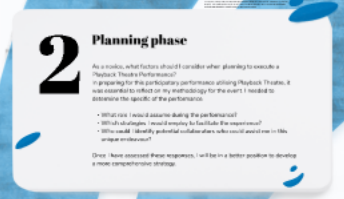
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2205102

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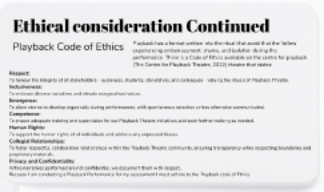
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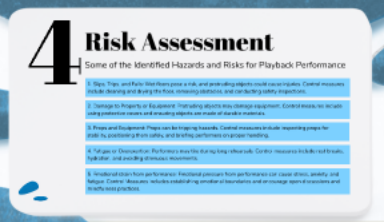
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Personal Stories


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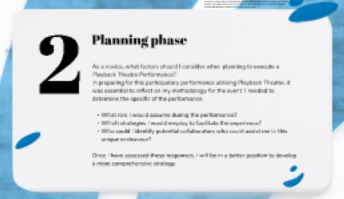
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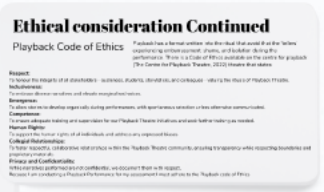
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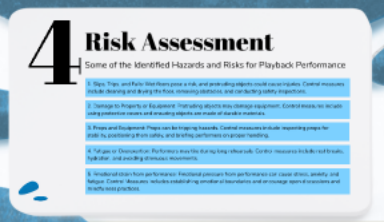
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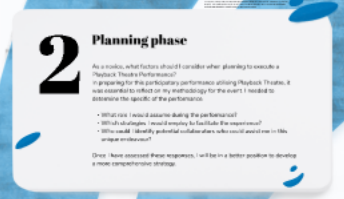
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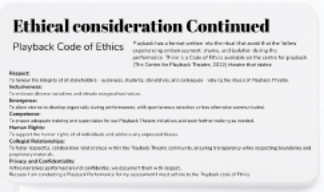
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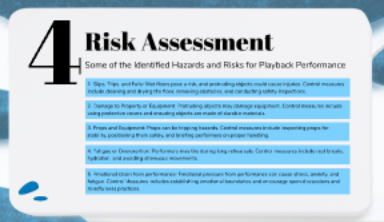
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1

Choosing Playback Theatre

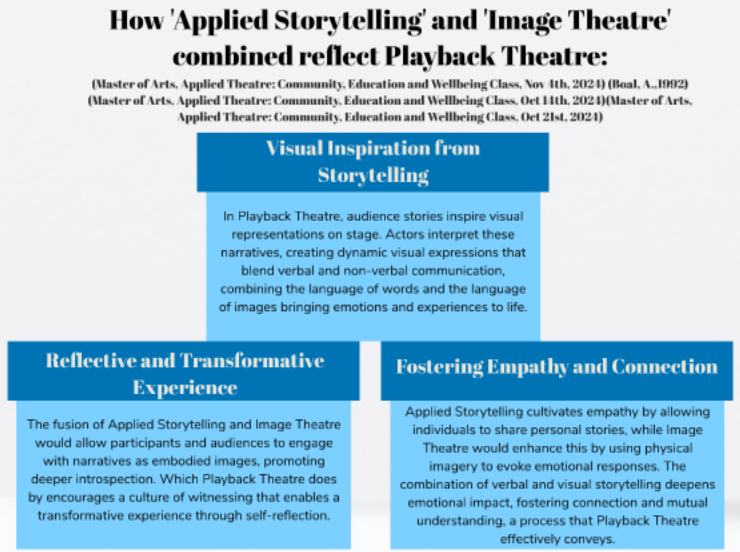
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(Applied Storytelling Inc., 2024). (Boal, A.,1992) (Master of Arts, Applied Theatre: Community, Education and Wellbeing Class, Oct 21st, 2024)

So why Playback Theatre?

I considered facilitating an Image theatre workshop as Boal states that 'We must not forget that words are only vehicles which convey meanings, emotions, memories, ideas... Which are not necessarily the same for everyone: the word spoken is never the word heard.' (Boal, A.,1992:174) '... make images. Of course, those images do not replace words but they cannot be translated into words either - they are a language in themselves.' (Boal, A.,1992:175) Throughout my life, I have encountered difficulties with verbal expression, word spoken or written which has made the idea of using images as a means of communication, as another language was especially appealing to me. However, as Ananda Breed explains in Sheila Preston's Applied Theatre: Facilitation: Pedagogies, Practices, Resilience 'The original story and storyteller is almost secondary to the main goal of constructing Forum Theatre that relates to a common social or political problem, unlike Playback Theatre where the emphasis is based on listening and playing back the essence of the story as verified by the teller. While in Forum Theatre, the original story is collected and rehearsed prior to the actual public performance; Playback Theatre literally plays back the original story as an improvisation.' (2026:192-193) The sincere and genuine expression of a person's lived experience deeply influenced me in my role as a practitioner. I aimed to explore an honest, unrehearsed and unfiltered representation that fosters a significant connection with those who shared their experience. I recognise that forum theatre and image theatre are two different practises by the same practitioner Augusto Boal but I adored the concept of the performance as an offering to be profoundly appealing. (Boal, A.,1992) Upon first learning that the presentation of playback through acting, music, and conducting was framed as an offering, I realised that as a participant or conductor, I had the autonomy to select what I embraced and what I chose to forgo within the context of this performance. I believe that applied storytelling also delivers the autonomy to embrace a shared story, as Eleanor Shaw says it 'allows you to see your own story in folktales and fairy tales, and to make sense of yourself and your own story in the stories of others.' (Cwlwm, 2024). This concept captivated me; however, the allure of engaging in active listening to an individual's lived experience articulated in their own words, coupled with witnessing their reaction to a playback performance that encapsulated that experience, profoundly resonated with me.

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How 'Applied Storytelling' and 'Image Theatre' combined reflect Playback Theatre:

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Visual Inspiration from Storytelling

In Playback Theatre, audience stories inspire visual representations on stage. Actors interpret these narratives, creating dynamic visual expressions that blend verbal and non-verbal communication, combining the language of words and the language of images bringing emotions and experiences to life.

Reflective and Transformative Experience

The fusion of Applied Storytelling and Image Theatre would allow participants and audiences to engage with narratives as embodied images, promoting deeper introspection. Which Playback Theatre does by encourages a culture of witnessing that enables a transformative experience through self-reflection.

Fostering Empathy and Connection

Applied Storytelling cultivates empathy by allowing individuals to share personal stories, while Image Theatre would enhance this by using physical imagery to evoke emotional responses. The combination of verbal and visual storytelling deepens emotional impact, fostering connection and mutual understanding, a process that Playback Theatre effectively conveys.

2 Planning phase

As a novice, what factors should I consider when planning to execute a Playback Theatre Performance?
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Initial Questions of Practice and the Solutions I selected

What role I would assume during the performance?

The only feasible role I could take on, given my current understanding of Playback, would be that of the Conductor. That way I could effectively manage the space, assuming the responsibility of guiding the actors, musicians during the improvised segment of the performance and setting the tone for the audience while holding their personal stories.

Which strategies I would employ to facilitate the experience?

I planned to employ the OARS (iod.unh.edu., 2021) strategy as I identified that a crucial part of this performance was actively listening to people as they shared their experiences. Additionally, I incorporated several questions from Kyle's session in the book "Time to Think" by Nancy Kline to foster a conducive thinking environment for my participants (2016:147-158) *(Kyle's session is a recorded thinking session with Kyle and Eric.)* Kline emphasizes the importance of active listening while also highlighting the significance of silence, as illustrated in Kyle's session where Eric refrained from responding, Nancy writes"He wanted to say, 'join the club.' But he didn't." (2016:148). Another instance is noted where Eric remained silent "this time he reminded quiet, assuming that Kyle was asking the question in order to get his own mind to think about it." (2016:149). The impact of this study on my facilitation during the Playback performance was considerable, as I experienced many moments of prolonged silence during my conduction of the playback performance. I viewed these pauses as crucial for my participants' reflection. Instead of rushing the process or jumping to conclusions, I aimed to create a thoughtful environment—a brave space (Landreman, L.M., 2023:135-149). —where participants could reflect on a moment they wanted to share and present it at their own speed.

Who could I as identify potential collaborators who could assist me in this unique endeavour?

The best candidates for the playback performance were my classmates from an intensive workshop, which deepened our engagement with playback theatre. I hadn't considered this approach until a classmate volunteered to act, inspiring me to explore it further. I appreciated their willingness to help.

With their support, I prioritised their well-being during preparations, ensuring I didn't add stress. I communicated regularly and organised rehearsals, providing reminders about necessary formats and procedures.

Follow up questions of practice

Do I want to use a theme or not?

Establishing a theme for playback performances offers several benefits, including fostering a sense of unity, enhancing audience engagement, and intensifying emotional resonance, which collectively contribute to a more memorable experience by highlighting both collective and individual narratives. Nevertheless, this approach can also impose limitations on storytelling possibilities, stifle creativity, and create a disconnect between performers and the audience. To address these challenges, it is essential to strike a balance between the thematic framework and the necessity for authenticity and diversity in playback theatre. Consequently, I opted for a broad theme focused on the concept of a moment, which facilitates unrestricted individual creative expression.

How can I make this the most relaxing experience for my 'company'?

My 'company' consists of classmates who are also in the middle of assessment. Some have already presented their workshops, while others are still waiting. My goal was to reduce stress for everyone. I maintained regular communication, practiced my materials, and worked to ease pressure. I also included a grounding and breathing exercise in my workshop to help ensure we were all mentally prepared for the playback performance.

How can I make this the most relaxing experience for the audience/participants?

I recognise that my audience may feel apprehensive about this unfamiliar performance. To ease any unease, I will clearly outline my intentions and provide an overview of the facilitation boundaries and relevant information ensuring that my practices is ethical.

3 Ethical consideration

The Drama Spiral

In my ethical deliberations regarding this playback performance, I opted to establish a framework for the performance to be shared, utilising a scale from one to ten. I intended to communicate that participants should elect a moment to share, with one representing a mundane activity such as making a cup of tea, and ten symbolizing their most profound and intimate secrets. I would inform the audience that in today's performance we were aiming for stories that would fall within the range of four to six on this scale. This method was chosen to provide clarity regarding our expectations for the audience and the nature of the stories we sought. Given that these narratives were to be personal, I was reminded of Clark Baim's drama spiral (Baim, 2020:120-121). The drama spiral touches upon positive personal stories, such contributions involve "direct personal stories that focus on neutral, positive, safe, or non-troubling topics," (Baim, 2020:121) which aligns perfectly with the objectives of this playback performance as I'd encourage audience members to share positive and authentic experiences. During the playback performance, I observed that the audience members and participants were engaged in the drama spiral, reflecting on their own experiences. They would identify a moment to share, questioning where their story lay of the scale, before exploring their personal experiences through the act of sharing their moments with the conductor. Then entering the present stage of Baim's spiral by being fully present in receiving playback performance and then internally evaluating their experience of their moment (Baim, 2020:120).

Personal Stories

Prendergast addresses the ethics of personal stories when she recounts how Kandil had experienced a 'level of discomfort – the feeling of shame and embarrassment – that she experienced around how her story was shared and performed.' Prendergast poses the question 'how can we ensure this kind of experience of embarrassment, shame, and isolation is never experienced by participants in our projects?' (Sadeghi-Yekta, K. and Prendergast, M.,2022:64)

Ethical consideration Continued

Playback Code of Ethics

Playback has a format written into the ritual that avoid that the ‘tellers’ experiencing embarrassment, shame, and isolation during the performance. There is a Code of Ethics available on the centre for playback (The Centre for Playback Theatre, 2022) theatre that states:

Respect:
To honour the integrity of all stakeholders—audiences, students, storytellers, and colleagues—valuing the rituals of Playback Theatre.

Inclusiveness:
To embrace diverse narratives and elevate marginalised voices.

Emergence:
To allow stories to develop organically during performances, with spontaneous selection unless otherwise communicated.

Competence:
To ensure adequate training and supervision for our Playback Theatre initiatives and seek further training as needed.

Human Rights:
To support the human rights of all individuals and address any expressed biases.

Collegial Relationships:
To foster respectful, collaborative relationships within the Playback Theatre community, ensuring transparency while respecting boundaries and proprietary materials.

Privacy and Confidentiality:
While narratives performed are not confidential, we document them with respect.
Because I am conducting a Playback Performance for my assessment I must adhere to the Playback code of Ethics.

4 Risk Assessment

Some of the Identified Hazards and Risks for Playback Performance

1. Slips, Trips, and Falls: Wet floors pose a risk, and protruding objects could cause injuries. Control measures include cleaning and drying the floor, removing obstacles, and conducting safety inspections.

2. Damage to Property or Equipment: Protruding objects may damage equipment. Control measures include using protective covers and ensuring objects are made of durable materials.

3. Props and Equipment: Props can be tripping hazards. Control measures include inspecting props for stability, positioning them safely, and briefing performers on proper handling.

4. Fatigue or Overexertion: Performers may tire during long rehearsals. Control measures include rest breaks, hydration, and avoiding strenuous movements.

5. Emotional strain from performance: Emotional pressure from performance can cause stress, anxiety, and fatigue. Control Measures includes establishing emotional boundaries and encourage open discussions and mindfulness practices.

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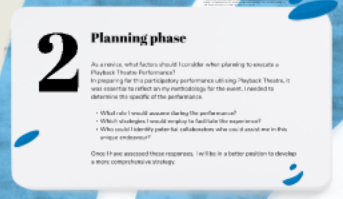
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Context in this presentation

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2 Planning Phase
3 Ethical Consideration
4 Risk Assessment
5 Reflection
Bibliography
Appendix 1 Workshop Plan
Appendix 2 Risk Assessment


2 Planning phase

As a novice, what factors should I consider when planning to execute a Playback Theatre Performance?
In preparing for this participatory performance utilising Playback Theatre, it was essential to reflect on my methodology for the event. I needed to determine the specific of the performance.

- What role I would assume during the performance?
- Which strategies I would employ to facilitate the experience?
- Who could I identify potential collaborators who could assist me in this unique endeavour?

Once I have assessed these responses, I will be in a better position to develop a more comprehensive strategy.


1 Choosing Playback Theatre

So why Playback Theatre?


5 Reflection

Reflecting on my playback performance, I recognised 3 key moments that shaped my growth as a conductor.
(Master of Arts, Applied Theatre: Community, Education and Wellbeing Class, Oct 14th, 2024)

Challenging Offering

A challenging moment arose when an audience member recounted a difficult experience involving excessive drinking and memory loss. Considering the drama up to in this context, this audience member had spiralled into the "Stories of unresolved difficulties" (Salm, 2020:120-121). Aware of my actors, musician and the rest of the audience energy I was picking up on an overwhelming sensation of feeling unsafe although the audience's light-hearted response made me feel uneasy considering the weight of inspiration during this sharing. Unsure how to proceed I recalled Ross Thorn's guidance on handling sensitive narratives, which suggested that I could acknowledge any discomfort and address it, or I could do the reverse. I chose to gently conclude the moment by having my actors reenact the moment, subtly addressing the impact on the individual who shared it rather than delving deeper into the moment. I gauged the room's energy, being mindful of both the audience's reactions and my own comfort, before deciding to move on without further comment. I questioned whether I had made the right decision, but ultimately felt it was the most respectful and safe choice for all involved.

Power of silence

We started with stretching exercises to foster connection, which felt essential. However, I spoke too quickly about the playback process due to nerves, failing to create the atmosphere I intended. When I asked the audience to share a moment, an awkward silence followed, making me feel exposed. Initially, this silence seemed to hinder the performance, but I recalled Nancy Kline's view on its value for reflection (Kline, 2018:51-53). I reassured myself and waited, knowing someone was.All eventually spoke. This silence became a meaningful part of the performance, allowing me to embrace unpredictability. As audience members began to share, I grew more comfortable, and people later noted my calm demeanour, highlighting my ability to project composure despite my inner doubts.

Realising I did it

The final story of the performance was the moment I had eagerly anticipated. An audience member, who had been silent, suddenly raised their hand when I announced we had time for one more moment, filling me with excitement despite my fatigue and that of my actors. Their dedication in bringing these personal stories to life made me proud. When this individual shared their experience with their prom dress—the last one available, its perfect fit, and its sigil #cance—the emotions were palpable. This moment embodied my vision for the performance: a deep connection between the storyteller and the actors, fostering vulnerability. Reflecting on the playback performance, I recognised its success in creating a space for meaningful sharing and engagement with sensitive topics.

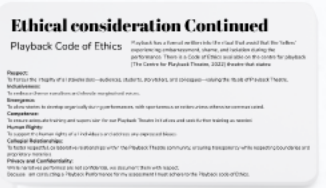
Overview

This experience taught me the delicate balance required as a playback conductor. The challenges of silence, managing sensitive subjects, and overcoming my own nerves have contributed to my growth. I now value the power of silence, the importance of approaching sensitive moments with care, and the joy of witnessing participants share their stories.

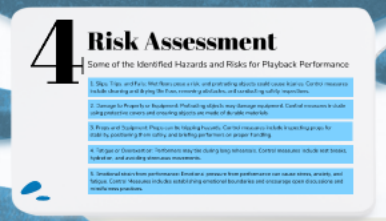
3 Ethical consideration

The Drama Spiral

Personal Stories

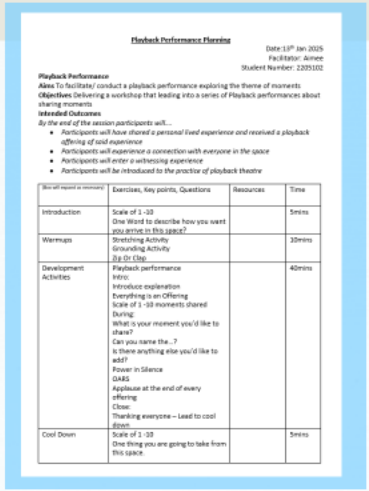

Ethical consideration Continued

Playback Code of Ethics


4 Risk Assessment

Some of the Identified Hazards and Risks for Playback Performance

Appendix 1 Workshop plan



Playback Performance Planning

Date:18th Jan 2025
Facilitator: Aimee
Student Number: 2205102

Playback Performance
Aims To facilitate/ conduct a playback performance exploring the theme of moments
Objectives Delivering a workshop that leading into a series of Playback performances about sharing moments
Intended Outcomes
By the end of the session participants will...

- *Participants will have shared a personal lived experience and received a playback offering of said experience*
- *Participants will experience a connection with everyone in the space*
- *Participants will enter a witnessing experience*
- *Participants will be introduced to the practice of playback theatre*

(Box will expand as necessary)	Exercises, Key points, Questions	Resources	Time
Introduction	Scale of 1 -10 One Word to describe how you want you arrive in this space?		5mins
Warmups	Stretching Activity Grounding Activity Zip Or Clap		10mins
Development Activities	Playback performance Intro: Introduce explanation Everything is an Offering Scale of 1 -10 moments shared During: What is your moment you'd like to share? Can you name the...? Is there anything else you'd like to add? Power in Silence OARS Applause at the end of every offering Close: Thanking everyone – Lead to cool down		40mins
Cool Down	Scale of 1 -10 One thing you are going to take from this space.		5mins

Appendix 2 Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment: Playback Performance
Event Title: Playback Performance
Location: Norah Isaac
Date: 13th January 2025
Assessor: Aimee Williams
Date of Assessment: 13th January 2025
Identified Hazards and Risks

1. Slips, Trips, and Falls
- Risk: The flooring in the dance studio presents a risk of slipping or tripping, particularly when it is wet or cluttered.
- Control Measures:
- Ensure the floor is thoroughly cleaned and dried before the performance.
- Eliminate any obstacles or clutter from the performance area.
- Require participants to wear suitable footwear that provides adequate grip.
- Conduct a safety inspection of the floor area prior to the performance.

2. Tripping and Collision Hazard:
- Risk: Objects that extend from the wall may pose a tripping or collision risk, potentially resulting in injuries such as bruises, cuts, or fractures.
- Control Measures:
- Install barriers, padding, or protective coverings around any protruding objects.
- Position warning signs or markers near these objects to inform individuals of the potential danger.
- Regularly check and maintain the protruding objects to ensure they are secure and not extending unnecessarily.
- Maintain clear pathways around the objects, ensuring sufficient space to prevent accidental contact.

3. Head Injuries:
- Risk: Protruding objects at head height may lead to accidental bumps, resulting in head injuries such as cuts or concussions.
- Control Measures:
- Apply soft padding or cushioning to any objects at head height to mitigate the impact severity.
- Clearly label objects with visible, high-contrast signage or tape to enhance visibility.
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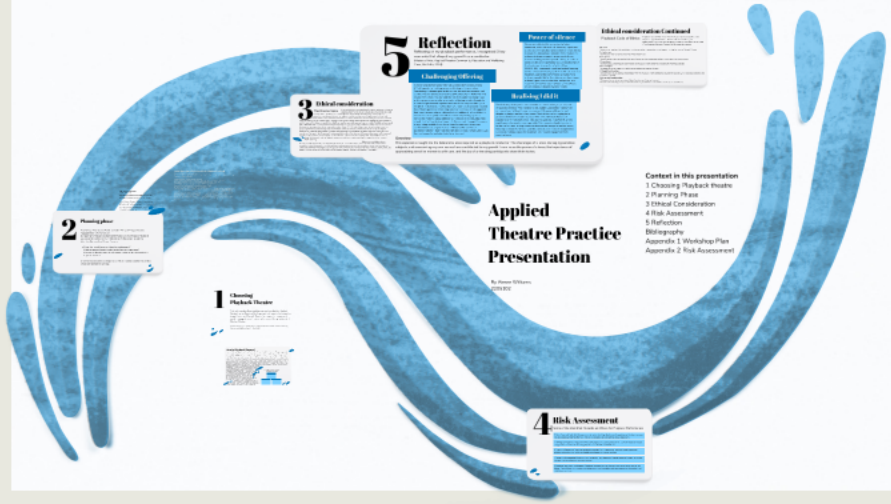
4. Damage to Property or Equipment:
- Risk: In environments with valuable equipment or furniture, protruding objects may damage items if people unintentionally collide with them.
- Control Measures:
- Use protective covers or bumpers on objects that protrude to minimize damage to surrounding items.
- Ensure that protruding objects are made of durable, non-damaging materials.

5. Utilization of Props and Equipment
- Risk: The use of props, including chairs or other objects integral to the performance, may result in tripping hazards or injuries.
- Control Measures:
- Conduct a thorough inspection of all props prior to the performance to confirm their stability and safety.
- Position props in designated areas that are safe and easily accessible for movement.
- Provide performers with a briefing on the proper and safe handling of props during the performance.

6. Audience Management
- Risk: Insufficient oversight of the audience during the performance may lead to incidents related to crowd dynamics, such as overcrowding or panic.
- Control Measures:
- Ensure that the venue has clearly indicated exits that remain free from obstruction.
- Employ ushers or ov

Aimee Williams
SN: 2205102

Total Word Count: 2614



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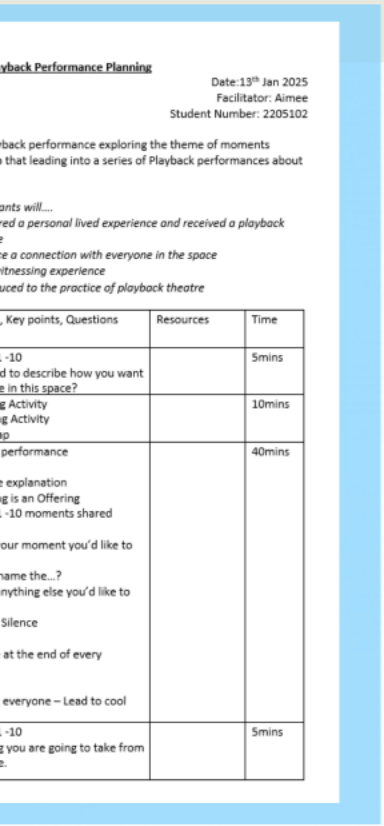
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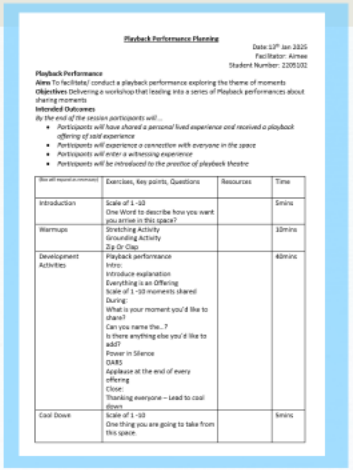
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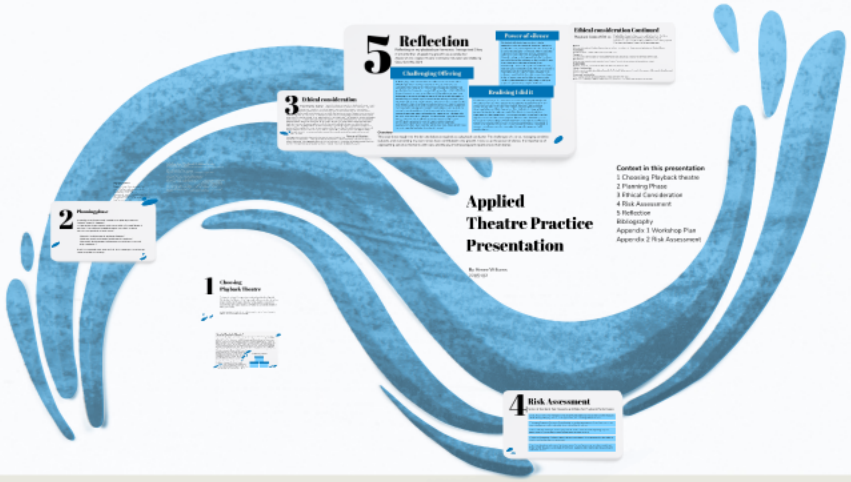
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Master of Arts, Applied Theatre: Community, Education and Wellbeing Class (2024) Applied Theatre Practice assessment for students in attends, December 13th.

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