

Chekhov Intensive Teaching Journal

Journal Entry 1:

First zoom class. I got to know the students with the interview game. sending students out into breakout rooms and asking the questions. They came back and told me about their partner. I introduced myself and what I do as well as Micheal Chekhov and NMCA. I handed out permission slips for recording videos as well as talked about why Chekhov. I gave them homework to read the steel magnolias script. This gave them over a week to read the play as well as learn lines. The students were great! They seemed a little timid and didn't have many questions but I'm hoping they will open up to me soon. The biggest obstacle as this point is making the schedule as well as making notes for myself so that I don't miss anything. I am going through the book and printing out any images I think may be important. Also buying everything I need. I just purchased fabric I can use for veil as well as blindfolds, sticks, tennis balls, crayons, and expo markers. I believe everything else I can find around my house "prop wise" and before sensations day I will go to the store and buy some more stuff. My inspired chart just came in and I cant wait to hang it up in the classroom when I have my first in person day. My next goal is to make powerpoint for my zoom class to make it interesting.

Journal Entry 2:

Today we started our zoom class off with interviews. The class answered questions like: Have you ever heard of Chekhov? If so, what do you know about him or his technique. What are you excited about? They made me laugh a lot because a lot of the students were getting Michael Chekhov and Anton Chekhov mixed up. I don't think they knew that they were not the same person. BUT I cleared that up really quick during our Michael Chekhov history lesson. I taught all about the history of Chekhov as well as showed them a few videos. I felt they must have been a bit tired because the class was so early and history isn't the most fun for high schoolers. Im going to have to learn how to make this more fun for them. Because if it isn't fun it isn't Chekhov! Am I right?

Journal Entry 3:

Last classes homework was to read Steel Magnolias. With it so fresh in their minds I thought it would be the perfect day to teach IAC so we can then make images and words collages for teaching the beginning stages of script analysis. We were able to be very active through zoom in learning IAC and I allowed a lot of fly-back time to make sure the students got a good understanding. When making the image and word collages, I had the students reaching into their ICA 3 times. (Triplicity baby!!!) We ran out of time to put our brains together to share and start working on themes. So, I had them put it on hold for next zoom class.

Journal Entry 4:

My first in-person class!!! It went fabulous! We were able to thoroughly get through everything planed which is great because I was a bit worried about time. We started the day off making friends with the space and crossing thresholds. I think this was really great for the students being their first time back in person for a while. We then moved on to the ball toss game and pedagogy.

They were so confused at first about me asking them to not catch the ball. I could see in their eyes that they have never been asked to do something so out of the ordinary. After I explained to them the purpose of “perfect” I saw it set in and they began to appreciate the game on a different level. I could see an immediate change in comfortability and safeness in the space. We did shoulder buddy interviews as an ice breaker and then moved on to the goblet. A couple students asked really good questions about the difference between the goblet and the IAC. We then did the statue exercise, copycat / follow the leader which was they really seemed to enjoy. I realized quickly that these exercises can be so early modified for different age groups. We then learned expansion and contraction, the pulse of life. I explained how to do scene partner work and we tried a tool in scenes for the first time. It took me a little bit to convince them to fully use the tool and to “not act”. We then went into qualities of movement and archetypal gesture and did some improv with that. They started to understand a bit more how to practice the tools. I then ended the day with the quantum peak lecture and the actors chant. Then lastly, of course, the golden hoop. The closure was beautiful and I could feel a different atmosphere in the room than when we first started. It was a great day!

Journal Entry 5:

During our zoom class today, we continued our images and word collages. We were able to share our collages and start putting all of our words together to begin our theme making process. We together listed our words and changed colors for themes through screen share. I was very worried about teaching so much over zoom but each lesson just keeps getting better and better. I can feel the students starting to get excited and have fun! After we finished picking out our theme we went into our directors call to action. What do I want my audience to do tomorrow after seeing my show today? I was so impressed with these students, they are just so incredibly intelligent and had such great ideas! We then talked about our SART events and I explained how to do LEAD. We ran out of time to continue but will pick back up tomorrow.

We had a big jump in class dates because there was an unexpected snow week as well as show dates for their upcoming performances. But it was “perfect” because they were able to take a well deserved rest as well as use the tools they knew so far in their show!

Journal Entry 6:

First zoom class back in a couple weeks! The students were ready to jump back in, starting up with a warmup and continuing through TPT, BBEEP, ensemble, the three “i”s, jewelry, improv, truth and style. We had great conversations and the students were able to break into breakout rooms to go over these tools within their scenes. When we came back to the classroom I explained the psychology of the stage. For their homework I am having them bring their headshot and resume.

Journal Entry 7:

Today I did lectures on interviews and meetings as “little pieces of art”. We did exercises with the imaginary door, and “impressing” people. We talked about college auditions coming up very soon and preparing for those. I then looked through everyone's headshot and resume and gave

them feedback. Today was a fun class, these are some of my favorite lecture to teach! I also have gotten better at making zoom classes more fun. Even if its the funnest class of the day its still so easy for students to check out because they are in these zoom classes all day with barley any breaks. So every moment I can find to help them feel energized and excited, I take the opportunity!

Journal Entry 8:

Heres to another all day in-person class!! We started off the day doing a fly-back of what we've learned so far. We then played the ball toss game and adding more aspects to the game. We then held "auditions" or "meetings" and may I say, these students are TALENTED! We radiated good will and it always wins. I then taught the Japanese Rock Garden. They made stage picture using Steel Magnolias and the theme we had made as a group. We then explored the 3 sisters using dialog from the play and mirrors improv. When we broke into scene partner groups, I noticed such a change from the students. They were REALLY getting it! They were REALLY using the tools. In high school it can be hard to take things like this seriously because you may feel silly and don't want to feel embarrassed in front of your peers. But these students were really getting it and truly were using the tools. I was so proud in this moment. We then moved on the sensations which is one of my most favorite things to teach. They really appreciated the "you are NOT obligated as an actor to feel anything" speech. Its so important to teach students this early so they don't hurt themselves in the future. Then I taught atmospheres, they really loved all the different atmospheres exercises! Then I taught my absolute FAVORITE. 4 brothers. I love teaching this because this is the most relatable tool to being a healthier happier human. Lastly, we did the palace exercise. I took a little more time on this because it is my most favorite to hear about. We did a fly-back and it was so beautiful hearing about their experiences. I could see every one of their reading moments. I wasn't able to do this before because I myself was doing it with my peers so this was the first time just watching everything unfold. It was absolutely amazing. We ended the day with the golden hoop.

Journal Entry 9:

In todays zoom class I taught the rest of the lectures. What the director unites, the 5 guiding principals, circle, objective, etc... I then took the rest of the class to do imaginary body. After doing this, I do wish I were able to do this exercise in person because I believe the outcomes become most aligned within the same threshold. But I didn't the best I could with the in person time I have. Otherwise, today was a great day and the imaginary bodies were unbelievably perfect.

Journal Entry 10:

Today was our final zoom class. We talked about NMCA and continuing our learning. A lot of the students were very interested in learning more deeply the technique. I guided them to NMCA website and am in hopes once they start school, they will look more deeply into NMCA pedagogy. We then ended the class with interviews and a fly-back of everything taught and learned so far. I had the students write any feedback they had for me as a teacher.

Journal Entry 11:

My last class!!! We made today an extra long day because we had so much to do. I was very nervous going into today because we had a lot to cover, but I continued with beauty, ease, entirety and form. We started the day with the actors march and going over our IAC. We dove into location/mobility/quality and the exercises along with that true universal self and imaginary body. We played with ball, stick, and veil and practiced using these tools on one body part at a time. We played a lot in scenes today because today is works-in-progress day! We then sensation exercise but instead of someone leading you around the stations I had to modify it for Covid. I made personalized bags for each student with each sensation fulfilled. We embraced our favorite sensation as we ate lunch for the day. We then moved onto TFW and did improv using the tool. Then into radiating and receiving, they got this down pretty well when we radiated good will for auditions. We went into the heart wrenching exercises that make radiating and receiving so real and so accessible. We did a safety fly-back to make sure everyone was okay and talk about what we felt using the tool. We then explored rhythm and tempo, focal points, and PG win-loss. We used these in improv and scene work. We did final scene work finding the most powerful jewels and finished the day with our very own works-in-progress. We finished with interviews and the famous Oreo cookie fly-back.