

LUTSF REPORT

Description

Over six weeks, from 11th July to 19th August, I studied on the second year of the Skinner Releasing Technique Introductory Teacher Certificate Programme. The programme was led by Robert Davidson from the National Theatre Conservatory in Denver, Colorado, and Theresa Moriarty from Seattle. Both were original members of Joan Skinner's Music and Dance Ensemble and are long-standing faculty members of the Skinner Releasing Institute, Seattle. The programme was hosted by the University of Coventry and attended by students from around the globe, including Australia, New Zealand, Finland, Italy, Austria and England.

As the second year of the training, the focus was on teaching practice. I taught class to my training peers once a week, followed by a seminar with detailed feedback from the course leaders and peer training teachers. I also attended daily class taught by other students and participated in their feedback seminars. There was a strong emphasis on developing a kinaesthetic use of voice, specific use of vocabulary, music selection to enhance movement improvisations and the correct application of hands-on partner studies. The Pedagogy for the 15 Introductory level classes had been re-written in the light of work-shopping and feedback given during the first year of training (6 weeks over July and August 2010). There was, therefore, a great deal of additional learning and reworking of lesson plans. Afternoon sessions explored the partner studies in greater detail, challenging areas of teaching such as the use of pulse, adaptation of the technique to different settings and guest tutors led sessions on the Skinner Releasing Early Years Pedagogy, and the use of Skinner Releasing principles as an educational model.

Outcomes

On teaching my first class in Week One, I had a revelation that I had to teach this work. This might seem odd, in that I was on a teacher-training course and had worked hard to make it practically possible to do the programme, but it felt like a revelatory moment that this is what I'm meant to do. This galvanised me into action, trying to source a studio space in London where I could set up independent classes immediately to cement and build on my teaching practice. Throughout my teaching practice I received positive feedback from the course leaders and my peers. This included comments on the ownership of the material, clarity of delivery, strong presence, supportive approach and the quality and resonance of my voice. At the end of the course I passed and am a certified Skinner Releasing Technique teacher.

I have now set up a Tuesday evening class in north London starting in October, which I will be co-teaching with another newly qualified teacher from the course. I have joined the Skinner Releasing Technique Network, through which I will have a web profile and can advertise my workshops. An unexpected outcome was the strong feedback I received on my voice and its impact as a tool for release and relaxation. I am considering, therefore, other possibilities of how I might use this attribute, perhaps through leading guided meditation workshops.

The training was extremely hard work but equally inspiring and I continue to be greatly committed to the benefits of the work, in terms of physical development (suppleness, alignment, economy of dancing), creative expression and emotional well-being. At present I plan to focus on teaching a

series of 15 classes a couple of times and integrating it as a daily practice for myself to nurture a supple and open approach to change.

I also have an interest in exploring the work further with teachers, particularly the relationship between this process-based work and the use of language and vocabulary to encourage and support it. Another avenue of interest would be to work with visual artists as visualisation practice within the technique enriches the way that we see.

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