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## **Design Thinking & the Entrepreneurial Mindset in the Collegiate Music Classroom**

Antonina M.C. Johnston  
*University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

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DESIGN THINKING & THE ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET IN THE COLLEGIATE  
MUSIC CLASSROOM

by

Antonina M.C. Johnston

A Thesis Submitted in  
Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Music

at

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August 2023

## ABSTRACT

### DESIGN THINKING & THE ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET IN THE COLLEGIATE MUSIC CLASSROOM

by

Antonina M.C. Johnston

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2023  
Under the Supervision of Dr. Sheila J. Feay-Shaw

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the implementation of design thinking and an entrepreneurial mindset into a collegiate music classroom, where students have an interest in applying business acumen and entrepreneurship to their future plans as teaching and performing artists. The following questions guided this study: 1) are there benefits to introducing design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset to music students as they transition from student to professional?; 2) will the addition of these approaches give students greater confidence as arts entrepreneurs?; 3) how can design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset methodologies be successfully introduced and practiced throughout a one-semester course?; and 4) will students find these methodologies applicable to their entrepreneurial journey as performing and teaching artists? This qualitative study included two participant groups from the Business for Performing Artist class: in Spring 2021 which did not include design thinking, and from Spring 2023 that included the implementation of design thinking. Three Qualtrics surveys were conducted in Spring 2023 to follow participants' understanding and growth of design thinking and entrepreneurship across the semester long course. An additional survey was given to participants from Spring 2021 as a follow-up to their experiences during the course and after graduation. Reflections of the researcher who facilitated the course were also included in the final results of the study. The data from the surveys and course materials showed that students were not able to

connect with the practice of design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset with a fifteen-week course also dedicated to other business practices needed by young, performing artists. Study participants left with only a surface level understanding of design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset, yet they were able to define the methodologies. With more time and practice implementing the methodologies in practical settings, participants would have the opportunity to put the methodologies into practice and see how they could apply to future projects and career endeavors. It also leaves room for continued research on the implementation of design thinking or the entrepreneurial mindset into both the collegiate music classroom and other performing arts spaces.

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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

As a vocal teaching artist, with fifteen years of professional experience, I tasked myself with determining how to be an arts entrepreneur in a saturated market with little to no guidance on what would or would not work. Over the years, it was trial-and-error learning that helped me see how to be a successful entrepreneur and gain a meaningful career that felt both satisfying professionally and financially. I never struggled with new ideas and ways to recruit and engage my private voice students, but in the beginning, I lacked fundamental knowledge of business management practices, marketing, and problem-solving strategies to apply to my success. Through trial-and-error, money lost, and some self-sought professional development, a decade later, I found my stride as a confident teaching artist. After many successful years as a private voice teacher and small business owner, I knew I wanted to grow as a teaching artist and businesswoman, and I knew it was time to start asking for more formal help and education to achieve those goals.

### **The Journey to Teaching Artist**

As a teaching artist with interests in music education, private voice instruction, arts management, and vocal performance, there was a lack of undergraduate and graduate programs that would be applicable to my specific needs and interests for professional growth. This realization led me to explore how university programs might create and offer an innovative curriculum that covers teaching artists' wide range of needs for success beyond performance after they complete their degrees. Typical performance track music degrees follow a similar list of required classes, such as lessons in the primary instrument, lessons in piano, music theory, music history, and involvement in ensembles. Additional courses may be required for specific

instruments; for example, vocal performance majors may be required to enroll in diction or foreign languages, song literature, or vocal pedagogy. These courses in undergraduate studies help shape the whole musician to focus on being a confident player or singer. However, in my experience I did not feel like the required courses prepared me to fully understand and successfully participate as a professional musician, teaching artist, or an entrepreneur in the arts. Once I determined that I wanted to focus on becoming a teaching artist, I investigated blogs, journals, and “how to” books for ideas, went to conferences and workshops, and engaged in years of trying to implement these new practices. I quickly learned that I needed help from other teaching artists with more experience in business practices and spent time working with other professionals to get feedback to improve my business model.

### **The Introduction of Design Thinking**

As I began a uniquely designed master's degree program which would allow me to grow as teacher, vocalist, arts management professional, and entrepreneur, I was given the opportunity to develop and teach a course on business skills for performing artists that would allow me to give budding performing artists the benefit of my years of learning. I taught the first iteration of the Business for Performing Artists course in Spring 2021, drawing on the business background that I had developed to design the original curriculum. It was while I was teaching the course in Spring 2021 that I was introduced to the concept of design thinking and started to incorporate the methodologies from the design thinking process into my thinking and teaching with my private voice students and studio business.

I began to ponder the value of including what I had learned about design thinking and an entrepreneurial mindset into the Business for Performing Artists course. Would the infusion of design thinking and ideas about entrepreneurial mindset enhance the students' sense of

professional branding and identity as they began their careers? I proposed the idea to implement design thinking and an entrepreneurial mindset into a collegiate music classroom centered on business practices for teaching and performing artists that I currently taught. The course design, which I expanded since its initial offering, was intended to provide students with a basic understanding of design thinking methodologies as a way to support their current course work and to apply toward their future career endeavors.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the implementation of design thinking and an entrepreneurial mindset into a collegiate music classroom where students might have an interest in applying business acumen and entrepreneurship to their future plans as teaching and performing artists. This research investigated how university students responded to the addition of design thinking strategies on the development of entrepreneurial skills needed for success in their profession. The following questions guided this study:

1. Are there benefits to introducing design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset to music students as they transition from student to professional?
2. Will the addition of these approaches give students greater confidence as arts entrepreneurs?
3. How can these methodologies be successfully introduced and practiced throughout a one-semester course?
4. Will students find these methodologies applicable to their entrepreneurial journey as performing and teaching artists?

### **Review of Literature**

#### **Current Voice Performance Curriculum**

It is important to review requirements and offerings from undergraduate degree programs at a variety of institutions to determine what is included in the typical university curriculum for students following an undergraduate music performance track. Review of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) standards for an undergraduate degree in performance

also provided commentary into the current state of curriculum. NASM includes 633 institutional members that establish the national standards for undergraduate and graduate degrees in music across the United States. NASM also provides accreditation for music and music-related disciplines and assists institutions and individuals engaged in artistic, scholarly, educational, and other music-related endeavors (National Association of Schools of Music, 2023). According to the 2022-2023 NASM Handbook, requirements for an accredited undergraduate degree program toward a Bachelor of Music in performance include:

### 1. Curricular Structure

#### a. All Programs

(1) Curricular structure, content, and time requirements shall enable students to develop the range of knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of those holding a professional baccalaureate degree in performance

(2) Curricula adhere to the following structural guidelines: study in the major area of performance, including ensemble participation, pedagogy courses, independent study, and recitals, should comprise 25-35% of the total program; supportive courses in music, 25–35%; general studies, 25%-35%. Studies in the major area and supportive courses in music normally total at least 65% of the curriculum

b. Pedagogy, Accompanying, Collaborative Keyboard. Including performance studies in the primary instrument, these occupy at least 25% of the curriculum.

c. Early Music. All performance degrees include attention to styles and performance practices. Programs with less than 25% coursework in the area of historically informed performance, but more than a small number of survey courses in these fields, may designate Early Music, Historical Performance, or the equivalent as an area of emphasis.

d. Related Programs may include: Musical Theatre; Voice with Pre-Professional Studies in Opera; and Preprofessional studies in conducting

2. Specific Guidelines for General Studies. Historical and analytical studies in the arts and studies in foreign languages are recommended for all performers.

3. Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities include:

a. Comprehensive capabilities in the major performing medium including the ability to work independently to prepare performances at the highest possible level; knowledge of applicable solo and ensemble literature; and orientation to and experience with the fundamentals of pedagogy. For majors in Early Music, Historical Performance, or the equivalent, the ability to apply aural, Improvisational, and language skills, knowledge of styles and performance practices, and general historical and cultural knowledge as required by the focus of the major is essential.

b. For performance majors in voice, the study and use of foreign languages and to the course of study are essential.

c. Solo and ensemble performance in a variety of formal and informal settings. A senior recital is essential, and a junior recital is recommended. (NASM, 2023)

NASM also provides curriculum requirements for a Bachelor of Music with Studies in Business and/or Music Industry. The requirements provided for the music business degree are separate from the performance track and suggest the inclusion of collaboration with the institution's business school degree requirements.

### **Different Program Requirements**

Review of an average public state university located in the Midwest of the United States follows a traditional trajectory for an undergraduate music performance degree that totals 75 credits in music during a four-year plan of 130 credits in total. Basic music courses for all instruments include four levels of music theory plus an elective, three levels of western music history plus an elective, and foundations in music. Additional requirements include eight semesters of lessons in the primary instrument, eight semesters in a performing ensemble, two semesters of piano, roughly sixteen credits that align with the student's particular instrument, and a junior and senior recital. There are also general education course requirements that total 45 additional credits in a four-year plan. This does not leave room for additional electives or interests without extending the time for an undergraduate plan (Peck School of the Arts, 2023). This institution does not currently offer a bachelor's degree or certificate in music business. There are currently two different courses offered to students interested in music business offered in alternating spring semesters.

In comparison, an average music conservatory program located on the East coast of the United States offers an undergraduate music performance degree for a total of 120 credits. Similar to the music courses listed above, it does not leave room for electives which would offer other areas of interest to be included (Berklee College of Music, 2023). Separate from the

performance track, this institution offers degree programs in music business and other related industry degrees, including a Bachelor of Arts in Music Industry Leadership and Innovation. This program includes a focus on innovation, digital strategy, emerging technologies, and business development. This program is not designed for musicians and does not require a music audition (Berklee College of Music, 2023). The courses included in the music business degree program are not infused in any way into the performance degree.

In 2021, a liberal arts college in the South created an undergraduate program in contemporary musicianship and entrepreneurial development. The curriculum crosses between both music and business courses and totals 124 credits for a four-year-plan which includes an additional certificate in entrepreneurship (Shenandoah University, 2023). This institution made strides towards collaboration between the contemporary musician program and the business school. Dr. Rod Vester, the program director, stated “This new program is truly remarkable and is sure to serve as a national model for what true innovation can look like in higher education when we listen to the needs of young passionate creatives” (Vester, 2021). Vester and his colleagues recognized that their students have an interest in courses that go beyond traditional music theory and history, and want to learn applicable skills for the music industry (Vester, 2021).

### **What is Design Thinking?**

Design Thinking is a problem-solving approach and mindset that has a focus on being human-centered and grounded in empathy. Although the approach has been growing in popularity through the design firm IDEO and degree programs at Stanford University’s Hasso Plattner Institute of Design (d.school), Radford University, and Smith College (Clarke, 2019), this methodology has been in use since the 1960’s and was originally proposed by Herbert

Simon, but articulated with the term “design thinking” by L. Bruce Archer (Archer, 1965).

Design thinking had many different iterations in the decades since its inception (Auernhammer, et al., 2021). A defining moment for the concept was when the founders of IDEO demonstrated how to design a new supermarket on an episode of *Nightline* in 1999. The designers in the episode focused on rapid prototyping and user feedback in their design process. This broadcast introduced the IDEO design process to a whole new group of people and to a degree, brought design thinking into the mainstream (Auernhammer, et al., 2021; Clarke, 2019). Even with this new exposure, IDEO founder David Kelly, still found it to be difficult to articulate the process that was being used and started to use “design thinking” as the identifying term (Brown, 2009).

When beginning to describe design thinking an individual typically starts by exploring the two overlapping concepts. These are described by Clarke (2019) as: “1) a unique way of looking at the world, and 2) a process of activities and methods that reflect and support that worldview” (p. 5). In the most basic terms, design thinking encourages a designer to focus on the needs and perspectives of the human for whom they are designing, to solve a problem in a creative way rather than basing decisions on the designer’s assumptions of the human’s needs and preferences. Artists and creative people naturally tend to see our world differently than an average individual, “Art encourages us to cherish intuition, uncertainty, and creativity and to search constantly for new ideas; artists aim to break rules and find unorthodox ways of approaching contemporary issues” (Eliasson, 2016, n.p.). Design thinking then feels like a natural fit for performing arts students as they are introduced to new entrepreneurial ideas early in their arts career.

Design Thinking requires eight core design abilities for solving problems (Auernhammer et al., 2021; Björgvinsson et al., 2012; Kelley, 2019). Kelley who is a founder of IDEO and the

d.school at Stanford, describes the eight core design abilities as: navigate ambiguity, learn from others, synthesize information, experiment rapidly, move between concrete & abstract, build & craft intentionally, communicate deliberately, and design your design work (Kelley, 2019).

D.school leaders have simplified these concepts to five core abilities that can be completed in any order. They list them as empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test (Hennessey et al., 2020; Pande et al., 2020; Plattner, 2010). These will be the five core design abilities that I will carry over in this research study.

There are misconceptions that design thinking is only applied to projects and ideas that are product designs, new software, technology, or architecture. It is understood that design thinking can be used for these tangible ideas, but its application has broadened beyond just physical products. Solutions can also be digital, like websites or apps, or intellectual constructs, like new educational curriculum, social programs, or new procedures and policies (Auernhammer et al., 2021; Clarke, 2019). Even though social innovation on the surface can seem less tangible, creating and representing physical deliverables like recordings, documents, and photographs, can validate the work of design thinking. Making ideas more concrete assists the design thinking and creative process and can inspire new ideas (Meinel et al., 2011).

### **A Human-Centered Approach**

Being human-centered in the design approach to problem solving is not a new concept but is a key element in design thinking. People have been designing for the benefit of the user since the beginning of time. What makes the human-centered approach unique in human-centered design is the importance of understanding the needs, behaviors, feelings, and motivations of the stakeholders involved in the design process (Fontenelle-Tereshchuk, 2020; Riener et al., 2006). The human-centered design approach has a spectrum of use, from adaptive

equipment for people who identify with a disability to focusing on social innovations like diversity in classrooms (Fontenelle-Tereshchuk, 2020; Riener et al., 2006) The human-centered approach is done through extensive experimenting, noticing, and sensemaking (L. Britos Cavagnaro, personal communication, 2023). In *Design Thinking for the Greater Good*, the authors noted that to be human-centered means to start with real people, not demographic profiles or market segments (Liedtka, et al., 2017). According to Clarke (2019), “instead of relying on nameless and faceless statistics and descriptions, design thinking requires deep explorations into people’s lives before beginning to generate solutions. Empathy as opposed to knowledge alone is key” (p. 9). Designer’s must truly know and understand the stakeholders, groups, or individuals for whom they are designing otherwise the designer might mistakenly rely on their assumptions rather than solving the real problem with which they are charged:

Empathy is the centerpiece of a human-centered design process. The Empathize mode is the work you do to understand people, within the context of your design challenge. It is your effort to understand the way they do things and why, their physical and emotional needs, how they think about the world, and what is meaningful to them. (Plattner, 2010, n.p.)

It is important to define the distinction between empathy, and the more often used sympathy in our society. Sympathy is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as “the feeling of being sorry for someone; showing that you understand and care about someone's problems” (OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com, n.d., n.p.) and Brown (2021), in her book, *Atlas of the Heart* takes it a step further by describing that sympathy is a cousin to the term pity. In contrast, the definition of empathy is “the ability to understand another person’s feelings, experience, etc.” (OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com, n.d., n.p.). The analogy of walking in someone else's shoes is used frequently when describing empathy. Having empathy, truly understanding the experiences of another through thorough research and reflection, allows the designer to have a human-

centered approach. Brown (2021) stated, “Rather than being a tool for connection, sympathy emerged in the data as a form of disconnection” (p. 124). Although all five design abilities are important to the overall success of the methodology, the beginning step of empathy is the most connected ability to teaching artists.

### **A New Focus on Entrepreneurship**

The combination of introducing design thinking, a focus on the human-centered design approach along with developing an entrepreneurial mindset may equip early career performing artists with the tools needed to transition from student to professional. Entrepreneurship is a noun defined as “the activity of making money by starting or running businesses, especially when this involves taking financial risks” (OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com, n.d., n.p.). Knowing the difference between entrepreneurship and being entrepreneurial or having an entrepreneurial mindset, is another important concept as an early career arts entrepreneur. In some circles, being your own boss, creating a start-up, and being a small business owner are glamorized as the American dream (White, 2003). Having an entrepreneurial mindset is defined as “a set of skills that enable people to identify and make the most of opportunities, overcome and learn from setbacks, and succeed in a variety of settings” (NFTE, 2018, n.p.). Having an entrepreneurial mindset becomes a part of a teaching artist’s individual identity as they move forward as a performing artist.

It is important to practice entrepreneurship as a methodology. When the definition of entrepreneurship is changed into “a way of thinking, acting, and being that combines the ability to find or create new opportunities with the courage to act on them” (Neck et al., 2021b, p. 3), it implies the notion of action and creating your own opportunities when they do not exist. When entrepreneurship is treated as a continued practice and methodology, it can be seen, in one form

or another, to impact our lives in every way. If it were not for the entrepreneurial mindset, we would not have technology like the iPhone. Steve Jobs, one of the co-founders and inventors of the iPhone, practiced similar mindset practices that encouraged human-centered design, the entrepreneurial truth of taking action, and practicing continuous iteration as part of their company's innovative culture (Isaacson, 2014).

There are many misconceptions about entrepreneurship because, often in discussion, the focus is on glamorized, overnight success stories. In the book *Entrepreneurship the Practice and Mindset*, the authors list the truths that debunk some preconceived notions about teaching entrepreneurship. The truths are listed as:

- Truth 1: Entrepreneurship is not reserved for start-ups.
- Truth 2: Entrepreneurs do not have a special set of personality traits.
- Truth 3: Entrepreneurship can be taught (It's a Method that requires practice).
- Truth 4: Entrepreneurs are not extreme risk takers.
- Truth 5: Entrepreneurs collaborate more than they compete.
- Truth 6: Entrepreneurs act more than they plan.
- Truth 7: Entrepreneurship is a life skill. (Neck et al., 2021b, p.4)

Truth 3, the idea that entrepreneurship can be taught and that it is a method that requires practice, again alludes to the idea of action. Entrepreneurship is a practice of action which is outlined across these statements, especially in Truth 6. This raises the question of how we can best teach and introduce entrepreneurship to young performing artists. If entrepreneurship is an action-based process, should the teaching also follow that process? This thought is addressed in the book *Teaching Entrepreneurship: Practice Based Approach* where the authors ask a similar question, "How can we expect to develop the entrepreneurial mindset of our students if we do not model a similar approach in our own teaching?" (Neck et al., 2021a, p.17). The authors also share the five practices of entrepreneurial education, which are play, empathy, creation, experimentation, and reflection. These practices align naturally with the design thinking abilities

of empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test (Hennessey et al., 2020; Pande et al., 2020; Plattner, 2010).

### **Summary**

The literature for this research study was outlined in several areas of focus. Current review of typical university undergraduate vocal performance curriculums show that many programs do not include courses focused on entrepreneurship. There are new programs being created that have an entrepreneurial component, both full majors and single semester courses.

The design thinking process for this research was defined as empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test, which are the five core design abilities. The first ability, empathize, is further discussed as the human-centered design approach. Also considered was the difference between entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial mindset. Entrepreneurial mindset was framed by the five practices of entrepreneurial education, which are play, empathy, creation, experimentation, and reflection.

This research study investigated the implementation of design thinking and an entrepreneurial mindset into a collegiate music classroom, where students have an interest in applying business acumen and entrepreneurship to their future plans as teaching and performing artists. This research also investigated how students responded to the addition of design thinking strategies on the development of entrepreneurial skills needed for success in their profession.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Background of Course Creation**

#### **Teaching Artist to Entrepreneur**

After graduating with an undergraduate degree focusing on vocal performance and private voice instruction, I spent the next decade reading, researching, experimenting, and searching for any information that would help me be successful as a teacher. According to Lortie, “by the time you reach college, you have spent from 13,000 to 15,000 hours as an ‘apprentice of observing’ successful and unsuccessful teaching” (cited in Campbell et al., 2021, p. 16). The idea of continued learning grew in me and was a great way to describe that decade of my career. I was an “apprentice” and “learner”. I regularly signed up for workshops and conferences, and I read articles and books to further my knowledge in vocal function and acting. I gained classroom experience through substitute teaching and working on high school musical theater productions. I also sought information about entrepreneurship and running a business. Through my years of “apprenticing,” I realized what was missing from my collegiate coursework. The curriculum for my performance track degree taught me to be a performer and artist but did not address the fact that many performers eventually move into teaching, and all performing artists and teachers become entrepreneurs. Courses on business, nonprofit work, and educational pedagogy would have been a beneficial addition to my program as an undergraduate student and musician.

The many positive experiences I had during my “apprentice stage” led to the need for more information and a realization of what I was missing. For years I have organized an event with my voice students called Beans & Belting, a benefit recital that raised money for nonprofit organizations supporting the performing arts opportunities for people that identify with disabilities. It was a passion project of mine that strengthened skills that I did not realize I had,

such as networking and fundraising. It also created positive educational and performing experiences for my students. It allowed me to create a teaching philosophy that included community outreach and advocacy as part of my studio's curriculum. I realized that my goals as a teacher and business owner involved more than helping students become good musicians and singers. I also aimed to teach my students how to be better people and lead by example. Another influential experience that helped me on my path was my long-term substitute teaching position in an area high school. Substitute teaching gave me an opportunity to gain teaching experience in a classroom setting. It taught me classroom management and how to work with large groups of students, and it posed a large challenge for me. It confirmed that I do not want to run a high school choral program, but it proved that I love teaching both private lessons and in the classroom. I also proved that I had a passion for entrepreneurship and running a business.

### **The Business for Performing Artists Course in Spring 2021**

Due to my success and experience in teaching and running my own business, in Fall of 2020, I was asked to develop a business course for vocalists and future teaching artists that would be applicable to all performing artists. My background as a voice teacher and entrepreneur prepared me for the process of deciding what content was needed to give learners a taste of important topics that would help them be successful arts entrepreneurs. The chosen textbook was *The artist's compass: the complete guide to building a life and a living in the performing arts* by Rachel Moore (2016) which was selected before I was asked to teach, and gave a good outline for the semester's topic journey. In addition, readings from the following materials were included:

1. *The Professional Actor's Handbook: From Casting Call to Curtain Call* (Agustin & Potts, 2017).
2. *The Empowered Artist: A Call to Action for Musicians, Writers, Visual Artists, and Anyone Who Wants to Make a Difference with Their Creativity* (Baker, 2015).

3. *The World's Your Stage: How Performing Artists Can make A Living While Still Doing What They Love* (Baker, Gibson & Leatherwood, 2016).
4. *The Actor's Business Plan: A Career Guide for the Acting Life* (Brody, 2015).
5. *Act Like It's Your Business: Branding and Marketing Strategies for Actors* (Flom, 2013).
6. *Making It Work: A Dancers Guide to the Business of Professional Dance* (Loucadoux & Margheritis, 2017).
7. *Building A Story Brand: Clarify Your Message So Customers Will Listen* (Miller, 2017).
8. *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule The Future* (Pink, 2005).

The course ran for the first time in Spring 2021 during the global COVID-19 pandemic. The three-credit synchronous online course met once a week for an hour and a half. The course description was listed as:

A pre-professional course aimed at preparing the student to make the transition from student to professional. Students will be guided through business subjects of the performing industry such as marketing, branding, resume writing, and website construction (See full syllabus in Appendix A).

In addition to the subjects listed in the syllabus, the course had special guests who were experts in their given areas. For example, I hosted a professor from a nearby university that was an expert in self-tape auditions, which were rising in popularity because of the pandemic. The professor offered both a workshop and a discussion on their experiences. Based on verbal feedback given during debrief in class, students found such expert visits to be positive and influential in their growth as artists. In addition to our special guests, the class also took one in-person field trip to a local establishment designed and created for artists to collaborate and share their art. This visit was to both share about local industry opportunities, but also for students to practice networking in-person instead of virtually. Learning objectives and course goals were:

Be able to define their brand and strategically employ this in all tools of the trade. i.e., website, resume, headshot, cover letter, audition attire). Create and launch a marketing plan through the development of a website, business cards, and/or presence in various social media networking sites. Delineate a team of both personal and industry professionals to support a successful career in the performing arts. Initiate contact with a network in the industry and organize a financial plan that will support their initial entry into the industry (See full syllabus in Appendix A).

## **My Introduction to Design Thinking**

While I was teaching the course for the first time in Spring of 2021, I was simultaneously discovering, learning about, and training in design thinking. The concepts in design thinking were not all new to me but the language and how to express the process was. I was first introduced to the term design thinking when applying to a fellowship program called the University Innovation Fellows through the d.school at Stanford University. A team of undergraduate and graduate students of varying disciplines and majors was sought from each applying institution. My team embarked on a seven-week long virtual program that trained us in the basics of design and how to become change makers on our campus. We were charged with completing a team project over the course of the academic year. Through this program I was also introduced to our campus entrepreneurship center and many like-minded colleagues and mentors. I quickly latched on to design thinking methodology because I discovered that I was already using design abilities in my business and teaching, and the methodology gave me terminology and a language to express what I was doing pedagogically.

Although there were many positive outcomes from the initial Business for Performing Artist course taught in 2021, there was room for improvement in the course design that would run in Spring of 2023. I knew that the addition of materials on design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset was something to explore in the planning process for the second iteration of the course along with using the design abilities in the course planning process. I hoped that students would find the addition of design thinking as beneficial a tool in arts entrepreneurship as I had.

The Business for Performing Artists course is offered every other spring and during the intervening year, another opportunity arose to apply for a curriculum innovation grant and

fellowship in the spring of 2022 through the university's entrepreneurship center. After the first iteration of the class, I saw the continued need to explore how entrepreneurship and innovation could be incorporated into existing or new programming offered at my current institution. I partnered with the voice area head at the time to explore what options might be possible within the voice curriculum and wrote a project proposal for the grant. In January of 2022, we were awarded \$10,000 and started to explore different options to expand the current curriculum. We proposed a new graduate program that was closely mirrored to the individualized master's program I was able to design for myself, and we used the outline of the first course iteration to guide where we felt more time was needed on specific topics. When we started our stakeholder mapping and interviews, we found that leadership was interested in the idea of a new program as long as it could be "budget neutral" in cost for the school and department. While the roadblocks and red tape meant the larger project would not be possible, I was able to pivot my idea and focus on the revision of the course that was held in the spring of 2023. In addition to the financial support of the grant, the fellowship sent my colleague and I to further d.school training in the summer of 2022 called Teaching and Learning Studio (TLS). This weeklong program completely immersed participants in the design process through short experiments, workshops, and collaborations. This experience alone changed the trajectory of both the future of the Business for Performing Artists course and my professional career. This program gave me additional tools to share with students and helped to build my confidence as a designer and educator.

### **Reimagining the Course for Spring 2023**

When I started the redesign of the course for its second iteration, there were no other courses that included design thinking in their materials required for majors in the music

department. I made some specific changes to the business course to implement design thinking. I changed the modality of the course from online to in-person to help foster a sense of community and allow the participants the opportunity for more teambuilding and collaboration. This also allowed me to try different activities that would be most successful if done in-person. The addition of interactive activities that helped develop skills in problem solving, teamwork, and ideating were also an addition to the course along with weekly reflection prompts that would be completed at the end of each class in their personal journals. Lastly, I added a new module on design thinking and shorter lessons on it that were incorporated throughout the course in hopes of regularly practicing one or more design abilities throughout the semester. I was hoping that by making these changes I would be able to introduce design thinking and an entrepreneurial mindset to participants and that they would find these methodologies applicable to their future careers as performing and teaching artists.

This led to a research project that investigated how students responded to the addition of design thinking strategies on the development of entrepreneurial skills needed for success in their profession. Research questions investigating benefits to introducing design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset to music students as they transition from student to professional were explored through qualitative research methods using surveys, course materials, and class discussions.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

This research study explored student responses to the implementation of design thinking and an entrepreneurial mindset in the undergraduate and graduate performing arts curriculum of an urban, research university in the Midwest United States. Students enrolled in the Business for Performing Artist course in the Spring semester of 2023, which was taught by the researcher, were given a basic understanding of design thinking through course discussions, in class activities, readings, and assignments. The core aspects of the class focused on personal identity and branding, finance, networking, design thinking and entrepreneurship as applied to the performing arts. The purpose and overall goal of this course was to offer applicable life skills to performing artists so that they might be empowered for success after graduation.

The course was a requirement for graduation with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Versatile Voice but was offered to all music, theater, and dance students with junior standing or above, including graduate students. The purpose of this qualitative research study was to understand what impact basic knowledge of both design thinking and an entrepreneurial mindset had on young performing arts students as they applied entrepreneurial skills and ideas into their future professional career in the performing arts.

Individual participants' baseline knowledge about design thinking and an entrepreneurial mindset were determined through a series of surveys, starting before the first-class meeting. Over the course of the semester students were asked the same questions on each survey to determine how their understanding and interest in the concepts being presented evolved. In addition to surveys, course work was reviewed and analyzed to reveal the impact of the curriculum introduced.

## **Participants**

### ***Group One – Spring 2023 Students***

The music business for performing artists course in the Spring of 2023 had a total enrollment of 13 participants including one graduate student. All enrolled students were offered the opportunity to participate in the research study by completing three qualitative surveys through Qualtrics and agreeing to allow their course work to be reviewed and coded for analysis. Assurance was given to students through the Institutional Review Board process that choosing to participate or not would have no influence on their grade in the course. Twelve of the 13 students signed the consent forms to participate in the study.

### ***Group Two – Spring 2021 Students***

In the Spring of 2021, the Business for Performing Artists course was first offered to vocal music majors in Versatile Voice as a requirement for their program, and was also offered to other interested music, theater, and dance students. The original class had a total of 14 music students, three of which were graduate students. This course did not include specific content related to design thinking and an entrepreneurial mindset. Students from this group were contacted and requested to participate in a Qualtrics survey. Two people completed the survey.

## **Qualitative Surveys**

The second iteration of the course in Spring of 2023 (Group one), was given a series of three surveys throughout the semester. The first survey link (see Figure 1 below) was sent to all students in the course the week before the first class meeting to gather information about student goals for the course and to determine initial background knowledge on design thinking and entrepreneurial mindset.

## Figure 1

### *Survey One – Group One (Spring 2023)*

Question #	Question
1	Full Name
2	Email Address
3	Major
4	Year in School (Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Graduate Year 1, Graduate Year 2, Other)
5	Do you currently have a website?
6	What social media platforms do you use? (Choose all that apply: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TicTok, Pinterest, YouTube, WhatsApp, Reddit, BeReal, Other)
7	Do you have any experience with Design Thinking? If so, please share.
8	In your own words please describe entrepreneurship.
9	What are you hoping to learn from this course?
10	What are your main areas of interest? (Choose all that apply: Personal Branding, marketing, Finance & Accounting, Contracts, Design, Side Hustles, Arts management, Nonprofits, Design Thinking, Entrepreneurship)
11	What are a few of your goals for after graduation?
12	If there were no barriers and you had unlimited funds, what would your dream career look like?

The second and third survey links were sent to everyone in the class, even if they decided to not participate in the study (see Figures 2 & 3). The second survey was given after week seven of the course, and the final survey link was sent at the last class meeting of the semester. Structured questions allowing for open-ended answers based on Fontana & Frey (1994) were used on each survey to follow specific participants' answers across the semester to determine which ideas and techniques were being retained. Participants were asked to include their name on the survey to link responses to similar questions regarding design thinking and entrepreneurship across the three surveys.

## Figure 2

### *Survey Two – Group One (Spring 2023)*

Question #	Question
1	Full Name
2	Email Address
3	What new social media platforms have you explored since the beginning of the semester? (Choose all that apply: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TicTok, Pinterest, YouTube, WhatsApp, Reddit, BeReal, Other)
4	How has your engagement on your social media platforms changed in the last 6 weeks?
5	In your own words please describe Design Thinking.
6	In your own words please describe entrepreneurship.
7	What are your main areas of interest for the second half of the semester? (Choose all that apply: Personal Branding, marketing, Finance & Accounting, Contracts, Design, Side Hustles, Arts management, Nonprofits, Design Thinking, Entrepreneurship)
8	What is a new idea or concept that you have taken from the course?
9	Has the material shared in this course influenced your goals for after graduation?
10	Hypothetical: The U.S. government is allowing each American citizen to create/design one new federal law. What law would you design? There are no limits think back about the “Yes and” improv game while designing.

There are two survey questions that were used for this research project. The first question that was asked on all three surveys for this research project was “In your own words, please describe design thinking”. The second question that was asked on all three surveys for this research project was “In your own words, please describe entrepreneurship”. The study started with a total of fourteen participants. During the first three weeks of the course, one additional student enrolled in the course and two students dropped out of the course. The total number of participants that completed the course at the end of the semester was thirteen. The additional student that added the course did agree to participate in the survey. Surveys that were completed by participants that did not complete the course were taken out of the results. Only nine participants completed at least one survey and three participants completed all three surveys.

**Figure 3**

*Survey Three – Group One (Spring 2023)*

Question #	Question
1	Full Name
2	Email Address
3	What new social media platforms have you explored since the beginning of the semester? (Choose all that apply: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TicTok, Pinterest, YouTube, WhatsApp, Reddit, BeReal, Other)
4	In your own words please describe Design Thinking.
5	In your own words please describe entrepreneurship.
6	Topic: Marketing & Branding Did you find this special guest applicable to your continued growth as an entrepreneur? Please share any take aways from this special guest?
7	Topic: Networking in the Arts Did you find this special guest applicable to your continued growth as an entrepreneur? Please share any take aways from this special guest?
8	Topic: Accounting Did you find this special guest applicable to your continued growth as an entrepreneur? Please share any take aways from this special guest?
9	What was your favorite topic discussed this semester?
10	Have you noticed if your interests have changed or broadened over the course of the semester? If yes, please explain.
11	What is a new idea or concept that you have taken from the course?
12	Has the material shared in this course influenced your goals for after graduation?
13	Would you have liked to learn about any additional topics? If so, please share.
14	Did you feel that enough time was spent on each topic? If not, please explain why.
15	Would you recommend this course to your colleagues?

In addition to the three surveys given to the participants in group one, the researcher analyzed the teaching and course materials, and weekly notes using the materials culture practices of Hodder (1994). These notes were compared with the data from the three surveys. Participant discussion posts and weekly assignments connected to design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset were also analyzed for understanding of participants' comprehension of the material.

Participants in Group two from Spring of 2021, who did not receive design thinking instruction were contacted at the time of the research project and asked to complete a survey in May of 2023 (Figure 4) as a follow up to the course. Survey questions were chosen to determine if they had any experience with the new topics that were offered in the second iteration of the course and how the original course impacted their career after graduation. The researcher received two completed surveys.

**Figure 4**

*Follow-Up Survey – Group Two (Spring 2021)*

Question #	Question
1	Full Name
2	Email Address
3	Degree Completed and Year of Graduation
4	Do you currently have a website?
5	Is it the website you created in Music 680 (Spring 2021)?
6	What social media platforms do you use? (Choose all that apply: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TicTok, Pinterest, YouTube, WhatsApp, Reddit, BeReal, Other)
7	Do you have any experience with Design Thinking? If so, please share.
8	In your own words please describe entrepreneurship.
9	Do you identify as an entrepreneur? If so, please explain.
10	Please share what professional experiences you have had in the last two years.
11	Did you feel prepared to transition from performing arts student to professional?
12	What do you feel was missing from your educational experiences in Music 680 and outside of Music 680 that would have helped you feel more confident as a performer and entrepreneur?
13	If there were no barriers and you had unlimited funds, what would your dream career look like?

**Procedure**

Participants were recruited for this qualitative research study based on their enrollment in the Music Business for Performing Artists courses in spring of 2021 and 2023. The course descriptions for both were listed as a pre-professional course aimed at preparing the student to

make the transition from student to professional. Students were guided through business subjects of the performing industry such as marketing, branding, resume writing, and website construction. In addition to the subjects listed in the syllabus, the course had special guests who were experts in their given areas. Participants were also given weekly readings, assignments, and discussion posts to complete. These assignments were intended to help with practical business skills, to move participants' final website projects forward, and to encourage critical thinking and individual reflection. Group one had additional reading and class discussions that included material on design thinking.

Data from the group one surveys was coded by looking for common threads and themes in each survey and then comparing them to the other surveys. Due to the sporadic participation, only three students' provided data across all three surveys. Survey data from group one was analyzed in relationship to other course materials and class notes. Data from the second groups' surveys was coded for common threads and themes to compare to the group one surveys for differences, based not on design thinking content, but on two years of professional experience.

All data sources were open-coded based on the techniques of Saldaña (2016). Data analysis and interpretation was based on the techniques of Huberman & Miles (1994) and data triangulation achieved across all sources (Janesick, 1994).

### **Summary**

This qualitative study included two participant groups: one from the Spring 2023 Business for Performing Artist class that included the implementation of design thinking, and the second group from Spring 2021 that did not include design thinking methodologies. Three Qualtrics surveys were conducted with group one to follow participants' understanding and growth of design thinking and entrepreneurship. A different survey was given to participants in

group two as a follow-up to their experiences in the course and after graduation. The creation and ideation of the Business for Performing Artists course plays an important role in this research because of the addition of design thinking into the curriculum of the course in Spring of 2023.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

The results chapter will explore the data from three qualitative surveys given to group one students from spring 2023, along with course materials and class discussions. The first survey was introduced the week prior to the first in-class meeting in January 2023. The survey was intended for fact-finding across multiple goals. It was important to learn what topics the students were interested in focusing on for the semester as well as collecting a baseline understanding of how students defined and comprehended design thinking and entrepreneurship. The second survey was given midway through the course after seven weeks in March 2023, and the third survey was given at the last class meeting in May 2023. The addition of design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset were introduced during this second iteration of the course and the understanding was measured through surveys and discussions. Results from the survey given to group two students from the original course in spring 2021, were also analyzed and compared to group one's results.

### **Survey Results**

#### ***Student Goals***

Students reported on their online presence and their interests and goals related to the course and future careers. Out of the original fourteen students enrolled at the beginning of the semester of Spring 2023, nine completed the survey. Out of the nine surveys completed, only one student had a website they were using for professional performing and teaching endeavors. All nine of the survey participants shared that they had experience using social media for personal and entertainment reasons on a regular basis. Students expressed the most interest for the course in focusing on topics revolving around personal branding, marketing, finances, and arts management. They also expressed their need for guidance in navigating the performing arts

industry as they transition from student to professional. When asked “What are a few goals for after graduation?”, there was a sense and tone expressing a level of anxiety; this was noted in the written responses. One participant shared in the first survey that, “A main goal of mine is to be able to pay rent and buy groceries every month. I have two majors and am fully aware that I may have to rely on doing PR or ad work at times while I find my ground marketing myself as a musician.” Answers also included the need for guidance navigating towards the career that will have the best fit. One student wrote, “I really have a hard time figuring out what I want to do as a performer and how I want to be perceived. I am hoping this will lead me down that path and give me a place to try it out.” Students were also eager to learn how to advocate for themselves in the industry: “I am hoping to learn more about marketing myself and advocating for myself in a professional setting.” In addition to these comments about what students hoped to gain from the course, there were also students that knew what they wanted to do next and were hoping the course would guide them towards information that could assist in their goals. For example, these students were interested in pursuing master's degrees in performance and arts administration or becoming a teaching artist after graduation.

### ***Design Thinking in Group One Surveys***

To better determine and gather baseline understanding of design thinking, participants were asked to share their experiences with the concept through a survey prior to the first-class meeting in Spring of 2023. Out of the nine surveys completed, six participants had no experience or knowledge of the design thinking process. The other three participants had heard of it but were not able to define the term or articulate its meaning. One student wrote, “I have heard of this many times but have yet to really have the concept explained to me. I know that the cycles in the model are interchangeable, and it embraces a sense of trial and error in order to create the

best scenario/product through feelings and ideas.” The participant’s use of the terms “trial and error”, can be equated to ideating, brainstorming, and testing multiple prototypes which are part of the concept. The student also used the term “feeling” which could imply the design thinking concept of empathizing with a client or user.

The second survey was given mid-way through the semester in March of 2023, after seven class meetings. Unlike the first survey which was fact-finding, this second survey was intended to show the development of thinking about the ideas of design thinking that were presented through the course. The definitions in the second survey were compared to the baseline definitions of the ten participants that completed the first survey.

When participants were asked to describe design thinking in the second survey, they used key phrases such as problem solving, new solutions, and trial and error. Participants showed that they understood the basic concepts of design thinking by including words that matched some of the five main design principles of empathize, define, ideate, prototype and test. There were a few students that had a more articulated definition when describing design thinking. Compared to the first survey where students had a difficult time articulating design thinking and only focused on “trial and error” and the ideation process, for the second survey one student wrote, “A process in which you experiment with solving a problem or workshopping an idea through trial and error. In this process you explore the audience impacted by the idea or problem and test your solutions or ideas with others.” Another participant was able to translate the definition to make sense to them. They stated, “Design thinking for me is the guidelines for realizing an idea. It is sometimes overwhelming to know where to start when you have a project in your mind. Design thinking is a supportive guide to help you with it.” Participants were able to translate design thinking into terms that were applicable to them and the course. One participant shared, “Design Thinking is

trying a million things to find what does and does not work for you. It is the trial-and-error way of discovering yourself and your brand.”

The third and final survey given to participants was distributed during the last week of class in May of 2023. This last survey was meant to collect data on the participants’ comprehension of the course content provided for the entire semester. Like the first and second surveys, students were asked to define design thinking to demonstrate how their thinking had developed or changed. In addition, students were asked to share thoughts about the course overall. Only four participants completed this survey.

As with the first and second surveys, similarities in wording and phrases were found in the third survey when students were asked to define design thinking. Words and phrases consistently shared by participants in the definition of design thinking were creative, problem solving, and trial and error. The students’ understanding of the process had developed and could be seen in the additions to their third survey definitions. They added ideas about collaboration, learning through action, and thinking critically. It is also notable that their definitions were shorter, more concise, and clearer. One student defined design thinking as “Trying out a bunch of things and seeing what fits and what does not. It is learning through action/trial and error”. Another student shared that “design thinking is a step-by-step process of creative thinking and collaboration to develop solutions for issues and helps advance the skills you need to help your career”. The two elements of collaboration and application to their career made this student’s definition stand out.

### ***Entrepreneurship in Group One Surveys***

The first survey also asked participants to define entrepreneurship to determine a baseline understanding. Compared to their definitions of design thinking, participants had more to share

when asked to describe entrepreneurship. There were many common themes and key words in their definitions. For example, students expressed that entrepreneurship includes owning and running a business, working for oneself, and taking risks through innovation and creative thinking. Students more successful definitions on survey one may reflect that entrepreneurship is referred to more openly in society and education, and students had more exposure to the term and the idea of becoming an entrepreneur. There were standout definitions shared by students. One student shared regarding personal branding and self-promotion in entrepreneurship, “No one will want to invest in something that the creator wouldn't do so themselves. For music, it's important to perform in a manner that resonates with things you believe and value, because other people will most likely feel the same way”. Another student shared, “I think entrepreneurship is a way to forge your own unique way in the world”. This definition related to class discussions regarding personal branding and “unique selling points”. Another student shared, “Entrepreneurship is taking risks and making decisions towards one's business and brand. Essentially, you are creating, managing, and executing personal plans in a business setting”. Again, this student brought forward topics and ideas into their definition of entrepreneurship which were shared with them in the course. The last standout definition shared was, “I think of entrepreneurship as taking charge of an idea or job and making it your own. It usually involves the way you view yourself as well as the ways that others view you. It involves creative thinking and lots of grit. It is very different for each individual.” Their definitions included elements of the entrepreneurial mindset by talking about the value of a product/service, forging your own unique way, taking risks, and discussing creative thinking and grit. These statements can be translated into important themes in the entrepreneurial mindset, such as being unique and having action trump everything.

The second survey, which was given mid-way through the semester was intended to show the development of thinking about entrepreneurship that had been presented through the course. The definitions in the second survey were compared to the baseline definitions of the ten participants that completed the survey.

The first survey showed that participants had more confidence when asked to define entrepreneurship than design thinking. When asked midway through the semester, they started to refine their definitions of entrepreneurship. Instead of only focusing on terms and phrases revolving around “being your own boss” and “starting a new business” that were found in the first survey, participants started to indicate new comprehension of entrepreneurship by bringing ideas of the entrepreneurial mindset. This was shown in phrases like “personal pursuit of marketing yourself”, “realizing a vision”, and “developing an idea”. Through these updated student definitions, there is evidence of a growth mindset. Although this was not a topic covered in the course with students, it is another element that is important in both design thinking and entrepreneurship. The growth mindset is a concept created by psychologist Carol Dweck:

Talent and intelligence can grow with practice, effort, and experience. Students with a growth mindset embrace challenges. They view obstacles and even mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow. They know they can develop their abilities through hard work, persistence, and asking for help when needed. Growth mindset empowers students to take risks and keep trying until they learn and improve. (Big Life Journal, 2020, n.p.)

In addition to asking students to define design thinking and entrepreneurship, the survey included questions regarding new concepts or ideas they had learned up to the mid-term point. Participants also shared that they had learned a lot about personal branding and marketing concepts, along with new ideas and opportunities in the non-profit and arts management space. This was not an original learning objective when creating the course but shows that students are more open to new opportunities. When asked if what they had learned so far has influenced their

goals after graduation, some shared their excitement for new opportunities and ideas, while others felt a new sense of pressure.

The third and final survey was distributed during the last week of class. This survey was meant to collect data on the participants' comprehension of the course content provided for the entire semester. Like the first and second surveys, students were asked to define entrepreneurship to determine how their thinking had developed or changed. In addition, students were asked to share thoughts about the overall course. Only four participants completed this survey.

Students' definitions of entrepreneurship, in the third survey, were shorter than past definitions, similar to the design thinking definitions. In the first survey, definitions were two to three sentences and in the third survey, most were one sentence. Instead of a more refined or developed definition for entrepreneurship, the participants consistently shared similar keywords and phrases like "be your own boss". Participants showed that they were able to more clearly articulate their definition of entrepreneurship, but the general definitions did not change.

It is interesting how the participants started to apply entrepreneurship as individual feelings in their definitions as if entrepreneurship is a part of the entrepreneur's identity. One student shared: "Creating your own ideas and bringing them into fruition. Being your own leader and boss". Another student stated that the "product or service you provide means a lot to you". That does not necessarily align with the typical definition of entrepreneurship, but it does allude to having and knowing your "why".

### **Summary**

The three qualitative surveys provided participant definitions of design thinking and entrepreneurship which were analyzed and compared to show how the definitions changed over

the fifteen-week course and how participants started to apply the concepts to their current and future performing and teaching artist endeavors.

### **Course Additions and Reflections**

Beyond the analyzation of participant survey results, the curriculum outline and timeline were important to understanding the full picture of what participants learned. The semester covers a total of 15 weeks, 13 of which had new content regarding the business of performing arts that was introduced. Each week of new content included a lecture, an in-class activity, a weekly discussion post, and an assignment. The first time the course ran in Spring of 2021, it was in a fully virtual modality and the second time in Spring of 2023, the course was held in-person.

Weekly topics were similar for both course iterations with the exception of one week where design thinking was introduced in the Spring 2023 course. The amount of time focused on each topic was determined from the interest that students expressed both in class and through the surveys. Although the topics were the same, the second iteration included new activities that would encourage design thinking, creativity, and more critical thinking. Such activities were easier to accomplish in the in-person teaching modality.

Within the course, not every week was focused on design thinking and entrepreneurship. Many of the course modules were focused on practical skills like building participant websites, resume writing, interviewing/auditioning, and time management. This posed a challenge to incorporating ideas and activities based in design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset. There were key modules and activities that were created to introduce new ideas on design thinking and to put into practice what students had learned. The most important weeks and modules focused on design thinking and entrepreneurship were introduced early in the semester.

## ***Introduction to Design Thinking in Week Two***

During the second week of class, design thinking was introduced more formally along with the five abilities and processes of design thinking, with a strong focus on empathy. The class participants were asked to explore how design thinking can be used while creating and defining their own personal brands. To connect to the previous week's discussion on unique selling points and developing their personal brand, each student was tasked with creating an app icon based on their unique selling points and developing identity, which was added to our larger-than-life smartphone. The directions to the activity included using a post-it note to draw an app icon that best represented themselves, add a fun name to the app, and then place it on the larger-than-life iPhone drawn on the whiteboard. I chose this activity to help everyone get to know one another and to encourage creativity. Students struggled with this activity, and I noticed that it stressed some students out because there was no “correct answer”. Many simply chose to write their own name instead of creating an app icon.

We did a second group activity where students were asked to solve a problem in an arts related scenario using the design thinking process. Again, students struggled with this activity and needed more time than I had planned for the activity to consider and understand the design thinking process.

There was not a written assignment during this week, but students were asked to read a chapter from Roth's *Achievement Habit* (2016). This book was written by one of the founders of the d.school at Stanford and his writing can seem ambiguous to some people. Students were encouraged to take their previous discussion post about success a step further and explore how their own perspectives drive what they feel. The feedback in the discussion posts and in the following class were negative, and the students either did not like Roth's writing style or how his

message was delivered. I was hoping to get students to think more critically in a design thinking space and unfortunately, students were unhappy because they did not fully understand the ideas being shared.

### ***Design Thinking Activities and Lessons***

After the initial introduction to design thinking in the second week of the course, I felt it was important to include smaller pieces of the design process throughout the remaining semester. During the third session, we started the class with an icebreaker activity called “Lemonade” from the d.school stoke deck, which is a virtual handout that has a number of different activities you can do to “help boost energy, create focus, get personal, nurture camaraderie, and communicate mindsets” (Cone & Anaissie, n.d). Lemonade is an activity meant to boost energy and nurture camaraderie. It also encompasses improvisational skills and creativity. The instructions for the activity were to put the group of 6-20 participants into a circle, have someone state “lemon” and share a bummer about their day. The next person is intended to turn the negative into “lemonade” by looking on the bright side of what happened. The cycle continues around the circle. The activity, which had good intentions, went dark when the first “lemon” shared was far too personal. Participants struggled to come up with “lemonade” options to fulfill the task. As the teacher, I tried to redirect on multiple occasions, but was unable to make the activity a success. We debriefed the activity as a group and the students liked the concept but were not able to articulate why they struggled with the improvisation, on the spot responses. In the sixth class of the course, participants were introduced to journey mapping, which:

Is a visualization of the process that a person goes through in order to accomplish a goal. In its most basic form, journey mapping starts by compiling a series of user actions into a timeline. Next, the timeline is fleshed out with user thoughts and emotions in order to create a narrative. (Gibbons, 2018, “Journey Mapping 101” section)

Participants were tasked with creating a journey map of their previous weekend and looking at the highs and lows. They were then asked to share their journey with a partner and the partner was tasked with retelling the story or journey shared with them. This activity was introduced to promote empathy, active listening, and learning how to share and express what the participants learned. When debriefing with participants after the activity, they shared how they enjoyed this activity and found it to be easy because of their past experiences as performing artists. This activity was a success with students. They easily were able to articulate their past experiences with their colleagues and retell the experiences of their partner. Some participants verbally shared during the debrief that they felt comfortable with this activity because of how it closely aligned with performing.

For the eighth week of class, the participants met online, switching modalities to keep everyone healthy due to a large performance in which the majority of participants were involved. This gave a unique opportunity to experiment with a virtual activity where the class could co-design a meeting in real-time based on prompts given to the participants. The class topic for this session was based on networking. Part of the design thinking process is to define the right problem, and to do this, making a list of assumptions is important:

An assumption is an unexamined belief: what we think without realizing we think it. Our inferences (also called conclusions) are often based on assumptions that we haven't thought about critically. A critical thinker, however, is attentive to these assumptions because they are sometimes incorrect or misguided. Just because we assume something is true doesn't mean it is. (University of Louisville Libraries, 2023, "Question Assumptions" section)

Individuals use assumptions daily to help with decision making. When talking about networking, it was important to list assumptions and fears to dig deeper into how participants feel about and approach professional networking. This was done by using an online platform called MURAL (see Figure 5), which is like other online whiteboards. To co-design this class meeting,



MURAL. Then together the class would discuss and categorize the answers. The activity gave the opportunity to ask clarifying questions and have deeper discussions about the prompt. The first prompt was a light question about what participants were currently listening to, but progressed to prompts such as “What worries you about networking”. This allowed for deeper discussions and allowed participants to lead conversations on topics and ideas that interested them. When debriefing about this activity, participants shared that they appreciated the activity and that they learned a lot about their own feelings and insecurities on networking realizing that many of their colleagues felt the same way. It strengthened a sense of community and built confidence when thinking and acting on networking.

During week twelve of the course, time was spent in class to review the design thinking abilities through the slides that were shared the second week of class. Participants were receptive to the review and were able to interact and respond to prompts asking about the process. The importance of stakeholders and stakeholder interviews was introduced and applied to the participants’ semester long projects of creating individual, professional websites. Due to the lack of time and the amount of work that needed to be done in the class, there was not enough time for a formal stakeholder activity that did not also apply to their website project. Instead, participants were asked to present what they had completed on the first iteration of their websites and gather feedback from their peers. They were then tasked with applying the feedback they received as they made revisions.

### ***Additions to the Spring 2023 Course***

During week eleven in Spring 2023, the class hosted a high-profile special guest in the performing arts and music business space, and I opened the event to the entire campus and community. Students were included in the event-planning process which was used as an

additional learning experience, along with the content and knowledge shared about getting work, contracts, copyrights, and the life of a traveling high profile musician. This group activity was connected to multiple topics in the class including branding, developing a marketing plan, social media, budgeting, and networking. Students were encouraged to use their developing skills to plan, market, and host the event. Students needed specific and consistent guidance to get through this process and did not take the initiative to complete it. Participants struggled with the tasks that were assigned to them even after multiple examples of using the design process to plan an event. Participants had a difficult time defining possible issues and then ideating solutions in order to plan ahead for those solutions.

The second iteration of the course also included an additional semester long project, that the first class in Spring of 2021 did not include. In the second week of the semester, each student was required to choose a book from either a predetermined list provided (see Appendix B) or a book based on a topic of interest. The books provided included ones that shared the design process, and concepts of the entrepreneurial mindset. Students had the entire semester to read the book and provide a five-minute PowerPoint presentation discussing the following: 1) a brief synopsis; 2) big take aways; 3) what they liked; 4) what they wished it included; and 5) what they are still wondering about. Students were also critiqued for the preparedness and professionalism of their presentations. This project was connected to the course topic of transitioning from student to professional by learning to set aside time for personal and professional development on topics of interest, while also exposing them to more design thinking and entrepreneurship outside of the classroom. Students gave mixed responses to this new book project assignment. It was a time-consuming project that if they waited until the last minute may have brought on additional stress. It was interesting to listen to their presentations. Some students

took the assignment seriously sharing important takeaways and discussed how they could apply what they learned to their future goals and plans. Other students took it as an opportunity to overly critique the book and complain about the writing style and content.

### **Spring 2021 Student Follow-Up Survey**

Results of the follow-up survey from participants in the original course were received from two participants. One person graduated in December of 2020 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in musical theater and audited the course in spring 2021, and one graduated in May of 2022 with a Bachelor of Arts with an emphasis in vocal performance. Both students went on to develop careers in some capacity within the performing arts. Similarly, these participants created a website for their final semester project in the course. When asked if they currently have a website, both participants said they have an active website, and one acknowledged continuing to use the website that they created during the course. When the course was originally developed, it did not include design thinking as a key concept for student learning. I asked the participants if they had any experience with the concept of design thinking. One participant had no background with the term and the other had no formal experience with it but had received a book from the researcher a year ago and used the themes to help navigate the job-hunting process.

The original course, in the spring of 2021, centered around the concept of entrepreneurship but the entrepreneurial mindset was not included in the curriculum. Similar to what was shown in the data with the Spring 2023 students, participants in the original course group expressed confidence with definitions of entrepreneurship during the course and in the follow-up survey. The participants in this survey had more real-life experience since completing the course, and their definitions reflected that. One participant wrote, “Entrepreneurship, in my mind, is being in business for yourself, but not by yourself. It’s more than just business; it’s

networking, making connections, finances, learning, sharing, and almost a personal brand.” The statement that it is “not by yourself ” alludes to the idea of collaboration, which brings insight not shown in phrases used by the Spring 2023 participants. In those definitions, statements included a sense of working alone. This may indicate how growth in developing participants' individual definitions of entrepreneurship continued as their professional lives began. In addition to their continued entrepreneurial growth, both participants identified as entrepreneurs as a part of their personal identity.

### **Summary**

After the analysis of the three qualitative surveys, course materials and class discussions of group one from spring of 2023, the definitions of design thinking and entrepreneurship developed and grew over the course of the semester. Similar development of the definition of entrepreneurship was found in group two likely through career experiences. In order to seek specific answers to the research questions and to explore other emerging themes, results will be realigned with contributing literature to determine possible benefits of introducing design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset to music students as they transition from student to professional.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

#### **The Apprenticeship Model**

Undergraduate collegiate voice programs typically follow a traditional program plan that includes basic music courses for all instruments including music theory, western music history and foundations of music. In addition to these courses, voice majors are also required to study voice privately and participate in ensemble courses that will assist with developing their craft as musicians and artists. The style of learning these types of courses follows is an apprenticeship model of learning. This mode of learning is based on workplace learning experiences and learning from watching and working with an expert in the field of interest (Billett, 2016). The apprenticeship model of learning is used for private instruction in music, where educators are modeling the desired technique or skill over time and students learn from doing what their teacher is modeling and sharing with them (Hyry-Beihammer, 2010).

#### **The Challenges of the Course Format**

Both participant groups of this study were exposed to course content in a lecture-based format in the course\_Business for Performing Artists. Group one participants in Spring 2023, who had the addition of design thinking, also were given short activities to assist with the practice of the design thinking process. Although they were able to try design thinking through activities in class, it was not created as an apprenticeship model of learning. Participants did not have enough applicable examples of design thinking to be able to successfully apply it to the related course activities. During my training, the different training modules and activities were rarely connected specifically to a project or idea that my team was working on. It was our job to make the connections. The study results showed students had a desire to find the “right answer”

to the problems being presented which is not a factor in the design thinking methodology.

Participants needed more time to watch the design thinking process in action and additional class time or time outside of the classroom to try it in a work or project-based format.

### ***Available Time for Development***

One theme that emerged from the study is the need for additional time to process and practice design thinking and entrepreneurship beyond the 15-week semester. Evidence of this was shown through the entrepreneurial experiences of participant group two, who took the original course in Spring 2021. Both participants shared their professional experiences that they have had two years post-graduation. Each participant had a deeper understanding of what it meant to be an entrepreneur and the actions and choices that are needed to find success in their desired area. One participant shared, “[there was a] point where school was holding me back and I was ready to spread my wings.” They were ready to try out what they learned in the Business for Performing Artist course and their other required courses, and fortunately found success in both teaching and performing.

Looking back at my own experiences developing my voice studio, it took time for me to discover design thinking as an applicable application for my business and teaching. It also took time to fully understand the process of design thinking and start practicing it regularly to find success in the method. I did this through my teaching and business, so it was much easier for me to make the connections. The group one participants, from Spring 2023, were given brief learning modules and then expected to apply design thinking immediately to different activities.

Another less prominent theme was detected from the data collected from course discussions, in class activities, readings, and assignments of the Spring 2023 group. The data showed that participants were able to articulate and define both design thinking and

entrepreneurship across the time span of the course. Their definitions developed and were made clearer over the fifteen-week semester, but participants struggled to make the applicable connection to use it in class activities or to consider it for future projects.

## **Design Thinking**

After my training through the Stanford d.school, I realized the design thinking methodology could be used by arts entrepreneurs and teaching artists to help organize their business ideas and plan for their careers. I was excited to include this in the second iteration of the Business for Performing Artists course. I made the assumption that participants in the class would be just as excited about these ideas and would be interested in the process of applying these ideas to their business practices. Due to that assumption, I jumped into introducing and teaching design thinking early in the course and focused on sharing as much as possible about the process in a short amount of time. This was my first opportunity to formally teach design thinking over a 15-week course. I knew that this new way of thinking and the amount of content that would need to be shared to help students gain understanding would be difficult in this time frame (Plattner, 2010). I also knew that I had to differentiate between critical thinking and a design centric way of design thinking. This is described by Herbert Simon:

This distinction between critical thinking as an analytic process of “breaking down” ideas and a design-centric mode of thinking as a process of “building up” ideas is foundational to the practice. So, too, is his definition of design as “the transformation of existing conditions into preferred ones.” (Mootee, 2013, p. 29)

The concept of breaking down ideas encourages ideation which is a core ability of design thinking (Plattner, 2010) and an important part of making and practicing music. We do not call it ideation when trying new skills or improvisation in music, but the ideas are the same. Performing artists practice many of the design abilities of empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test (Hennessey et al., 2020; Pande et al., 2020; Plattner, 2010) as part of the artistic process without

consciously realizing that they are practicing them on a regular basis. Based on the survey results from both participant groups, the data showed that design thinking was a new concept for the majority of students in the second iteration of the course where it had been consciously infused. One student associated the concept of design thinking with graphic design and social media and not as a tool for problem solving. The confusion could be because of the word “design” which can have many different meanings and is used frequently when referring to visual art. After the second week of class, and the formal introduction of applying design thinking abilities and principles, participants were able to articulate the design thinking process for the second survey that was provided mid-way through the semester. Participating students were able to define design thinking as a problem-solving methodology that encourages a designer to focus on the needs of the human for whom the design is intended. They also knew the perspective for solving a problem in a creative way needed to be based on the client’s needs and preferences rather than on the designer’s assumptions of the client needs (Clarke, 2019). Although the participants were able to articulate a basic definition of design thinking, applying the concepts and making the applicable connections were still a struggle for some of the students, even at the end of the course. Participants verbally shared that they felt unsure how they would be able to use design thinking or felt that it was not a process that would work for them.

It is understandable that the students were having a difficult time making connections for the use of design thinking because they were being exposed to the methodology for the first time. There is significant complexity to the process of each design ability, and knowing how it can be applied to an idea or project (Clarke, 2019). Based on the typical curriculum plan for a performing arts major, most courses focus on developing their performing and music skills (NASM, 2023; Peck School of the Arts, 2023) and do not focus on skills of entrepreneurship and

career development. The primary places where students might see the application of design thinking in their work could be in courses like their private lessons where performance is being shaped to meet the expectations of an audience.

By the final survey of the Spring 2023 course participants, answers included words and phrases that have been consistently shared in the definition of design thinking such as creative, problem solving, and trial-and-error (Clarke, 2019). The participants' understanding of the process of design thinking showed development over the fifteen weeks and can be seen in the changes to their third survey definitions. The survey data added ideas about collaboration, learning through action, and thinking critically; elements which were introduced and practiced in the course and which are critical to the design thinking process (Neck et al., 2021b; Plattner, 2012). It is also notable that the participants' definitions were shorter, more concise, and clearer in the final survey. The design thinking abilities were starting to develop for some participants, which was shown through class discussions and in the final book project presentations. Students were able to articulate what they learned from the literature they chose to focus on for the semester and shared what they did not like. For example, one participant decided to continue reading the Roth book (2016), *The Achievement Habit*, that was introduced the second week of class. This participant was able to share that they felt the book encouraged "hustle culture", which is defined as:

A social standard where one can only succeed if they overexert and work themselves to the max capacity. Hustle culture is perpetuated by social media and sets unrealistic standards of productivity and meaningful work. This social standard puts unnecessary stress on people. It often leads to burn-out as social status is associated with the amount of work done and encourages the neglect of having a personal life outside of work. (Chen & Wen, 2021, "What is hustle culture?" section)

The student misinterpreted the idea of "hustle culture" as similar to, or the same as the practice of design thinking which is a process of generating ideas. This misinterpretation could have

happened because of the entrepreneurial idea of taking action, and creating opportunities for yourself if they do not exist (Neck et al., 2021b). When this discussion occurred in class, I asked students to clarify what “hustle culture” meant to them and why they thought it was bad. In my own life and business experiences, I needed to hustle and work incredibly hard to have a successful business and career as a teaching artist. Students related “hustle culture” with the feeling of burn out. During the discussion, students expressed that they did not even have time to work to find performing jobs or to perform outside of school. Similarly, the Spring 2021 group participants showed that it was not until after finishing school that they were able to start practicing entrepreneurship.

### **The Entrepreneurial Mindset**

Participants from both groups showed a stronger baseline understanding of how to define entrepreneurship and therefore had an easier development of the ideas of the entrepreneurial mindset. They were able to define their perception of entrepreneurship similarly to the formal definition; “the activity of making money by starting or running businesses, especially when this involves taking financial risks” (OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com, n.d., n.p.). Participants used similar ideas from the first through the third survey. The participants consistently shared similar keywords and phrases like “be your own boss”. Participants showed over the time of the course, that they were able to articulate their definition of entrepreneurship more clearly, but the general definitions did not change. Participants also started to apply entrepreneurship as individual feelings in their definitions as if entrepreneurship was a part of their identity (Fauchart & Gruber, 2020).

While having an entrepreneurial mindset is defined as “a set of skills that enable people to identify and make the most of opportunities, overcome and learn from setbacks, and succeed

in a variety of settings” (NFTE, 2018, “What is the entrepreneurial mindset? section), having an entrepreneurial mindset becomes a part of a teaching artist’s individual identity as they move forward as a performing artist. It is still unclear if participants in group one from Spring 2023 comprehended the idea of the continued practice of entrepreneurship as a methodology (Neck et al., 2021b). There was not enough time in the fifteen-week course to have continued practice of the skills of design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset, and therefore it took longer to understand the concepts even with the shared scenarios and insights brought by other guest entrepreneurs. This was confirmed after analyzing the data from the Spring 2021 group survey answers regarding entrepreneurship. These participants have been able to explore and experiment in the entrepreneurial space for the last two years and have gained an understanding of what is involved. The seven truths of entrepreneurship had an opportunity to develop within their careers and experiences in the two years since graduation (Neck et al., 2021b). The participants shared experiences of starting and running a private voice studio, directing and producing shows, and booking performing work for themselves. Both participants are enacting examples of the entrepreneurial truths to in their own careers: learning to collaborate with others, taking action, and practicing entrepreneurship as a life skill. They have not created start-up companies or businesses and do not have special entrepreneurial skills; however, they understand that entrepreneurship can be learned, and they are willing to put in the effort needed to show success. This concept of entrepreneurial truths was not accepted by all participants, and I believe this is due to the lack of an opportunity to practice entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial mindset in a real performing arts setting.

## Summary

The main theme that emerged from this study is the need for additional time to process and practice design thinking and entrepreneurship beyond the classroom. Evidence of this was shown through the entrepreneurial experiences of those earlier course participants. Each participant had a deeper understanding of what it meant to be an entrepreneur and the actions and choices that are needed to find success in their desired area. Group one, from Spring of 2023, did not have the opportunity to practice the process of design thinking and entrepreneurship in a practical setting which might have helped them make the connection to their future careers as performing and teaching artists. The definitions produced by the participants developed and were made clearer over the fifteen-week semester, but participants struggled to apply them in class activities and visioning for future projects.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusions**

Through experiences as a private voice teacher, arts entrepreneur, and lecturer, I was able to create a unique research study that investigated the implementation of design thinking and an entrepreneurial mindset into a collegiate music classroom. Through the course creation of Business for Performing Artists in spring of 2021 and further development in 2023, the opportunity for this research study was presented. The first iteration of the course offered new information about entrepreneurship and business practices to performance students that they would not normally have in their traditional program plan. It also allowed me to reflect on what was missing in the curriculum for these students and what changes would make it stronger for the second iteration. Due to an opportunity for training and focus on design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset, I felt that these components could be a valuable addition to the course. The processes provide a structure to assist with project planning, problem solving, and idea ideation. Design thinking also gives additional language for performing artists to articulate and share projects and ideas.

This research study investigated how students responded to the addition of design thinking strategies on the development of entrepreneurial skills needed for success in their profession. I found that there are benefits to introducing design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset because it gives students another tool to use when creating and planning their careers. At the same time, this set of methodologies does not need to be the only thing that students use when pursuing professional work and can be used to supplement other methodologies and processes. For arts students in particular, design thinking might be best used as a supplemental tool. The study results showed that there was not enough time in one semester to fully emerge

students in the process of design thinking and practice the techniques. Although participants were able to articulate and define design thinking, it did not give them the boost of confidence as a developing arts entrepreneur that it gave me.

This was my first opportunity to formally introduce and teach design thinking in a semester long course. Due to the pre-approved syllabus for the course, I had to achieve a predetermined list of learning objectives and added the design thinking component on top of the required business topics. The material was introduced successfully; however, beginning the course with a list of norms and rituals like the entrepreneurial truths would set the culture of the class and allow for immediate implementation of the mindset and design thinking process.

### **Survey Results**

Through the qualitative survey data, participants were able to show development in how they defined design thinking and entrepreneurship. Their definitions became clearer and more precise over the semester. Through the class discussions and book presentations at the end of the semester, participants showed that they were not as able to make clear connections with the methodologies and how those could be applied to future endeavors in the arts. Students could repeat what was shared with them, but they had difficulty applying it to class activities and discussions. This is likely the result of limited time that could be given in class to understanding the application of the techniques, and the overall limited time of the semester. At times, the content felt rushed because of how much needed to be covered in each class meeting. If participants had the opportunity to have continuous practice with the methodology in a variety of scenarios, they might have made the connections needed to warrant continued practice of the design thinking strategies. Participants also had very limited professional experiences through which to see how the methodology could benefit them.

After personally reflection on the experience of teaching both iterations of the course, I was made more aware of my bias towards the addition of design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset. I was very excited to be able to share what I had learned and how it could be applied to a career as a performing or teaching artist since I was able to see the personal benefits within my experiences. I made the assumption that the participants would also have an instant connection and excitement to the process and its potential. When analyzing the data gathered from the second group of participants who did not have design thinking or the entrepreneurial mindset as part of the course curriculum, it was interesting how they naturally started to incorporate ideas of the entrepreneurial mindset into their definitions of entrepreneurship based on their professional experiences after graduation. I believe this is the case because they were consistently practicing the act of entrepreneurship in their professional lives which allowed both to identify as entrepreneurs.

Learning and developing an understanding of the design thinking process or the entrepreneurial mindset does not come with a specific timeline. Some people will be able to make the connections needed to have a deeper understanding of these concepts within the performing arts. The data revealed that for those connections to be made more quickly, an element of real life or work-based experience is needed. These practices can be introduced throughout a performing arts degree program and can be understood and applied over time.

### **Recommendations**

Students struggled with making the connection between the design thinking process and what they do as performers and teaching artists. As a private voice instructor for over a decade, it felt easy for me to make the connection to the professional experiences I have had. For example, the process of teaching a voice lesson uses the five design abilities although they are not

typically described through the ‘how’ in private teaching unless in the vocal pedagogy space. Different language and definitions would be used, but the concepts are very closely related. Working on the voice is a delicate process and I have to lean into an empathetic place in order to not only build trust with a student, but also to share critiques and corrections. Voice teachers spend a large amount of time working on defining and redefining vocal function issues both physically and technically. Teachers in a voice lesson spend countless hours ideating and trying new solutions, prototyping and testing what can be done to find the right solution to vocal production issues or musicality concerns. The design thinking process is done in different orders, and using and repeating different abilities during every lesson. Performing artists understand the process of design thinking, but do not necessarily have the language to articulate the process that is a natural outcome of artistic creativity. Design thinking can give performing artists language for the steps they are taking which can be applied with greater intent to starting a business or teaching practice. The design thinking process can be replicated in many different performing spaces including theater and dance.

The group of music students who participated in the study were only exposed to design thinking and entrepreneurship in one course, and it was hard for them to make connections beyond the course material. If these concepts were added to other required courses, students would be able to build understanding over time to fully comprehend the design thinking methodology and entrepreneurial mindset before putting them into professional practice. The consistent act of practicing both design thinking and an entrepreneurial mindset is a large part of finding success with these methodologies. This would create a need for professional learning in design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset for other music faculty. Developing interest and understanding in these techniques could be a potential barrier to this idea. The Business for

Performing Artists course included so many topics needed for students that each could only be briefly introduced and discussed. Participants ended up leaving the course with more questions and a need for further information to help develop their future careers. This may indicate a need for a second course that can extend what is currently offered. This could also lead to a similar research study that follows students over multiple courses and over a longer period of time.

### **Summary**

This research study showed that students were not able to connect with the practice of design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset within a fifteen-week course also dedicated to other business practices needed by young, performing artists. Study participants left with only a surface level understanding of design thinking and the entrepreneurial mindset, yet they were able to define the methodologies. With more time and practice implementing the methodologies in multiple required courses, participants would have the opportunity to practice the methodologies and apply them to future projects and career endeavors. This also leaves room for continued research on the implementation of design thinking or the entrepreneurial mindset in both the collegiate music classroom and other performing arts spaces.

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## APPENDIX A

### Spring 2023 Business for Performing Artist Syllabus

#### Music 604: Business for Performing Artists

Spring 2023

Tuesdays 4:00PM-5:50PM

103 LECWC (Innovation Studio)

#### Course Catalog Description

3 cr. Undergraduate/Graduate

This is a pre-professional course aimed at preparing the student to make the transition from student to professional. Students will be guided through business subjects of the performing industry such as marketing, branding, resume writing, and website construction.

#### Prerequisites

Junior, Senior, or Graduate status in a PSOA program (Music, Dance, or Theatre).

#### Course Approach

This course will meet once weekly in-person at the Lubar Entrepreneurship Center. There may be additional opportunities for additional workshops and lectures both on campus and off. All the course materials will be located on Canvas. Students will be required to participate on the “Discussion” tab on Canvas weekly to share reflections, ideas and questions. In order to be successful in this course time management for the required reading and participation in both the weekly discussions and weekly meetings will be key. Attendance to our weekly meetings is STRONGLY encouraged.

#### Course Description & Themes

This course will encourage students to explore business subjects of the performing industry and will help them transition from student to marketable professional. The goal is for students to walk away with tangible information and resources to start a successful career. Students will be introduced to resume writing, tax preparation, branding, marketing and website construction.

#### Course Goals

Upon completion of this course, the student should expect to:

- Define their brand and strategically employ this in all tools of the trade (i.e., website, resume, headshot, cover letter, audition attire)
- Create and launch a marketing plan through the development of a website, business cards, and/or presence in various social media networking sites
- Delineate a team of both personal and industry professionals to support a successful career in the performing arts. Initiate contact with a network in the industry
- Organize a financial plan that will support their initial entry into the industry

### **Required Text**

Moore, R.S. (2016). *The Artist's Compass: The Complete Guide to Building a Life and a Living in the Performing Arts*. New York, NY: Touchstone.

\* 1 Additional Book of the student's choice for Assignment #11 Book Review

### **Supplemental texts, excerpts provided in Canvas**

Agustin, J., & Potts, K. (2017). *The Professional Actor's Handbook: From Casting Call to Curtain Call*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Baker, B. (2015). *The Empowered Artist: A Call to Action for Musicians, Writers, Visual Artists, and Anyone Who Wants to Make a Difference with Their Creativity*. St. Louis, MO: Spotlight Publications.

Baker, W., Gibson, W., & Leatherwood, E. (2016). *The World's Your Stage: How Performing Artists Can make A Living While Still Doing What They Love*. New York, NY: American Management Association.

Brody, J.D. (2015). *The Actor's Business Plan: A Career Guide for the Acting Life*. New York, NY: Methuen Drama, Bloomsbury Publishing.

Flom, J. (2013). *Act Like It's Your Business: Branding and Marketing Strategies for Actors*. Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc.

Loucadoux, M., & Margheritis, S. (2017) *Making It Weak: A Dancers Guide to the Business of Professional Dance*. Monee, IL: Authors.

Miller, D. (2017). *Building A Story Brand: Clarify Your Message So Customers Will Listen*. Nashville, TN: HarperCollins.

### **Tips to Succeed & Time Expectations**

To be successful in this class it will be important to manage your time and stay on schedule with your discussion responses and assignments. This will make the end of the semester much easier. Taking an online course has many benefits, but it can also be difficult to prioritize your time. If you feel like you are getting behind or feel lost, please reach out to me so that we can come up with a solution to help you be successful.

This is an estimate of the time required to meet the expectations of this course. Grades are determined by quality of the work produced, not by the time invested.

2 hours/week - Class (x14 weeks = 28 hours)

6-7 hours/week - Reading & Responses on Canvas (x14 weeks = 88 hours)

2 hours/week - Weekly Assignments (x14 weeks = 28 hours)

Total Course Hours = 144 hours

Graduate Students will be required to also complete a research project and presentation related to one of the themes discussed. (Additional 43.2 hours)

### Undergraduate Grading Criteria

Grading Scale – Based on 1,000 points for the semester

950-1000	A	870-909	B	790-829	C	720-749	D
930-949	A-	850-869	B-	770-789	C-	700-719	D-
910-929	B+	830-849	C+	750-769	D+	00-699	F

### Graduate Grading Criteria

Grading Scale – Based on 1,300 points for the semester

980-1300	A	870-909	B	790-829	C	720-749	D
940-979	A-	850-869	B-	770-789	C-	700-719	D-
910-939	B+	830-849	C+	750-769	D+	00-699	F

### Assignments and their Weight in Grading

Detailed directions for each assignment will be provided in advance on the course’s Canvas site.

- Weekly Reading & Discussion Responses on Canvas 100 points. Each response should be between 250 to 300 words. There will be a total of 12 discussions provided and 10 must be completed.
- Assignment #1 – Formal Introduction & Bio, 50 points
- Part 1: Create an “About You” formal introduction. What sets you apart from everyone else? What is your true essence?
- Part 2: Write a 5-6 sentence Biography.
- Assignment #2 - Resume with Head Shot, 50 points
- Part 1: Updating your Performance Resume
- Part 2: Head Shot – Research different photographers and poses. What represents you? Please write a brief memo about your findings and start the process of scheduling head shots.
- Download and explore App StyleDNA.
- Assignment #3 - Social Media Rhetorical Analysis, 50 points
- Choose a Social Media page that aligns with your area of study and complete a Rhetorical Analysis on 4 different posts. What works for this page and what doesn’t?
- Assignment #4 – Exploring Logos & Graphic Design, 50 points
- Download free version of Canva and explore all the tools and options.
- Explore logos, colors and themes and create a business card on Canva.
- Assignment #5 – Website Domain & Themes, 50 points
- Using a free website creator (Ex: Weebly or Wix) choose a theme and format for your website. Start formulating your website structure. What are the most important elements of your website and why?
- Assignment #6 - Questions to use for interviewing artists in your field, 50 points

- Write 5 questions that you would ask an artist/performer/teaching artist in your field. Explain why you chose these questions.
- Assignment #7 - Marketing plan document, 50 points
- Create a Marketing Plan and Calendar. You will refer to your semester goals to create an individual plan.
- Assignment #8 – Creating Content, 50 points
- You will also be creating content for 4 future posts or blogs. You will be using your rhetorical analysis and technical writing experience to create great content.
- Assignment #9 – Cover Letter 50 points
- Using your interview questions and networking relationships, make a list of 5 regional places to find work and 5 places outside of Milwaukee. Write a Cover letter.
- Assignment #10 – Creation of a business expense and income log 50 points
  - Make a list of common business expenses and create a log of potential income. Do a comparative of living expenses.
  - Assignment #11 - Book Review, 100 points
- Final Project - Website, 300 points

### Graduate Research Presentation

Graduate Students will have an additional Research Presentation worth 300 points towards their final grade. Students will choose a related topic to research and give a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation. They will also have to provide an outline, sources and hand out.

### Final Project due per UWM Exam Schedule

A final project worth 30% of your total grade will be due the last week of class and will substitute for a final written exam. The final project is a completed website and is a compilation of assignments 1-10, which include, but are not limited to, access to social media business pages, a draft of the designed business cards, the Industry Interviews, Cover Letter, Branding document, a scan of the Thank you card that was sent, documentation of the system by which expenses and income will be logged, and all other written materials created in class.

### Course Schedule

Please be advised that the course schedule can be revised to meet the students or university's needs. To keep students responsive and engaged there may be times that readings may be changed or removed. There will be an ebb and flow to this course based on discussions in class and the interests discovered as the course evolves throughout the semester.

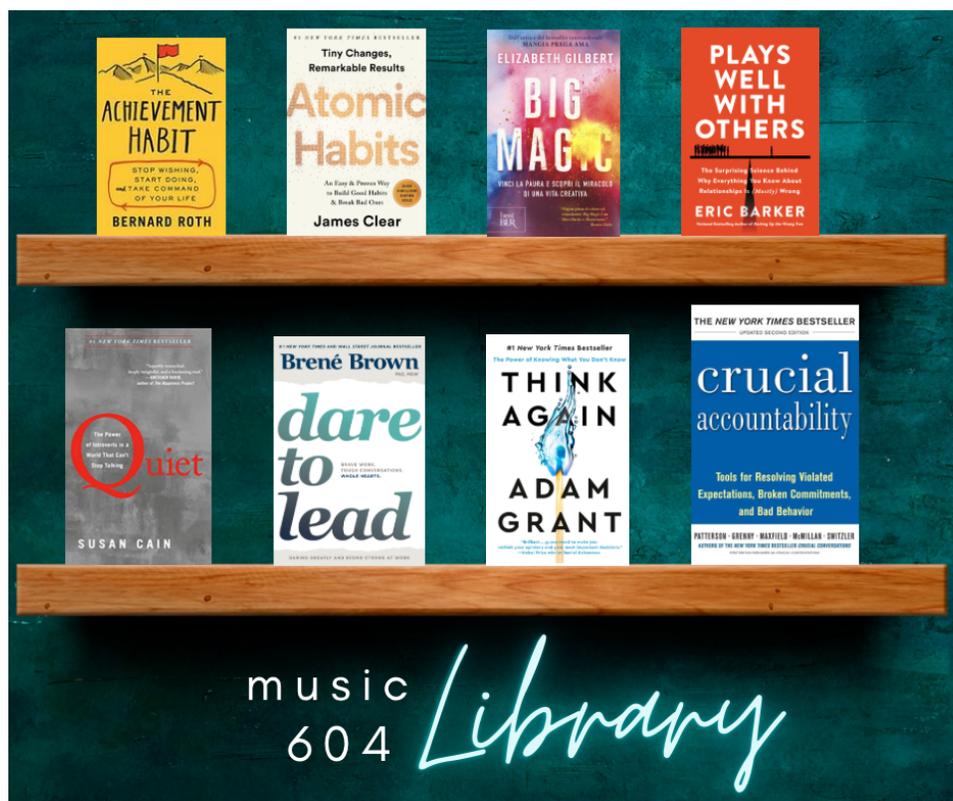
Week	Topic	Tasks for the Week
1 Jan. 24	Course Syllabus, Identity, Discovering Your Brand	<b>Theme:</b> Assessing your goals and strengths as an artist. (We will also be discussing SMART Goals and how to set them.) <b>Reading:</b> Moore Chapter 1: What Does Success Look Like to You?

		<b>Due Jan. 23: Introduce yourself on Canvas &amp; Complete Survey</b>
2 Jan. 31	Introduction to Design Thinking	<b>Theme:</b> Continue focus on individual identity & Introduction to Design Thinking <b>Reading:</b> TBD <b>Due Jan. 30: SMART Goals for the Semester, Discussion Response Week 1 &amp; Assignment #1</b>
3 Feb. 7	Resume/CV Writing	<b>Theme:</b> Discovering what you have to offer and how to use it. <b>Reading:</b> Moore Chapter 2: The Business of the Performing Arts. How the industry works and how you can be a part of it. <b>Due Feb 6: Discussion Response for Week 2</b>
4 Feb. 14	Head Shots, Recordings/Portfolios	<b>Theme:</b> Introduction to personal branding. Protecting your voice and getting yourself heard. <b>Reading:</b> Moore Chapter 3: Promoting Brand “You”. <b>Due Feb. 13: Discussion Response Week 3 &amp; Assignment #2</b>
5 Feb. 21	Branding 101: Logos, Graphics, Themes	<b>Theme:</b> Introduction to Rhetorical Analysis. Pick your platform of choice. Secure domain name and start exploring logos, colors and themes. <b>Reading:</b> Articles* provided in Canvas <b>Due Feb 20: Discussion Response Week 4 &amp; Assignment #3</b> <b>Graduate Students – Presentation Proposal Due</b>
6 Feb. 28	Social Media	<b>Theme:</b> Social Media: Its Use In Marketing & Branding <b>Reading:</b> Articles* provided in Canvas <b>Due Feb 27: Discussion Response Week 5 &amp; Assignment #4</b>
7 Mar. 7	Networking & Creating Relationships	<b>Theme:</b> Networking and Establishing Your Team, Interviews of Industry Professionals <b>Reading:</b> Moore Chapter 4: Who Can I Help? <b>Due Mar. 6: Discussion Response &amp; Assignment #5</b>
8 Mar. 14	Developing a Marketing Plan	<b>Theme:</b> Discuss interview questions. Introduction to Technical Writing in Social Media, what makes good content? <b>Reading:</b> Chapter __ Building a Story Brand <b>Due Mar. 13: Discussion Response &amp; Assignment #6</b>

		<b>REMINDER - No Class March 21</b>
9 Mar. 28	Content Creation	<b>Theme:</b> Discussing Content Creation and how this will relate to your individual marketing plan. <b>Reading:</b> The Actor's Business Plan Chapter <b>Due Mar. 27: Discussion Response &amp; Assignment #7</b>
10 Apr. 4	Finding Work, The Art of the Audition	<b>Theme:</b> Where to look, what to ask, and how to land the job; Provide a list of ten places where you can interview/audition. Continue discussing the side hustle. <b>Reading:</b> Moore Chapter 5: Finding Work <b>Due Apr. 4: Discussion Response &amp; Assignment #8</b>
11 Apr.11	Cover Letter, Interviewing & Side Hustles	<b>Theme:</b> Discuss where jobs are posted in your field. What is a side hustle and why it is important. Introduction to writing a Cover Letter. <b>Reading:</b> Articles* provided in Canvas <b>Due Apr. 10: Discussion Response</b>
12 Apr. 18	Unions, Negotiating Contracts, Managers/Representation	<b>Theme:</b> How to prepare, where to go, what to do. Start peer review of first drafts of Final Projects <b>Reading:</b> Moore Chapter 7: When Things Go Wrong <b>Due Apr. 17: Discussion Response &amp; First Draft of Final Project for Peer Review and Revisions</b>
13 Apr. 25	Finances as a Young Artist	<b>Theme:</b> Taxes, insurance, and other important survival smarts; Discuss creation of a business expense and income log for tax purposes. <b>Reading:</b> Moore Chapter 6: How to Be Financially Smart from the Start <b>Due Apr. 24: Discussion Response &amp; Assignment #9</b>
14 May 2	Transitioning from Student into Professional	<b>Theme:</b> Graduate Student Presentations & Book Reviews <b>Reading:</b> None <b>Due May 1: Complete any missed discussion responses. Assignment #10 &amp; #11</b>
15 May 9	Website Peer Reviews, Q&A	<b>Theme:</b> Website Peer Reviews. Review the topics discussed in this course. Q&A. Assistance with Final Project Questions. <b>Final Project due May 16 at 4:30PM</b>

## APPENDIX B

### Spring 2023 Reading List



This semester everyone (including me) will choose one book to read and share a brief (7 minute) book review. Continued professional development and personal growth is important once you leave the structure of an academic setting. This will be a practice in setting aside time to focus on unstructured learning.

The 8 books listed below are possible options for you to explore. Do not feel limited to this list - if you find something you would like to read, please send it to me for approval and we will add it to our library.

1. [The Achievement Habit: Stop Wishing, Start Doing, and Take Command of Your Life](#)[Links to an external site.](#) by Bernard Roth
2. [Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good habits & Break Bad Ones](#)[Links to an external site.](#) by James Clear
3. [Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear](#)[Links to an external site.](#) by Elizabeth Gilbert
4. [Plays Well with Others: The Surprising Science Behind Why Everything You Know About Relationships is \(Mostly\) Wrong](#)[Links to an external site.](#) by Eric Barker

5. [Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking](#)Links to an external site. by Susan Cain
6. [Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts.](#)Links to an external site. by Brené Brown
7. [Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know](#)Links to an external site. by Adam Grant
8. [Crucial Accountability: Tools for Resolving Violated Expectations, Broken Commitments, and Bad Behavior](#)Links to an external site. by Kerry Patterson, et al.