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CREATIVE COLLABORATION: AN ARTS INTEGRATED EDUCATIONAL BUSINESS

by

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M.A. Florida Atlantic University 2001

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts with a concentration in Musical Theatre
in the School of Performing Arts
in the College of Arts and Humanities
at the University of Central Florida
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ABSTRACT

One of the main reasons I have been attracted to the world of theatre is its versatility. Theatre incorporates many other disciplines: Science, Mathematics, History, Language, Philosophy, and Psychology to name a few. I have always had daydreams about running a school program that utilizes a play as the unifying force behind the research and application of traditional academic subject. When I first started as an English teacher, I created many projects that incorporated other disciplines, such as creative writing, acting, and music. When I began teaching theatre, I began to focus solely on skills that applied to theatre. I have been a classroom teacher for the past twenty years, and I find myself becoming disillusioned with the classroom environment. As I transition out of teaching in the public-school sector, I am building on methods I started utilizing in the classroom to create my own educational business that will include live workshops, online classes, and private coaching.

I will be exploring two types of arts-related education: Arts as Curriculum and Arts-Integrated Curriculum. The goal of both types of curricula is to inspire students to take ownership of their work and perhaps create enthusiasm for self-directed learning. I would like to incorporate this goal into the mission statement for my business and develop curriculum that will serve not only those looking to learn and improve their performing arts skills, but also students for whom traditional school might not resonate. The predominant part of my business will be courses created to be taught online. The income from those courses will be supplemented by in-person workshops and after-school programs.

This is dedicated to my mother, who has metaphorically held my hand as I attempt, in middle age, to figure out what I want to be when I grow up.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all the professors on my committee for their time, talent, and patience in both the classroom and during this process. Your kindness and dedication are appreciated.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS (or) ABBREVIATIONS

STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering Arts and Mathematics
CETA	The Center for Changing Education through the Arts Program
ASM	Assistant Stage Manager

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

When I began this thesis, it was with the intention that I would continue to be a secondary classroom teacher. I would conduct a theatre adaptation project using devised theatre techniques as outlined by Tectonic Theatre in the book entitled, *Moment Work: Tectonic Theatre Project's Process of Devising Theatre* by Moises Kaufman and Barbara Pitts McAdams, as an experiment in reconstructing the theatre classroom by creating a devised musical theatre piece that students could take ownership of. As a teacher, my goal was to promote a more Montessori-style classroom, where “emphasis is placed on helping children choose pursuits that are of interest to them, thus supporting the child’s natural curiosity and desire to learn...you can also expect to see children working together on projects, since collaboration at this age helps the child to become socially adapted to society and aware of the needs of others.” (“FAQs and Stay Connected - theMAC - Montessori Academy of Celebration”). My students could research and explore an area of interest and then use their knowledge to collaborate and create an original work. I was blessed in the fact that I worked at a charter school and the acting classes I taught were not part of standardized testing; therefore, I had a bit of freedom in how I designed my curriculum. As long as I could apply C-Palm standards to my lessons (<https://www.cpalms.org/search/Standard#>), I could do what I wanted. I was in my 21st year of teaching, and I could see how education seemed to be shifting more and more into guided self-learning: I believed Montessori and STEAM based projects could help students take ownership of their learning while allowing them to see practical applications of what they discover. It could broaden their understanding of theatre arts and give them a more practical view by exploring all

the elements that go into creating a theatre piece, and how research and knowledge could enhance their exploration of their art as well as their knowledge of the elements of their art could be used to enhance their academic knowledge. This was my goal as a teacher.

As it happens, things did not go according to plan, neither with my career trajectory or with the project itself. By the time the school year was over, I had made the decision to move from Miami to Central Florida and leave the secondary classroom behind. This changed my focus a bit from my original intent of reinventing my classroom to reinventing myself. I had twelve years growing a program I was extremely proud of in a school I loved, but I could no longer sustain the energy and patience needed to start over in the institutional school system. Yet who was I if I wasn't a teacher? When the last year I would teach full-time ended, I was so burnt out that I wasn't even interested in going to see theater, never mind teaching and directing. I started working as a copywriter. While I found it to be much less stressful, I no longer had the sense of passion and purpose I had while teaching.

Luckily, as I was transitioning from the secondary classroom into the world of business, I was given opportunities to teach in a different format. I found myself conducting live workshops for acting and musical theatre at my former school and coaching privately for some of my former students via Zoom. This led me to start exploring the idea of perhaps taking some of these classes and teach online. I could decide what I wanted to teach, what the maximum number of students would be in each class, and I could give feedback instead of grades. I could incorporate some of the Montessori principles I originally tried to do in my first thesis project such as projects that were “collaborative instead of competitive” with “assessment(s) by portfolio and the teacher's observation” (“FAQs and Stay Connected - theMAC - Montessori Academy of Celebration”).

The main challenge would be to make sure I had enough students and classes to be able to make a living. To do that, I needed to explore what it was I could offer that wasn't already being offered online. I have training and degrees in English, Creative Writing, and Theatre. While it is quite possible to strictly teach acting or voice online, I missed some of the skills I used to teach, such as critical approaches to literature, where I taught psychology and philosophy as a lens into literary analysis. Perhaps all my previous training and experience could be utilized on one platform to teach in an interdisciplinary style? Who would be interested or could benefit the most from this style of teaching, especially online?

For the past decade, there has been a rise in parents homeschooling their children. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 5.4 percent of children were reported to be homeschooled in 2020–21. This is an increase from 2.8 in 2019 and from 1.7 percent in 1999 ("Homeschooled Children and Reasons for Homeschooling"). Many of these families use Outschool to supplement their teachings at home. With this platform, I could open my prospective students from a local to a national level. As a matter of fact, the platform itself seems to follow Montessori methods: most of the classes on Outschool are categorized by age in three-year groups, as does Montessori. Since students don't have a set curriculum they have to follow, they can "follow their desire to learn" by choosing from the thousands of classes offered. They don't receive grades, simply feedback based on observation. The platform appears to be just the forum I need to teach the way I have been dreaming about. I just needed to find my niche, so that I could stand out from the many other teachers on the platform. Based on my education and experience, I think that niche might be Arts-Integrated education.

The Kennedy Center's *Changing Education through the Arts Program* (CETA) defines arts integration as "an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an arts form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both" ("What Is Arts Integration?"). In the exploration leading up to creating this definition, CETA categorized three different types of Arts based curriculum: *Arts as Curriculum*, *Arts-Enhanced Curriculum*, and *Arts-Integrated Curriculum* ("What Is Arts Integration?"). Throughout my teaching career, I have had experience in all three categories. As a first-year teacher with a degree in English and Creative writing, I taught Middle School English and Writing and Research courses at The Sagemont School in Weston, Florida. I frequently incorporated creative writing exercises and projects to encourage my students to own their work, but I had no experience in theatre other than one summer in high school when I was in a production of *A Chorus Line*. Therefore, while I may have had my students "act out" scenes from *Macbeth* and taught them what iambic pentameter was, my lack of training in theatre prevented me from demonstrating *how* and *why* it was begin used, and how it could change the subtext. This aligns with the idea of *Arts Enhanced* curriculum, "When the arts are used as a device or strategy to support other curriculum areas, but no objectives in the art form are explicit" ("What Is Arts Integration?").

During my first year of teaching English, I happened to audition for a community production of the *Sound of Music*, and my love for theatre was born. After the principal at Sagemont saw me in a production of *Jekyll and Hyde*, he asked me to take over the fledgling Drama Club there, and the trajectory of my life was changed forever. With the exception of one year when I moved to the Boston area, I taught Theatre and English classes for eight years at that school, in addition to directing plays and coaching for competitions; however, I taught English as

a completely separate thing from my theatre classes. I completely fell in love with the medium of theatre, and sorely felt my lack of training in that area. The summer before I left Sagemont permanently, I had the opportunity to intern as an assistant stage manager (ASM) for Shakespeare and Company, a professional company in the Berkshires, where I learned enough to realize I needed more experience and training in theatre to become a better teacher. I taught one more year at Sagemont after that summer, spent the next summer doing summer stock in Texas, and then moved to New York, where I received training through intensives at Circle in the Square Theatre School and Labyrinth Theatre. After two years in New York, I returned to Florida and full-time teaching at Miami Arts Charter School, where I started teaching AP English Literature, AP Language, 10th Grade English, and Critical Thinking. It was in this capacity that I started to segue more into the Art-Integrated versus the Arts Enhanced Area. Since my students were all at the school for one type of art or another, I frequently created projects that allowed students to demonstrate their understanding of a text through their art; however, I still wasn't teaching a true Arts-Integrated course. Even though I now had more of an understanding of theatre techniques, I didn't have enough time as an English teacher to teach these skills to my students, and many of them, who were at the school for another art, would not be interested in learning about it.

At the same time that I was teaching English, I was assisting the Theatre teacher in directing productions and coaching students for Thespian competitions. After the Theatre teacher left the school, I was asked to take over the Theatre program. For the next ten years, I would build a curriculum that sat firmly in the Arts-as-Curriculum category, which CETA defines as "Arts for Arts sake" ("What Is Arts Integration?"), and by now only explored analysis as it related to Stanislavski acting technique - Objectives, Obstacles and Tactics. I didn't bring in

other subject skills for further analysis, as again, I didn't have the time if I were to fit in all the objectives from C-palms into my plans and get my students performance ready. Miami Arts Charter School had only been in existence for one year when I first arrived, and we had to build the program from the ground up. My students, for the most part, had very little theatre experience; many of them only came to the program to avoid going to their neighborhood school. It was my job not only to train them in acting, but to help instill passion and discipline that hopefully would spread to other areas of their life. This left little time for any interdisciplinary work.

The years passed and as our reputation grew, so did our program, and I was able to have two more faculty members in my program. We also added two more strands: technical theatre and musical theatre. By this time, right before Covid would interrupt all our lives, I was beginning to feel both burnt out and, once again, inadequate as a teacher, so I applied for the MA in Theatre program at UCF. Before I received an acceptance, Covid hit and everything shut down. For the first time in twenty years, I wasn't running from project to project and job to job, and I began to wonder how much longer I could keep up the energy and dedication that my colleagues and students had come to expect. When schools opened back up, we taught a crazy combination of live and online teaching that added to the weariness I had already been feeling. Starting classes at UCF helped me a bit with igniting my passion again, but I was still concerned with how much longer I could keep it up. At the same time, my mother had some health problems and would not be able to drive for much longer. I decided then to sell my home and move to Central Florida to help take care of her. I decided that I would not look for another full-time teaching job, as I needed a more flexible schedule to be able to drive my mother to her medical appointments.

While I am at this crossroad, there are changes in institutional education that are concerning to me and reinforce my decision to not return to the classroom. Schools and teachers seem to be under scrutiny and censorship as political teams square off; this is a situation that I do not want to be a part of, and I think, may drive more families to homeschool their children.

This is where I think my business, Creative Collaborations, LLC, can fill a niche. I would like to teach both Arts-as-Curriculum and Arts-Integrated classes that can be offered live and online. The following chapters will discuss the different classes I am currently offering, the classes I plan to offer in the future, and the marketing strategies I will use to gain students.

CHAPTER TWO: ARTS AS CURRICULUM

CETA defines Arts as Curriculum classes as those having “students develop knowledge and skills in a particular art form. Often referred to as ‘arts learning’ or ‘art for art’s sake,’ the programs are guided by national, state, or local standards for each of the art forms.” (“What Is Arts Integration?”). This attempt to categorize each type of curriculum lead to the Art-Integrated definition as “an approach to teaching in which students conduct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both” (“What Is Arts Integration?”). Since I became a full-time theatre teacher, most of the projects I have worked on fall under the Arts-as-Curriculum category, so this is where I started when I began to freelance. I was lucky enough to be hired my former school, Miami Arts Charter, to conduct workshops for both theatre and chorus students at their annual four-day Arts Camp in Umatilla, Florida. I was able to try out my Level One Archetype Workshop, which will be discussed in further detail in the next section. Based on the success of that workshop, I have added two more levels to the live workshops and have also expanded it onto an online class.

Acting Through Archetype Workshops

The goal for this workshop was to enable students to create a base line physicality for a character. Many students struggle with breaking out of their own established physical habits and postures, so my hope was that by incorporating poses and gestures based upon Carl Jung’s Twelve Archetypes, they feel less self-conscious, get out of their own heads, and create new physical movements for their characters based on choice and exploration.

I developed a Power Point Presentation that gave a brief definition of an archetype:

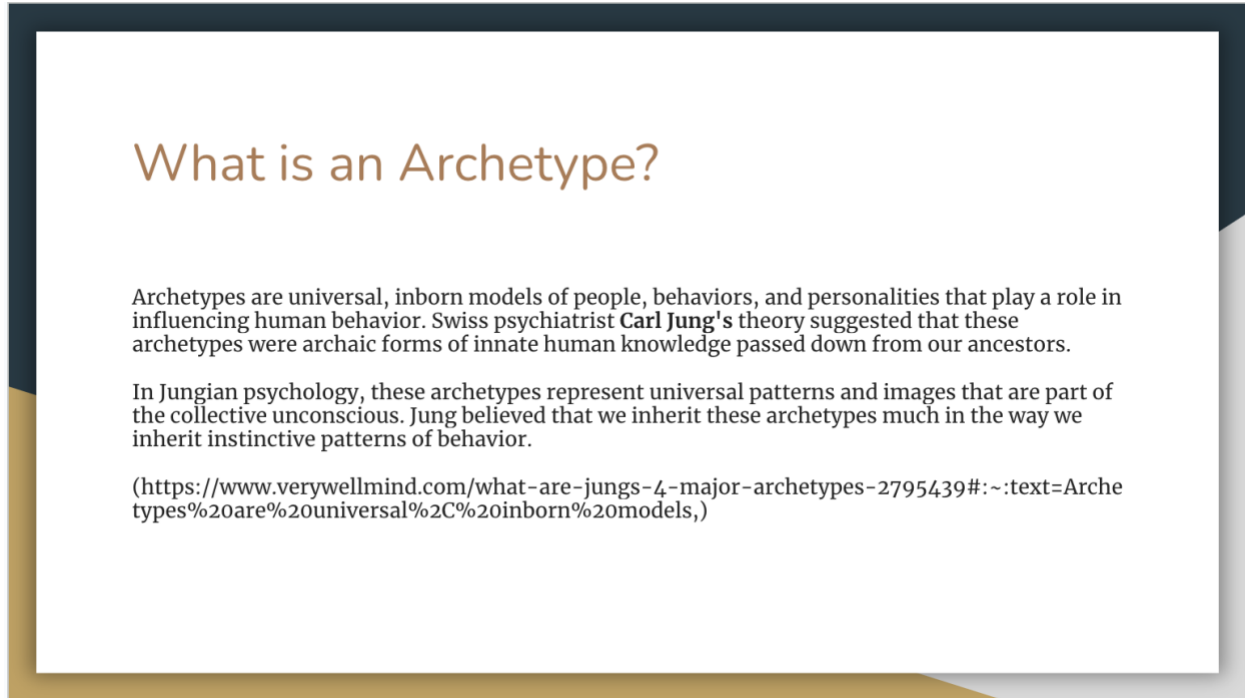


Figure 1 What is an Archetype?

I briefly discuss Jung's idea of the mass unconscious and Joseph Campbell's idea of how the collective unconscious manifests in our stories. I do not spend much time on this for my theatre students. In the future, I plan on elaborating this part for my online Arts-Integrated class.

We then move on to the first archetype: The Innocent. I am going to use this archetype and slide as the example of what methods are used to explore this archetype, and how new methods can be introduced to create levels of complexity. This can work two ways: each level of Archetype work can introduce a new method, or we can use Archetype work as a practical application for acting techniques that are introduced.

THE INNOCENT

The Innocent (Snow White, Dory, Buddy, Andy Dwyer) *Free to be You and Me*

The innocent seems to have read and absorbed every self-help book in the world. They're optimistic and always searching for happiness. The innocent sees the good in everything. They want to feel well-adjusted to the world around them. The innocent also wants to please others and feel like they belong.

- Motto: Free to be you and me
- Core desire: to get to paradise
- **Goal: to be happy**
- Greatest fear: to be punished for doing something bad or wrong
- **Strategy: to do things right**
- Weakness: boring for all their naive innocence
- Talent: faith and optimism

The Innocent is also known as: Utopian, traditionalist, naive, mystic, saint, romantic, dreamer

Figure 2: *The Innocent*

We begin with discussing characteristics and goals of the Innocent (information for this slide came from “Explore Your Mind” and “Tree of Life Counseling”). If I know that my students will be applying this to a text immediately, I tell them to pay special attention to the goal and strategies of an archetype, as this will relate to their characters objectives and tactics, assuming the group already has learned this type of analysis. I did not have to go into detail about objectives and tactics with my first workshop as they knew this already. When I expand this workshop into a class, I will dedicate some time to teaching Stanislavski’s objective work, so they can understand how to determine what kind of archetype the character in their text is. That way they can choose an archetype and apply the physicality they developed in the workshop to that character.

After discussing the wants and needs and talents of the Innocent, we look at the weaknesses and fears to see how that can affect a character’s journey. We start by looking at the examples given and then see if students can name a few examples of their own. I then introduce

them to Stanislavski's Three Circles of Attention ("Stanislavski – 3 Circles of Attention.") and ask them to determine what a typical circle would be for the Innocent – for example one might choose the 3rd circle of attention - arms out wide - as the Innocent is naïve, open, and not afraid to be vulnerable, so they direct themselves out to the whole world. I make sure that everyone understands that there is no "correct" answer. Everyone's Innocent should be their own interpretation of that archetype. Going forward with this workshop, I plan on adding some of the work from theatre practitioner Michael Chekov's archetypal gestures as well to further clarify how physicality can determine inner emotions. The exercise I feel will supplement the three circles of attention exercises best comes from Franc Chamberlain's book, *Michael Chekov*:

Expand into a star shape, saying to yourself 'I am going to awaken the sleeping muscles of my body'. When you reach the physical limit of your expansion, imagine that the movement is continuing. When you reach the limit of your imagination, return to your starting position and repeat.

Contract inwards and downwards, crossing your arms across your chest, bowing your head and going down on to your knees. Imagine that the space around you is contracting also. When you have reached your physical limit, imagine that you are continuing to contract. When you have reached the limit of your imagination, return to your starting position and repeat.

Explore the actions of expanding and contracting while speaking the line ‘I want to be left alone!’ Try to speak in harmony with the gesture and notice the effects the different gestures have on your speech. (Chamberlain 139-140)

While conducting this exercise for the Innocent, I would have my students say, “I want everyone to be happy.” I will give them corresponding lines for each archetype that follows. This should help students experiment with degrees of the circles of concentration and go bigger in their physicality.

After these exercises, I have each student create a pose for the Innocent. Where are their shoulders? Is their chin up or down? What direction are they looking? If I took a picture, would I be able to tell that this was the Innocent? The students stay frozen in their pose, and I turn on music from the Archetype playlist I created. I have a song chosen for each character that I hope will help the students connect with the archetype. For example, there is a song called “Free to Be You and Me” by The Seekers that not only fits the emotional tone of the Innocent but also matches their motto. The song itself was a children’s song from the 70s, and it is lighthearted and cheerful. Once I start playing the song, students begin to move around the space and explore the physicality of the Innocent. They are not to greet each other, just explore the space and their own connection to it and themselves. After a few minutes, I ask them to pair up and greet each other: they are not to speak, they are only to communicate physically. They can only be in pairs, no more. I let them walk the space again, and then pair them off two more times. I then stop the music and we break for discussion.

Some of the guiding discussion questions: What was your circle of attention? Where was your center of gravity? What part of your body did you move the most? Were your steps heavy

or light? Quick or slow? (To add another level to this workshop, I can teach Laban's eight efforts of movement: dab, float, press, wring, glide, punch, slash, and flick. Then I can have students explore which effort fits their archetype best.) If it works out that there is an odd number of students, after the exercise, I ask the student that got left out if it changed the emotional arc of the character. If yes, how did it change their physicality? I try to make sure that I pick a different person each time that won't get paired up, so students don't take it personally if they are left out.

After we go over all the Archetypes and have walked the space and greeted each other, we then discuss what the effects would be if we played the negative arc of the character. How would that change their circle of attention? Center of gravity? Tension? Pace? Would playing your character against the archetype add something to the text? Would it make the character more complex? Humorous? Or would it change the character too much so they are no longer the Innocent – this could be how you track your character's journey. Maybe they change into a different archetype after experiencing a certain plot point. If they have a scene or monologue on which they are working, I have them determine what the archetype is for that scene by connecting the objective and tactics of the character to the correlating goal and strategy of the archetype.

For my online students, I intend to expand this into a series of either half-hour or one-hour classes, depending upon the age group. These students will be able to do most of the same exercises as my live workshops, except for the meet and greet portion of walking the space. I intend to have several versions of this class, tailored to each age group. I am going to try all age groups initially to see what age group garners the most students. The following is how I would structure each class on Outschool.

The first class would be geared for children 6-9 years old. This class will consist of four 45-minute classes where we cover three archetypes each class. Here is a sample for Week One:

1. Discuss Definition of Archetypes (Simplified for this age group) (5 minutes)
2. Discuss Characteristics and Examples of the Innocent (3 minutes)
3. Lead Students in Circles of Concentration and Chekov's Expansion Exercises (5 minutes)
4. Create Pose (2.5 minutes)
5. Walk Space with Music; Give line to say when spacewalk is done. Let each student say theirs individually. (2.5 minutes)
6. Discussion: (2 Minutes)
7. Repeat numbers 2, 4, 5 and 6 for the Hero, and the Sage (20 minutes)

I have plans to incorporate two more age groups: 10-13 years old and 14-17 years old that will follow this basic guideline, but with more time added experimenting with and discussing how to play the negative arc of these archetypes. These classes will run an hour each for eight weeks, with the last two weeks consisting of applying an archetype to a monologue selection. I may also offer this course twice a week for a month.

For my Level Two Archetype class, I am incorporating vocals to the archetype. I will be using concepts learned in the Estill Voice Technique class taught by Professor Tara Snyder. For this workshop, before we even talk about archetypes, I give an introductory lesson on how we create sound. I talk briefly about power (Breath), Source (True Vocal Folds) and filter (Vocal Tract Resonance) for how to produce sound (Estill 5); then I go right into a modified idea of what is a person's "attractor state", not as a singer, but in their general speech patterns. I want them to start noticing their own speaking habits, so they can choose to modify them for a character if necessary, or just to make choices instead of defaulting to their attractor state. Here

are the components I asked my students to consider as they either spoke a monologue or piece of text aloud:

What is your VOCAL STATE?

1. **Pitch:** High or Low - Run a scale and then speak a line after every three or four notes.
 - a. **Start on your morning sleepy voice**
 - b. **DO** - I am Michele **FA** - I am Michele **DO** - I am Michele
 - c. Pitch changes where do you mostly sit?
2. **Volume:** Loud or Soft (Depending on Onset)
 - a. **TVF Onset:** Glottal, Smooth, Aspirate Abrupt, and Aspirate Gradual
 - b. **TVF Body Cover:** Slack, Thick, Thin, or Aspirate
3. **Speed:** Scale of 1-10 - How fast do they speak?
 - a. Walk the Floor at the pace in which you speak.
4. **Movement:** From a scale of 1-10,(1-monotone and 10- musical) How dynamic is your character's voice
 - a. Go over chunk - how much to you change pitch or speed?
5. **Tongue:** High, Mid or Low
6. **Lips:** Protrude, Mid, Spread
7. **Jaw:** Back, Forward, Dropped

For numbers 5, 6, and 7 Practice each on : i || a || u

High	Mid	Low	High	Mid	Low	High	Mid	Low
Eeee	eeee	eeee	ahhhh	ahhh	ahhhh	oooo	oooo	oooo,

Figure 3: What is Your Vocal State?

Before students begin to run a piece of text, we go over each characteristic or vocal structure with the sentence, “I am (their name).” so they will start on their normal “waking up in the morning sleepy voice” on that sentence. Estill says to have them run up a scale, but for this class, I don’t want them to sing as much as to talk on a pitch, so I have them go from “DO” on a solfege scale to “FA” to “DO” at the top of the octave, making sure that if they start singing the line, they can adjust to speaking at that pitch. We then discuss how going higher affected their energy or tone. Most students told me that they got louder and felt more excited/cheerful on the higher pitches.

This segues into a discussion on True Vocal folds and the onsets that are used to access them. I suggest onset exercises from Estill for students to use to practice slack, thin, thick and aspirate folds, and then we discuss what types of tone these types of voices convey and which

ones create more volume. We will also briefly touch upon anchoring to make sure students are not constricting in the process of using folds that require more effort. I don't play examples in the workshop because we are pressed for time, but I think for the online class, I will search for examples of each type of fold being accessed during a monologue.

After this, we discuss the rate at which we speak and do a floor exercise in which students walk the rate at which they are speaking while I call out numbers on a scale of 1-10. When they finished, I asked them to go back to their text and speak it aloud. When they were done, I asked them to check in so far on pitch, volume, and speed to see how dynamic their vocals were. When I first did this workshop, I was surprised at how many children didn't have a realistic view of how they spoke: when I asked them to tell me on a scale of 1-10 how fast they normally spoke, many thought they spoke much slower than they did. For the online class, I think I may have students record themselves speaking a piece of text before we do the exercises. Then they can refer to it for a more objective opinion.

After this first check-in, we go over the structures of the Lips, Tongue, and Jaw and experiment with different vowel sounds to see how changing each structure affects the tone and timbre of the voice. This whole process takes about 20-30 minutes, leaving us with about an hour in which to take all this information and apply it to each Archetype. We first go over the Innocents qualities together and then they will practice saying the line I give them using different pitches, speeds, volume, and structures until they decide what their default voice would be for the Innocent. Here is my sample slide with my version of the Innocent marked in bold:

THE INNOCENT Vocal Qualities

1. **Pitch:** **High** or Low
2. **Volume:** Loud or Soft (Slack, Thick, **Thin**, or **Aspirate** TVF Onset)
3. **Speed:** Scale of 1-10 - How fast do they speak?
4. **Movement:** From a scale of 1-10,(1-monotone and 10- musical) How **dynamic** is your character's voice
5. **Tongue:** **High**, Mid or Low
6. **Lips:** Protrude, Mid, **Spread**
7. **Jaw:** Forward, **Mid**, Back, **Dropped**

Exercise: Smiles are my favorite

Figure 4: The Innocent Vocal Quality

After we do this for each archetype, we discuss what effects playing against that archetype can have. For example, if your Innocent was low slow speaking with slack folds – the unexpectedness of it could be humorous or possibly add quirkiness or complexity to a character. We also discuss how even within an archetype, vocal qualities can change with emotion or a character's arc.

The online class would be conducted in the same sequence as the workshops, but we can take much more time with each structure and give many more examples to analyze. I would break it up in the same way I did the first level Archetype course – six weeks of one-hour long classes. This course would start at age 13 and up.

Week one would consist of evaluating your attractor state. Weeks two through five would be going over each archetype. Week six would be choosing an archetype to match their text and then workshopping it with the class.

Musical Theatre Workshops

The next workshop I have been conducting live and plan on turning into an online course is a Level One and Two Musical Theatre: The Basics class. For this course, I use a combination of techniques and information from *Estill Voice Training Level One, 2nd Edition: Figures for Voice Control* and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as clarified by *Edith Skinner's Speak with Distinction*. I have two workshops for this series: a Level One and a Level Two, which I designed to cover the “easiest fixes.” I have found that many of my beginning singers have some of the same issues - usually involving support and/or placement, so for Level One, we concentrate on support, or “anchoring” and for Level Two, we look at placement.

At the Level One MT Workshop, we start with the introductory exercise from Estill Voice: understanding effort:

Bring forefinger to thumb and maintain the lightest contact. Press as hard as possible.

What kind of work is being done? Where is it? Was the breath held? If the lightest contact is a 1 and the hardest is a ten, what is a three? ... Notice the other fingers of the hand, the muscles of the arm and shoulder, and release the tension accumulating anywhere other than within the muscles of the lower arm required for this task. (Estill 9)

Based on this exercise, I instruct students to start paying attention to how much effort is being used when they are singing, and where that effort is focused. Is every muscle engaged necessary or are some just coming along for the ride?

After this exercise, I give them a brief overview of Power, Source, and Filter, and then we move on to the explanations, examples, and exercises for True Vocal Folds that was outlined in the Archetype Level Two: Vocals workshop. All these exercises lead up to the main purpose of this workshop: Anchoring. We have exercises that go over the three places to anchor: Head,

Neck and Torso. Within each category, students practice singing on thin folds and then anchoring in the selected section of their body to hear and feel the difference. While they are working individually, I walk around and guide anyone who is struggling with anchoring or trying to belt or raise volume instead of letting anchoring do it for them. Once we have spent enough time on this, if we still have time, I quickly go over False Vocal Fold Constriction. If there is still time, I then let students work on a part of a song that they may struggle with: it usually tends to be that they want to “belt” more in their upper range, which is what anchoring with thin folds instead of belting, or even anchoring more in a belt can help with tremendously. There are many more ways to help this, such as narrowing the Aryepiglottic Sphincter, but this is all I feel most students are ready for twenty-five students (which has been how many I have had in the workshop) in such a short amount of time.

The second level of the Musical Theatre One: The Basics course is a combination of teaching the Lips, Tongue, and Jaw structures and Vowel Placement. Again, this is based on “easy fixes” I find with many students. Level Two doesn’t have to have Level One as a prerequisite, but ideally students would have taken my first workshop to be able to apply the ideas discussed and practiced there. In this course, we start with the Lip, Tongue and Jaw positions. We then do an exercise singing each vowel commonly used in vocal warmups. I am not using IPA charts for this, as that chart is a class in and of itself. Before I introduce IPA, I just want my students to start noticing their structure placement for single vowel sounds, so we start with the ones most of them are used to doing in warmup exercises: OO, EE, EH, OH, AH

We go over each vowel and discuss how changing the position of each structure changes the tone or even the vowel itself. I then ask them to think of where in the mouth the sound comes out of for each vowel. OO, EE, EH, OH, AH start at the lips and work their way to the back of

the mouth just in the way the Plosives (P, B, T, D, K, G) do. How does where the voice hits in your mouth change the tone? I then have them sing on one long sustained note and go through these vowels and pay attention to the structure changes.

We move on to a brief overview of what the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is and what it is used for; then we cover long and short vowels, keeping in mind structure and placement. From here, we get to the heart of the lesson: diphthongs. I discuss rising and falling diphthongs (Skinner 140) and start with singing the word DAY //eɪ//. If students use it as a “falling” vowel, where the first part (which is typically the more “open” part of the diphthong) of the two-part vowel is prominent, what type of sound are they getting? Most of the students at this point answer “opera” or a more “legit” sound. Then we practice singing the same word with a “rising” vowel to see how the sound changes. The extra “ping” that comes from leaning on the second part of the vowel usually reads as “younger” or “more modern.” I then play them various examples of Golden Age musicals and more Contemporary musicals to identify the Rising and Falling Diphthongs, ending with the concert version of “One Day More” from the musical *Les Misérables* to see how the different characters use rising or falling vowels for their character work. (TUNE - Musical Moments)

At this point, I have students find a phrase containing a diphthong in their music, and I have them practice it with rising, falling and everywhere in between until they come up with the sound they want. Then they get up and demonstrate and explain why they made the choices they did. The last time I conducted this workshop, the students had been assigned duets, which turned out to be an interesting segue into matching diphthongs in order to blend. This portion took up the rest of the 90-minute workshop. In the future, if I have fewer students, I have one more lesson on “faking” or replacing vowels— such as singing “may” for “me” to get a thicker sound.

After practicing this, students will be encouraged to slowly go over the structure change needed to change “me” to “may” and find where to meet in the middle to get the sound they want while keeping as true to the vowel as possible. This lesson will be included in the online course.

For the online version of this workshop, I plan on extending it into a four-week course and keeping the number under seven students, so we can spend more time on individual coaching. Both the Level One and Level Two courses will be open to ages 12-18; the Level Two course will have Level One as a prerequisite. The Level One course will run for four weeks, with each class running 50 minutes. The schedule will be as follows:

Week One: Effort (5 min), Power/Source/Filter (10 min), True Vocal Folds (30 min),
Give out Song Selection List (5 min)

Week Two: Anchoring Overview (5 min), Torso Anchoring Group and Individual
Practice (20 minutes), Song Application (25 minutes)

Week Three: Head/Neck Anchoring Overview (5 min), Head/Neck Anchoring Group
and Individual Practice (20 minutes), Song Application (25 minutes)

Week Four: Understanding and Freeing False Vocal Fold Constriction (15 Minutes),
Warmups (5 min), Song Application Workshop (30 minutes)

The Level Two course will run for four weeks as well, giving time for more examples and individual coaching. Here is the schedule for the Level Two course:

Week One: Lip, Tongue and Jaw Structures Overview and Exercises (20 min), Finding
Your Attractor State (20 min), Identify Preferred Genre, (10 min), Give out Song
Selection List (5 min)

Week Two: IPA Overview (Long and Short Vowel Practice with different onsets) (15 min), Diphthongs – Rising and Falling with Examples (20 minutes), Identify Diphthongs in your music (15 min)

Week Three: Warmups (5 min), Faking the Vowel (20 min), Individual Practice/Workshop Diphthongs (25 minutes)

Week Four: Putting it all together: Individual workshops (50 minutes)

When I first start these online course series, I shall start by alternating months between Level One and Level Two. If I get enough students, eventually I will run them in the same month, but at different times. Between the Musical Theatre and Archetype online courses, I will be starting with four Arts-as-Curriculum courses per week, with the possibility of doubling classes if the numbers warrant.

CHAPTER THREE: INTEGRATED ARTS

When I first started to become disillusioned by public school curriculum and limitations, I investigated alternative methodologies of teaching. Montessori methods and ideals seemed to match the kind of teaching I think is more accessible and productive for this current generation of students:

Montessori classrooms encourage deep learning of the concepts behind academic skills rather than rote practice of abstract techniques...Montessori emphasizes learning through all five senses, not just through listening, watching, or reading. Learning is an exciting process of discovery, leading to concentration, motivation, self-discipline, and a love of learning... Montessori classrooms emphasize skills and dispositions that have been shown to have the greatest impact on success in later life: self-regulation, collaboration, conflict-resolution, and a variety of other executive skills aimed at continuous improvement...The emphasis in a Montessori class is on assisting and supporting children to develop and learn based on their own interests, desires, and timing. Attention is also paid to promoting collaborative social and educational relationships that enhance learning through shared ideas and insights.

(“FAQs & Stay Connected”)

These methods are aligned to many of the projects I had already been conducting with my secondary students, except for the fact that I had to grade their projects, and I believe that for many students, the idea of getting it “right” in order to earn the grade inhibited their creativity and risk taking and somewhat stifled the joy of learning. Yet trying to teach using Montessori Methods in the public-school classroom did not seem feasible, as grading is required and students had to adhere to a set curriculum. When I decided to transition to teaching privately, I

realized many Montessori methods would not work well online, such as using work stations and incorporating “all five senses” when doing a project. Arts-Integrated curriculum aligns with Montessori ideals as well as the types of classes I could teach both live and online: both focus on interdisciplinary learning to create a positive outlook towards learning:

This approach to teaching is grounded in the belief that learning is actively built, experiential, evolving, collaborative, problem-solving, and reflective. These beliefs are aligned with current research about the nature of learning and with the Constructivist learning theory.

Constructivist practices that align with arts integration practices include:

- Drawing on student’s prior knowledge
- Providing active hands-on learning with authentic problems for students to solve in divergent ways
- Arranging opportunities for students to learn from each other to enrich their understandings
- Engaging students in reflection about what they learned, how they learned it, and what it means to them
- Using student assessment of their own and peers' work as part of the learning experience
- Providing opportunities for students to revise and improve their work and share it with others.
- Building a positive classroom environment where students are encouraged and supported to take risks, explore possibilities, and where a social, cooperative learning community is created and nurtured. (“What Is Arts Integration?”).

Now that I had a clear idea of the methodology I wanted to use, I had to find the right place to I could use it. Outschool seems to be the platform I need to have the freedom to put these ideas into practice. Once you are approved, you can create your own courses how you see

fit. When I look at the class offerings on Outschoool, I see many Acting and Voice classes, and many literature courses, but I do not see many Arts-Integrated courses. I plan on starting with an Arts-Integrated version of the Archetype courses.

Archetypal Character Analysis and Practice

This course will require a reconfiguration of the live workshops I have been teaching. Students will get on their feet to physically embody the archetypes before creating a character sketch based on the archetype. We will spend each week on one archetype, dive deep into the examples, walk the space as the archetype, and then create a character sketch utilizing Archetypes and Uta Hagen's Nine Questions, which can help students define their character's background and circumstances. The application of the knowledge learned will not be applied to monologues, but to analyzing literature and creating characters. In order to better serve students that might find writing difficult, I will open up the character "sketches" to comics, drawings, songs, or whatever medium they find most conducive to storytelling. For this syllabus, I am including C-Palms standards for both English and Theatre, but we will not be limited to simply achieving those standards. Below is my syllabus for the Level One class:

First Semester

Creating Characters: Archetype Scope and Sequence

Objectives

Students will identify Archetypes in literature and plays.

Students will be able to analyze literary themes and elements based on Archetype.

Students will contract their own narratives with complex characters based on the Archetypes.

Standards:

ELA9.R.1.2 Analyze universal themes and their development throughout a literary text.

ELA.K12.EE.4.1 Use appropriate collaborative techniques and active listening skills when engaging in discussions in a variety of situations.

ELA.11.C.1.2 Write complex narratives using appropriate techniques to establish multiple perspectives.

ELA.12.R.1.3 Evaluate the development of character perspective, including conflicting perspectives.

ELA.12.R.3.3 Analyze the influence of classic literature on contemporary world texts.

TH.912.S.1.5 Write monologues, scenes, and/or short plays using principles and elements of writing found in dramatic literature.

TH.912.S.2.3 Demonstrate an understanding of a dramatic work by developing a character analysis for one or more of its major characters and show how the analysis clarifies the character's physical and emotional dimensions.

TH.912.S.2.8 Strengthen acting skills by engaging in theatre games and improvisations.

Week 1: Archetype Overview and The Innocent Analysis, Practice and Character Sketch

Week 2: The Jester Analysis, Practice, Improv, and Character Sketch

Week 3: The Ruler Analysis, Practice, Improv, and Character Sketch

Week 4: The Rebel Analysis, Practice, Improv, and Character Sketch

Week 5: The Hero Analysis, Practice, Improv, and Character Sketch

Week 6: The Lover Analysis, Practice, Improv, and Character Sketch

Week 7: The Creator Analysis, Practice, Improv, and Character Sketch

Week 8: The Magician Analysis, Practice, Improv, and Character Sketch

Week 9: The Everyman/Orphan Analysis, Practice, Improv, and Character Sketch

Week 10: The Sage Analysis, Practice, Improv, and Character Sketch

Week 11: The Explorer Analysis, Practice, Improv, and Character Sketch

Week 12: The Caregiver Analysis, Practice, Improv, and Character Sketch

Week 13: Choose your favorite Character, Partner-up and create an outline for a scene (5 pages maximum). Look at opposing Objectives, Obstacles, and Tactics. Improv your tactics and see what happens.

Week 14: Finish scenes

Archetype and The Hero's Script Writing Journey

This course is the first of two semester long courses; for the second semester, I will use Christopher Vogel's *The Writer's Journey* and have students use their character sketches to create a story that follows the Hero's Journey. We will discuss each aspect of the journey, apply it to literature, give time for students to create a scene outline, and then workshop them in class. By the end of the course, they may not have a whole play, but they will have a detailed outline with partial scenes. Below is the syllabus for Archetypes 2: Sending Your Characters on a Journey.

Second Semester

The Hero's Journey

Texts

Vogler, Christopher. *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*. Michael Wiese Productions, 1998.

Objectives

Students will be able to identify the patterns found in The Hero's Journey and the function of the archetype there within.

Students will create original Stories or Plays using the Hero's Journey.

Standards:

ELA.9.C.1.2 Write narratives using narrative techniques, varied transitions, and a clearly established point of view.

ELA.9.C.1.5 Improve writing by considering feedback from adults, peers, and/or online editing tools, revising for clarity and cohesiveness.

ELA.9.R.1.2 Analyze universal themes and their development throughout a literary text.

TH.912.C.2.2 Construct imaginative, complex scripts and revise them in collaboration with actors to convey story and meaning to an audience.

TH.912.S.1.5 Write monologues, scenes, and/or short plays using principles and elements of writing found in dramatic literature.

- Week 1:** Reimagining Your Archetypes - What roles will they play? Hero, Mentor, Threshold Guardian, Herald, Shapeshifter, Shadow, Ally, and Trickster
Choose which of your Jungian Archetypes will fill these roles.
- Week 2:** Sending them on a Journey: The Ordinary World
- Week 3:** Sending them on a Journey: The Call to Adventure
- Week 4:** Sending them on a Journey: Refusal of the Call
- Week 5:** Sending them on a Journey: Meeting with the Mentor
- Week 6:** Sending them on a Journey: Crossing the First Threshold
- Week 7:** Sending them on a Journey: Tests, Allies, and Enemies
- Week 8:** Sending them on a Journey: Approach to the Inmost Cave
- Week 9:** Sending them on a Journey: The Ordeal
- Week 10:** Sending them on a Journey: The Reward
- Week 11:** Sending them on a Journey: The Road Back

Week 12: Sending them on a Journey: The Resurrection

Week 13: Sending them on a Journey: The Elixir

Week 14: Story/Play Outline and Scene Readings

These two classes will be the start of my Integrated Arts Series on Outschool. I plan on adding more classes in the future, which I will discuss in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FOUR: MARKETING

Target Audiences for Live Workshops, Online Classes, and Private Coaching

Currently, I have already been conducting live workshops and private coaching through word of mouth and contacts with my previous school. However, that is a bit limiting as most of my students are in Miami. That means all my private coaching is online. While I do believe online coaching has value, I would like to also be able to coach in person as well. In addition, I have had to drive three hours to conduct live workshops. While this is not an insurmountable issue, it does add to my expenses and limits the number of workshops I can do. To address both issues, I am looking at trying to conduct workshops or classes in some after-school theatre programs, such as the one at Osceola Arts, which is located just ten minutes from my home. Their class schedule for Theatre seems to be production-based only, and I believe there will be space for me to start teaching some technique-based classes geared toward middle and high school levels (“Youth Classes”). I hope to further refine my workshops or even do live courses and perhaps gain some private students as well. To promote my workshops in other places, I intend on applying to give a workshop at the 2023 Florida Association of Teachers (FATE) and submit to give a workshop at 2024 Florida Thespian State Festival.

For my Outschool classes, my target audience is the homeschooled student. According to the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI), over three million students were homeschooled during the 2021-2022 school year. Two of the most common reasons cited for this was to “customize or individualize the curriculum and learning environment for each child” and “to use pedagogical approaches other than those typical in institutional schools” (Ray). This aligns with my own pedagogical leanings, and I think my Arts-Integrated classes will appeal to this audience. While Outschool does promote the classes created on their platform, it will be

necessary to market for myself as well. Outschool has a page on their site that gives advice on how to channel students to my classes. In it the discuss the seven ways to market your business, which I will describe here and discuss how I am applying these strategies to Creative Collaborations. First, Outschool lists what you can do on their website to promote your classes:

Design an outstanding Educator Profile

Message enrolled families to promote new classes by following this guide

Write class listings for SEO

Use data insights to create classes that meet demand from parents or match up with parent topic requests

Create a “funnel” of classes that build on one another, giving learners the opportunity to easily keep signing up for more courses

Draw in global learners to increase sign-ups

(“7 Places to Market Your Teaching Business • Outschool’s Educator Library”)

One of the strategies Outschool mentions is hat of creating a “funnel” of classes that build on one another and create the opportunity for students to sign up for the next course. This is a way of keeping the students with whom you connect coming back. I have started this process by having Level One and Two courses, but I will continue with that funnel as students progress. For example, after a student completes the Archetype: Hero’s Journey course, I could open a story revision workshop, where we read and give feedback to the stories created in the class. I could also do an online workshop on publishing your work. The possibilities are endless.

There are also pages on the site that are updated weekly which list topic requests and class demands from parents. They show you search terms used and what percentage per age group was inquiring. For example, one of the popular terms searched was “literature”, with 16% of inquiries coming from parents of 3-7 year old children, 37% coming from parents of 8-10 year old children, 50% in the age 11-13 bracket, and 58% from 14-18 year old bracket. This give me

insight as to what age group I should target my Arts-Integrated Archetype course. This page also gives information about what days of the week parents are looking to book classes – whether it is Monday through Friday or on the weekends, according to subject. (“Classes in Demand • Outschool’s Educator Library”)

I also plan on sending out an email campaign to all the homeschool parent support groups, such as the ones listed on homeschool.com. This site has over sixty support groups listed. I will start promoting my Outschool classes with the groups in my time zone and work my way West. For the groups that are in Florida, I will also promote my private coaching and local workshops.

Website and Social Media

I am currently in the process of building the website for Creative Collaborations, my LLC. The domain was purchased from GoDaddy with the URL address: <https://creativcollabs.com/> I will have different pages for the various courses discussed in this thesis. I will also have a blog page where I will discuss issues, pedagogy, and research into my courses. Each month, I will post that blog on LinkedIn and submit it to any associations and parenting magazines to which it may apply. I am also creating an Instagram, Facebook, and possibly a TikTok account (if the platform remains viable in the U.S.) where I will give mini-lessons and positive messages about the importance of arts in education. All posts will end with a call to action and link to my website.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

One more avenue I have not yet discussed but plan on putting into action if I find that the classes I designed are successful, is asynchronous or “flex” learning. This is an option offered on Outschool that, after the initial set up, is the most cost effective for me as it relates to my time. I plan on offering the Acting the Archetype 1, Creating Characters Through Archetype, and Musical Theatre 1 and 2 classes as flex classes. In this format, I would record the lectures and exercise demonstrations, and let students turn in their character sketches, scenes, and song recordings for feedback. If someone takes a Level One class as a flex class, they can choose to take a Level Two class live.

I will be launching my Outschool classes starting in May; this gives me the month of April in which to start promoting. I have created a spread sheet to run projecting income for the next few months. I set the student number for the live online classes at 5 students per class, although I would take up to ten for the Archetype classes and up to seven for the MT classes.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	Classes	# of Students	Times a week	Course length	Price per Student	Monthly Income Minus Outschool Cut	Art or Integrated	Live	Online	Flex	Monthly Income Total
2	Archetype 1	5	2	6 Weeks	24	336	Integrated		x		
3	Archetype Hero's Journey	5	2	6 weeks	24	336	Integrated		x		
4	Act Archetype	5	2	6 Weeks	24	336	Art		x		
5	Act Archetype 2	5	2	6 Weeks	24	336	Art		x		
6	MT 1	5	1	4 Weeks	12	168	Art		x		
7	MT 2	5	1	4 Weeks	12	168	Art		x		
8	Archetype 1 Flex	1	2	6 Weeks	20	56	Integrated			x	
9	Act Archetype Flex	1	2	6 Weeks	20	56	Art			x	
10	MT 1 Flex	1	2	4 Weeks	20	56	Art			x	
11	MT 2 Flex	1	2	4 Weeks	20	56	Art			x	
12											
13											
14											
15											1904

Figure 5: Projected monthly earnings for Quarter 2 2023

These projections are only for my classes on Outschool and are based on each class being offered once with five students per class. After the first month, if I can get the numbers, I will offer multiple selections. I may also wait a few months to create the flex classes, as I think I will need to teach this class live a few times to really see what works and what I will need to tweak.

In the future, I will be adding more classes that I will teach. Future class possibilities could include:

1. Integrated Arts: Acting and Analyzing Shakespeare. This course would start as an overview of Shakespearean monologues where we deconstruct the language and use it to analyze subtext. This class could be a series, where after the initial class, I could have classes dedicated to specific plays.
2. Integrated Arts: Characters on the Couch - Psychological Analysis. This class would use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to analyze literary characters and discover why it is they made the choices they did.
3. Integrated Arts: Finding the Philosophical. We will explore a few major philosophical ideas and see how they are depicted in plays and literature.
4. Integrated Arts: History through Theatre
5. Integrated Arts: Math Through Scene Design – this course would be taught by a technical theatre practitioner.

While one never expects to become a millionaire by teaching, I do think I can make a decent living with this plan. I have already put the money into the equipment I need to teach everything I have outlined in this thesis: my Mac laptop, ring lights, microphone, speakers, electric piano, camera, Zoom Account, LLC applications, website builder, and domain names. There are not many expenses in my day-to-day business, as most of my classes do not require

supplies. At the moment, I am supplementing my income from Creative Collaborations with income from a freelance copywriting job. I will continue to do so until I can make enough income from Creative Collaborations to make that my only source of income.

In the United States, teachers have increasingly been overloaded with more classes and students. We have become responsible for students' academics, social skills and emotional health with very little support or resources. I have been a teacher for 21 years, and I have consistently worked 50-60 hours a week in addition to the 10-12 hours a week spent commuting, as my salary was not enough for me to buy a home in Miami near my school. As much as I loved teaching theatre in the secondary classroom, the level of patience, energy, and passion required to do this job well was just not sustainable for me. But I am at heart a teacher; I am not built to have a job that is simply a job and not purpose filled. I feel that my business plans, especially those that pertain to Outschool may be the reinvention of the classroom which I sought. I feel a bit like Goldilocks – Academic curriculum as too hot and Arts-as-Curriculum as too cold, but Arts-Integrated curriculum seems to be the perfect temperature for me. I think this alternative to the classroom is a great avenue for students and teachers alike who are finding it increasingly difficult to thrive in the institutional environment.

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