

Collaborative Theater Making
EdTA 2013 Conference Guthrie Theatre
September 28, 2012 12:45-4:15 Livingston Conference Rm

Presenters

Tory Peterson, Perpich Center for Arts Education, tory.peterson@pcae.k12.mn.us
Virginia McFerran, Perpich Center for Arts Education, virginia.mcferran@pcae.k12.mn.us

Session Description

This interactive session will present curricular strategies for creating original theater. The process involves collaborative techniques for creating a high school production using middle school voices. High school students with the guidance of a teacher/director conduct interviews and gather reflections, journals, poetry, and artwork from middle school students. Collaborative staging ideas will be explored. Handouts of pre-performance reflection and peer education forum will be made available to participants.

Perpich Center for Arts Education staff will present and coordinate the session: Tory Peterson, Arts High School Teacher, will be the lead presenter. Virginia McFerran, Theater Education Specialist, will facilitate the session. Outline of Session

As attendees enter give them copies of Aesop's Fable to read 3-4 times.

Part One: Creating and Reflecting

15 Minutes: Introduction and Warm-up.

Tory 10 Minutes: Brainstorming Middle School Conflicts.

Tory 20 Minutes: Risk-Takers, Cautious People. Virginia

30 Minutes: Collaborative Dialogue Writing. Tory

15 Minutes: Critical Response Protocol. Tory and Virginia

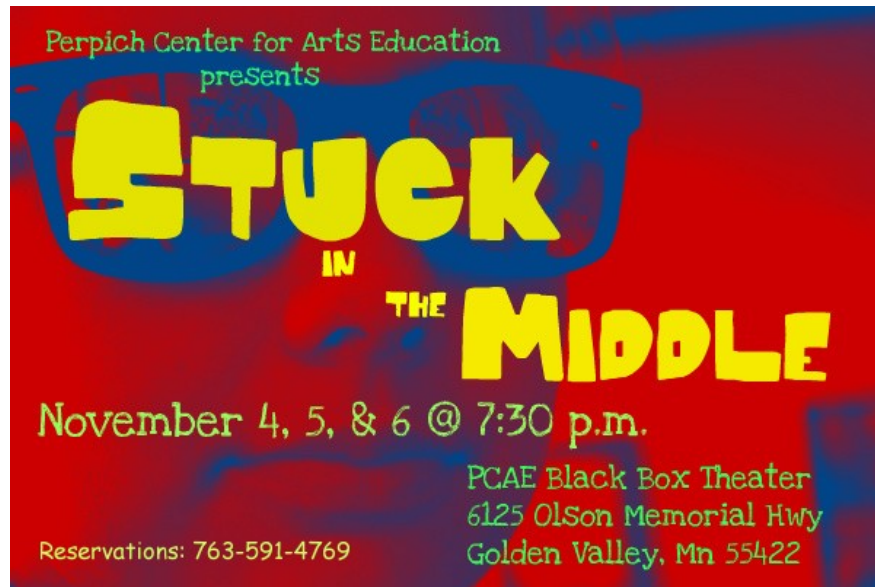
Break (30 Minutes)

Part Two: Staging

30 Minutes: Fantastic Binominal

30 Minutes: Aesop's Fables/Soundscapes

30 Minutes: Radio plays in groups, based on Fables and/or FB writes



Imagine everything you think could happen in the 9th grade.

Stuck in the Middle is a middle school project that has the power to engage students and participants on many levels about the transition from middle school to high school. The program in its current form consists of two creative components:

- Script Development curriculum created for interested teachers to incorporate into classrooms prior to the performance;
- Performance development curriculum based on writings, reflections and interviews of middle school students;

This program is designed to encourage middle school students to be creative thinkers and problem-solvers. Your school's leadership combined with this program will evoke deeper and more insightful discussions on almost any topic of the school transition. These discussions will lead to more thoughtful and informed decision-making and broader understandings of the various points of view presented.

Stuck in the Middle is a project that encourages students to question how they perceive themselves and their peers in an ever-changing world.

"Theater allows us to converse with our souls—to passionately pursue and discover ways of living with ourselves and others. We are all artists, and theater is a language. We have no better way to work together, to learn about each other, to heal and to grow."

-Michael Rohd

"The great thing is, if one can, to stop regarding all the unpleasant things as interruptions in ones "own" or "real" life. The truth is, of course, that what one regards as interruptions are

precisely one's own life."

-C.S. Lewis

"The doors we open and close each day decide the lives we live."

-Flora Whitmore

"Change is inevitable—except from a vending machine."

-Roger C. Gallagher

I. PRE-WRITING REFLECTION engages adolescent youth in writing & discussing attitudes about entering into high school. This curriculum is designed specifically for the mind of the middle school student. Middle school students are always changing, adjusting, thinking and questioning.

5 Senses

Have students create lists of senses to the question--"When I think of middle school, I see _____, I hear _____, I smell _____, I feel (texture not emotion) _____, I taste _____.

Give student 2-3 minutes to just brainstorm each sense. Can be done individually or as a class. Give students enough time to brainstorm beyond the obvious answers.

This is the beginning of allowing the students to create the playworld, an entirely new universe for the stage. Laws belonging to this piece and no others: way time operates, way people dress, what constitutes good and evil, good manners or bad manners, etc.

Middle School Object

Ask each student to come to class with a thoughtful object which answers the question “What is middle school?” Tell them to be ready to share their objects with the class.

This exercise allows us to see students preconceptions, prejudices, memories, histories and culture. Students may bring in a convoluted assignment given by a teacher, some cafeteria food, their personal journal from middle school, lyrics to the Blaine Larsen song “My High School”.

Below is a list of concerns that middle school students have communicated. Take time to discuss these concerns with the students (feel free to have students voice concerns not listed). Have students circle three concerns they have about transitioning to high school. Have them reflect on their circled concerns and be prepared to explain why they feel this way.

Choosing a high school
Getting lost in larger school
Harder work in high school
More homework in high school
Unfamiliar teachers
Acne
Boys
Hair
More Hair
Gym Class
The Math Teacher
Various Body Parts
Being Popular
Girls
Dancing
Relationships
Social Networking
Unfamiliar surroundings
New school rules and regulations
Participating in extra-curricular activities
Making new friends
Losing old friends
Too many class choices
Lack of class choice
Making it from class to class in given passing time
Getting in and out of new locker
Being teased
Finding trusting relationships
Peer pressure
Eating in the cafeteria
Gym class

II. SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT

Risk-Takers, Cautious People

Based on a lesson developed by Buffy Sedlachek

Adaptation submitted by Virginia McFerran

Objectives: Students will practice writing dialogue and creating scenes.

Part A: Making Lists

1. Students are asked to have their writing notebook or paper out with a pencil/pen. 2. The t
2. Teacher gives the following directions:
“Start now. Start making a list of everyone you know. That’s it. That is the entire direction. Start anywhere, but you must start now. A list of everyone you have ever known. Spelling is not important. If you do not remember them and have forgotten the name, write a word or two that will remind you who that was. There is no talking; there is only writing at this time. I can answer no questions. Please continue writing. Make a list of everybody you have ever known.”

The teacher monitors the progress of the room; and as the students are writing, times the writing period. As long as the students remain immersed, continue timing. This writing may continue for as long as the students need. Five minutes seems average. Teacher calls time.

Begin the following discussion:

1. How many students, while making the list, had the experience of recalling a certain event, a smell, a taste, and a sound?
2. As a person came into your mind, were there specific moments that came as well? (Teachers may ask students to raise hands if true. They may or may not ask students to volunteer any specific events remembered. It may be valuable to focus more on sensory recall and images, than on objective details).
3. Teacher tells students, “Congratulations! You have just been stirring the raw materials, the mixture of your own experiences, feelings, and memories. This is where all your creative inspiration and imagination rests. This kind of list making stirs your personal stew and gets you ready to write or act or think creatively.

Part B: Risk Takers/Cautious People

1. Teacher asks students to look at their lists.
2. Each student stars five people he/she might consider “risk takers.” Each student puts a check by five people you consider to be “cautious people.” Teacher emphasizes that we are exaggerating reality.
3. On the strips of one color paper the students write down 5 lines a risk taker might say. Encourage students to use specific individuals from his/her life. Share some examples.
4. Do the same with the cautious people on the other colored strips of paper.
5. The students then place all of their lines in baskets: one for one color and one for the other.
6. The teacher then pairs the students up. Each pair selects 5 strips from one basket and 5 strips from the other basket.
7. The pairs create a dialogue between the two colored strips of paper.
8. They may add transitions or connector lines if needed.
9. Students will then come up to the front of the classroom and perform their two person dialogue scenes.

Extension of lesson:

Day two: Students will work in pairs and create a written story or short play using their dialogue from the previous day. They will be required to come up with a setting, beginning, middle and end. Pairs will then share their new story/scene with the rest of the class.

Variations: Many other possible character pairs are possible, such as:

Pleasure-Seekers/Power Seekers

Dreamers/Doers

Collaborative Writing Using Natural Dialogue Rhythms

Based on a game from Philadelphia Young Playwrights Submitted by: Leif Jurgensen

Designed for grade levels: 4th-12th

Equipment needed: Copies of Dialogue Worksheet

Objective:

Quickly generate dialogue for a short scene.

Lesson Progression and Procedures:

1. Class brainstorms a list of conflicts or disagreements from aforementioned discussion points. Choose one.
2. Decide on only two characters.
(For example the characters could be a mother and a daughter. The conflict could be the daughter comes home to find the mother frantically looking for money she left on the dresser. Or a teacher and a student with the teacher confronting the student about his missing homework.)
3. Divide the students into pairs and handout one worksheet to each.
4. Each student/playwright will write dialogue for only one character. Instruct the students there should be no talking while filling out the worksheet - DO NOT discuss the dialogue; simply pass the paper back and forth and write the next line until you are finished.
5. Follow the rules for the amount of words to be used in each line of dialogue. (Contractions count as one word: can't, she's...)
6. Don't worry about logical resolution (solution of the problem). End the dialogue on the last line no matter where you are.
7. Allow 10-15 minutes to fill out worksheet.
8. Have students share.
9. Repeat with different characters and situations.

Extensions and Applications:

- Link the conflict/disagreement and characters to a book the class is reading or historical event or social issue.
- Rehearse, stage, and perform the scenes

Collaborative Writing Using Natural Dialogue Rhythms

This exercise is based on a game from Philadelphia young playwrights

Conflict or Disagreement _____

Character A _____ Written by Playwright 1 _____

Character B _____ Written by Playwright 2 _____

A: (two to four words) _____

B: (two to four words) _____

A: (two to four words) _____

B: (two to four words) _____

A: (two to four words) _____

B: (one to two words) _____

A: (one to two words) _____

B: (one to two words) _____

A: (one to two words) _____

B: (one word) _____

A: (one word) _____

B: (one word) _____

A: (twenty or more words) _____

B: (twenty or more words) _____

A: (four to six words)_____

B: (four to six words)_____

A: (four to six words)_____

B: (one to two words)_____

A: (one to two words)_____

B: (one to two words)_____

Direct Address Monologue

See: *Fires in the Mirror* and *Twilight 1992* are plays by American playwright, author, actress, and professor Anna Deavere Smith. They chronicle the viewpoints of people, from different communities, connected to the Crown Heights, Brooklyn, crisis of 1991 and L.A. Riots following the Rodney King verdict.

Students transcribe a direct-address monologue based on an interview of classmates attitudes of transitioning from middle school into high school. A direct-address monologue means just as it says, that a character is directly addressing the audience, as opposed to speaking to other characters in a scene. Make sure the transcribed interview tells a story, one-word answers and brief paragraphs lack the specific detail needed to make theater voices sound authentic.

Interview Introduction

Developed by: Maria Asp and Jack Zipes

Space required: Group should be seated in a circle

Equipment needed: none

Objective: Students will retell the story of a partner using the short story plot line (introduction, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution) format.

Lesson Progression and Procedures: Paring Students Option 1:

- Students sit in a circle. Ask every other person to stand up. They will be Group A and everyone sitting will be Group B. Have Group A move 3 open seats to the right and sit. (Hopefully they will now be next to someone they may not know very well.)
- Group A turns to the person on their right. They will now be partners for the exercise.

Paring Students Option 2:

- Have students walk around freely in the classroom space.
- Teacher directs students to quickly find a person standing right next to them and connect their elbows. This will be their elbow partner.
- Students then release their connection to their partner and walk around freely in the classroom space.
- Teacher directs students to quickly find a person standing right next to them and connect their feet. This will be their foot partner.
- Repeat exercise until students have made a body fusion partner that the teacher approves of.

The Interview

Activity After Students Have Partners:

- Have students circle five questions or prompts about which they feel they have a personal voice about. Next, have students sit down with a friend or classmate and exchange stories around the following questions and topics. Challenge students to be specific and as detailed as possible in the telling so that they really “paint a picture” for their partner. Let students know that these shared stories will become the basis of a writing assignment to follow discussion. Students should try to answer at least three to five of the questions:

What is your earliest memory of school?
What object do you remember most from Elementary/middle School?
What do friends mean to you?
Describe a ritual you perform at school on a daily basis.
Describe a typical day in your school life.
What gets you up in the morning?
How do you get through the day? (i.e. What keeps you going?)
Describe your favorite place/space at school.
What is your favorite time of day and why?
What do you love about going to a new school?
What do you hate about going to a new school?
What do you hate about leaving your old school?
What do you most fear about going to a new school?
What do you hope for at your new school?
What is your biggest regret in middle school?
What do you imagine happens to you in 9th grade? (Body and Soul)
What will you leave behind in middle school?
How would you like to be remembered at your old school?
If you could change one thing about school in general, what would it be?

- Group A begins asking the questions and trying to find out as much as they can in 3 minute. Taking copious notes throughout the interview process.
- The Classroom Teacher/Teaching Artist says switch and Group B starts to ask the questions for 3 minutes while taking copious notes.
- After the interviews, students will return to their original seats and immediately write down the major plot events (introduction, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution) of their partner’s story. The only part of the story that needs to be true is the climactic event. All other events may be created by the storyteller or exaggerated.
- Once they have written their “story” have the student re-read their monologue, underline or highlight the main points of what they have written expand on it further. Each student should create approximately a page’s worth of writing based on his or her imagined encounter.
- Have the students think about the answers to the following questions as they review their written monologue. Do you like the monologue? Does it hold your attention? What specifically do you like best about the monologue? Be prepared to highlight three examples.

Strengthening the Monologue

Listed below are some suggestions to help spice up students writing:

- Stay focused. Don't try to fit all your ideas into one monologue. Make sure you're only telling one story at a time.
- Make sure your story has a complete beginning, middle and end.
- Monologue needs to communicate facts, names and relationships about the story being told.
- Change the names of real people & places in your monologue to protect their anonymity.
- Specifics communicate more thoroughly and help the audience relate to the character and situation. Pronouns can weaken communication.
- Use contractions and incomplete sentences to help capture the sound of people speaking naturally.
- Use ellipses to show how the character may struggle for words.
- Make sure you use a variety of specific words and phrases to communicate your story. Try to avoid junk words like "oh," "well" and "um". They only get in the way.
- Consider the actor--remember these monologues are spoken and not read, so try to avoid long complex sentences and hard to pronounce words.
- Using a variety of spices mentioned above enlivens all theatrical monologues.

"It seems everything is so full of possibilities one can hardly take it all in."

-Kenneth Koch

FURTHER ARTISTIC/REFLECTIVE ACTIVITIES

Poetic Structures--The following two poetic structures were developed by Kenneth Koch for his book

Wishes, Lies, and Dreams; Teaching Children to Write Poetry.

Structure #1 focuses on the difference between the ways one “really is” and how others perceive them. Kenneth Koch suggests a **two line repetitive form**: begin every odd line with “People think I...” and every even line with “But I know I...” and have students finish the line with their personal thoughts and feelings. The poem can be about being misunderstood: People think I’m cruel/But I know I’m quite compassionate; about fear, about personal values.

Structure #2

This is a wonderful theme to get students reflecting on the difference between the way they are now in middle school and the way they used to be. The physical and social changes they are going through are occurring every year and at every grade level. They find themselves having different tastes in clothes and music and find new interests and opportunities in social circles. Again every odd line should begin with “In middle school...” and every even line with “But in high school...”. This structure seems to get students reflecting on the past and present in clear and focused ways. “In middle school I sing softly alone in the shower /But in high school I will sing loud in the choir.”

Quote Book—are there quotes that inspire you? They may come from books, movies, magazines and songs. Select or make a small journal and begin collecting quotes that you find interesting and speak to you as a person.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Quote-Book>

An Art Journal--An art journal is basically a diary, but for artists. The only difference is how you use it. You can use it like a diary every day, like a comic book of your life; things that happened to you, or just do sketches of interesting or memorable moments from your day or week.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Use-an-Art-Journal>

Create a CD of music that says something about who you are and what you believe in at this time in your life. Do this periodically and see if the music changes in theme over time.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Perfect-Mix-Tape-or-CD>

III. PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT

Creative Response Protocol

PURPOSE: Student Reflection

DESCRIPTION: This protocol aims to discover what others “see” while participating in workshop exercises. It should be done every time a group shows work in front of the class. It is intended to help each learn to reflect on as much as the group is willing to share.

Describe the work done in the exercise.

1. What do you notice?

Without passing judgement, describe what you read, see or hear...

2. What does it remind you of?

Describe what you recall historically, culturally, scientifically when you consider the work...

3. How do you feel?

Describe your feelings in one or two words...

4. What questions does it raise?

Raise any questions about the work, reading, viewing...

5. Speculate...

Respond with what meaning you take away...

Aesop Fable

Assign middle school characters, situations, language and environments to the Aesop Fable. Let your answers come spontaneously and quickly as you play with varying aspects of the story and begin to see new aspects develop.

Create a short piece incorporating the following elements:

Switch plot structure

The theme

9 spoken lines dialogue (no more, no less)

Narrator

One specific environment

One Soundscape

3 distinct sounds

IMPORTANT: Make sure retelling of fable is middle school relatable. Be aware that changing some aspects may change the overall context or meaning of the story and one must honor the intention, theme, symbols and ideas of given fable.

The given requirements in Exercise Five introduce elements of constraint. This constraint is not meant to be restrictive, it is meant to encourage the effort to find alternatives instead of allowing students to be easily satisfied. Remember we are not looking for finished product in regards to performance, yet. The purpose is to generate ideas, if too much time is given to refine and develop ideas they become as permanent and hard to restructure as the original story.

Be thoughtful and playful.

Soundscape

Designed for grade levels: K-12

Space required: Classroom

Equipment or resources needed: none

Summary: Soundscape is a drama technique that creates sounds to describe an environment. Sounds are developed by the students and the leader acts as the orchestra “maestro”. This technique is a great way to build engagement and suspense for a place, setting or environment that you are using in your curriculum.

Objectives/ Goals/ Learning Targets:

Students will:

- Create an environment using their voices and their imaginations
- Explore a theme or mood using sound

Lesson Progression and Procedures:

1. Leader establishes an environment that the group wants to recreate.
2. Leader and students create a list of sounds from that environment.
 1. Students pick sounds that they would like to create.
 2. “Maestro” establishes signals for the group (fast, slow, loud, soft, staccato etc.)
 1. Point at group means their turn.
 2. Hitting hand like a knife on other hand means staccato
 3. Pushing hands down means soft.
 4. Pushing hands up means loud.
 5. Spinning right hand quickly mean fast.
 6. Spinning right hand slowly means slow.
 7. Students could come up with this list depending on age group and lesson intention.
 3. Depending on the shyness level of the group, everyone can make the sounds together first.
 4. “Maestro” directs the group!

Extensions and Applications:

- After the initial round of sounds, the teacher could introduce the idea of mood. For instance, if we wanted to make the jungle a scary place, what would that sound like? If we wanted to make the jungle a happy place, what would that sound like? How would you use your voice to achieve those different moods?
- After the students master the drama technique, they could use this technique within small groups for demonstrating a theme, idea or a mood.

Response protocol

What did you notice?

Any Image? Any Relationship? Any Character Attribute? Etc.

Note: at this point in the brainstorming exercises what works & doesn't work is unimportant. Focus the discussion on what is noticed so that those ideas can be evaluated and played with.

III. Closure

The emphasis of this workshop has been on the different ways of doing/seeing things, the different ways of looking at things to escape from cliché concepts and challenging personal assumptions of the given story. Think Creative laxative.

Students tend to follow the established structure of the story and are unlikely to find anything “new” and this tends towards a lack of personal voice. Usually students will wait patiently for some chance circumstance to spawn inspiration that will produce more writing. These exercises deliberately mix connected and unconnected ideas in order to provoke insight and stimulate an alternative to aspects of the original story structure.

Radio Play

Space required: classroom

Equipment or resources needed: Digital recorder

Objectives:

Students will: create a radio play out of a Aesop Fable they have created

Lesson Progression and Procedures:

Students are put into the groups that all read the Aesop Fable . It is explained to them what a radio play is. They are instructed to create a radio play including the following elements:

Environmental sounds - i.e. sounds of the beach, or forest, etc

Sound effects - i.e. foot steps, creaking door, etc.

Introduce a "Narrator"- a voice that moves the story along.

A song - they will be asked to write and perform simple song.

They must tell the story as if the audience had their eyes closed.

Extensions and Applications:

Students can create radio plays out of poetry, scenes from books in literature, scientific reactions, etc.

Evidence of Learning/Assessments:

You can assess the students learning by the clarity by which they tell the story without any visual help.

Puppet Workshop.

1. To explore storytelling/ drama through the use of objects.
2. To stimulate creative transformations of objects.

Lesson Progression & Procedure

1. The class is divided in groups of equal number.
2. Each group is assigned a story/monologue/dialogue.
3. Each group is given different materials to create puppet like characters to enact their story.

For example:

- a. Varied Veggies: Potato, Big Carrot, Squash, Pepper, Eggplant, etc.
- b. Lunch bags: variety of colors and sizes
- c. Classroom supplies: paper clips, rulers, tape, stapler, 3-hole punch, etc
- d. Sports category.
- e. Science Lab category
- f. Cardboard drawings cut outs.

These contrasting categories help generate a wide range of performing styles.

4. Participants have access to general construction supplies: dowels, sticks or rods, toothpicks, colored paper, yarn, feathers, jewelry, beads, buttons, glue guns, knives scissors, permanent markers, crayons, etc
5. After puppets have been completed the leader presents a few suggestions:
 - a. The puppet that speaks should move. The listening puppets should stay still. This helps clarify who is speaking.
 - b. Enter and exit by the side panels.
 - c. Always keep an eye on your puppet.
 - d. Experiment with your vocal possibilities. It is useful to exaggerate, project with volume.
6. Each group performs their puppet version of their story.

The Fantastic Binominal

Designed for grade levels: 3rd – 12th

Space required: classroom

Equipment needed: Paper and pencil

Objective:

The cornerstone of the Neighborhood Bridges Program, the Fantastic Binominal (FB) is an exercise that Professor Jack Zipes borrowed and developed from Gianni Rodari's Grammar of Fantasy as a meaning of stimulating storytelling and writing. As an exercise, it sparks the imagination of both the storyteller and the audience. By bringing together an unlikely combination of nouns with a preposition, the FB inspires free association and imaginative thinking so that anything becomes possible in the narrative. The stories are spun on the spur of the moment with no premeditation. Throughout the year, this basic exercise, initially led by the teacher and/or teaching artist, gradually involves the students who can eventually take over the game when prompted by the teacher/teaching artist.

Lesson Progression and Procedures:

1. The teaching artist asks the students whether they know what a preposition or “linking word” is. After discussing the nature of a preposition and how it helps link words or phrases together, the storyteller/educator asks for examples from the students and writes a list prepositions on the board:

about	into	above	of	between	unto
across	off	after	on	beyond	up
against	onto	along	outside	by	upon
amid	over	around	during	with	through
at	to	before	for	within	throughout
behind	toward	below	under	without	inside
beneath	beside	until	from	in	underneath

2. The teacher/teaching artist next asks for two nouns to be quickly selected by a student. For purposes related to the curriculum or area of focus, we might select groups of nouns that are connected with the themes of the lesson. For instance, if we are working with “Little Red Riding Hood,” we might ask for names of predatory animals and get lions, leopards, dragons, sharks, etc. We might then ask for articles with colors such as blue dress, pink pants, red car. If we are working with the topic of geography, we might ask for “countries in Africa.” If we’re studying water biology, we might ask for “fresh water animals without fins.” Build a list of nouns in each distinct category.
3. The teaching artist/teacher asks a student to select a preposition for their choice of a linking word; ask another for a noun from the first category; ask another for a noun from the second category; ask another for the order of nouns with linking word. From that combination and order of words, the teaching artist/teacher models spinning a story using the phrase as a title and, hopefully, incorporating the phrase into the story-- “the

panther in pink pants,” “the shark below the red car,”-- with the help of the audience.

4. The students are then asked to repeat the exercise on their own: select a linking word, and a noun from each list, use this as a title for a story and make up a story on the spot, writing it in their notebook. Only allow the students to write for 5 or 10 minutes. This is merely a first draft. The point is to get their ideas out and on the paper, correct spelling and punctuation is not important.
5. Students then read the story to the class.

Extensions and Applications:

- The stories can be manipulated to explore theatre exercises that involve character, point of view, setting, and alternative endings.
- The stories can also be used as the text that serves as a basis for a performance by a group of students.
- The stories can be refined, adapted, expanded, illustrated, to fulfill the goal of many other curricular areas.

Tableau/Montage

Source: Spolin, SITI Co.

Objectives

The Student will:

1. develop and demonstrate the understanding of storytelling through tableau/montage
2. understand story structure of beginning/middle/end with transitions
3. dramatize a given piece of literature through use of tableau/montage

Lesson Progression and procedures tableau

1 : a graphic description or representation **2** : a striking or artistic grouping

3: a depiction of a scene usually presented on a stage by silent and motionless costumed participants

mon-tage 1 : the production of a rapid succession of images in a motion picture to illustrate an association of ideas **2** : a composite picture made by combining several separate pictures

Introduction

1. Ask participants to define tableau and montage. Ask them for examples of where they might find tableaux and montages.
2. Have participants break into small groups of 4-5 and handout the literary structure they will be developing. (*We will be working with nursery rhymes because there is a great level of comfort for beginners with rhymes. This activity can be done with any literary structure of your choosing from Carl Sandburg's poetry, cultural folktales, scientific theories, and personal diaries.*) Give participants 5-10 minutes and have them read through the 6-8 nursery rhymes and choose one to work with. Duplications of rhymes are allowed, it is interesting to see how various groups may interpret the same rhyme.

Part One: Beginning/Middle/End

1. Utilizing every person in the group, create a silent sequence of three tableaux that represent the Beginning/Middle/End of the scene sequence for the Radio Plays. Each tableau should communicate character, relationship & aspects of the environment.
2. Allow the groups 10-15 minutes to work on the tableaux and once the group has developed the B/M/E sequence take time to look at each of the sequences. Each tableau should incorporate shape and gesture. Each tableau must be presented "visually," in such a way as be recognizable.
3. Select a volunteer group and define which part of the classroom will be the playing area and which will be allowed for audience. Have audience close eyes as first volunteer group readies their Beginning tableau. When group is set and still, leader calls out, "Open eyes" and audience opens eyes and sees Beginning tableau, leader calls out "Close eyes" and audience closes eyes.
4. With audience eyes closed group readies their Middle tableau. When group is set and still, leader calls out, "Open eyes" and audience opens eyes and sees Middle tableau, leader calls out, "Close eyes" and audience closes eyes.
5. With audience eyes closed group readies their End tableau. When group is set and still, leader

- calls out, “Open eyes” and audience opens eyes and sees End tableau, leader calls out, “Close eyes” and audience closes eyes. End of group 1 B/M/E sequence
6. Continue this B/M/E sequence with each of the participating groups and their Radio Play.
Note: At any point in viewing the tableaux feel free to ask the audience what they are seeing. Ask them to specific in their descriptions of what is seen in the tableaux.

Part Two: Transitional Tableaux

1. Giving groups 10-15 minutes have them go back to their original B/M/E sequence of the literary source (nursery rhyme), groups will now add two more tableaux to the sequence, these tableaux should represent transitional tableaux between the Beginning/Middle and Middle/End tableaux.
2. Groups are now allowed to incorporate aspects of spoken text into their tableaux taken directly from the Radio Play. Edit and use the best of what was said. Limit each tableaux to 20 seconds or shorter.
3. Upon completion of the transitional tableaux assignment, perform entire 5-tableau sequence. Leader will once again, select a volunteer group and define which part of the classroom will be the playing area and which will be allowed for audience. Have audience close eyes as first group readies their Beginning tableau. When group is set and still, leader calls out, “Open eyes” and audience opens eyes and sees set Beginning tableau, leader calls out “Close eyes” and audience closes eyes. Continue with other groups. **Note:** Leader should not rush the “Open eyes/Close eyes” as there may now be incorporated text. Sequences can last up to but not longer than 20 seconds.

Extensions and Applications

With older students, this lesson can easily be extended into teaching organic blocking and focusing on picturization in directing class. It can also be a catalyst for group/individual script writing by creating voice through interior monologue for characters.

Evidence of Learning

1. Students will articulate what happens in a linear storytelling structure.
2. Students will develop an understanding of physical tableau and transition to re-enforce storytelling.
1. Students will develop character voice through interior monologue based on views of situational conflict of literary source.

***NOTE: Curriculum guide has been developed and adapted through my work with theater colleagues, educators and professionals; Virginia McFerran, Buffy Sedlachek, Leif Jurgensen, Anne Bogart, Augusto Boal, Wendy Knox, Randy Reyes, Barney O’Hanlan, Viola Spolin,

Aesop's Fables

The Lion and the Mouse

Once when a Lion was asleep a little Mouse began running up and down upon him; this soon wakened the Lion, who placed his huge paw upon him, and opened his big jaws to swallow him. "Pardon, O King," cried the little Mouse: "forgive me this time, I shall never forget it: who knows but what I may be able to do you a turn some of these days?" The Lion was so tickled at the idea of the Mouse being able to help him that he lifted up his paw and let him go. Some time after the Lion was caught in a trap, and the hunters who desired to carry him alive to the King, tied him to a tree while they went in search of a wagon to carry him on. Just then the little Mouse happened to pass by, and seeing the sad plight in which the Lion was, went up to him and soon gnawed away the ropes that bound the King of the Beasts. "Was I not right?" said the little Mouse.

Moral: Little friends may prove great friends.

The Boy Who Cried Wolf

There was once a young Shepherd Boy who tended his sheep at the foot of a mountain near a dark forest. It was rather lonely for him all day, so he thought upon a plan by which he could get a little company and some excitement. He rushed down towards the village calling out "Wolf, Wolf," and the villagers came out to meet him, and some of them stopped with him for a considerable time. This pleased the boy so much that a few days afterwards he tried the same trick, and again the villagers came to his help. But shortly after this a Wolf actually did come out from the forest, and began to worry the sheep, and the boy of course cried out "Wolf, Wolf," still louder than before. But this time the villagers, who had been fooled twice before, thought the boy was again deceiving them, and nobody stirred to come to his help. So the Wolf made a good meal off the boy's flock, and when the boy complained, the wise man of the village said: "A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth."

The Fox and the Crow

A Fox once saw a Crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree. "That's for me, as I am a Fox," said Master Reynard, and he walked up to the foot of the tree. "Good-day, Mistress Crow," he cried. "How well you are looking to-day: how glossy your feathers; how bright your eye. I feel sure your voice must surpass that of other birds, just as your figure does; let me hear but one song from you that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds." The Crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by Master Fox. "That will do," said he. "That was all I wanted. In exchange for your cheese I will give you a piece of advice for the future: Do not trust flatterers.

The Tortoise and the Hare

The Hare was once boasting of his speed before the other animals. "I have never yet been beaten," said he, "when I put forth my full speed. I challenge any one here to race with me." The Tortoise said quietly, "I accept your challenge." "That is a good joke," said the Hare; "I could dance round you all the way." "Keep your boasting till you've beaten," answered the Tortoise. "Shall we race?" So a course was fixed and a start was made. The Hare darted almost out of sight at once, but soon stopped and, to show his contempt for the Tortoise, lay down to have a nap. The Tortoise plodded on and plodded on, and when the Hare awoke from his nap, he saw the Tortoise just near the winning-post and could not run up in time to save the race. Then he said to the tortoise, "Slow and steady wins the race."

Androcles and the Lion

A slave named Androcles once escaped from his master and fled to the forest. As he was wandering about there he came upon a Lion lying down moaning and groaning. At first he turned to flee, but finding that the Lion did not pursue him, he turned back and went up to him. As he came near, the Lion put out his paw, which was all swollen and bleeding, and Androcles found that a huge thorn had got into it, and was causing all the pain. He pulled out the thorn and bound up the paw of the Lion, who was soon able to rise and lick the hand of Androcles like a dog. Then the Lion took Androcles to his cave, and every day used to bring him meat from which to live. But shortly afterwards both Androcles and the Lion were captured, and the slave was sentenced to be thrown to the Lion, after the lion had been kept without food for several days. The Emperor and all his Court came to see the spectacle, and Androcles was led out into the middle of the arena. Soon the Lion was let loose from his den, and rushed bounding and roaring towards his victim. But as soon as he came near to Androcles he recognised his friend, and fawned upon him, and licked his hands like a friendly dog. The Emperor, surprised at this, summoned Androcles to him, who told him the whole story. Whereupon the slave was pardoned and freed, and the Lion let loose to his native forest.

Moral: Gratitude is the sign of noble souls.

Examples of Student work from past performances/scripts:

Upperclassmen (Ninth Grade Nothin', 2010)

B2: I never go down the hall by the gymnasium. I'm always afraid I'm going to get beat up. I know it's an irrational fear. Did you know they don't have statistics on beatings by the gymnasium? They have overall school complaints of physical contact but they do not break these statistics down to geographical locations around the school. I've heard many beatings take place in that hallway and in the parking lot out back and in the industrial arts areas. As you can probably tell, my parents aren't the kind of parents, to let my insurance lapse. They fear for me. I fear for me.

(Pause)

B1: When do you think it's gonna happen?

B2: I don't know. Soon...I hope.

B1: What do ya think it'll be?

B2: A swirlie—maybe. Locked in our lockers or just a good old-fashioned beating. They'll think of something, the upper classmen always do.

B1: I have never been in a physical fight in my life. Physically my athleticism is right up there with gerbils. Because of this quality I have chosen to be a pacifist.

I am the middle child in my family of three kids. I will be graduating Middle School with a straight C average. I was raised Catholic however this is not a Catholic school. I am now an athiest, and I have never met anyone or read anything that can give me hard evidence to support the existence of God. I mean seriously, what middle school kid can?

I dislike middle school and want to attend a French Immersion School instead of my feeder high school where most of the rest of my class will be attending so I will not have to be with them any more. Brett Rubin always asks me, "Know what's worse than a hurricane?" and then punches me really hard. Bruise hard. I don't think his punches are worse than a hurricane but the way I get treated sure is.

What're you gonna do?

B2: I haven't made up my mind yet. Walking away seems to be the "Big" thing to do but that can be seen as weakness in the eyes of upperclassmen.

B1: I'm going to talk to the principal. She seems to know how things work around here.

B2: She must—she's the administrator.

B1: I can't fight and I shouldn't be forced into acting a way a peer group wants. I should be able to be myself and stand by what I believe.

B2: One would think.

B1: I'm a simple person. I don't understand all this high school hazing.

B2: We may just have to take what's coming as a part of growing up.

B1: Oh gosh, I'm getting sore just thinking about it!

B2: The calm before the storm...

B1: Ouch...

B2: Ouch...

B1: It's not fair. All the girls seem to get along just fine.

21st Century Dating (Ninth Grade Nothin', 2010)

Sitting back to back texting on cell phones.

Boy: U 1st

Girl: No U 1st

Girl: I luv u Andrew.

Boy: And I luv u.

Girl: X

Boy: O

Girl: XXX

Boy: OOO

Girl: XOXOXXXXXOOOO

Boy: OXOXOXOXXXXOXXX

Girl: XXOO

Boy: OOX

Girl XO

Boy X

Girl: Relationships are the toughest and roughest thing in life. For me it's because guys aren't honest and they lie about everything. I can't stay in a relationship for a long time. It's hard for me to be tied down to someone and do what a girlfriend is supposed to do.

Girl Texting: I can't go out w/ u anymore. It's not u it's me.

Boy Texting: WHY? Fine. Be that way.

Both walk off never fully becoming aware of the other.

Homework (Ninth Grade Nothin', 2009)

Girl: I'm very concerned about not getting my homework done in high school! In High school we get

a lot more homework and the texts books are bigger and thicker! I worry about missing school and getting to homeroom, I don't want any absences and I don't want my grades to suffer. Nothin' in going on my personal record! I think the homework is a significant turning point in life because the teachers see us more as teenagers and not as children, so they expect more. The amount of homework is astronomical and keeping track of things... daily planners, color-coded bookmarks, to-do lists, watch alarms, all friendly reminders. I find myself staying up later doing homework and feeling overwhelmed but I'm learning to handle it better... I'm getting the hang of things. Study hall seems to make things easier, when I use it. I also have to find ways to juggle my personal problems, extra curricular activities and friends. I think high school is the second hardest thing in my life...

I know if I try my best it will show.

Boy: Ben got an A+++++++ on his essay about sea monsters.

Girl: I got a B- on mine and it was five pages long!

Dealing with my parent's reaction to my grades is the first!

Mariah Himmelwright (Stuck in the Middle, 2010)

My name is Mariah Himmelwright, I'm 17 This is my daily journal. There are many like it but this one is mine. 100 sheets, 200 page composition notebook. I have filled it. Without me this journal is useless. Without me it's just notebook used for math equations and study notes. My personal journal entries are in here to help me—to remind me of where I've been and help me figure out where I'm going.

opening to a random page

Zoe: I had my first boyfriend. My first REAL crush.

opening to a random page

Rachel: On September 24th I tried to commit suicide.

pause, to audience

Mariah: The entries are not always upbeat.

opening to a random page

Rebekah: It's has been a tough start to the school year.

opening a to random page

Kenzie: I have witnessed friends experience psychological and physical abuse by so-called “adults”.

opening a to random page

Rebekah: I ran away from home to live with my aunt.

opening a random page

ALL: My favorite teacher is Ms. Baldinelli...

Pause

She isn't perfect, sometimes her passion is too intense. She's one of those hippy types but she treats me with respect and cares about each one of her students. She takes the time to really teach us literature and how to write. She writes meaningful comments and suggestions for writing and organizing better work. She's always fair. Gives a tremendous amount of homework and opened the "outside" world to me and taught me things that were of interest... not necessarily from a textbook. But one thing I know she wants is to instill a love of words and language to all the students, and to make us caring people and better citizens in the world.

closes notebook

Mariah: Ms. Baldinelli,

Zoe: Boys at this age are unimportant

Kenzie: I care more of my friends & myself

Rebekah: the year has gotten a lot better and

Rachel: I no longer think about suicide

All: Thank you.

Just a little Fun (Stuck in the Middle, 2010)

Rachel: It's just a game

Cody: just a little fun, right?

Sophie: Too old to be hopscotching

Christian: building forts

Rachel: cutting

Sophie: combing

R&S: a Barbie's hair

Jenna/Kenzie: It wasn't just a picture.

Christian: It wasn't supposed to go this far

Mariah: Why did you do that? I thought you liked me. You said you liked me.

Christian: Jeez, lighten up Mariah, I only showed a few guys, it's no big deal.

Mariah: That wasn't for other guys, just you. You know, I used to think you were a nice guy but now you're just an ugly liar!

Christian: You're not worth it anyway. I'm into more "mature" women, if you know what I mean.

Sophie: Weeks go by

Rachel: Gossip spreads

Bullies: Everybody knows what you are!

Sophie: a certain picture is now common knowledge

Rachel: Middle school, high school, everybody knows

Marais: We surround her in the halls

Jenna: Like bodyguards

Marais: She needed to know she had some real friends

Cody: Everybody knows what you are!

Sophie: Slut!

Jenna: Knock it off

Marais: Get out of the way

Jenna: Go to class

Rachel: What are you, the hall monitor?

Sophie: I saw that picture—

Rachel: everybody knows what you are!

Mariah: It's like this every day. I hate school. I'm afraid to leave the house. I can't trust anyone, not even my friends. Everybody calls me names, I'm not what everybody thinks I am. I've never done anything. Everyone hates me, no matter where I go.

Mariah leaves

Rachel: I was so mean

Cody: I was a jerk

Jenna: I wasn't there for her

Marais: as much as I should have been

Sophie: I was a B-I-T-C-H.

Cody: Yeah, you were.

All: Shut up Cody!

Christian: I was selfish and thoughtless

A gunshot is heard.

All: Just a little fun, right?

Out Out Damn Germ (In Middle School a Secret is not a Secret Unless the Whole School Knows, 2011)

GENTLEWOMAN "I have seen Eden rise from her desk, throw her sweater upon her, unlock her locker, take forth klenex, fold it, blow upon it, look at it, fold it, and again return it to her pocket; yet all this while in a flu-like agitation"

D "besides her walking, what, at any time, have you heard her say?"

G “that, sir, I cannot tell”

D “what is she doing now? see how she rubs her hands”

Eden carries hand sanitizer and continually squirts and rubs.

G “she does that all the time, to seem thus washing her hands. I have known her to continue in this fashion a quarter of an hour”

LM “Yet here’s a germ”

D “hark! she speaks!”

LM “out, damned germs! out, I say! who would have thought a woman’d have so many germs on her?”

D “did you hear that?”

LM “will these hands ne’r be clean? Here they are still! all the hand sanitizers of the school could not sweeten this little hand! Oh, oh, oh!”

D “What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charg’d.”

LM “to class, to class! there’s the ringing of the bell! come, come, give me new hands. what’s done cannot be undone. to class, to class, to class!”

D “will she go now to her desk?”

G “Directly.”

D Look after her; Remove from her all agitation. And keep an eye on her.

G “Goodbye, good Cheyenne.”