

This summary is part of research on performance training in Australia undertaken by Professor Peta Tait and Dr Melanie Beddie in 2017 funded by La Trobe University. It researched the influences on, and the training of, prominent teachers working within key training institutions circa 1980 to 2010.

Kevin Jackson

Kevin Jackson has been teaching acting since 1975 and taught at National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) for 27 years, first as an acting teacher and later as Head of Acting, 1985-88. After 1988, he continued in a part-time position while also teaching at The American Conservatory Theatre (ACT) in San Francisco having first trained in its Stanislavski-influenced approach in 1983. Jackson left NIDA in 2011 and now teaches at private studios. He taught hundreds of significant graduates who continue to work in the industry not just as actors but also as writers, directors, producers and acting teachers.

Jackson graduated as an actor from NIDA in 1971. As a student he was recommended Hagen's *Respect for Acting* and he has continued to set this text, although he frequently also acknowledges the writing of Michel Saint-Denis, Mike Alfreds and Susan Baston. Working with director, Doreen Warburton and designer Arthur Dicks at the Q Theatre from 1975 to 1981, he conducted workshops for young people in the outer Sydney suburbs. This was an important period of growth for Jackson who was still developing both his acting and teaching craft and gave him insights into the model developed by Joan Littlewood and subsequent UK-based community theatres. He views his teaching as an amalgam of lessons and insights accrued over a long period of practice, and his approach pays careful attention to the written text and to precise word meanings, to syntax and punctuation. He encourages additional research on the writer and he stresses the need to discern the 'Given Circumstances'. Once the actor's research has been completed, Jackson sets the actor the task of discovering personal connections to the story.

Jackson cites his highly disciplinarian Catholic schooling as shaping the way he teaches acting with rigor and as a combination of Intellect and feeling. He learnt about text analysis and craft skill from his British-trained teachers, but his teachers in the USA assisted him to understand how to access and release emotion.

