

**Living Truthfully in the Present Moment:
Exploring the efficacy of the Meisner Technique in
promoting an actor's sense of Present Moment Awareness**

**Do the foundational exercises of the Meisner Technique offer the potential to
help instil and promote an actor's sense of present moment awareness?**

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Project Proposal

Introduction

“The essence of theatre is within a mystery called the present moment” (Brook, 1993, p.811). Despite these words from renowned theatre director Peter Brook, the exploration of the present moment within approaches to acting pedagogy remains underexplored. There does appear to be a growing interest in this area, with articles exploring aspects of mindful acting and presence (Lee, 2019; Boshier, 2025; Ingleson, 2025). However there remains limited empirical study that explicably examines the present moment in relation to acting pedagogy to support its implementation.

Sanford Meisner believed that acting is “living truthfully under imaginary circumstances” (Meisner & Longwell, 1987, p.15). Rooted in behavioural aspects of acting practice, the Meisner Technique encourages actors to develop the ability to live fully, truthfully and in the moment (Durham, 2004). Here lies the link to mindfulness and more distinctly, present moment awareness, which as the concept suggests, is an individual's awareness of their experiences in the present moment (Hayes, Strosahl & Wilson, 2012). With this in mind, the research question driving this study is to determine whether the foundational exercises of the Meisner Technique offer the potential to help instil and promote an actor's sense of present moment awareness.

Justification

It has been acknowledged that humans will always navigating thoughts (Afari & Herbert, 2022). A 2010 study by Killingsworth & Gilbert found that mind wandering, where an individual's thoughts are unrelated to the present moment, accounts for almost half of our waking lives. Despite the study's age, we can still acknowledge that mind wandering plays a significant part in our everyday lives. Therefore, we can infer this may also make its way into the acting studio, rehearsal and performance, raising questions regarding the challenges actor's face in remaining present.

Put simply, present moment awareness is the awareness of now (Afari & Herbert, 2022). It represents an individual's focus towards present moment experiences (Hayes, Strosahl &

Wilson, 2012). It is said that the Meisner Technique trains actors to be observant and responsive, moment to moment (Gray, 2015), therefore we can hypothesise the possibility this aligns itself with present moment awareness. However, there remains a lack of publications analysing the psychological workings of the Meisner Technique (Strandberg-Long, 2019), highlighting the gaps in current literature and empirical study worth consideration within this field.

Intended Impact

Whilst current literature infers that the Meisner Technique promotes a state where actors remain in the moment (Durham, 2004), this study aims to create and implement a measure for this specifically through the lens of present moment awareness. By exploring the implementation of the foundational exercises and seeking individuals' experiences of these, this research aims to add to the existing body of literature providing differing perspectives of the Meisner Technique and its potential impact on promoting present moment awareness.

Outlined Intentions

The study will evolve around in-person workshops where participants will engage with the foundational exercises of the Meisner Technique. Meisner's repetition exercises are fundamental to the technique (Schebetta, 2017), said to encourage actors to respond spontaneously to each moment (Gray, 2015) as they must invest fully in the moment (Strandberg-Long, 2019), justifying its focus within this study.

The use of a mixed methods approach enables the study to explore this research topic in depth, evaluating existing literature alongside gathering new data. A thematic literature review (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun, Clarke & Hayfield, 2022) will help to identify and evaluate patterns that emerge within the current body of literature, advancing understanding and appreciation of the Meisner Technique by ascertaining and evaluating key principles.

The study will then compromise of both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Quantitative data will be in the form of carrying out a self-report Likert-scale questionnaire to

suggest participant's perceived levels of present moment awareness. Tanay and Bernstein (2013) developed the State Mindfulness Scale (SMS; Appendix E) to assess perceived levels of present moment awareness during a short activity of around fifteen to twenty minutes in length. The scale lends itself to this study as it can be implemented to evaluate participants' responses to each Meisner Technique exercise they engage with, completed at the start of the workshop to provide a baseline starting score and then immediately after each exercise for comparison. The SMS scores can then be analysed through the use of a repeated measures ANOVA test to assess the impact that the Meisner Technique may have on an actor's perceived experiences of present moment awareness.

Qualitative data will be collected in the form open ended questions via a questionnaire at the end of the workshop (Appendix F). This will offer participants the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and give more data rich responses detailing their thoughts and feelings, with the questions prompting participants to reflect on their experiences of present moment awareness and the Meisner Technique. This provides insights into individuals experiences that can be collated and analysed for any reoccurring themes or patterns, again following Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis (2006; 2022) adding an extra layer to the quantitative data.

During data analysis a consideration will be made for recall bias. Due to participants reflecting on past experiences this does highlight the reoccurring problem in the ability to effectively and precisely analyse mindfulness (Shiffman et al, 2008). This is acknowledged as a limitation when evaluating and synthesising participant responses and therefore inferences made. However, by using the SMS immediately following their participation in an activity and providing the questionnaire at the end of the session, an attempt has been made to minimise the potential for recall bias.

Sampling will consist of a combination of purposive, convenience and snowball sampling. Participants will be deliberately targeted for their links to the area of study and those known to the researcher for accessibility and relevance to the study (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009; Winter, 2020) but encouraged to share details of the study with anyone who they believe would also be interested. The aim is to recruit twenty participants, which in line with current beliefs would be a sufficient number to identify any patterns and correlations within the quantitative and qualitative data. Participants must meet the inclusion criteria of living in the UK, aged sixteen and above and of any gender, identifying as actors, including those in pre-

professional and professional training. This information will be provided and checked as part of the recruitment process.

The following timeline has been created to complete this project:

Task	Deadline
Complete ethics form	08/11/2024
Plan overall project	03/01/2025
Complete project proposal	24/01/2025
Gather data for literature review, identifying recurring themes	04/04/2025
Plan literature review	02/05/2025
Organise workshops	30/05/2025
Complete draft literature review	11/07/2025
Plan project report	25/05/2025
Hold workshops	25/07/2025
Analyse data collected from workshops	01/08/2025
Complete draft project report	19/08/2025
Complete appendix	19/08/2025
Complete bibliography/references	19/08/2025
Submit draft report	22/08/2025
Edit report based on feedback	29/08/2025
Complete and submit final submission	05/09/2025

Ethical Considerations

An acknowledgment of insider research has been made during the ethical approval process and research design. The aim is to ensure a level of scrutiny in understanding and following all guidelines in regard to integrity and ethical codes of conduct, striving towards a research project that respects and values objectivity and professionalism.

Informed consent is vital, with full details of the project and what it entails available to all interested potential participants. This ensures participants are able to make an informed decision before joining the study, as well as the understanding that they can leave at any

point. A consent form (Appendix D) will need to be completed before joining the study featuring this information and the participants acknowledgement. Parental/Guardian consent will be required for all participants under eighteen, which will also form part of the consent form.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR; Data Protection Act, 2018) will be adhered to in relation to the retrieval and storing of personal data. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality throughout, with names and contact information only used for contact and emergency procedures in line with facilitating in-person workshops. All data will be kept securely in password protected storage systems, stored until the completion of the projection before being deleted.

The study is not without risk, therefore support in the form of resources and information on where to seek further professional guidance will be available to participants who experience emotional distress, if necessary, although this is not anticipated. I hold an enhanced DBS Certification, public liability insurance and First Aid Certification to ensure safety and reassurance for all participants attending the in-person workshops as part of the study.

Ethical approval has been approved via the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (Appendix A). I am able to access support and guidance from the tutors at the Voice Study Centre, with this study as part of the programme of study on the MA Professional Practice course.

Learning Outcomes

With this research study the aim is to deepen my pedagogical understanding of the connections between the Meisner Technique and present moment awareness. By engaging with participants' experiences, I hope to gain new insights to better inform my own practice surrounding the Meisner Technique and how actors perceive their experiences of present moment awareness, as well as how the two may intertwine. I also hope to add to the current body of literature within these fields and identify areas of potential future study to strengthen ways of promoting present moment awareness within acting pedagogy.

Project Report

Introduction

Sanford Meisner believed that acting is “living truthfully under imaginary circumstances” (Meisner & Longwell, 1987, p.15) and throughout his lifetime evolved his technique to explore this approach. Rooted in the behavioural aspects of actor training, Meisner believed that “an ounce of behaviour is worth a pound of words” (Meisner & Longwell, 1987, p.4). His work remains a popular acting methodology, with his approach described as training actors to be observant and responsive, moment to moment (Gray, 2015). But this belief and the potential connections between the Meisner Technique and the present moment remains underexplored in terms of empirical study. This study therefore aims to explore this research gap, considering the potential within the Meisner Technique to encourage an actor’s sense of present moment awareness in order to live truthfully in the present moment.

In his book *Meisner and Mindfulness* (2023), acting teacher Royce Sparks explored possible connections between the Meisner Technique and its shared qualities with mindfulness, with consideration towards the concept of present moment awareness. Inspired by the behavioural aspects of acting practice, the Meisner Technique encourages actors to develop the ability to live fully, truthfully and in the moment (Durham, 2004). Here lies the link to present moment awareness, which as the concept suggests, is an individual’s awareness of their experiences in the present moment (Hayes, Strosahl & Wilson, 2012). This potential interwoven nature between the teachings of Meisner and present moment awareness drives the primary research question of this study, to determine whether the foundational exercises of the Meisner Technique offer the potential to help instil and promote an actor’s sense of present moment awareness.

Context

Originally as part of the Group Theatre in 1930s New York, Meisner worked alongside well-known practitioners Stella Adler and Lee Strasberg (Krasner, 2000) exploring aspects of emotional, physical and psychological truth within actor training (Blair, 2008). But after a parting of ways following strong disagreements in their approaches (Strandberg-Long, 2019), Meisner established The Neighbourhood Playhouse where he developed his own technique

focusing on the spontaneity and dynamics between actors and the expression of the human experience (Meisner & Longwell, 1987).

Meisner's approach towards actor training evolved across the 1930s and 1960s (Shirley, 2010), and he continued this work until his death in 1997. His lasting impact is evident in the many Meisner trained actors prominent in American realist-narrative cinema (Halba, 2012). Yet despite his vast influence on twentieth-century actor training (Strandberg-Long, 2019), his influence beyond the US remains limited (Durham, 2004). There are several contributing factors towards its limited implementation in the UK. Some refer to the many layers of the technique that require a longer period of time to teach (Courtney, 2000) creating barriers towards integrating the technique into existing teaching practices (Strandberg-Long, 2019). The technique is constructed to train and refine skills over time (Strandberg-Long, 2019), with its exercises designed to be used until the elements of the technique are embedded and become instinctive (Hart, 2008; Esper & DiMarco, 2008) which is not always fully explored. Meisner originally established a two-year acting curriculum; the first being dedicated towards improvisational exercises focusing on listening, reacting and impulsively responding, before moving into the second year which progressed towards script analysis and character work (Gordon, 2010). As a system, the Meisner Technique is said to depend upon each exercise informing the next (Strandberg-Long, 2019).

However, it is felt that the beginning repetition exercises, synonymous with the technique (Hart, 2008; Gonsalves, 2012), are often taught without progression into the further stages (Esper & DiMarco, 2008) restricting the technique's effectiveness and hampering individuals' experiences of the work. Considered together, these factors contribute towards beliefs that Meisner's work is often misunderstood and therefore mistaught (Strandberg-Long, 2019), potentially linked to its limited and lack of in-depth teaching. As practices are often handed down from one generation to the next, this lack of in-depth teaching can lead to further disparity as different interpretations of the technique emerge which are not always aligned with Meisner's original teachings (Strandberg-Long, 2019).

But it is the interwoven nature between the Meisner Technique and the present moment that drives this research study, emerging from patterns discovered within the current body of literature surrounding the Meisner Technique. In recent years, Meisner practitioners have begun to highlight the potential within the technique to encourage actors to invest in the present moment. Meisner teacher Strandberg-Long states that when adopting the technique,

actors must invest fully in the moment (2019). Attributed to establishing teaching of the Meisner Technique in many British drama school in recent years, Strandberg-Long's perspectives and insights come from extensive teaching and research. She notes that training in the technique enables actors to become more observant, impulsive and present (2021).

Similarly, these observations are supported by Schebetta, whose views also stem from many years of teaching and research surrounding Meisner's work. He believes that the technique builds an actor's ability to focus on being present with what is happening in the now (2017). These are further supported teacher Durham's observations stating that when training in Meisner's Technique, actors must attend and respond to the present, finding a state where they remain in the moment (2004). Collectively, the current body of literature indicates the potential of the Meisner Technique to promote an actor's sense of present moment awareness, worth further consideration and exploration.

Justification

When working with a wide range of students, abilities and confidence levels it is important that practitioners have the ability to adapt and offer flexibility in their practice. There are many existing methods and techniques within actor training (Carnicke et al., 2016) allowing actors to find their own process (Merlin, 2025). The ability to explore and embrace varying techniques contributes towards a deep and valuable acting practice. But the growing interest towards adopting these alongside mindfulness-based approaches to help promote an actor's sense of present moment awareness and further enrich their craft shows significant promise (Lee, 2019; Bosher, 2025; Ingleson, 2025).

A study by Killingsworth and Gilbert (2010) found that mind wandering, where an individual's thoughts are unrelated to the present moment or task at hand, can account for almost half of our waking lives. Mind wandering refers to the arising of thoughts that are unrelated to the present moment (Bennike et al., 2017). Mind wandering can be categorised as either spontaneous or deliberate (Carriere et al., 2013). Spontaneous mind wandering accounting for thoughts that arise spontaneously, compared to deliberate mind wandering when an individual consciously directs their attention towards a new thought (Vannuccia & Chiorri, 2017). Since Killingsworth and Gilbert's study (2010), others have explored mind wandering

in relation to other fields of study with varying results. Some have estimated mind wandering to occupy fifteen to twenty-five percent of thinking time (Murray et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2022). Whilst others have estimated this at thirty to fifty percent of the time (Kane et al., 2017; Seli et al., 2018). Therefore, when considering the implications of mind wandering it becomes clear that this is a complex concept to distinctly analyse. Despite this, when these studies are considered in relation to one another, we can infer that mind wandering plays a significant part in our everyday lives. Therefore, we can infer this is likely to make its way into the acting studio, rehearsal and performance, highlighting the challenges actor's may face in remaining present which leads us to explore present moment awareness.

Put simply, present moment awareness is the awareness of now (Afari & Herbert, 2022). It embodies an individual's focus towards their present moment experiences (Hayes, Strosahl & Wilson, 2012). As the Meisner Technique has been described as training actors to be observant and responsive, moment to moment (Gray, 2015), we can begin to hypothesise the potential interwoven nature to present moment awareness.

Whilst current literature infers that the Meisner Technique promotes a state where actors remain in the moment (Durham, 2004), a lack of publications analysing the particulars and psychological workings of the technique have been noted (Strandberg-Long, 2019). Existing research has primarily focused on understanding key principles of the system, leaving empirical study into the implementation of the technique relatively neglected. As a result, there is limited understanding of how actors perceive their engagement with the technique in comparison to the viewpoints of practitioners. Whilst practitioners note how they believe it helps develop the ability for actors to live fully, truthfully and vitally in the moment (Durham, 2004) its impact is yet to be thoroughly analysed with empirical study. This project aims to address this gap by evaluating individual's experiences of the Meisner Technique and how it may help them to be truthfully in the present through the specific lens of measuring perceived experiences of present moment awareness.

Aims and Objectives

The primary research question that drives this study is to determine whether the foundational exercises of the Meisner Technique offer the potential to help instil and promote an actor's

sense of present moment awareness. With this in mind, the overarching aims of this research are:

- To facilitate the implementation of the Meisner Technique with actors, including those in pre-professional and professional training.
- To understand how actors perceive their experiences of the present moment in their work.
- To discover how the ways in which the Meisner Technique may promote an actor's sense of the present moment.
- To consider how the Meisner Technique may help to create a mindfulness-based approach to actor training.

To achieve these, the study is guided by the following objectives:

- To explore the implementation of the Meisner Technique with actors, including those in pre-professional and professional training, via an in-person workshop.
- To evaluate how actors perceive their experiences of the present moment in their work with the use of the SMS (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013).
- To analyse the impact that the Meisner Technique may or may not have on an actors perceived engagement with the present moment in their work by measuring their scores via the SMS (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013) through repeated measure testing.
- To propose the potential influence the Meisner Technique has on creating a mindfulness-based approach to acting pedagogy based upon the data collected.

Review of Current Literature

The significant hypothesis driving this study is the interwoven nature between the Meisner Technique and present moment awareness. Preliminary research identified much reference to the present moment within existing literature surrounding the Meisner Technique, prompting further study as part of a literature review and the inspiration guiding this project.

Preliminary research began with Royce Sparks' *Meisner and Mindfulness* (2023) and *The Actor's Art and Craft* (2008) by William Esper and Damon DiMarco providing the initial inspiration guiding this project. Research then continued with searches utilising the online University of Wales Trinity Saint David library and Google Scholar for both grey and white

literature. Inclusion criteria helped to limit results to peer-reviewed articles and journals, academic books or dissertations and theses to ensure the information gathered was of a high standard and rigorously reviewed before publication. Key search terms included 'Meisner Technique', 'Sanford Meisner', 'Meisner and present moment' and 'Meisner and present moment awareness'. To deepen the understanding of present moment awareness, key search terms in this area included 'present moment awareness and actor training' and 'present moment awareness and acting'. Initially, inclusion criteria was limited to literature published after 2000, aiming to capture more recent findings for greater validity and relevance. However, exceptions were made due to Meisner's work, and therefore his own writings pre-dating this, as well as older literature of interest discovered through backward citation chaining. Citation chaining allowed for a deeper range of material to be considered, utilising connections made between literature (Haddaway, Grainger & Gray, 2022). Backward chaining, seeking older publications, helped to find and acknowledge initial source material, whilst forward chaining helped expand the research into more recent literature (Cribbin, 2011). This approach to exploring current literature allowed for the backwards and forwards tracking through connected and related citations (Haddaway, Grainger & Gray, 2022) to uncover broader perspectives of both the Meisner Technique and present moment awareness.

Present Moment

It has been acknowledged that limited literature specifically surrounds mindfulness and the Meisner Technique (Bosher, 2025). However, similarities have been made, most notably by Sparks (2023), and more recently by Bosher (2025) who also highlights similarities between the two concepts, acknowledging that leaning into these could be beneficial to actors in training.

When exploring literature surrounding the Meisner Technique there are limited direct references to present moment awareness. However, descriptions by practitioners of Meisner's exercises detail that actors must attend and respond to the present rather than assumed or anticipated reality of a partner's behaviour (Durham, 2004) immediately highlighting its links to present moment awareness. This is further supported by other observations that within the technique actors build the ability to focus on being present with

what is happening now, not what they think should be happening or expect to happen (Schebetta, 2017).

Others suggest that the Meisner Technique promotes a state where actors must remain in the moment (Durham, 2004), alongside an interest in the unpredictability of the moment (Gray, 2015). The improvisational aspects of the technique allow actors to co-create a spontaneous, unpredictable affective engagement in the moment (Esper & DiMarco, 2008) as a result of each actor's real time perception of another's behaviour (Sun & Okada, 2021). Practitioner Silverberg notes that becoming fully available to a partner allows actors to be authentically responsive in each moment (1994) supported by Gray's belief that this engagement in the moment makes dialogue affectively alive (2015).

Despite its complexities, the technique's main aim is to train actors to be observant and responsive moment to moment (Gray, 2015), where they simply have to attend and respond (Durham, 2004). But what is often described as moment-to-moment engagement (Esper & DiMarco, 2008) does depend upon an actor's ability to invest fully in the moment (Strandberg-Long, 2019). The spontaneity and responsiveness to a partner and the present moment (Durham, 2004) is what creates what some practitioners describe as the continuous action-perception loop (Sun & Okada, 2021) within the repetition exercise.

Student of Meisner himself and now renowned Meisner teacher, Esper views the repetition exercises as a workout for living spontaneously, moment to moment, which he believes is an essential skill for actors (Esper & DiMarco, 2008, p.79). Whilst his 2008 book, *The Actor's Art and Craft*, is not able to provide evidence of empirical study, his contribution towards the understanding of the Meisner Technique is invaluable. His wealth of experience as a Meisner Technique teacher across multiple decades, alongside having trained with Meisner himself, offers a unique perspective in not only the origins of Meisner's work, but also how this continues to be relevant and adopted in twenty-first century actor training. Esper's belief that the Meisner Technique encourages actors to live spontaneously, moment to moment (Esper & DiMarco, 2008) is what drives this research study with the intention of exploring efficacy of the foundational exercises of the Meisner Technique in promoting an actor's sense of present moment awareness.

Attention

A prevailing theme that emerges from the current body of literature surrounding the Meisner Technique is attention. Practitioners including Strandberg-Long (2019) state that the Meisner Technique requires the actor to redirect their attention from themselves and their actions and onto a partner in order to thoroughly observe and respond to their partner's behaviour. This is supported by others such as Halba (2012) who note that within the technique actors are encouraged to seek and place their attention outside of themselves and onto a partner, further supported by Durham (2004) who in their observations believes this encourages the ability to offer limitless attention to the acting partner.

To fully explore how the Meisner Technique promotes attention, a consideration towards attention can be made through the lens of Sohlberg and Mateer's clinical model, originally developed in 1987 with more recent amendments in 2017. The model defines five components of attention:

- Focused attention – the ability to direct attention towards relevant stimuli, either internal or external.
- Sustained attention – the ability to focus on a specific attention demanding task for a continuous amount of time without distraction.
- Selective attention – the ability to select focus on one activity or stimuli over others.
- Alternating attention – the ability to alternate focus back and forth between different tasks.
- Divided attention – the ability to simultaneously focus on two or more tasks at the same time.

(Sohlberg & Mateer, 1987; 2001; 2017).

It is Strandberg-Long's belief that all of these components can be experienced within the Meisner Technique (2019). In her research, she provides a rich collection of qualitative data through both practitioner and student interviews, gathering a plethora of individual experiences of the technique offering a broad representation based on sample size depiction. In her thesis, Strandberg-Long explored the impact of attention within the Meisner Technique through the context of Sohlberg and Mateer's model (1987; 2001; 2017). She states that the five components of attention are evident in Meisner's work, providing a detailed perspective on how attention is not only explored, but also develops throughout an actor's engagement with the technique over time. This study is valuable in that it provides significant deeper insights into attention, supported by Sohlberg and Mateer's model (1987;

2001; 2017) to strengthen the discoveries made. Further research to explicablely analyse the components of attention within the Meisner Technique would help to strengthen Strandberg-Long's research, providing a greater representation of the wider population within the field of actor training and offer significant insights into how actors perceive their levels of attention.

During the repetition exercises (Appendix H) both focused and sustained are evident, with an actor's attention firstly directed outwards towards the partner which then must be sustained continuously throughout the duration of the exercise (Strandberg-Long, 2019). This active listening means an actor learns to process the words and gestures of the other actors with awareness (Krasner, 2011). As observations are made as part of the exercise, selective attention occurs, with actors selecting what which behavioural observations they focus on. This necessitates the ability for individuals to consciously focus on their partner as opposed to any other potential stimuli that the setting may offer (Strandberg-Long, 2019). As the exercise progresses, actors begin to shift between making observations about their partner and listening then repeating those observations made about them requiring the development of alternating attention. This establishes the need for flexible attention and awareness in the moment (Strandberg-Long, 2019). Long term, the aim is for actors to develop and refine the ability to divide their attention between the different layers of the repetition exercise (Strandberg-Long, 2019) thus aligning with divided attention.

Sohlberg and Mateer's attention process training (2017) states that attentional load must be gradually and systematically increased to develop each component in progression. This mirrors practitioners' understanding of teaching the Meisner Technique, that a full understanding of each part must be achieved in order to effectively progress (Hart, 2008). Practitioners state that the Meisner Technique relies upon a continuous process of training an actor's attention and ability to listen (Gonsalves, 2012; Moseley, 2012). This would open up the potential for further study, developing a longitudinal study to track deeper perspectives on the refinement of the Meisner Technique and its impact on attention over time.

Viewing practitioners' observations through the lens of Sohlberg and Mateer's model, it can be inferred that the Meisner Technique may align with the description of present moment awareness as the deliberate attention to an individual's experiences either internally or externally (Wilson & DuFrene, 2009). This mirrors the belief of present moment awareness as a flexible focus towards present moment experiences (Hayes, Strosahl & Wilson, 2012),

just as the Meisner technique establishes redirected focus and full commitment to the present moment (Strandberg-Long, 2019).

Impulse

Another distinct theme arising from the data is impulse. It was Meisner's belief that an actor's talent lies in the ability to be instinctive, with the repetition exercise aiming to train actors to access their internal impulses (Meisner, 1987). Esper supports this, stating that within the technique impulses are being developed not minds, with actors responding to what they hear from their partner without analysis (Esper & DiMarco, 2008). With reacting said to be the foundation of Meisner's repetition technique (Krasner, 2000), actors are encouraged to respond spontaneously from reactions in the moment (Gray, 2015) with impulses seen as immediate response to a situation (Strandberg-Long, 2019). This necessitates the continued detailed attention to an acting partner and the present moment (Durham, 2004), once again circling back to present moment awareness. Without that awareness of the present moment experiences, an actor is unable to respond organically and spontaneously to observed behaviour (Shirley, 2010).

In time, it is noted by practitioners that the technique develops an actor's ability to listen and act on impulse (Strandberg-Long, 2019) achieving Meisner's goal of teaching actors to respond spontaneously and act on impulse (Malague, 2012). It is the core belief that impulses are the most important things artists have and that actors must follow wherever they lead (Esper & DiMarco, 2008).

Practitioners note that as a system, the technique enables actors to tune into and read human behaviour in order to maximise the potential for them to be instinctive (Shirley, 2010). As a result of the improvisational nature of the exercises, actors are creating impulsive behaviour that emerges truthfully and spontaneously from reactions, rather than pre-planned behaviour (Hodge, 2010). Interactions become an active responsiveness to the present moment circumstances (Durham, 2004) developing instantaneous reactions to behaviour that differs moment to moment (Sun & Okada, 2021). This reflects the significance of an individual's awareness situated in the here and now (Nilsson & Kazemi, 2016), imperative to present moment awareness.

In their study, Sun and Okada (2023) examined the interactions participants made when participating in Meisner's repetition exercise (Appendix H). Compared to other literature

detailing the repetition exercise, this study specifically evaluated the interactions made, beginning to examine the characteristics of the impulsive interactions within the exercise. When describing the technique, some practitioners refer to observations as noting physical attributes, physical behaviour and emotional behaviour (Moseley, 2012), however Sun and Okada expand on this, by specifically focusing on the characteristics of the statements made. Categories were created and defined accordingly; description, feeling, evaluation, speculation and exclamation. One element of their study noted that across fourteen weeks and twenty-two repetition exercise sessions, actors began to produce less description and more speculation statements, implying that over a period of time and engagement with the technique, statements became more specific, relating to inner states and behaviour rather than external observations. This supports views that the Meisner Technique offers the opportunity for impulses to be developed (Esper & DiMarco, 2008) allowing actors to tune into and read human behaviour in order to maximise their ability to be instinctive, responding organically and spontaneously to the behaviour they observe (Shirley, 2010). Sun and Okada's study (2023) would further support views that Meisner's repetition exercise demonstrates the potential to develop an actor's ability to listen and act on impulse as inferred by Strandberg-Long (2019).

Practitioners observe that emotional expressiveness occurs as a result of a series of external impulses (Shirley, 2010) as actors begin to respond truthfully with others (Schebetta, 2017). A core Meisner belief is that whatever an actor is doing should always be in response to a partner (Merlin, 2010), with their full attention given towards their partner, thus allowing for an unreserved description of partner's behaviour (Sun & Okada, 2023). The aim of the improvisational nature of Meisner's work is to remove any pressures of being clever, interesting or exciting and to instead just concentrate on a partner (Courtney, 2000), demonstrating the ties between attention and impulse which all stem from present moment awareness.

Conclusion to Review of Current Literature

To form conclusions from the current body of literature uncovered, we are mostly relying upon individual's observations and ideas based upon their perceived experiences and those they have observed when engaging with the Meisner Technique. Therefore, we must acknowledge this poses questions surrounding rigour, validity and trustworthiness of the

data. Whilst many practitioners have written about their experiences with teaching Meisner's work, this has largely overlooked ways to specifically measure the observations they make through empirical study. However, consideration should be made to the observation that in general less research has been carried out within the field of acting pedagogy in comparison to other art forms (Winner, 2006). With this in mind, the lack of empirical study surrounding the Meisner Technique should not be too surprising, highlighting significant knowledge and evidence gaps. Despite this, when collated and viewed as a whole, the literature does provide clear insights into the potential that the Meisner Technique holds in terms of further empirical study.

Research Design

Methodology

The nature of this research study leads to practitioner research, which carries the potential for bias, or a loss of subjectivity (Saidin & Yaacob, 2016). Therefore, it is imperative to remain mindful of the balance between the roles of researcher and practitioner (Humphrey, 2013) in order to acknowledge the ethical implications that surround insider research due to the researcher's place within it (Breen, 2007; Costley et al., 2014). This has helped to shape the overall research design in order to best meet the needs and aims driving this research study.

Guided by a subjectivist ontological and epistemological viewpoint, this study aims to value the belief in multiple possible realities, with the belief that reality is both individual and perspectival (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In terms of actor training, this allows for an open-mindedness towards each individual's experiences throughout the study. This enables the research to consider and value each participants perceived experiences of present moment awareness and their engagement with the Meisner Technique, alongside the collection and analysis of the existing body of literature within these areas. A subjectivist stance appreciates that reality may be different for each individual, acknowledging each participants potential to experience the same thing in different ways (Cohen et al., 2007) and that any conclusions can be drawn from analysing a range of responses from both this study and existing research.

Adopting a pragmatic paradigm offers the chance to balance philosophical ideas alongside a practicality in research design (Morgan, 2014). With the research question key to the process (Creswell, 2003), this encourages a use of the most appropriate method towards research design (Feilzer, 2010). In line with the conventions of pragmatism, it should be acknowledged that any discoveries are relative and not absolute (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009) with truth subject to change (Denscombe, 2010). A thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun, Clarke & Hayfield, 2022) in the study's review of existing literature and qualitative data collection and analysis will help to highlight any patterns, whilst acknowledging that these are inferred patterns relative to each individual's perceived experiences of present moment awareness and the Meisner Technique as identified across a data sample which may or may not be representative of the wider population.

In light of the study's aims to understand how actors perceive their experiences of the present moment in their work and discover how the Meisner Technique may promote their sense of the present moment; the use of phenomenology and hermeneutics are the best methodological fit for this study. These promote the study of lived experiences and the understanding of human consciousness (Lavery, 2003) which underscore the guiding principles of this study. It also reflects the belief that Meisner intended his technique to centre around his interest in the spontaneity and dynamics between individuals and the expression of the human experience (Meisner & Longwell, 1987). Meisner's teachings encourage that "your sense of truth is derived from the sum total of all your human experiences – your understanding of life as it's lived by most people. It's invaluable to your acting" (Esper & DiMarco, 2008, p.97). This in many ways aligns with the underpinnings of phenomenology and hermeneutics. Therefore, this research design will encourage the collection of data that aims to provide insights into each individual's perceived experiences of present moment awareness and the Meisner Technique, drawing conclusions from patterns identified across the sample of data in order to determine deeper understanding of actor's experiences.

Methods

The choice of a mixed methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods (Feilzer, 2010), aligns with the broader aim of gathering individuals' perspectives of their experiences of present moment awareness when acting. The collection of quantitative data in the form of the State Mindfulness Scale (SMS; Tanay & Bernstein, 2013; Appendix E)

self-report Likert-scale allows for the analysis of participants perceived experiences of present moment awareness through the use of a pre-existing and validated mindfulness scale (Cox, Ullrich-French & French, 2016). This enables the analysis of repeated measure scores to determine any potential impact that the Meisner Technique exercises may have on an actor's perceived engagement with the present moment, as stated in my research objectives. The SMS (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013) was designed to include the experiences and qualities of mindfulness, such as present moment experiences, alongside attention and awareness, with those aspects intended to be fully integrated within the scale (Cox, Ullrich-French & French, 2016). Tanay and Bernstein (2013) defined mindfulness as attending to the present moment whilst maintaining a sense of openness and curiosity. This especially aligns itself with not only the previously mentioned chosen methodology of this study, but also the exploration of the Meisner Technique. Practitioners have discussed the opportunity that the technique offers actors to explore the unpredictability of the moment and the possibility this offers them to be curious, fully enjoying and appreciating the potential within the present moment (Esper & DiMarco, 2008; Strandberg-Long, 2019). This to some extent mirrors Tanay and Bernstein's remarks on exploring openness and curiosity towards the present moment (2013).

The scale also lends itself to this study as it was developed to assess perceived levels of present moment awareness during a short activity of around fifteen to twenty minutes in length, reflecting the length of the Meisner Technique exercises that will be implemented as part of this study. The scale will be completed before taking part in exercises and just afterwards to collect responses that assess the impact of the Meisner Technique. The Likert-scale scores throughout the process will then be analysed utilising a repeated measures Anova analysis to determine any potential impact the Meisner Technique exercises may have on perceived experiences of present moment awareness.

However, adding a layer of qualitative data in the form of a questionnaire (Appendix F) is driven by the phenomenology and hermeneutic methodology in order to gather more detailed and personal responses from participants. This enables the collection of data to meet the research objective of evaluating how actors perceive their experiences of the present moment in their work. The combination of both methods should open up the potential to generate a diverse nature of results (Creswell & Clark, 2007) from which to draw conclusions.

Sampling

Sampling consisted of a combination of purposive, convenience and snowball sampling. Participants were deliberately targeted due to their links to acting and those known to the researcher for accessibility and relevance to the study (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009; Winter, 2020) and encouraged to share details of the study with anyone they felt may also be interested. This helped attract participants who were more likely to engage meaningfully with the study and therefore provide the most useful information. Out of the twenty-two participants involved, only five were previously known to the researcher in a professional capacity.

Twenty-two participants were recruited and completed the study providing a sufficient number of responses in order to identify any patterns and correlations across both the quantitative and qualitative data. However, this also benefited the practicality of the research design, taking into consideration the timeframe of the project and the delivery of two in-person workshops, ensuring the study was carried out safely and meticulously. Participants met the inclusion criteria of living in the UK, were aged sixteen and above of any gender who identified as actors, including those currently in pre-professional or professional training. Exclusion criteria was limited to those with no actor training or experience. This information was provided to all potential participants; the inclusion and exclusion criteria checked as part of the recruitment process.

Ethical Consideration

As previously mentioned, an acknowledgment of insider research has been made during the ethical approval process and research design. The aim is to ensure a level of scrutiny in understanding and following all guidelines regarding integrity and ethical codes of conduct, in order to strive towards a research project that respects and values objectivity and professionalism alongside uncovering meaningful and beneficial data. Ethical approval has been sought and approved via the Voice Study Centre and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David in order to carry out this research project as part of the researcher's MA degree in Professional Practice, specialising in Performance Coaching.

Informed consent is imperative to the study, with full details of the project and what it entails available to all potential participants (Appendix C) accepting that a duty of care towards all

participant is vital (Bell & Waters, 2018). Each participant must be treated respectfully and wholly as an individual, not just for their role in the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1997) meaning every participant must have been able to make an informed decision before joining the study, as well as understanding that they were able to leave at any point. A consent form (Appendix D) was completed before joining the study detailing all information and seeking the participants acknowledgement. For any participants under the age of eighteen, parental/guardian consent was required and sought as part of the consent form.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR; Data Protection Act, 2018) was adhered to in relation to the retrieval and storing of all personal data. All participants were given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality throughout, with names and contact information only used for contact and emergency procedures in line with facilitating in-person workshops. All data is kept securely in password protected storage systems, stored until the completion of the projection and then deleted.

It is important to acknowledge that the study is not without risk, therefore support such as resources and information of where to seek further professional guidance were available to participants who experienced emotional distress if necessary. To instil reassurance for participants of their engagement in the study, the researcher holds an enhanced DBS Certification, public liability insurance and First Aid Certification to ensure safety for all participants attending the in-person workshops.

The Study

The study evolves around the implementation of the key foundational exercises of the Meisner Technique during an in-person workshop. As previously mentioned, in order to assess how actors perceive their experiences of the present moment and how the Meisner Technique may or may not impact their perceived engagement with the present moment, this was assessed through the lens of the SMS (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013) in order to measure perceived levels of present moment awareness.

The Meisner Technique process emphasises the placement of improvisational exercises before any form of analytical engagement with material (Strandberg-Long, 2019) which is to be the specific focus of this study. Therefore, the workshop started with an initial

improvisation exercise where participants worked in pairs to create and share a short improvisation. This evolved around the actors working spontaneously in the moment, listening and responding to one another in order to create a short scene. Following this, the first SMS (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013) was collected, providing a baseline for the quantitative data enabling comparison for the repeated measures. This provided a score which implies a participant's suggested levels of present moment awareness before engaging with the Meisner Technique.

Meisner's repetition is a series of exercises fundamental to the technique (Schebetta, 2017), designed to gradually increase in difficulty and demand on the actor (Strandberg-Long, 2019). Repetition encompasses the basic principles of the technique, laying the foundation for an actor's understanding of Meisner's work (Hart, 2006). The first exercise implemented was the three moment exercise (Sparks, 2023; Appendix G). The aim was to establish the essence of the foundations to the Meisner Technique; with one actor opening their complete attention to their partner and finding something concrete about them that holds some interest, no matter how small (Esper & DiMarco, 2008). This begins with one actor giving their complete attention to their partner and finding an observational statement to make. Person A begins by stating a truthful observation of partner B, this is moment one. Person B then repeats the observation as they hear it from their point of view, this is moment two. Person A then says what they saw in moment two, this is moment three and the end. They then take a moment to reset and then it is Person B's turn to begin. This cycle can then be repeated a number of times up and in the case of this study up to around ten minutes in length (Sparks, 2023; Appendix G).

As practitioners have noted, this exercise requires an actor to place their whole attention onto a partner, choosing an observation that exists on the surface and making a simple, observational statement (Halba, 2012). As the partner repeats the observation that has been made about them, the exercise actively encourages the actors to observe each other's evolving impulsive behaviour (Strandberg-Long, 2019). Following the implementation and participation of this exercise, participants again completed the SMS (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013) to provide the first response to engaging with the Meisner Technique. This provided the opportunity to note any impact on engaging with the technique in comparison to their baseline initial Likert-scale scores.

As the technique depends upon each exercise informing the next (Strandberg-Long, 2019), the three moment exercise helps to set up Meisner's repetition. The repetition exercise encourages the actor to deeply listen and react to their partner and their surroundings whilst repeating their observations (Strandberg-Long, 2019). Repetition requires the actor to listen and respond, forcing the actor to work moment to moment, spontaneously (Esper & DiMarco, 2008). The progression from the three moment exercise requires the observations and repetitions to be made continuously. The format is somewhat similar; person A makes an observation, which person B repeats from their point of view. However, this time, person A repeats their same observation again, creating a cyclical nature (Sparks, 2023; Appendix H). Here, full concentration towards the behaviour of the partner is required in order to create a reality that keeps changing and triggering impulses (Strandberg-Long, 2019). The repetition can and should be repeated multiple times until the impulse comes from one of the actors to set up a new observation (Sparks, 2023; Appendix H) and in the case of this study up to around ten minutes in length. This contributes towards a continuous action-perception loop (Sun & Okada, 2021), enabling dialogue to be alive (Gray, 2015). Again, immediately following the implementation and participation of this exercise, participants completed the SMS (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013) providing another measure that represents their Likert-scale score responses to the repetition exercise.

To complete the final SMS (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013) self-report Likert-scale score measure, participants repeated the improvisation exercise that provided the initial baseline score. This offered the chance to evaluate any potential impact the Meisner Technique had on a participant's perceived experiences of the present moment. A direct comparison can be made between the first initial scores and the final scores, acting as a before and after, reflecting participants explorations of the Meisner Technique, as well as providing the final score as part of the repeated measure. Practitioners believe that Meisner created the foundational repetition exercises to take actors away from the intellectuality of a script and instead to emphasise the skill of listening and reacting to the partner (Strandberg-Long, 2019). Retaining this study in improvisational work, should help to isolate and specifically hone in on these skills through the lens of improvisation.

To conclude the workshop, participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire (Appendix F) which generated the qualitative data collection. Participants were asked a series of open-ended questions, allowing them to reflect on their own personal experiences of present moment awareness and their engagement with the Meisner Technique during the

workshop. This provided the opportunity for their responses to enhance the numerical data (Greene et al., 2001) as well as seek to understand participants lived experiences (Lavery, 2003) in line with the phenomenological and hermeneutics methodology.

Data Analysis

In terms of data analysis, a consideration has been made for recall bias. Participants were required to reflect on past experiences when completing the SMS (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013) self-report Likert-scale, which highlights the reoccurring problems surrounding the ability to effectively and precisely analyse mindfulness (Shiffman et al, 2008). This often poses a limitation towards evaluating and synthesising responses, also impacting inferences made. Ecological momentary assessment is a form of experience sampling (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984) involving the repeated sampling of behaviour in real-world, real-time settings (Shiffman et al., 2008). By completing the SMS (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013) immediately following their participation in an exercise, an attempt has been made to use a measure in alignment with ecological momentary assessment in order to minimise the potential for recall bias. The use of this scale immediately following participation in the exercises allows for participants' responses to be captured in the moment, creating an element of experience sampling. Repeating these measures allows for the tracking of data following interventions with the two Meisner Technique exercises, as well as creating a before and after intervention from the initial and final SMS.

Results gathered from the SMS (Tanya & Bernstein, 2013) will be analysed using a repeated measures ANOVA analysis (The Jamovi Project, 2024) to determine how a participant perceives their experiences of present moment awareness, with the self-report Likert-scale scores providing suggested levels of present moment awareness. Participants are required to indicate the degree to which a set of twenty-one statements described what they have just experienced during the participation of an exercise, with one suggesting 'not at all' and five suggesting 'very well'. The scores can then added to suggest a perceived level of present moment awareness ranging from the lowest possible score and level of present moment awareness at twenty-one and the highest possible score at one-hundred-and-five (Appendix E). A mean average will be created between the repeated measures to infer a quantitative measure that tracks and indicates suggested levels of present moment awareness throughout engagement in the study representative of the study sample.

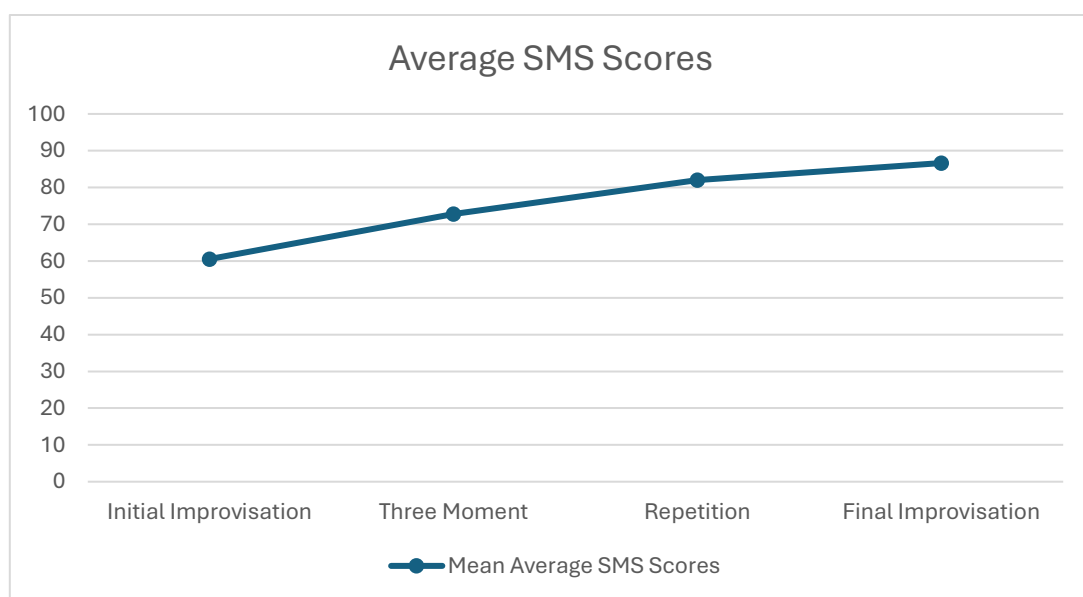
The qualitative data gathered via the questionnaires will be analysed adopting a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun, Clarke & Hayfield, 2022). This will help to highlight any reoccurring patterns within individual participants responses and generate potential inferred patterns relative to each individual's perceived experiences of present moment awareness and the Meisner Technique. However, in line with the research design and methodology, a significant acknowledgement must be made towards understanding that any patterns inferred across this data sample may or may not be representative of the wider population. This may be addressed with an awareness of data saturation; analysing the data to the point where any data analysed begins to form significant and substantial patterns that are indicative of this sample size so that more meaningful inferences can be made.

Findings

State Mindfulness Scale Results

Firstly, taking into consideration the data gathered from the SMS (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013) self-report Likert-scales, a strong positive correlation between the implementation of the Meisner Technique and participants suggested perceived levels of present moment awareness is evident. A mean average across the sample has been calculated to provide and track an overview of the suggested perceived levels of present moment awareness at each stage of the study as represented in the chart below:

Chart 1: SMS Scores



As the results indicate, between the initial and final improvisational exercises, following participation in the two Meisner Technique exercises, all participants displayed increased perceived levels of present moment awareness. From this we are able to infer that engagement in the three moment and repetition exercises of the Meisner Technique positively impact increased levels of present moment awareness as represented in this sample. An acknowledgement must be made towards the sample size, that at twenty-two, this may not be fully representational of a larger population. Nevertheless, the results show promise in proving the hypothesis that the Meisner Technique may offer the potential to help instil and promote an actor's sense of present moment awareness.

The most significant difference occurred between the initial improvisation exercise baseline and after completing the Three Moment exercise. Here we see a mean average score increase of 12.27, starting with a mean average score of 60.55 and moving to 72.82 demonstrating a 20.26% increase. From this we are able to infer that the Three Moment exercise offers participants the opportunity to establish higher perceived levels of present moment awareness.

After this point, suggested levels of present moment awareness continued to rise, but with less of a significant percentage increase; the increase between the Three Moment exercise to the Repetition exercise sitting at 12.61% and the increase between the Repetition exercise and the final improvisation exercise sitting at 5.66%. This would imply that once established, further engagement in the Meisner Technique exercises helps to retain and promote present moment awareness, but does have less of a significant impact than is noticeable between a baseline measure and that first engagement with the Meisner Technique Three Moment exercise.

Overall, from the starting baseline score following the initial improvisation exercise to the final improvisation exercise, a positive increase in suggested levels of present moment awareness increased on average by 43.09% which is a noteworthy positive impact. This evidence, despite small in sample size, does highlight the potential that the Meisner Technique offers in promoting an actor's sense of present moment awareness.

A repeated measures ANOVA test was carried out on the SMS (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013) scores to explore the differences at each stage of the process, as detailed in the table below. The results of this reveal there was a statistically significant increase overall throughout the

study. The post-hoc test also demonstrated a statistically significant difference at each stage of intervention, in particular the most significant difference between the initial improvisation exercise and the three moment exercise.

Table 1: Repeated Measures ANOVA Post-hoc tests

Comparison					
RM Factor 1		RM Factor 1	Mean Difference	t	pBonferroni
Initial Improvisation	-	Three Moment Exercise	12.09	5.13	<0.001
	-	Repetition Exercise	21.50	8.32	<0.001
	-	Final Improvisation	26.14	11.30	<0.001

With a Bonferroni score of less than 0.001, this indicates the unlikely probability of these results being random, therefore helping to demonstrate that these figures are representative of the sample size.

This study offers quantitative data which supports existing beliefs from practitioners that the Meisner Technique develops an actor's ability to focus on the present and what is happening in the now (Schebetta, 2017), training actors to be observant and responsive in the moment (Gray, 2015) through the measure of the SMS (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013). This begins to explore the evidence gap, discovering ways to specifically measure an individual's sense of presence through the lens of present moment awareness, thus establishing a study that is measurable and replicable for further study.

Participant Responses

During analysis of the qualitative data collected within this study, key patterns of recurring and overlapping responses began to emerge between the reflections made by participants. Whilst all reflecting on their own personal experiences, links can be found within their responses surrounding present moment awareness and their engagement with the Meisner Technique.

In relation to present moment awareness, one notable recurring theme was that of mind wandering. In contrast to present moment awareness, mind wandering is the arising of thoughts and thinking about experiences unrelated to the present moment (Bennike et al., 2017). It has been suggested that mind wandering can be separated into two types;

spontaneous and deliberate (Carriere et al., 2013). Spontaneous mind wandering refers to thoughts that spontaneously arise, capturing and shifting attention, whereas deliberate mind wandering occurs when attention is consciously and intentionally shifted towards a new thought (Vannuccia & Chiorri, 2017). In both cases a person's attention shifts towards thoughts unrelated to the present moment (Seli et al., 2014).

When reflecting upon their acting practice or performance in general, several participants noted they are aware they have the tendency to mind wander. Some participants referenced moments where they were “worrying about what comes next in a scene”, or “thinking about what should happen next”. Whilst others mentioned “moments of worrying about something within the show”. These viewpoints would align with deliberate mind wandering, with their attention purposely shifted following thoughts that arise (Vannuccia & Chiorri, 2017), thus supporting the hypothesis that mind wandering does make its way into an actor's life.

Another notable theme was focus, in particular the struggles participants face with remaining focused. Many participants mentioned the difficulties in staying focused over longer periods of time, be it during rehearsals or performances. Similarly, others noted the challenges in staying focused when a rehearsal or production is happening over a longer period of time, with one participant sharing that “long rehearsals can become repetitive and possibly boring”, alluding to a contributing factor towards loss of focus in the present moment. A handful of participants accounted a loss of focus towards “not being involved in the main action of scene”, or “in an ensemble role” leading towards struggles to remain present. These viewpoints across the sample highlight that actors do face challenges in sustaining present moment awareness, signifying this is a field worthy of more detailed consideration and study moving forwards beyond this current study.

In relation to this study and the Meisner Technique exercises engaged with, the qualitative data largely supports the quantitative data collected, mirroring a positive response from participants surrounding the impact of the technique's exercises on their perceived levels of present moment awareness. Supporting existing literature that describes the Meisner Techniques ability to connect actors with one another (Malague, 2012), participants described the exercises as “helping to shift attention and focus on a scene partner, rather than myself”, “an increased focus on reacting to a partner” as well as “providing a quick way to learn about your scene partner and their characteristics”. These responses highlight previous claims by practitioners that the technique allows actors to redirect their attention

from themselves and their actions and onto a scene partner, thus enabling them to thoroughly observe and respond to their partners behaviour (Strandberg-Long, 2019).

Presence also featured amongst participants responses, supporting beliefs that Repetition encourages actors to focus on the present moment, in what they are doing, observing and reacting to in the moment (Schebetta, 2017). One participant said “the repetition exercise helped me to explore what was going on around me more”, whilst another believed it helped them to “really enjoy being fully immersed and engaged in the experiences”. This begins to highlight what some describe as an interest in the unpredictability of the moment (Gray, 2015) which could propose an area of future study itself in attempting to better understand how actors can open themselves up to being curious, fully enjoying and appreciating the potential within the present moment, with others refer to as a full investment in the moment (Strandberg-Long, 2019). Alongside the previous remarks surrounding challenges of present moment awareness faced by the participants in this study, inferences can be made between the positive impact of the Meisner Technique exercises upon those challenges.

However, the Meisner Technique does not come without challenges of its own. Practitioners often detail the difficulties actors face with the technique, such as attending and responding to the present moment, rather than an assumed or anticipated reality of a partner’s behaviour (Durham, 2004). This viewpoint is supported by the responses from participants of this study, with one recalling “it was a challenge understanding what was a genuine impulse” and another describing how it “was quite hard not to over act in response to something.” But as previously discussed, the Meisner Technique was designed to train and develop skills over time (Strandberg-Long, 2019), with elements of the technique to become embedded and instinctive for its actors (Hart, 2008; Esper & DiMarco, 2008). This highlights a limitation of this study due to its time constraints and the fact these skills were being taught and delivered in just one workshop session. Nevertheless, this shows promise as some participants did admit that whilst “initially difficult”, “towards the end of each exercise I felt a lot more comfortable and confident”. This would lay a foundation to suggest that future study would be worthwhile, especially in consideration towards a longitudinal study which would be able to more specifically measure the impact of the Meisner Technique over time, working in alignment with the intentions of Meisner’s teaching.

This leads to the consideration that questions should be raised regarding the diminishing of the integrity of Meisner’s work by simply isolating some exercises of his teachings without

consideration towards the wider concept as a whole. These issues are shared by practitioners who note the beginning exercises are often taught without progression into the further stages (Esper & DiMarco, 2008) and should not be ignored. However, this study does not aim to represent the wider concept of Meisner's work, instead focusing on the foundational exercises of the Meisner Technique in order to examine whether they offer the potential to help instil and promote an actor's sense of present moment awareness. As such, the findings of this study will reflect those foundational exercises and not be representative of the Meisner Technique in its entirety.

As Esper states, Meisner's repetition exercise should be viewed as a workout for living spontaneously, moment to moment which he believes is an essential skill for actors (Esper & DiMarco, 2008, p.79). The findings of this study appear to support this belief, that the key exercises establishing the technique's key principles do offer actors the opportunity to explore and develop their sense of present moment awareness. From this we are able to infer that even in isolation, the principal beliefs and intentions guiding Meisner's teaching is of benefit to exploring ways to instil and promote an actor's sense of present moment awareness. In particular, as explored in the study and evident in the quantitative findings, the three moment exercise in isolation could be utilised as a beneficial tool to establish an actor's sense of present moment awareness. However, an interesting consideration would be to explore how actors who are familiar and confident with the Meisner Technique might explore the three moment exercise used in isolation as part of their practice and as a strategy to enhance their present moment awareness.

Potential Future Study

The findings of this study build upon the current body of literature by viewing the Meisner Technique's interwoven nature with the present moment through the specific and measurable lens of present moment awareness. This research extends our knowledge of how actors experience the Meisner Technique by creating links to pre-existing knowledge surrounding present moment awareness, building towards a more detailed and in-depth psychological understanding of Meisner's teachings.

In light of the findings, it is recommended that this field of study should be further explored in order to gain even broader perspectives of actor's experiences of the Meisner Technique,

present moment awareness and the interwoven nature between the two. In particular, longitudinal studies that allow actors to fully immerse themselves in the technique and allow for the technique to become embedded and instinctive (Hart, 2008; Esper & DiMarco, 2008) as Meisner intended should be encouraged.

Longitudinal study may also offer the potential for participants to engage more thoroughly with the Meisner Technique. As highlighted by Sun and Okada (2023) and their study surrounding the categorisation of statements made during the repetition exercise, over time the category and therefore depth of observation and statements progressed. This indicates the potential for engagement with the technique to deepen over time, mirroring views made by practitioners such as Strandberg-Long who explains the technique is constructed to train and develop skills over time (2019) and Hart (2008) who highlights Meisner's aim was for the elements of the technique to become embedded and instinctive. Others emphasise the view that the technique depends upon a continuous process of training an actor's attention and ability to listen (Gonsalves, 2012; Moseley, 2012). Therefore, potentially as a result of prolonged engagement with the Meisner Technique and its exercises in a longitudinal study, participants may offer more detailed responses when it comes to gathering data, in particular qualitative data. This deeper reflection may in turn offer more detailed insights to analyse, ultimately working towards data saturation in terms of collating individuals' experiences which is limited in this current study.

Conclusion

Taking into consideration the quantitative and qualitative data gathered as part of this study we are able to infer a positive correlation between the foundational exercise of the Meisner Technique and their potential to instil and promote an actor's sense of present moment awareness. The quantitative data has been able to generate measurable numerical data to compare and track suggested levels of perceived experiences of present moment awareness through the lens of the SMS (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013). But with a phenomenological methodology of data analysis explored via a thematic analysis, recurring and overlapping themes within the qualitative data have also been evaluated, surrounding mind wandering, focus and present moment awareness, further supporting the quantitative data of this study.

In conclusion, this study has been able to explore and highlight the efficacy of the Meisner Technique in promoting an actor's sense of present moment awareness. Whilst this field of study remains underexplored, this study contributes towards an exciting and promising direction of future study that demonstrates much promise in strengthening ideas and advancements in acting pedagogy for the twenty-first century.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical Approval Form



PG2 / E1 FORM

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

RESEARCH STUDENTS

This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the MyTSD Doctoral College Portal at (<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).

This document is also available in Welsh.

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk, with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Abigail Louise Sugden			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student
3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	UWTSD – Voice Study Centre			
4	Campus:	Carmarthen			
5	E-mail address:	abigail.sugden@virginmedia.com			
6	Contact Telephone Number:	07776124058			
For students:					
7	Student Number:	2225850			

April 2022*

1

PG2 Ethical Approval Form

8	Programme of Study:	MA Professional Practice
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Louise Emanuel / Julie Crossman / Debbie Winter

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☒	NO	☐
Date					
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): <i>Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval</i>	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
		Institute Research Committee	☐		
		Other (write in)	☒	WAPPAR Ethics Board Representative	

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.				
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice				☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy				☒
3	[List any other relevant documents here]				☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution	
2	Contact person name	
3	Contact person e-mail address	
4	Is your research externally funded?	YES ☐ NO ☐
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES ☐ NO ☐
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary YES ☐ NO ☐
7		Employed YES ☐ NO ☐
8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered. YES ☐ NO ☐

9	Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☐
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Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☐
	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	Living Truthfully in the Present Moment: Exploring the efficacy of the Meisner Technique in promoting an actor's sense of Present Moment Awareness			
2	Proposed start date:	6 th January 2025	Proposed end date:	22 nd August 2025	
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below: <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> <i>Proposed Research Question</i> <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how <u>Existing Research</u> has informed the proposed activity and explain <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>				
3	Purpose of Research Activity The purpose of this research is to explore how existing acting pedagogy may be enhanced and embraced through the exploration of adopting a mindfulness-based approach to actor training. Existing literature indicates there may be interwoven characteristics shared between the Meisner Technique and present moment awareness, an aspect of mindfulness. This includes key principles such as attention and awareness of present moment experiences. There are limited examples of empirical study to support the inferences made by existing literature reviews and those we can infer from academic writing. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore the Meisner Technique and evaluate the efficacy of its impact on how actors perceive their experiences of and connection to the present moment. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>				
4	Research Question Does the Meisner Technique offer the potential to help instil and promote an actor's sense of present moment awareness? <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>				
5	Aims of Research Activity •To facilitate the implementation of the Meisner Technique with actors, including those in pre-professional/professional training. •To understand how actors perceive their experiences of the present moment in their work. •To discover the ways in which the Meisner Technique may promote an actor's sense of the present moment.				

	•To consider how the Meisner Technique may help to create a mindfulness-based approach to actor training. (this box should expand as you type)					
6	Objectives of Research Activity •To explore the implementation of the Meisner Technique with actors, including those in pre-professional/professional training. •To evaluate how actors perceive their experiences of the present moment in their work. •To analyse the impact that the Meisner Technique may or may not have on an actor's perceived engagement with the present moment in their work. •To propose the potential influence the Meisner Technique has on creating a mindfulness-based approach to acting pedagogy. (this box should expand as you type)					
	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here, but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.					
7	A mixed methods approach will be adopted as part of this project, including a literature review, quantitative and qualitative data collection. •Literature review to evaluate and consider existing body of literature. •Questionnaires ○ The State Mindfulness Scale (SMS; Tanay & Bernstein, 2013) is a Likert scale used to assess an individual's perceived experiences of present moment awareness. This will provide a numerical score that represents an individual's suggested perception of their present moment awareness during an activity or period of time, usually suggested at fifteen to twenty minutes. This aligns well with the implementation of the Meisner Technique in this study, with exercises typically lasting around fifteen to twenty minutes. The SMS will be completed before taking part in Meisner Technique exercises and just afterwards to collect responses that assess the impact of the Meisner Technique on the experiences of present moment awareness. The scores can then be compared to assess any impact. ○ Qualitative open-ended questions alongside the SMS will provide participants the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings and reflection upon the aspects of the Meisner Technique and their perceived experiences of present moment awareness. (this box should expand as you type)					
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.					
8	In-person workshops, the Midlands, England. (this box should expand as you type)					
	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.					
9	(this box should expand as you type)					
10	<table border="1"> <tr> <td rowspan="2"> Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available? </td> <td>NO</td> <td>☒</td> </tr> <tr> <td>YES</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> </table>	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available?	NO	☒	YES	☐
Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available?	NO		☒			
	YES	☐				

11	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?		YES	NO
12	A prosperous Wales	☐	☒
13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒
14	A healthier Wales	☐	☒
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☒
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

Will the research activity include:		YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☐	☒
3	Use of focus groups?	☐	☒
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☐	☒
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☒	☐
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☒	☐
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒

17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.	☐	☒
	Details of any other primary data collection method: (this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and may be exempt from some of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

Who are the intended participants:		YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☒	☐
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.	☐	☒
	Details of any other participant groups: (this box should expand as you type)		

Participant numbers and source	
Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
10	How many participants are expected? I aim to recruit 20 participants in total, aiming to collect at least 16 complete responses for use in the study. (this box should expand as you type)
11	Who will the participants be? Participants may be of any gender, aged sixteen and above, living in the UK. They will be acting students in pre-professional/professional training or actors still taking part in training/practice opportunities. They will have some acting training or experience, but do not need to identify as working or professional actors. (this box should expand as you type)
12	How will you identify the participants? The recruitment of participants will stem from convenience sampling, as I will share details of the study on my social media pages to attract individuals who may have previously worked with me, or taken classes with me. They will be encouraged to share the details with others they know who may be interested in this project, adopting snowball sampling to widen reach. (this box should expand as you type)

Information for participants:		YES	NO	N/A
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☒	☐	☐
18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>				

Information for participants:		YES	NO	N/A
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☒	☐	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
Participants will need to use a digital device (such as a phone/tablet/laptop) in order to complete the online onboarding/consent form and then the digital questionnaires. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>				

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them.						
If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.						
1	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>☒</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	☐	No	☒
Yes	☐					
No	☒					
2	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information					
	Risk to participants: •Sharing of personal data.	How you will mitigate the risk to participants:				

	• Emotional distress due to the nature of acting and anything that may arise from improvisational work and performing material. • Health and safety during the in-person workshop sessions. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	• Following GDPR guidelines and protecting all data shared. Anonymity of participants in the study and resulting paper. • Details on the research project will be shared with potential participants before they give consent so they are able to make an informed decision before agreeing to join, as well as being aware that they can leave the study at any point. I will have details of organisations and where participants can seek further professional support should they need it. • Ensuring all participants are dressed suitably to avoid slips and trips. Be aware of and follow the health and safety advice and policies of the studio hire, eg. fire escape procedures. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
4	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to the investigator: • Low to no participant uptake • Participant withdrawal • Complaints against myself or research study <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator: • Share study with more potential participants than I aim to include or be willing to take on a few more participants to help balance out any potential participants who don't join or leave the study. • Keep in contact with tutors for support and guidance. • Ensure to follow all correct procedures to protect against misconduct. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
5	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University: • Risk to university's reputation should the research project not meet integrity and ethical obligations; plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, or data protection. • Data protection <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to the University: • Ensure a level of scrutiny in understanding and following all guidelines in regard to integrity and ethical codes of conduct. Carry out the role of as principal researcher with a level of professionalism and respect in following codes of conduct. • Following GDPR guidelines. Protecting data shared. Anonymity of participants in the study. Participants may withdraw at any time and their information redacted/removed with all data deleted. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
6	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to environment: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

Disclosure and Barring Service				
	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☒	☐	☐
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.	001834163831		

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	Participants will have my email address and will be told they can contact me at any time throughout the project or following its completion with any questions. They will also be aware they can ask to see my final report following its completion if they wish. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation. A consent form with information regarding the research project and what participants can expect will be provided before commencing with the project. Participants will be able to read details of the project and the process including the in-person workshops and online questionnaires. They will also be informed of data protection procedures before confirming their consent. There will be a question to check participant's age; those aged under sixteen will have an added question that includes parental/guardian consent before proceeding. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case. Names of participants will be collected for contact purposes. Any medical information that is necessary to ensure their safe participation in an in-person workshop session and details of an emergency contact will also be taken. All data will be stored in password protected storage on my personal laptop which will not be shared. Throughout the research and in the study, participants will be referred to as participant A, B, C etc providing anonymity in the data. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	YES	NO
1	"Personal data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ("data subject"). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.	☒	☐
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	Names and email addresses will be collected for contact purposes to provide details of the workshop sessions and send links to the online questionnaires. Any medical information that will be necessary to ensure safe participation in an in-person workshop session will also be collected.		

	alongside details of an emergency contact. This will not be included in the research project, but to ensure participants are safe when partaking in the workshops. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	<i>"Special category data" means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects' –</i> <i>(a) racial or ethnic origin,</i> <i>(b) political opinions,</i> <i>(c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature,</i> <i>(d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992),</i> <i>(e) physical or mental health or condition,</i> <i>(f) sexual life,</i> <i>(g) genetics,</i> <i>(h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),</i>	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☐	☒
10	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☒	☐
11	Other – specify:	☐	☒
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	All data will be kept in password protected storage on my personal laptop which will not be shared. This includes contact details, personal details and all data retrieved in regard to the study. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

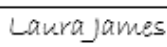
Data Protection			
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☒	☐
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒

21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	All data will be kept in password protected storage on my personal laptop which will not be shared. This includes contact details and personal details such as medical conditions and emergency contacts necessary for holding in-person workshops. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Myself, as principal researcher. Voice Study Centre tutors reviewing my work will only see anonymised data collection. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	Myself, Abigail Sugden <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
24	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	All data will be kept in password protected storage on my personal laptop which will not be shared. The data will be stored until the completion of this project and the submission of this assignment. It will then all be deleted. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. <i>(Most relevant to academic staff)</i>		
	No <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒

SECTION K: Declaration

The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
1	Signature of applicant:	
		Date: 14/11/2024

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Laura James	Date: 31.01.2025
3	Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		Date:
5	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate) ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.

RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY Once complete, submit this form via the MyTSD Doctoral College Portal at (https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk).
RESEARCH STAFF ONLY All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.
STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

Appendix B: Letter of Approval

Abigail Sugden

Acting, Singing and Voice Coaching

08/11/2024

Dear UWTSD,

This confirmation is in regards to the research study 'Living Truthfully in the Present Moment: Exploring the efficacy of the Meisner Technique in promoting an actor's sense of Present Moment Awareness' by Abigail Sugden.

|

I confirm that I approve of the research proposed to be carried out by Abigail Sugden between February and April 2025.

Kind regards,

Abigail Sugden

Appendix C: Participant Information

Introduction to the Meisner Technique

I'm looking for performers who'd like to take part in a FREE Meisner Technique acting workshop as part of my research study for my MA in Performance Coaching.

The project aims to understand and evaluate how actors perceive their experiences of the present moment.

During the workshop we will explore some of the Meisner Technique's foundational exercises alongside some improvisation. Don't worry if you're new to the Meisner Technique, as this workshop will act as an introduction to some of the Key Meisner exercises.

Throughout the session there will be a series of short questionnaires for you to answer. Afterwards, I will then use the responses to analyse the impact the Meisner Technique may have on an actor's perceived engagement with the present moment.

This will be my final research project for my MA in Performance Coaching with the Voice Study Centre, validated by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

To take part you need to...

- Be aged 16 and above
- Live in the UK
- Have experience in acting or actor training



Thursday 24th July
10am to 2pm



Studio 79
St John Street,
Leicester, LE13WL



For further details on this research project and to confirm your participation, please follow this link ...
<https://forms.gle/muEZ6touNgfE6KdQ7>

The workshop is completely free, as I appreciate your time and help in me completing this final research project of my MA in Performance Coaching with the Voice Study Centre.



If you have any questions please get in touch. You can email me at hello.abigailsugden@gmail.com

Living Truthfully in the Present Moment

An exploration of the Meisner Technique within actor training

* Indicates required question

This research project questions whether the Meisner Technique offers the potential to help instil and promote an actor's sense of present moment awareness

Sanford Meisner referred to acting as "living truthfully under imaginary circumstances", with his methods rooted in behaviour and the belief that "an ounce of behaviour is worth a pound of words". Teachers of the Meisner Technique believe it trains actors to be observant and responsive moment to moment which is where the link to present moment awareness lies.

This research project aims to understand and evaluate how actors perceive their experiences of the present moment. It will explore the implementation of the Meisner Technique and analyse the impact it may have on an actor's perceived engagement with the present moment.

This project is part of the researcher, Abigail Sugden's, studies as part of the Voice Study Centre's MA in Performance Coaching. The research undertaken will form one of the assessment modules as part of the course. Ethical approval has been given by the Voice Study Centre and the awarding university, University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

If you'd like to be involved, there's the opportunity to take part in an in-person acting workshop exploring elements of the Meisner Technique based around the foundational exercises of Meisner's work. Throughout the workshop there will be a series of short questionnaires to complete, allowing for the collection of data aimed at assessing participants' perceived levels of present moment awareness.

Workshop Details

The workshop will take place on Sunday 8th June held at Studio 79, St John Street, Leicester, LE13WL.

The day will begin at 10am finishing at 2pm. There will be a short break mid-morning. Attendees are advised to bring refreshments.

Throughout the workshop you will get the opportunity to experience some of the foundational exercises of the Meisner Technique, working with others in pairs or small groups. There will be a series of short questionnaires to complete, allowing the collection of data surrounding your experiences and perceived levels of present moment awareness in relation to the Meisner Technique exercises.

The workshop will be led by Abigail Sugden, who is the sole researcher in the project. Abigail has over ten years experience in actor training, working across a variety of educational and specialist performing arts training settings. Her training includes The Actors Centre, Identity School of Acting and ArtsEd where she gained an MA in Acting. Other areas of study include Performance Anxiety, Vocal Health and Breathing for Performers. She has also completed courses including Children and Young People's Wellbeing and Children and Young People's Participation. She holds an enhanced DBS Certificate, Public Liability Insurance, First Aid Certification and has completed training in Safeguarding. Abigail specialises in pre-professional actor training with the aim of developing a mindfulness based approach towards actor training, combining existing acting methodology alongside an appreciation of the benefits of mindfulness. This research project is part of her overarching research into mindfulness based approaches to acting pedagogy.

Would you like to proceed with participating in this research project? *

- ☐ Yes please
- ☐ No thank you

In order to participate in this research project you will need to meet the inclusion criteria and give consent by completing the following questions.

Please note that if you are under 18, you will need the consent of a parent/guardian.

Can you confirm that you meet the following criteria in order to participate in this * research project?

- ☐ You are aged sixteen and above
- ☐ You are living in the UK
- ☐ You have experience of current or recent actor training
- ☐ No, I don't meet the above criteria

Please indicate your age *

- ☐ Aged 18 and above
- ☐ Aged 16-17

If you are under 18 please confirm you have sought parent/guardian consent to * participate in this research project.

- ☐ I confirm that I have parent/guardian consent to participate
- ☐ I do not have parent/guardian consent to participate
- ☐ I am 18 or over and do not require parent/guardian consent to participate

Do you consent and agree to participate in this research project which includes attending the one-day in-person workshop? *

- ☐ Yes, I do
- ☐ No, I don't

Do you agree to complete the questionnaires provided during the workshop in order to collect data? *

- ☐ Yes, I agree
- ☐ No, I don't agree

Do you understand that your participation in this research project is voluntary and that you may withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time? *

To withdraw participation, please email Abigail at hello.abigailsugden@gmail.com

- ☐ Yes, I understand
- ☐ No, I do not
- ☐ Other: _____

Your Details

The following data collected will be used in relation to the in-person workshop. This will not form the data included in the project's research or report.

It will be used to share details of the workshop with you, as well as ensure a level of safety, providing assurance for yourself and I during the workshop. I will require your email address, details of any medical conditions you may have, as well as the name and phone number of an emergency contact.

All details will be collected and stored in adherence with GDPR guidelines.

Please give your full name *

Your answer

Please provide your email address *

Your answer

Please provide the name and phone number of at least one emergency contact. *
You can provide a second if you wish. This will only be used in the case of an emergency during the in-person workshop.

Your answer

Do you have any medical conditions or injuries that I should be aware of ahead of you partaking in the in-person workshop? *

Please confirm, answering either 'yes' or 'no'. If the answer is yes, please provide details.

For example, please let me know if you have asthma and carry an inhaler, or any allergies and carry an adrenaline auto-injector (EpiPen or similar).

Your answer

Do you consent to the collection and use of your personal information for the purposes of the in-person workshop? This includes your contact details and those of your emergency contact(s) as well as any medical details if relevant. *

(All information will be treated and carried out in line with GDPR guidelines.)

- ☐ Yes, I do consent
- ☐ No, I don't consent

As previously mentioned, throughout the workshop a series of short questionnaires will be provided for you to complete. These responses will remain anonymous, with codes to identify each participant. This is the data that will be compiled as part of this research project. *

Do you consent to the use of the data collected in this research project for the purpose of compiling research for the researcher's MA course?

(All data will be treated and carried out in line with GDPR guidelines, personal identities will be kept anonymous in the research summary report.)

- ☐ Yes, I do consent
- ☐ No, I don't consent

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. Your support is much appreciated.

Please confirm the details you have provided are accurate. *

☐ The details I have provided are accurate

If you meet the required inclusion criteria I will be in touch shortly to welcome you * to the project. I will also confirm details of the in-person workshop shortly.

Please submit your response below.

Many thanks.

☐ Submit

Appendix E: State Mindfulness Scale (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013)

The State Mindfulness Scale

(Tanay and Bernstein, 2013)

Please indicate the degree to which each of the statements below describes what you have just experienced.

Please use a scale where 1 = not at all and 5 = very well

1	I was aware of different emotions that arose in me	
2	I tried to pay attention to pleasant and unpleasant sensations	
3	I found some of my experiences interesting	
4	I noticed many small details of my experience	
5	I felt aware of what was happening inside of me	
6	I noticed pleasant and unpleasant emotions	
7	I actively explored my experience in the moment	
8	I clearly physically felt what was going on in my body	
9	I changed my body posture and paid attention to the physical process of moving	
10	I felt that I was experiencing the present moment fully	
11	I noticed pleasant and unpleasant thoughts	
12	I noticed emotions come and go	
13	I noticed various sensations caused by my surroundings	
14	I noticed physical sensations come and go	
15	I had moments when I felt alert and aware	
16	I felt closely connected to the present moment	
17	I noticed thoughts come and go	
18	I felt in contact with my body	
19	I was aware of what was going on in my mind	
20	It was interesting to see the patterns of my thinking	
21	I noticed some pleasant and unpleasant physical sensations	

Living Truthfully in the Present Moment

An exploration of the Meisner Technique within actor training

* Indicates required question

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Sanford Meisner referred to acting as "living truthfully under imaginary circumstances", with his methods rooted in behaviour and the belief that "an ounce of behaviour is worth a pound of words". Teachers of the Meisner Technique believe it trains actors to be observant and responsive moment to moment which is where the link to present moment awareness lies.

This research project aims to understand and evaluate how actors perceive their experiences of the present moment. It will explore the implementation of the Meisner Technique and analyse the impact it may have on an actor's perceived engagement with the present moment.

This project is part of the researcher, Abigail Sugden's, studies as part of the Voice Study Centre's MA in Performance Coaching. The research undertaken will form one of the assessment modules as part of the course. Ethical approval has been given by the Voice Study Centre and the awarding university, University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

Workshop

Thank you for taking part in today's workshop. Your support is much appreciated.

In addition to the Likert Scale surveys you've completed within the workshop, there is one final additional questionnaire. This is completely optional, but offers you the opportunity to reflect on your experiences and provide any additional feedback.

Would you like to proceed with participating in this questionnaire? *

- ☐ Yes please
- ☐ No thank you

As detailed in the initial consent form completed, your responses will remain anonymous, with codes to identify each participant. This data will be compiled as part of this research project. *

Do you consent to the use of the data collected in this research project for the purpose of compiling research for the researcher's MA course?

(All data will be treated and carried out in line with GDPR guidelines, personal identities will be kept anonymous in the research summary report.)

- ☐ Yes, I do consent
- ☐ No, I don't consent

Questions

The first few questions relate to your general acting practice.
The final few questions relate to today's workshop.
Please answer in as much detail and honesty as you like.

When acting, are you aware of experiencing moments of present moment awareness or mind wandering? Please feel free to answer in relation to acting practice, rehearsals or performances. *

Your answer

How would you describe your experiences of staying present when acting? Please feel free to answer in relation to acting practice, rehearsals or performances. *

Your answer

What challenges, if any, do you believe actors face when staying present whilst acting? Please feel free to answer in relation to acting practice, rehearsals or performances. *

Your answer

What challenges, if any, do you personally face when staying present whilst acting? Please feel free to answer in relation to acting practice, rehearsals or performances. *

Your answer

In relation to today's workshop, how did you find the Meisner Technique exercises? How would you describe your experience of these? *

Your answer

What challenges, if any, did you face with the Meisner Technique exercises? *

Your answer

To what extent do you believe the Meisner Technique exercises impacted your experiences of present moment awareness? *

Your answer

Is there anything else you would like to add or give feedback on?

If you would like to be sent a copy of this research project once completed, please let me know.

Your answer

Thank you for participating in this research project. Your support is much appreciated.

Appendix G: Three Moment Exercise (Sparks, 2023, p.55-67)

“Set Up: Two actors sit in chairs facing each other. The distance between them ideally should be knees are close to one another but not touching. What this gives is the dynamic of no starting contact but being very much ‘in each other’s space.’”

“It doesn’t matter who starts the exercise, but whoever starts becomes partner A. Here then is the layout of the exercise: Moment 1: A makes an observation about B. Moment 2: B repeats the observation. Moment 3: A says what they saw in moment 2. After a pause happens, the same exercise begins only now with partner B starting. Once they are finished, it’s A’s turn again. It’s a simple, cyclical exercise, and the pause in between rounds encourages everyone to not make a race out of it and memorize the structure.”

“An example from Chris and Stefania.

(Moment 1) Chris: You’ve got black hair.

(Moment 2) Stefania: I’ve got black hair. (smiles)

(Moment 3) Chris: You smiled.”

“A begins by making a truthful observation of partner B. This is moment 1.

B repeats the observation as they hear it from their point of view. This is moment 2.

A says what they saw in moment 2. This is moment 3 and the end of the exercise.

A and B take a moment to reset, and now it is B’s turn to begin the exercise.”

Appendix H: You-I Repetition Exercise (Sparks, 2023, p.131-132)

“In the previous repetition exercise, one partner began with a simple observation based on the hierarchy of observations. Their partner would repeat back word for word what they heard. Then the person who began the exercise would repeat back word for word the phrase they heard, and the exercise would go on like this.”

“Now we’re going to make a small but important modification to the exercise ... [Richard] will begin by making an observation of Michael, same as before. The change comes when Michael repeats. He will now repeat word for word what he hears, but from his own point of view. The exercise will continue on in the same way until they are stopped...”

(Michael opens his bag to get a tissue)

Richard: You’re Mary Poppins.

Michael: I’m Mary Poppins. (Goes red, wipes his eyes, puts the tissue away)

Richard: You’re Mary Poppins. (Laughs deeply)

Michael: I’m Mary Poppins. (Shakes head, then laughs)”

“In the three moment exercise, the depth is more of a hint as to what is on offer, a means to get you further engaged and sharpen the specificity of your observations. In repetition, however, the values are flipped, wherein a specific observation unveils a vast world of possible dynamics between you and your partner. Since you are releasing impulses brought out by them, the experience becomes personal, the depth compounding significantly and quickly. This new version of repetition slightly shifts your relationship to the text.”

Appendix I: Participant SMS Scores

State Mindfulness Scale Scores

Participant	Initial Improvisation SMS Score	Three Moment Exercise SMS Score	Repetition Exercise SMS Score	Final Improvisation SMS Score
A	59	87	97	98
B	59	62	79	85
C	59	66	71	75
D	70	76	88	97
E	56	84	94	95
F	57	84	94	95
G	57	85	95	96
H	54	81	91	93
I	54	82	92	93
J	56	84	94	95
K	59	63	68	70
L	60	64	69	71
M	59	64	69	71
N	56	60	62	69
O	57	61	66	70
P	60	63	68	72
Q	67	73	85	94
R	68	74	86	95
S	67	74	86	95
T	66	71	82	91
U	65	71	83	92
V	67	73	85	94