What we 'profess' as professionals and how we behave – are they the same thing?

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This article contains both an offer and a response to a lingering challenge experienced by many acting teachers regarding students' moments of both resistance and compliance during their training journey. This theme emerged during the 2020 AusAct: Australian Actor Training Conference where I presented a paper identifying accounts of students who may be resistant to change in regards to their own ongoing well-being. In my presentation I suggested that student actors, desiring to align themselves with certain perceived professional values or maxims such as 'suffering for your art' may not embrace seemingly contradictory advice about nurturing their future sustainable professional well-being. I will outline my argument for this claim in the second section of this chapter. However, I will also offer a reflection and response drawing upon some cautious reactions to this presentation at the conference in which it was felt that I was advocating that acting teachers might need to step into the role of psychologist or therapist to equip students into change. While this was not my intention, the immediate post-presentation conversation did highlight some important tensions that teachers may be experiencing as they seek to enable students to become professional actors while being sensitive to not triggering detrimental experiences in the process of potentially highly confronting training experiences. Through this offer and response I hope, in this chapter, to map out a new way of framing the ethical accountability between teacher, student and educational institution in regard to professional identity formation.

I'll begin with identifying three factors that may have contributed to this heightened awareness and cautiousness concerning the power of the teacher to impact student lives. It may be that such reticence accounts for the wariness with which my presentation was received. One factor is that there are the historical accounts and 'myths' attributed to well-known acting teachers such as Strasberg, Meisner, Adler, Morris and Chubbuck in which students experience confronting demands through which they must 'prove' their willingness to be transformed by 'the work'. Another factor is that many teachers are now

conscious of scholarly accounts of disruptive and sometimes psychologically injurious student-teacher encounters (see accounts in Burgoyne, Poulin & Rearden 1999; McFarren 2003; Moor 2013; Prior 2012; Seton 2004; Stringer 2020; Taylor 2016) where some acting/voice/movement teachers have variously 'forced'/'compelled' student actors to 'push through', to 'take a risk', to be 'vulnerable' in some task. The documented consequence is that some students (and often their student peers) have been left deeply distressed or confused by the training experience and sometimes teachers have floundered to know how to 'manage' the situation that may have been unforeseen. Finally, there are the teachers themselves and their own formative experiences of training that have informed their subsequent teaching approach for better or worse. This tendency to re-enact the way one was personally taught is itself significant given the paucity of formalised training of acting teachers, as highlighted by Ross Prior (2012), where there could be a more thoughtful review of the efficacy and impact of certain teaching techniques.

Given all the above, in most teaching contexts the teacher means well. The task is intended to be formational and indeed 'liberating' – to free the student of present habits that are perceived to be either limitations or blocks to a great dynamic range of performance that teachers believe they can see in the student. The students also mean well. They want to become the professionals that their teachers aspire for them to become – but 'something' causes a student to hesitate, something 'gets' in the way', something 'feels uncomfortable'. Such hesitations or 'resistances' are often interpreted by the teacher as 'blocks' that need to be removed or overcome (see Wangh 2013; Roznowski 2017). Furthermore, various narratives emerge in this context that justify the teachers' role in drawing the student through moments of personally confronting work, but, at the same time, such narratives seem to undermine the legitimacy of the students' own self-awareness and perception about what they feel ready to commit to.

For example, some teachers endeavour to persuade students that the transformation is worth the attendant pain and disorientation, or that they should 'get over it' if they want to make it as 'professional' actors. And much of this is premised on the former personal experiences hard won by the teachers themselves. Such arguments for taking a 'leap of faith' are difficult to argue against, especially as students want and need to belong to this collective of aspiring

professional actors. This seemingly paradoxical dynamic of enabling and constraining each other, at the same time, is identified by complexity theorist Ralph Stacey (2003) as an inevitable dynamic of human formation. However, I believe, that Stacey, drawing upon a nuanced application of complexity theory in relation to psychoanalysis, and other scholar/practitioners, drawing upon a constructive-developmental theory of education, would suggest that it would be unfair to place any blame at the feet of the students as though they have some 'lack' or 'dysfunction' that may ultimately exclude them from professional and personal competency in acting. Nor should teachers feel they must fulfil the role of psychologists or therapists and try to 'mend'/'fix' what students bring into the classroom from their prior developmental learning and identity formation experiences. Rather, such encounters are symptomatic of much broader, educational and formative activities that teachers, students and student services of educational institutions all have a stake in. Given this premise, I'll now revisit the key elements of my 2020 presentation, and then finally open up a new conversation between my offer and the cautious responses emergent from that offer.

I begin by framing the question of educational formation within the larger brief of what may be expected of professional identity formation. Professions are odd things. Indeed, the word 'profession' is derived from the Latin *professio* which means to make a public declaration of intent to serve through a calling requiring acquiring technical expertise and knowledge, both tacit and explicit (Brown 1993, p. 2368). It's presumed that members of a profession publicly declare and represent accountable practices, in their discipline, in the service of others. In some disciplines, such as medicine and law, there are long-standing traditions and expectations about being equipped with access to privileged, specialist knowledge as well as developing technical competencies to fulfil various highly specialist functions – operating on a living body or carefully crafting legislation that ensures protection and justice within a community. But alongside these technical competencies there is also an underlying enculturation into each respective disciplinary field – a notion of professional formation in which graduates not only 'do' medicine or 'law' but 'become' lawyers or doctors, with all the assumptions, privileges, and regulations that are intended to give a profession both credibility and longevity.

A review of medical education conducted by Jarvis-Selinger et al. (2012) identified that while

competency-based education had become prominent in undergraduate and postgraduate medical training in that it evaluated and translated the physicians' many professional roles into measurable and assessable competencies, there was a concurrent presumption that the necessary socialisation of trainee doctors would occur by default. This neglect of professional identity formation has produced an exclusive focus on "*doing* the work of a physician" rather than also attending to what contributes to the learning journey of becoming and "*being* a physician" (italics in original, p.1185).

Developmental theorists such as Robert Kegan (whom I will further discuss in this section) make the point that the transition from novice to professional is not a process of gradual, incremental change but rather is shaped by abrupt discontinuities and various moments of identity crisis. These crises emerge in individuals as they recognize the need to re-align their experiences of training in the discipline with their pre-existing sense of who they are and what they value (p.1186). Jarvis-Selinger et al. (2012) argue that while competency development in medical education is essential, attention and reflection should also be given to "how each of these crisis moments profoundly influences the aspiring physician's understanding of what it means to "be" a doctor" (ibid.).

At the same time, according to Steven Howard (2005) there are certain cultural 'rites of passage' in the developmental journey of student doctor to medical professional that have been exploitative and potentially harmful to student doctors (and even patients in their care) that are only recently shifting due to new commitments to well-being. Howard observes that for many years it's been expected that residents spend many hours on duty with consequent sleep deprivation. While most agree that such an arrangement provides a valuable learning experience in terms of confidence in one's competencies and rigor for the demands of the profession, there are emerging voices expressing concern that the consequent sleep deprivation affects performance, sometimes resulting in physicians injuring themselves (either at the hospital or during their travel home after a shift) as well as detrimentally affecting patient care (p.108). Here I see an important and strangely ironic tension manifesting between what is understood to be part of the formational identity journey of the medical professional – putting in 'heroic' hours of service – and the consequent health risks of self-care neglect that may injure both trainee doctors and the patients in their care.

If a profession is about declaring one's willingness to serve the public with particular skills and competencies, then I'd suggest that a similar expectation might be said of those who aspire to become professional actors – their credibility as professionals who serve is evidenced whether it's working with a director, performing the work of a writer, partnering with a producer, or a creative ensemble or, most crucially, entertaining and moving an audience. Now that may seem rather lofty – but you may be surprised to identify how this works out in practice. The difference between amateur and professional is more than just a matter of financial remuneration – it's primarily a question of service. But expectations of service can be sometimes unsustainable and even exploitative, and that's where the dilemma of personal and professional 'identity' can emerge, as has been demonstrated in the training of medical professionals.

Here are some examples of expectations of actors that I've identified in terms of unquestioning professional service and loyalty. I regard these as powerful myths in that while they may not be definitively true, they circulate in a way that becomes true for those who believe in them:

"the show must go on"

"don't take it personally" (in relation to rejection and criticism)

"you must suffer for your art"

"if you feel blocked, you need to break through, and take whatever risk it takes"

" get over it!" (in relation to however anyone treats you)

" artists can be temperamental"

"it's only a fiction" (in response to feeling disturbed or distressed)

"it's just a bit of banter/fun" (in response to sexual harassment)

"we don't need a fight director or intimacy director – let's just see what happens"

Young actors in training are especially susceptible to the power of such myths because they have already invested so much time, energy and financial commitment to train for and become recognised as professional actors. Being 'seen' or recognised in having an identity as an emerging actor, especially if family or friends may have doubted them, becomes highly crucial for them.

Furthermore, actors can become very anxious about their capacity to do the thing they love - to act and create a story. In particular, taking on intense roles at first feels like a terrific challenge. Audiences, directors and producers want actors to be bold and expose themselves, emotionally or even literally. Supposedly, that is what professional actors do. So student actors want to show they can become that exposed and vulnerable too. But then they also know deep inside that there's a personal cost and even a personal risk involved. Maybe they've had moments either in class or in actual roles where they felt a bit overwhelmed or even 'lost' in the role. It started to feel like they couldn't find themselves again after a rehearsal or between performances and that can become really scary after a while.

Part of the feeling can be that, as an actor, you don't know how much is left in you to give yourself emotionally to a role – and then, even without wanting to, you might find you can't connect with the role or with other actors. Then your director expresses concern that you're not giving enough but you don't know what to do, and you don't know why it's not 'working' any more. And new, recurring doubts emerge – what if you can't find your skill again? What else can you do as a profession if this acting doesn't work out?

To cope with many of these professional stresses, the Australian Actors Wellbeing Survey (Seton, Maxwell & Szabó 2019) documented that some actors use yoga or meditation to try and create some respite from the intense roles they prepare for and play. Some occasionally use marijuana or other drugs to smooth things down a bit. Some try unwinding by watching TV or reading or video games – anything to get out of the role of 'headspace'. Many have a drink and try to unwind by chatting at the bar with either the cast or crew or friends who saw the show. Some have tried Alba emoting as a technique that claims to offer another way into creating emotional performances that are generated by physical rather than emotional triggers. But sometimes such techniques seem out of step with the practical ways in which theatre and screen production processes actually unfold, where there may not be contextual opportunities to draw upon physical triggers in appropriate ways.

As acting educators we can teach students skills about self-esteem and self-compassion. We can even teach them skills about stress management, and good diet, exercise and rest. But my

experience in doing so leaves me wondering whether these young actors trust and integrate such recommendations for their well-being when, concurrently, they perceive that the professional sector seems to value other things seemingly contrary to healthy well-being – self-sacrifice, inspiring suffering, compliance with industry norms about how 'the show must go on' no matter what. How is healthy change possible when their emerging identity is so heavily invested in 'being' a professional actor?

Psychologist Robert Kegan and his colleague, educator Lisa Lahey, have observed that "If we want deeper understanding of the prospect of change we must pay closer attention to our own powerful inclinations NOT to change" (Kegan & Lahey 2001, p.1). They suggest that the usual explanation about the difficulty of change is that people aren't sufficiently motivated. This presumes that they aren't genuinely committed to change or don't have access to knowledge of alternative choices that could support such change. However, Kegan and Lahey argue that the forces that keep change from occurring are less well understood when they are simply regarded as resistance. This brings us back to my early question about how educators encounter 'resistances' or 'block's in student actors and may possibly misjudge these responses as due to a lack of motivation or desire.

Kegan and Lahey propose that these counter-forces are better understood if one regards these as competing commitments to particular beliefs and values. These competing commitments create what is actually an understandable 'immunity to change' (ITC) – a descriptor developed by Kegan and Lahey to account for this developmental dynamic. Furthermore, the predominantly unconscious investment in maintaining the status quo – holding in tension these competing commitments in one's personal and professional self – takes a lot of energy. Lahey offers the metaphor of someone driving a car to illustrate the power of competing commitments: "One foot on the gas and one foot on the brake, and basically being stuck" (Lahey 2020).

Kegan and Lahey refer to this inner contradiction as an immune system, because the mind, like the body, has a strategic immune system – an invisible, ceaseless dynamic that exists for one purpose: to protect us, even to save our lives. An immune system is not an illness, disease, weakness, or problem that needs to be fixed or cured. It is an intelligent, elegant

phenomenon that only wants to take care of us. However, when the immune system misrecognises a danger that is not really there in the present, it will still go to work to protect us. Notice that no amount of willpower is going to help resolve this internal contraction. Fortunately, misguided immune systems can be informed in new ways.

It's when we can identify and articulate our contradictory goals, and the big assumptions that are underneath them, that we are in a potentially new position or way of knowing to do anything to disrupt them. Importantly, this process does not presume that the big assumptions will prove false. However, such a process does allow us to examine them and possibly adapt them to new contexts. The most powerful driver for behavioural change is actually an openness to becoming more conscious of the strategies we use to make both cognitive and emotional sense of our own selves and our relationships with each other. Here we encounter a crucial distinction between the accumulation of new knowledge (i.e. in-formation) and the changing of how we actually experience perceiving and knowing (i.e. trans-formation).

Kegan (2009) offers this important distinction between informational learning, as equivalent to the development of skills and competencies, and, transformational learning that creates developmental shifts in the process of knowing itself (p.42). Both types of learning are equally valuable but, Kegan argues, those educators recognising the value and necessity of transformational moments in a training program may need a better understanding of their students' pre-existing level of epistemological (i.e. way of knowing) development:

> Changes in one's fund of knowledge, one's confidence as a learner, one's perception as a learner, one's motives in learning, one's self-esteem – these are all potentially important kinds of changes, all desirable, all worthy of teachers thinking about how to facilitate them. But it's possible for any or all of these changes to take place without any transformation because they could all occur within the existing form or frame of reference [of the knower]. (Kegan 2002, p. 43)

Constructive-developmental psychology (Kegan 1982, 1994; Piaget 1954; Kohlberg 1984; Belenky et al. 1986) provides a way of grasping transformational learning as consisting of a

dynamic, evolving relationship of equilibrium between the subject and object of one's knowing. It is this subject-object relationship that adapts over time: "What is "object" in our knowing describes the thoughts and feelings we say we have; what is "subject" describes the thinking and feeling that has us. We "have" object; we "are' subject" (Kegan 2002, p. 45).

As Kegan and Lahey note, if you try to offer an apparent quick fix to a behaviour – such as trying to motivate new habits, or try to apply discipline to bad habits, without attending to the 'ways of knowing' patterns and how they serve basic functions for survival, then it's highly likely that the problem (arising from conflicting behaviours) will continue to occur (Kegan and Lahey 2009).

The dynamics of professional life of the actor that I identified earlier – compliance, tolerance, complicity – certainly may be experienced as effective in preserving the 'status quo' of the profession, even though this can lead to overwhelm, chronic stress, and even self-medication. We might attend to these consequences through the provision of practical tools such as boundary setting, meditation classes and time management. But these undeniably valuable interventions may only alleviate the impacts of the behaviours without attending to the underlying patterns of 'knowing' – where the 'subject' has us – that function to preserve habitual, yet maladaptive attachment strategies.

The developmental, and, indeed, transformational learning process occurs as ways of knowing shift the relationship of various perceptions of self with that which is perceived as other. And, crucially, for educators, such transformations will be better understood and facilitated if the students' personal histories of 'knowing' are more effectively honoured and appreciated. This is where a new contextualisation and interpretation of 'resistance' or 'block' may prove both productive for acting teachers and supportive for student actors. And I believe that a foundational appreciation of attachment theory may prove insightful to teachers as it contributes to an understanding of how students are developing their own 'knowing' in relation to their experiences of attachment with significant others.

What is most crucial to our sense of personal comfort and 'self-protection' is how we manage our attachment to other human beings, individually or in groups. This, I would suggest, is

where professional identity formation as an actor and a desire for inclusion in the acting profession in exchange for loyalty to that profession may function as a kind of 'self-protection' or 'immunity', paradoxically, against other competing invitations towards self-care and wellbeing that seem disloyal to the ethos of professional 'sacrifice' I highlighted earlier.

The Dynamic-Maturational Model of attachment theory developed by Patricia Crittenden provides a useful tool for analysing how human beings work with and serve each other. From our earliest moments of life, we are seeking, through attachments, to meet four important human needs – safety, comfort, closeness to others and predictability. So, attachment is not only about relationships, but also about the strategies we acquire to protect ourselves, AND the patterns of information processing (cognitive and affective) that underlie our protective strategies (Baim and Morrison 2011, pp.13–14).

Attachment relationships are also a key to understanding the development of the capacity to 'know' the inner states of one's self and other people, and to continually adjust behaviour in relation to others, especially those of significance. It's believed that the capacity for emotional as well as social intelligence is most likely acquired through emotionally-attuned relationships between children and those who care for them. This capacity to interact with other people in an emotionally and socially intelligent manner is fundamental to forming and maintaining close positive relationships with other people. If one can grasp what it's like to be one's own self and project that onto others, one has the capacity to reflect, to observe one's self, to think about one's thinking, and to tune into one's own emotions and the likely feelings of other people. This transformational process also enables individuals to answer questions such as: " 'How well do I know myself?' 'How did I come to be the person I am today?,' 'What shapes my motivation, emotional responses and relationship patterns?' and 'How can I take my life forward in an integrated and balanced way?'" (Baim and Morrison 2011, pp.16–17).

As I outline the various patterns of attachment, this may cause readers to reflect on their own strategies and their own life history of attachments, relationships and emotional coping. A crucial insight from this theory is that we have all found a way to survive with various

evolving strategies and choices until now. The fact that we have got by doesn't mean that there haven't been times when we got it wrong, and then needed to work at renegotiating a relationship into a new way of interacting. There can be great value and learning in the process of repair. (Baim and Morrison 2011, p.22).

Equally, it's also important to note that people are always more than the attachment strategies that might be associated with them. As I describe the various patterns – A, B and C strategies – you may find yourself thinking of people you know or whom you have taught that may have manifested some of these patterns. Furthermore, people can have more than one self-protective strategy, and they can have a blend of 'A', 'B' and 'C' strategies. So you need to be very cautious about making conclusions or attaching a label or pattern to an individual. Adults, in particular, frequently do have a blend of strategies and do not fit neatly into one pattern, because they have had more time and opportunity to develop a range of approaches to life's challenges. This should remind us not to become so focused on finding a definitive pattern that we lose sight of the overall process of trying to help students to understand themselves and their self-protective strategies (Baim and Morrison 2011, p.23).

I'll briefly outline 3 primary patterns of attachment as framed in the dynamic-Maturational model of Attachment so you can begin to identify how 'big assumptions' of the acting profession that contribute to professional identity formation might also prove useful with Kegan and Lahey's model of immunity to change (ITC) (Kegan and Lahey 2009). By incrementally and judiciously identifying the 'big assumptions' we have about where safety is and where danger lies, this can provide a safe context for reviewing if such assumptions are still true, all the time, for our students now, as they mature into adults and professionals.

There are three pathways of maturing attachments that human beings explore as they develop from infancy to adulthood:

The 'B' pathway develops through the experience of predictable and appropriate care-giver attunement and responses. The infant/child learns to integrate and give equal value to both thoughts and feelings (cognition and affect are generally in balance) because that's how they experience their world most of the time. While this may seem the optimum pathway, there

actually can be circumstances of danger and unpredictability where pathway 'A' or 'C' may actually provide better, short-term survival advantages. It shouldn't be assumed that the B pathway is the only correct pathway (Baim and Morrison 2011, pp. 24–28).

In the 'A' pathway, the infant/child encounters predictable and but sometimes inappropriate or possibly unattuned care-giver responses. As a consequence the infant/child learns to value thinking over feelings. He/she becomes more dependent on thoughts to avoid feeling the distress and possible anger at not having needs for safety, comfort, closeness, and certainty attended to (Baim and Morrison 2011, p. 30).

As they develop they may first try out what might be considered normative strategies, such as people-pleasing behaviours or they may contain their own feelings that they feel might disrupt what is people-pleasing (this may become more expansive and adaptive in safe contexts). But as they mature, if they don't feel satisfied by these patterns of behaviour, they may try out more troubling behaviours such as compulsively care-giving and /or compliance towards those who demand care and attention from them. If things get more fraught they may resort to potentially endangering strategies to get their safety, comfort, closeness and predictability needs They may become promiscuous by desperately seeking out anyone who will give them care and affection. But they may also try to maintain self-reliance in this so that any promiscuous relationship that breaks up doesn't seem to distress them (Baim and Morrison 2011, pp. 30–32).

The 'A' strategy is often understood as a 'distancing' strategy because the person learns to distance themselves from their own genuine emotions and also to distance themselves emotionally from other people. They come to believe over time that their own emotions and closeness to other people is risky (Baim and Morrison 2011, pp. 32–33). We can imagine what it must be like for a student actor, with this kind of patterning of attachment, to struggle to access and express deep feelings.

Alternatively, an infant/child might explore the 'C' pathway to get his/her safety, comfort and connection needs met. This path emerges in response to unpredictable and variably attuned/unattuned care-giver responses to the infant/child. The infant/child learns to value

feelings over thinking because it is the intense expression of feeling that produces the responses from others that meet their needs in some way (Baim and Morrison 2011, pp. 34–35).

So they may try to get attention by variously becoming threatening by increasing their initial distress so that it must be attended to, and, at the same time, offering to be compliant in their behaviour as long as they have the other's loyal attention and care. (Baim and Morrison 2011, pp. 35–36).

Where this effectively-organised strategy becomes more concerning is when the child tries to get his or her needs met through both aggressive behaviours and demands for attention, coupled with feigned helplessness that only others can meet their needs. Unaddressed, they can resort to more dangerous strategies as they have capacity to both punish and seduce others who don't attend to their still unmet needs (Baim and Morrison 2011, pp. 36–37).
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The 'C' strategy is often regarded as a 'preoccupied' strategy because this person is preoccupied with the past lack of certainty and connection as well as being preoccupied with their own emotions. They will tend to speak about past events, particularly troubling or stressful events, as if they were occurring now, because when and how the event happened is far less important than how they continue to feel about the event. The person has, from the earliest age, been preoccupied with their own point of view and feelings as a way of both surviving and gaining predictability in difficult circumstances (Baim and Morrison 2011, p. 37).

Now from these pathways, you might be tempted to assume that the 'B' pattern is always the best and most preferred option as a strategy for meeting one's attachment needs. In situations of safety and sustainability, it probably is. However, 'A' and 'C' patterns are not 'deficits' model as they may also serve the needs of persons in particular circumstances. In reality people often have a blend of strategies. They may use different strategies with different attachment figures in different circumstances over different frames of time. What's useful about this dynamic maturational model is that it enables a person to 'map' their own patterns of behaviour in relation to their ways of feeling safe and secure about how they think and

how they feel, particular in the context of significant ongoing relationships such as that of the teacher and student, and peer-to-peer relationships in the learning environment.

It was at this point that some anxiety surfaced as I proposed that by helping students discern their own personal histories of patterns of attachment they tend to privilege and assisting them to identify their own competing commitments, we might help them to explore what 'big assumptions' in their lives may need review and expansion so that professional identity formation of perfectionism doesn't 'own' them and determine their own emerging sense of identity. A concern was expressed that I appeared to be advocating that teachers of voice, movement and acting should take on the roles of psychologists and/or therapists – two roles for which they are not trained and certainly require both specialised knowledge and training, as well as ongoing clinical supervision. I fully respected such articulated concerns.

Since presenting this paper, I have also noted a similar concern expressed regarding the ethics of advocating the application of the 'immunity to change' (ITC) (Kegan and Lahey 2009) process for institutional and individual change especially if it is imposed on participants without careful consideration of individual expectations and capabilities to follow through the ITC process (Kjellström 2009). In her critique she examines the role of the teacher or facilitator, the ethical implications of participants' abilities and reactions, and underlying mental demands and assumptions. She concludes that any ethical use of developmental, transformational practices such as the ITC process should be voluntary, providing full disclosure to participants, incorporating an adult developmental perspective into the process and openly allow the possibility that the prevailing professional culture/institution may also need to change (Kjellström 2009). These are valid and valuable considerations but I note that Kjellström fails to acknowledge that, even prior to any intervention by a transformational process such as ITC, the existing dynamics of identity formation in an institution (and subsequent professional culture) may also lack ethical accountability and review for the impacts on its participants. This is what concerns me in the context of actor training and how it equips and shapes students for the profession.

Meanwhile, as we continued to converse at the conference, I became more concerned that simply 'stepping back' from such roles, while still taking students through various training

experiences in which students may resist, hesitate, stumble and even fall, also felt ill-considered, given that it is known by the teachers that, under the 'right' circumstances, experiences of shifts in body, voice and psyche can be extraordinarily transformational. So, is it really a case of 'all care and no responsibility'? Many teachers in the performing arts have had little or no training in the challenges of learning in higher education, and do not have any kind of ongoing professional supervision by which they can review the impacts of their teaching on the professional formation of students. I don't believe this excuses them from averting their attention away from emerging insights in contemporary professional education and identity formation that may address some of the challenges around student resistance, blocking and reluctance to incorporate self-care into their professional (and personal) lives.

Since the conference, I've had time to further reflect upon and explore what options may exist that enable the ethical intervention of a constructive-developmental theory of education (using a process such as ITC) alongside a ecological-transactional model of human development (using the insights of the dynamic-maturational model of attachment theory). Kegan proposes the metaphor of successively more elaborate bridges of learning/becoming that educators need to identify and honour in the partnership they are taking with their students: firstly, what kind of bridge are we on, in regard to the student's developmental journey of ways of knowing?; secondly, how far along that particular bridge is the student traversing?; thirdly, is it a bridge that is safe to walk across "[for] it must be well-anchored on both sides, not just the culminating side … only by respecting what he [the student] has already gained and what he would have to lose were he to venture forth is it likely we could help him continue his journey" (Kegan 2009, p.48).

One productive way to support both teachers and students in negotiating these learning 'bridges' could be that the role of teacher, in the context of actor training, could be reconstructed as mentor, especially given that most acting teachers are (or have been) working professionals themselves. McGowan, Stone and Kegan (2008) offer a model of mentoring that examines the role human meaning-making structures such as training institutions play and addresses the complexities of support and challenge for adults at various stages of development. They argue that it is the uniquely balanced combination of confirmation, contradiction and continuity within an overall supportive holding environment

that actually facilitates transformative learning and identity formation. A confirming environment provides the assurance that the learner is at a particular transition moment that is acknowledged and affirmed for what it is. This is also where an appreciation of the attachment dynamics of each participant – teacher and student – proves invaluable. However, confirmation is not sufficient to stimulate change. The place of questioning and testing big assumptions and encountering contradictions allows for a necessary and appropriate re-shaping to a new way of 'becoming' in the journey of transformational learning. Finally, continuity provides the ongoing sense of a safe space to negotiate the inevitable stress and temporary sense of crisis as one's way of knowing shifts and matures (pp. 404-405). The value of mentors is that they are able to contain the students' sense of anxiety and imbalance and, simultaneously encourage the student's desire to move towards a new way of knowing and being: "In creating an effective holding environment, the mentor will generate opportunities for "provisional identities that allow the protégé to 'try on' a new self while simultaneously retaining his or her 'old form'" (p. 408). This is a different dynamic to that of psychologist or therapist but does require both intentional review of existing teaching practices (to check that they are stage-appropriate for the learning capacities of students) and provision of ongoing supervision of teachers, as mentors, to provide support and accountability.

Therefore, in the interest of preparing students to become valued, effective and maturing professionals, the most empowering and liberating education we can offer, I believe, is one that helps them recognise that they are undergoing a process of personal and professional change. They should know that they can choose to negotiate how they travel through this process rather than feel as though they must leap into the unknown with the only assurance that their teachers 'survived' the leap before them. This doesn't not require teachers to become therapists because the process of transformational learning is not a therapeutic (although given the personal past learning histories of students there may be times when they require specialist therapeutic support provided by Student Services in an educational institution). However, this recognition of the significance and power of professional identity formation needs to be better understood and applied by teachers and supported by appropriate professional supervision.

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