

Hamline University

DigitalCommons@Hamline

School of Education Student Capstone Projects

School of Education

Summer 2020

CREATING A THEATRE CURRICULUM FOR DIVERSE UPPER ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

Sara Feinberg

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_cp



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

CREATING A THEATRE CURRICULUM FOR DIVERSE
UPPER ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

by

Sara Feinberg

A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Teaching.

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

August 2020

Primary Advisor: Kelly Killorn
Content Advisor: Sarah Richardson
Curriculum Advisor: Tricia Menzhuber
Primary Editor: Kate Ray

DEDICATION

To my family for their continuing support over the past ten years, and to my friends for cheering me on throughout all of my studies. Thank you for believing in me, for pushing me to do my best, and for supporting me the whole time. Special thanks to Tricia Menzhuber for seeing talents in myself that I never thought I had, and for picking me up when I was at my worst. Also, special thanks to Sarah Richardson and Ari Slaughter for listening to me, thinking deeply like I do, and helping me create a curriculum that would best serve students of color. Finally, special thanks to my mom for teaching me to be a teacher like her, my dad for lending a listening ear, my stepmom for her encouragement and love, my stepdad for stepping in financially and to help when I felt overwhelmed, and my sister Kate for her advice, superior editing skills, and incredible writing prowess. And I can never forget my husband. Thank you, Greg, for everything you have done to help and support me through an intensive Montessori teacher training and a master's degree. I love you!

Copyright by
SARA FEINBERG, 2020
All Rights Reserved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction	6
Overview of Paper	7
Personal and Professional Background	8
Summary	12
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review	14
Introduction	14
The Upper Elementary Student	15
Montessori	15
Piaget	18
Other Theories	19
Resistant Learners	20
Race	22
Income	24
Trauma	27
Immigrants	28
Summary	29
Teaching Tools for Culturally Diverse Students	30
Interpersonal Skills	31
Social-Emotional Learning	32
Group Building	34
Existing Theatre Curricula	37
Telling Student's Stories	41
Curriculum design	43
State Standards and Creating a Theatre Curriculum	44
Summary of Chapter Two	46
CHAPTER THREE: Project Description	47
Introduction	47
Project Description	47
Assessment	50
Theoretical Base	51
Setting	52
The Audience	53
Timeline	53

Summary.....	53
CHAPTER FOUR: Reflection.....	54
Introduction.....	54
Major Learnings	55
Summary of Literature Review	57
Implications on Policy.....	58
Limitations	59
Future Research	60
Communication Results.....	61
Benefits To This Profession.....	61
Summary.....	62
REFERENCES	64
APPENDIX A: Minnesota State Standards for grades 3 and 4.....	70
APPENDIX B: Curriculum Overview	76
APPENDIX C: Unit Plans.....	89

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

It was November, and my job was killing me. I started teaching Montessori to grades 1-3 in a new school which was full of children who had experienced severe trauma and were diverse in many different ways, including race, socio-economic status, and learning styles. The morale in the building was low for both the students and the staff, and there was little to no support. I had never been so stressed in my life, but I really wanted to make it work. My goal had always been to teach urban, diverse children, many of whom could also lack necessary social and emotional skills. How could I give up now?

The job continued to get harder and I could not keep the classroom safe. As I was crying to my former boss who now works at a small, urban private K-8 school near my house, she said, "I am looking for a full-time theatre teacher starting as soon as possible. I think you would be perfect for the job." I made a decision. I quit my other job and in December, I started teaching theatre at two different urban K-8 private schools.

Little did I know that teaching theatre to a group of children who were not only not interested in theatre, but who had no idea of what theatre was would be a challenge in and of itself. I was used to teaching theatre since I have been teaching as a resident artist, theatre educator, and actor for the past 20 years, but teaching a required theatre class to children full time was new to me. I also had no idea how to teach theatre long term. There was no theatre curriculum to follow, which was both a blessing and a curse. I was free to create something that culturally diverse children who had little experience with theatre would resonate with, but I also still had the challenge of finding

the hook for two very different communities. This led to my question: *how can a theatre curriculum for diverse upper elementary students be created?*

Overview of Paper

Although I am teaching theatre to children in grades K-8 in both schools, I decided to focus on creating an upper elementary theatre curriculum. Since I have more experience working with primary grades, I felt creating a curriculum for this age group would be the best fit, because I could easily adjust it for younger and older students.

Since I was also working with resistant children, the definition of which were those who had diverse needs, social and emotional skills, and races and backgrounds; as well as experiences of trauma, and resistance to learning (especially anything outside of their comfort zone), I wanted to focus my curriculum on designing lessons and experiences that created safe spaces, helped them to get comfortable trying new things, and had many opportunities for group building. Because of this, I wanted to research the impact that these experiences have on older elementary children in schools today, and how I could help them to become more resilient and motivated to take risks, regardless of their backgrounds. With this research at my fingertips, I was hoping to further understand these children and to use theatre to help them become successful in other ways throughout their life.

The purpose of this capstone is to create a curriculum for diverse upper elementary students who are resistant to learning about performing arts, and who may not have been exposed to theatre in the past. This curriculum provides exercises that help these children learn to create their own plays, build a sense of community and place

where expression is welcome, take risks, and have a safe space to bring up issues and solve problems.

Personal and Professional Background

For most of my elementary school years, I had a hard time relating to others. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) was not a common diagnosis at the time, and therefore I was labeled as the “bad kid”. I did well in school, but was often bored, although I was usually in the highest academic groups. I went through trauma in my elementary years, which tended to come out in a variety of ways. I tended to hide in my books, had poor social skills, and exploded when confronted. Because of this, I was not very well-liked. Through it all, however, I always wanted to sing. Singing helped me forget what was going on at home, and let me really stand out as my own person. In 6th grade, I auditioned for Alice in Wonderland at my local elementary school and got the lead part. I absolutely loved being Alice and was hooked on theatre from that time onward. Theatre and music, singing in particular, helped me to find my way through high school, and voice became my major in college, with a minor in theatre. Because of this experience, I knew first hand that theatre changes lives, and could help children to find their voice.

I also loved to teach from an early age. Teaching was in my blood. My mom was a teacher in a public, urban elementary school for 27 years, and I wanted to follow in her footsteps, but in my own way. Soon after I graduated from college, I decided to move to Birmingham, Alabama to mentor fifth-grade children and run an after school program. Almost all of the children in this school were African American, and, although the community was reluctant to believe that a “White Yankee” could teach their children,

by the end of the school year I had family friends for life, and I successfully ran an after school program for a previously underserved community. This experience helped me to realize that I wanted to work with diverse populations of children, particularly those in urban schools that experienced racism, were from lower-income families and had experienced trauma.

After my experience in AmeriCorps, I tried working in an office as a receptionist and started my singing career, but I missed working with children so much. I didn't know that people could get jobs teaching theatre until I saw the job in a classified ad. When I saw this, I was galvanized into action. I quit my full-time job and did a theatre education internship at the Guthrie Theater. I then started teaching theatre and directing for children's theatre companies around the Twin Cities.

Still, I wanted more. I wanted to have time to get to know children, and teaching theatre did not give me opportunities to build lasting relationships with children. I knew building relationships is the best way to help diverse students and was frustrated that I could not do this to the extent that I wanted to in short classes and camps. I was not sure how I wanted to proceed in my teaching career. At the same time as I was feeling frustrated in my career, I was trying to find a preschool for my daughters. I happened upon a Montessori preschool and decided to observe. I was transfixed by how these teachers worked with children. After I observed Montessori elementary teachers, I knew this was the way I could teach best.

I decided to get my Montessori training since this was one way I would have more time to get to know children better and watch them grow. I also fell in love with what Maria Montessori was trying to do for children, and how her method transformed

my own children's lives for the better as they went through a Montessori school. Before my training was even finished, I got a job as a first through third-grade Montessori guide in a private, suburban, almost all Caucasian environment. I loved the relationships I was building and how I was teaching, but I was not able to help diverse children in this environment.

That led me back to the city, where I took a job teaching Montessori to young diverse children, many of whom experienced trauma. I found I had somewhat of a reverse culture shock, meaning that I was not used to teaching urban diverse children after teaching in a suburban, homogenous environment. I encountered resistant and apathetic learners, and at the same time, I was not trained adequately to work with them successfully. As my job was falling apart, I was offered a full-time job teaching theatre. When I took the job in December, I felt like I was coming full circle in my life. This time, however, I wanted to correct my mistakes and help start a thriving new program. Backing me up was a supportive community to help and guide me when there were trouble spots. I also had creative license to do whatever I thought best to help engage these children in theatre. What could go wrong?

Well, it turned out, many things could go wrong. While I did fix many mistakes I made at the beginning of the school year in my urban Montessori position, I was frustrated by the lack of curriculum I had to help me teach theatre to such a diverse group of students. I continued to receive apathy and resistance to teaching theatre to children in this new environment, which led me to my question, *how do I create a theatre curriculum for diverse, upper elementary students?*

At this time I am at two very different schools. At the private school in St Paul, there are 99% African American students, and less than 1% of other races and mixed races (Private communication, May 11, 2020). The other private school is in Minneapolis, and is 67% Latino and 12% African or African American, with 9% Caucasian and 11% other races (Private communication, May 11, 2020). In years past, and for the first two months of the new school year, the position I inherited was a floundering music program. After the music teacher left in October 2020, the students experienced many different substitute teachers until I started teaching. Starting a new theatre program, especially in the middle of the school year, posed quite a lot of challenges. I not only had to help these children understand what theatre was, but to make them care about the class in the first place.

While some (mostly younger) students did take to the new theatre program and the way I taught my classes, others resisted. I tried all of the behavior management tricks I knew and asking the children for their input, but to no avail. I needed to find a different approach to teach children who were resistant learners. The way I was used to teaching theatre was not working with resistant learners and students of color, and I did not know what to do in order to engage them. I needed to learn more about culturally diverse students, and I needed to reexamine my teaching strategies in order to be successful.

That brought me to this project, and my question, *how can a theatre curriculum for diverse upper elementary students be created?* For this capstone, I studied the nature of upper elementary students, the underlying issues within our society and our school system that oppress students, their social and emotional needs, how to engage resistant

learners, and how to create a theatre curriculum to meet the needs of culturally diverse upper elementary children.

Summary

This project answers the question: *how can a theatre curriculum for diverse upper elementary students be created?* It consists of creating a theatre curriculum for upper elementary children who struggle to open up to themselves, each other, or teachers. I am hoping that, by building a curriculum especially designed for resistant diverse learners, I will be able to help other theatre teachers who are encountering the same resistance to learning and that this curriculum can guide teachers into the art of theatre in a loving and gentle way.

Chapter two reviews the literature which helps to answer the above question, and explores other topics related to understanding diverse, resistant learners, such as understanding the nature of the upper elementary child, the reasons why there are resistant learners and how to help them be successful, and the continuing need to develop social and emotional and group building skills in the classroom. I then compare and contrast different theatre curricula and, through my literature review, find curricula that are most helpful to diverse children, based on their needs, and that are tied to the Minnesota state and national theatre standards. These topics are important because they help to understand what is behind a student's resistance to change, collaboration in a group, performing, and trying new things, which are the nature of teaching theatre. Chapter three includes an outline of the project and the books and curriculum I used to create my specialized curriculum, and it details why these books were an important tool for diverse students. The intended audience is provided, and the timeline

for the project completion is stated. Chapter four concludes the project and provides a place for reflection. In this chapter, I looked at the literature and decided which literature was most important to a successful completion of this capstone. I also focused on the next steps of this project, which include how I communicated the project and what work I can do in the future that relates to the project I completed.

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

Introduction

The last chapter outlined the background and journey which asked *how can a theatre curriculum for diverse upper elementary students be created?* This chapter begins by reviewing who the upper elementary student is; their social and emotional needs and capabilities, cognitive development, and the tendencies and characteristics of the upper elementary child (Montessori, 2008).

Once the characteristics and tendencies of the upper elementary child are understood, the nature of resistant learners must be investigated. Why are some children resistant to trying new things and to school in general? There are many factors that cause resistance to learning in upper elementary students, from race, to socio-economic status, experiences of trauma, or culture (Toshalis, 2015). Each factor was researched to understand what made students afraid to learn and therefore resistant to trying new things, but especially in the theatre classroom, where students were asked to go outside of their comfort zone and work together much more than in other classroom situations.

Through the literature review, it became necessary to highlight two lacking skills in United States schools today: social-emotional skills and group building skills. Each of these skills are imperative to use traditional theatre curricula successfully, yet so many resistant learners lack either one or both of these skills. It was necessary to review which skills are lacking, why they are lacking in schools today, and how a new approach to theatre curriculum fostered growth of these skills in upper elementary students.

The next step was to compare and contrast different theatre curricula, from the more traditional approaches, to more novel approaches which were the basis for a new approach to theatre curriculum. The Minnesota State Standards (2018) grounded the findings and helped to develop the new curriculum. These standards are still in revision but are more closely connected to the National Core Arts Standards (2014). These two sets of standards were used as a guide to drive the overarching goal of the theatre curriculum over the school year.

The Upper Elementary Student

The first concept mentioned at most teacher trainings, classes, and professional development seminars is “know your students”. In order to truly understand the upper elementary student (classified in this project as ages nine to 12, or grades three to six), there must be an understanding of how the student interacts with society and peers, their cognitive abilities, their understanding of the world, and the natural tendencies and characteristics that students of this age tend to gravitate toward.

Montessori

Dr. Maria Montessori spent most of her life observing and writing about children. She began as a scientist, teacher and a doctor in 1908, when she founded the *Casa de Bambini*, or Children’s House, for preschool aged children in poverty in Rome. As these Children’s Houses became famous, she branched out from the preschool age child and started researching and observing children in elementary schools. Montessori spent a large part of her later years writing about elementary children, and what she called their characteristics (Montessori, 2008).

Montessori divided up cognitive and physical growth of a human from birth to age 24 into four different planes of development (A. Awes, personal communication, July 21, 2010). A plane of development, according to Montessori, was a *rebirth* of the child into a new being of sorts. These planes of development were broken up into six year spans: from birth to age six, from ages six to 12, from ages 12 to 18, and from ages 18 to 24. She also subdivided each plane of development. For example, she divided the first plane, or ages birth to six, into two, three-year groups. She did the same with the other three planes. Therefore, children in each plane of development have identified characteristics (A. Awes, personal communication, July 21, 2010).

The focus of this review was on children in the second plane of development, or from ages six to 12, and more specifically, in the second half of this plane of development, or ages nine to 12. In this plane of development, Montessori observed that the child became more social than in the first plane. The child wanted to work with other children, and became increasingly more influenced by peers than by family as they grew older. The elementary child also becomes a “tough kid”, as in, they are much more apt to shrug off a scrape or other injury than the younger, more fragile child. Montessori characterized this age as the “age of rudeness”, and talking back to adults or saying rude things to peers happens more often at this stage (Montessori, 2008).

Children in the second plane of development take pleasure in following a loyal group of peers, which Montessori called the “herd instinct”. Children in this age group often dress alike and even start to look alike. Children in this age group work hard to be successful in a group, and ultimately, in society. Children from ages nine to 12 were also more interested in moral codes, often exclaiming that something was unfair, and they

created their own laws and order in their society. Although children in the younger elementary may tell on their peers and look to the adult to help maintain the laws of the classroom, upper elementary children rarely do this, putting the loyalty of this so-called friend above their own needs (A. Awes, personal communication, July 21, 2010).

The difference between the six to nine year old and the nine to 12 year old children was that the six to nine year old child began their journey to develop these characteristics. They began to learn how to work and play in groups, to use their imagination, and move away from the influence of their families and toward their peers. The nine to 12 age group, or upper elementary student, synthesized these characteristics and developed them to a higher degree and in a more complex way based on their brain development (Montessori, 2008).

Unfortunately, many scientists and psychologists did not take Montessori's work into consideration and her findings were not widely published, but her work makes it clear that children of this age not only want to find a place in society, but crave it, and that is why they are heavily influenced by people and trends in their society (Montessori, 2008). Because of this need to belong to a group, if children do not have the skills to collaborate or to work in groups, they can end up being shunned by other members of society as they age. Also, as children age and become part of the modern workforce, there may be continued problems with colleagues, figures of authority, and completing tasks, since many tasks in the modern workforce consist of collaborative elements. According to Sue Jennings, author of *Remedial Drama*, the job of the theatre educator then becomes building these skills so they can be successful in group work and ultimately, in society (Jennings, 1984).

Piaget

Maria Montessori's theory of cognitive development was also corroborated by world renowned child psychologist Jean Piaget, who conducted his studies of children's cognitive development almost thirty years later than Montessori. Piaget classified cognitive development into four stages as well, however, these stages were thought to arrive at different ages than what Montessori believed. Piaget divided his stages into these categories: Sensorimotor, from ages zero to two years, Preoperational, from two to seven years, Concrete operational, from seven to 11 years, and Formal operational, from ages 11 to adult (Woolfolk, 2008).

Piaget tested children of different ages to see how well they understood the stability of their physical world, or how the understanding of their world could be changed according to these factors: displacement, area, volume, and mass of different objects. According to Piaget, "a student's ability to solve conservation problems depends on an understanding of three basic aspects of reasoning: identity, compensation, and reversibility" (Woolfolk, 2018, p. 42). In the task of number conservation, for example, the preoperational child cannot understand that if the same amount of liquid is poured into two different glasses, it is still the same amount of liquid. At around age seven or eight, children moved from the preoperational to the concrete operational period, in which they were able to understand this concept (Woolfolk, 2008). This showed that upper elementary children were able to understand things in a more complex way than they did at a younger age. Piaget also showed that children after age seven understood a hierarchy of classification, for instance that roses are a type of flower. Younger children were not able to understand this (Woolfolk, 2008). In regards to teaching theater,

students in upper elementary must use more complex story ideas, activities, and concepts to keep them engaged while working in the theatre classroom.

Other Theories

The way children in upper elementary grades understand concepts is more abstract than the way younger children understand them. According to Chip Wood, author of *Yardsticks: Child and Adolescent Development Ages 4-14*, children in the nine to 12 age group develop a sense of humor, and understand inferences and more abstract concepts. These children begin to question the authority of adults, and take on increasingly complex tasks such as running a store, interviewing a peer or adult, or following multi-step instructions (Wood, 2018). According to Kuther in the book *Lifespan Development: Lives in Context*, upper elementary children understand not only the effects of something on themselves, but on society as a whole. For example, that illness is not only something that can happen to them and to their family, but can affect cultures in different ways (Kuther, 2019). These children have a greater understanding of how time works, and often can schedule events and look forward to things much further in advance than younger children (Wood, 2018).

Kuther stated another important characteristic of children in the nine to 12 age group is that they become much more aware of their peers and what their peers may think about them (2019). Upper elementary children's bodies also begin to change and they become self-conscious of their changing and growing bodies. They are often more aware of how others look, smell, and act. While six and seven year olds pick their noses in front of their peers (who often either do not notice or are doing the same thing themselves), older children often watch and judge every move of their peers. Although

peer relations becomes much more pronounced in adolescence, it first becomes a factor in upper elementary. Children whose bodies are changing are then asked by theatre teachers to engage in dramatic play, silly movements, and strange stretching exercises, which can be a cause for embarrassment and, ultimately, resistance (Wood, 2018).

Resistant Learners

In researching the upper elementary child, Wood (2018), found that upper elementary children had a better understanding of complex thoughts and ideas, a greater sense of their world and society around them, more interest in social interactions and group work with peers, a deeper understanding of humor and abstract thought, a greater sense of self-awareness, a high sense of morality, and were physically stronger and able to try new things. If this is the case, why are many upper elementary children resistant to learning new things, to trying new ideas, and to school and learning in general? Answering these questions requires a deeper look into the most important task of the teacher: know your student.

In order to understand why some children resist learning, there needs to be a deeper understanding of what resistance is and what it means. According to Toshalis (2015) most often, instead of taking the time to understand and analyze resistance from students, educators responded poorly or negatively to what the student was doing to disrupt the class or the activity. Toshalis further stated that educators often feel remorse for these reactions afterward. After all, they did not get into education to reprimand students but to ignite a sense of wonder and excitement in learning. Most feel overwhelmed, try to think of what they will do next time, roll around many recycled

strategies, and when the behavior resurfaces, they often respond in the same or a similar fashion. So the cycle continues (Toshalis, 2015).

Children do not grow up in a vacuum. Although, according to Montessori (2008), Piaget (Woolfolk, 2008), and many other specialists in cognitive development, children learn many new things as they mature, society factors heavily into their cognitive development. Society, according to the *Merriam-Webster* dictionary (1994), means “A community, nation, or broad grouping of people having common traditions, institutions, and collective activities and interests” (p. 1115). Society may be all of these things, but it is also composed of many different people artificially divided into subgroups: race, class, gender, culture, ethnicity, and ability, among others. Children unwittingly become entangled and categorized into these subgroups, and according to Toshalis, author of *Make Me! Understanding and Engaging Student Resistance in School*, for many children, society can have a dramatic and often negative impact on their attitude toward learning, school, others, and themselves (Toshalis, 2015).

Resistance, in its definition according to Toshalis (2015), is complex. Part of Toshalis’ definition of resistance is “any situation in a school setting in which a student decides not to comply with an implicit or explicit expectation” (p. 8). But resistance is more than this. According to Toshalis, it also tells educators, schools, and society that something is not right. Toshalis says, “resistance is the *symptom* of the problem” (p. 304). If that is the case, educators, administrators, and schools need to become detectives. What is driving resistance? Why do children continue to resist? How can teachers change the situation and help them succeed? To do this, there must be a deeper

look into what diverse children are dealing with in schools, communities, and society as a whole.

Race

Most teachers begin their trainings with the determination to be “color blind” or to not account for race when teaching children. Unfortunately, this is not an effective way to remove bias, and is not possible. The question of race, and how race has represented society in the United States is so deeply ingrained that it seems impossible to see children without the lens of race. Better to address the idea of race head on, to understand where the bias is coming from, and how this contributes to resistant learners and school culture in our society (Lee, 2008).

The question of race and how children of different races are perceived is a complicated one, and a research paper on its own. In America, the history of race and race relations is long and tumultuous, filled with violence that is still prevalent, and, according to Jones, author of the article *The Rise of Far Right Extremism in the United States*, racism is showing a resurgence in recent years (2018). Although more and more children in the public school system are children of color, as of 2012, 87% of K-12 school teachers were white females from middle class backgrounds (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). This created a greater divide in the classroom, because teachers had a harder time understanding the children they teach.

Trainings for teachers must include cultural diversity classes, and in order to receive a license renewal in the state of Minnesota, teachers must continue taking these classes throughout their tenure in the profession (Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board, 2019). But that does not mean that many of these

teachers can come close to understanding what children of different races go through in their everyday lives, and how this daily subversion can lead to shutting down creative thoughts, ideas, and risk-taking, because taking risks can get children hurt, or worse.

Enid Lee, a self-acclaimed anti-racist educator, talked about the role racism has in schools, students, families, and communities in the United States. In her article “Anti-Racist Education: Pulling Together to Close the Gaps,” she defined racism as “the use of institutional power to deny or grant people and groups of people rights, respect, representation and resources based on their skin color” (Lee, 2008, p. 4). There are many institutions that uphold and create this racist mentality, but one of the first ones that children encounter are schools. According to Lee (2008), schools tend to teach and uphold the model of Whiteness and White culture as the dominant culture, and she asserted that much of the curriculum supports this. Not only was the school curriculum racist, but teaching styles, the institutional framework of schools, and the school staff also present Whites as dominant and place White behavior and communication practices as the dominant or correct method (Lee, 2008, p. 4-5).

Another, and doubly important view on race in schools, is found in the book *The Guide for White Women who Teach Black Boys* (Moore, Michael, & Penick-Parks, 2018). This book takes the approach that race must not only be examined by the historic school structures put into place by white culture, but that white women, who make up so much of the teachers in public schools that predominantly teach students of color, need to change themselves and their own implicit biases first in order to create lasting change in the school system. The book is filled with articles that challenge what white teachers know and whether they are truly advocating for children of color (black boys, in the case

of this book, but it can be used for other races as well), providing them with high standards, being firm yet kind, and building relationships with the children and their families. White teachers, and especially white women teachers, will receive the benefits of reading and doing the exercises in the articles to achieve a new and culturally responsive understanding of who they are as teachers and the students they are serving (Moore, Michael, & Penick-Parks, 2018).

Theatre, then, can be a great tool to teach diversity and bias awareness both in the classroom and beyond. In the article “Act it Out”, Karen Cathers and Nancy Schniedewind collaborated with a teacher on a year-long project to bring diversity and bias awareness into a classroom of third-grade students. Acting out issues of bias and racism became an important way for students to solve problems in the classroom and beyond (2008). In “Engaging the Drama”, students were able to bring issues of race, bias, and many other problems onto the stage. According to Gallagher, using the stage to bring their issues to light empowered students to find a way to solve the problems (2013).

Income

Adding to the race issue is the dynamic of poverty. Not only have all children of color experienced racism throughout their lives in the United States, but a high percentage of families of color tend to live in poverty due to this systemic racism (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). In fact, according to the U.S. Census, 20.8% of African American and 17.6% of Hispanic families live in poverty, compared to 8.1% of Caucasian families. Also, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2019), 24.4% of people in poverty did not finish high school. According to Mitchie (2009), author of *Holler if You Hear Me*, a book about his teaching experiences in a mostly Hispanic neighborhood in the

South Side of Chicago, many of the families he worked with had negative school experiences, and as a result, ended up dropping out of school. In fact, many parents in poverty feel uncomfortable in school situations themselves, according to a study by Annette Lareau called *Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families*. In this study, researchers followed and recorded black and white families in both the middle class and in poverty. In one instance, a researcher observed an interaction a parent had with their teacher in conferences. The parents in poverty tended not to comment or ask any further questions of the teacher, generally, Lareau asserted, because these families often did not trust the school, the school officials, or the system in general (2002).

Many teachers working with diverse youth and students of color, and especially families in poverty, may not know the extent that student's family lives can affect their learning at school. For example, Toshalis (2015) presented vignettes about children's experiences in school and how their daily lives set them up for failure before they even got into the classroom. Toshalis wrote about a boy named Damon, who started his day off in a difficult place right as he got on the bus. He needed to put up a front immediately to avoid a fight later, and he became stressed just from the bus ride. By the time he navigated through hallways and got to his classroom, his thoughts were racing and his stress level was quite high, but he was expected to perform and have everything he needed right away (Toshalis, 2015). According to Kathleen Gallagher (2013), author of the article "Engaging with Drama", student interviews of issues that stopped them from engaging with school included their inability to pay for public transportation to get to school, which ultimately resulted in absenteeism and disengagement. In her study,

Gallagher said that teachers “cited absenteeism as the greatest impediment to engagement” (Gallagher, 2013, p. 20).

One of the greatest advocates for theatre for all is Augusto Boal, author of *Theatre of the Oppressed*, which specifically addresses how theatre historically morphed from an art expression for all people into an art form for the ruling classes. In his project in Lima, Peru, Boal (1979) set out to “outline various experiments...made in considering the theatre as a language, capable of being utilized by any person, with or without artistic talent” (p. 121). By setting theatre up as something that anyone can and should do, Boal broke down the historical barriers of theatre as an art form for the wealthy and put it into the hands of the oppressed and people living in poverty. Choosing to use theatre as a language for all people gives the youth experiencing oppression a voice, and helps them to work through troubling issues, role-playing solutions to problems in their lives and empowering them to find real solutions (Boal, 1979).

Theatre and the arts, in and of itself, is a part of world history, not for a small select group of people. Throughout history, theatre was an activity in which people of all income levels participated in, and until the past few hundred years or so, was not placed into a specialized field but was integrated into other art forms. By specializing theatre into something that is not done or seen by people in poverty, it removed the humanness and accessibility from the arts (Boal, 1979). Bringing theatre to children in poverty can help them see that theatre is not just for Caucasian people who have money. In the words of Susan Jennings, author of *Remedial Drama*, “drama is not merely an extra subject; it is a way of **doing**” (Jennings, 1984, p. 2). The core of the theatre curriculum needs to help students see theatre as something they can, should, and need to do.

Trauma

Many more children of color and who are from low-income families in the United States live through traumatic events, such as violence, gun use, mental health issues, alcoholism, and mass incarceration (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2017). Trauma, at its most basic level, is a difficult event that the mind is not able to process and move into memory. According to Joan Lovett, author of *Small Wonders: Healing Childhood Trauma with EMDR*, if a person has a traumatic event in their lives, they sometimes continue either reliving or blocking the event, but because they do not process this event into memory, the associated feelings stay at the surface, which can cause anger, fear, high anxiety, poor speech, poor body image, and much more (Lovett, 1999).

Trauma also builds walls for children. These walls can be created by a series of small events or deeper ones and can make it almost impossible for children to get outside of their comfort zones. They may dissociate from reality completely, or through certain triggers, such as loud noises or a certain phrase or touch (Lovett, 1999). Because children are not fully developed physically, intellectually, and emotionally, trauma affects them more acutely than adults, who can still have their lives devastated by traumatic events. Although some of these children may receive therapy services relating to their traumatic events, 75-80% of children in poverty do not receive any services at all (Stagman & Cooper, 2010). This makes the school's job more complicated because the school then serves not only as an educator but also as a therapist for some children in need (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2017). Since many students of color have experienced trauma, theatre must be used not only to help them adjust and process

trauma but also to help them learn how to build trust and to try new things in a safe and nurturing environment (Jennings, 1984).

Immigrants

In the United States, a country made up mostly of immigrants who worked their way to create and thrive in a new land, there has been a systematic oppression of certain immigrant subgroups. African slaves entered this country, not by choice, but as slaves, and those in power worked hard to make sure this particular immigrant subgroup remained slaves. Although immigrants known as Irish, Italian, and Polish, to name a few, had a history of oppression when they first came to the United States, because of their skin color, they were able to assimilate into the oppressor's world view. Later immigrants, such as the Hmong population, Iranians and Iraqis, Somali and other East African countries, and Latinos now face new waves of oppression, along with the African American communities for whom this oppression never went away. Because of their skin color, these subgroups face a similar oppression to the institutionalized racism that has always faced African Americans in this society (Han, 2020).

Since the September 11th terrorist attacks in 2001, and again when Donald Trump was elected president in 2016, immigration has become an increasingly hot topic in politics. According to a study done by YouGov in 2019, 35% of Americans believe that illegal immigration is a serious issue, 23% believe it is a somewhat serious issue, and 25% believe it is a mildly serious issue (YouGov, 2019). In 2016, many immigrants were not only forced to hide from the law but with the recent administration, immigrant families with undocumented workers became even more fearful of being harassed, which spread to the families of these immigrants (Despres, 2020). Children from immigrant

families and who were new to the country entered the school system feeling scared, anxious, and uncertain about so many things in their lives, but animosity toward immigrants in the school system caused widespread discrimination and violence toward these students. According to Jennings (1984), if the students came from a country where English is not their first language, they were often teased for speaking their native languages and were also teased or threatened for their difficulty to speak English.

Most teachers believe, according to Jennings, that the biggest hurdle of immigrants who do not already speak English, is learning the language (1984). While communication is an important part of adjustment to a new society, it is certainly not all that immigrant children are grappling with as they come to a new country and start going to school. Immigrant students may also be dealing with new social norms, expressions, family dynamics, work relations, other cultural and religious differences, or any combination of these issues (Jennings, 1984). In these instances, the theatre educator can serve as an introduction to many of these cultural differences, using group work to bring these differences to life in non-judgmental frameworks, if used in a culturally responsive way (Jennings, 1984).

Summary

The effects of race and race relations, the hardships of low-income immigrants, and the added pressures of trauma that takes place in these situations all have a say in why children are resistant learners. According to Toshalis (2015), there is an important need to refocus education into these categories: relevance (the “why” of learning), results (what will they get out of this lesson), relationships (connections with each student), reciprocity (negotiation, or even apologies), rigor (making the academics challenging to

all), and responsiveness (honoring all backgrounds and cultures). To put a child who has experienced racial discrimination, challenges from lower incomes, trauma, culture shock, or all of these issues combined into a theatre environment--when they are trying to stay cool in front of their peers and are stressed by the day--asks them to let go of these stressors and try things outside of their comfort zones without giving them the skills to do so effectively (Toshalis, 2015).

Teaching Tools for Culturally Diverse Students

So how can drama teachers, and all educators, give diverse children a more supportive and inclusive experience in school? Enid Lee (2008) laid out some important steps that teachers can make to help their classrooms and schools commit to a multicultural focus throughout the school year. First, teachers can assume that students of all races are learners. This may sound obvious, of course, teachers believe this, but do they? Negative talks toward or about students can be a huge catalyst for poor behavior in a classroom. Lee stated that, when observing teachers in classrooms, she asked one teacher to be more positive when talking to other adults in front of them. The teacher started a six-week trial to see whether this positive talk would work. After the six weeks were completed, she noticed a marked increase in positivity throughout her classroom by praising students in front of other adults (Lee, 2008, p. 5).

Good teaching, according to Lee, helps to close racial and socioeconomic gaps in education. Another way to close this gap was by the language teachers used to address students in the classroom. Telling students that they were mathematicians, actors, or readers, and asking students questions “as an actor” or “as a mathematician” instilled

positive self-worth in students while deciphering answers and problem solving (Lee, 2008, p. 9).

Letting students bring their cultures from outside of their schools into the classroom can help students believe their culture is important and necessary in the world. It is important, Lee stated, that children are given the opportunity to teach others about their culture, and to integrate the celebration of different communities throughout the entire year's curriculum, instead of just talking about a culture during a specific month (e.g., Black History Month). If students can be a part of the learning process by thinking up their own questions that are culturally relevant to them and to their peers, and if teachers admit that they do not know everything about their student's culture but are willing to learn, students can be seen as co-creators of learning, and respect themselves and the teacher. Making the curriculum not only challenging but relevant can change learners from resistant to excited to learn (Lee, pp. 8-10).

Acknowledging, interpreting, and celebrating student's backgrounds in school and in the theatre classroom became an important and necessary step towards helping them connect to theatre, its importance in our society, and how theatre can be used to tell these important stories. By lifting up their stories in the classroom, teachers can then lift up their stories in dramatic arts. By telling children that what they say and who they are matters, they can begin to have the confidence to participate in and create a way to bring up themselves, their families, and the communities into a better way of living.

Interpersonal Skills

As children move through elementary school, teachers must foster both academic and interpersonal growth in children. In this case, interpersonal skills are: collaboration,

active listening, teamwork, responsibility, flexibility, empathy, and patience, among other things. In an ideal world, children's growth would be supported by the parents and family who would nurture and support both interpersonal skills and academic skills in their homes. Nurturing these two pillars of education would bring forth adults who have a high success rate academically and in the collaborative workplace. In the real world, however, this is not always the case. Teachers cannot always adequately teach interpersonal skills, students may not get support at home, and if this happens, either academic or interpersonal skills, or both, can be lacking as they grow into adulthood (Pettway, 2019).

In the past 15 years, starting with the No Child Left Behind presidential order and continuing to the current day, many schools and parents alike focused on the academic pillar of achievement, and, because of pressures from the local and federal government during this time, have had to focus more on testing and academic achievement to make sure their schools and jobs stay solvent (Fairtest, 2015). However, with the increase of testing and focus on academics, the interpersonal pillar of education can get left behind. In the article titled "Independent Test Results Show NCLB Fails", the author argued that because teaching social and emotional skills and academics has become more imbalanced, it, too, can lead children to have greater anxiety, lower self-worth, and greater behavior and interpersonal problems as they move through elementary school and beyond (Fairtest, 2015).

Social-Emotional Learning

The term social-emotional learning has become a buzz word in the education community and with teachers across the United States in the past 20 years or so, but it has

started to be implemented in more and more schools over the past 10 to 15 years (Coyl, 2009). The term and the idea behind it started with a study in Connecticut in the 1980's with a group of low-income, children of color who were struggling to come to school and perform academically. These schools hoped to increase academics through a new program which pinpointed learning how to be self-aware, how to care for one another, how to manage behaviors, and how to make responsible decisions. They hoped that by teaching these skills, children could have a more positive school environment, enrollment could improve, and academic test scores could rise. The schools ended up performing better than the national average on academics, and attendance rose as well. This led to other schools trying out the program, and it spread across the nation (Edutopia, 2011).

Now, social and emotional learning (SEL) is one of the hottest topics in education, and schools and teachers have tried various concepts to help these children understand and navigate their feelings. At the same time, teachers noticed that more and more children needed direct teaching of these social and emotional skills (Coyl, 2009). Many teachers blamed the anxiety in students as young as kindergarten for being over-tested and the strict curriculum, which emphasized reading and math skills over skills which used to be central to kindergarten: play and cooperation. Many teachers of older students have seen stressed and miserable children because they are losing the time to teach these skills early, and with the stress of academics they are losing their self-confidence in school early, and to a greater degree (Gray, 2019).

Luckily, although testing children as young as kindergarten is still alive and well in the school system, there is also a shift toward teaching the "whole child", which includes teaching interpersonal skills, more often called social-emotional skills, in the

classroom. According to a study by Marianne D’Emidio-Caston (2019) called “Addressing social, emotional development, and resilience at the heart of teacher education”, the need to teach students interpersonal skills, or social emotional learning (SEL) has become much greater in recent years. D’Emidio-Caston (2019) stated that there is increasing evidence of the need to teach SEL skills in the classroom, and for teachers to be trained to teach these skills. According to D’Emidio-Caston (2019), direct teaching of SEL helped children become emotionally regulated, which led to less suspensions, less discipline, and a more successful school experience for diverse students.

Group Building

Although social and emotional skills include group building, for theatre and theatre education, group building in particular is paramount for children to create any sort of performance. As opposed to other art forms that are largely individual in nature, theatre is inherently collaborative, using directors, playwrights, and actors (and sometimes many other elements such as set designers, lighting, sound, and so on) to create a play (Mandell & Wolf, 2003). Because theatre is collaborative in nature, it became essential to teach children how to work in groups before any solid theatrical work could happen.

Group building is not only important in theatre, but is becoming increasingly important in the 21st century workforce. In the new models of the workplace, groups often come together to collaborate, solve problems, offer suggestions, and work in smaller groups to finish a larger project. Office spaces are open plans, many more are becoming team-based, and most employees are expected to work independently (University of Phoenix, 2011). According to the study created by the University of

Phoenix, if students do not learn the essential skill of collaboration then going into the workforce is increasingly difficult, and creates a disadvantage in regards to higher education, managing life choices and collaborating with others (2011).

In his article, “The Play Deficit”, Peter Gray (2013) discussed how organic group building was diminishing due to children having less free time to play without adult supervision and intervention. Children are not free to have conflicts and solve them organically without adult rules and organized game playing, which means they are not engaging in playground games. If children do not play games in groups, they do not learn how to negotiate group work in school without supervision.

Teachers, then, must recreate the playground game, along with teaching basic group building skills like how to create rules, try something that may not be perfect, and collaborate, debate, and have empathy for each other in the process (Gray, 2013). In a conversation with Sarah Richardson, theatre and music teacher for Lake Country School in Minneapolis, she mentions that the skills children need to work in groups have diminished over her tenure at the school. She uses playground games in her classwork, teaching children basic games and letting them decide which rules go next in the game, which gives them a way to learn these skills (S. Richardson, personal communication, March 13, 2020).

But how do theatre educators directly teach basic group building skills to older children without them feeling as if they are doing playground games or other theatre activities that seem “baby” or “too young” for them? This is the difficulty as students grow older and these important social and emotional skills are not in place. In this case, pinpointing specific skills in a way older children will relate to was a key element in

engaging older elementary learners. In her book *Breaking Through: Drama Strategies for 10's to 15's*, Barbara Goodwille specialized in finding group building games for upper elementary children. She wrote that pantomime, for example, might be a helpful but easy way to teach beginning social skills to older children. Asking them to pantomime feelings, gestures, and phrases in a game much like charades can help older children feel comfortable, and get everyone on their feet and acting quickly (Goodville, 1986). Many times these children had trouble being watched by their peers, therefore whole group activities helped older elementary children to feel safer getting outside of their comfort zone. Whole group exercises, according to Mandell and Wolf (2003), engaged everyone at once doing all of the activities, from whole groups vocalizing yet saying different things, to small group play creation, back to whole groups acting out their scenes simultaneously, and then, watching small group creations one-by-one. All of this happened quickly with very little down time (Mandell & Wolf, 2003).

In her theatre classroom, Mandell also provided constant positive feedback and coaching for her students as they worked together in a large group setting. This type of coaching was called side coaching (Mandell, 2003), and was beneficial in a number of ways. First, side coaching ensured that children stay on track and understand the assignment given to them, without getting into their acting space and doing the actions for them.

Side coaching also promoted immediate positive feedback to the students while they were working. Children needed to feel like the new things they tried were successful. This constant positive feedback gave them the confidence they needed to try new experiences, not only in the theatre classroom but also in the greater school, society,

and, ultimately, their futures. In her book, Mandell and Wolf (2003) wrote about many different examples of universal coachings, all of which were supposed to help children try harder and stay positive about their activity. Some examples were: “be spontaneous”, or don’t worry about being silly” and “trust your body, your emotions, your intuitions” (Mandell & Wolf, 2003, p. 192).

The books by Mandel and Wolf (2003) and Goodville (1986) provided ideas to design group building work for upper elementary and early adolescent learners that were smaller, more fast-paced theatre games with a lot of movement, less talking, and positivity. These tools--pinpointing specific group building skills, getting the whole classroom working at once, side coaching, and positive feedback--helped children to slowly start trying new things, and eventually led them to develop a successful creative group ensemble.

Existing Theatre Curricula

The purpose of this section was to use the research about the background of diverse students to review various theatre curricula, and to decide which curricula best fit the current diverse student population. Through talking to people, researching many, many books, articles, and websites, and reevaluating current curriculum, a new approach to theatre and to theatre curriculum emerged that answered the question *how can a theatre curriculum for diverse upper elementary students be created?*

When researching different theatre curriculum to use for diverse students, the curriculum seemed to be categorized into two main categories: traditional and non-traditional. Traditional theatre curriculum, as a whole, tends to believe that the students have elected to take a theatre class. While this is often the case, especially in high school,

these books did not work for resistant learners in the elementary setting, especially since most elementary schools do not offer theatre classes at all (Americans for the Arts and Vans Custom Culture, n.d.).

Many of the traditional theatre curricula began their lessons with traditional theatre warm ups, which often prepared the student to play a character on stage. Warm ups, generally, involve three parts: warming up the body, the voice, and the imagination. The body and the voice need to be warmed up to make sure there are no injuries, since theatre is a physical activity, and warming up the imagination helps students to shift gears from whatever they were doing before and into imaginary play and creation work. Warm ups also involve making silly noises with voices, singing in front of others, and doing silly and physical things with their bodies to help students get outside of their comfort zones right away and get familiar with acting (S. Wolf, 1994).

Beginning a theatre class with traditional theatre warm ups and games is also taught in most theatre classes and camps, and in rehearsals for plays throughout the world. For resistant learners, however, these traditional theatre warm ups generally can put them outside of their comfort zones too early, which can cause resistance. For students with poor self-esteem or who have experiences of trauma, these warm ups can be triggers which can cause resistance. Also, older elementary students might feel uncomfortable moving their bodies too much, especially since most are dealing with changing bodies and insecurities from developing sooner or later than their peers (Kuther, 2019).

The next stumbling block to play creation was widespread resistance to learning about theatre. Again, most traditional theatre curricula assume the children want to be

there, however, many children from poverty may not know what theatre is, thus it became irrelevant to them in the classroom. Gender can also be a factor when teaching theatre. In the United States, many children now believe that theatre is “for girls”, or that people who like sports can’t also like theatre as well. Many times, the boys in particular would be the ones causing the most trouble, either because they were too embarrassed to let others know they liked the activities, or because they felt that theatre was not masculine. Goodville found this to be true in her book as well. She remembered a time where she was teaching a class of 4th graders. The girls wanted to participate, and the boys did not want to. Later, she saw one of the boys, who mentioned that he could not participate even though he secretly liked it because of peer pressure (Goodville, 1986). Because of these two issues, theatre classes can turn into classroom management instead of teaching.

Another problem with using traditional theatre curricula in this environment, was the absence of collaboration within the group. As most theatre educators know, without a solid group to guide the play, there is no play. Many theatre teachers wrongly assume that students know how to work in a group, or they may not have known how to break down group building skills into small enough chunks so diverse students could be successful. Christopher Michael’s capstone about teaching theatre to high school students with trauma served as a better jumping off point toward finding more suitable curricula for this population (Michael, 2019). Also, since there are few theatre curricula for elementary students, talking with colleagues about their theatre curriculum can be key to creating a successful theatre curriculum for diverse students. Sarah Richardson is the theatre and music teacher at a small private school in Minneapolis. Richardson explained

what theatre needed to be for diverse upper elementary students. She highlighted, among other ideas, teaching playground games, rule building, collaboration, group building skills, and social and emotional skills in order for them to be successful in theatre (S. Richardson, personal communication, March 13, 2020).

The other theatre curriculum category was the non-traditional theatre curriculum. This curriculum was for diverse students who needed fast paced highly collaborative games that taught basic skills at a deep and meaningful level. The book *Acting, Learning and Change* by Jan Mandell and Jennifer Wolf (2003) gave clear-cut directions to new theatre educators, and although the activities were geared toward adolescents, it was easily adaptable to younger students. Not only were there clear guidelines for the teachers, there were specific observations of theatre classes journaled by one of the writers, Jennifer Wolf, who documented Jan Mandell's theatre classes as she taught them throughout the school year. By documenting the class thoroughly, the reader clearly saw how the class ran. In her theatre classes, Mandell showed her prowess by the pacing of the class, the transitions between activities, and side coaching during independent and group work. Side coaching, or positive interactions and critique of the students during a large group activity, helped the classroom become a safe environment where students felt respected. It was also a great way for the teacher to get to know the individual students and vice versa (Mandell & Wolf, 2003).

This book was broken down into five basic sections: Using the Receptive Mind, Forming an Ensemble, Creating, Rehearsing, and Performing (Mandell & Wolf, 2003). In each section, there were activities geared to help the student learn about that particular skill. For example, in the section "Using the Receptive Mind", the games

involved physical activities that taught students to get up and try new things without thinking too long about what they were doing, and helped others feel safe while feeling safe themselves. According to Mandell, “The receptive mind is a ready mind - ready to welcome the challenge that comes with taking on new knowledge” (Mandell & Wolf, 2003, p. 2). These educators have figured out what many others have not, that in order to teach theatre to resistant learners, they must first learn how to receive and take on the challenges of coming to the classroom, trying something new, and learning something from it (Mandell & Wolf, 2003).

Telling Student's Stories

While Mandell and Wolf gave the building blocks for how to approach resistant diverse learners, it was also necessary for the students to have a place where they could tell their stories. Two articles that gave insight into not only how to do this, but why having children tell their stories was such a powerful tool toward helping these children feel safe and to be seen in this society.

In the first article, “Act it Out: Dramatizing Stories to Enhance Student Writing and Diversity Awareness” by Karen Cathers and Nancy Schniedewind, they argued the usefulness of creating a classroom environment where students understand the importance of diversity and become aware of biases many of these students live with on a daily basis, and also the importance of giving these students a safe place to tell their stories. In the article, the teacher created a safe place by setting the tone of inclusion in her classroom beforehand. She then helped children who felt uncomfortable talking in front of others to feel heard by giving other students a polite way to acknowledge a

child's accent while talking, or another culturally sensitive topic, and nurture that child so they could be heard (Cathers & Schniedewind, 2008).

Once these baselines were in place, the teacher then asked students to tell their stories through the writing process. Afterwards, students told their peers their stories out loud, and the class discussed the stories in a positive and safe environment. In this lesson, not only was the teacher able to teach the writing process, but she was also able to provide a definition of race or other problematic topics that was easier for a young person to understand and made sense to everyone (Cathers & Schniedewind, 2008).

But the teacher did not stop at asking students to tell their stories. Although this was an English class, she went further and had students take on the various roles of the situation being discussed by role playing the situation. For example, one of the students experienced racism at a drinking fountain, where someone else called her a "black face" (Cathers & Schniedewind, 2008). Here, the teacher first had two students role play the altercation without mentioning another way the student could have addressed the situation. Then, she had the students recreate the role play and asked others to brainstorm other ways to solve the problem. In this way, students were using role play to learn about bias and race. Also, role play gave a chance for those students in the situation to try a different and better way to solve their problem. Role playing helped to empower students to face their fears head on (Cathers & Schniedewind, 2008).

Another article that served as inspiration for teaching theatre in this new way was "Performing Identities through Drama and Teatro Practices in Multilingual Classrooms," by Carmen Medina and Gerald Campano (2016). In this article, Medina and Campano explained that many schools with bicultural students who are from lower income areas

may receive less stimulation environments (Medina & Campano, 2006). In their article, Medina and Camparo discussed how students without English as their first language felt left out in schools most of the time, and various ways to address this issue, using writing in Spanish as one possibility.

The most interesting part of the article was the plays the students did in the teacher's class. Here, the students created and performed plays in a mixture of English and Spanish, and were also able to tell their stories in their dominant language, which gave them a safe place to speak about their past and present problems. These students were able to have a voice when performing a play, whereas in many of their classroom sessions they were usually not able to do so, because English is the dominant language and most teachers cannot speak Spanish, (Medina & Campano, 2006).

Curriculum design

There are many different design blocks in order to create this new theatre curriculum for diverse elementary students. The most common one is understanding by design, which is a backwards approach to curriculum design (McTighe & Wiggins, 2011). Knowing the broader themes and moving to the specifics from these broad themes, and seeing what students need to understand the "big idea" of the lesson or unit is how backwards design works. Reviewing the book *Understanding By Design*, showed that going from the big idea to the smaller processes was the best fit for lesson planning, and to use big ideas to create understanding for upper elementary students. In understanding by design, it is important to start with the question, "What is the desired result?" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011, p. 8), and then to find evidence of learning by asking what the learner should know, and finally, what skills the learner needs to get

there. This is a big picture way of thinking, and narrowed the focus of the curriculum project and kept lessons geared toward the results of the unit or the school year (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

State Standards and Creating a Theatre Curriculum

An important and necessary resource toward deciding on which big ideas to present are the Minnesota State Standards and the Arts and the National Core Arts Standards, which are two similar documents outlining the theatre concepts children should be learning in the United States. These two documents provide the framework for teaching theatre and for how to approach theatre curriculum creation. The Minnesota State Standards for the Arts (2018) are still in the process of going through a major change to become much more aligned with the National Core Arts Standards. In the 2008 Minnesota Arts Standards, the topics in theatre seemed disjointed, and ideas did not flow into one another. Many ideas also stemmed from the notion that to experience theatre, students needed to be introduced to theatre terminology, such as stage directions, types of stages, theatre history, and types of plays. While these terms are important, they are not crucial to gaining experience in play creation. Since the object of most theatre classes is to help children learn how to work in groups in order to create a play, asking teachers to teach children unnecessary theatre terminology can reduce a theatre class to quizzes and busywork, and away from getting them out of their seats to teach group building and collaboration skills, which in turn will teach play building.

The new set of standards, still being revised since 2018, have a scope and sequence that align with the current design of theatre classes. The standards begin with an emphasis on creation, first by creating artistic ideas, and then by creating an artistic

work. These standards emphasize group work and the process of creation, rather than the finished product. Creation continues with revision and completion of the work, and then moves to the second big idea: performance. Within performance students learn basics on technique and choice to communicate a character, and then learn how to convey meaning of the character's choices on stage and during performance. After performance comes response, where students learn critique and further character development, and some technical elements involved in a theatre production, such as props and sets. Finally, students learn how to connect with plays by comparing their play or other plays to their own experiences, and reflecting on being a part of a play. They also learn how other cultures perform plays on stage (MN Arts Standards, 2018).

The new set of Minnesota Arts Standards gave a better outline for what students need to know by the end of the school year, but this curriculum also needed the help of outside curriculum books and colleagues, which added many games and activities that initially taught group work before introducing the theatre standards. From the review on diverse, resistant learners, it was important to give students time to feel comfortable with each other and with group work before a positive theatre experience could be created. Also, performing a play can seem daunting to many students, so helping them feel comfortable by giving them smaller performing opportunities, such as showing small plays or scenes throughout the year, might be the best way to start teaching the performance standard while side coaching them throughout the progression to build positive self-worth. Especially for upper elementary students, whose bodies are changing and growing quickly, positive self-image is key toward success in theatre (Goodville, 1986), (Mandell & Wolf, 2003).

Summary of Chapter Two

This chapter reviewed the literature in order to answer the question: *how can a theatre curriculum for diverse upper elementary students be created?* First the basic makeup of the upper elementary student was outlined, how their bodies and minds grow and change, and what they are capable of intellectually, physically, and emotionally. The effects of race, class, immigration, and trauma on these children was reviewed next, which showed the negative impact these areas have on students' growth in family, school, and their community at large. The literature reviewed the best ways for diverse students to be receptive to theatre and possible curricula that would help them have a positive and successful experience with this art form. Finally, chapter two reviewed how the Minnesota State Arts Standards provides a scope and sequence, though students also needed a foundation of general group work and positive community building before the theatre standards were taught.

Chapter three outlines which students the curriculum was geared toward, where they are located, what ideas, books, and articles were used to begin the curriculum project, and how the work was completed. This project, although a large endeavor, served as a solid foundation for theatre teachers who teach diverse students, and the curriculum can be modified to teach older or younger students with ease. The literature review gave insights as to how and why certain activities were chosen and how to make sure that diverse upper elementary student's voices are heard throughout the project design.

CHAPTER THREE: Project Description

Introduction

In the past two chapters, I reviewed the question: *how can a theatre curriculum for diverse upper elementary students be created?* I began chapter one with an overview of my situation, the children, and how I tried to teach theatre in the way I had always done amidst the problems I was experiencing. I then reviewed the literature to find out why children were struggling to engage in, understand, and learn theatre, and how I could teach them to work together and create things in groups. Through this review, I discovered that children who were less engaged in theatre needed a different approach than the traditional theatre curriculum. Instead, they needed to be taught basic group building skills before they could begin creating a play. I then found less conventional theatre curricula that resonated with diverse children with the same challenges as those I work with. I spoke to other theatre educators to get more ideas and exchange information and now, from this place of research and reflection, I provided a framework for my curriculum project.

The purpose of this chapter is to give a detailed outline of the curriculum I designed, the students I worked with, and the process used to design a theatre curriculum that served diverse, upper elementary student communities. I presented the books and authors who gave me a helpful theatre curriculum, and explained why these curricula were a valuable tool for my project. I also described the intended audience for the project, and the timeline for when and how I completed the curriculum.

Project Description

To create a theatre curriculum for diverse upper elementary students, I found that I needed to investigate what I wanted to achieve for students by the end of the school year. I tend to have trouble narrowing my focus to a particular goal, so I found a curriculum model that helped me start with a goal in mind. This model was from a book called *Understanding By Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). In the understanding by design curriculum, the focus was not on each individual lesson and content area that students should be exposed to, but rather on what students should understand by the end of the school year. McTighe (2011) went further into the definition of what understanding means, stressing that understanding was not merely that students can repeat the same activity in the same context, but that they can recreate the content area or learning goal out of context and can apply this concept toward other areas of education. In short, students needed to be able to synthesize the information learned and apply it in other areas of their education and life (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

Since I wanted my students to have a deeper knowledge of how to create and work in a group, for example, I needed to build my curriculum around understanding of group work and collaboration on various projects throughout the school year. Students show true understanding of group work if they use tools and strategies learned in theatre outside of the theatre classroom, or, better yet, if they use group building and collaboration skills outside of school completely. That would be the true application of this concept, according to McTigue (2011).

Once I had the concept in place, I worked backwards to figure out how I could get students to apply this goal. In this case, I needed to find evidence of this knowledge. To achieve true understanding of the material, quizzes and tests did not show deep enough

learning. Instead, I needed to collect other evidence. In theatre, this meant collecting data through real time interactions, participation, and carefully observed signs of engagement with peers and with the material presented. There are many ways that teachers assess student work besides tests and quizzes. Rubrics are one example, though rubrics may not go far enough to guide student's learning toward true understanding. Reflections can be a great assessment tool. Students can reflect on assignments given by writing about them, videotaping themselves, or simply saying how they felt about a certain topic. Students can also be assessed through performance or presentations of skills learned. If students are able to show what they learned to an audience, it can help them engage more deeply with their learning, and may also help them to apply the concept learned to other parts of their education.

The final step in the understanding by design curriculum model was creating the detailed structure, or the learning plan (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). The learning plan tells the teacher what they are going to teach in order to achieve understanding of the goal. It breaks down the big idea into smaller steps so the teacher can successfully implement these concepts throughout the school year. This is where teachers list what materials they need to be successful, and any tools they need to teach, as well as the time frame for each lesson. This part includes set up and clean up time, transition times (and ways to transition), extensions, and differentiation for each lesson (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

I felt strongly that this curriculum model, while harder to produce initially, was the most beneficial model to create true understanding for diverse upper elementary students. In the video "What is Understanding By Design? Author Jay McTighe

Explains” (2013), McTighe gave important advice, especially to someone like myself who tends to take on too many things at once. In this video, he said to “think big, start small, and go for an early win.” (McTighe, 2013). What McTighe meant by think big was to think about how to plan a curriculum. The understanding by design curriculum model will eventually be used for all lessons and all curriculum, but his model takes time to implement. He then said start small. This meant to start by planning only a unit and get comfortable with the reverse process, so as not to burn out on this method of curriculum planning. When McTighe said teachers should go for the early win, he meant that teachers should start with a concept they are familiar with so they can begin in a place that is comfortable to them (McTighe, 2013).

Assessment

Theatre arts, and the arts in general, has been conflicted in how to assess children in educational settings. How can teachers assess a child who has natural talent against someone who tries hard but does not have that same presence on stage, or drawing talent, or other artistic ability? Because assessment is more complicated in the arts, many arts educators found that authentic assessment is critical in arts programs.

Authentic assessment goes beyond checking for understanding and is not made up of tests and quizzes. Instead, authentic assessment looks at deeper learning, which compliments the understanding by design model. According to Michael Anderson, author of *MasterClass in drama education*, authentic assessment may not be anything new, but “it does allow drama educators to make a case for their learning area based on its relationship to one of the oldest cultural industries: drama and theatre.” (Anderson, 2012, p. 119). In my review of how to create a curriculum, I found some methods of

authentic assessment that helped upper elementary students take ownership of the creative process and apply their learning toward collaborating, producing, and performing plays and theatre experiences.

In a study done by Chen, Andrade, Hefferen, and Palma, the authors asked a group of teachers to incorporate self-assessment and student feedback into rehearsals, storytelling, and directing. Students became directors, and instead of the teacher providing feedback, which most of the time produced little change, the students critiqued the actors or storytellers on stage. The teacher called the students “directors” and only served as a guide to help students deliver positive and constructive criticism. Although it took more time for students to learn how to acquire these skills, the study found that students who were evaluated by peers made more adjustments than when asked to do the same things by their teacher (Chen, Andrade, Hefferen & Palma, 2015). Assessments in theatre, then, must be authentic. Concepts must be able not only to be known and understood, but also to be applied (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). In my project, I used authentic assessments as much as possible in every aspect of my curriculum.

Theoretical Base

In this project, I used the book *Acting, Learning and Change* by Jan Mandell and Jennifer Wolf as my main resource for understanding overarching goals of my curriculum, and how to break down these goals into activities that achieve understanding (2003). Jan Mandell worked with high school students, but many of the concepts and activities were easily adapted to upper elementary students. Her pacing and style were a large part of how I developed my lessons and scope and sequence for the curriculum. Mandell had a fast paced environment where all children or many children

worked together at once, which helped them feel less singled out and more able to try new things in a comfortable way. She moved quickly from topic to topic and activity to activity so students did not have time to think about what they were doing before they were asked to try. Incorporating her strategies kept the energy level high and with classroom management (Mandell & Wolf, 2011). Mandell's book fit well with the understanding by design model, and provided big ideas or goals that I used for my curriculum; such as the receptive mind, the ensemble, rehearsals, performance, and reflection (Mandell & Wolf, 2011).

Setting

The setting for my project took place at two different private urban schools in the twin cities; one in Minneapolis and one in St. Paul. In the Minneapolis school there are 128 students total. The upper elementary grades are divided up into three classes: the third grade, which has 15 students, the fourth grade, which has 11 students, and the fifth grade, which has 11 students, for a total of 37 students. The school is a mixed income school, with 87% of students in the free and reduced school lunch program. The demographics of the school are as follows: 68% are Hispanic students, 9% are Caucasian, 9% are two or more races, and 2% are American Indian (T. Menzhuber, personal communication, May 11, 2020). In the St. Paul school, there are a total of 74 students. There are six third-graders and seven fourth-graders in a mixed age classroom, and eight-fifth graders for a total of 21 upper elementary students. This school is also mixed income with 66% of students on the free and reduced lunch program. The students are 99% African American and 1% other or mixed races (T. Menzhuber, personal communication, May 11, 2020).

The Audience

The audience consists of upper elementary students, in grades three through five, at two urban K-8 private schools. In each classroom, many students experienced trauma and most come from lower and working class families. Since I came to these two schools in December of 2019, theatre classes took place in a separate classroom. At the St. Paul school, the classroom consists of a multi-use room with large tables and chairs situated throughout that can be moved to create a larger working space. In the Minneapolis school, the classroom is a music room that has been stripped of extra furniture to create a large working space for students. Classes are 45 minutes in length, two or three days per week (shared with the PE teacher) in the St. Paul school, and 30 minutes in length, two or three days per week (also shared with the PE teacher), for the Minneapolis location.

Timeline

The curriculum I designed is a year long curriculum, divided up into 12 week trimesters, and further divided into three to four week units (some are longer and some are shorter depending on the subject material). Each unit ended with some sort of sharing of skills learned. The curriculum focused on beginning level acting students, and used the Minnesota State Standards, the National Theatre Core Arts Standards, and the book *Acting, Learning and Change* by Jan Mandell and Jennifer Wolf as my guides. I completed this project in August 2020.

Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the method that I used to design my curriculum, which answered the question: *how can a theatre curriculum for diverse upper elementary students be created?* I reviewed reasons for using particular books as a guide for

developing lessons and my overall goals for learning. The students and the community of both schools were detailed, giving a picture of the diversity in race, backgrounds, and events that shaped the lives of these students.

The curriculum created gave children who have experienced trauma, racism, poverty, and other biases the place they need to process, move through, create, and change their lives for the better through the medium of theatre. This project created a curriculum that focused on understanding instead of memorization, on creating a group that works together both inside and outside of the school environment, and helped diverse upper elementary students to have a voice.

CHAPTER FOUR: Reflection

Introduction

I began this project with the question: *how can a theatre curriculum for diverse upper elementary students be created?* Throughout my teaching career, I worked hard to be what I thought was culturally responsive, although I did not know what that meant. I believed I was colorblind, which I now know is an excuse not to educate myself on systemic racism in this country. I came into this project thinking I could “fix” the students in these schools, instead of celebrating their cultures and highlighting their stories. I had no idea that this paper would completely change my outlook on working with students of color, the structure of our nation’s school system, and my own implicit biases.

It would be absurd to write this capstone and ignore the current events that surround the completion of this paper and this project. Since I began this project, our

world has completely changed. The coronavirus forced teachers to teach remotely, and the protest of George Floyd's death in Minneapolis brought concepts written about in this paper to a higher level of importance. The reasons I first began to write this capstone have taken a completely different turn. I learned that I knew only the basics about racism in the United States, and I especially did not believe that I was actively worsening the disparity between white students and students of color. According to Ali Michael, author of *The Guide for White Women who Teach Black Boys* (2018) my journey into "white racial identity development" (p. 66) had begun. I discovered that there are many stages of this identity development: contact, in which a person first makes contact with the idea of racism and connects it to themselves; disintegration, where the world that white people knew begins to disintegrate, often a very emotional time; reintegration, which is a time that white people will try to regress into what they thought was their world before, which often brings out anger; pseudo-independence, in which people try to understand how to help by "saving" people and communities of color; immersion, where white people immerse themselves in their new understanding of racism and a racist society, and learn how to be antiracist; and finally, autonomy, in which white people recreate a new antiracist identity. White teachers must go through each of these stages much like the stages of grief to peel back the development of their racial identity. Michael states "rather than trying to change Black boys, [white teachers] might change systems of evaluation so that Black cultural styles are not denigrated or downgraded (2018, p. 71).

Major Learnings

Before writing this paper, I did not know what systemic racism meant. I did not believe that the education system was set up for students of color to fail. I felt as though I

knew what I needed to know about the subject of race because I taught students of color, and I knew about trauma because I went through it myself. I even thought I understood students in those schools because I lived in the same neighborhood as them. I thought I knew how to teach theatre because I had taught camps and acted in plays over the past 20 years. The research I did, the books and articles that I read, and the conversations that I had while working on this project dismantled these ideas. In a nutshell, I learned that I had a lot more to learn. Although this created vulnerability, it also became a place for healing to begin, and for hope to be a better teacher in the future.

As I worked on this project, I continued to revise my curriculum. I began with the question: “what skills does an actor need to perform on stage?” However, as I continued to reflect and read about my own implicit biases, which, according to *The Guide for White Women Who Teach Black Boys* (2018), stem from white teachers’ belief that communities of color need to be “saved” from their circumstances, I realized I needed to understand the history of theatre, and how it evolved into a white art form and became a token of white supremacy (Boal, 1979). Therefore, when I revised my curriculum, I gave space for students of color to shape their identity and bring the cultural identity of every student into lessons I created. Although this was a more complicated curriculum to create, it felt true to the Understanding by Design model (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006), which first asks the question: what is the desired result? In this case, the desired result was to create and understand the cultural identity of diverse students and students of color. By creating a curriculum centered around students of color, I can listen to and learn from their stories as they share their cultures and experiences which, in turn, make theatre relevant to their lives.

Summary of Literature Review

I began my research with images seen from television, books, and movies of teachers saving failing students of color running through my head. Books like *Holler if You Hear Me* (Mitchie), and *Make Me!* (Toshalis), among many others that I read throughout the years, gave the impression that teachers can and should save failing students, most of whom are students of color. While each book served as inspiration in different stages of my career, as I began reading *The White Women's Guide to Teaching Black Boys*, I finally found a book that changed me and my worldview. This book was paramount in teaching me how I am biased, why these biases exist, and that I need to acknowledge the racism prevalent in our school system brought on by systemic racism. The book also led me to research culturally responsive teaching methods which will change the way I teach in the classroom.

Jan Mandell's book, *Acting, Learning and Change* (2003), taught me the valuable art of storytelling, improvisation, and creating an authentic safe space. Mandell's book changed the way I looked at the structure of the theatre class, and gave me clear ideas as to how to move students through each lesson in my curriculum. She showed me why I needed to be detailed and organized in all aspects of my theatre program, from the syllabus to the parent letters, which will gain parental and student support for a rigorous arts experience in the next school year.

Although I read *Theatre of the Oppressed* later in my research, Augusto Boal's program to bring the actor and the audience together to solve problems and to tell stories across culture became an inspiration for so many of the other books I read. In this book, Boal outlined how theatre began as something people from all walks of life participated

in, but it was taken away from the oppressed and given to the ruling class over time (1979). He then broke down those walls using a series of exercises that equate theatre as another language, capable for all to learn and to use, regardless of their acting “talent” and status in society. Boal’s book and later books that brought his project ideas into the school system became critical to create this culturally responsive theatre curriculum.

From many other drama activities, and in many books, I learned that acting games are not just “games”, and that there must be a reason for doing the activity and this reason must be communicated with the students. Each activity must build upon the last to achieve the final “big idea” of the lesson, the unit, or the curriculum. The function of games and their history should be communicated, according to Sarah Richardson, in order to provide a context for student learning. If a book is brought into the classroom, the author’s picture and biography should be discussed, and the reason for the book should be transparent (S. Richardson, personal communication, March 17, 2020). This provides relevance to children, and especially to students of color, with whom relevance is one of the largest catalysts to enthusiastic learning (Moore, Michael, & Penick-Parks, 2018).

Implications on Policy

Creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students is the basis of community building for the majority of classroom teachers and teaching artists alike (Gallagher, 2013). In the theatre production sector, particularly in the last five to ten years, sensory-friendly productions for autistic children; classes and camps highlighting specific demographics such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other (LGBTQ+) youth; money for plays and classes allocated for low-income youth and

students of color; and classes for youth suffering from trauma have been on the forefront of many theatre company's agendas (The Children's Theatre, 2020). By creating and sharing a theatre curriculum which specifically centers on students of color and is aligned with the Minnesota State Standards for the arts (2018), drama teachers have an opportunity to teach theatre in a culturally responsive manner in elementary schools as well, however, a culturally responsive theatre curriculum is not widely available at this time. In a time of racial unrest and with a dire need to close the achievement gap in our school system, this curriculum helps policy makers see the importance of the arts to create real change. This will give administrators and principals concrete reasons to increase and add classes in the arts in their schools, and help districts allocate necessary funds to an underfunded subject area.

Using this theatre curriculum, the drama teacher can also support teachers who may want to introduce role play or other theatre activities into their classrooms as part of culturally responsive teaching, but who may feel unqualified about using these tools in a classroom setting. The drama teacher can host trainings on role play in the classroom, which classroom teachers can incorporate into community building meetings to find solutions for important issues that arise during the school year.

Limitations

This curriculum project, however helpful, has some with significant limitations. First of all, I am a white woman in a field where white women make up over 85% of K-12 teachers in the nation (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Writing a curriculum for people of color must be seen as a limitation. I therefore enlisted the help of a phenomenal teacher of color to give me insight into whether the

curriculum is culturally sensitive to the student populations. I also found that trying to make the same curriculum fit two very different populations of students made little sense, so I decided to narrow my curriculum focus to one school, the school which was made up of mostly Latino students. I plan to adapt this curriculum to the other school's needs throughout this school year.

Another limitation is that I have currently only written this project for grades three and four, although I currently teach Kindergarten through eighth grades. I plan to use this curriculum as a template to create curricula for the rest of the grades throughout the school year, and to add lessons that further isolate grade specific theatre standards in future years

The outside stress caused by the coronavirus outbreak and the George Floyd riots in Minneapolis was a significant limitation in completing this project. Writing a curriculum combined with the mental stress of a global pandemic was a huge challenge. Within a few months of this development, the killing of George Floyd took place in South Minneapolis. As a Minneapolis resident, working on this paper during these riots also took a huge toll on my mental health, but at the same time, these riots opened my eyes to further research I needed to do in order to transform myself as a teacher to students of color. Although these limitations initially presented difficulties, I now see them as major assets for changing myself and my curriculum to best reflect the student population and their needs.

Future Research

Although I have been immersed in the creation of this project and this paper since February of 2020, I have only just begun to analyze and change my world view on issues

of systemic racism and my place as a teacher in a school system that historically reflects white privilege (Moore, Michael, & Penick-Parks, 2018). My future plans are as follows: I plan to continue to research black historical events in the Twin Cities and beyond, so as to further understand systemic racism in the United States. I will also take workshops on how to teach in a culturally responsive manner and to further develop my curriculum for students of color, refining it as I learn more about teaching using a culturally diverse framework. My curriculum will expand to include Kindergarten through eighth grade, using my third and fourth grade curriculum as a guide to create curriculum for all other grades.

Communication Results

A theatre curriculum such as this one has implications in circles greater than I currently move in. Although there are no other drama teachers in my school, I can still share my findings with the school's staff. During professional development, I plan to discuss my curriculum to support teachers who need help using role play or other dramatic exercises to discuss racial disparities and situations, and to problem solve how to redirect these situations toward positive outcomes.

Benefits To This Profession

Because there are few theatre curricula for elementary children that focus on cultural diversity, creating this curriculum will give drama teachers the benefit of having a culturally responsive lens in which to start dialogue with upper elementary students of color about racism, trauma, poverty, and so much more.

The benefit to me will be twofold. First, I have learned that I have so much to learn about theatre and what it can do to combat racism in this country. I have also

learned how to teach theatre in a brand new way, and a deeper and more constructive way. My entire curriculum is now built on a study of identity and telling student's stories.

Summary

In chapter four, I reflected on how I changed and how our world changed since the beginning of this project. I outlined how the literature reshaped my thinking and prompted me to learn more about systemic racism and racist practices in schools, and to find a way to enact cultural responsiveness in my curriculum. I acknowledged that there is still much learning and growing to do on this subject, and I wrote a plan for how I will continue learning in years to come. I explained the benefits of a project such as this one to policy makers, drama teachers, and classroom teachers, the limitations I still have as a white woman teaching students of color, and further projects and research I plan to do, which includes expanding this curriculum to all grade levels I teach.

I began writing this curriculum with the underlying mindset that I could save students of color and conform them into white culture by giving them a multicultural theatre curriculum. My research turned this thinking on its head, and caused me to create a curriculum completely different than the one I thought I needed. I learned that students of color are underrepresented in white-based schools and school curriculum, that the label "resistant learners" does not fully get at the heart of what students of color deal with on a daily basis at schools, and that it has negative and racist connotations. I learned to reexamine myself and my own set of beliefs for what diversity is, what resistant learners are, and who I am as a teacher in schools that serve students of color. I complete this project with the knowledge that I have much more to learn, but I also have a path to learn

deeper, guides that can help me along the way, and a thoughtful and well laid-out curriculum that serves as a great start to teaching culturally responsive theatre. My deepest hope is that this curriculum will promote higher level thinking, give students of color power and voice, and begin to enact change for good in our schools.

REFERENCES

- Americans for the Arts and Vans Custom Culture [PDF file]. (2013).
https://issuu.com/americans4arts/docs/afta_navigator_facts-and-figures
- Anderson, M. (2012). *Masterclass in drama education: Transforming teaching and learning*. Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Boal, A. (1979). *Theatre of the oppressed*. (McBride, C. & McBride, M-O. L., Trans.). Theatre Communications Group, Inc. (Original work published 1974)
- Chen, F., Andrade, H., Hefferen, J., & Palma, M. (2015). Formative assessment in theatre education: An application to practice. *Drama Research: International Journal of Drama in Education*, 6(1), 1-21. https://artsconnection.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/National-Drama-Publications_Drama-Research-Joanna.pdf
- Children's Theatre. (2020, July 19). *ACT One. Access. Connect. Transform*. Children's Theatre. <https://childrenstheatre.org/education-and-engagement/for-our-community/act-one/>
- Coyle, D. (2009, February). Kids really are different these days. *Phi Delta Kappan*, (90)6. 404-407. <https://search-ebshost-com.ezproxy.hamline.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ829688>.
- Despres, C. (2020, March 10). Study: Since Trump, Latino youth anxiety over immigration has skyrocketed. *Salud! America*. <https://salud-america.org/study-since-trump-latino-youth-anxiety-over-immigration-has-skyrocketed/>
- D'Emidio-Caston, M. (2019). Addressing social, emotional development and resilience at the heart of teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 46(4), 116-149.

- <https://search-ebshost-com.ezproxy.hamline.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1231310>.
- Fairtest. (2015, October 28). Independent test results show NCLB fails. <http://www.fairtest.org/independent-test-results-show-nclb-fails>
- Gallagher, K. (2013, January). Engaging with drama: A cross border theatre project reveals the complexities of student engagement-and disengagement. *Education Canada*, 53(1), 20-23. <https://search-ebshost-com.ezproxy.hamline.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1008755>
- Goodwillie, B. (1986). *Breaking through: Drama strategies for 10's to 15's*. New Plays Incorporated.
- Gray, P. (2013). The play deficit. <https://aeon.co/essays/children-today-are-suffering-a-severe-deficit-of-play>
- Gray, P. (2019, December 20). Kindergarten teachers are quitting, and here is why. *Psychology Today*. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/freedom-learn/201912/kindergarten-teachers-are-quitting-and-here-is-why>
- Han, J. Does skin tone matter? Immigrant mobility in the U.S. labor market. *Demography* 57, 705–726 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-020-00867-7>
- Hawker Bronlow. (2013, July 17). *What is understanding by design? Author Jay McTighe explains* [Video file]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8F1SnWalfE>
- Huberman, B. (Ed.). (2016). Growth and developments: What parents need to know. *Advocates for Youth*. <https://advocatesforyouth.org/resources/health-information/parents-15/>

- Jennings, S. (1984). *Remedial drama. A handbook for teachers and therapists*. Theatre Arts Books.
- Jones, S. (2018, November 7). The rise of far-right extremism in the United States. *Center for Strategic and International Studies*.
<https://www.csis.org/analysis/rise-far-right-extremism-united-states>
- Kathers, K., & Schneidewind, N. (2008). "Act it out": Dramatizing stories to enhance student writing and diversity awareness. *Multicultural Education*, 16(1), 53-58.
<https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.hamline.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ822399>.
- Kuther, T. (2019). *Lifespan development: Lives in context* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Lareau, A. (2002). Invisible inequality: Social class and childrearing in black families and white families. *American Sociological Review*, 67(5), 747-776.
www.jstor.org/stable/3088916
- Lee, E. (2008). Anti-racist education: Pulling together to close the gaps. In E. Lee, D. Menkart, & M. Okazawa-Rey (Eds.), *Beyond heroes and holidays: A practical guide to K-12 anti-racist, multicultural education and staff development* (pp. 3-12). Teaching for Change.
- Lovett, J. (2010). *Small wonders: Healing childhood trauma with EMDR*. Free Press.
- Michael, C. (2019). *A trauma informed curriculum for devised theater*. (Unpublished capstone project). Hamline University, St. Paul, MN. Digital Commons.
- Minnesota Department of Education (2018). Arts.
<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/stds/Arts/>

- Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board. (2019). Mandatory requirements chart for relicensure committee [PDF file].
https://mn.gov/pelsb/assets/Mandatory%20Requirements%20Chart%20For%20Relicensure%20202-19-20%20POST_tcm1113-373621.pdf
- Mandell, J., & Wolf, J. (2003). *Acting, learning and change: Creating original plays with adolescents*. Heinemann.
- Medina, C. L., & Campano, G. (2006). Performing identities through drama and teatro practices in multilingual classrooms. *Language Arts*, 83(4), 332-341.
<https://search-ebshost-com.ezproxy.hamline.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ751819>.
- Merriam-Webster. (1994). Society. In *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary* (10th ed., p. 1115).
- Michie, G. (2009). *Holler if you hear me: The education of a teacher and his students* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Montessori, M. (2008). *From childhood to adolescence* (2nd ed.). (The Montessori Educational Research Center, U. S. A., Trans.). Kalakshetra Publications.
 (Original work published 1948)
- Moore Jr., E., Michael, A., & Penick-Parks, M. W. (2018). *The guide for white women who teach black boys*. Sage Publications.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). Spotlight A: Characteristics of public school teachers by race/ethnicity.
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/spotlight_a.asp

- National Child Traumatic Stress Network, Justice Consortium, Schools Committee, and Culture Consortium. (2017). *Addressing race and trauma in the classroom: A resource for educators*. National Center for Child Traumatic Stress.
https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources//addressing_race_and_trauma_in_the_classroom_educators.pdf
- National Core Arts Standards (2014). Theatre [PDF File].
<https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/Theatre%20at%20a%20Glance%20-%20new%20copyright%20info.pdf>
- Pettway, T. B. (2019). *Supporting children with social and emotional challenges: A phenomenological study of teachers' experiences using social and emotional learning competencies* (Ed.D.). ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2364141364). <https://ezproxy.hamline.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.hamline.edu/docview/2364141364?accountid=28109>
- Stagman, S. and Cooper, J. (2010). Children's mental health: What every policymaker should know. *National Center for Children in Poverty*.
http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_929.html
- Toshalis, E. (2015). *Make me! Understanding and engaging student resistance in school*. Harvard Education Press.
- University of Phoenix (2011). Life in the 21st century workforce: A national perspective [PDF File]. *University of Phoenix*.
<https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/publication/edu/Life%20in%20the%2021st%20Century%20Workforce.pdf>

- US Census Bureau. (2019, September 10). Poverty rate in the United States in 2018, by ethnic group [Graph]. *Statista*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/200476/us-poverty-rate-by-ethnic-group/>
- Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2011). *The understanding by design guide to creating high quality units*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Wolf, S. A. (1994). Learning to act/acting to learn: Children as actors, critics, and characters in classroom theatre. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 28(1), 7-44. <https://search-ebshost-com.ezproxy.hamline.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ479248>.
- Wood, C. (2018). *Yardsticks: Child and adolescent development ages 4-14* (4th ed.). Center for Responsive Schools, Inc.
- Woolfolk, A. (2008). *Educational psychology: Active learning edition* (10th ed.). Allyn and Bacon.
- YouGov. (2019, January 9). How serious a problem is illegal immigration in the U.S. as a whole? [Graph]. *Statista*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/957630/public-opinion-seriousness-illegal-immigration-us/>

APPENDIX A: Minnesota State Standards for grades 3 and 4

Minnesota State Theatre Standards 2020-21

4.3.2.2.1	4. Theater	3	2. Create	2. Generate and develop original artistic ideas.	1. Create roles, settings and stories for <i>work</i> .
4.4.2.2.1	4. Theater	4	2. Create	2. Generate and develop original artistic ideas.	1. Express and generate details of settings and story elements that support the <i>given circumstances</i> in a <i>work</i> .
4.3.2.2.2	4. Theater	3	2. Create	2. Generate and develop original artistic ideas.	2. Express and devise ideas for costumes, props and sets in a <i>work</i> .
4.4.2.2.2	4. Theater	4	2. Create	2. Generate and develop original artistic ideas.	2. <i>Design</i> one or more technical theater elements (using available technology) that support the story and <i>given circumstances</i> in a <i>work</i> . **
4.3.2.2.3	4. Theater	3	2. Create	2. Generate and develop original artistic ideas.	3. Collaborate with peers to determine how characters might move and speak to support the story in a <i>work</i> .
4.4.2.2.3	4. Theater	4	2. Create	2. Generate and develop original artistic ideas.	3. Demonstrate how a character might move and act to support the story and <i>given circumstances</i> in a <i>work</i> .
4.3.2.3.1	4. Theater	3	2. Create	3. Create original artistic work.	1. Devise original ideas for a <i>work</i> .
4.4.2.3.1	4. Theater	4	2. Create	3. Create original artistic work.	1. Collaborate with peers to devise original ideas for a <i>work</i> by asking questions about characters and plots .

4.3.2.3.2	4. Theater	3	2. Create	3. Create original artistic work.	2. Compare ideas with peers and make decisions to develop and refine a <i>group work</i> .
4.4.2.3.2	4. Theater	4	2. Create	3. Create original artistic work.	2. Collaborate with peers to make group decisions and identify responsibilities required to present a <i>work</i> .
4.3.2.4.1	4. Theater	3	2. Create	4. Revise and complete original artistic work.	1. Collaborate with peers to revise, refine, and adapt ideas to a <i>work</i> .
4.4.2.4.1	4. Theater	4	2. Create	4. Revise and complete original artistic work.	1. Revise to enhance an <i>improvised or scripted work</i> using repetition and collaborative review.
4.3.2.4.2	4. Theater	3	2. Create	4. Revise and complete original artistic work.	2. Demonstrate physical and vocal choices for an <i>improvised or scripted work</i> .
4.4.2.4.2	4. Theater	4	2. Create	4. Revise and complete original artistic work.	2. Develop <i>movement</i> and vocal choices for <i>characters</i> in an <i>improvised or scripted work</i> .
4.3.2.4.3	4. Theater	3	2. Create	4. Revise and complete original artistic work.	3. Revise <i>design</i> and <i>technical</i> (using available technology) choices to support an <i>improvised or scripted work</i> .**
4.4.2.4.3	4. Theater	4	2. Create	4. Revise and complete original artistic work.	3. Collaborate with peers on solutions to <i>design</i> and <i>technical challenges</i> (using available technology) in <i>rehearsals</i> for a <i>work</i> . **

4.3.3.5.1	4. Theater	3	3. Perform	5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for performance.	1. Rehearse a <i>work</i> and perform it for peers.
4.4.3.5.1	4. Theater	4	3. Perform	5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for performance.	1. Revise the <i>dialogue</i> and action to improve the story in a <i>work</i> .
4.3.3.5.2	4. Theater	3	3. Perform	5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for performance.	2. Modify voice and body to expand and perform as a character in a <i>guided drama experience</i> .
4.4.3.5.2	4. Theater	4	3. Perform	5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for performance.	2. Demonstrate specific vocal and physical choices to develop a character in a <i>work</i> .
4.3.3.6.1	4. Theater	3	3. Perform	6. Make artistic choices in order to convey meaning through performance.	1. Utilize a variety of physical, vocal, and imaginative exercises in a group setting for a <i>work</i> .
4.4.3.6.1	4. Theater	4	3. Perform	6. Make artistic choices in order to convey meaning through performance.	1. Rehearse different acting exercises in a group setting for a <i>work</i> .
4.3.3.6.2	4. Theater	3	3. Perform	6. Make artistic choices in order to convey meaning through performance.	2. Demonstrate basic use of technical elements (using available technology) that can be included in a <i>work</i> .
4.4.3.6.2	4. Theater	4	3. Perform	6. Make artistic choices in order to convey meaning through performance.	2. Customize various technical elements (using available technology) for a <i>work</i> .**
4.3.4.7.1	4. Theater	3	4. Respond	7. Analyze and construct interpretations of artistic work.	1. Examine connections between oneself and a character's emotions in a <i>work</i> , and develop the character using physical characteristics and prop or costume choices.

4.4.4.7.1	4. Theater	4	4. Respond	7. Analyze and construct interpretations of artistic work.	1. Compare and contrast the <i>traits of characters</i> in a <i>work</i> and their impact on emotions, considering physical characteristics, props or costume choices.
4.3.4.8.1	4. Theater	3	4. Respond	8. Evaluate artistic work by applying criteria.	1. Analyze the <i>technical elements</i> used in a <i>work</i> .
4.4.4.8.1	4. Theater	4	4. Respond	8. Evaluate artistic work by applying criteria.	1. Describe how <i>technical elements</i> or technology may support a <i>theme</i> or idea in a <i>work</i> .**
4.3.4.8.2	4. Theater	3	4. Respond	8. Evaluate artistic work by applying criteria.	2. Give examples explaining why artistic choices are made in a <i>work</i> .
4.4.4.8.2	4. Theater	4	4. Respond	8. Evaluate artistic work by applying criteria.	2. Describe personal reactions to artistic choices in a <i>work</i> .
4.3.5.9.1	4. Theater	3	5. Connect	9. Integrate knowledge and personal experiences while responding to, creating, and presenting artistic work.	1. Identify how theater connects one personally to a community or culture.
4.4.5.9.1	4. Theater	4	5. Connect	9. Integrate knowledge and personal experiences while responding to, creating, and presenting artistic work.	1. Explain the ways a <i>work</i> reflects the perspectives of a community or culture.
4.3.5.10.1	4. Theater	3	5. Connect	10. Understand that artistic works influence and are influenced by personal, societal, cultural, and historical contexts, including the contributions of Minnesota American	1. Analyze connections between community, social issues (including contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities) and other content areas to a <i>work</i> .

				Indian tribes and communities.	
4.4.5.10.1	4. Theater	4	5. Connect	10. Understand that artistic works influence and are influenced by personal, societal, cultural, and historical contexts, including the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities.	1. Connect a <i>work</i> with community, social issues and other content areas.

APPENDIX B: Curriculum Overview

Theatre Curriculum Overview for Grades 3 and 4, 2020-2021

Week	Big Ideas	Skills Needed/I can/learning objective	Essential Questions	Assessments	Standards	Alternate Friday Activities
------	-----------	--	---------------------	-------------	-----------	-----------------------------

Trimester One	Theme: Individual Identity	Skills learned: movement, receptive mind				<i>(These activities encompass a separate unit plan)</i>
1	Community Building	Getting to Know You: Day 1: Names and group rules Day 2: Procedures	How can I get to know my classmates? What is theatre? <i>I can learn classroom rules and procedures and follow them. I can learn something new about my classmates.</i>	Turn and talk about the group juggling lesson. Share out about what they learned. Record responses about what they think theatre is.	4.3.3.2.1 4.4.3.2.1	Christmas play ideas. Identity with Christmas lens. Christmas interviews and memories
2	Community Building	Individual Identity	How can I tell my story? <i>I can write down things that make up my identity and share them with a group.</i>	Identity paper airplanes Identity graphic organizer	4.3.3.2.1 4.4.3.2.1	PE
3	Community Building	Social Identity	How can I share my culture? <i>I can learn about and contribute to</i>	Name one way we are all alike as students exit the room.	4.3.3.2.1 4.4.3.2.1	Christmas Play Songs

Week	Big Ideas	Skills Needed/I can/learning objective	Essential Questions	Assessments	Standards	Alternate Friday Activities
------	-----------	--	---------------------	-------------	-----------	-----------------------------

			<i>my classroom and school's culture.</i>			
4	Community Building	Work together on group activity	<p>What does it mean to work together?</p> <p><i>When asked to work on a specific task as a group, I can perform the task without incident.</i></p>	<p>What does it mean to work together?</p> <p>When asked to work on a specific task as a group, I can perform the task without incident.</p>	4.3.2.3.2 4.4.2.3.2	PE
5	Community Building	Work with anyone in the room	<p>How do I work with new people?</p> <p><i>When asked to change groups quickly, I can work with all people equally in all groups.</i></p>	Name one new person you worked with-whole group share.	4.3.2.3.2, 4.3.2.4.1 4.4.2.3.2, 4.4.2.4.1	Christmas Play Songs
6	Community Building	Letting go for the sake of the group	<p>How do I compromise?</p> <p><i>When given a specific task, I can compromise for the sake of the group.</i></p>	Each group tells or writes how they compromised on their issue. SWBAT define compromise	4.3.2.3.2, 4.3.2.4.1 4.4.2.3.2, 4.4.2.4.1	PE
7	Control of Movement	Pantomime	How do I show emotions with my face and body?	Students move in the manner of the adverb. Students can	4.3.2.4.2 4.4.2.4.2	Christmas Play Songs

Week	Big Ideas	Skills Needed/I can/learning objective	Essential Questions	Assessments	Standards	Alternate Friday Activities
------	-----------	--	---------------------	-------------	-----------	-----------------------------

			<i>I can tell a story without using my voice.</i>	successfully say they are doing an action while actually doing another action. Successful completion of activities		
8	Control of Movement	Movement through space Tempo/rhythm	How do I move through the acting space? How slowly or quickly do I move through the acting space? <i>I can move in different ways through the acting space.</i> <i>I can most at different tempos through the acting space.</i>	Turn and talk-share out. Participation in all activities.	4.3.3.5.2 4.4.3.5.2 4.3.2.4.2, 4.3.3.6.1 4.4.2.4.2, 4.4.3.6.1	PE
9	Control of Movement	Focus Stage directions	How do I interact with other actors and the audience on stage? <i>I can give focus to the actor who is</i>	Answer the question, why should some actors bet the focus in a play? Say the name of a stage	4.3.4.7.1 4.4.4.7.1	Christmas Play Songs

Week	Big Ideas	Skills Needed/I can/learning objective	Essential Questions	Assessments	Standards	Alternate Friday Activities
------	-----------	--	---------------------	-------------	-----------	-----------------------------

			<p><i>most important at the time.</i></p> <p><i>I can move throughout the acting space using stage directions.</i></p>	direction to exit the room.		
10	Control of Movement	Gestures	<p>How do I show the audience what I mean (in a big way)?</p> <p><i>I can learn what gestures mean and use them to show the audience what I mean.</i></p>	<p>Student will do a movement that others can copy. Students will participate in a character activity.</p> <p>Sharing of reflection questions.</p>	4.3.4.7.1 4.4.4.7.1	PE
11	Control of Movement	Tableau/Statues	<p>How do I show an important part of the story in one picture?</p> <p><i>I can use frozen pictures to tell a story or part of a story.</i></p>	<p>As students leave, ask them to show the teacher an emotion with body and face.</p> <p>Journal reflection.</p>	4.3.3.2.3 4.4.3.2.3	Christmas Play Songs
12	Communication Following Directions	Listening Feedback/critique	How can I listen to other actors and give feedback?	Hearing their name to leave the room. Successful completion of activities.	4.3.2.3.2, 4.3.2.4.1 4.4.2.3.2, 4.4.2.4.1	Christmas Play

Week	Big Ideas	Skills Needed/I can/learning objective	Essential Questions	Assessments	Standards	Alternate Friday Activities
------	-----------	--	---------------------	-------------	-----------	-----------------------------

			<i>I can listen to other actors and provide feedback.</i>	Students will participate in the final tableaux and provide and receive feedback. Journal reflection of unit.		
Trimester 2	Theme: Group Identity	Skills Learned: Voice, ensemble				
13	Ensemble	Whole group exercises/listening	How do I move with the whole group? <i>I can move while working with a group.</i>	Say one thing the student learned as they leave the room.	4.3.2.3.2, 4.3.3.6.1 4.4.2.3.2, 4.4.3.6.1	
14	Ensemble	Trust	How do I build trust with my classmates? <i>I can build trust through a variety of exercises.</i>	Successful completion of trust exercise.	4.3.3.6.1 4.4.3.6.1	Begin learning about masks in theatre//identity masks
15	Ensemble	concentration/eye contact	How do I maintain concentration and eye contact? <i>I can build concentration</i>	Ask what concentration and eye contact are when students leave the room.	4.3.2.4.2 4.4.2.4.2	PE

Week	Big Ideas	Skills Needed/I can/learning objective	Essential Questions	Assessments	Standards	Alternate Friday Activities
------	-----------	--	---------------------	-------------	-----------	-----------------------------

			<i>and eye contact skills.</i>			
16	Ensemble	cooperation	How do I cooperate with my classmates? <i>I can cooperate with my classmates on a variety of activities.</i>	Electronic self assessment	4.3.2.3.2 4.4.2.3.2	Begin learning about masks in theatre//identity masks
17	Control of Voice	rate	How quickly or slowly do I speak in a play? <i>I can change my vocal rate to make things more clear for the audience.</i>	Ask student to speak at different rates to leave the classroom.	4.3.2.4.2 4.4.2.4.2	PE
18	Control of Voice	projection/clarity	How loud or soft do I speak in a play? <i>I can change my volume to express emotion and create clarity.</i>	SWBAT define projection/clarity.	4.3.2.4.2 4.4.2.4.2	Create masks
19	Control of Voice	expression	How do I use my voice to show emotions and reactions? <i>I can use my voice to</i>	Turn and talk and share out.	4.3.2.4.2 4.4.2.4.2	PE

Week	Big Ideas	Skills Needed/I can/learning objective	Essential Questions	Assessments	Standards	Alternate Friday Activities
------	-----------	--	---------------------	-------------	-----------	-----------------------------

			<i>portray emotion.</i>			
20	Control of Voice	Pitch/tone	How do I use my voice to get my point across? <i>I can change the pitch or tone of my voice to express various emotions.</i>	Successful completion of activities.	4.3.2.4.2 4.4.2.4.2	Create masks
21	Creating Character	Role-playing	How do I play another character that I know well (or myself)? <i>I can role-play real life situations and find solutions.</i>	Reflection journal writing.	4.3.2.2.3, 4.3.4.7.1 4.4.2.2.3, 4.4.4.7.1	PE
22	Creating Character	Character embodiment	How do I show a character trait with my body? <i>I can create specific character traits.</i>	Ask all students to strike a character pose in large group. Scan for comprehension.	4.3.2.2.1, 4.3.4.7.1 4.4.2.2.1, 4.4.4.7.1	Create masks
23	Creating Character	emotion/sculpting	How do I show emotion with my body?	Creating a successful character or sculpture. Taking	4.3.4.7.1 4.4.4.7.1	PE

Week	Big Ideas	Skills Needed/I can/learning objective	Essential Questions	Assessments	Standards	Alternate Friday Activities
------	-----------	--	---------------------	-------------	-----------	-----------------------------

			<i>I can show emotions with my body through a variety of activities.</i>	pictures of each sculpture.		
24	Creating Character	masks	How do I use a mask and my body to create my character? <i>I can create a character and show it to others using a mask.</i>	SWBAT create and use masks created for a sharing or skills learned. (Masks will be created on alternate Fridays during trimester 2)	4.3.2.2.2 4.4.2.2.2	Reflect and show masks/share play or pantomime.
Trimester 3	Theme: Cultural Identity	Skills Learned: Story Writing, Creativity				
25	Scene Work/Actor	Stories from home countries	How can I create a play about something from my culture? <i>I can explore my stories and cultural history through plays and acting.</i>	Brainstorm list of story ideas, folk tales from home	4.3.2.2.1, 4.3.2.3.1, 4.3.2.3.2 4.4.2.2.1, 4.4.2.3.1, 4.4.2.3.2	PE
26	Scene Work/Actor	Who, what, where, when, why?	How do I decide what my scene will	Fill in 5 questions with sentence starters	4.3.2.2.1, 4.3.2.3.1, 4.3.2.3.2	Story creation-cultural

Week	Big Ideas	Skills Needed/I can/learning objective	Essential Questions	Assessments	Standards	Alternate Friday Activities
------	-----------	--	---------------------	-------------	-----------	-----------------------------

			<p>be about in small groups?</p> <p><i>I can understand the who, what, when, where and why of a story.</i></p>		4.4.2.2.1, 4.4.2.3.1, 4.4.2.3.2	influences and history
27	Scene Work/Act or	Improvisation of a scene in small groups	<p>How do I create a scene with a small group?</p> <p><i>I can improvise a short scene with a group.</i></p>	Brainstorm scene lists	4.3.2.2.1, 4.3.2.3.1, 4.3.2.3.2 4.4.2.2.1, 4.4.2.3.1, 4.4.2.3.2	PE
28	Scene Work/Act or	Tableau of scenes	<p>How do I create a frozen picture of the beginning, middle and end of my scenes?</p> <p><i>I can create tableaus of the beginning, middle and end of my story.</i></p>	Pictures of tableaus	4.3.2.2.1, 4.3.2.3.1, 4.3.2.3.2 4.4.2.2.1, 4.4.2.3.1, 4.4.2.3.2	Scene creation
29	Scene Work/Act or	Creation of lines (writing)	<p>How do I write a script?</p> <p><i>I can, using writing prompts and sentence</i></p>	Written lines with sentence starters	4.3.2.3.1, 4.3.2.4.1 4.4.2.3.1, 4.4.2.4.1	PE

Week	Big Ideas	Skills Needed/I can/learning objective	Essential Questions	Assessments	Standards	Alternate Friday Activities
------	-----------	--	---------------------	-------------	-----------	-----------------------------

			<i>starters, write a short script.</i>			
30	Scene Work/Act or	Entrances	How do I enter the playing area? <i>I can enter the playing area as my character.</i>	Turn and talk and share out about reflection questions.	4.3.2.4.2, 4.3.3.5.1 4.4.2.4.2, 4.4.3.5.1	Scene creation
31	Scene Work/Act or	Review gestures and movement	How do I use the skills learned to perform as my character? <i>I can review gesture and movement and apply it to the character I created for my story.</i>	Written character graphic organizers with sentence starters and vocabulary	4.3.3.5.1, 4.3.3.6.1 4.4.3.5.1, 4.4.3.6.1	PE
32	Scene Work/Act or	Review voice and body awareness	How do I use the skills learned to perform as my character? <i>I can review how voice and body are important to my character and to understanding the story.</i>	Continued work on graphic organizers.	4.3.3.5.1, 4.3.3.6.1 4.4.3.5.1, 4.4.3.6.1	Costume creation

Week	Big Ideas	Skills Needed/I can/learning objective	Essential Questions	Assessments	Standards	Alternate Friday Activities
------	-----------	--	---------------------	-------------	-----------	-----------------------------

33	Student Director	Listening, watching, giving feedback	How do I listen, watch, and give constructive criticism to a group? <i>I can listen, watch, and give constructive feedback.</i>	Turn and talk	4.3.4.8.2, 4.3.2.3.2, 4.3.3.5.1 4.4.4.8.2, 4.4.2.3.2, 4.4.3.5.1	PE
34	Audience	Listening with whole body, eye contact, reactions	How do I listen to and watch a play? <i>I can be a respectful audience member.</i>	Feedback to audience from actors	4.3.3.5.1 4.4.3.5.1	Costume creation
35	Performance	Review ensemble work, how to support each other during a performance	What do I do when someone forgets a line/forgets to come onstage/forgets what to do? <i>I can learn how to support my cast when performing in a play.</i>	Journal reflection of unit.	4.3.3.5.1 4.4.3.5.1	PE
36	Reflection	Discuss good and hard parts of performing,	How do I talk about the performance?	Journal reflection of the year.	4.3.4.8.2, 4.3.5.9.1 4.4.4.8.2, 4.4.5.9.1	Show completed plays to parents

Week	Big Ideas	Skills Needed/I can/learning objective	Essential Questions	Assessments	Standards	Alternate Friday Activities
------	-----------	--	---------------------	-------------	-----------	-----------------------------

		end of year summary	<i>I can reflect on my performance.</i>			
--	--	---------------------	---	--	--	--

APPENDIX C: Unit Plans

Community Building Theatre Unit Overview

Grades 3-4

What they will learn: In this unit, students will uncover what it means to be members of a community. As a community they will create group rules and norms. They will learn about what makes up personal and social identities and they will explore their identities throughout group work. They will work together to accomplish one task, compromise for the sake of the group, and how to work and play with anyone in the classroom.

Why they will learn it: Working together is essential to creating shared work. In order to create theatre, students must know how to work together, how to compromise, and how to follow rules, which are then essential in other avenues of their lives. Theatre is at its heart, work that cannot be done alone, and in which all players are interconnected. This theatre curriculum is designed to uncover students' own stories, and to provide a space to explore identity work in community.

How they will learn it: Students will use various playground games in order to develop specific skills such as working together, cooperation, compromise, and creation. Playground games are low-risk ways to help students feel comfortable trying new things, and will help them safely participate in activities which teach acting skills such as eye contact, onstage movement, and creative expression. Identity work will be shared in a low-risk environment, and will focus on how our differences are important and necessary, and that we are more alike than it may seem at first.

Community Building Unit Overview

Week	Big Ideas	Skills Needed/I can/learning objective	Details of lesson	Essential Questions	Assessments	Standards
Trimester One	Theme: Individual Identity	Skills learned: movement, receptive mind				
1	Community Building	Getting to Know You: Day 1: Names and group rules Day 2: Procedures	Day 1: Group Rules/Objectives Group Juggling Turn and Talk Reflection Day 2: Learning Procedures Scavenger Hunt Group Juggling Var. 1 Closing Breaths	How can I get to know my classmates? What is theatre? I can learn classroom rules and procedures and follow them. I can learn something new about my classmates.	Turn and talk about the group juggling lesson. Share out about what they learned. Record responses about what they think theatre is.	4.3.3.2.1 4.4.3.2.1
2	Community Building	Individual Identity	<i>POC artist: identity work (if possible)</i> Day 3: Identity Intro Name Paper Airplanes Reflection Day 4: Bumpity ump ump ump	How can I tell my story? I can write down things that make up my identity and share them with a group.	Identity paper airplanes Identity graphic organizer	4.3.3.2.1 4.4.3.2.1

			Strike an Identity Pose Breaths			
3	Community Building	Social Identity	Day 5: All My Friends How are We Alike? Make a group name Day 6: Grouping El Floron Mexican Flower Passing Game Alphabetical Line up	How can I share my culture? I can learn about and contribute to my classroom and school's culture.	Name one way we are all alike as students exit the room.	4.3.3.2.1 4.4.3.2.1
4	Community Building	Work together in a group	Day 7: Intro Working Together Making Shapes Shape Exploration Breaths Day 8: Wink Fainting, Game Flip it Over Challenge Reflection	What does it mean to work together? When asked to work on a specific task as a group, I can perform the task without incident.	Did you accomplish your goal? Why or why not? Answer using an electronic journal in the next class.	4.3.2.3.2 4.4.2.3.2
5	Community Building	Work with anyone in the room	Day 9: Warm up Rotation Changing Partners Imaginary Ball Day 10: Shakedown Hula Hoop Pass OR Fingertip Hula Hoop	How do I work with new people? When asked to change groups quickly, I can work with all people	Name one new person you worked with-whole group share.	4.3.2.3.2 , 4.3.2.4.1 4.4.2.3.2 , 4.4.2.4.1

			The Wind Blows	equally in all groups.		
6	Community Building	Letting go for the sake of the group	Day 11: Frog is in the Meadow Junkyard Games Reflection Day 12: Group Juggling Var. 2 Machine in Teams Reflection	How do I compromise? When given a specific task, I can compromise for the sake of the group.	Ask how each student compromised on the activities on the way out the door.	4.3.2.3.2 , 4.3.2.4.1 4.4.2.3.2 , 4.4.2.4.1

Community Building Daily Lesson Plans

Day 1: Getting to Know You/Names and Group Rules

Objectives/Standards:

The object of this lesson is for students to understand why we need rules, what they are for, and which rules we need in our classroom. They will learn what theatre means and the teacher's story of why theatre is important to them.

MN Arts Standards: 4.3.3.2.1; 4.4.3.2.1

Materials:

- Koosh Balls (4-8)
- White board
- White board marker
- Definition of theatre to me on a card

Key Vocabulary:

- Respect
- Procedure
- Theatre
- Actor
- Collaboration
- Cooperation

Introduction: Classroom Objectives and Rules (10 minutes)

1. Discuss the purpose of this class. Ask questions: Who has heard of theatre? What does the word theatre mean to you? Do you think you can be an actor? Why or why not?
2. Be ready to say what it means to the teacher (when I think of the word theatre, I think...). Tell a story of why theatre is important to the teacher.
3. Teacher says: My goal is to share something I love with you because it helped me, and it's a way to discover yourselves...etc. How do you think a class environment should run if this is the overall goal?
4. Here is a game. While we play, I want you to pay attention to the things that made this game work well. (moving to rules).

Lesson: Koosh Ball Name Game (15 minutes)

1. Students stand in a circle.
2. Encourage the group to listen carefully to names and to practice using each other's names throughout the group.
3. Go around the circle and have each participant say their first name.

4. Teacher chooses someone across the circle and calls out his or her name and makes eye contact with him or her and then toss the koosh ball to them.
5. Make sure students remember who they threw the koosh ball to. They have to throw the ball to the same person every time.
6. To avoid anyone catching the beanbag twice while we are establishing the pattern ask everyone to hold up one hand until they have caught the koosh ball at which time they can put their hand down.
7. This process continues until everyone has had the koosh ball once and the last person will toss the koosh ball back to the teacher, completing the pattern.
8. Once the pattern is complete, reinforce the pattern.
9. After a couple of rounds add more koosh balls into the mix.
10. Continue until you have 4-8 koosh balls going depending on the group size.

Closing: Turn and Talk Reflection (5 minutes)

- Have students turn and talk to their partner about the game they played.
- How did this game work? Why did it work? What did we need to make the game work? What did you notice about when we played it? Get to rules here...
- Three rules: Say yes (Try), Be respectful (With bodies and voices), Be safe (With ourselves and others). Help students get to these rules as a class.
- Ask about if they can think of rules and remember the why behind each rule.

Assessment:

- Sharing what they know about theatre/actors
- Sharing about what they learned

Day 2: Getting to Know You/Procedures

Objectives/Standards:

To find a fun way to learn classroom procedures and to connect those procedures with rules. To try another way to do the first activity, so students see that there is more than one “right” way to do an activity or game.

MN Arts Standards: 4.3.3.2.1; 4.4.3.2.1

Materials:

- Cards for procedure scavenger hunt. They should say the procedure on one side, and on the other side, a fun way to bring their card to the white board to attach it.
- Poster putty
- White board
- Marker

Key Vocabulary:

- Procedure

Introduction: Learning Procedure Scavenger Hunt (15 minutes)

1. Begin with a question. Remind students of the rules (have them up on the white board on cards already). Ask about what a procedure is. Define procedure. Talk about the game we will play to find procedures for this class. Ask how these procedures will fit into each rule on the board. They must attach them to the board under the rule they think works the best. Make sure they know to check the back of the card for fun ways to walk to the board!
2. Procedure scavenger hunt: procedures are hidden around the room.
3. Children must find one procedure. When they find one, they must join another child who has not found a procedure and help them.
4. When they get the procedure card, they must walk back and attach it to the white board under certain rule categories (such as the “say yes” category, or the “be safe” category), They must walk back using the directions on the back of the card, which should be fun and silly.
5. Once all procedures are found (ring bell, timer, drum), ask them to find a seat.
6. Each child reads a procedure and another child can answer it (teacher can answer if no one knows)

Lesson: Group Juggling Variation 1 (10 minutes)

1. Talk to students about group juggling. Ask if there are ways we could change the rules. Begin by asking them if there is a different way we could pass the ball.
2. Reflect: did it work? Why or why not?

3. Try another way to do this, again asking them to change a specific thing, such as “do we need names for this activity? What else would work?”

Closing: Breaths in circle (5 minutes)

- Three breaths using the breathing ball or just with arms up and down.

Assessment:

- Successful completion of the activities.

Day 3: Personal Identity Intro

Objectives:

Students will understand what identity means and how identity can be shared with others.
MN Arts Standards: 4.3.3.2.1; 4.4.3.2.1

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils
- White Board and Marker
- Cards with categories of shared identities on them

Key Vocabulary:

- Identity
- Culture
- Alike
- Differences
- Shared Identity

Introduction: Identity (5 minutes)

1. Ask, what is identity. Define identity with students: Identity is all of the things that make us, us.
2. Say we are going to talk about and learn about what makes up our identity.

Warm Ups: Paper Airplane (15-20 minutes)

1. Teacher asks what do you want someone to know about you that isn't easily seen? Give suggestions in the full group. Write suggestions down.
2. Teacher asks how do you make that a question?
3. In a group each child should write a question down on their own piece of paper.
4. Everyone makes a paper airplane from their written question.
5. Everyone throws their paper airplane around the room, picks up an airplane, and keeps throwing them.
6. Stop throwing airplanes after the timer goes off.
7. Everyone must have a paper airplane.
8. They must find the owner of the airplane and the owner can answer the question on the airplane.
9. Each person introduces the owner of the airplane to the group, their question, and their answer.

Closing: Reflection (5 minutes)

- Come back to the circle and reflect. What did you learn (that there are many different ways to be alike, identity is something that is shared with others, differences are okay and make things interesting)?

Assessment:

- Paper airplane with a question on it.
- Participation in the groupings.

Differentiation:

- Give students who have trouble thinking of ideas pre printed cards with ideas on them.
- Ask another student who finishes early to help others who are struggling with the writing or the idea.

Day 4: Personal Identity (adapted from Mulvahill, 2019)

Objectives/Standards:

Students will be given the space to explore their personal identity, and will learn the term identity.

MN Arts Standards: 4.3.3.2.1; 4.4.3.2.1

Materials:

- Personal identity wheel graphic organizer
- Something hard to write on
- Pencils

Key Vocabulary:

- Identity
- Personal identity
- Freeze
- Acting space

Warm up: Bumpity-Ump-Bump-Bump (5-10 minutes)

1. Students stand in a large circle. One student comes to the middle. That student walks around the inside of the circle, stops in front of one person, and gives them a direction.
2. There are four choices: Left = say the name of the person to the left; right = say the name of the person on the right; it = say the name of the person who is it; or self = say one's own name.
3. After the student gives the direction, they say "bumpity-ump-bump-bump!" out loud.
4. The student who was given the direction races to say the name of the correct person before the student finishes the phrase. If they can't, they're the next person on the inside of the circle.
5. Ask if there is a way to change the game, such as saying something different...

Lesson: Strike an Identity Pose (15 minutes)

1. Remind: What is identity?
2. Model how to complete identity wheel
3. Count off into Small Equal Groups (3 at the maximum)
4. Make your personal identity wheel while talking about it with your group
5. Go onstage a few at a time and name one part of your identity
6. At the drum or bell sound, strike a pose showing a part of your identity. This can be anything: eating pizza, bicycling, winning a race, reading, etc.

7. Switch groups until everyone has a chance to tell and show their identity part from the wheel

Closing: Turn and Talk Reflection and Three Breaths (5 minutes)

- Turn and talk to your neighbor about the identity wheel, sharing it if you'd like.
- What did you like about this lesson?
- What is identity?

Assessment:

- Completed personal identity wheel.

(adapted from Mulvahill, 2019)

Day 5: Social (Group) Identity (adapted from Mulvahill, 2019)

Objectives/Standards:

Students will explore and contemplate the term social identity and will learn the definition of social identity.

MN Arts Standards: 4.3.3.2.1; 4.4.3.2.1

Materials:

- Blindfolds (if needed) for every student

Key Vocabulary:

- Social
- Shared identity
- Identity
- Category

Warm Ups: All My Friends (5-10 minutes)

1. A quick way to learn students' interests.
2. Students form a circle. Stand in the middle and say, "All my friends like ... ," filling in the blank with anything you enjoy—hiking, sushi, reading—anything!
3. Any student who also enjoys the thing the teacher mentioned has to switch spots with another person in the circle.
4. Much like musical chairs, whoever doesn't have a spot goes in the middle and says, "All my friends..." starting the process all over again.
5. Pose a different way to do the game, such as doing it outside the circle framework.

Lesson: How Are We Alike? (15 minutes)

1. Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRzRAh2M2Ao> (from the beginning to 2:19).
2. Teacher: What is identity? Have students talk about what makes up their identity, based on the videos. Write down answers from the sharing on a poster, using the categories in the video as an example.
3. Teacher: Are there things on this list we share with each other?, (appearance, family, activities they like, birthdays). This is called **shared identity**. We are going to see who we share parts of our identity with.
4. Teacher rings the bell or beats the drum, and students have to find these like categories as fast as possible. For example if the teacher says eye color, students have to find out who has the same eye color and group with them. If the teacher says siblings, students must group by how many siblings they have or if they do not have any, in that group.

5. Between each grouping, have children notice other groups. Ask: Is it okay that some students (fill in the blank)? Is it okay to be different than our friends?

Closing: Group Name and Breaths in Circle (5 minutes)

- Make a group name for the classroom only to use in theatre class.
- Begin asking children to lead the closing breaths if they are ready.

Assessment:

- Successfully getting into different categories according to shared identity.

(adapted from Mulvahill, 2019)

Day 6: Shared Identity (adapted from Richardson, 2020)

Objectives/Standards:

Students will learn and sing a song in Spanish, and play a game from another culture. They will understand how to group themselves into shared categories.
Minnesota Arts Standards: 4.3.3.2.1; 4.4.3.2.1

Materials:

- Flower (fake)
- Website with music and video on it
- Card with history of the game
- Speakers to play the music

Key Vocabulary:

- The Spanish words in the song, but especially: el pase (it passes), and el floron (the flower)
- Shared Identity
- Alphabetizing
- Category
- Culture
- Mexico

Warm Ups: Grouping (5 minutes)

1. Call out a category and direct students to get in appropriate groups as quickly as possible. Example categories include: clothing colors, birth order (youngest, middle, oldest), height, favorite foods, shoe size, etc.
2. Within each group have participants learn each other's names.

Lesson: El Floron Mexican Passing Game (15 minutes)

1. Students learn the song "El Floron" using call and response of each section. Tell them where the game came from and a bit about the history.
2. Stand in a circle. One student is in the middle. They close their eyes and the other students pass the flower as they sing the song. When they finish "que pase..." for the second time. The music stops and the person in the middle opens their eyes. They have to guess who has the flower. They get 2-3 tries. The person with the flower is next to be the one in the middle regardless of whether the guess was right or not.
3. Ask children about a possible variation of the game once they get the hang of this version. Let them choose some variations.
4. Try out these variations if interested. <https://musicplayonline.com/modules/grade-3-lesson-5-a-3/>

Closing: Breaths/Line up Game (10 minutes)

- 3 breaths
- Line up according to first names (A-Z).
- Students can try this with or without talking.

Assessment:

- Students try the game and sing the song.
- Students line up according to first names.

Differentiation:

- Children who do not want to play can help with the music
- Children who cannot speak English or Spanish can hum along to the song, or only sing “el pase”
- Help those who have trouble spinning in circles. If this is too hard for them, tell them to move slower.

(adapted from Richardson, 2020)

Day 7: Group Building Intro: What Does it Mean to Work Together? (adapted from Richardson, 2020)

Objectives/Standards:

Students will learn how to work together on one activity.
MN Arts Standards: 4.3.2.3.2; 4.4.2.3.2

Materials:

- Cards with pictures of various shapes on them
- Camera to take a picture of the completed shape

Key Vocabulary:

- Shape
- Work together
- Theatre
- Group
- Make

Introduction: Working Together Discussion (5 minutes)

Important questions: What does it mean to work together? Why would actors need to work together? Remember our definition of theatre. That is what actors do onstage. We are going to work together to make just one thing.

Warm Ups: Making shapes (5 minutes)

1. Actors line up all facing the teacher.
2. Teacher asks the students to make the shape of a noun, such as a water bottle, fish, chair, etc.
3. Students make the shapes by themselves, finishing at the end of 5 counts.
4. Students can shake out the movement, and the teacher calls a new one.
5. Students can also call out ideas.

Lesson: Shape Exploration (20 minutes)

1. Teacher holds up a picture of a shape and students need to make that shape as a group ***without touching or talking***, as quickly as possible.
2. When students have made the shape, teacher holds up a new card.
3. Continue, making shapes more and more difficult.
4. Eventually, introduce the element of moving in the shape. (there are different ways to interpret that command! How many different ways can they make each shape travel?)

Closing: Breaths (5 minutes)

- Ask a student to lead this activity. Ask them if there is a different way to lead it.

Assessment:

- Students successfully create shapes in the time the teacher gives them.

(adapted from Richardson, 2020)

Day 8: Group Building: Working Together (adapted from Mulvahill, 2019)

Objectives/Standards:

Students will be able to collaborate in many different ways and in many different games.

MN Arts Standards: 4.3.2.3.2; 4.4.2.3.2

Materials:

- Shape cards
- Nouns to make shapes with
- Old sheet or tarp without holes

Key Vocabulary:

- Collaboration
- Team
- Challenge

Warm Ups: Wink Fainting Game (10 minutes)

1. Students sit in a circle. One person leaves the room
2. Choose a leader. The leader practices winking at another student. When the student gets winked at, they faint dramatically.
3. The person who left the room reenters. Students in the circle wait to be winked (they cannot close their eyes or turn away from the “leader”).
4. The guesser has three tries to guess the person leading the activity.
5. Choose another person to leave the room and begin the game again.
6. Ask if there is another way they could do the activity, such as: instead of fainting, what else could they do?

Lesson: Flip It Over Challenge (15 minutes)

1. Students divide into two teams. One team will do the challenge first while the other team watches, then they will switch places.
2. Have all members of the team stand on a flat bedsheet, tarp or blanket (kids should fill up all but about a quarter of the space).
3. Challenge the team to flip over the sheet/tarp so that they are standing on the other side of the sheet/tarp without stepping off or touching the ground.

Closing: Reflection and Breaths (5 minutes)

- Questions to ask: What make this game successful? If it was not, what was difficult about it? Why couldn't you complete this challenge?

Assessment:

- Successful flipping of the sheet OR if unsuccessful, to be able to talk about why they were unsuccessful.
- Journal about this in the next class.

(adapted from Mulvahill, 2019)

Day 9: Group Building: Working With New People (adapted from Mandell, 2003)

Objectives/Standards:

This rotation is a low risk way of creating connections and breaking down group barriers. Music not only creates mood, but changing the music with each leader can inspire a variety of physical expressions.

MN Arts Standards: 4.3.2.3.2, 4.3.2.4.1; 4.4.2.3.2, 4.4.2.4.1

Materials:

- Category examples on cards for grouping activity
- Scenarios on cards for Changing Partners activity
- Music for each new leader in Warm Up Rotation activity

Key Vocabulary:

- Category

Warm Up: Warm up Rotation (10 minutes) (Jan Mandell)

1. Break the students into equal small groups (groups of 5 are best).
2. Have each small group stand in small circles and number off.
3. Person 1 in each group begins leading a physical warm up and everyone follows.
4. Next call out “Person 2” and that person takes the lead.
5. Next call out “Freeze” and everyone freezes except Person 2, who leaves the group and quickly finds another group to lead.
6. Keep calling out numbers to change the leaders.
7. Call out “Freeze” to rotate leaders to their new groups.

Lesson: Changing Partners (10 minutes) (Jan Mandell)

1. Assign students into groups of 2
2. Assign an activity for 2, such as: *one person lifts an imaginary weight while the partner is the spotter.*
3. Allow a short time for partners to complete the task, then coach them to partner up with someone new.
4. When new partners are established, have them start a new activity.
5. Teacher coaches students through the various activities.
6. Make sure the students do each activity silently with no words
7. Continue to freeze and re-partner students in various situations. Let students choose other scenarios

Closing: Imaginary Ball (5-10 minutes)

1. Students get in a circle.

2. Teacher gets out an imaginary ball from their pocket.
3. Teacher says the ball can be big or small, heavy or light.
4. The teacher throws the ball using a sound and showing the ball is big or small, heavy or light.
5. The student catches the ball as the teacher threw it, and then changes the ball to make it “look” different.
6. Using eye contact, the student throws the ball to another student.
7. Continue as follows, changing the ball and using eye contact.
8. To make sure everyone gets a turn, when a student finishes their turn they can hold up a finger or sit down.

Assessment:

- Ask students why the changing partners game is important in theatre as they leave.
- Students can successfully lead and follow in different groups with different people.

(adapted from Mandell, 2003)

Lesson 10: Group Building: Working With New People (adapted from Mulvahill, 2019)

Objectives/Standards:

This activity helps kids work on cooperation, listening, coordinating, and strategizing skills.

MN Arts Standards: 4.3.2.3.2, 4.3.2.4.1; 4.4.2.3.2, 4.4.2.4.1

Materials:

- 2-4 hula hoops

Key Vocabulary:

- Cooperation

Warm Ups: Shakedown (5 minutes)

1. Students shake down one arm, the other arm, one leg and the other leg for 8, 4, 2, and 1 count. They say the numbers as they shake the body parts.
2. Students do the exercise again faster each time.
3. Ask students another way they could change this game.

Lesson: Hula-Hoop Pass (for smaller students) (15-20 minutes)

1. Students stand in a big circle. Place a Hula-Hoop on one student's arm and have them join hands with the student next to them.
2. Ask all the other students to join hands to close up the circle.
3. The objective of the game is to pass the Hula-Hoop all the way around the circle without unclasp hands.
4. Students will have to figure out how to maneuver their bodies all the way through the hoop to pass it on.

OR Fingertip Hula Hoop (for larger students) (15-20 minutes)

1. Students stand in a circle and raise their arms then extend their index fingers.
2. The teacher places a Hula-Hoop so that it rests on the tips of the children's fingers.
3. Students are told that they must maintain a fingertip on the hula hoop at all times, but are not allowed to hook their finger around it or otherwise hold the hoop; the hoop must simply rest on the tips of their fingers.
4. The challenge is for the students to lower the hoop to the ground without dropping it.
5. To make this more challenging, you can place communication constraints on the children—no talking or limited talking, for example.

Closing: The Wind Blows (5 minutes)

1. Sit in a circle. Turn one chair to face out. Choose someone to stand in the middle. They (or you) can call: “The wind blows for.....everyone wearing a watch, everyone who can swim a length, everyone who had breakfast today, everyone who likes ice cream, etc.
2. If the statement applies to a student, they must get up and change places (or you can go to the line at the door).
3. The last student left standing becomes the new caller.
4. No one can change places with the person sitting next to them.

Assessment:

- Ask full group why this exercise is important to theatre.
- Successfully complete the group activity

Differentiation:

- If a child is too big, get bigger hula hoops or do the other exercise
- If a student feels insecure about touching another person, have them cheer on other students

(adapted from Mulvahill, 2019)

Day 11: Group Building: Compromise (adapted from DeKoven, 2016)

Objectives/Standards:

Students will learn to compromise their own idea for the sake of playing a game. Students will learn the definition of the word compromise.

MN Arts Standards: 4.3.2.3.2, 4.3.2.4.1; 4.4.2.3.2, 4.4.2.4.1

Materials:

- Blindfold (if needed)
- Junkyard materials: a pair of old (clean) socks (possibly two or more), a small box, and some racquets or sticks. Rolled up paper can also work.

Key Vocabulary:

- Compromise

Warm Ups: Frog is in the Meadow (5-10 minutes)

1. Begin in a circle,. One person is in the middle. Sing the song and stir while singing. Replace “frog” with the name of the student: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdj6cleCx4I>
2. The student in the middle then covers their eyes and points to someone in the circle.
3. The person next to them takes hands and the frog cuts the hands apart with their hand.
4. The two players run around the circle in opposite directions and try to tag the frog first.
5. The first one who tags stays out, the last one goes into the middle of the circle and the song begins again.

Lesson: Junkyard Games (15-20 minutes) (Deep Fun: <https://www.deepfun.com/socks-boxes-racquets/>)

1. Create a game using junkyard objects (racquets, balls out of socks, cardboard boxes)
2. Rules: You must work together, everyone needs to have a say, you will have to compromise, you can laugh!
3. Give students 5 minutes to work on the game rules, then they must play however thought out the rules are.
4. Stop the game if there are troubles. Ask: what do we need to do in order to make this game successful for everyone?
5. Continue the game once all are in agreement.
6. Stop the game after 5-10 minutes, and if it falls apart.

Closing: Reflection and Three Breaths (5 minutes)

- What did you learn?
- How did you help one another?
- How can you help one another next time?
- Could you do this again a different way?

Assessment:

- Successful completion of the game.

(adapted from DeKoven, 2016)

Day 12: Group Building: Compromise

Objectives/Standards:

Students will learn compromise in various settings and through various games. They will reflect on a game played at the beginning of the unit, and how they have grown and changed since doing this game.

MN Arts Standards: 4.3.2.3.2, 4.3.2.4.1; 4.4.2.3.2, 4.4.2.4.1

Materials:

- Cards with machine names on them

Key Vocabulary:

- Compromise

Warm Ups: Group Juggling Var 2. (10 minutes)

1. Changing the pattern/choosing another way to do the activity from the beginning of the unit.
2. Get into groups of 3-4. Each group must think of one way to change the activity. They must choose it together. Give them two minutes to do this. Use a timer. If they can't come up with an idea, that is okay.
3. Try a variation that a group says. Talk about it-did it work? Why or why not?
4. Keep the rest of the variations to use another day.

Lesson: Machine in Teams (15 minutes)

1. Place students in small groups (the smallest should be 3, the largest should be about 5)
2. Each group has to create a machine that all know, such as a vacuum cleaner. Give examples or give groups cards with machines on them to start the game going.
3. Rules: You can't say anything that would be considered a language. All have to participate, you want to make it clear.
4. Participants have a short time to practice making the machine, and then they show it to the rest of the group who has to guess what machine they made.

Closing: Reflection (5 minutes)

- How was group juggling now that you have done all of the exercises?
- Was working in a group different then it was at the beginning of the year? How?
- Reflect in electronic assignment: theatre journals.

Assessment:

- Journal reflection in the next class (electronic assignment).
- Write a few sentences about the unit based on journal prompts.

Overview of Movement Unit

Week	Big Ideas	Skills Needed/I can/learning objective	Details of lesson	Essential Questions	Assessments	Standards
Trimester One	Theme: Individual Identity	Skills learned: movement, receptive mind				

1	Control of Movement	Pantomime	<p>Day 1: Body Parts, What are you Doing, What are you Doing in Teams, Adverb Exit</p> <p>Day 2: Pass the Popcorn, Four Square Transform Emotions, Birthday Line Up</p>	<p>How do I show emotions with my face and body?</p> <p>I can tell a story without using my voice.</p>	<p>Students move in the manner of the adverb. Students can successfully say they are doing an action while actually doing another action.</p> <p>Successful completion of activities.</p>	4.3.2.4.2 4.4.2.4.2
2	Control of Movement	<p>Day 3: Movement through space</p> <p>Day 4: Tempo/rhythm</p>	<p>Day 3: Character of the Space, Leading with Body Parts, Turn and Talk, Breaths</p> <p>Day 4: Hand Clapping Game, The Machine,</p>	<p>How do I move through the acting space? How slowly or quickly do I move through the acting space?</p>	<p>Turn and talk and share.</p> <p>Participation in all activities.</p>	4.3.3.5.2 4.4.3.5.2 4.3.2.4.2, 4.3.3.6.1 4.4.2.4.2, 4.4.3.6.1

			Slow Motion Freeze Tag	<p>I can move in different ways through the acting space.</p> <p>I can most at different tempos through the acting space.</p>		
3	Control of Movement	<p>Day 5: Focus</p> <p>Day 6: Stage directions</p>	<p>Day 5: Snap, Clap, and Slap, Who Has the Acting Flag, Freeze Dance</p> <p>Day 6: State Direction Tag, Stage Direction Category Game, Human Mandela</p>	<p>How do I interact with other actors and the audience on stage?</p> <p>I can give focus to the actor who is most important at the time.</p> <p>I can move throughout the acting space using stage directions.</p>	<p>Answer the question, why should some actors get the focus in a play?</p> <p>Say a stage direction to exit.</p>	<p>4.3.4.7.1</p> <p>4.4.4.7.1</p>
4	Control of Movement	Gestures	<p>Day 7: Do This!, Character from the Freeze, Isolations</p> <p>Day 8: Ski, Roller skate, Run, Etc., Mirrors, Brain Gym, Reflection</p>	<p>How do I show the audience what I mean (in a big way)?</p> <p>I can learn what gestures mean and use them to show the</p>	<p>Students do a movement that others copy. Students participate in a character activity.</p> <p>Sharing out of reflection questions.</p>	<p>4.3.4.7.1</p> <p>4.4.4.7.1</p>

				audience what I mean.		
5	Control of Movement	Tableau/Status	Day 9: Family Portraits, Environment Tableau, Might in the Museum Day 10: Move and Freeze, Status Game, Reflection	How do I show an important part of the story in one picture? I can use frozen pictures to tell a story or part of a story.	As students leave, ask them to show the teacher emotions with their bodies and face. Journal reflection.	4.3.3.2.3 4.4.3.2.3
6	Communication Following Directions	Day 11: Listening Day 12: Feedback/critique	Day 11: Telephone, Prui?, Breaths, Whisper Line Up Day 12: How to be a Good Audience, Breaths, Journal	How can I listen to other actors and give feedback? I can listen to other actors and provide feedback.	Students will successfully hear their name to leave the room. Successful completion of assignments. Completion of tableau. Successful feedback. Journal reflection of unit.	4.3.2.3.2, 4.3.2.4.1 4.4.2.3.2, 4.4.2.4.1

Movement Theatre Unit Overview

Grade Level: 3-4

What they will learn: This unit is designed to help students uncover how they move through the acting space and onstage. The series of lessons serve to build an individual and group awareness of their movement and how the movements they do affects those around them. Students will learn how to express emotion and feeling through pantomime, gesture, tempo, rhythm, and focus. They will also learn the nine stage directions (center stage, stage left, stage right, downstage, upstage, upstage left, upstage right, downstage left, downstage right), and how to cheat out, or to make their bodies available for the audience to see at all times.

Why they will learn it: Actors make big movements in order to be seen, heard, and understood. Understanding and becoming aware of movements done onstage helps actors to learn how to create story and character in later lessons. Becoming aware of how bodies move in space is not only important in acting, but can help with coordination and physical movement in everyday life.

How they will learn it: Students will discover their own use of body movement and how it affects others by focusing on pantomiming emotions and thoughts. They learn how to use big gestures in order to be seen and understood. They play stage direction games in order to learn their stage directions in fun and engaging ways, and they play games that help them to listen to each other and to provide and receive feedback from their peers.

Movement Daily Lesson Plans

Day 1: Pantomime (adapted from Mulvahill, 2019)

Objective/Standards: The objective is to help students feel comfortable with creating an action with their bodies in a low-risk way.

MN State Standards: 4.3.2.4.2; 4.4.2.4.2

Materials:

- Cards with adverbs on them
- Cards with actions on them

Key Vocabulary:

- Pantomime
- Adverb

Warm Ups: Body Parts (5-10 minutes)

1. Students mingle around the classroom until the teacher calls out a body part and a number, for instance “four knees!”
2. Students have to form a group of four students closest to them (finding new partners each time) and join together one knee each or a group of two with both knees together.
3. Anyone who is not part of a group gets to call the next round.
4. Ask for another way to play the game.

Lesson: What Are You Doing? (10 minutes)

1. Students sit in a circle (this can also be performed onstage). One person begins an action, such as painting a picture.
2. The other student (next to them in the circle) asks “What are you doing?”
3. The first student needs to say a completely different action (I am reading a book) and the other person has to do it.
4. Go all the way around the circle.

Variation: In teams (10 minutes)

1. Do the same thing, but two teams are chosen first. The first person from one team starts an action, and the second person asks the same question.
2. They say a completely different action and the second person does it.
3. Students can get out in a few ways: saying an action that has already been said, not doing the action right away, doing the action you say.
4. People who are out serve as helpers to the teacher.

Closing: Adverb Exit (5-10 minutes)

1. Define adverb for students, and get examples (smilingly, grandly, etc). Teacher can also provide examples.
2. When an adverb is called, the students (in a small group, full group, or individually) leave the circle and go into their line in the manner of the adverb.

Assessment:

- Students move in the manner of the adverb.
- Students can successfully say they are doing an action while actually doing another action.

(adapted from Mulvahill, 2019)

Day 2: Pantomime (adapted from Mandell, 2003)

Objectives/Standards:

Students will explore and understand how to express emotion and ideas through their bodies.

MN State Arts Standards: 4.3.2.4.2; 4.4.2.4.2

Materials:

- Tape to tape out the squares (if necessary)
- Four signs with emotions near each square

Key Vocabulary:

- Emotion
- Pantomime
- Facial expression

Warm Ups: Pass the Popcorn (5 minutes)

1. Students sit in a circle and each creates an imaginary object that must be passed around the circle without talking and using only physical expressions.
2. They indicate its size, texture and even if it tastes good (or bad). For example: pass the water balloon, egg, beach ball, etc.

Lesson: Four Square Transforming Emotions (10-15 minutes) (Jan Mandell)

1. Divide the room into four parts, or squares, each of which is identified by an emotion such as: anger, depression, joy, excitement
2. Divide the class into four equal groups, and have each stand in one square of the room.
3. Assign each group an activity, such as digging a ditch, playing in a band, washing a floor, or building a sand castle.
4. Have each group begin the assigned activity in the emotion dictated by the square.
5. On cue, students move clockwise as quickly as possible to the next square, continuing their original activity, but now in the emotion of the second square. For example, if they begin washing the floor angrily, and move to a different square where they have joy, then they must wash the floor with joy.
6. Do not talk, Try to maintain eye contact, show how you are feeling by the way you handle the objects.
7. Keep students moving quickly until they move through all four squares.

Closing: Birthday Line Up (5-10 minutes)

1. The objective is to have students line up in order of their birthdays—January 1st through December 31st.
2. To do this, they will need to know the order in which the months fall as well as their own birthday.
3. To make it super challenging, tell them they must do it without speaking at all, only using hand signals.

Assessment:

- Successful completion of the activities.

(adapted from Mandell, 2003)

Day 3: Movement Through Space (adapted from Richardson, 2020)

Objectives/Standards:

The object if the lesson is for students to understand how to move through space, and that they can move in many different ways throughout the acting space. It also helps them learn how to interact with others in an acting space while all doing the same activity. Students work on developing characters physically, observation. self-expression, reaction, awareness of space, accompaniment.

MN State Standards: 4.3.3.5.2, 4.3.2.4.2, 4.3.3.6.1; 4.4.3.5.2, 4.4.2.4.2, 4.4.3.6.1

Materials:

- Cards with ideas for different spaces to walk on.

Key Vocabulary:

- Actor Neutral
- Neutral
- Energy
- Space

Warm Ups: Character of the Space (10 minutes)

1. Students start on the acting space. Teacher asks students to stand in actor neutral, which means actors are standing without emotions.
2. Teacher asks students to walk in actor neutral throughout the acting space.
3. Teacher then says: The floor is not the floor anymore, but is...(ice, underwater, sharp rocks, etc).
4. Students must walk as if they are on these things.
5. Teacher calls out freeze, and starts a new space idea.
6. Students can give suggestions. They can also try a new way to do the activity.

Lesson: Leading with Body Parts (15 minutes) (Sarah Richardson)

1. Practice moving in the space with a “neutral” (blank sheet of paper) affect. Maintain an even distance from others. (if the teacher says “stop”, the room must be evenly filled).
2. Vary energy levels - 1 through 10 (1 is least energy, 10 is highest.)
3. Call out a body part and students move through the room being “led“ by that body part. Use a wide range – ear, right toe, hip, hair, nose, knees, belly, etc.
4. Students start to say a silent “hello” to others while being led by different body parts. Then let the greeting become verbal – find the emotion/voice that emerges.
5. When you meet someone who is leading with a different body part than you are, freeze, observe and slowly transform into their shape.

6. Teacher plays a variety of music. Students explore leading with body parts as suggested by the tone and timbre of the music.
7. Partner work: one partner “pulls” the other but without touching. They indicate which body part their follower should lead from non-verbally. They may change emphasis frequently. Switch jobs.

Closing: Turn and Talk and Breaths (5 minutes)

- Students turn and talk about the lesson.
- Guiding questions: Why do actors need to know how to move in an acting space? What does this teach me about movement and acting?

Assessment:

- Students turn and talk to their neighbor about the activity. They share what they learned with the whole group.

(adapted from Richardson, 2020)

Day 4: Tempo/Rhythm

Objectives/Standards:

Students will explore movement through the acting space.

MN State Arts Standards: 4.3.3.5.2, 4.3.2.4.2, 4.3.3.6.1; 4.4.3.5.2, 4.4.2.4.2, 4.4.3.6.1

Materials:

- Cards with machine ideas
- Cards with ideas on what the machine should do
- Written words about the hand clapping games to show to students (on a poster)

Key Vocabulary:

- Tempo
- Rhythm
- Sound
- Motion

Warm Ups: Hand Clapping Game (When Billy Boy, Miss Mary Mack, etc) (10 minutes)

1. Ask students to show you hand clapping games.
2. Teacher can also choose a hand clapping game with the students.
3. Students practice the game without a partner first, slowly.
4. Students partner up and practice the hand clapping game with partners, groups of 4, 5, and other variations.

Lesson: The Machine (10-15 minutes)

1. Teacher asks for a volunteer to come up and start a sound and a motion. Student begins in the center of the playing area.
2. Other students, when ready, join the first student to create their own sounds and motion.
3. They continue creating the same sound and motion while the whole class joins.
4. The machine can go faster, slower, explode, or freeze to finish the movement.
5. Begin again with another student as the first volunteer.

Variations: Make the machine create a specific thing (ask children what it should be; make sure each movement is based on another movement in the group; play “Machine in teams”, where each small group (the smallest should be 3, the largest should be about 5) has to create a machine that all know, such as a vacuum cleaner. Give examples or give groups cards with machines on them to start the game going. Rules: You can’t say anything that would be considered a language. All have to participate, you want to make

it clear. Participants have a short time to practice making the machine, and then they show it to the rest of the group who has to guess what machine they made.

Closing: Slow Motion Freeze Tag (5 minutes)

1. Teacher chooses someone who is “it”. The rest of the students disperse.
2. When the teacher begins the game, students must move as slowly as possible to get away from the person who is “it”. The “it” person also must move slowly.
3. The object of the game is to move as slowly as possible. Once someone else gets caught, they become “it” and must try to slowly tag other players.

Assessment:

- Participation in the games.
- Ask students how the machine helps them to be actors.

Day 5: Focus (adapted from Mandell, 2003, Richardson, 2020)

Objectives/Standards:

Students will learn how to focus on one actor. Students will learn listening skills and how listening is important to theatre. Students will develop awareness of stage space, stage picture.

MN State Arts Standards: 4.3.4.7.1; 4.4.4.7.1

Materials:

- Music player or person making music.

Key Vocabulary:

- Snap
- Clap
- Slap
- Freeze
- Acting Flag
- Cheating out
- Focus

Warm Ups: Snap, Clap and Slap (5 minutes)

1. Form a seated circle. One person begins the sound by snapping their fingers. Others join them slowly going around the circle, passing the noise.
2. When the noise goes back to the leader, they start to clap. The clapping noise passes around the circle.
3. When the clapping noise gets passed to the leader, they start the slapping noise, by slapping their hands on their knees. This also passes around the circle.
4. The game is finished when the leader finishes the last sound.

Lesson: Who Has the Acting Flag? (15 minutes) (Sarah Richardson)

1. Introduce the idea of the “acting flag”. The person with the “acting flag” (metaphorical), is the person who has the focus on stage at a given moment.
2. One group of students will be the audience, one will be the actors. 9 or so is a good group size.
3. Give the actors a situation that involves a crowd and a person who has the focus - for example, a political speech, rock concert, teacher in a classroom, shark attack on a beach, robbery at a store.
4. Pass out cards to the students - one card has a picture of the “acting flag” on it, one has the number 2, and one has the number 3. The rest are blank.
5. Without talking or revealing their cards to one another, students organize themselves into a tableau where the person with the acting flag takes focus, and the

number 2 and 3 are in supporting positions. Everyone else supports the focus of the scene, and creates an effective stage picture. The audience guesses who has which card.

Closing: Freeze Dance (5-10 minutes) (Mandell)

1. Choose one person to be in charge of the music.
2. When the music starts, everyone else dances, the crazier the better.
3. When the music stops, the dancers must freeze in their position.
4. Anyone caught moving after that is out.
5. Play continues until there is one person left, the winner

Assessment:

- Students answer a question when exiting the space: Why should some actors get the focus in a play?

(adapted from Mandell, 2003, Richardson, 2020)

Day 6: Stage Directions (adapted from DeKoven, 2015)

Objectives/Standards:

Students will learn their nine stage directions.
MN State Arts Standards: 4.3.4.7.1; 4.4.4.7.1

Materials:

- Index card with ideas for moving in stage directions
- Tape for stage

Key Vocabulary:

- Center Stage
- Stage Right
- Stage Left
- Upstage
- Downstage
- Upstage Right
- Upstage Left
- Downstage Right
- Downstage Left
- Mandala

Warm Ups: Stage Direction Tag (10 minutes)

1. Students are asked to sit in the audience facing the stage.
2. Teacher talks about the importance of stage directions. They ask why they are necessary. Students give answers.
3. Teacher names each stage direction, then asks for volunteers to become each of the nine stage directions.
4. Students stand in each stage direction place. Teacher has the other students line up in the audience area.
5. The first student calls out the name of a stage direction (the teacher will help if needed). The student will go to the stage direction they called the name of, tag them out, and they will become the stage direction. The student tagged goes to the back of the line.
6. This continues, but action moves faster when the teacher gives a 1 minute challenge to get as many stage directions as possible.

Lesson: Stage Direction Category Game (5-10 minutes)

1. Students sit in audience. Students can come with category ideas.
2. Teacher calls out possible categories students can move to.

3. Students move to different stage directions if they are in these categories. For example, teacher can say: If you have pets go stage right, if you are an only child move stage left, if you hate broccoli go down stage, etc.

Closing: Human Mandala <https://www.deepfun.com/mandala-game/> (10 minutes)

1. Show everybody some of these photos of "Human Mandelas."
2. Talk about the historical context of mandalas.
3. Define the term mandala with students.
4. Ask people to make up their own mandala-like shape (divide into appropriate size groups as necessary - who knows how many people you can get into one mandala?).
5. Establish a good place to take photos (with a chair to stand on or a tree to sit in so they are high enough to look down).
6. Ask the mandala-people to hum or make chant-like sounds once they've achieved their group manadalatitude.
7. Take pictures.
8. If people want to play again, encourage them to create a whole new mandala-like pattern - maybe just with hands or legs, maybe sitting in chairs, maybe lying on each other.
9. Repeat with variations.

Assessment:

- Students can say a stage direction to exit the classroom

(adapted from DeKoven, 2015)

Day 7: Gestures (adapted from Mandell, 2003)

Objectives/Standards:

Students will create gestures using their bodies and facial expressions. They will use those gestures to create characters.

MN State Arts Standards: 4.3.4.7.1; 4.4.4.7.1

Materials:

- Music and a speaker
- List of activities, if needed

Key Vocabulary:

- Gestures
- Emotions
- Freeze
- Character
- Isolation

Warm Ups: Do This! (5-10 minutes)

1. Talk about which games can be games where you choose to pass. This can be a game where students can decide not to do the action by saying “pass”..
2. Students start out in a circle. One student says, “Do this!” and does a motion (and sound if interested). All say “Yes!” and repeat the sound and motion.
3. Go all the way around the circle.
4. Help the students think up a good variation for this game.

Lesson: Characters From the Freeze (15 minutes)

1. Teacher plays a variety of music. Students move around the room following a series of directions, such as moving through the space quickly, making bodies large or small, expressing various emotions, and so on.
2. When the group is physically loose and open, tell students to freeze. Tell them to let their frozen positions give them clues as to a character they could be.
3. Suggest an activity for their characters to perform, such as packing a suitcase or cleaning the floors. Teachers can also allow them to choose an activity on their own and do it.
4. As they perform their task, coach them through the process by asking them to think about details, such as the character’s age and name, words describing the character’s personality, things the character loves to do, and so on.
5. Ask the students to show how the character is feeling as they are doing the task.
6. After a short amount of time, ask the students to freeze again, shake off the character, and move again through the room.

7. Start the activity again with a new selection of music.

Closing: Isolations (5-10 minutes)

1. Teacher begins by isolating one body part that moves. This is done in relative silence. Students copy the body movements, isolating each body movement, and building on the body movements until most or all of the body is moving.
2. Teacher quiets the movements and begins with a small movement on the other side of the body, and builds up to a larger body movement. Eventually all of the body is moving.

Assessment:

- Students doing a movement that others copy successfully.
- Students participating in the character activity.

Differentiation:

For students who are unsure about doing the character activity, ask them to be in charge of the music, or to help choose an emotion or activity that other students will then try.

(adapted from Mandell, 2003)

Day 8: Gestures (adapted from Dennison, 1987)

Objectives/Standards:

Students will learn how to mirror other students and pay attention to how they are moving through space. They will learn that gestures portray activities.
MN State Arts Standards: 4.3.4.7.1; 4.4.4.7.1

Materials:

- Music for the mirroring exercise
- Cards with sports ideas
- Brain Gym video and player (if needed)

Key Vocabulary:

- Mirroring
- Gesture
- Movement
- Brain Gym
- Crossing the midline

Warm Ups: Ski, Roller skate, Run, Etc. (5 minutes)

1. Students begin in a circle. Teacher tells students to begin by imagining they are skiing, or jumping rope, or running.
2. Teacher leads students through a series of different sports activities in their imagination. Coach them through the activities by telling them it's okay if they don't know how to do some of the sports activities. They can just try their best.
3. Ask them for variations, particularly with the pantomimed activities.

Lesson: Mirrors (10-15 minutes)

1. Begin by leading a full group in a mirroring exercise. Show them how to mirror and have them mirror you for awhile.
2. Have students partner up, facing each other. Teacher asks one student to be the leader, making sure they know they will both get a turn.
3. The leader begins with a series of movements, starting with small ones, that the other student must mirror. This activity should be in silence.
4. The follower must follow the movements as closely as possible. The leader must make sure that the movements they are doing are slow and controlled, and it needs to be movements the follower can follow.
5. Continue this (adding music if necessary), for a few minutes, then call freeze, and the students switch places.

Closing: Brain Gym and Reflection (5-10 minutes)

- Students stand in a circle and the teacher begins with various Brain Gym exercises. Teachers can use this video to learn and teach them to students. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5ChXC-rHLE>. Teachers can also use this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VL4an7UC3wA>
- Reflection essential questions: What does the mirroring exercise teach you? Why do actors need to mirror? Ask students to turn and talk to their neighbors about it, and share out what they learned.

Assessment:

- Sharing out of reflection questions.

(adapted from Dennison, 1987)

Day 9: Tableau

Objectives/Standards:

Students will learn what a tableau is, and how to create a picture or a moment in time using their bodies and facial expressions.

MN State Arts Standards: 4.3.3.2.3; 4.4.3.2.3

Materials:

- Camera
- Cards or list of environments

Key Vocabulary:

- Environment
- Emotion
- Tableau
- Portrait

Warm Ups: Family Portraits (10 minutes)

1. Students will go into small groups. They must come up with a family portrait that the teacher will take a picture of (a real or pretend camera are both options). They can choose which characters they would want to play, but that is not the most important part of the exercise.
2. Students must choose an emotion the family is having, for example, sick family, happy family, tired family, fighting family, etc. They must then “pose for the camera with these emotions in place.
3. This could also be done in a larger group or a full group.
4. Ask them to vary the activity.

Lesson: Environments Tableau (10 minutes)

1. Students begin the lesson in two groups. Each group needs to come up with an environment based on choices on the board.
2. Once they choose an environment, students will create a tableau of the environment, freezing into a position that shows the environment.
3. Students show their tableaus to each other. Once the audience guesses what environment they are trying to show, they can join the environment. Students can also unfreeze and move in the environment.
4. Try another environment. With the same groups.

Closing: Night in the Museum (5-10 minutes)

1. Students find a place in the room during a countdown. They must freeze as statues in a museum. They cannot just lie on the floor or do something easy-they must try to make the statues interesting.
2. One student (or the teacher) is the night watch person. This person goes around the room, trying to find moving statues. Statues must move at some point, when the night watch person's back is turned.
3. If the watch person sees you move, you are out. People who are out can try to get other statues to move or laugh by getting near them but they cannot touch them.
4. The last one (or two, or three) to finish are the winners.

Assessment:

- As students leave for the next class, ask them to show teacher an emotion with their bodies and face.

Day 10: Status (adapted from Sarah Richardson, 2020)

Objectives/Standards:

Students will be able to explore what status is, and how it can be a tool to oppress others. Students will be able to explore different statuses, and to give students a place to change their current status.

MN State Arts Standards: 4.3.3.2.3; 4.4.3.2.3

Materials:

- Cards with numbers 1-9 (or more) on them
- Music and speakers

Key Vocabulary:

- Status

Warm Ups: Move and Freeze (5 minutes)

1. Teacher starts by putting on music or singing the move and freeze song with the group.
2. Students will move until the music stops or the teacher calls freeze, then students must freeze in an interesting way.
3. Continue this for several minutes.
4. Ask for variations.

Lesson: Status Game: (15 minutes)

1. Define status with the students. Show examples of status in movements of the body.
2. Divide the students into two groups. One section is the audience. The other actors perform.
3. Give the actors cards on which are written the numbers 1-9 (or higher if you have more students in a group). The numbers refer to relative status - 1 being the highest, 9 the lowest.
4. The actors walk around the space, demonstrating their status silently by the way in which they interact with each other. At a signal from the teacher, actors freeze, and the audience tries to put them in a line in the correct order by status.
5. Discuss what physical characteristics make status evident and repeat with the remainder of the class. *(Be sensitive to the actual relative status of students in your group, and assign roles accordingly. There are certain children in my own classes to whom I would not assign the lowest status.)*
6. Discuss observations with the student audience.
7. Guess relative status and repeat with other groups.

Closing: Reflection (5 minutes)

- What does status mean?
- How do we show status?
- How can we change our actions so we show a different status?
- Talk about journal reflection.
- Breaths in circle.

Assessment:

- Journal reflection in the next class.

Differentiation:

Students who feel uncomfortable with the exercise can give out status cards and judge others in the group on whether they achieved the status on their cards or not.

(adapted from Sarah Richardson, 2020)

Day 11: Listening (adapted from DeKoven, 2002)

Objectives/Standards:

Students will learn why listening is an important part of theatre.
MN State Standards: 4.3.2.3.2, 4.3.2.4.1; 4.4.2.3.2, 4.4.2.4.1

Materials:

- Phrase or sentences to begin the telephone game if needed.
- Blindfolds for each student, if necessary.

Key Vocabulary:

- Listening
- Whisper

Warm Ups: Telephone (5 minutes)

1. Students begin in a circle. Teacher says a short phrase or sentence.
2. Students repeat that sentence in whispered form around the circle.
3. Teacher hears how the sentence changes from the last student.
4. Try another sentence.

Lesson: Prui? <https://www.deepfun.com/prui-2/> (15 minutes)

1. Choose a student to start the game. Everyone closes their eyes and starts milling around. In the meantime, the game starter secretly appoints someone to be Prui.
2. When people bump into each other, they shake hands, while saying “prui” (pronounced “proo-ee”). If the person they encounter is not Prui, they each go off to find someone else.
3. When someone bumps into the actual, pre-appointed Prui, shakes hands and says prui, the Prui shakes hands, doesn’t say anything, and doesn’t let go.
4. Now both people are Prui, remaining Prui until the end of the game. If either of them is encountered by anyone else, more people are added to the collective Prui. The game continues until more or less everyone has become Prui. Then, at a signal from the pre-selected Prui appointer or teacher (who has their eyes open during the game so they can help steer people away from hazards) lets people know that they can at last open their eyes.

Closing: Breaths and Whisper Line up (5 minutes)

1. After the breaths, students will close their eyes or sit quietly.
2. Teacher will whisper their name from the door.
3. Students will come to the door when they hear their whispered name.

Assessment:

- Hearing their name to leave the room.
- Successful completion of activities

Differentiation:

- If a student is hard of hearing, the teacher can tap them instead of whisper their name.
- For the Prui game, the student hard of hearing can be the eyes of the group, and help others stay in the acting space.

(adapted from DeKoven, 2002)

Day 12: Feedback/Critique

Objectives/Standards:

Students will be able to know how to be a good audience. They will also be able to show skills learned to others in their group. They will be able to give and receive feedback in a positive way.

MN State Standards: 4.3.2.3.2, 4.3.2.4.1; 4.4.2.3.2, 4.4.2.4.1

Materials:

- Index cards with numbers for the group numbers on them
- Pen to write with

Key Vocabulary:

- Critique
- Feedback
- Audience
- Compliment
- Positive

Lesson: How to be a Good Audience Member (25 minutes)

1. Students go into 4 small groups. Each group creates a short picture tableau with a beginning, middle and end.
2. Ask the audience: We are going to create short scenes and show them to each other. Why do we need an audience? What should the audience do to make sure the show is successful? Get some ideas from the audience.
3. Ask the actors: what does the audience need to do in order to help you do the best job you can do? Get answers from actors.
4. Show the first short tableau set. Ask the actors: how did you feel about the way the audience watched your show?
5. Ask the audience to provide feedback. Define feedback. Ask what positive feedback and critique would look like and sound like.
6. Ask audience to come up with one compliment and one critique to say to the actors. Have them share with the actors. Teacher writes down each compliment on an index card.
7. Change to another group of actors. Again, uncover what the audience may need to do and say, and what actors need in order for the performance to be successful. Ask for feedback once the scene is complete.
8. Once all of the scenes are completed and feedback is given, give the compliment cards to each group member in each group. Let them take home the compliments.

Closing: Breaths in Circle, Journal in the Next Class (5 minutes)

- Give students directions on how to write their journal reflection.

Assessment:

- Successful completion of the tableaux.
- Successful feedback.
- Journal reflection of unit.

Appendix A: References

Bates, V. (2011, March 30). Frogs in the meadow [Video]. Youtube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdj6cleCx4I>

David, J. (n. d.). *25 drama games and activities*. Sign Up Genius.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/groups/drama-games-activities.cfm>

DeKoven, B. (n. d.). Deep fun. <https://www.deepfun.com/>

Drama Notebook. (n. d.). Opening and closing rituals.

<https://www.dramanotebook.com/drama-curriculum/teach-drama-to-kids/opening-and-closing-rituals/>

Foco, Z. (2013, January 7). Brain gym exercise for students. [Video]. Youtube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5ChXC-rHLE>.

Jgurs. (2009, January 3). BrainGym. [Video]. Youtube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VL4an7UC3wA>,

Mandell, J. (2003). *Acting, learning and change*. Heinemann.

Mulvahill, E. (2019, July 31). *33 awesome team-building games and activities for*

kids. We are Teachers. <https://www.weareteachers.com/team-building-games-and-activities/>

Musicplay (n. d.). *Grade 3 lesson 5 (a.3)*. [https://musicplayonline.com/modules/grade-3-](https://musicplayonline.com/modules/grade-3-lesson-5-a-3/)

[lesson-5-a-3/](https://musicplayonline.com/modules/grade-3-lesson-5-a-3/)

Paradigmshift Education. (2015, November 18). *101 ways to line up a group*.

<https://paradigmshiftleadership.com/101-ways-to-line-up-a-group-a-classic-team-building-and-icebreaker-activity/>

Pangrazi, R. (n. d.). Dynamic PE ASAP. <https://www.dynamicpeasap.com/lesson-plan>

Pop'n'Olly (2020, May 10). *Identity explained to children*. [Video].

Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRzRAh2M2Ao_

Spolin, V. (1986). *Theater games for the classroom*. Northwestern University Press.

Appendix B: Resources

Community Building Unit Day 3: Identity Categories:

Personality?

- Funny
- Serious
- Gentle
- Fair
- Helpful
- Kind
- Stubborn
- Strong
- Quiet

Outside appearance?

- Gender
- Style
- Hair
- Skin color
- Clothing
- Jewelry
- Eye color

How I think?

- Do I like to talk things through?
- Do I like to think before I speak?
- Do I think deeply about everything?
- Do I think about many things at once?

What I believe?

- God/religion

What I like to do?

- Sports
- Games
- TV/Movies
- Reading
- Writing
- Art
- Acting
- Singing
- Inventing
- Favorite foods
- Cooking
- Gardening

Where do I come from?

- Where do I live (house, apartment, etc.)?
- What country am I from?
- What state am I from?
- Where do my parents or family come from?
- Culture?
- Siblings
- Who do I live with?

Personal identity question sheet:

- What is something you want people to know that they don't know about you right now that they can't tell by looking at you?
- How can you ask it as a question? What is a question that they can ask that would allow you to tell them?

Community Building Unit Day 4: Personal Identity Wheel PDF:

<https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/wp-content/uploads/sites/732/2017/04/personalidentwheel.jpg>

Community Building Day 9: Changing Partners Game Scenarios (Jan Mandell):

1. Stare Down: students stand facing their partners, and begin a simple stare down, looking each other in the eyes, trying not to laugh. Coach for concentration. Conclude after about a minute.
2. Handshake: working with new partners, students create a three-part hand slap greeting, and rehearse it until it is memorized.
3. Portrait Painter: again with new partners, one person is a portrait painter and the other is the model. Act out this interaction in pantomime.