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DEVELOPING SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR LIVE PERFORMANCE

A PERFORMER'S LIFE FOR ME



Learning Aim, A: Understand the role and skills of a performer

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DISTINCTION CRITERIA
CONSISTENTLY MET.

SECTION I (PI and MI ASSESSED)

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PERFORMER?

When you watch professional work, how do you know it is good?

There are many factors that contribute to a good performance and performer. A key element is professionalism within the performance as a whole and the individual performers of the company. This is key in creating a believable performance which has integrity and can form a connection with an audience. Performers must be engaged with the work they are a part of as well as the audience in front of them otherwise the audience will be despondent and more reluctant to accept the purpose or message of the piece. A good performance can be socially, politically or environmentally controversial or challenging and be used to evoke an opinion; this is especially relevant within society today as theatre can be used as a social/political platform to comment on a variety of issues. Catharsis comes with this and theatre has the power to allow an audience to escape from times of austerity; a good performance will be able to take you away from your world and transport you into the world the theatre is creating. Within a good performance there must be a clear performance intention and a level of complexity within the production value. A vital aspect which makes a good performance is energy. A performance must have a life to it and an energy which carries the production. In order for this energy to fuel a production it must be well put together and so well-rehearsed that it seems effortless. Another question to ask ourselves as practitioners to evaluate a piece of 'good' theatre is whether we would be happy performing the piece. If the answer is yes then you know it must include some of the above elements, if the answer is no then you have to justify the reason why. Personally, I believe that a good performer and performance has the ability to affect people. I think that the power of acting is being able to challenge peoples perceptions and make them form an opinion – whether that opinion is that they hated it or loved it is irrelevant because I think that in a society where everyone seems to be treading on eggshells and some would rather be impartial than voice their view, formulating an opinion and being directly affected by a performance is an incredible thing. A performance that makes you think has the ability to make people do things and find their voice through the spark of an idea initiated by theatre. I also believe that a good performer can make people feel things, not just superficially but gutturally. Theatre has the ability to let people experience or re-live things vicariously and that links back to the idea of catharsis and how, even if you only have one person in an audience who can relate to and feel what you as a performer are trying to portray, you have succeeded in making somebody feel something on a deeper level and I personally think that is a beautiful aspect of being a performer. I also think that a 'good' performance has the ability to completely remove you as an audience member from the world we live in and transport you into the world of the piece. Whether that is a world of magic or social relevance, a good performer will capture your attention and make you solely focus on the performance in front of you. A good performer will be balanced within themselves and have confidence within their own ability whilst remaining humble. This element of humility is vitally important and pairs itself with empathy; people are more likely to want to work with you if you have self-respect and awareness but have the humility to be conscious of others and be open to always learning – nobody is ever perfect and can always learn something from the people around them, therefore a good performer will have an open mind to be a continual developing and reflective practitioner. Having empathy is a key attribute for a good performer as it makes you connect with the people you are working

with but also the characters you play which in turn brings integrity and believability to your performances. A good performer will be prepared to improve themselves and their performances by having a good temperament to accept constructive criticism and learn from feedback and comments. Energy is also a key aspect of being a good performer and this energy should be able to come through within their commitment to their craft. There should be dedication to the parts they receive and play as well as having a self-imposed goal to be committed to achieving on a personal level as a performer; to constantly be growing and learning to improve yourself and achieve. A good performer will not just connect loosely to a part but will do deeply and understand that they are reacting to the text as a character, not just passing over the lines without knowledge and understanding as the foundations to support those reactions. Understanding that a performance is rarely a solo job and that working as a collective, no matter what size, is a critical part of being a good performer; nobody wants to work with an arrogant performer who has disregard and no respect for the people around them. I also believe that a good performer will have an awareness of what is happening around them socially, politically and within their environment because if you don't know what issues need to be voiced, how can you create theatre with an impact? This also includes the business side of the profession which I think is more prevalent than ever nowadays; a good performer will be able to understand the realistic and practical applications of their craft and be able to understand how to make a sustainable living out of their profession.

What are the key skills, qualities and attributes of a professional actor or dancer; explain in detail what these roles are and why they are key?

- Skills
- Qualities
- Attributes

Versatility – versatility is the ability to adapt and present yourself as a well-rounded performer equipped with as many skills that are relevant to the profession and useful within the industry to gain as much work as possible. This is key in order to survive as a performer as you need to be able to adapt and have a variety of skills to widen the range of performance aspects you are capable of.

Resilience – you must be incredibly resilient and have a strong sense of self in order to withstand rejection but also focus on developing yourself as an individual to improve. Living alone and balancing auditions with jobs will be a key use of independence. You must be able to see the positives within a situation and take constructive criticism with a developing and reflective perspective rather than feel demoralised.

Development and reflection – an actor must be constantly willing to improve themselves with an open mind to accept criticism and learn from it. Actors should work to reflect of the feedback they gain and then develop on this for self-improvement and success. Taking feedback from peers, critics reviews and responding positively to Director's notes provides a professional outlook. This is key in a professional setting and builds a developing and reflective mindset.

Team player – it is important for an actor to be able to work alone but even more so as part of a team. Whether that team is directors and cameramen or a company on stage, you must be able to work amicably and professionally with other people.

P1 **Empathy** – having empathy creates a greater sense of depth to a character but also to you as a person; if people see that you have empathy, they are more likely to want to work with you.

P1 **Respect** – an actor must have respect in all aspects: respect for oneself and a knowledge as to what you are willing to do or are comfortable with, respect for directors/writers who have a vision of their own which you are responsible for portraying despite your own opinions, and respect for other co-stars who may have different methods of working or different boundaries to yourself. If you give respect, you will gain respect, and this will make you more appealing to work with.

P1 **Reliability** – an actor must be able to deliver when they have said they will. This requires an element of trust from the employer that you as an actor would have researched and understood the part as well as learnt the lines. If you mess about without preparation and do not respect the people you are working with or the tasks you have been asked to do, people will not want to work with you.

P1 **Commitment** – as an actor which is both a mentally and physically demanding job, you cannot go about it half-heartedly. You must be fully committed and prepared to make sacrifices in order to honour the job and your craft. You must be willing to make sacrifices in your social and personal life to accommodate for your profession and be committed to the terms you have agreed to prior to the rehearsal and performance periods. You must be dedicated to taking on a role and focussing your energy and skill onto that role and performance process. MI

P1 **Responsibility** – there is a great amount of pressure that comes when performing and adopting a role and therefore you must be prepared to accept that responsibility as an actor. As a performer within a company, you have the responsibility to adhere to any commitments you have made and be responsible for learning lines, attending rehearsals and being an active company member so as not to let down fellow performers and jeopardise a performance's success. MI

P1 **Open mind and acceptance** -an actor must be willing to say yes to things even if they go against their own instincts; taking risks is what makes exciting theatre and therefore having an open mind to accept these risks and try them is vitally important for development of work as well as self-growth.

P1 **Confidence** – having confidence in excess is not vital to be a performer however having the confidence in yourself and your abilities is incredibly useful as it allows you to not doubt yourself and therefore trust in yourself as an actor which will give a better performance. Confidence and the knowledge that you are capable is also attractive for an employer as they will respond more positively if they don't think you have self-doubt. MI

P1 **Intelligence** – I think this is quite an important quality but not necessarily in terms of intellect. I think as actors we have to be aware of the world around us and therefore have knowledge about current situations, but also be culturally aware and enriched; you can be a great actor but if there is no interesting substance to you, you will not find individual fulfilment or make an impact in my opinion. I think that you must be able to speak intelligently with people whilst networking and enrich yourself with as much art, music, drama, film, science, English etc. as possibly to make your personality as rounded and interesting as possible.

P1 **Dedication** – you must be fully committed and prepared to fully immerse yourself into a production or job. Dedication is so important and also reinforces your passion and drive to succeed and create good theatre.

Humility – being able to respect and appreciate the opportunities given to you and be down to earth and honest when talking about your successes. It is, however, important to

acknowledge when you are proud of yourself and celebrate your achievements, they just don't have to be outwardly expressed with arrogance and disregard of others.

Networking – being able to make contacts but balance this with independence so that you do not solely rely on the contacts you make

Professionalism

Skills: Acting

- Self-motivation and the discipline to achieve this
- Resilience and perseverance
- Confidence
- Adaptability and versatility
- Teamwork
- Vocal – accents, vocal knowledge and warmups, manipulations of voice, voiceover work, projection,
- Movement
- Physical stamina and strength
- Memorisation
- Initiative

(learn.org, n.d.)

What (and why) are the key features of the role of a professional performer?

- What is their work like (be specific about what role you are discussing)?

An Actors work is incredibly demanding and requires a huge personal sacrifice. The work is physically and mentally challenging and also follows the trends of the industry. For example, at the moment diversity is at the forefront of theatre so people will cast BAME actors instead of white middle class men (as a generalised example). Work is unpredictable, and hours can be long. An average week would be 45-47 hours excluding weekend or evening work which will be common and required as an expectation. A lot of excess time will be spent learning lines, rehearsing, preparing and networking as well as working on the side if you are free-lanced (doing additional jobs for money, researching ways to live a sustainable life within your profession, and networking. There is no typical day for an actor as there is a huge element of spontaneity and instability within the profession. Time may be spent doing film, TV or theatre work as well as voiceover and commercial jobs. Being an extra in films or a walk on (you get directed but have no lines) is also a good use of time and a way to get money as well as tapping into corporate workshops and money; A lot of skills used in drama are transferable into meeting settings and can be extremely valuable for large companies to create a team atmosphere and confidence when presenting or pitching an idea. During some jobs, a lot of time may be spent reading the script in table reads and are then worked through with blocking later in the process. Actors will also be expected to warm up both vocally and physically before any rehearsals and this is a universal expectation for performers to be prepared.

Around 80% of an Actors life will be spent 'resting' meaning unemployed or not working therefore it is vital to find ways to adapt and be able to survive when not

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rehearsals and other obligatory meetings or appointments such as table reads or costume fittings. Rehearsals are a main responsibility, usually agreed to within terms and conditions, as well as preparing for auditions and actively seeking jobs or opportunities which is another main duty as an individual for an Actor. You must be able to learn dialogue or scripts fast and have a constant collection of speeches you can use for audition monologues. Keeping records of expenses and legal aspects such as taxes and accounts are a responsibility for Actors, especially if you are freelance and do not employ an accountant to help you. A performer will be expected to be ready to work when arriving on set including being vocally and physically warmed up depending on the nature of the job. They will also be expected to adhere to the contract they have signed and look after themselves and their bodies whilst performing. It is a performers individual responsibility to keep their bodies in working condition so that they are prepared for any physically demanding performances and also have the stamina and fitness to perform to the best of their capabilities on long days at all times. It is also a duty of a performer to bring a sense of passion into their performance and essentially make the audience believe they are not watching a play but are fully immersed within the performance; It is important that you, as a performer, love what you are doing and can bring authenticity and integrity to a role, making the audience become emotionally invested and build a connection with that specific character you have taken the time to create and build from a stimulus. You have a responsibility to the Playwright or Director to honour the text and understand your character fully in order to portray it in the best way possible on stage. As a performer within the professional industry, you also have a duty to use the platform of theatre to make social comments on what you feel passionate about within the world. Theatre is a brilliant way to provoke opinions and allow a message or comment to be said subtly within an art form allowing the audience to build their own thoughts about an issue and affect the way they live or their perspective on a matter of importance. Therefore, it is a performers duty to be aware of current affairs and have an opinion on world issues that can be discussed and possibly developed into an influential piece of theatre. On the other hand, some genres of theatre are created to relieve the public of their troubles within times of austerity, in which case an Actors responsibility is to enrapture the audience within the story they are telling and allow them a cathartic experience away from their real life.

(Service, n.d.)

- What qualifications do you need?

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Qualifications are usually not a major requirement for Acting roles as many castings are audition based. However, saying this, many do choose to formally continue their training by attending Drama Conservatoires with specialist attributes or University courses that offer similar training. It is helpful to have

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done similar courses and have at least 2 GCSE's at grade 3 or above for a Level 2 course or 1-2 A levels for a Level 4 course. Many courses at Conservatoires are highly vocational and focus on giving you the right tools to flourish as an actor and be able to go into the industry and get work. As with the Russel Group Universities, having a good Drama School on your CV can give you a head start or bias over others as casting directors will be aware of which schools produce reliably good actors, however it is not compulsory to have a degree to become an Actor. All conservatoires have specialist strengths and can offer specific training for certain aspects of the performing arts. For example, RADA will give you traditional training whereas Central is more contemporary and Rose Bruford can offer bespoke courses. Typically, conservatoires are independent institutions therefore do not go through UCAS, however post graduate degrees where institutions offer a master's degree can operate through UCAS and offer support and funding. University degrees tend to have more of an academic slant on their education and therefore can be more appropriate if you wish to lean about directing, acting or devising, whereas the vocational demands of Conservatoire training are more suited if you want to solely focus on acting. Another benefit of a Conservatoire training is the showcase you get within the 3rd year; agents and casting directors attend these showcases meaning if you are in the production you have more of a chance to gain an agent and be employed for acting work. There is no one way into the industry and Universities have just as much value as a Drama Conservatoire route into the industry, even though they may be seen as less prestigious (mostly due to the lack of the 3rd year show where there is the opportunity to gain agents and castings). Universities can merge courses together (such as English and Theatre (Bristol, n.d.)) which can provide more opportunity for entry into a wider variety of professions – with academic underpinning you are provided with understanding of writing and could therefore go into directing or writing for theatre as well as having acting knowledge, helping you to become more of a versatile performer. Universities also offer Drama Societies that can provide a community of like-minded passionate people who are doing unrelated subjects for a degree and can also provide a way to network and find a way into the industry. MI
(careers, n.d.)

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- What is the salary like for this role?

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The salary is incredibly fluctuating and varies depending on what job you are doing. Minimum wages can be negotiated by Equity which is the trade union for performers, but rates and agreements are heavily based off of employment rates and the number of performances you will be doing. Very few Actors people PI become wealthy through acting which is why so many do other secondary or even tertiary jobs. The average pay for an actor in the UK is £94.97 per day or around £18,313 per year. Voice over work can earn you up to £42,000 per year and

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movie or theatre performers range from £30-40,000, averaging around £500-£700 per week. However, this is completely variable. Some one- or two-day jobs can pay as much as £60,000. Also, if you complete a job such as an advert or episode of a programme which once on air is played multiple times, you can gain a substantial amount of money from royalties. Actors also need to consider Agent fees when they are working and factor this into their living and working costs. Agents represent you as an actor and therefore should only ever take money when they take their cut from the money you are offered from a job; you shouldn't have to pay to get signed onto an Agent's books. Agents who are licensed and follow Union standards cannot take more than 10% of your earnings but private managers can take more than 15% of an Actors pay from a job (Appleton, 2011).
(AGCAS, 2017)

- What are the terms and conditions?

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Terms and Conditions within a contract make certain that the employee and employer have an understanding between them of what is expected and what has been agreed upon prior to the start of the job. There may be certain things the employee has to agree to or have the option to say no to that may alter the nature of their process. T's and C's also make apparent the legalities of the job, for example, what the employee can talk about or if there are any parts of the script that can't be disclosed etc. They distinctly agree when and where the actor is required, and this creates a formal commitment that the performer must adhere to. Terms and Conditions can also make agreements on how the performer should remain health wise for the duration of the production and also how they must comply to the direction given to them by the director. The term's and conditions make agreements on money and the obligations of the actor as well as the requirements, rules and specifications of the job. Contracts are complex and in-depth documents that must be taken seriously in order for the performer not to agree to anything they don't want to; despite what the terms and conditions say, the performer has their own rights and can opt to negotiate certain terms they are not comfortable with. They are a formal document and signed, therefore making it a formal and legal agreement which can be used against you if you go against any of the agreed conditions. (Entendre)

- How does this job impact on your life-style?

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The nature of any performers job is so unpredictable and unstable that it is a massive sacrifice to work as an Actor. (Cronican, 2012)
Self-sabotage – taking rejection or feedback as a personal comment on their ability and character can be demoralising and bring down self-esteem, performers can

confuse their performance with their own identity which can alter their perceptions of themselves. (Curtiss, 2013)

PI A business without a lot of security – unreliable income therefore stress and unpredictable living circumstances. There will be times when you don't know when you'll have enough money to survive or keep down a home.

Party lifestyle with networking can lead down a rough road to drugs and alcohol. A lot of performance industries have a notorious inclination towards toxic dependencies on substances or other intoxicants. The nature of the industry does include a lot of networking and the idea of 'making the right friends' which can be dangerous for potentially naïve and impressionable new performers susceptible to wanting to impress or fit in by following the trends or 'norms' of whatever crowd they have met. MI

PI Controversy around the job – e.g. if you play an unlikeable character people can mix that up with your actual identity as an actor. There is the risk of getting typecast and therefore falling into the same roles which can be frustrating and detrimental to the progression of yourself as a performer. You risk getting political/social backlash from the media and reviews due to a role you are cast in or even what you do and how you behave in your personal time or on social media. As a performer you have a responsibility to be aware of what is happening in the world in order to use your platform as somewhere to comment on issues searching for a voice.

MI Creativity – A positive is that you get to use your creativity and challenge you mind on a daily basis. Performing allows you to express creativity via a craft as well as providing a platform for opinions to be heard and comments to be made.

MI Massive sacrifices socially – There are highly unpredictable and unsociable hours due to late shows or travelling to locations for filming which could result in or cause unstable friendships and relationships within your personal life as well as with cast members – this can be quite difficult if you form good relationships with cast members during a show only to finish the film or show and part ways quite abruptly. There is inconvenience and apprehension in leaving your home or town because if auditions come up and you are away for the weekend or are taking a holiday, you will not be available to take the jobs which can make you regret going away or taking time for yourself which in turn can make you demoralised and miserable. There is a massive impact on your personal life in multiple ways one of which, especially but not exclusively regarding women, is family life and children. MI At the moment, there is little support within the industry for working mothers with young children which could lead to the decisions for Mothers to take time out of their career in order to have children, however this can make it even harder for parents to re-enter the job and find childcare that fits the hours and erratic schedules demanded for performers.

MI Self-expression – there are constraints of having to appear a certain way and be malleable for castings depending on your headshots e.g. no dyed hair, need to look the same as you do on your headshot, tattoos and piercings need to be covered

MI up. This can be limiting and frustrating to your personal and social life if you want to portray something different to your performing profile. Headshots cost a lot of money therefore it would be unaffordable to keep changing your appearance whilst searching for jobs where casting directors need to be able to know what you currently look like – if they cast you because of your brown hair but you have since dyed it pink, this is an issue and they will not be pleased or impressed.

MI Health – as a working performer you need to keep body in shape and fit. You must have both mental and physical stamina to keep going on long days with harsh demands and you must be able to move – this includes flexibility and physical strength and awareness. You must have good time management and organisation to exercise around rehearsals times, as well as organise yourself to keep fitness in mind whilst you are doing a 7 or 8 show week. As part of this you must keep in consideration eating a healthy and balanced diet despite the lack of time or energy you may have after a long day of work and you must also be aware of your mental wellbeing in tandem with your physical wellbeing; performance jobs are incredibly demanding and require you to be in shape physically but also mentally astute and on form to respond to direction and creatively think. You must as a performer respect your body and understand its limitations and boundaries – it is okay to take time to recover however this is difficult when you are constantly searching for jobs that can pay the bills, therefore you need to take time to re-centre yourself after each show or rehearsal and have an effective routine to unwind and come down from the adrenaline otherwise you will burn yourself out before you have even started (King, 2011). The implications of not getting work are great within this industry and do require you as a performer to be prepared for times of hardship as well as prosperity. You need to be conscious in your living costs and how you will afford to follow a route into performance as well as survive in a high cost city, such as London, taking into consideration the costs of rent, food and travel to auditions across a variety of venues; Performing is such an unreliable job which means that you may have to sacrifice what you are passionate about in order to sustain a 'stable life'. This can be demoralising and hard if you are working multiple jobs to earn money to live, whilst simultaneously searching for performance work and learning the material needed in order to progress in the industry. Ultimately, if you are unemployed solely through acting you will not be earning money and will therefore not be able to afford accommodation or food or a sustainable life. This can possibly lead to lack of morale and have a detrimental effect on your mental health which can make it harder to continue pursuing a profession that can, at times, seem impossible to enter and thrive in successfully. MI

What is a typical working day for a professional actor/dancer?

PI A typical day for a practitioner in a rehearsal: arrive early and warm up (physical and vocal), have a briefing/listen to directors' notes, rehearse a scene or act then reflect and take on notes and direction. Typical hours would be 10am-5.30pm rehearsals but when closer to performances you may be required to rehearse from 6 – 9pm. You may spend

time workshopping an idea with other cast members or the leaders of a project as well as discussing ideas openly if in a devising production. It is important to be early for rehearsals so that you can make the most of the set scheduled time and therefore make efficient use of the rehearsal space – this is also considerate and respectful towards other cast members who have arrived early and are putting the time and effort into the performance (Truity, n.d.). When not rehearsing, you may be attending a costume fitting or table read, working a temp job such as an office job, security guard or waitress, networking or leasing with potential employers or connections, job seeking or attending auditions and casting calls. It is important even when not employed or actively working in a performance capacity that you stay aware of the industry and seek opportunities to further your career (Knowledge, n.d.). A typical performance day may start with a brief warm up, vocal and physical, and a discussion about what will happen throughout the day. A typical schedule for a performance day may look like this:

TIMES		REH ROOM	840	
9.00am	816 Peep - Set Up - AP			Corridor Upstairs
9.30am		840 Dance Warm Up	REH ROOM Stockholm Warm Up	Corridor Upstairs Attempts - line run
10.00am	816 Peep - Dress - AP	840 Dance	REH ROOM Stockholm	Corridor Upstairs Attempts
10.45am	816 Dance - Dress - JB	840 Stockholm	REH ROOM Attempts	Outside 842 Peep AP Notes / Playback - then a break until next scheduled time
11.30	816 Stockholm - Dress - TM	840 Attempts	REH ROOM Peep	Outside 842 Dance JB Notes / Playback - then a break until next scheduled time
12.15	816 Attempts - Dress - RS	840 Peep	REH ROOM Dance	Outside 842 Stockholm TM Notes / Playback - then a break until next scheduled time
1.30	816 Peep	REH ROOM Dance	840 Stockholm	Outside 842 Attempts RS Notes / Playback - then a break until next scheduled time
2.30	816 Dance	REH ROOM Stockholm	840 Attempts	BREAK Peep

3.30	816 Stockholm	REH ROOM Attempts	840 Peep	BREAK Dance
4.30	816 Attempts	REH ROOM Peep	840 Dance	BREAK Stockholm
5.30pm	All rooms to be tidied BY CANDIDATES NOT TUTORS Everything to be taken to REHEARSAL ROOM Break / Make Up / Costume etc 816 Tutors clean / mop			
6.00pm	ALL CALLED 816 WARM UP AND BRIEFING			

TONIGHT - Please return all props where you got them from, AND TIDY REH ROOM/DRESSING ROOM before you go home tonight. **(no-one is to leave until the end of the evening after clearing DRESSING ROOM PLEASE) I will remove marks from 'process' if you do x**

Performing	Balcony	Dressing Room
Peepshow	Dance and Stockholm	Attempts
Attempts	Stockholm, Peep	Dance
INTERVAL		
Dance	Attempts, Peep	Stockholm
Stockholm	Attempts, Peep, Dance	

You may do a brief run through, checking technical elements, and this may be recorded for you to look back upon in order to form a reflective practice and finalise any specific elements that need refining before a final performance. You may then go into a dress rehearsal that has no stops and works with the technical aspects running all the way through the piece. After this, you may have time to discuss with other company members

any alterations and have a break to have some food and water before the beginning of the performance evening. During the evening there is usually time to have a short warm up and brief of the performance and then time before the start of the show; it needs to be respected that some performers may want this time to themselves to prepare, and others may be more relaxed and communicative. MI

How would a professional actor or dancer, ensure they are ready for a day of rehearsals?

PI It is a performers responsibility to do some research before a rehearsal. This includes reading the play for leisure, not making notes first of all and try to avoid character so that you can get a real sense of what the play is about. Some may note pages with a post-it-note to refer back to when reading in rehearsals or to look at in more depth. This also saves time in rehearsals when trying to find a key page. You could also go through a script and highlight your lines so you can quickly identify where big chunks of text or dialogue are within the script. Outside of rehearsals a performer may also do some script analysis to try and understand their character a bit before they enter the rehearsal space therefore making the time in rehearsals more effective and efficient. It is important to look at the schedule of the production and rehearsal day to know when and where you are needed throughout the process to arrange other commitments around these dates. Before rehearsals and within them you should remove anything that could distract you such as electronic devises (that can e switched off or on silent unless they are needed or permitted). You should be wearing loose and comfortable clothes that you can move in, including flexible shoes. To be fully prepared before a rehearsal, a performer should have their script, a pencil with eraser as blocking can change therefore pen is inconvenient, somewhere to take notes either on their script or on a tablet or separate notepad, a highlighter and the right mindset to enter the workspace. This is incredibly important and as a professional you must be able to leave any personal problems 'at the door' and come into the rehearsal space with energy, ideas, positivity and an open mind to explore and create exciting theatre. MI
(Mason, 2013) (Mondahl, n.d.)

How would a professional actor or dancer use their team working skills in their job role?

PI Collaboration is a major part of a lot of company-based shows and therefore each member must be equipped in team working skills. Getting others to be on board with an idea to try something out is a key part of collaboration and can aid in driving forward a project and providing a productive and innovative environment for creating theatre. Team working skills are vital in the beginning stages of rehearsal and working together to brainstorm and have different perspectives inputting on your ideas is a beneficial start. MI
Workshopping through ideas together allows them to then progress and evolve into collaborative ideas that feed into each other and work as part of a team effort to make the piece work creatively; other people's perspectives can help alter our own or provide fresh ideas that can bring new life to a piece. Patience and tolerance must be present within team work and operate at the same level of importance. You must be able to work amicably with each other and accept other ideas whilst remaining calm and professional within the rehearsal process. MI
Doing vocal and physical warmups together can be a good way to boost team morale and get everyone onto the same level of energy and preparation but is also a vital part of performance in order to ensure all members of the company are ready both physically and mentally to perform at their best ability without injuring themselves in the process. As a company, being part of an ensemble is an integral

aspect and being an active team member helps to strengthen this team dynamic. Working together as a cast to produce cohesive work with connections and intimacy links onto this point of ensemble and reinforces the idea of team work within a professional environment. *MI*

Below is a list of application procedures that you could consider becoming a professional actor.

	Describe what this is (PI)	How do you develop these? What must they include? (MI)	How does this sell a professional practitioner? What is their importance? (DI)
CVs	<p>A document (usually 1 side of A4) cataloguing any of your previous work experience or jobs as well as loose descriptions of interests, skills, qualities and why you are fit for the specific job you are applying for.</p> <p><i>PI</i></p>	<p>This must include your qualifications (possibly credentials from school and or college) from higher education onwards. Extracts from posters or reviews can be included to support any references as well as links to your webpage. They must be concise, and you have to understand what information you are putting out there – what do you want to give out. Include a passport sized photo or headshot on the back. Professional contact details, Agent details, Spotlight and Equity number, height, build, hair and eye colour, accents you can do should all be included to give an overall profile of yourself. Samples of work for singers, styles of singing, and voice type should all be included (the same applies for dancers). Any music skills or grades on a n instrument, drivers licence, extra skills in stage combat, horse riding, workshops, chorus dancing, skiing scuba diving, short and</p> <p><i>MI</i></p> <p><i>MI</i></p> <p><i>MI</i></p> <p><i>MI</i></p>	<p>This document should be a concise showcase of your key skills and attributes that are applicable to the job you want. It is important practitioners are aware of how they are portraying themselves as people on the paper - Don't lie but embellish things you have done, present wat you want to – exclude bits of info that diminish your productions. A CV is a Casting Director or Agents first look at who you are as a performer. It is vital you keep it concise in order to keep their attention and stand out amongst hundreds of other CV's trying to get the same job or role. A good CV will help you to progress in the casting process, alongside other elements, and is and especially important document to show off your versatility and credentials 'on paper'. A CV can help in showcasing the academic qualifications or experience underpinning the talent of the Actor which can be reinforced</p> <p><i>DI</i></p> <p><i>DI</i></p> <p><i>DI</i></p> <p><i>DI</i></p> <p><i>DI</i></p>

		<p>professional course can all be added in. you should also reference any film, TV or theatre credentials you have – you must state where, what year, what director, the type of role, and the venue of these references. You can break these credentials down into relevant areas of info e.g. genres, student work, amateur work etc.</p>	<p>by the references included within a CV from previous employers but also the reviews included about productions the individual has been in. A CV helps to paint a picture of the candidate before seeing them in person by the inclusion of height, weight, eye colour, hair colour etc. A CV will be looked at early on in the casting process therefore showing you have particular qualifications needed for a specific part e.g. Equity and Spotlight numbers, first aid, or horseback riding, can help to take you up into the next level of casting as the agents and directors separate those who have key skills and those who are lacking in them for a particular role.</p>
<p>Personal statements</p>	<p>Overview of self and your achievements</p>	<p>Gives a Director a better understanding of your skills. You must include your strengths and weaknesses as well as other skills you have acquired, and any education or work experience you have had (Fish4Jobs, 2018).</p>	<p>A personal statement is a great opportunity to give an employer an idea of what you are like as a person and what you are passionate about without actually having to meet them face to face, acting as a sort of first impression for your personality. Some personal statements, however, are more rigid and have set guidelines that you are asked to cover when writing your statement, which can assess your ability to follow instruction and respect their requests whilst still conveying your personality.</p>

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			Personal statements also provide a talking point that can be brought up within an audition or interview. <i>DI</i>
Auditions	<p><i>PI</i></p> <p><i>PI</i></p> <p>What you have to attend for the majority of performance job opportunities and casting calls. You have to do a monologue of your choice for some, learn pages of dialogue or respond to material given to you on the day for others and perform in front of a couple or a panel of directors or industry professionals.</p>	<p><i>MI</i></p> <p><i>MI</i></p> <p>Preparation and execution are key along with research being imperative parts of auditioning. <i>MI</i> You will often be required to sight read and therefore need to be able to work with a quick turnaround and little stress or anxiety. Be confident but not cocky – first impressions count, walk in with positive body language, good posture, and a smile. Be intelligent – be able to discuss things intellectually with them thinking of it as an open conversation, but still be able to take direction. Connect with the material you are performing – could use the Stanislavski 7 questions, obstacle, objective, character types, find moments of love in the piece, emotional growth, and thought process of the character. Be aware of variety and find dynamics in the scene; find actions to work with the words (Caldarone, 2004).</p>	<p><i>DI</i></p> <p><i>DI</i></p> <p><i>DI</i></p> <p><i>DI</i></p> <p><i>DI</i></p> <p><i>DI</i></p> <p><i>DI</i></p> <p><i>DI</i></p> <p>Auditions are a given part of being a performer – they are an unavoidable fact of being within the performance industry and therefore it is your responsibility as a practitioner to equip yourself with the best skills and approaches to survive many, many audition processes. You must consider when doing research and preparation whether the audition piece you have is suitable for the job you are aiming to get. Sometimes, you will not have the choice to perform your own chosen monologue, but you must be intelligent and input the effort to find and learn an appropriate monologue. Auditions do not just start when you begin performing, they begin when you walk into the audition room – having a good temperament and showing you are professional to work with is key in producing a good first impression. An audition is also the opportunity to showcase the skills or attributes you think are most applicable to the job or that you have developed as a practitioner, therefore thought into this is especially important. Despite the result, auditions are a</p>

			good opportunity to get yourself out into the industry and start making your face and abilities known to industry professionals which it is why is so crucial you go into an audition with a positive and professional outlook each time. D1
Portfolios of work	A collection of all of your credentials, headshots, show reels, resume and best work in one place so it is easily accessible for potential employers. (Frost, 2018)	A portfolio needs to be kept up to date and the skills you are displaying need to be current. A portfolio must be presented well – online is good but needs to be produced well enough to be easy to access across a variety of platforms e.g. if it works on a PC it also needs to work on a phone or tablet screen (provide a weblink on your CV). Quality not quantity is key in a portfolio to keep a reader's attention and impress them in a short amount of time. Physical portfolios can include anything but, in any form, they should have a variety of different examples; your CV, any project management positions, profile, personal statement, key achievements etc. you have to be careful about using Instagram as your portfolio – blogs are okay, but people will use social media to vet you as a person. Think about how you pitch yourself. Keep private things private and be sensible as to what you put out into the internet and what you say e.g. political	A first impression even before an audition which allows directors/agents to quickly put a face to a name and see your skills and abilities easily. In a professional setting, having a well-produced and developed professional portfolio gives a sense of professionalism to Casting Directors, Agents and employers, which will help to maximise your chances of standing out and being considered for a specific role, audition or job opportunity. Portfolios of work give a potential employer the chance to see both your credentials and actual footage and evidence of work that you have done – this gives viewers an added layer of knowledge to inform their casting decisions and evaluate your eligibility for a role they may want you for. Because of the impact this portfolio has on whether you get cast or not, it is vital it is easily accessible, well produced, and includes the best moments of work you have done to give a positive and professional outlook on

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		views are best kept private. MI	your abilities as a practitioner. Essentially, a portfolio is a visual representation of the breadth of a practitioner's skills which is why it is so crucial for the initial impact to be professional and positive. DI
<p>Agent</p> <p>PI</p>	<p>Someone who helps to get you jobs, usually part of a larger company or group of agents. You do not pay them but when you get a job, they take a 20-25% cut of your earnings.</p> <p>MI</p> <p>MI</p> <p>MI</p> <p>MI</p>	<p>Be polite and respectful when dealing with agents and casting directors as they can quickly put you on a 'blacklist' which makes it harder to gain another reputable agent or jobs in the future – do deals honestly and try not to have more than one agent at a time, unless they are for different specific skills e.g. singing then acting. A good agent will want you to get jobs because then they get paid so it is in their best interest to help you get jobs – medium sized agencies have around 100 clients and should be getting you around 3-5 jobs per month. A good agent won't take the same type of people, they want diversity therefore don't go with an agent who has 10 of 'you' in their books.</p>	<p>If you don't have an Agent, you are at a disadvantage within the industry. Agents have specific niches and can specialise in certain sub genres of the performance industry. An agent is essentially a representative of you therefore it is important to be with an agent who has an ethos or speciality that you agree with and want to get jobs for e.g. it is hard if you are signed with a TV and film comedy agency to then get acting work in theatres (Bearne, 2019). As much as they are representing you, you are also representing them and they have a reputation to uphold within a highly competitive industry therefore it is imperative you act appropriately whilst being a client – if you are a nice person who is good to work with then you are more likely to benefit from having an Agent and will build a better rapport with them, who will in turn help make the industry know you are someone good to work with which will benefit your career. DI</p>

<p>Head shots</p> <p style="text-align: right;">P1</p>	<p>A portrait photograph of your face framed to just below the shoulders usually attached to your CV and sent separately with your credentials to casting directors.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">M1</p>	<p>Neutral in appearance but with 'held energy'. It is better to wear very little to no makeup as a good photographer will look at you face and highlight your attributes by using lighting and angles. It is advised to use a recommended photographer - look up their work and see if their clients are being employed. You must keep your headshots up to date if you change your look. Any good professional won't do anything for free, therefore headshots are an investment - £150-250 (Guild, n.d.) average for a session where you usually gain a variety of photos from which you choose 3-4 prints (the option of extras comes with an additional £10-20 charge). Have some in black and white and some in colour then pick the best – make sure it is a true representation of yourself.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">M1</p>	<p>Headshots are a vital part of being a practitioner so much so that if you do not have them, you will not even be considered for a role; how are Casting Directors and Agents supposed to gauge whether you are a correct fit for a job without seeing your face on paper? A headshot is one of the first things an Agent will look at, sometimes even before they look at you physically in the room which is why this part of the process is so vital. Because of the importance of this, headshots should be a reasonable and worth while investment when done properly; They are not about looking our best or being highly photogenic with lots of makeup or unnatural angles and poses, they are about finding a balance within a photo of your natural face and personality as a true representation of yourself – you would not be giving yourself the best chance if you made your headshot look completely different to how you look in real life. We undeniably live in a world that is still incredibly vain and where people base their opinion off of the visual stimuli of appearance that we are given which is why the importance of getting good, high quality headshots is so important.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">D1</p>
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INTERRELATIONSHIPS

Chose director or choreographer

	How does an actor interrelate to this person?	Why is this relationship important to the success of the performance?	Evaluate what might happen if this interrelationship was not effective
Director	An Actors job is to collaborate with a Director and use their own skills to translate the Directors vision into a performance. <i>fi</i>	This relationship is based off of give and take, patience and lenience whilst discussing, collaborating and bringing a text to life in a performance. Ultimately, an Actor has to be able to take direction respectfully and carry out what the Director wants, however, a Director must be able to have an open mind and alter their expectations to accommodate the skills and abilities of the performers (Travis, 2012). Having clarity and acceptance on both sides of the performance makes sure that there is a degree of complicity within the Director/Actor relationship which will, in turn, translate itself through the performance hopefully creating a cohesive performance. <i>MI</i>	It is only natural and expected for Directors and Actors to have their own opinions and views on a character or creative decisions within the piece and it is vital they bring these ideas together to work comprehensively and negotiate a middle ground where they can both be satisfied. If this middle ground cannot be reached, there are a multitude of results that can negatively impact on a performance. As a starting point, if an Actor is constantly told to do something which they don't think is the right decision, they will not be able to perform to their best capacity as they will not wholeheartedly believe in the creative decision they are carrying out. This will frustrate the Director as the Actor will no be performing with the degree of integrity needed within a performance and therefore a rift of tension will arise and make rehearsals an unenjoyable space with negative energy which will hinder the creativity needed to make interesting and believable theatre. <i>DI</i>

(DI ASSESSED)

Based on this research –evaluate what you have learnt, what has surprised you – has this researched changed your opinion about working in the performance

INTERVIEWS WITH CURRENT PRACTITIONERS FROM:

ARTS EDUCATIONAL
DRAMA CENTRE
MOUNTVIEW
PERFORMANCE PREPARATION ACADEMY
URDANG
FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY
LEEDS UNIVERSITY

(PI and MI ASSESSED)

What did you learn from these interviews?

General

- Don't take yourself too seriously
- Enjoy the audition process
- Offer yourself and what you can do
- Don't be arrogant
- Go to London, see shows, do stuff, branch out, meet people
- Work hard
- Throw yourself into everything, take all the opportunities – Pineapple Studios, dance lessons
- You get out what you put in
- Get ahead of the game - learn monologues, read plays
- Take risks
- Don't be idle or lazy, do as many plays as possible
- Explore – be versatile, find skills, master skills

Auditions

- Be able to communicate authentically and truthfully
- Be okay with being vulnerable
- See new theatre - SOHO
- Connect to the monologue on a genuine level
- Know everything inside out
- First 10 seconds count for everything – first impression, say your name clearly and with confidence
- Play around with your look
- Have back up monologues – around 4
- Read the play!!
- Don't make things up – have integrity and honesty, don't fake your training
- They want people who are different. Be yourself.
- Be able to take direction – be free with it
- Be open to direction – growth mindset
- Shakespeare – use the words and know the play, timeless emotions, put them into your own context
- Don't project an 'actor version' of yourself
- Don't feel judged
- You are having a conversation with them

Drama School

- £14,500 per year – ArtsEd, can get DaDA award or student loan to cover costs for part of fees and living
- £9250 foundation at East15 – funded by the government
- £9500 Midlands
- Can apply for housing benefit or a career development loan from the bank (Government pays the interest off)
- Peer Productions – free actor training, you don't pay them, they don't pay you, have to pay petrol cost, you are doing a job, Level 4 qualification out of it. Gives industry experience, believe in the charity, 1 year so gives time to find out what you want to do. Need 2 monologues one modern and a song, in a room with 15 others for a workshop, team building, group work, interview, online application
- East15 – 9am to 6.15pm from Monday to Friday (depending on rehearsals), be Early!
- Royal Welsh – skills classes, voice, singing, movement, project classes, fitness (need to be physically fit enough as well as mentally to survive), yoga
- ArtsEd – 8.15am start, 8.30am yoga for 45 minutes, improv, Acting, screen, text, voice, finish 5.30pm – 50%stage 50%screen
- Musical Theatre or Acting? Audition for both, try it all out, do research, know why you want to go for the school.
- Find somewhere you absolutely love every moment of, that will push you and make you work but that you love waking up and going to
- You won't love the 3 years if you don't love the audition or the place – a family, something you want to be a part of
- Royal Welsh has the highest employability
- Don't race to get in – it will happen when its right
- Aim to be a creator, something different, something original
- BBC Dramas and Netflix are good

I think all of this information and advice is really good and beneficial to hear from current students who are in the positions we aspire to be at in the future. There were many things I expected to hear but others that provided a fresh perspective that I hadn't heard before. I think there is a vast difference between A level Drama and Performing Arts based courses to then a fully vocational and intense Conservatoire course at a higher education level, therefore I think it can sometimes be hard to envisage how some of the advice being given is viable within your life. For example, the idea of throwing yourself into courses and workshops and going to see shows regularly can be a daunting and seemingly difficult task to carry out when you are doing a full week of homework and coursework at college, but you have to imagine that when you are on a course, you will solely be focussing on that subject and can therefore invest more time into a singular passion with like-minded people around you. I fully believe that you need to take risks and experiment with your own abilities as a performer and what you can push yourself to do. I think that this can be difficult sometimes when you are younger and surrounded by your own self-consciousness and judgment, therefore doing a full time course requires a level of maturity and freedom with yourself to try things out, which may not always work, and be okay with learning through failures and mistake to develop your own integrity as a performer. I really liked the comment of being okay with being vulnerable and playing around with your look as a performer. I think that sometimes, putting everything on the table and wholly giving yourself to a role or a performance can be a liberating experience and help to develop the depth with which you can connect to the stage. As important as being resilient is, I think that vulnerability is equally as vital to make sure you still feel

MI emotion and can reflect on emotional experiences to relate them to a performance and create a personal response and connection. I also think that identity is an interesting part of a performer's work and life. In some cases, a performer can feel confined or limited with what they are able to do with their appearance due to the expense of headshots and need for consistency, agent pictures and castings that are dependent on a certain 'look'. MI However, I think it is vital you as a person develop your own identity and style which is unique to you and something you feel comfortable with – ultimately, I think that casting should be based on talent rather than a specific 'look' or in today's society how many social media followers you have. I agree with the fact that appearance is a natural aspect that humans are drawn to and a first impression does count, but in most ways a performer's appearance can be altered to suit a specific role you are being cast for. MI Having listened to a lot of personal experience from the practitioner's panel, it has really made me question the traditional routes into professional training and the industry. All higher education, but especially institutions that do not operate via UCAS, have a huge cost for their courses and I think this has made me consider whether going straight into another few years of training is the right solution for me personally. The courses are both mentally and physically demanding as well as time consuming and intense and I think I MI really have to analyse and discuss which route or Conservatoire would be best for me, and whether I am ready enough to enter this type of course and industry. I think alternate routes such as Peer Productions are great to give more information to young people before they decide to audition and attend a Drama Conservatoire for formal training, and this is something I will have to research more into before I decide what path best suits me. MI

(DI ASSESSED)

Evaluate your current practice. In response to the above interviews, what do you need to do now to prepare for vocational training in a year's time?

DI I am good at being discursive within my process and challenging the way I create theatre and I think this is a good attribute to have within a performance company or collaborative projects. I think it is a responsibility to challenge the conventions of theatre and this is something I would like to explore through social/political comment within theatre in my future practice. I identified that I can sometimes be reluctant to try out new ideas or alternate methods of practice and therefore have made a conscious effort to say yes to all ideas and trying a variety of skills out. This has caused me to be more playful with my practice and experiment more with how I can move and speak and perform in a variety of innovative and interesting ways. I am reliable and hard working and am proud of this attribute. This has constantly helped me in terms of organisation and interconnections with people and is something I will carry forward into my future practice as a performer. DI I am good at being critical of my work and others to try and develop more in both my skills as a performer but also within directing and creative vision. I think this is something I would like to explore more and delve into directing more to increase my versatility as a performer but also enrich my own personal knowledge and skill set. I could be in better physical condition – I need to build up some fitness and stamina in order to be in the best condition to begin a highly intense and physical vocational Conservatoire course if I

decide to continue down that route. However, I am good at doing yoga and focussing on mindfulness which is becoming ever present within society and higher education courses to help nurture a healthy mental wellbeing, therefore I will continue this practice. I need to work on not being so worried about whether something is 'right' or what other people want to see – finding the freedom in trusting the process and trusting myself is something I need to search for. This is something I am only just beginning to find and explore, and I believe it will be a constant journey to develop myself as a performer and person within my life. I am not as resilient as I could be and tend to take a lot of things to heart which is not beneficial within a highly competitive and ruthless industry; this has not only made me question my suitability to even enter the performance industry, but also made me question what route I want to go down and whether I will be happy and creatively inspired by that route. I think I need to assess my maturity and own feelings of apprehension or anxiety before entering a Conservatoire course and decide whether I need to pursue something else before returning back to performing. I think this has made me realise that routes of higher education or performance training do not have to be linear and the traditional ways to enter the industry may not suit me personally, therefore I need to find and research routes that may support my creative interests and passions more; whether Theatre In Education, Community theatre or Divisive theatre are more interesting avenues to explore for me. I should go and see more theatre or performances up in London and also try out new classes or workshops that are available for acting or performance. This will help me start to develop more as a versatile performer and also equip me with more knowledge and experience of what I wish to do with my performance career. To help me prepare for any auditions or castings I do, I need to learn more monologues to start building up a cache or repertoire of speeches – this will help me for auditions and also make me more equipped generally. I think that I need to find out who I am as a person before trying to 'become an actor' – I need to find my boundaries and test them, take more risks to find where my limits are, find out what my identity is and play with it. Experimenting with these aspects will bring a sense of assuredness within myself which I lack at the moment. This will come with maturity, but I do believe it is an important aspect of myself I need to focus on as I develop both as a performer and myself. A major aspect for me to develop is to stop being so reliable. It is good and important to be a reliable professional but not so much within actual performance. My performances can sometimes become so reliable that, even though they are good, they are dry and lack originality. To improve this, I need to try out different things and be more open with myself as a performer to throw myself into different situations and not be afraid of the risk failing. To improve my versatility and broaden my skills as a performer, I must learn to get comfortable in front of a camera. I should work more with self-tapes and create my own material to practice with (writing a monologue and filming it to see what is believable and what I like within my performances). This will help my own personal knowledge of my own performances and help me to identify what I like and what I dislike, but also be proactive in self teaching myself how to act in different capacities and varieties. I think a big target for me is to have more trust in the journey and the process rather than having to know what the end product is. I know that sometimes I can get too pedantic over an idea and find it hard to progress without having a destination, but I would like to develop my mindset and alter my approach to have more freedom over ideas and see where the experimentation and development of a piece takes the process. Having listened to the panel and conducting my own research with industry professionals, I think it would be beneficial to take a year out to explore something else or work to earn some money and gain some life experience before revisiting performance. I think that personally, I do not feel ready to go straight into another 3

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years of intensive education and do not think I would make the best out of the training at just 18 years old. Sometimes it takes going away from a passion to realise how much you love it, and I think this is the case for me personally and would allow me to really confirm whether performance is a career I am willing to spend money on and pursue professionally. Whether I develop my creative skills through an Art foundation year or take my drama skills into a more social context such as Charity work etc, I think giving myself a bit more time will allow me to really find somewhere I love and would want to stay for 3 years – somewhere that will challenge my abilities, teach me how to eliminate bad habits, provoke my opinions and make me create theatre about something I am passionate about. 01

I know that I need to be more culturally aware – I must be more critical in my opinions and take ownership of my thoughts more as a developing and reflective practitioner who wants to make comments through theatre. I should become more informed on subjects or issues I feel strongly about and use theatre to make a social or political comment as a responsibility to the arts industry and our society. 01