Spotlight on Technology

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Chris Mayers plays Ichabod and Jessica Miesel portrays Katrina in Serenbe Playhouse’s October 2013 production of The Sleepy Hollow Experience. This photo was selected for the cover from more than 80 photos submitted by professional theatres in our 2014 spring issue cover contest. Serenbe Playhouse, founded in 2009 by Brian Clowdus, produces open-air performances at locations around the Serenbe community, located in the metro Atlanta area. More info: www.serenbeplayhouse.com (Photo by BreeAnne Clowdus; cover design by Deanna Thompson)
Time … and the Art of Auditioning

At the 2013 SETC Fall Auditions in Atlanta, I had the good fortune of sitting in on the qualifying auditions for entry into Professional Auditions. After the auditions were completed, I was asked to give a general response to the participants while the panel made its decisions.

Now, I have seen thousands upon thousands of auditions in my time as an off-Broadway and regional director, head of acting for the Stella Adler Studio and associate artistic director of the Art of Acting Studio LA. Throughout these many auditions, one thing has consistently come into play: time. Because so many auditions are structured to get the most in the least amount of time, the audition becomes about making it all happen in a flash. There is a mad rush to “get it all in.” What often gets cut out is the most important character in the audition: you, the auditionee.

What I told the auditionees that day in Atlanta, and what I would like to tell so many others, is this: Create an audition package that lets you relax and enjoy. It should be one that lets you breathe and lets us breathe; one that gives you extra time to act, sing and be; one that gives you time at the beginning and end to take in the world in front of you and the world inside of you. Those of us watching your audition are, of course, looking to see your talent. But we are also looking to know you. After all, we may end up spending a lot of time together. And when you have created an audition that leaves no second to spare, the “you” we see is stressed, rushed, nervous and tense.

Remember, you are the director and performer of your show. Create a performance that leaves your nerves to the normal place in auditioning: the performance, not the time. Realize that time is on your side. Edit, breathe, relax, sing and be. And don’t forget: We want you to succeed.
From the SETC President

Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines technology as “the practical application of knowledge especially in a particular area.” In this issue of Southern Theatre, our focus is on technology.

Whether you work in a theatre, teach at a school or university, attend classes, or act on stage, chances are you’re finding new opportunities – and having new demands placed on you – as a result of advances in technology.

Tablets are revolutionizing how many of us compute – and they also are opening new doors for stage managers, directors, actors and others to do their jobs more efficiently. Jen Nelson Lane and Marcus Lane provide an overview of a theatre app that can streamline the job of the stage manager and the director – and also share a lower-cost option that combines several mainstream apps to achieve similar results. They also provide details on an app that actors can tap to learn their lines – and an actor who uses the app explains how it helped him become King Lear in a recent production.

Online classes are increasingly being added in higher education, but can you really teach theatre over the Internet? University professor Tessa Carr and educational technology expert Amanda McAndrew provide a tutorial on how to take theatre classes online. They also share two case studies from university professors who have successfully created online courses.

Those looking for costuming solutions on a budget will find helpful advice in our regular “Outside the Box: Design-Tech Solutions” column. Melissa Crain describes how her school solved a costuming dilemma for less than $10, transforming a thrift shop pullover sweater into a V-neck cardigan for The Grapes of Wrath.

In this issue’s “400 Words” column, director and acting teacher Don K. Williams provides advice on how to succeed in an audition by relaxing and making time your friend, not your enemy.

Finally, in our “Words, Words, Words …” book column, Linda Dean reviews How to Teach Your Children Shakespeare, a new book not just for parents, written by playwright Ken Ludwig, the 2013 SETC Distinguished Career Award recipient.

Technology – it’s an essential part of life today. I hope you benefit from this issue of Southern Theatre as we embrace what it has and will do for us in the theatre. Enjoy!

Jack Benjamin, SETC President
From Pullover to Cardigan

Solving a Costume Dilemma with Thrift Store Purchase and Ingenuity

by Melissa Crain

When the Gainesville Theatre Alliance (GTA) produced The Grapes of Wrath in 2012, a number of factors brought costume designer Sara Olson to the decision to refashion a thrift store pullover sweater into a button-down cardigan.

Olson had originally planned for Ma Joad to wear a jacket while traveling, but when she saw Elisa Carlson’s portrayal of the worn-down woman in rehearsals she felt a cardigan was in order.

Originally brought into popularity in the 18th century, the cardigan is a button-down sweater or light coat that was named after the Earl of Cardigan, a man known for leading his brigade into slaughter. (Maj. General James Thomas Brudenell, the 7th Earl of Cardigan, was the commander of the British Light Brigade immortalized by Tennyson.) Not always the peak of fashion, the cardigan nevertheless has been a constant in wardrobes.

Olson knew Ma Joad’s cardigan should be grey to fit the color scheme she had given the family. After finding nothing that would work in GTA’s stock, Olson scoured local thrift stores for a worn grey cardigan – also without luck. Olson did, however, find a pullover sweater that had the right color and level of distressing she wanted. Olson bought the sweater, knowing that converting it to a cardigan would take less time and less skill than dyeing and distressing a new cardigan.

Begin with a Cutting Line

The first step in converting the sweater was to find the center of the front of the sweater using a ruler, and then to mark the cutting line with chalk. Next we used scissors to cut the sweater down the center front, making sure not to cut the back of the garment. The particular sweater we used had a tight knit, so we weren’t worried about the edges unraveling before the process was complete. (If you are using a sweater with a loose knit, the edges can be secured by running basting stitches on either side of where you plan to cut.)

Select and Cut Facing

Next, we chose a coordinating fabric to make the button facing. The button-facing fabric was cut two inches wide and the same length as the center front of the sweater. We made sure, when cutting the facings, to add a ¼-inch seam allowance at the top, sides and bottom of each facing. 

Sew and Press Facing

We sewed one strip of fabric to each of the raw edges of the newly-cut cardigan, right sides together. The facings were then rolled to the inside and pressed with an iron; the facing could no longer be seen from the outside of the garment. The facing was then pressed in half so that the raw edge was underneath itself; this step can
be done before or after the facing is sewn on. Olson instructed me to press the facing afterward, so that I could more easily see the purpose for each step. If you press the facing in half before attaching it, you need to sew the ends closed, right sides together, and turn the piece inside out before attaching to the sweater. The other edge of the facing is then secured to the cardigan using a blind-hem stitch.

**Choose Buttons, Create Buttonholes**

Once the button facing was in place on the sweater, we chose buttons and determined the number we needed. We then used the following formula to determine their locations:

1) Divide the length (from neckline to hemline) by the number of buttons.

2) Place the first button the amount of inches calculated from the top. Then, place each button afterward the same amount of inches from the one above it.

To make buttonholes, we referenced our sewing machine’s manual. Buttonhole settings vary from machine to machine. Since the cardigan would be worn by a woman, we placed our buttonholes on the wearer’s right facing.

Once we had created the buttonholes, we then sewed on the buttons. Accuracy of button location was achieved by folding the cardigan and lining up the facings, as if the sweater was buttoned. We then made chalk marks through the buttonholes and sewed the buttons on these marks.

**DO YOU HAVE AN ‘OUTSIDE THE BOX’ STORY IDEA?**

We are seeking submissions! Please send a synopsis of your idea via e-mail to “Outside the Box” Editor Larry Cook at lcook@ung.edu.

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The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee
TECHNOLOGY AT YOUR FINGERTIPS:
How Stage Managers, Directors and Actors Can Streamline Their Work with Apps

With an estimated 140 million smartphone and 70 million tablet users in the U.S. alone (as reported by the research firm eMarketer), the market for apps has exploded in recent years. We are now living in a world where, if you have a need or an interest, there is most likely an app – or several apps – to support you. During the early stages of this revolution, most theatre-related apps were geared to helping people buy tickets, read reviews and get theatre news. Recently, however, there has been a rush to create apps that help actors, designers, directors, stage managers, choreographers and technicians complete their work.

On the pages that follow, we highlight apps that help stage managers and directors take their processes into the digital age. In a separate story and sidebar (see Page 18), we look at an app that helps actors learn their lines.
Director-choreographer Jeff Whiting developed Stage Write to streamline the process of documenting the spacing, staging and choreography for a production. While working as Susan Stroman’s associate director/choreographer on several shows, Whiting found himself spending hours outside of rehearsal creating the show bible, the highly detailed charts of stage arrangements and actor movements that enable a production to be reproduced on tour and in other incarnations with the original staging. The constant updating and editing of these bibles, as a show develops, often generates thousands of pieces. Stage Write gives a great many options for furniture pieces, such as pianos, and various sizes of tables and chairs. Our production included a set of rolling risers, which we put into the app by simply adding the dimensions from the set designer’s drawings.

We used a dropdown menu called the “Green Room” to make icons for each character, as well as for each of the four guest spellers pulled from the audience for each performance. The app was particularly useful with this last group. During rehearsal, we brought in a variety of people, from ASF staff members to local actors to friends of the cast and crew, to act as our guest spellers. By viewing the blocking charts on the iPad, they were able to see where they would go when called onstage. We also used the app in the lobby during performances to show guest speller applicants the stage and give instructions about what to do if selected to go onstage.

During rehearsal, I took longhand blocking while my assistant mapped out each scene in Stage Write. We were able to email our lighting designer, who was in New York City, the spacing charts we created in Stage Write for each scene of the show. Thus, the designer had a very clear idea of the blocking for each scene long before the designer run-through. This was a huge time saver – so much so that we were able to move from the rehearsal studio to the stage a full three days ahead of schedule.

Once the show was ready to close, we printed out our blocking charts for the show bible. If the show is ever remounted, those involved in the production will find charts that clearly show the blocking process.
The actual app,” Whiting says.

His app greatly speeds up the process of assembling a show bible. The usual method has been to create hand-drawn charts for each scene and production number, a tedious and time-consuming process. These charts were often inaccurate, hard to update and extremely difficult to share. With this in mind, Whiting streamlined the process in Stage Write so that the “user only has to enter the stage dimensions one pages of paperwork per show. This inspired Whiting to create an app that would make it easy to accurately document and update the staging, choreography and blocking for productions.

Whiting says he began developing the app five years before it was released, while working on his show bible for the Broadway production of Young Frankenstein.

“It took about a year to fully develop the app – six months to write the details, then six months to build the actual app,” Whiting says.

This inspired Whiting to create an app that would make it easy to accurately document and update the staging, choreography and blocking for productions.

As helpful as this app is, I did have a couple of instances where I had to abandon Stage Write in favor of “old-school” pencil and paper blocking. The original app allows you to record basic choreography, but not specific choreography broken down by exact counts, so I did mine longhand. I also had to do a lot of longhand blocking for scenes with very specific business involving hand props because there was not a way to record that in the app. That said, Stage Write now offers a new $50 in-app purchase called the Staging Score, which allows you to enter all actions, including choreography by exact counts. Something else I would like to see in the app is the ability to do charts for specific furniture props, such as a table. It would be great to be able to make a chart that clearly shows how to, for instance, set a table in a scene.

This app not only has made communication easier with designers, performers and directors, but also has resulted in neater prompt books and show bibles. I learned to take blocking using a pencil and paper, so I will always do at least some of my blocking that way, but the Stage Write app has certainly made recording a lot of the “big picture” moments much easier. ■

A Stage Manager’s Perspective

The app served me especially well when ASF presented A Christmas Carol. This show had a cast of 22, but featured 69 characters. Nine understudies covered every role. At one point, two actors were out and we needed to do what is called a “split-track,” combining the business of two characters so that one actor can play both. Stage Write saved our lives in this situation. Not only were we able to clearly show the original blocking to the understudies, who had not had a full rehearsal at that point, but we also were able to quickly make a new chart to show the split-track blocking. This split-track was then printed out from the app and posted on the callboard with the sign-in sheet so that the entire cast would be aware of the changes.

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time, create the actor icon one time, and then easily drag the performer icons into the desired positions. This method saves thousands of hours of time and the final product is clean and easy-to-share.”

Another time saver: Stage Write captures every detail in correct dimension every time you use it. With one click, users can create a dance line, track traffic patterns between performers and scenic elements, and share charts with designers and others.

The original version of Stage Write allowed users to enter basic choreography showing positions on a chart. Now a Staging Score add-on expands those capabilities, allowing users to enter all specific actions and choreography for all performers. For moments that have no musical timing, a time line is implemented. For musical numbers, a “staff” of counts is implemented. Each actor has his or her

Using Stage Write: A Director’s Perspective

by Marcus Lane

As a director, I traditionally do a large amount of pre-blocking – drawing and filling in diagrams in my script – so I can hit the ground running and maximize my rehearsal time. In the past, I did this with a pencil, paper and a very large eraser. However, I was recently introduced to an app that has changed my process and saved me a significant amount of time along the way.

I first discovered Stage Write when my wife, Jen Nelson Lane, a stage manager, sent me a link to a YouTube video about the app. I thought it looked interesting – until I saw the cost. It was quite pricey at $199.99. I promptly moved on, but my wife was excited about it. Eventually she wore me down, and we purchased the app. When she used it on a production of The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, I observed the process and got excited about the possibility of using it on my next project, Six Degrees of Separation, at the University of Montevallo.

As I began using the app, I found that there is a learning curve. It took quite a bit of time to learn the various features and complete the first-time set-up of components. The first decision I had to make was: How do I want to set up the dimensions of the performance space and the scenic elements of the show? I had two options. I could draw the dimensions in the app, including permanent structures such as the wings, proscenium arch and set pieces, or I could import a preexisting design. I fooled around with drawing these items in the app, but quickly decided that option wasn’t for me. Then I tried to import the set design. After entering the stage dimensions, I couldn’t locate an import button on the “Performance Space” page. I finally found one under the “Set Pieces” tab and used it to add my set design. Later, I discovered the “Edit Permanent Stage” function on the “Stage Dimension” tab. From there, I could import the design either from iTunes Share or from my photo gallery. Once I discovered that, the process was a snap.

The next step was to input my cast members into the app. For each actor, I could select a different shape, color, border and name. They all would be stored in a handy dropdown menu called the “Green Room.” After they were all entered, I could easily place the ones I needed into a scene. Once I had entered my information into the app, it was time to start pre-blocking. I would create a new scene and begin placing actors, entering a cue line and utilizing easy-to-use arrows to draw blocking movement. When I was ready for the next chart, I would duplicate the previous one, move the actors, enter the new cue line, and add new blocking arrows. I found I could do this significantly faster than with my old pencil and paper. I also was able to document any changes quickly. When the scene was completed, I would start the next with a blank copy of the Permanent Stage. This part of the process saved me hours of preproduction time.
own line under that staff upon which the actions or choreography can be documented according to the count or moment in time. This allows the user to see what every person is doing at a specific moment.

The initial cost of the app may cause some sticker shock ($199, plus a $50 in-app purchase for Staging Score), but Whiting notes that “once you make the investment, you have it for unlimited productions.” As a green, all-digital method of archiving shows, it may save some money in paper costs.

Soon after it was released in early 2012, several high-profile artists – including Susan Stroman, Christopher Gattelli and Chase Brock – began using it. Since then, it has been used in the staging and choreography of *Newsies, The Book Of Mormon, The Producers, Kinky Boots* and *Big Fish.*

“Almost every show on Broadway today is using it,” Whiting says.

This screenshot from Stage Write shows the positions of all the actors in the show (both on stage and offstage) for the scene from Six Degrees of Separation that is shown in the photo on Page 12.
If you would like to try using an iPad for stage management but can’t afford an expensive app, Patricia Crotty and her students at the Florida School of the Arts have some low-cost alternatives for you to explore.

Crotty, a professor of acting and stage management at the school, sees iPads as the way of the future in stage management – and has taken the lead in teaching her students to use the technology on the job. Each stage management major at Florida School of the Arts receives an iPad for use in classes and departmental productions, Crotty says.

“The great thing about iPads is that they are not just tiny computers – they are digital paper,” says Crotty. “They enable us to do everything digitally, even things we could not do on a traditional computer.”

Crotty and her students have found several affordable apps that provide some of the same features as the higher-priced Stage Write app. Crotty’s top three choices for young stage managers are GoodReader, iAnnotate and Noteshelf.

Below is some detail on these apps. In addition, Crotty’s former student Marina Alcover, who helped Crotty in locating and configuring the apps, describes how they can help stage managers.

**GoodReader**

GoodReader is one of the top-selling non-Apple apps for the iPad. This app can handle huge PDF and .txt files, making it easy for theatre artists to upload scripts. Once scripts are uploaded to the iPad, the possibilities are nearly endless. Users can open “typewriter text boxes” to add dialogue right on top of the PDF file, as well as adding sticky notes, arrows, lines and other hand-written marks onto the file. This proves particularly useful to stage managers who use the program for blocking. Cues can also be written straight into the file, exactly where they go in the script, thus creating a virtual calling script.

**Cost:** $4.99 in the App Store.

*GoodReader in action:* Alcover, who earned an associate degree in stage management from Florida School of the Arts in June 2013 and is currently a production intern at Barter Theatre in Virginia, says this low-cost app works well for creating her cue script (see illustration at left) and her blocking script.

“I really like a feature in this app that lets you view two pages at one time, so I can have the page of the script on the left and the ground plan on the right,” she says. (See illustration, Page 15.)

“This is great for writing the blocking and for checking it as well,” she notes. “It is also very easy to move any notes or annotations around, so if a cue moves, you can just drag it to where it needs to be called. The best part is being able to share it with anyone on the production team. You can email it right from the app.”

“I also like using GoodReader for line notes because you can either use a new copy of the script every day or you can alternate colors to know which...
lines are repeatedly being missed or said incorrectly,” she says.

Alcover also uses GoodReader to call the show during a performance.

“It makes calling a lot less stressful because everything is spaced out evenly on the page and you can color code, highlight and underline. Since I have sloppy handwriting, having everything typed out is great not only for me but also for my assistant stage managers who are following along with the cue script.”

iAnnotate

According to branchfire.com, iAnnotate “turns your tablet into a world-class productivity tool for reading, marking up and sharing PDFs, Word documents, PowerPoint files and images.” The multi-award-winning app includes a free “lite” version, available on Google Play. While not the full version of the app, the lite version does allow for editing with a pencil tool, highlighter and note tools, and allows several PDFs to be open at once. The full version allows notes to be annotated straight from Dropbox, Google Drive, SkyDrive and other platforms. Work can be shared as annotated, flattened or original, helping artists to control what they share. The favorite feature of iAnnotate seems to be the ease of switching between multiple documents.


iAnnotate in action: This app is similar in some ways to GoodReader, Alcover says. One additional feature it has that may be of particular interest to people in theatre allows the user to take a picture or record a sound clip and embed it anywhere on a PDF file.

Noteshelf

The Noteshelf app strives to make your experience “as real as a pencil and paper,” offering a variety of ways to take notes on your iPad. It supports several stylus products, but also allows users to handwrite notes. The app includes more than 70 templates to get users started, and provides a smooth, natural, hand-written look to whatever the user writes. Notes can be filed into different books and arranged on a “shelf.” Each book can be password-protected. The app features both free and paid add-ons, such as grid paper, to help personalize the experience. This app is great for archiving a lot of different productions in different “books” within the app. Notes can be shared via Twitter, Facebook, PDF, email, Dropbox and other methods.

Cost: $4.99 in the App Store

Noteshelf in action: Alcover uses Noteshelf for

With GoodReader, you can view a spread, showing a page from the script on the left and the ground plan on the right.
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meeting and rehearsal notes.

“I write faster than I type,” Alcover says. “Using Noteshelf with a stylus, I can write my notes but still keep them in the iPad.”

While the app is popular, some users complain about an inability to insert a page within a document in this app. That could prove problematic for artists, particularly in virtual prompt books.

**Archiving and Sharing Files**

Alcover notes the importance of archiving the many documents created with your apps.

“I back everything up to my Dropbox account so I have access to all of my files on my iPad and laptop,” she says. “Also Dropbox makes sharing so much easier. At Florida School of the Arts, we had a stage management Dropbox account. All of the stage managers, directors and designers had access to it, so everyone always had the most updated version of every document. Instead of having to run to a computer in the production office, it is very convenient to pull up any document during rehearsal from Dropbox as well.”

Crotty also notes that using apps for stage management makes sharing of information easier for all of those working on the production.

“Our schedules are hectic,” she says. “Being able to share all these files electronically among our team members saves a lot of time,” says Crotty.

**An App for Everyone**

There’s no question that the many technological advances available to artists these days can make learning lines, sharing files, archiving shows and many other theatre-related tasks easier. Whether your budget is large or small, chances are good that you can find an app to help you streamline your job in the theatre.

Marcus Lane is a freelance director/fight choreographer and an associate professor at the University of Montevallo in Alabama.

Jen Nelson Lane, director of production and education at Birmingham Children’s Theatre, was previously the production stage manager at Alabama Shakespeare Festival. She is a member of the Southern Theatre Editorial Board.

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Photos above from recent productions of The Importance of Being Earnest (left), King Lear (center) and Complete Female Stage Beauty (right).

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Spring 2014 | Southern Theatre | 17
Actors have been struggling to learn lines since the first show went up thousands of years ago. So it’s not surprising that, yes, there’s an app for that. Scene Partner is an app designed to act as a virtual scene partner for actors learning lines. Text from plays can be turned into speech so that actors are able to listen to cues, lines or entire scenes. Using a “text to speech” (TTS) engine, this app gives actors the ability to hear their lines on an iPad, iPhone or iPod Touch. It comes with one male and one female “scene partner” voice. Additional voices are available as in-app purchases for $1.99 each. Actors may also record their own voices and the voices of cast mates and merge them with the TTS.

This app includes multiple playback options. Actors can choose “Just Me” to listen only to their own lines, “Just My Cues” to receive only cues when running lines, “Me and My Cues” for both, or “Full Scene” to listen to the entire scene. This provides flexibility for artists who learn lines in different ways. If you purchase the “Edit” feature for $1.99, scenes can be organized into “French scenes” or broken down into beats. Using “Readmode,” available as an in-app purchase for $1.99, you also can highlight lines in a variety of colors or hide them using Scene Partner: Helping

by Marcus Lane and Jen Nelson Lane

Larry Reina (right) used Scene Partner to learn his lines when he played the title role in King Lear at Red Monkey Theater in Riverdale, NY, in January 2014.

Using Scene Partner: An Actor's Perspective

by Larry Reina

I have known J. Kevin Smith, the developer of the Scene Partner app, since 2006, when he played Petruchio and I played Gremio in a production of The Taming of the Shrew in Stamford, CT. About a year and a half later, he asked me to beta-test Scene Partner – and I jumped at the chance. Several years, several iPhones and an iPad later, I have not looked back. Gone are the days of using a handheld tape recorder to tape my cues and my responses. Scene Partner is my “go-to” app the moment I get cast in a play. I have used it, for example, four times already today as I work to learn my 158 sets of lines as King Lear (which I am preparing to perform at Red Monkey Theater in Riverdale, NY, at the time of this writing).

Portability and ease of use are the hallmarks of Scene Partner. I can refer to it at a moment’s notice. I mostly use it on my iPhone while I am standing on line at Starbucks. Or sitting on the train going into Manhattan in the morning. Or sitting on the train going home to Westchester in the evening. Or walking from my midtown office to Grand Central Station. You get the idea.

My waking hours are obsessed with learning Lear’s lines. While walking to lunch today, reciting...
Actors Learn Lines and Get Off Book

a “blacklight highlighter.”

One potential drawback of this free app is the number of in-app purchases. Most of them are around the $2 mark, but they are plentiful and can add up. The majority of scripts are available only as in-app purchases, which may be a turn-off, particularly to younger users. Scripts can be imported into the app using their online conversion utility from plain text, Word, .rtf and PDF, but a $1.99 script conversion fee does apply. Two plays are pre-loaded onto the app, Shakespeare’s As You Like It and King Lear.

J. Kevin Smith, creator of Scene Partner, is excited about updates made to the app in late 2013. “We’ve had a number of updates over the past three years, but the most recent has given us a brand new set of plays customers can use,” said Smith.

That said, time to look at Lear’s “O reason not the need” speech (under my breath, of course – though it is not unusual to see New Yorkers talking to themselves in public), I pulled out my iPhone. I was able to quickly locate and read the line set over and over again at regular speed or double-time to burn the lines into my memory!

I then play back the scene through either a direct connection or through Bluetooth over my car stereo. This plays the full scene that I have designated, not just my lines. I can put the scene in repeat mode or I can play it at double-time. I often speed through my lines in the scene this way on my way to rehearsal. One of the drawbacks to the process above is that you cannot read these scenes as you have created them; you can only listen to them. That is something I hope could change in a later iteration of Scene Partner.

Another change I would like to see is the addition of a text editing capability that allows you to retain scenes that you have created and saved. I have sometimes wanted to edit the text (to add written notes, like blocking). Though that ability does exist, the problem as Scene Partner is currently configured is that your saved scene is lost once you edit the text. If you want the original saved scene, you have to redo it. But this is a minor inconvenience and no impediment to my continued use of this indispensable app.

That said, time to look at Lear’s death speech. Go cue 158: “No, no, no life! . . .”

Larry Reina is a New York-based actor who has appeared with the Idaho Shakespeare Festival and a number of theatres in New York City and its suburbs, including Clocktower Players of Irvington, NY, Armonk Players of Armonk, NY, and Curtain Call of Stamford, CT.
Have You Been Told You Need to Develop an Online Class?

Tips to Help Professors Become E-Teachers

by Tessa W. Carr and Amanda Seal McAndrew

“At our next department meeting, we’ll be discussing the feasibility of offering online classes in our discipline.”

These are words dreaded by many theatre educators. With 6.7 million, or 32 percent, of all students taking at least one class online in the fall of 2011, we all know it’s coming. Sooner or later, that meeting happens. As educators in a medium that celebrates the live interactive experience, how can we engage this changing academic environment? How do we teach acting, directing or applied design elements online? How will we be compensated for this labor? Is there support for using new technology to teach online? The questions come fast and furious.

Your E-Learning Options

For those new to the various modes of online course delivery, it may be helpful to start with some definitions:

- Face-to-face, often referred to as F2F, class: This is the traditional classroom setting where individuals meet in person in a physical space. Beyond F2F, you have several options, including completely online classes and hybrid classes.
- Online class: A generally accepted definition of an online course is one in which 80 percent or more of the course content delivery, interactions and activities occur online, according to the Babson Survey Research Group.
- Hybrid class: This is a class that includes some combination of online and F2F course delivery, interactions and activities. Students overwhelmingly prefer a blended classroom, according to the 2013 Study of Undergraduate Research and Information Technology, administered to nearly 1.6 million students worldwide by the Educause Center for Analysis and Research (ECAR). Students said they valued F2F time, as well as strong use of websites and a learning management system. Students also acknowledged the need for guidance in navigating components of information technology.
- MOOC, massively open online course: This type of class is a recent development in the online education world. These are typically non-credit bearing online courses that are free and open to anyone in the world, though some institutions are piloting credit-bearing options for reduced fees. Much of the latest data from ECAR shows that most people who take a MOOC course have already earned a degree. Recently, a MOOC pioneer, Sebastian Thrun, has begun to question their effectiveness in undergraduate education. However, MOOCs are clearly impacting higher education.

As online education evolves, many administrators are taking a more serious look at online education as well as pushing faculty to examine their current face-to-face and online teaching practices. The good news for faculty members is that effective teachers already have the skills needed to create strong online courses. The strengths of good teaching - disciplinary knowledge, communication, organization, a curiosity to learn and a strong ethic of caring engagement – remain constant whether the course is offered F2F or online.
Shortly after arriving at Northern Kentucky University, Michael Hatton was asked to create an online version of a “Theatre Appreciation” class and an online version of a course that uses theatre as a vehicle for discussing race and gender issues. After completing the university-offered training in online pedagogy and familiarizing himself with the technology and available resources, Hatton jumped into the process. His courses are now standards for others to follow, and he enjoys encouraging others to take the leap. His top eight pieces of advice for those developing an online course:

1. Experiment, and don’t worry about creating the “perfect” course. “This may sound silly, but faculty members need to not be afraid,” Hatton says. “The first time you create your online course, and try out some of these new software programs, it may not work, and that’s okay. ...It is just like trying out things in a F2F class. They don’t always work, but that is part of the learning process as well. We as faculty can’t hold ourselves up to this standard that everything we do has to be perfect each time we try something.”

2. Tap into virtual worlds familiar to students in designing a look. Hatton studied the design elements of Facebook, Google, Barnes and Noble, and other heavily trafficked websites. While he didn’t copy those designs, he used their simplicity as a guide to personalize the course management system. “I use Facebook as a physical design for my courses,” Hatton says. “It’s an interface that pretty much all of my students, even my nontraditional students, have been exposed to. They understand the layout.”

3. Take the time to develop a comprehensive plan for the online course, including content and rollout. A typical course includes well-designed modules of content, each with a video introduction, Hatton says. He develops pre- and post-unit checklists to guide the student through the material. Although he loads all material onto the course management system at the beginning of the semester, he does not release all the modules at once. Throughout the semester, students turn in assignments, watch archived lecture units, follow along with media-enriched presentations, and interact with each other and Hatton over discussion boards.

Hatton employs anti-plagiarism software to check for academic dishonesty, and sends voice email to students who have missed assignments.

4. Provide a feeling of face-to-face contact regularly. “Your students need to see your face and hear your voice at least once a week in a media-rich way,” Hatton says. He gives feedback in a timely manner to reinforce his commitment to the course. “They can ask questions and know that I am there.”

5. Choose whether students log in at a specific class time or on their own based on your particular situation. Hatton’s students log into the course management system whenever it is convenient for their schedules. “I usually choose asynchronous experiences for my students...,” he says. “If you are like me then you have students who are all over the world, so doing synchronous sessions can be difficult.”

6. Take advantage of the option of being able to teach class from anywhere. Hatton takes videos of himself in various sites around the world, does some basic editing and shares them with classes. This adds interest for students in the class while also freeing him from the four walls of the classroom.

Case Study 1: Best Practices and Tips from a Professor who Successfully Took “Theatre Appreciation” Online

Michael Hatton, assistant professor, Northern Kentucky University Department of Theatre and Dance

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“I do lectures on-site,” Hatton says. “So I was able to lecture from the Acropolis for a theatre history course.”

**Keep the personal touch.**

Personalization is the essence of teaching for Hatton. He believes the teacher must make a connection as a human being with each student.

“That has to be there in order for your online course to be a success,” he says. “If you don’t have that, then students won’t be engaged and they won’t care. There is no sense of who you are in the course.”

With distance students, he says, the sense of a connection with an engaged and concerned faculty member is especially important.

**Test the water with small changes if you’re not ready to leap into online courses feet first.**

“It’s not an all-or-nothing thing,” Hatton says. “You can begin by supplementing your F2F courses, dip your toe in, create more transparency with grading, post your rubrics, use the tools to make your life a little easier, but also to play into the world that our students are regularly exposed to and in which they have grown up.”

You also can take a test run by using the “flipped” model. The flipped method inverts the traditional class by no longer using F2F class time for lectures. Pre-recorded video lectures are provided for students to watch prior to coming to class. Then, class time is spent solving problems, discussing difficult content, participating in group work, and otherwise engaging in discourse. While this isn’t an entirely new concept, technology provides a new medium for delivering content to students outside of class.

(Continued on Page 24)
Case Study 2: Professors Create Hybrid Course that Showcases Potential of Inter-University Collaboration

Scott Hayes and Mike Burnett both worked at Regent University in Virginia Beach, VA, when they began team-teaching a hybrid course. When Mike moved from Regent to Angelo State University in Texas, the two decided to expand their use of the course management system. Their collaboration highlights how online courses can incorporate the skill sets from different theatrical backgrounds. It also demonstrates the possibilities that online courses present for institutions that do not have available local expertise or funding for F2F guest artists, lectures and other similar programs.

Hayes and Burnett had to end their collaboration this year, after Hayes left Regent for an administrative position at Liberty University. The descriptions below reflect how the collaboration worked while Hayes was at Regent and Burnett was at Angelo.

Class Combines F2F and Distance Students

The collaboration focused on Regent University’s Theatre 700: Research and Aesthetics class, which spans both the master of fine arts (MFA) and the master of arts (MA) programs. The MFA is primarily F2F, and the MA is primarily a distance program. Class enrollment ranges between 10 and 30 students, with about two-thirds of the students in the F2F environment.

Through Regent’s learning management system (LMS), the professors had access to tools that allowed content to be delivered both synchronously and asynchronously to the different student populations.

How the Class Was Organized

The professors uploaded all course materials, PowerPoints, lecture notes, video links and similar materials before the course began. Burnett videoconferenced into the physical classroom, which was managed in person by Hayes.

How Students Participated

Both F2F and distance students used the virtual classroom suite, Wimba (now called Collaborate).

“Students arrived for the F2F class, most bringing their own laptops to enter the Wimba session,” Hayes says. “Distance students entered the Wimba session from their individual locations, and each student’s status was listed on Wimba’s master screen.”

The class was archived as it progressed for students who could not log in synchronously.

Class in Session: How It Worked

Hayes shares the following description of a typical class: “Mike enabled either his voice microphone or his webcam, and began lecturing. Wimba allows for simultaneous delivery of the instructor’s voice and/or image, PowerPoint, and screen interactions similar to a F2F whiteboard. As he lectured, students asked questions. Some F2F students simply raised their hands and asked their questions – with their voice recorded by a classroom microphone. Some F2F and distance students asked questions or commented on lecture points by using a running chat feature that could be seen by all. Other distance students pressed the “Raise Hand” button on Wimba, alerting Mike. He identified the student and the student enabled his or her own microphone, allowing the student to answer the question or make a comment. The student’s voice was heard by all (and recorded).”

Hayes notes that this system also allowed him to participate in the class as it progressed.

“I was able to comment as a second lecturer, as well as respond in writing to students’ questions, or inform Mike of any interaction he may have missed in this incredibly interactive environment,” Hayes says.

At the conclusion of the class, the session was archived for student review. When Burnett was not lecturing, Hayes followed the same process on his own.

Developing a Sense of Class Community

The dynamic nature of the Wimba sessions allowed the F2F MFA students to get to know the distance learners in the MA program and helped create a sense of community among the graduate students that had not previously existed, the professors note.

While synchronous sessions furthered this at Regent, that may not be an option in other situations. Asynchronous technologies that allow students to leave video and audio comments and other class contributions can facilitate a similar sense of community. Voicethread.com is one such technology. Some LMSs also have video and audio commenting components incorporated.
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Institutional Support is Critical

The front-end work involved in creating online courses is substantial, Hayes and Burnett said. They noted that Regent’s support, both financially and in terms of faculty course load, was essential for the success of their class.

The Future of Online Courses

As more and more theatre schools consider offering online and hybrid courses, professors are discovering that there are both limitations to what can be delivered effectively and requirements for institutional support that must be met if the course is to be successful. Online and hybrid courses are just as much work as seated F2F courses. Faculty members need specialized instructional design training, up-to-date software and hardware, and strong IT support to create a great course.

However, if these issues are addressed, many professors will find that online theatre courses within a theatre curriculum are not only feasible, but also represent exciting opportunities to take their classes in new directions.
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Online Teaching Toolkit: Free Resources Are Available to Help You Create an Online Course

by Tessa W. Carr and Amanda Seal McAndrew

Not sure where to start with technology? You may be surprised to learn there are a number of free resources you can use to create your online course. Here are eight ways you can put these free tools to work for you. This is not an endorsement of the particular applications and sites mentioned – just an informed suggestion of places to start. All tools listed are free; some may offer advanced features for a fee.

1. **Get to know your institution’s LMS.**
   
   Learning management systems (LMSs), such as Moodle, Sakai, Desire2Learn and Blackboard, offer a one-stop shop of tools for posting content. They allow you to create discussion boards, distribute quizzes, collect electronic assignments and post grades in a gradebook. Using your institution’s LMS to build an online class provides you with a major advantage: built-in, on-campus technical support.

   If your school doesn’t offer an LMS, there are a number of Web-based alternatives. These include Edmodo and Collaborize Classroom.

2. **Learn to screencast.**

   Screencasting allows you to record audio and images from your computer screen. For example, you can record slide shows with narration to deliver a lecture or instructions. While more robust (and expensive) software packages are available, many instructors find that free screencasting tools meet their needs. While recordings are limited to 5 to 15 minutes in these free programs, that actually is an...
Another discussion tool is nb (http://nb.mit.edu). Here you can upload PDF documents and create groups. Students then can annotate and comment on class readings in asynchronous discussions.

Diigo (www.diigo.com) is a site where professors can design a course page for students and create a collection of relevant articles and sites. A browser add-on is available that allows for marking-up on the web. Annotations can be shared with others who have installed the add-on.

Let students create content. Students have a multitude of options, including mobile devices, for creating images, video and sound recordings.

Fotobabble (www.fotobabble.com) lets students upload images and add audio descriptions.

Audacity (http://audacity.sourceforge.net) provides a way for students to record and edit sounds.

Soundcloud (https://soundcloud.com) allows students to share recorded tracks for streamed playback, with options for commenting at markers within the track.

Splice (available in iTunes or Google Play) is a mobile app that students can use to edit着急的amount of time for creating small digestible chunks of content.

Examples of free screencasting programs are Screencast-o-matic, Jing and Screenr.

Put collaboration tools to use. Online students typically can’t meet in person, but they can still collaborate. These tools open up a world of possibilities:

Google Apps (www.google.com/enterprise/apps/education) is a suite of widely-known applications that provide opportunities for collaboration, including:

- **Drive.** Students can create and collaborate on documents, spreadsheets, presentations, forms and drawings.
- **Sites.** Students can create and collaborate on websites for courses, class assignments, class projects or eportfolios.
- **Hangouts.** This video chat tool enables synchronous meetings for online office hours or group project meetings.

VoiceThread (http://voicethread.com) is a discussion board on which students can post video and audio comments on a variety of file types including images, slideshows and videos.
smartphone videos they have taken, which can be emailed or uploaded to YouTube for sharing.

5. Dabble in social media. Social media can offer a more inviting way than LMSs to connect to students. Options include:
   - **Google+.** You create a “circle” or a “community,” open only to class students, where posts relevant to course content can be shared.
   - **Twitter.** Students must express ideas in 140 characters – which can be a nice challenge.
   - **Facebook.** Though an enticing idea, it is probably best saved for student clubs or extra-curricular activities.
   - **Storify.** Students pull posts from social media sites to tell a story.
   - **YouTube.** You can create a channel of videos, found or created by students, that illustrate content.

6. Encourage an online library. Students can create visual pin boards where images are curated as links to Web content. They can share collections and create discussions about pinned items.
   - Sites include Pinterest, Learnist and Scoop.it.

7. Get feedback. Embed quick answer polls in your website or LMS for student feedback.
   - Options include: Poll Everywhere and Micropoll.

8. Keep up to date on trends. Educause offers a great series called “7 Things You Should Know About” (www.educause.edu/research-and-publications/7-things-you-should-know-about) that gives basic information about trends in using technology tools for education.

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New to teaching online or hybrid courses? Here are a few important course design considerations:

**Don’t simply convert your current F2F class to online.**
Spend time re-designing your F2F course. Consider how technology and asynchronous delivery affect the content and interactions. How might they be even better than F2F? Consult an instructional designer or someone with prior online teaching experience. *Understanding by Design*, (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) is an excellent instructional design resource.

**Identify and communicate support structures.**
Who can students contact if they have technical difficulties? Don’t assume that all students taking an online class will be computer geniuses. Provide tutorials on how to use a specific technology whenever possible.

**It’s not a pajama party.**
Yes, you may have enough flexibility in your schedule to actually do some of your work in your pajamas. However, teaching online is still a lot of work, especially the first time.

**Sustainability is important.**
Pay careful attention to your ability to reuse the materials you develop. When creating lecture videos or other content, keep in mind that mentions of dates or current events may determine if you can recycle these items with minimal effort.

**Find open and free content to use.**
Free instructional materials are available online. Tapping into these can provide you with well-rounded course content while also saving you the time and effort of creating new materials.

**Personalize the online experience.**
Studies indicate that, even in online classes, students highly value interaction with their instructors. Allow time for student introductions. Work to make personal connections with students. Spend time creating community and finding technology tools that facilitate interactions.

**Set expectations.**
Be clear and concise about course assignments, projects and participation. Explain why you are asking students to complete certain activities, and be explicit about the requirements. Don’t assume your intentions are obvious.

**Don’t be afraid.**
Stepping out of your comfort zone can be hard, particularly when it comes to assessment. Rethink the design of your tests and projects. Tap into technology to find alternatives to multiple choice tests, including opportunities for incorporating authentic and real-world assessments, such as interviews, videos and group case study analyses.

**Create collaborative learning opportunities.**
The beauty of online communication is that it allows us to connect with people around the world. It’s the true promise of online education, so take advantage of it. Help students use video chat tools for study groups or group projects. Incorporate tools that allow for group reading, annotating and collaborative writing. Invite experts in the field to host “ask me anything” sessions.

**Hold virtual office hours.**
Create opportunities for students to interact with you synchronously if possible. Video chats work well for meeting with students; don’t be afraid to pick up the phone.
How to Teach Your Children Shakespeare
by Ken Ludwig; introduction by John Lithgow
2013; Crown Publishers; www.crownpublishing.com
Pages: 348. Price: $25

by Linda Dean

In his introduction to Ken Ludwig’s new book, How to Teach Your Children Shakespeare, John Lithgow writes, “This book is a teaching primer for parents and a manual for making Shakespeare manageable and fun for kids. On these terms alone, it succeeds splendidly. But it has an extraordinary hidden virtue. It is equally informative, readable and fun for adults. It is essential reading for anyone who has grown to adulthood with the misfortune of missing out on Shakespeare. And it is just as rich for those of us with a long history with the bard. Shakespeare’s mind is so limitless and Ludwig is so knowledgeable that we discover little gems on every page.”

When his children were 6 years old, Ludwig began teaching them Shakespeare by having them memorize short speeches. His book outlines a plan for teaching 25 passages, beginning with excerpts from A Midsummer Night’s Dream and ending with speeches from Shakespeare’s most psychologically complex play, Hamlet. Appendices suggest additional passages that students or adult learners might find fun to memorize, as well as providing favorite epigrams, a chronological listing of Shakespeare’s plays, and an annotated bibliography of children’s books, scholarly research, recordings and films.

Ludwig provides a careful analysis of each passage – paraphrasing, defining archaic words, and breaking down complex metaphors or images – to ensure that learners understand what they are memorizing. He also illuminates how each passage reveals character or advances plot. Along the way, he explains Shakespeare’s use of iambic pentameter, alliteration, rhyme and puns, using examples easily grasped by children.

So that passages will not appear intimidating to children, Ludwig suggests printing them in a large font, a few lines per page, breaking each line into short chunks based on rhythm. A few examples of a “Quotation Page” are shown in Appendix 5, but others are available at www.howtoteachyourchildrenshakespeare.com, along with recordings of the speeches by Sir Derek Jacobi, Richard Clifford and Frances Barber.

Having fun with his children during this learning process was clearly a priority for Ludwig, but he also offers other goals:

1) Shakespeare ranks next to the Bible as one of the two great bedrocks of Western civilization in English, thus, “To know some Shakespeare gives you a head start in life.”

2) Memorizing and analyzing Shakespearean passages, rather than simply reading them, will gradually build facility in understanding Shakespeare’s language and syntax and hone an appreciation for Shakespeare’s playfulness and precision in word choice.

Ludwig’s commentaries on Henry V, Prologue to Act 1, The Tempest, IV, 1, 165-175, and Hamlet, II, 2, could spark some interesting discussions about the theatre, imagination and the “purpose” of art.

Accolades from Sir Derek Jacobi (“a rare treat”), Hal Holbrook (“scholarship dancing around with fun”), and Rocco Landesman (“a delight from first page to last”) accurately convey Ludwig’s gleeful approach to working with Shakespeare’s language. Come join the fun, even sans children!

Linda Dean has served as education director at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival and on the Executive Board of Shakespeare Theatre Association. She is an adjunct instructor in Auburn University’s Department of Theatre.
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