

Allison Hetzel opens her class with a chime. That chime is not just a signal to put down the baggage of the day and focus on the work—it is an invitation to engage gently but persistently with difficult and often-frustrating material, and it is a promise that Allison will be there to support and guide you on your way through. Trying to speak in an Irish dialect on my own just about made me write off the Emerald Isle, but once Allison has chimed in, I was able to find some ease and roll through the hills of County Cork in rehearsed monologue and even some improvisation! That serenity was... a miracle.

Over the better part of the last decade, I have had the pleasure and privilege of being Allison Hetzel's student both on the undergraduate and graduate level—and that miniature Irish epiphany is just one moment inside and outside her classroom. In Allison's dialects course, we learned how to learn dialects. Yes, we learned some dialects; more importantly, Allison helped us identify the quickest ways to access new dialects once the semester was over.

In Allison's acting classes, difficult partners became thoughtful and articulate actors. Performers can provide challenges on a personal level: the personalities often crowd each other out. Actors in particular can deftly find new and interesting ways to test you. In other classes, in rehearsal outside of class, in halls between classes, those big personalities could clash. In front of Allison, though, that clash becomes a distant memory, and the work is allowed to rise to the surface and stay there. I'd say it was the chime, but Allison doesn't chime in to meetings or in her office.

In her office hours and in rehearsals, Allison has helped mumbling me access and maintain a much better sense of projection and enunciation onstage—and now in the classroom. Trying to bellow "There she blows!" from a crow's nest in *Moby-Dick* was unusually challenging: Allison came into rehearsal to give notes to me and the rest of the cast on pronunciation, dialect, volume, and articulation, and she also took time away from classes and rehearsal to meet with me individually to try to bring new and stronger notes out.

And all of this has been done with a sense of ease, a chime, an invitation, and a promise. Allison will bend over backwards to help current students, former students, and future students alike—she will make time to answer concerns, coach scenes, research job opportunities, or whatever else she can assist in. That's why as instructor of record for theatre classes I confidently send students with questions about the department her way.

Now that I'm getting to see a smaller hint of the teaching side of academia, I can safely say Allison has taught me more than anyone else in the department about the kind of teacher I would like to be: available, calm in the face of challenge, enthusiastic, and inspirational. Allison Hetzel does not need the chime: she is already all of the above. She deserves recognition and appreciation for all her hard work, for the environment she creates inside and outside of the classroom, and for her staggering commitment to education.

Yours,

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