

CAPSTONE PROJECT:
CREATING A THEATRE CURRICULUM FOR DIVERSE
UPPER ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW AND UNIT PLANS

by
Sara Feinberg

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Capstone Facilitator: Kelly Killorn
Content Expert: Sarah Richardson
Curriculum Expert: Tricia Menzhuber
Capstone Editor: Kate Ray
Peer Reviewer: Terese Shimshock

Project Description Overview

I had been a Montessori teacher in a private school for 8 years, but last year I decided to take a job in a challenging elementary school. By November, I was too stressed and exhausted to continue. I was looking for another job when I was asked to teach theatre to students at two diverse urban schools. Although teaching theatre was not new to me, I had never done it full time. Once I started, I found that I really loved teaching theatre again, but many of the students were not interested in theatre and knew little of what theatre meant. It was because of this job change that helped me choose my capstone question: *how is a theatre curriculum for diverse upper elementary students be created?*

I began my research reviewing the cognitive and physical development of upper elementary students. I discovered that physical and cognitive abilities of students was not the reason that upper elementary students are resistant learners. When researching resistant learners, however, researchers said similar things: students who resisted learning tended to also be people of color, immigrants or children of immigrants (mostly immigrants of color), or children who experienced trauma and poverty. According to researchers, resistant learning stemmed from experiences brought on by systemic racism, which has dominated our country since its inception, and by a school system which expects people of color to comply with rules and expectations set up by the white middle and upper class.

Not only are students of color victims of racism and oppression, but few students are receiving the social and emotional skills at a level they once were both in our schools, and in society. Because of high stakes testing schools have less time to focus on these

important skills. Teachers in schools today are not able to focus on building problem solving skills and anger management skills, which leaves students of color feeling underrepresented by teachers and administration in the schools.

In the search to find theatre curricula that fit the needs of all students, existing theatre curricula was critiqued, which was not sufficient to engage students of color and resistant learners. Creating a space where children of color, and all learners, could tell their stories and talk about their culture, be proud of who they are and where they came from was the goal of the curriculum. This led to looking in unconventional places for games and activities.

My project focused on upper elementary students. I also narrowed my curriculum focus to just one of the two schools I currently work at. This school has a mostly Latino population, with some students from Eritrea and some white and mixed-race students. These students were mostly lower and middle class, and many are first and second generation immigrants.

This theatre curriculum focuses on student voice, empowerment, and telling their stories. The Understanding by Design model was used as a template to design the curriculum, beginning with the big ideas and moving to assessment and finally the lessons that would lead to the understanding of the big ideas. The Minnesota State Arts standards were often referred to throughout the creation of this curriculum.

This curriculum is divided into three main parts; one part for each trimester of the school year. The first part begins with community building and movement activities, with the focus on individual identity; the second part works on ensemble, voice work, and character development, but with the overall focus on group identity; and the third part

works on play creation and performance, with an emphasis on identity in the context of greater society. This theatre curriculum is closely aligned with the Minnesota State Arts Standards for theatre. For ease, only third and fourth grade standards were used in my unit plans and curriculum overview.

I wrote out the first two units of my theatre curriculum in detail, adding specific lessons that emphasize the themes highlighted in trimester one. I focused on personal identity and shared identity, and working together in a group in both the community building and movement units. Each lesson in both units include an objective and standards the unit is based on, Minnesota State Arts standards, materials, key vocabulary, a warm up, the main lesson, and a closing, with assessments and differentiation if necessary.

As I researched and wrote my capstone, many huge changes happened in our world. The coronavirus and the murder of George Floyd could not help but shape my focus and my project. The murder of George Floyd, in particular, was paramount to both my personal and professional growth as a white woman and a teacher. I was able to change my mindset to begin a culturally responsive path in teaching, and to change my own world view.

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. Because there are few theatre curriculum 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.

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 Strike an Identity Pose Breaths	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

3	Community Building	Social Identity	<p>Day 5: All My Friends How are We Alike? Make a group name</p> <p>Day 6: Grouping El Floron Mexican Flower Passing Game Alphabetical Line up</p>	<p>How can I share my culture?</p> <p>I can learn about and contribute to my classroom and school's culture.</p>	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	<p>Day 7: Intro Working Together Making Shapes Shape Exploration Breaths</p> <p>Day 8: Wink Fainting Game Flip it Over Challenge Reflection</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>	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	<p>Day 9: Warm up Rotation Changing Partners Imaginary Ball</p> <p>Day 10: Shakedown Hula Hoop Pass OR Fingertip Hula Hoop The Wind Blows</p>	<p>How do I work with new people?</p> <p>When asked to change groups quickly, I can work with all people equally in all groups.</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
6	Community Building	Letting go for the sake of the group	<p>Day 11: Frog is in the Meadow Junkyard Games Reflection</p>	<p>How do I compromise?</p> <p>When given a</p>	Ask how each student compromised on the activities on	4.3.2.3.2, 4.3.2.4.1 4.4.2.3.2, 4.4.2.4.1

			Day 12: Group Juggling Var. 2 Machine in Teams Reflection	specific task, I can compromise for the sake of the group.	the way out the door.	
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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 Murder 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)

ObjectivesStandards:

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 <https://www.deepfun.com/socks-boxes-racquets/> (15-20 minutes)

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, Slow Motion Freeze Tag</p>	<p>How do I move through the acting space? How slowly or quickly do I move through the acting space?</p> <p>I can move in different ways through the acting space.</p> <p>I can most at different tempos 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

3	Control of Movement	Day 5: Focus Day 6: Stage directions	Day 5: Snap, Clap, and Slap, Who Has the Acting Flag, Freeze Dance Day 6: State Direction Tag, Stage Direction Category Game, Human Mandela	How do I interact with other actors and the audience on stage? I can give focus to the actor who is most important at the time. I can move throughout the acting space using stage directions.	Answer the question, why should some actors get the focus in a play? Say a stage direction to exit.	4.3.4.7.1 4.4.4.7.1
4	Control of Movement	Gestures	Day 7: Do This!, Character from the Freeze, Isolations Day 8: Ski, Rollerskate, Run, Etc., Mirrors, Brain Gym, Reflection	How do I show the audience what I mean (in a big way)? I can learn what gestures mean and use them to show the audience what I mean.	Students do a movement that others copy. Students participate in a character activity. Sharing out of reflection questions.	4.3.4.7.1 4.4.4.7.1
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	Day 11: Listening Day 12: Feedback/cr	Day 11: Telephone, Prui?, Breaths, Whisper Line Up	How can I listen to other actors and give feedback? I can listen to	Students will successfully hear their name to leave the room.	4.3.2.3.2, 4.3.2.4.1 4.4.2.3.2, 4.4.2.4.1

	Directions	itique	Day 12: How to be a Good Audience, Breaths, Journal	other actors and provide feedback.	Successful completion of assignments. Completion of tableau. Successful feedback. Journal reflection of unit.	
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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)

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 varieties.

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 Mandalas."
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 mandalatitude.
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 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 in the circle, 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.

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Appendix B: Resources

Community Building Unit Day 3: Identity Categories:

Personality?

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

Outside appearance?

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

How I think?

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

What I believe?

- o God/religion

What I like to do?

- o Sports
- o Games

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

Where do I come from?

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

Personal identity question sheet:

- o 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?
- o 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.