**VIEWPOINTS UNIT**

**Title:** Working from the Outside-In                        **Subject/Course:** Theater

**Topic:** Suzuki/Viewpoints             **Grades:** 11       **Designer:** Rachel Kurnos

 Source: <https://emerson.digication.com/rachelkurnos/Viewpoints_Suzuki_Unit>

**Content Standards:**

Theater Arts, standard #1 – Students will…

1.15 Demonstrate an understanding of a dramatic work by developing a character analysis

1.16 Perform in a variety of **scenes** and/or plays for invited audiences

1.17  Demonstrate an increased ability to work effectively alone and collaboratively with a partner or in an ensemble

1.18 Apply appropriate acting techniques and styles in performances of plays from a variety of dramatic genres and historical periods

Theater Arts, standard #5 – Students will…

5.13  Use group-generated criteria to assess their own work and the work of others

5.16 Devise specific methods for documenting and assessing one’s own artistic development throughout participation in a theatre project

**Understandings:** Students will understand that…

• The journey and the process in the theater are more important than the final product.

• There are many theater traditions outside of the western theater tradition that can be useful in discovering and creating complex and interesting scene work.

• Relationships created through this physical work reflect both what happens on the stage and what happens in real life.

• Physicalization can lead to new character discoveries that the script cannot always lead the students to.

• Character development happens through more than just table work.

• Collaboration is essential in both the theater and in life.

**Essential Questions:**

• How do spatial and tempo extremes affect a character in a scene? Do these same extremes affect you in the same way in life?

• What ways can you intensify a scene through movement?

• How do the relationships formulated through viewpoints work reflect stage relationships as well as relationships in your own lives? • How can you collaborate both verbally and non-verbally with your classmates and scene partners?

• How can you show a character’s journey simply through movement?

**Students will know…**

• The vocabulary associated with viewpoints (both physical and vocal) and Suzuki.

• The ways to access emotions through physical work.

• The history behind Anne Bogart and Tadashi Suzuki’s work.

• The ways to use non-western theater in a western theater context.

**Students will be able to…**

• Get out of their heads and into their bodies.

• Use the space around them as a tool to create dynamic scene work, both emotionally and physically.

• Utilize their knowledge of viewpoints and Suzuki in future scene work.

• Demonstrate their knowledge of viewpoints and Suzuki through physical and textual work.

• Show their character through full body physicalization.

• Collaborate verbally and non-verbally in both theater exercises and in scene work.

**Daily: Warm-up**

**Day 1:**

-         Stop-and-go: The students will run around the room, trying to avoid running into anyone else. As they do this, stop can be called at any moment. They must stop as quickly as possible without toppling over or fidgeting. Then go will be called and they must start again. Tempo variations will be thrown in, such as normal speed and slow motion. They will have to use their cores to stop quickly and they will discover how they walk (heel or ball of foot first, etc.)

-         Mimicking another member of the class: They will be paired up, and group one will go in front of the class and walk around. They will sit down after a while and their partners will try to walk the way their partners do. Then the two groups will switch

-         Discussion: What did you learn about how you move today? Where do you feel like your body leads from?

**Day 2:**

-         Changing tempo tag: The students will play tag as it is usually played, but different speeds will be called out and the students must play tag at that speed. The speed will be determined in terms of numbers, one being the slowest they can move, ten being the fastest.

-         Go over the viewpoints: Name viewpoints and ask students what they think they mean. Give students a hand-out listing the different viewpoints for their own reference.

-         Far/close: Students walk around the room and choose one person to always keep in their vision. The student must then be as close to that person as possible and then as far away from that person as possible. Then they must choose another student and they have to be far away from one of the students but close to the other student. The number of students they must be close to/far away from can grow to up to five people, depending on class size.

-         Triangle game: Each student chooses two other students in the room. The students must try to make an equilateral triangle with those two students. All of the students will be moving around the room trying to make their triangle and the game isn’t finished until everyone has their equilateral triangle.

**Day 3:**

-         Count to twenty: Students stand in a circle and either close their eyes or focus their attention to the center of the circle. The students must try to count to twenty without communicating to one another, each person saying one number at a time. If two people say the same number, they must start over again. Once the students reach twenty, another goal can be set, such as reaching thirty or forty or seeing how high they can go.

-         12, 6, 4: The students stand in a circle and start walking/jogging around the circle. Without communicating verbally, the students must switch directions twelve times, jump six times and go into the center of the circle and out again as a group four times. The goal is to learn to work as a group and to listen even when words aren’t being spoken.

-         Circle, line, clump: The students are told either to make a circle, a line, or a clump. They are allowed to make any type of these formations but they must be made as a group. After some formations are called out, they must decide as a group non-verbally whether to make a circle, a line, or a clump. They continue to make different formations working together and listening to one another.

-         Standing, sitting, kneeling: Three students go up at a time. At all times, one of them must be standing, one must be sitting, and one must be kneeling. They will do this without words for a while, getting the hang of working together, then they will improvise a scene with a given location (suggested by the rest of the class) and they must justify why they are sitting, standing or kneeling in the scene.

**Day 4:**

-         Jump, stop, walk: The students walk around the space and then are told to either jump, stop, or walk. After a while, they are told that the meaning of the words has changed: Jump now means stop and stop means jump. They must try to force their brains to work against their natural impulses. Then they are told that stop and walk are switched. In the end, none of the words means what it originally meant. This exercise forces the students to think outside of their own limitations and to break free from the expected.

-         Grid work – The students are to walk around the space but as if they are on the grid. This means they can only walk in right angles. As they walk, they are told more things that they can do. Now they are allowed to jump if they would like to. They are told to work off of one another and their own impulses. They are to use all of the viewpoints, but especially kinesthetic response in order to listen and react naturally to one another. Then they are told they are also allowed to stop. Then sit. Then they are allowed to follow one another. More and more allowances are given to them. They are then told to freeze and look around. Usually the students are pretty equally spread out. They are told that on stage, actors tend to play it safe by staying at a safe distance and that viewpoints are used to break out of that safety. They are now to play with extremes and as they are moving around the room, they need to think about not only how they are moving, but how they are moving in relation to the whole group.

-         To/against music: Music is played and the students must move to the music and then against it. Music can be limiting and they will learn to break free from those limits.

**Day 5:**

-         Go over vocal viewpoints

-         In pairs – the students will receive an open scene and they must recite the scene using each vocal viewpoint. Groups are spotlighted and listened to and changes in character and status while using different vocal viewpoints are discussed.

-         In their pairs, the students will take the scene they have been working on and will get it on its feet to mix the vocal and physical viewpoints.

-         Present scenes

**Day 6:**

-         Suzuki presentation – posters about Japanese theater art forms are presented to the students so they understand where Suzuki came from and where it is now.

-         Watch short video on students practicing Suzuki

-         Slow ten: Students start from opposite ends of the room and will walk slowly, engaging their core, giving their walk a beginning, a middle and an end. This is a traditional Suzuki exercise

-         Begin teaching walks: There are several walks that Tadashi Suzuki created and that he uses in his productions and most of these walks will be taught to the students.

**Day 7:**

-         Teach standing/sitting statues

-         Continue teaching walks

**Day 8:**

-         Finish teaching walks

-         Playing with tempo: using Macbeth monologue, walk around space. Speeds will be called out and that speed will apply to their walking and the monologue itself

-         Discussion: How did the different tempos change different parts of the monologue?

-         Statues with Macbeth monologue

**Day 9:**

-         Talk about final project (a status scene using Suzuki and Viewpoints) and pair them up

-         Class time to work on project

**Day 10:**

-         Continue to work on final project

**Day 11:**

-         Present final project scenes

-         Discussion of scenes

-         Wrap up

**SUZUKI FINAL ASSESSMENT**

For your final assessment, you will be creating scenes in groups of two and three using the knowledge you’ve gained from this unit on viewpoints and Suzuki. This scene should be based around a power struggle between the characters you create. The power struggle you choose can range from the fight between a dictator and a peasant trying to throw a coup to a mother trying to keep control over her child. You will use your viewpoints and Suzuki knowledge to choreograph this scene. While you may use text, this scene should be mostly movement based. This scene can be as abstract as you please. You will have two class periods to work on your piece. The requirements are as follows:

-         Your scene must be between two to three minutes in length

-         The piece that you create must have a beginning, middle, and end. While the characters you have created have probably been in a struggle long before your scene ever took place, there needs to be a clear reason why this struggle has come to a head at this moment in time. An example of a scene structure could be: beginning – status quo; middle – status quo disrupted; end – new status quo

-         Music must be incorporated into the scene. You can decide whether or not the music should play for the entire scene or just for part of it

-         You must individually create character profiles. The profiles should include, but are not limited to: Name, age, occupation, relationship to other character(s) in scene, reason for power struggle, want (in this scene), tactics used, and obstacle (s) (which prevents them from getting what they want in this scene)

-         Since this scene will be mostly physical work (or all physical work if you so choose), you will need to turn in a breakdown of the action. As a group, you will only have to turn in one of these. If you decide to include dialogue, please include that in your action breakdown

I do not expect you to be Suzuki masters. You will simply be using the knowledge that you have gained over the past couple of weeks to create a compelling physical scene. And remember: this scene is not all about Suzuki. I want you to use your viewpoints training as well. Take another look at the handout you were given at the beginning of the unit that lists all of the viewpoints; it might be a good starting-off point. As well, if you decide to use dialogue, remember to review the vocal viewpoints. Those include: Tempo, dynamic, shape, duration, timbre, pitch, gesture and architecture. Have fun, experiment and play!

**List of Viewpoints**

1)      **Tempo:** The rate of speed at which a movement occurs; how fast or slow something happens onstage

2)      **Duration:** How long a movement or sequence of movements continues

3)      **Kinesthetic Response:** A spontaneous reaction to motion which occurs outside you; the impulsive movement that occurs from a stimulation of the senses

4)      **Repetition:** The repeating of something onstage

5)      **Shape:** The contour or outline the body makes in space, broken down into lines, curves, and a combination or lines and curves

6)      **Gesture:** A movement involving a part or parts of the body. It is shape with a beginning, middle and end

-         Behavioral Gesture: Belongs to the concrete, physical world of human behavior as we observe it in our everyday reality

-         Expressive Gesture: Expresses an inner state, an emotion, a desire, an idea or a value. It is abstract and symbolic rather than representational

7)      **Architecture:** The physical environment in which you are working and how awareness of it affects movement. Architecture includes solid mass (walls, floors, ceilings, etc), texture (if the solid mass is made out of wood, metal, fabric, etc), light (sources of light and shadows), color and sound (sound created from architecture, like sound of footsteps)

8)      **Spatial Relationship:** The distance between things onstage, especially one body to another, one body (or bodies) to a group of bodies, and the body to the architecture

9)      **Topography:** The landscape (where is the furniture in the room most dense/difficult to maneuver), floor pattern (the pattern in which you walk) and design we create in movement through space

**Macbeth Monologue Used with Statues**

**Macbeth, Act 5, Scene 5:**

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,

Creeps in this petty pace from day to day

To the last syllable of recorded time,

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage

And then is heard no more: it is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing.