Program: Theatre—Performance, BFA

College of Liberal Arts

Theatre

Theatre—Performance, BFA

Expected Outcome 1: Advanced Acting Skills
Students will demonstrate the acquisition of increasingly complex skills in performance. For theatre performance majors (THPR) these expectations include growing competency in acting choices in a broad range of dramatic literature and theatrical styles; in vocal production & resonance, freedom, focus, expression, and clarity; and in movement skills that exhibit increasing flexibility, focus, and control. While expected outcomes in the theatre performance (THPR) and music theatre (THMU) degree tracks share a certain amount of commonality, the acquisition and mastery of the above skills are unique to THPR majors.

Assessment Method 1: Performance Reviews

Assessment Method Description
Each student is assessed at the end of each semester in individual performance reviews conducted by faculty members who evaluate student work within and beyond the studio throughout the semester. Particular emphasis is placed in these reviews on student progress in the acquisition of increasingly complex and advanced skills described for THPR majors in the expected outcome above, and developing an approach to the discipline required for continuing success as a professional actor. Faculty members now provide direct oral and written feedback in the form of a summary sheet for semester reviews, and lay out specific expectations for student improvement in the upcoming semester. Students who do not meet expectations as outlined by faculty in the ensuing semester do not continue in the program.

Findings

Four students were individually assessed at the end of Fall semester 2013, and one at the end of Spring semester 2014. Graduating Senior THPR majors do not undergo a semester review, but participate in a senior performance recital. Three THPR students completed the BFA/THPR degree program in 2014. Students were assessed on the following criteria on a scale of 4-1 ( 4- Advanced 3- Proficient 2- Marginal 1- Inadequate) and their group scores follow:

Fall 2013:
Punctuality and Preparation: 3.75
Incorporating Feedback/Acting Skills: 3.62
Performance Evaluations outside the studio setting: 3.75
Professional Deportment/Ensemble Skills: 3.75

Strengths 1.) Student assessments indicated strong proficiencies in preparation, advancing acting skills, and professional comportment within the studio and in the production program.

Weaknesses: 1.) Written feedback (summary sheets) did not address specific technical skills including voice and speech, movement and characterization, etc. tied to
Spring 2014: In response to feedback from OIRA, the semester review summary sheets were revised to incorporate more specific applied skills evaluation, tied to student performance outcomes. On a scale of 4-1 (4- Advanced 3- Proficient 2- Marginal 1- Inadequate) one student was assessed using the following criteria:

Punctuality and Preparation: 3.5  
Incorporating Feedback/Advancing Acting skills: 3.75  
Healthy Vocal Production/Articulate Speech/Embodied Text work: 3.5  
Pursuing Objective through partner/expressive movement/clear characterizations: 3.5  
Performance Evaluation Beyond Studio 4.0  
Professional Comportment within and beyond the studio: 3.0

In ongoing assessment discussions performance faculty noted the findings below:

Strengths: The student evaluated has made significant progress in all areas of training.

Weaknesses: the sample size is too small to draw conclusions about the value of instructional programming.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**

- Faculty members continue to reinforce concepts introduced in studio classes in private coaching sessions to further enhance student ability to demonstrate proficiency in complex skills.
- Faculty will continue to use formal performance review assessment summary sheets for implementation in fall 2014 assessment cycle so that students continue to have written documentation of strengths and areas of weakness, with expectations of improvement at the end of each semester. Based on feedback from OIRA, the summary sheet was amended in Spring 2014 to incorporate more specific skills tied to performance outcomes. Portions of the assessment summary sheet related to acquisition of advanced acting skills appear below. Fully revised summary sheet for semester reviews THPR can be viewed as appendix 2. The 2013 semester review sheet can be viewed as appendix 3.

**Additional Comments:** Students indicated the specificity of the feedback was useful to them as they set personal goals for their artistic development.

**Assessment Method 2:** Senior Recital

**Assessment Method Description**

Students prepare and perform a senior recital during the last semester of their degree program as their culminating performance project for assessment by performance faculty. In the most recent reporting cycle, seven members of the theatre faculty applied the criteria listed below in assessing the work of 3 BFA senior THMU majors in a performance of selected contemporary scenes and monologues of various styles and genres. Their work was assessed on a 4-1 scale (4- Advanced 3-Proficient 2 Marginal 1- Inadequate) for the following skills sets:
## THPR Senior Recital Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>4 Advanced</th>
<th>3 Proficient</th>
<th>2 Marginal</th>
<th>1 Inadequate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urgent pursuit of clear task against strong obstacle</td>
<td>The student consistently demonstrates the ability to urgently pursue objective against obstacle in a compelling, imaginative performance.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates an adequate comprehension of urgent pursuit of objective against obstacle in the performance.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates an inconsistent comprehension of urgent pursuit of objective against obstacle in the performance.</td>
<td>The student fails to demonstrate a comprehension of urgent pursuit of objective against obstacle in the performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varied tactics</td>
<td>The student consistently demonstrates the ability to play a variety of tactics in a compelling, imaginative performance.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates an adequate comprehension of playing varied tactics in the performance.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates an inconsistent comprehension of playing varied tactics in the performance.</td>
<td>The student fails to demonstrate a comprehension of playing varied tactics in the performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnering</td>
<td>The student consistently pursues objective through partner compellingly and effectively in the performance.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates an adequate comprehension of using partner to pursue objectives and partners sufficiently in the performance.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates an inconsistent ability to pursue objectives through partner in the performance.</td>
<td>The student fails to demonstrate the ability to pursue objectives through partner in the performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis and comprehension of dramatic action</td>
<td>The student demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the dramatic action and uses basic analysis skills to orchestrate a compelling performance.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates an adequate comprehension of the dramatic action and uses basic analysis skills to orchestrate a performance grounded in the text.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates an inconsistent understanding of the dramatic action and fails to use basic analysis skills to orchestrate the performance.</td>
<td>The student fails to demonstrate progress toward accomplishment in vocal freedom, expressivity, resonance &amp; articulate speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice (THPR majors)</td>
<td>The student demonstrates a high level of accomplishment in vocal freedom, expressivity, resonance &amp; articulate speech.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates an adequate level of accomplishment in vocal freedom, expressivity, resonance &amp; articulate speech.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates intermittent accomplishment in vocal freedom, expressivity, resonance &amp; articulate speech.</td>
<td>The student fails to demonstrate progress toward accomplishment in vocal freedom, expressivity, resonance &amp; articulate speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement (THPR majors)</td>
<td>The student demonstrates a high level of accomplishment in movement choices that are motivated, physically focused, efficient, &amp; appropriate to the character and the period.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates an adequate level of accomplishment in movement choices that are motivated, physically focused, efficient, &amp; appropriate to the character and the period.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates intermittent accomplishment in movement choices that are motivated, physically focused, efficient, &amp; appropriate to the character and the period.</td>
<td>The student fails to demonstrate progress toward accomplishment in movement choices that are motivated, physically focused, efficient, &amp; appropriate to the character and the period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style (THPR majors)</td>
<td>The student demonstrates the ability to make and execute sophisticated, imaginative, and accurate stylistic choices.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates the ability to make and execute consistently accurate stylistic choices.</td>
<td>The student intermittently demonstrates the ability to make and execute accurate stylistic choices.</td>
<td>The student fails to demonstrate progress toward accomplishment in making accurate, effective stylistic choices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

Urgent Pursuit of a clear task against a strong obstacle: 3.66
Uses a variety of tactics in an imaginative compelling performance: 3.40
Partnering- pursues objective through partner: 3.70
Analysis and comprehension of dramatic action: 3.76
Voice- freedom, expressivity, resonance, articulate speech: 3.3
Movement-motivated, focused, efficient, appropriate to character: 3.13

In ongoing assessment discussions the performance faculty made the following observations:

Strengths: As an ensemble, students met, and in some cases, exceeded the benchmarks for this particular outcome in the assessed performance, excelling in advanced acting skills.

Weaknesses: 1.) Student outcomes in the voice and movement categories reflect ongoing challenges in the mastery of these skills. 2.) Student engagement with the final assessment performance is compromised by performance fatigue at the end of their senior semester. Students maintain a demanding rehearsal schedule in the production program over their four years, and by their senior semester, they are tired and less focused.

How did you use findings for improvement?

- Faculty members have changed the time frame for the senior recital, scheduling it early in the semester to ensure focus and commitment to the project.
- “Imitation technique” pedagogical approach continues to be refined as a technique for teaching style in the BFA Performance studio. Students observe and recreate accomplished video performances that provide clear examples of heightened acting styles and modes of speech. These imitations become a foundation from which to create more original characterizations. As this technique is developed, it will challenge the voice, speech, and movement abilities of the actors in an effort to strengthen these skills.
- Faculty will continue to use this new rubric for the assessment acquisition of specific advanced skills in voice, movement, and acting styles appearing at the end of the rubric below. It has helped to identify areas of instructional programming that needed strengthening, including movement skills. For example, there are no qualified movement teachers on the Theatre faculty. Students could benefit from an instructor who has expertise in mime, mask, combat techniques, contact improvisation and clowning. Faculty have identified and scheduled performing artists to conduct guest workshops for BFA students to help them develop movement skills. More movement training techniques (unarmed combat, tai chi, etc.) will be introduced in performance classes.

Assessment Method 3: Exit Survey
Assessment Method Description
Students complete a survey in their last semester in each degree program outlining their accomplishments and achievements beyond the studio setting during their time as degree candidates.
Findings

Three graduating seniors completed exit surveys and faculty highlighted the following findings:

- 60% graduating seniors had advanced through the state screening auditions to the annual SETC acting auditions at least once during their tenure in the BFA degree program.
- All graduating seniors were cast in at least three major roles in AU Theatre productions after open competitive auditions.
- All graduating seniors received an offer of industry related employment or graduate school offers/scholarships after completion of their degree program.

Strengths: Exit surveys continue to indicate a high level of student achievement beyond the studio setting and postgraduate placement in employment and further training opportunities. 100% of students indicated their satisfaction in their advanced mastery of fundamental acting skills, and 100% agreed they had achieved an intermediate level of competency in more advanced skills.

Weaknesses: Employment in performance fields is short lived, and while two found employment is will be of short duration. Only one student chose to pursue graduate work- we would like to see more students in masters/MFA programs.

How did you use findings for improvement?

- The department has expanded the number of residencies offered by professional guest artists to engage our students in ways that expand their understanding of performance technique and market readiness. Guest artists Christine Ebersole, Teresa Wolf and Corolla Luttringhaus, and the artistic team at the Puzzle Theatre in New York have all been part of this effort.
- Students have performed at summer theatres across the country, the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, and the Glee Project.
- Senior Performance Majors now have ten workshop sessions in on camera technique with professional directors.
- The department has increased efforts to provide opportunities for performance students to gain exposure to theatre in venues outside the university. This included trips to NDEO, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, SETC, and theatre faculty-led trips to various theatrical and dance venues New York City.
- The department has expanded its opportunities for students to benefit from television and film workshops, acting/broadcast recording opportunities, and devised theatre experiences.
- All THPR students are required to take THLA 4980 a capstone course in theatre in which they develop a plan for working in the industry or industry related field or attending graduate school.
- The exit survey has been revised to reflect the addition of questions designed to gage student opinion of their ability to realize learning outcomes 1 & 2 (see below).
Appendix 1. B.F.A. Performance Program-- Senior Exit Survey

Name_________________________________

Permanent (Parents) Address  ______________________________________

____________________________________

Email address                             ______________________________________

Cell phone                                  ______________________________________

Date B.F.A. Performance Program Completed  ____________________

Expected Date of Graduation               ____________________

This survey is designed to measure the level at which students in the BFA (THMU &
THPR) degree tracks have successfully applied skills introduced and developed in studio
work beyond the studio setting, and to evaluate student opinion on the level at which
they have attained competency in fundamental and advanced skills appropriate to their
degree track.

List Roles/Plays Performed at Auburn University

If you advanced beyond the S.E.T.C. Alabama State screening auditions, list the year(s)
you did so.

If you attended NETC or other professional unified auditions list the specific audition
and the year(s) you did so.

List all summer entertainment industry employment you obtained while a student at
A.U.

List all off campus industry related activities (community theatre, student films, extra
work in film or television, etc.) you engaged in while a student during the academic
year at A.U.

Did you attend U/RTA auditions?  ____________ Yes  ____________ No

List graduate programs that expressed interest in you or made offers of acceptance into
their programs.
If you have accepted admission to a graduate program or entertainment industry employment to begin after you graduate, list the name and address of your new employer or school below.

At what level would you rate your ability to employ basic acting skills (including comprehension of dramatic action and basic scene analysis, identification and pursuit of clear and urgent character objectives, and the ability to identify obstacles, play varied tactics and use partner effectively in pursuit of those objectives) in your work as a performer? (Check one).

Advanced ability _______________________
Intermediate ability _______________________
Basic ability _______________________
Little or no ability _______________________

At what level would you rate your ability to apply more complex skills (including competency in singing intonation, musicality & phrasing, in ballet, jazz and tap dance, and in the execution of acting & singing choices that are stylistically accurate for BFA music theatre students; and growing competency in orchestration of varied acting choices, in the performance of literature in heightened language and varying styles, in vocal work demonstrating technical proficiency in a range of dialects, and in stylistically appropriate movement choices for BFA performance students) in your work as a performer? (Check one).

Advanced ability _______________________
Intermediate ability _______________________
Basic ability _______________________
Little or no ability _______________________

Additional Comments: THPR is a degree track in which juniors and seniors focus on advanced performance skills level skills. The fundamental acting skills/professional deportment was eliminated as an assessment outcome as a redundancy.
Appendix 2: BFA Assessment Summary Sheet for Semester Reviews- 2014

Student:

Date:

Evaluator:

Rank the following for this student by circling or highlighting the appropriate level in each category.

**Punctuality and preparation**

Advanced: Student is punctual for all studio sessions and has thoroughly prepared all written and performance work in advance of each session.

Proficient: Student had no more than two excused or unexcused absences, and was punctual and prepared for the nearly all studio sessions.

Marginal: Student had more than two unexcused absences and was inconsistently punctual and prepared for studio sessions.

Unacceptable: Student had more than four unexcused absences and was consistently late and unprepared for studio sessions.

**Ability to accept and incorporate feedback to demonstrate growth in increasingly complex skills.**

Advanced: Student is consistently incorporating feedback and has demonstrated continuous improvement in the refinement of basic skills and the acquisition of more complex skills in studio work throughout the semester.

Proficient: Student is making consistent efforts to incorporate feedback and has demonstrated some improvement in the refinement of basic skills and the acquisition of more complex skills in studio work throughout the semester.

Marginal: Student is making intermittent efforts to incorporate feedback, but has not significantly advanced in the refinement of basic skills and the acquisition of more complex skills in studio work throughout the semester.

Unacceptable: Student is resistant to feedback, and has failed to refine basic skills and to acquire more complex skills in studio work throughout the semester.

**Quality of performance work beyond the studio setting.**

Advanced: Student has consistently demonstrated improvement in the refinement of basic skills and the acquisition of more complex skills in performance work beyond the studio setting (AU Theatre productions, directing
scenes and other class outcomes, off campus auditions and theatre productions, etc.) throughout the semester.

Proficient: Student has demonstrated some improvement in the refinement of basic skills and the acquisition of more complex skills in performance work beyond the studio setting (AU Theatre productions, directing scenes and other class outcomes, off campus auditions and theatre productions, etc.) throughout the semester.

Marginal: Student has made intermittent efforts to improve the refinement of basic skills and the acquisition of more complex skills in performance work beyond the studio setting (AU Theatre productions, directing scenes and other class outcomes, off campus auditions and theatre productions, etc.) throughout the semester.

Unacceptable: Student has failed to engage in techniques and practices designed to demonstrate improvement in the refinement of basic skills and the acquisition of more complex skills in performance work beyond the studio setting (AU Theatre productions, directing scenes and other class outcomes, off campus auditions and theatre productions, etc.) throughout the semester.

Demonstration of healthy vocal production, clear articulation, and embodied text work.

Advanced: Student has consistently demonstrated improvement in these skills in performance work beyond the studio setting (AU Theatre productions, directing scenes and other class outcomes, off campus auditions and theatre productions, etc.) throughout the semester.

Proficient: Student has demonstrated some improvement in the refinement of these skills in performance work beyond the studio setting (AU Theatre productions, directing scenes and other class outcomes, off campus auditions and theatre productions, etc.) throughout the semester.

Marginal: Student has made intermittent efforts to improve the refinement of these skills in performance work beyond the studio setting (AU Theatre productions, directing scenes and other class outcomes, off campus auditions and theatre productions, etc.) throughout the semester.

Unacceptable: Student has failed to engage in techniques and practices designed to demonstrate improvement in the refinement of these skills in performance work beyond the studio setting (AU Theatre productions, directing scenes and other class outcomes, off campus auditions and theatre productions, etc.) throughout the semester.

The student demonstrates advancing skills in the areas of pursuing a strong objective through partner, expressive movement choices, and clear characterization.
Advanced: Student has consistently demonstrated improvement in these skills in performance work beyond the studio setting (AU Theatre productions, directing scenes and other class outcomes, off campus auditions and theatre productions, etc.) throughout the semester.

Proficient: Student has demonstrated some improvement in the refinement of these skills in performance work beyond the studio setting (AU Theatre productions, directing scenes and other class outcomes, off campus auditions and theatre productions, etc.) throughout the semester.

Marginal: Student has made intermittent efforts to improve the refinement of these skills in performance work beyond the studio setting (AU Theatre productions, directing scenes and other class outcomes, off campus auditions and theatre productions, etc.) throughout the semester.

Unacceptable: Student has failed to engage in techniques and practices designed to demonstrate improvement in the refinement of these skills in performance work beyond the studio setting (AU Theatre productions, directing scenes and other class outcomes, off campus auditions and theatre productions, etc.) throughout the semester.

Professional comportment within and beyond the studio ensemble.

Advanced: Student is committed to their ensemble and consistently displays professional discipline, courtesy, and respect for their peers, faculty members, and guests within and beyond the studio setting.

Proficient: Student understands the importance of ensemble and usually displays professional discipline, courtesy, and respect for their peers, faculty members, and guests within and beyond the studio setting.

Marginal: Student is inconsistent in their commitment to ensemble and in the practice of professional discipline, courtesy, and respect for their peers, faculty members, and guests within and beyond the studio setting.

Unacceptable: Student fails to honor the principles and practices of a functional ensemble and disregards professional discipline, courtesy, and respect for their peers, faculty members, and guests within and beyond the studio setting.

Area of greatest strength during the last semester:

Area of greatest weakness to address moving forward:
Appendix 3: BFA Assessment Summary Sheet for Semester Reviews 2013

Student: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

Evaluator: ______________________________

Rank the following for this student by circling or highlighting the appropriate level in each category.

Punctuality and preparation

Advanced: Student is punctual for all studio sessions and has thoroughly prepared all written and performance work in advance of each session.

Proficient: Student had no more than two excused or unexcused absences, and was punctual and prepared for the nearly all studio sessions.

Marginal: Student had more than two unexcused absences and was inconsistently punctual and prepared for studio sessions.

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Ability to accept and incorporate feedback to demonstrate growth in increasingly complex skills.

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Unacceptable: Student is resistant to feedback, and has failed to refine basic skills and to acquire more complex skills in studio work throughout the semester.

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Advanced: Student has consistently demonstrated improvement in the
refinement of basic skills and the acquisition of more complex skills in performance work beyond the studio setting (AU Theatre productions, directing scenes and other class outcomes, off campus auditions and theatre productions, etc.) throughout the semester.

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Unacceptable: Student fails to honor the principles and practices of a functional ensemble and disregards professional discipline, courtesy, and respect for their peers, faculty members, and guests within and beyond the studio setting.

Area of greatest strength during the last semester:

Area of greatest weakness to address moving forward:

Additional comments may be attached.