta Hagen.¹¹ Actors such as Jack Nicholson studied with Meisner as did James Gandolfini, Anthony Hopkins, Jeff Bridges and other actors of acclaim. Some who studied with Hagen include Jack Lemmon, Liza Minnelli and Matthew Broderick.¹²

In 1937, Cheryl Crawford, Robert Lewis and Elia Kazan (all former Group Theatre members), founded the Actors Studio. There, "the method" was born, a system largely

⁷ A. L. Fovitzky, *The Moscow Art Theatre and its Distinguishing Characteristics* (New York: A. Chernoff Publishing Company, 1923), 8.

⁸ Robert Leach, *Makers of Modern Theatre: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 6-18.

⁹ Nick Worrall, *The Moscow Art Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2003), 3.

¹⁰ Richard Boleslavsky, *Acting: The First Six Lessons* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1949); Lee Strasberg, *A Dream of Passion: the Development of the Method*, ed. Evangeline Morphos (London: Bloomsbury, 1988); Harold Clurman, *The Fervent Years: The Group Theatre and the Thirties* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1983) and Cheryl Crawford, *One Naked Individual: My Fifty Years in the Theatre* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1977).

¹¹ Sanford Meisner and Dennis Longwell, *Sanford Meisner on Acting* (New York: Random House, 1987) and Uta Hagen, *Challenge for the Actor* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991).

¹² "Actors Who Studied With Sanford Meisner," IMDB, accessed June 11, 2020, <https://www.imdb.com/list/ls063986017> and "Theatre Legends: Uta Hagen," The American Theatre Wing, accessed February 3, 2016, <https://americantheatrewing.org/legends/uta-hagen>.

attributed to the work of Lee Strasberg.¹³ It was at the Actors Studio that America was perhaps most influenced by the Stanislavski System. Some of the contemporary actors and cultural icons who were part of this studio include Dustin Hoffman, Anne Bancroft, Robert De Niro, Michael Aronov, Joanne Woodward, Paul Newman, James Dean, Sydney Poitier, Bradley Cooper, Marilyn Monroe, Harvey Keitel, Marlon Brando, Steve McQueen, Geraldine Paige, Robert Duvall, Tennessee Williams, Jane Fonda and Al Pacino.

Technique Liberates Art

Technique alone does not equal talent. "Technique" can be thought of as "tools."¹⁴ The more tools one has at their disposal, the more one can, in theory, realize whatever artistic impulse arises. Once one has mastered an artistic technique, they no longer need to think about the mechanics of the technique and can simply play. Mastery of a given technique comes when one does not have to consciously think about the technique (or tool) being utilized but, instead, acts from a place of unconscious thought; this is called "mushin" in Japanese or "flow" in the west as coined by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.¹⁵

Flow

If one "plays their technique," an actor's mental focus (or circle of concentration) is on their use of tools, rather than simply trusting the pre-work they have done and then expressing themselves with thought of those tools. It is easy to desire control over impulses, which can lead to a stifling of these impulses and limit the potential of one's performance. Through play, such as playing a musical instrument, chess or video games, one may increase the likelihood of entering a flow state.¹⁶

Many performers make a flow state of mind a principal goal in their performances, as this state enables performers to "get out of the way of themselves" and lose themselves while performing, a state of mind in which time becomes irrelevant. It is an optimal means of expression when one becomes absorbed in their actions.¹⁷ Theatre performers, especially in some Asian forms of theatre, are even thought of as conduits for something larger that channels through them.¹⁸ This state is thought to be liberating and thus enables impulses to be followed without conscious thought.

¹³ Richard Hornby, "Stanislavski in America," *The Hudson Review* 63, no. 2 (2010): 296.

¹⁴ Melissa Bruder et al., *A Practical Handbook for the Actor* (New York: Vintage, 1986), 8.

¹⁵ See Joe Hyams, *Zen in the Martial Arts* (New York: Bantam, 2010), 89-90 and Arnold B. Bakker, "Flow Among Music Teachers and their Students: The Crossover of Peak Experiences," *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 66, no. 1 (2005): 27.

¹⁶ Mark D. Cruea, "Gaming the Mind and Minding the Game: Mindfulness and Flow in Video Games," in *Video Games and Well-Being*, ed. Rachel Kowart (Switzerland: Palgrave, 2020), 97-107.

¹⁷ John Gruzelier et al., "Acting Performance and Flow State Enhanced with Sensory-Motor Rhythm Neurofeedback Comparing Ecologically Valid Immersive VR and Training Screen Scenarios," *Neuroscience Letters* 480, no. 2 (2010): 113.

¹⁸ Judith G. Miller, *Ariane Mnouchkine* (London: Routledge, 2018), 41.

The Role of the Subconscious

“As you progress you will learn more and more ways in which to stimulate your subconscious selves, and to draw them into your creative process.”¹⁹

Stanislavski believed no definitive line separates the subconscious and conscious mind. Instead, he concluded that the conscious mind guides our thoughts while the subconscious operates constantly. He posited that the study of the subconscious mind was a fundamental part of his system and that it was the role of the actor to organize the various subconscious musings in the creative process to develop an artistic form. One of the goals of this technique is to structure one’s pursuits consciously so the actor does not control but surrenders to their subconscious. As one crosses from the conscious to subconscious mind—what Stanislavski referred to as the “threshold of the subconscious”—what one perceives, feels and understands changes. The performer goes from a “true-seeming” emotional experience to that of “sincerity of emotions.”²⁰

SECTION III

The Stanislavski System Structure ("Approach" or "Technique")²¹

“Life on the stage, as well as off it, consists of an uninterrupted series of objectives and their attainment.”²²

Terms to Know:

Super Objective

The thematic component of a play, the Super Objective, influences the storytelling of the director and actors.²³ “It is the theme expressed in the form of unfolding action.”²⁴ Identifying the theme is part of the interpretive process of those in the production, a process typically led by the director, dramaturge or playwright. Ideally, each actor’s Through-line of Action (discussed below) serves the Super Objective in the process of telling the story of the playwright.

¹⁹ Konstantin Stanislavsky and Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood, *An Actor’s Handbook: An Alphabetical Arrangement of Concise Statements on Aspects of Acting* (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1963), 26-27.

²⁰ Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares* (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1948), 303-306.

²¹ The discussion below is not a comprehensive review of the Stanislavski System. Components less relevant to arts entrepreneurship education have been omitted.

²² Constantin Stanislavski, *Creating a Role* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 43.

²³ Robert Blumenfeld, *Using the Stanislavsky System: A Practical Guide to Character Creation and Period Styles* (New York: Limelight Editions, 2008), 33.

²⁴ James Thomas, *Script Analysis for Actors, Directors, and Designers* (Burlington, MA: CRC Press, 2013).

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: When understanding an actors' use of their "Super Objective," arts entrepreneurship educators can aid acting students (and others) in developing mission and purpose statements.²⁵

Through-Line of Action (commonly referred to as the "spine")

This is each character's arching objective throughout the entirety of the play. It incorporates all other objectives, actions and units.²⁶

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: In an arts entrepreneurship context, this can be thought of as important long-time career or organizational goals (ideally needs), whether small, medium or large in scale. In my experience teaching in higher education, not all students have had experiences that emphasize the articulation of goals (small, medium and large) in their formal education. Goals are critical for a multitude of reasons. They give a clear sense of the objective(s) to be accomplished and what one potentially stands to gain. Goals help entrepreneurs determine their sense of direction concerning their targets. Whether hit or not, targets can be measured. If goals are accomplished, be they small, medium or large, the entrepreneur gains traction and potentially momentum. If goals are not met, one may pivot and articulate new ones.

Units of Action ("bits" or "beats")²⁷

These are smaller individual goals, objectives or needs of one's character that, collectively throughout the play, create a character's Through-Line of Action. Units of Action can rapidly change within the course of a given scene and often do as obstacles arise between characters. A character may have one or several of these smaller goals in a scene. In theory, there are no limits to how many units of action, or needs, a character might develop in each scene.

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: Arts entrepreneurs have no shortage of needs. They can be varied and shift with circumstances.²⁸ Helping theatre artists understand the connection between needs in scenes and needs in running an organization can help entrepreneurs structure small and medium goals.

Tactics (or sending action) and Communion (or threading)

Tactics are how characters pursue goals and are associated with active verbs. For example, one might achieve their goals by nudging (another or others), coaxing,

²⁵ For experiential exercises addressing this topic, see James D. Hart, *Classroom Exercises for Entrepreneurship: A Cross-Disciplinary Approach* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018), 33.

²⁶ Cathy M. Smith, E. Grace Gephardt and Debra Nestel, "Applying the Theory of Stanislavski to Simulation: Stepping into Role," *Clinical Simulation in Nursing* 11, no. 8 (2015): 363.

²⁷ When Stanislavski introduced his system in the United States, he referred to "bits." To an English-speaking ear, this sounded like "beats" and, consequently, became part of the English-speaking vernacular regarding the Stanislavski System.

²⁸ Some acting instructors prefer the word "needs" as opposed to "objectives," as needs are more immediate. For example, one may have a need for shoes; it is entirely different to want a pair of shoes.

inspiring, guilting or beguiling.

Sending Action

The term “sending action” was utilized by Earle Gister, long-time acting teacher and influential director of the acting program at the Yale School of Drama.²⁹ He described “sending action” as the way a character makes another or others feel, to emotionally impact them. Trying to cause others to feel an emotion is, for Gister, how a character engages in tactics.³⁰ Emotion has the power to sway. Each character sends actions and, in turn, receives actions sent towards them. There is an assumed flow between the two scene partners, what Stanislavski calls “communion.” Gister called it “threading.” As the actors are impacting their scene partners through communion or threading, an audience can experience emotions through what is felt by the actors.

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: In my classrooms, theatre students often win our pitch contests. This is likely because they can sway an audience—emotionally or otherwise. If actors utilize their knowledge of how to impact others emotionally, they can, perhaps, sway pitch contest judges, investors, team members and other stakeholders. Helping a theatre artist understand that they should, in essence, “perform their pitch” and emotionally influence their audience—principally by inspiring them—can deliver dynamic results. This phenomenon appears in the popular television show *Shark Tank*. Time and again, those pitching will become emotional, no doubt attempting to evoke empathy or compassion within the “sharks.” Those pitching speak about their creation story, how they had a problem (which is where the emotion typically arises) and the solution they devised to solve the problem.

In pitching, it is not enough to articulate a problem; a solution must follow. With the articulation of a solution, stakeholders are generally going to want to know how the solution is realized, or how the product or service works. Helping theatre students understand how their tactics in scene and subsequent solution works will help them structure their entrepreneurial pursuits.

Given Circumstances

These are the situations in which actors find themselves in the context of theatrical scenes.³¹ It becomes the goal of an actor practicing this system to imagine themselves in these circumstances as fully as possible so that they lend context to their storytelling and perform in a believable manner. Imagining the given circumstances, I have come to believe, is one of the key components of this technique. As the actor imagines, so too can the audience.

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: As prospective team members could be doing something other than joining the entrepreneur’s startup, it

²⁹ David Krasner, “Acting: The Gister Method by Joseph Alberti,” *Theatre Topics* 23, no. 1 (2013): 111.

³⁰ Gister was not a fan of the word “tactic,” but felt “sending action” was less technical and more on par with how people communicate and pursue objectives from one another in life.

³¹ Lee Norvelle, “Stanislavski Revisited,” *Educational Theatre Journal* 14, no. 1 (1962): 29-37.

behooves the entrepreneur to sway those potential team members. It becomes paramount for an entrepreneur to understand the circumstances they find themselves in (financially, in the market, in contrast with existing or emerging competitors, how trends may be shifting, how customer segments may be emerging or declining, etc.). As one knows their circumstances, needs (units of action) can be determined and the entrepreneur can act accordingly. When an arts entrepreneurship student understands the circumstances they find themselves in within the market, within a board room, in the sales process or otherwise, they can work within these confines or break restrictions by choice. Knowledge of their given circumstances can aid in devising a strategy.

Obstacles

In pursuing one's objectives (needs) through acting, inevitably, one will encounter obstacles in the course of the play.³² Obstacles are impediments on the character's journey. They threaten to block the character, the objectives or units of action being pursued.³³

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: In their book *Attention and Self-Regulation: A Control-Theory Approach to Human Behavior*, psychology professors Charles Carver and Michael Scheier offer the following:

All of these examples, taken directly from the subject matter of social and personality psychology, raise important questions about the regulation of human behavior. How do we feel and act, for example, when we confront obstacles in the course of trying to attain goals? How do we respond to unforeseen occurrences in our personal environments? How aware are we of our feelings and intentions? And to what degree are those feelings, attitudes, and intentions actually reflected in our overt actions and verbalizations? These are some of the central questions of our field.³⁴

There is no shortage of obstacles experienced in the entrepreneurial process. It can seem that little (or large) proverbial fires start each day. Helping actors make this connection will aid them in being adaptable, to pivot when necessary, to establish goals to overcome the obstacles they face and understand their given circumstances. Moreover, if they expect obstacles in developing businesses, they may not be surprised when these challenges arise.

By identifying and naming the obstacles they encounter, arts entrepreneurs gain cognitive awareness of what they must overcome or circumvent. In this respect, knowledge becomes power. Knowing what challenges (weaknesses or threats) prevent entrepreneurs from gaining momentum can aid them in devising a strategy. Such a strategy might manifest as a business plan or a SWOT analysis.

³² Dyer P. Bilgrave and Robert H. Deluty, "Stanislavski's Acting Method and Control Theory: Commonalities Across Time, Place, and Field," *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal* 32, no. 4 (2004): 335-336.

³³ "The Definitive Guide to Method Acting," Backstage, accessed June 1, 2020, <https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/the-definitive-guide-to-method-acting-65816>.

³⁴ Charles S. Carver and Michael F. Scheier, *Attention and Self-Regulation: A Control-Theory Approach to Human Behavior* (New York: Springer, 2012), 3.

One of the core obstacles both artists and entrepreneurs face is the status quo, which can be defined as the existing power structures or present states of affairs. Hagen states that “the very nature of an artist” is to rebel against the status quo or otherwise revolt.³⁵ This denotes a great propensity for change and a desire for impact. In their respective quests for change, artists and entrepreneurs will experience inevitable pushback, as the status quo seeks to preserve and expand its power, rather than acquiesce to the many unknown outcomes of change. But it is not just the status quo that resists these unknowns. People in general tend to view the status quo, even when unjust, as preferable or desirable.³⁶ This can make efforts towards change especially challenging. With this in mind, arts entrepreneurship instructors serve their students by teaching them to face and otherwise overcome these obstacles.

The Magic If

“You can kill the King without a sword, and you can light the fire without a match. What needs to burn is your imagination.”³⁷

Imagination plays a significant role in the Stanislavski System. He believed the imagination can be stimulated, utilized and that “art is a product of the imagination.”³⁸ Indeed, it is one of the primary tools of an actor, as they imagine their given circumstances and how their characters will develop.

Stanislavski notes, “If” acts as a lever to lift us out of the world of actuality into the realm of imagination.³⁹ Actors may ask of themselves, “What if I were in the character’s environment, in such circumstances?” Doing so enables actors to connect to their objective or units of action and to forgo or suspend disbelief. The imaginative work of an actor helps shape their role-playing in such a way as to deliver a degree of authenticity in their playing, which encourages an audience to *also* suspend disbelief.⁴⁰

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: In their mind’s eyes, entrepreneurs “see” what has yet to be, that which may become if their efforts bear fruit. This can occur, in part, through ideation, which is an imagination-based process. However, it should be noted that ideation alone is not enough, just as imagining given circumstances is not enough. Action must be taken for value to be realized. The “Magic If” can serve actors as they imagine ways to take actions to reduce risks, strategize,

³⁵ Uta Hagen, *Respect for Acting* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 15.

³⁶ Aaron C. Kay et al., “Inequality, Discrimination, and the Power of the Status Quo: Direct Evidence for a Motivation to See the Way Things Are as the Way They Should Be,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97, no. 3 (2009): 421.

³⁷ Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares*, 46.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

³⁹ See Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares*, 59 and Barbara Bird and Leon Schjoedt, “Entrepreneurial Behavior: Its Nature, Scope, Recent Research, and Agenda for Future Research,” in *Understanding the Entrepreneurial Mind*, ed. Alan Carsrud and Malin Brannback (New York: Springer, 2009), 344.

⁴⁰ Through performance consistency and commitment, actors on a stage can evoke a sense of belief within the audience, enabling them to temporarily believe. Example: A young person may act the role of an elder for the length of a play. As the actor commits to this portrayal the audience may allow themselves to not question or otherwise resist the notion that such a young person “is” an older person.

collectively brainstorm, problem-solve, pivot as need be and a number of other entrepreneurial processes. There are numerous experiential exercises and theatrical improvisation exercises arts entrepreneurship educators can use to facilitate Stanislavski's concept of "Magic If."⁴¹

"What if" can also be utilized in helping aspiring entrepreneurs understand the nature of cause and effect in the entrepreneurial process. For example, "If I do this...that will likely happen. Then if I do that, that probably will happen," and so on. As they practice this imaginative planning technique, "if this, then that," students can develop strategies for action.⁴²

Improvisation

Improvisation can aid actors in character development and other necessary creative decision-making in their processes of theatre-making. Stanislavski believed that improvisation can stimulate the imagination in such a way that the actors' thinking about character extends into the wings of the theatre, not just while on stage.⁴³ This continued imagination practice can enable actors to gain a deeper imagined insight into the lives and needs of their characters. The more actors improvise scenes that are not necessarily in the play's text, the more they might invest in the given circumstances of the play—emotionally as well as imaginatively. Again, they can invest to such a degree they suspend their own disbelief, just as a child might when engaged in role play. In such instances, the actors know they are playing a character but allow themselves become immersed.

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: As noted in "Obstacles," there is no shortage of problems entrepreneurs face. Though proverbial firestorms seemingly appear at one's door every day, tactical adjustments can be made, rising to the level of strategy.⁴⁴ Improvisation is thus a critical skill in the process of entrepreneurship.⁴⁵ Such skills are utilized by startups when adapting to changing or highly uncertain environments.⁴⁶ Entrepreneurs may improvise in any number of ways that could include their sales process, problem-solving with board members, working with limited resources, needing to make swift decisions, etc. Improvisatory skills typically include listening, being present, avoiding saying "no," and instead

⁴¹ For experiential learning exercises, see Viola Spolin, *Improvisation for the Theatre* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1963); Heidi M. Neck, Patricia G. Greene and Candida G. Brush, eds., *Teaching Entrepreneurship: A Practice-based Approach* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2014) and James D. Hart, *Classroom Exercises for Entrepreneurship: A Cross-Disciplinary Approach*, 2018.

⁴² Hart, *Classroom Exercises for Entrepreneurship*, 198.

⁴³ Peter Brook, *Threads of Time. Recollections. A Cornelia and Michael Bessie Book*, (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1998), 93-94.

⁴⁴ Ted Baker, Anne S. Miner, and Dale T. Eesley, "Improvising Firms: Bricolage, Account Giving and Improvisational Competencies in the Founding Process," *Research Policy* 32, no. 2 (2003): 255-276.

⁴⁵ Keith M. Hmieleski and Andrew C. Corbett, "The Contrasting Interaction Effects of Improvisational Behavior with Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy on New Venture Performance and Entrepreneur Work Satisfaction," *Journal of Business Venturing* 23, no. 4 (2008): 482-483.

⁴⁶ Tom Duxbury, "Improvising Entrepreneurship," *Technology Innovation Management Review* 4, no. 7 (2014): 22-26.

saying “yes” to developing circumstances and contributing or building upon solutions for a scenario.⁴⁷

Improvisation skills can be used in the process of collective brainstorming, too. In this context, entrepreneurs actively imagine and articulate, each voicing their impulses together for a common purpose (like a problem they are addressing). Such actions can “start anywhere and go off in any direction.”⁴⁸ Such is a process that can lead to the development of previously unthought-of concepts, assumptions and syntheses. Likewise, utilizing improvisation skills within the classroom can also help creatively-minded individuals cognitively “warm-up” just as an athlete would stretch and otherwise engage their muscles before a performance, so performers can optimally imagine and commit to impulse-driven actions.⁴⁹

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: By engaging arts entrepreneurship students in varied cognitive, improvisation-based exercises, educators can activate students’ imaginations. Like a car started in winter that becomes progressively warmer over time and ready for driving, students’ minds become more focused and sensitive to arising creative impulses. Their imaginations are “stretched” and consequently, at the ready. Advantages are found in building a sense of community within the classroom through interactive improvisation exercises.⁵⁰

Circles of Concentration (or Attention)

This component of Stanislavski’s System aids actors in imaginatively visualizing their mental points of focus. One can imagine a pool of light, such as those featured in theatrical productions. An actor can imagine this circle of light within only their person and their thoughts that emerge while in character. The circle might then extend to include both the actor on stage and others performing with them. Next, this circle of illumination can extend to include those on stage and the audience. Next, it can expand to include the performer, all other aforementioned areas of focus, as well as the larger community outside of the theatre. Imaginatively visualizing each circle can aid a performer in considering their points of focus, their attention in pursuit of their objectives, needs and goals.

⁴⁷ Lakshmi Balachandra, “The Improvisational Entrepreneur: Improvisation Training in Entrepreneurship Education,” *Journal of Small Business Management* 57 (2019): 63-64.

⁴⁸ Peter Brook, *The Shifting Point: Forty Years of Theatrical Exploration, 1946-87* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), 111.

⁴⁹ Dan Moshavi, “‘Yes and...’: Introducing Improvisational Theatre Techniques to the Management Classroom,” *Journal of Management Education* 25, no. 4 (2001): 442.

⁵⁰ Peter H. Hackbert, “Using Improvisational Exercises in General Education to Advance Creativity, Inventiveness and Innovation,” *US-China Education Review* 7, no. 10 (2010): 14.

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: There are many things entrepreneurs must focus on. In a typical entrepreneurial process, there is always something one could or should be doing. Such is the magnitude of an entrepreneur's responsibilities. Being aware that many actors utilize "circles of concentration" in their performances, arts entrepreneurship instructors can guide them in making a connection with their short and long-term entrepreneurial circumstances and needs. Understanding what each proverbial light represents, a student can attend to the many needs of multiple stakeholders.

Tempo and Rhythm

One can assess both one's own inner tempo and rhythm or repetition occurring outside of oneself. Stanislavski worked to help actors appropriately assess these to depict natural expressions and adhere to, perceive and resist those energies exhibited by others within given circumstances.

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: As previously noted, actors are keenly aware of others' expressions, ways of being, body language, tone and other bits of information when communicating. Simultaneously, performers have an awareness of the way they, too, are perceived. With this in mind, arts entrepreneurship instructors can use their understanding of this component to teach students about networking, the speed of a negotiation and perceiving team members' behaviors and speech tempos (and those of customers and stakeholders). Understanding others' rhythms and tempos, an actor (or non-actor) can learn to energetically or rhythmically sync with others in conversations. Doing so can help developing arts entrepreneurs "get onto the same page" as those they are engaging with—to not be in contrast with them but, rather, simpatico.

In the context of negotiations, arts entrepreneurs can assess when a person is attempting to speed up a negotiation, which, in all likelihood, would be due to the other person wanting to seal a deal quickly. That person may increase the speed with which they perceive a mistake has been made before the entrepreneur recognizes the error. By perceiving this shift of negotiation speed, the artist-entrepreneur can consciously slow the pace of negotiation so they are not taken advantage of and have time to assess why the other party is accelerating their tempo.⁵¹

⁵¹ Alan McCarthy, "Negotiation Skills Top 10 Tips," accessed May 27, 2020, 9:23-10:13, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oy0MD2nsZVs>.

*Affective Memory or Emotional Memory*⁵²

This component of the system can be utilized by actors (and others) to recall past emotional experiences. They, in essence, relive the emotions again and the corresponding feelings for the scene in which they are acting. Doing so can lead an actor to not only genuinely and willfully feel an emotion on stage, but also to more realistically depict the emotion of a character. Stanislavski developed this technique as a result of his appreciation of French psychologist Théodule-Armand Ribot's (1839-1916) concept of Affective Memory.⁵³

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: In a 2016 Forbes contribution, Karl Moore, Associate Professor at McGill University in Canada, writes about how introverts can act like extraverts. To illustrate, he references the Stanislavski Approach: "Though an actor is not a serial killer, through internationalization they can play the part of one by recalling a time in their private lives when they felt, for example, a lack of empathy. Comparably, an introverted leader can think of a time in their lives when they felt open and powerful in order to play the part of an extroverted executive when stepping into a boardroom filled with potential investors."⁵⁴

Like actors, arts entrepreneurs can draw upon past experiences and memories to play a desired and contextualized role. When teaching about team development or roles within an entrepreneurial organization, an arts entrepreneurship instructor can help actors make a mental connection between emotional memory and the roles they may be called upon to play for business purposes. For example, if they need to appear strong during a conflict, the founder might recall a time in their lives when they felt powerful, influential and dynamic, both before and during the moment of conflict.

⁵² This is a later addition to the Stanislavski system. It was further developed as a component of technique by Lee Strasbourg's concept of method acting. An offshoot technique of Stanislavski's system, it became popular with many film actors, including the aforementioned who were affiliated with the Actors Studio. This particular tool is controversial and not used in all school programs that teach the Stanislavski System. Some critics of affective memory use note that if an actor is focusing on past memories rather than letting emotions emerge through one's imagination of given circumstances and through listening to their scene partners, they are not necessarily focusing on the live circumstances on stage. Rather, they are experiencing emotions of the past. One can argue they are not, therefore, consciously present. Regular use of this tool of reflecting on, for example, the death of one's grandparent, become "emotionally processed" and thus inconsistent or no longer effective as a tool for a particular role. Having emotionally or cognitively processed this emotion, through regular reflection on a prior event, can lead to an actor not being able to consistently generate the desired emotion—as they may need to for a long run of a production. However, as film actors often do not generally need to perform as many takes of a performance as stage productions often require, this component of the Stanislavski System has become especially prevalent in film. Actors Al Pacino, Robert De Niro, Christian Bale and Marlon Brando are all said to be or have been proponents of emotional memory. Other problems that might arise as a result of affective memory include emotional shocks from revisiting traumatic events of one's past. Such "visits" may not be emotionally healthy for some and could potentially lead to undesirable effects.

⁵³ Cheryl Kennedy McFarren, "Acknowledging Trauma /Rethinking Affective Memory: Background, Method, and Challenge for Contemporary Actor Training" (Ph.D. diss., University of Colorado at Boulder, 2003), 2.

⁵⁴ "The Director's Chair: Leadership Lessons From The Theater," Forbes, accessed May 27, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/karlmoore/2016/08/03/the-directors-chair-leadership-lessons-from-the-theatre/#5c4345e711db>.

Physical Action

Stanislavski's thinking on his approach evolved over time. He eventually substituted his early use of Emotional (or Affective) Memory with "Physical Action," which he developed in 1933, only five years before his death.⁵⁵

Motion creates emotions.⁵⁶ Physical actions can lead a performer to experience particular feelings, just as emotions can elicit a physical response. One sees this evidenced in the image of a runner who, as they cross the finish line ahead of their peers, holds their arms up, fully extended in a v-like shape, indicating a feeling of victory.⁵⁷ Stanislavski believed that each physical action—a hand wave, for example, or the lifting of a wine glass to toast another—is performed as a result of the character's inner needs (or objectives) pursued by the actor.

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: Research supports Stanislavski's theory of Physical Action. Dr. Amy Cuddy, professor at Harvard University, explained in a TED Talk that when one holds a pencil between their teeth so as to create a smile-like shape, people will begin to feel happy.⁵⁸ When people are feeling strong or powerful, they are likely to put their fists upon their hips, elbows protruding sidewise. When people "pretend to be powerful," creating a power pose stance like that of Wonder Woman, they tend to feel powerful. "So, we know that our minds change our bodies," she notes, "but is it also true that our bodies change our minds?" She continues, "So, I'm talking about thoughts and feelings and the sort of physiological things that make up our thoughts and feelings, and in my case, that's hormones."⁵⁹

Cuddy notes that powerful people assume greater risks. They tend to be more assertive than those who do not feel powerful and even believe that games involving chance will go in their favor. She demonstrates the physiological differences between the powerful-feeling and those who do not feel so, a process governed by the hormones testosterone and cortisol. High-power people have low levels of the stress hormone cortisol and high testosterone levels—the "dominance hormone." This is also found in primates who must ascend into a dominant role. Within a short period of time, their hormones shift. Their testosterone increases and cortisol level decreases. "Role changes can shape the mind," she concludes.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Perviz Sawoski, "The Stanislavski System," (working paper), accessed June 11, 2020, http://homepage.smc.edu/sawoski_perviz/stanislavski.pdf.

⁵⁶ Giuliana Bruno, "Pleats of Matter, Folds of the Soul," *Log 1* (2003): 113.

⁵⁷ "Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are | Amy Cuddy," TED, accessed May 28, 2020, 4:21-4:42, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ks-Mh1QhMc>.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 7:34-7:42.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8:06-8:23.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 10:08-10:10.

She conducted an experiment involving subjects standing in high power poses for several minutes. After positioning themselves that way, she asked that they spit into a vial. Cuddy found that when one puts themselves into a power pose, their mind changes, causing them to feel more powerful. In 86% of participants, this resulted in increased risk tolerance and a willingness to gamble. For those in low-power positions, however, 60% had a decreased interest in gambling – a statistically noteworthy difference. Those who were “high-power” had a roughly 20% increase of testosterone, and those who represented low-power, a decrease of 10%. These changes occurred as a result of two minutes of configuring one’s form in either high-power or low-power positions. Low-power posing people, Cuddy says, experience an increase in cortisol of 15% while high-power experience a decrease of 25%. These poses lead to one either feeling reactive to stress or assertive, comfortable and confident.

Nonverbals govern how we feel and think about ourselves. Our bodies change our minds. Cuddy concludes that voluntarily engaging in poses of power changes how we feel and, indeed, our brain chemistry, and that we can use this information in evaluative situations – environments where one is being judged or evaluated, such as a pitch or interviewing for a job. Presence becomes powerful in this respect and can lead to more exceptional performances.⁶¹

Who wants to support an entrepreneur who does not appear confident? Few would, as a lack of confidence can denote risk for an investor. They may ask, “Does this person believe in what they are doing, proposing or selling? Can they really be successful?” Utilizing Stanislavski’s principles of physical action and Cuddy’s example with power poses, actors and arts entrepreneurship students can experience the chemical, and consequently emotional, benefits through physical changes. This may result in a higher likelihood that stakeholders will perceive greater confidence in the person, thus potentially leading to higher levels of success for the aspiring entrepreneur. I would note this may be an interesting area for future research.

Arts entrepreneurship educators can apply this understanding in their classroom settings by having students configure their bodies in such a way that their testosterone and cortisol levels adjust. Through regular practice with this technique, students can come to experience and consequently own and integrate their findings. As entrepreneurship is a risk-based endeavor, those who tend to be more risk-averse might experience an increased willingness to engage in risk – to act entrepreneurially – by consciously adjusting their physical forms. Doing so might increase the likelihood of a more significant number of these students acting entrepreneurially post-graduation.

⁶¹ Cuddy, “Body Language.”

Courses Commonly Found in American Theatre Training Programs

Acting

Acting courses are critical for acting students. In these classes, students commonly (a) learn the Stanislavski System and (b) put their technique into practice by way of experiential learning. Majors in Acting typically complete multiple levels of acting classes (e.g., Acting I, II, III, IV).⁶²

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: Arts entrepreneurs, through code-switching, play many roles with their varied stakeholders. They wear “masks” or enact distinct personas relevant for relating to those with whom they communicate. In other words, they act. For example, one likely speaks with their doctor differently than they do their parents, which contrasts with how they might speak with their best friend or romantic partner.

Script and Text Analysis

Courses of this nature typically teach actors how to interpret authors’ texts, perceive subtleties within language, assess and define the needs of characters and determine the theme of a play. Text analysis requires critical thinking skills and ultimately will define how an artist develops their respective characters within a play as they relate to the story or experiences the author and director wish to create. Such courses can develop analytical skills to help performers develop a strategy of sorts regarding how they will contribute to the story being told.

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: The skills actors use in the process of script or text analysis can serve them entrepreneurially as they are tasked with thinking deeply about their business strategies and how they may wish to use language in developing a business plan or pitch. They can use their developed critical thinking skills to structure crafted language for communication purposes such as subtleties of language to communicate insights for readers of a plan, negotiations or those experiencing their pitch.

⁶² Depending on a theatre program’s objectives and the desires of those leading them, curricula will differ. All schools will not use the same course titles or have exactly the same content as others. There are many variations of techniques for acting purposes. Likewise, there are different techniques offered in classes that teach speech, voice and movement, to name a few. A school might have core acting classes but also offer additional acting-based classes such as film acting, clowning, Shakespeare, etc. In brief, there is no universal form or technique taught in all schools.

Devised Theatre

Not every theatre program offers a course of this nature. More conventional programs may omit devised theatre classes, preferring to maintain a more traditional curricular structure. Devised theatre classes are important, however, as they teach students how to create original theatrical works that may or may not be textually-based. Through devised theatre courses, students can explore heightened theatrical aesthetics, like Viewpoints. In such practices, they often create without a script as a basis, rather choosing to brainstorm and improvise as a matter of processes. Devised Theatre can be used to create new artistic opportunities.

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: Entrepreneurs can utilize these practices in creating innovative (or otherwise new) businesses. The skills one leverages to engage in “theatre-making” are akin to business “making.”

Improvisation (at the course level)

Perhaps the most influential figure in improvisation for the theatre is Viola Spolin.⁶³ Theatre programs have utilized her games and exercises for decades. Improvisation courses teach students how to be agile thinkers, to say “yes” to information and opportunities and to take action without significant prior deliberation or analysis paralysis. Courses utilizing improvisation as a key focus can teach artists how to perceive what a creative impulse feels like and to follow that without first judging or fearing their impulses. Should they otherwise negate those impulses that arise, students may engage in self-censorship. Courses offering improvisation techniques help theatre artists devise theatre and stay open to new experiences, listen effectively during scene work and problem solve in the moment.

Impulses can be thought of as strong urges to do something, which I like to refer to as the “lightning quick” urges that communicate, “Do this. Do this.”⁶⁴ Stanislavski referred to impulses as “motive forces” or “motive power.”⁶⁵ One’s ability to follow creative impulses is critical to creative and artistic processes. Limiting impulses can affect one’s artistic work in way of scale.⁶⁶ When an actor is overly concerned with “accuracy,” impulses may be stifled. Likely emerging from one’s subconscious, impulses are not

⁶³ Viola Spolin, *Theater Games for the Classroom: A Teacher’s Handbook* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1963).

⁶⁴ Hart, *Classroom Exercises for Entrepreneurship*, 15.

⁶⁵ Stanislavsky and Hapgood, *An Actor’s Handbook*, 26-27 and Richard Drain, ed., *Twentieth Century Theatre: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2002), 253.

⁶⁶ Anne Bogart, *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2003), 4.

⁶⁷ Ann Medaille, “Creativity and Craft: The Information-Seeking Behavior of Theatre Artists” *Journal of Documentation* 66, no. 3 (2003): 327-347.

always rationale or need to be managed or controlled.⁶⁸ In a letter to Agnes DeMille, legendary dancer and choreographer Martha Graham supports this thought in describing impulses as “a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action.” In the letter, Graham encouraged DeMille to not judge her expression, but to “keep the channel open...you have to keep open and aware to the urges that motivate you.”⁶⁹

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator can Utilize this Knowledge: Entrepreneurs, in their acts of creativity, will also experience impulses. Though it is crucial, artistically, to explore one’s impulses by not censoring but following them, not all impulses in a business context should be followed. It behooves an entrepreneur to carefully analyze their arising impulses during business, as impulses can lead to actions. Actions can be thought of as causes, and causes have effects. With this in mind, an arts entrepreneurship instructor can serve their students by teaching them skills in how to think before they speak, to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of their ideas and urges. In doing so, an instructor encourages their students to think critically, which may result in an increased likelihood of success.

As there are multiple stakeholders in any entrepreneurial process (at minimum the entrepreneur and a customer), there are several desires and needs at play. Conflicts can arise in entrepreneurial endeavors. Imaginative impulses can help an entrepreneur navigate the difficulties they experience. Conscious awareness of the impulses that urge us, just like in acting, can serve arts entrepreneurs in problem-solving, helping them devise solutions, engage with colleagues in brainstorming activities during ideation and more.

Speech

These classes teach performers how to enunciate properly so that audiences understand them and how to utilize this part of the actor’s instrument effectively. Speech classes also develop actors’ skills in dialect work. Some theatre programs use speech classes to aid actors in developing their ability to articulate complex thoughts. For example, a speech class may offer skills in how to perform iambic pentameter, commonly found in Shakespeare’s plays. In such instances, students may be taught skills in how to

⁶⁸ Remus Bejan, "Finding the Way Back Through Systematic Confusion," *Romanian Journal of Artistic Creativity* 2 (2013): 117.

⁶⁹ Stephanie Pace Marshall, "Blessed Unrest: The Power of Unreasonable People to Change the World," *National Consortium of Specialized Secondary Schools of Math, Science and Technology Journal* 13, no. 2 (2008): 14.

visualize what it is they are thinking about and give words to those images. This skill can enable actors to communicate complex thoughts and aid audiences in understanding what they are saying.

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: If an entrepreneur cannot be understood while articulating their vision, they are lost. Conger, Kanungo and Menon posit that ability to articulate one's vision is an exemplary leadership skill.⁷⁰ However, if investors, customers or other stakeholders cannot understand or conceptualize an entrepreneur's offering, they likely will not support the entrepreneur's endeavor.

Voice

Vocal work teaches students how to project, so audiences hear them. Some vocal techniques emphasize how emotions are connected to breath. They offer skills in how to boldly access emotions and emotional states inspired by the playwright's text. Vocal techniques also teach students how to relax physically. Relaxation techniques can aid an actor in producing a greater magnitude of sound without harming their vocal instrument. Relaxation techniques play a critical role in the Stanislavski System, a component he referred to as "Relaxation of Muscles." Relaxation can help calm an actor's mind and enable them to focus intensely and perform efficiently, perhaps optimally. Emotions can be better realized when one is relaxed and an actor's face appears less tense and effortful. Consequently, the overall performance may have a more significant appearance of "real life."

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: All of the techniques communicated above can aid entrepreneurs. Relaxation helps one calm their nerves and mind to perform more efficiently without unnecessary stress or effort. These techniques can also help entrepreneurs avoid burnout—an issue of utmost importance. As we know, stakeholders are impacted when an entrepreneur is no longer able to proceed.

As is the case with "sending action," voice classes can help an actor emotionally appeal to stakeholders by being able to experience emotions and impact others emotionally.⁷¹ This component of emotional connection is one of the building blocks of effective pitching.⁷² Emotional appeals alone are not sufficient without rational arguments,

⁷⁰ Jay A. Conger, Rabinda N. Kanungo, and Sanjat T. Menon, "Charismatic Leadership and Follower Effects," *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 21, no. 7 (2000): 747-767.

⁷¹ See Tactics (or "sending action") and Communion (or "threading") above.

⁷² John Wheatcroft, "Entrepreneurs need to be Pitch Perfect," *Human Resource Management International Digest* 24, no. 4 (2016): 26-28, and Ruben van Werven, Onno Bouwmeester and Joep P. Cornelissen, "Pitching a Business Idea to Investors: How New Venture Founders Use Micro-level Rhetoric to Achieve Narrative Plausibility and Resonance," *International Small Business Journal* 37, no. 3 (2019): 193-214.

yet they can help considerably, especially in the context of narratives.⁷³ Emotional appeal can lead a potential stakeholder to empathize with an expressed pain point, which can increase the likelihood of support from that person. Such a result may be due to the human tendency to emotionally imitate, simply by way of exposure to emotion.⁷⁴ The emotion of passion is especially powerful and can excite people about a business and foster employee loyalty.⁷⁵

Not only can people be taught how to recognize their own emotions, they can also learn to influence others' behaviors as a result of expressed emotions. Voice classes can play a critical role in this. Indeed, passion is contagious.⁷⁶

Movement

Movement classes have many purposes. They can help theatre artists develop so they are physically strong and flexible. They also help artists develop a sense of presence, feel confident within their bodies, express themselves physically and develop their apparatus so they can express characters that have a different physicality from their own. This enables actors to communicate whatever physical aesthetic (heightened or otherwise) a director wishes to realize. Examples of such aesthetics can include Commedia dell'arte, Biomechanics, Japanese Noh, Butoh, Dance Theatre and others.

How an Arts Entrepreneurship Educator Can Utilize This Knowledge: Fluid IQ, enabling people to learn new skills, decreases as people age. Creativity is enhanced through physical exercise and leaders who are physically fit are more equipped to handle the rigors of entrepreneurship.⁷⁷ High-intensity exercise also aids memory and there are unequivocal benefits for entrepreneurs who are physically engaged. Fitness can also lead to significant increases in "brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF)," which is a protein that aids brain cells by assisting their function and growth.⁷⁸

⁷³ José-Santiago Fernández-Vázquez, and Roberto-Carlos Álvarez-Delgado, "Persuasive Strategies in the SME Entrepreneurial Pitch: Functional and Discursive Considerations," *Economic Research* 32, no. 1 (2019): 13, <https://doaj.org/article/8a83c480db2248b88c286549dbad85e7>; Amélie Wuillaume, Amélie Jacquemin, and Frank Janssen, "The Right Word for the Right Crowd: An Attempt to Recognize the Influence of Emotions," *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research* 25, no. 2 (2019), 246.

⁷⁴ Jennifer E. Jennings et al., "Emotional Arousal and Entrepreneurial Outcomes: Combining Qualitative Methods to Elaborate Theory," *Journal of Business Venturing* 30, no. 1 (2015): 115.

⁷⁵ Richard Chang, "Turning Into Organizational Performance," *Training and Development* 55, no. 5 (2001): 104-111.

⁷⁶ Melissa S. Cardon, "Is Passion Contagious? The Transference of Entrepreneurial Passion to Employees," *Human Resource Management Review* 18, no. 2 (2008): 77-86.

⁷⁷ "How Fitness Can Ensure Smooth Entrepreneurial Journey," *Entrepreneur*, accessed May 15, 2020, <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/325861#:~:text=When an entrepreneur enhances his,one to grow mentally tougher.>

⁷⁸ Margaret Fahnstock, "Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor: The Link Between Amyloid-B[β] and Memory Loss," *Future Neurology* 6, no. 5 (2011): 627-639; "BDNF Gene - Genetics Home Reference," U.S. National Library of Medicine. National Institutes of Health. Accessed May 1, 2020. <https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/gene/BDNF>.

With physical development, sustained attention span is improved as is one's nervous system (autonomic) concerning cognition loads.⁷⁹ As entrepreneurs face numerous stressors, it benefits them to exercise, as it helps with stress relief.⁸⁰

Arts entrepreneurship instructors can help their acting students understand that physical fitness through movement helps one maintain a higher degree of balance in their lives. *Harvard Business Review* found that burnout likely contributes significantly to the three hundred billion dollars in losses the U.S. economy incurs annually because of entrepreneurial company failures and bankruptcies. Research has found that with burnout, problems arise regarding work. Problems can include absenteeism, inefficient decision making, health concerns like depression, and even possible death.⁸¹

SECTION IV

Principal Suggestions for Arts Entrepreneurship Instructors Teaching Acting Students:

Understand the research concerning standard psychological features of actors

By having a greater sense of who one is teaching, pedagogical modalities can be structured to increase the likelihood of engaging actors in arts entrepreneurship classes.

Emphasize the use of goals in the entrepreneurial process

"If you are looking for something, don't go sit on the seashore and expect it to come and find you; you must search, search, search with all the stubbornness in you!"⁸²

Though they may not always associate it as such, objectives are goals and the Stanislavski system urges actors to pursue them with persistence.

Offer and use experiential learning exercises and opportunities

Experiential activities, including exercises, can assist students in navigating social matters that are varied and complex. This type of learning can help students develop leadership and critical thinking skills, navigate career options while contributing to society and consider complex social issues. Additionally, experiential education can facilitate integration of students' knowledge with practice.⁸³ Perhaps most importantly,

⁷⁹ "People Who Normally Practice Sport Have a Better Attention Span than Those with Bad Physical Health," *ScienceDaily*, accessed May 27, 2020, <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/04/130410082159.htm>.

⁸⁰ "5 Reasons All Entrepreneurs Should Work Out," *Inc.com*, accessed June 1, 2020, <https://www.inc.com/aj-agrawal/5-reasons-all-entrepreneurs-should-work-out.html>.

⁸¹ Eva de Mol, Violet T. Ho and Jeffery M. Pollack, "Predicting Entrepreneurial Burnout in a Moderated Mediated Model of Job Fit," *Journal of Small Business Management* 56, no. 3 (2016): 392-411.

⁸² Stanislavski, *Creating a Role*, 84.

⁸³ Nancy Kindelan, "Demystifying Experiential Learning in the Performing Arts," *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 124 (2010): 31-33

experiential learning can foster wisdom. As one experiences something, they may come to discover what they are learning. In such instances, they do not need to have faith that something learned is so. Rather, they know because of experience.

In order to learn to act, one must act. To best utilize one's voice as an instrument, to realize how the breath helps have a sense of emotional vulnerability, one should engage in vocal exercises. To effectively analyze scripts for subtle meanings, themes and character objectives, one must actively analyze scripts. If a student is to be physically dexterous, flexible and able to utilize their body as an instrument in the creation of their art, they should probably engage in active movement classes. To learn to think nimbly, to understand what an impulse feels like and how to follow that without first fearing or judging it, to learn to actively listen to scene partners, to create and respond in an agile fashion, one should engage in improvisation. In studying how to properly enunciate, utilize dialects or speak the heightened verse of playwrights like Shakespeare, speech classes serve a vital role.

As actors learn by doing, an arts entrepreneurship instructor will increase the likelihood of engaging theatre students in the means of learning they are familiar with by utilizing experiential learning methods in their classroom. This may include games, simulations, demonstrations or activities otherwise known as "exercises."⁸⁴

Have a working knowledge of the Stanislavski Approach and its variations

As this system is the most popular in theatre education, an arts entrepreneurship instructor can reference key elements of the structure and develop course content that draws on these components.

Be cognizant of the acting courses arts entrepreneurship students may be taking

Knowledge of what acting students are learning enables arts entrepreneurship instructors to leverage actors' developing skills.

Offer perspective

Help students understand the reality of the theatre industry. Simply put, there are too many players and not enough opportunities. Each spring, thousands of actors arrive in New York and Los Angeles to do showcases. Within the United States alone, there are one hundred and fifty BFA and MFA Acting programs.⁸⁵

Theatre students need a competitive advantage that will help them stand out to effectively compete for existing commercial opportunities. Through entrepreneurship, they have the ability to devise their own professional opportunities. As actors' work becomes

⁸⁴ Sixty-five experiential exercises that address many of the concepts in this article can be found in Hart, *Classroom Exercises for Entrepreneurship*, 2018.

⁸⁵ Peter Zazzali, *Acting in the Academy: The History of Professional Actor Training in US Higher Education*, (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 8-9.

known, as others within the profession see their work, actors' networks expand. Work begets more work.

Artists do not need to only create theatre companies – they can view themselves as a company. They *are* their product and, with their product, commit an act of service through art. With this in mind, artists make connections between the audience (customers) and the work they create. Help them understand the efficacy of creating with a customer in mind. Their audience can serve as muse.⁸⁶

Be aware of emerging trends in theatre: technology, business models, etc.

If arts entrepreneurship instructors understand current and emerging trends in the realm of professional acting, they can help actors shape business models that increase the likelihood of generating income, developing viable and sustainable entities, and scaling those businesses.

Encourage actors to develop entrepreneurial endeavors by utilizing devised theatre skills

One can reasonably assume that actors have always played a role in developing new productions, innovations in theatre and theatrical aesthetics. Consider teaching arts entrepreneurship acting students how to identify what motivates them, what they find personally fascinating in the works of others (real-time professionals, those of the past and other world theatrical traditions). Using such knowledge as a base from which to create, they can draw upon their influences in making something new. By creating new forms, modes of theatrical expression and other original creations for the theatre, the actor develops opportunities for themselves and others and potentially pushes their art form forward.

Teach student actors about common sub-pursuits

Many actors do not only pursue acting, but also discover directing, design, writing and other theatrically-relevant topics. A significant number will also acquire interests outside the field of theatre and branch into other creative and artistic pursuits. In addition to encouraging actors to explore what opportunities might be within the field of possibility, consider teaching them how to leverage their inherent skills for work that is, or is not, theatrical.

⁸⁶ James D Hart, "But What Does Arts Entrepreneurship Even Mean?," Artsblog: For Arts Professionals in the Know (blog), Americans for the Arts, April 9, 2019, <https://blog.americansforthearts.org/2019/04/09/but-what-does-arts-entrepreneurship-even-mean/>

Aid actors in understanding the importance of technique

“Create your own method. Don’t depend slavishly on mine. Make up something that will work for you! But keep breaking traditions, I beg you.”⁸⁷

Whether learning arts entrepreneurship-based techniques or those commonly found in acting-focused classes, students increase their likelihood of giving form to their impulses by utilizing relevant learned techniques. Acting students in arts entrepreneurship classes should know the purpose of developing techniques, how such tools assist in creating entrepreneurial endeavors (as well as art) and to devise their own techniques, methods or approaches.

Equip actors in arts entrepreneurship courses with skills to avoid burnout

If one does not stay in the proverbial game, they cannot win it. With this in mind, perseverance is of utmost importance.

Teach actor-educated entrepreneurs about the importance of goal articulation and pursuit

Not all acting teachers communicate that Stanislavski’s concept of objectives is akin to pursuit of personal goals. It can serve them to understand this correlation, enabling them to set specific goals that give them a point of focus, a way to measure progress and trajectory in their entrepreneurial pursuits.

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