

Exploring and Experimenting in DP Theatre

Practical engagement with
traditions & theorists

Big understandings

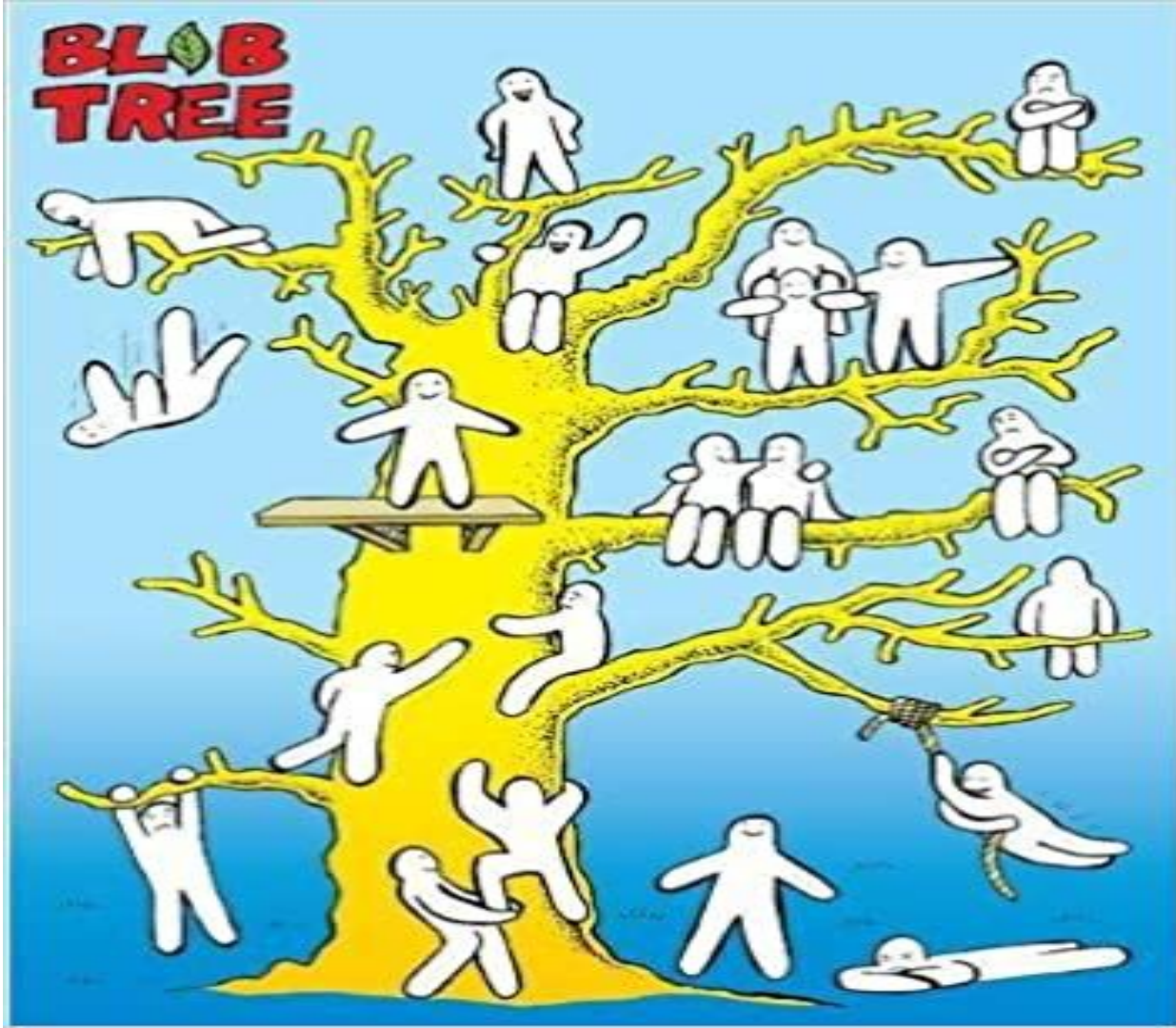
- Distinguish between "exploring" and "experimenting" within the Research Presentation (RP).
- Connect theoretical research to practical intentions in the Solo Theatre Piece (STP).
- Empower students to navigate their own practical pathways independently.
- Unpack assessment criteria to ensure students are hitting the "high-mark" descriptors.

Housekeeping

- Zoom etiquette (camera on, mic off)
- Asking and participating
- Chat, hands up
- Aha! moments and Wonderings
- Breakout rooms: giving and listening, “Zoom respect”

- Name
- Location
- Thinking about DP Theatre, which blob are you and why?
- Nominate next

blobtree.com



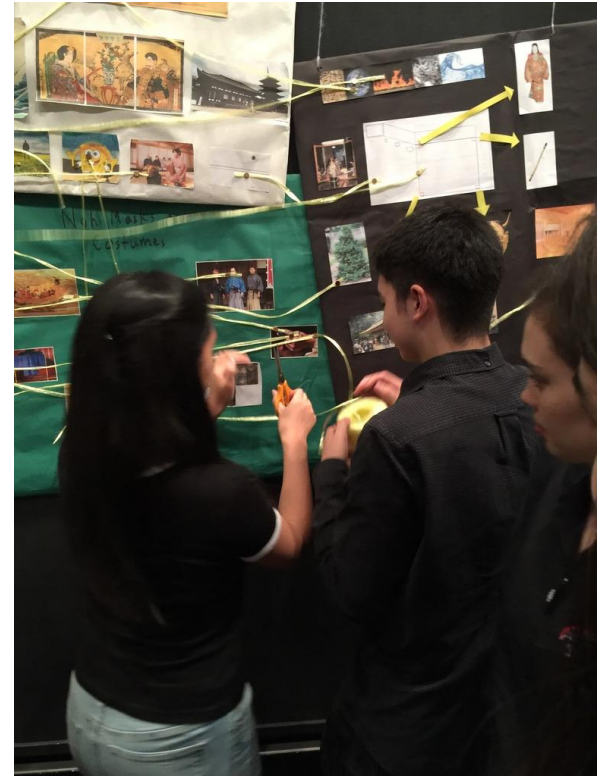
Exploring or Experimenting?

The key to the RP lies in B
For B is where me and thee do see
That pottering with skills is just a tease,
Putting in *place* is the golden piece.

WTT - freedom inside parameters

World Theatre Traditions:

- I choose a Tradition
- I identify 4-6 defined research areas to allocate
- Students find/create symbols & images representing “Pearls of Wisdom”
- Class comes together to post images on wall, explaining, and connect ideas with string.



Approaching the Convention

Teacher-led *Practical Exploration* workshop on one convention. E.g. with 'Movement style of Noh' it breaks down into several elements:

- Kamae → Feedback → Correct → Feedback → Correct → Feedback...
- Suriashi → Feedback → Correct → Feedback → Correct → Feedback...
- Small turns → Feedback → Correct → Feedback → Correct → Feedback...
- Large turns → Feedback → Correct → Feedback → Correct → Feedback...

Universal aim: increase skill of body or voice in line with this tradition.

Once improved, turn to the students' own research of other conventions.

Convention - Element

Suriashi

Limitation

Upper body twists when walking

Feet lift off ground

Response

Steel rods and cables activity

Bamboo pole to sides

Ankle grab partner

Chair-arc method

Limitation

Upper body becomes tense

Head begins to bob

Friction makes slide clunky

Legs bend variably

Legs turn to jelly

Response

String across room at head height activity

Solution activity

Solution activity

Backpack of sand activity

The Limitation Tree
Adapted from the Decision Tree protocol

Group Design Task

In breakout rooms, you will:

- Agree on a theatre tradition
- Compile a list of conventions that centre on use of **body** or **voice**
- Design a workshop for **one** of the conventions (or element of one), anticipating limitations they may demonstrate, and how you will respond
- Complete a hypothetical 'Limitation Tree' for **one other** convention/element a student may choose to explore independently
- Prepare to share your teacher-led outline and your Limitation Tree.

B1 of the RP

“The student demonstrates an **effective** **process** of **practical** exploration of the performance **convention**.”

Heavy lifting:

- **Effective**: joined up thinking; results as intended
- **Process**: over time; from nothing to something
- **Practical**: using body or voice
- **Convention**: exploration that is valid and specific to the tradition

Now you've strengthened the
"Actor's Muscle", what do you
do with it?

Teacher-led experimentation

I introduce a piece of TPM to workshop with all.

TPM is:

- From the time and place of the tradition
- Used for performance in that time and place
- Sometimes a script
- Sometimes a commonly used idea, concept or outline
- An extract of 1-2 minutes
- Never a modern interpretation, or student-created.

Oimatsu Example

- Model, Observe and Feedback on key *kata*:
 - Sashi
 - Kazashi
 - Mawari Kaeshi
 - Hiraki
 - Shitome
- Share TPM, unpack the meanings.
- Try some prescribed kata choices.
- Students each then play.
- Create and practice different options: same kata at different points; different kata at the same point.
- Share the options - explain the pros and cons of the options.

backwards, then lowers to the right.

Variable meaning depending on text.

Sashi = Looking into distance, e.g. at sunrise

Pivot both feet to point diagonally to left, sliding right foot back as you do, to point 45 degrees Stage Left

Draw a large circle to your right with your fan arm, open fan, and end with the tip of the fan parallel with the bridge of your nose, almost like using the fan as a visor

Kazashi = Looking around; protection

Beginning with the end point of Sashi, "car reverse" 2-3 steps to face forwards once more
Fan arm drops to side, and fan hold switches round to have 4 fingers above fan, straight out towards tip. Fan arm then resumes position out in front with tip of fan slightly lower than bridge of nose

Sayū (follows the Agehaōgi) = Concludes a Section

Step to the left with left arm outstretched

Then, stomp with left foot, then extends the right arm and takes a step to the right.

Handout 2a: Utai from Oimatsu

Yo-	One dash = 1 whole beat	Ge-e	Tilde (~) indicates pitch loops up back down
Ko- -	Two dashes = 2 whole beats	Ra.Su.	Dotted syllables = half beat
<u>Ré</u>	Upwards accent = rising pitch	<u>Tsù</u>	Downwards accent = falling pitch

Yo- Wa- I- Wo- Sa- Zu- Ku- Ru-	Sitting USC - ready to stand.
Ko- - No- Ki- - Mi- - No- -	Stand on Ki- . End of last No- -, pivot into Sashi (sunrise)
Yu- Ku- Su- E- Ma- Mo- <u>Ré</u> To	Completing Sashi on Yu- Ku- . Begin to travel on Ma-
Wa- Ga- Shi- N- Ta- Ku- No- - -	Arrive DSR pillar during this line. Kazashi (flip fan and

Group TPM task

Back into your groups, you will:

- Identify **2-3** pieces of TPM from your chosen tradition
- For **one TPM**, identify one way for how your **one convention** could be applied.
- Devise 2-3 alternative choices for how your convention could be applied in the same TPM (i.e. same technique at different points; different technique at the same points)
- Be ready to share a brief intro of your TPM and 2 contrasting choices for how a student could apply convention techniques.

B2 of the RP

“The student **effectively** demonstrates how they have **experimented** with applying the performance **convention** to **traditional performance material**.”

Heavy lifting:

- **Effective**: joined up thinking; results as intended
- **Experimented**: options and choices; *could* do - not *would* do. NOT a performance
- **TPM**: from the place and time; as used by the masters
- **Convention**: technique that is valid and specific to the tradition; the same one chosen in B1 and A.



Practical Intent

So the STP just lets me be
The me that I want the whole world to see
But they try to box me in with a defined
theory
Trying and playing to some degree

Theory → Intent

Exploring *theory* vs. exploring *convention*

Theory → Aspect

Tradition → Convention

Theory → Practice → Intentions

Or

Theory → Intentions → Practice

Example from taught course

Performative reading to students of an [extract from Anaïs Nin's diary](#) about Artaud's Sorbonne lecture-performance on *Theatre and the Plague*

[Describing in disgusting detail](#) what a virus inside their bodies is doing to their internal organs as they act it out

Exploring the [pileta scene from Art of Silence](#) by Jennifer Hartley, with 'one word distortion' and non-word human noises activities

Word-Sentence-Phrase or similar guided activity to articulate TMIs

Individual agency to continue exploration

Group theorist task

Agree on **one** theorist, list possible aspects

List as many **activities** as you can think of for workshopping the theory

Choose **one** activity. Conduct, recall, or imagine the output of the activity

Reflect on the output. Complete a *Quadrant Reflection*:

Things we like

Why we like them

Links to theory

Next activities leading from this

Repeat for as many activities as time allows.

Exploring Theory Quadrant Reflection

Scan/[Click here](#) for
the template



B1 of the STP

“With reference to their **theatre-maker intentions**, the student **explains** the **process of having** developed the solo theatre piece, as informed by their chosen **theory**.”

Heavy lifting:

- **TMIs** - prescribed elements; guiding or guided by practical exploration; aligned with theory
- **Explains** - gives reasons or causes to a detailed account
- **Process of having** - looking back on creation phase
- **Theory** - not constrained by aspect; complements TMIs.

Summary of Action → Agency

Teachers can lead and direct in the taught course...

...BUT, look for student voice and choice opportunities *within* this:

Somatic learning first beats intellectualising first every time

Exploring a traditional convention is narrower than exploring a theory

Exploring a convention is worthless without TPM to 'hang on to'

Exploring a theory is worthless without TMIs to express

DP Theatre is chiefly concerned with how knowledge is ***applied*** to performance

Balancing Guidance with Agency

First year:

Hand-holding through independence

Second year:

Independence with confidence

Free resources

[Solo Theatre Piece - Student information booklet](#)

[Research Presentation - Student information booklet](#)

[Mini Noh Theatre unit/lessons and resources](#)

[Command Terms - Student information booklet](#)

[Accessing Artaud: four layers of cruelty - article and workshop ideas](#)

[Exploring Theory Quadrant Reflection Template](#)

[Artaud workshop: 'creature inside' narrative](#)

3 Aha! Moments...

2 'Next Steps'

1 Wondering



Image by Gemini AI, prompt: More than just coffee o' clock, it's the end of the session!

- Slides downloadable on kpburgess.com
- Thanks to ibsc.org.uk for providing free webinars
- Email me at kieran@kpburgess.com for coaching or consultancy

- Happy Exploring & Experimenting!

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