

Lesson Plan Workshop #2 – Character and Empowering the Voice WNYC Audio Theater Residency – The Sound

Blueprint Strands Addressed:

- Theater Making: Acting, Playwriting/Play Making, Designing and Technical Theater, and Directing
- Developing Theater Literacy
- Making Connections

NY State Educational Standards for Theatre Arts Addressed:

Art Standard 1 - Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts

- 1.1 Use improvisation and guided play writing to communicate ideas and feelings
- 1.2 Imitate various experiences through pantomime, play making, dramatic play, story dramatization, storytelling, role-playing, improvisations and guided play writing
- 1.3 Use language, voice, gesture, movement and observation to create character and interact with others in improvisation, rehearsal and performance
- 1.5 Identify and use, in individual and group experiences, some of the roles, processes, and actions for performing and creating theatre pieces and improvisational drama within the school/community, and discuss ways to improve them

Art Standard 2 - Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

- Discuss vocations/avocations with theatre professionals and identify the skills and preparation necessary for theatre vocations/avocations

Art Standard 3 - Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

- 3.8 Use the techniques and vocabulary of theatre criticism, both written and oral, to discuss theatre experiences and improve individual and group performances

Objectives/Outcomes

Participants will:

- Listen to and analyze the emotions they hear in key moments from the selected audio theater performance
- Examine the internal and external factors that affect character's choices and character's vocal quality
- Perform scenes from selected audio theater script to explore various character emotional choices

Materials Needed:

- Selected scenes from *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot* (audio & paper copies)
- Large Poster Board and Markers
- Microphone and Recording Device
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Lesson Plan:

▪ **The Main Activity**

A devising activity to explore how external factors affect the internal life of characters and their vocal quality. Also incorporating a technological activity demonstrating how microphones can affect vocal quality. An example is below.

Role on the Wall

- An outline of a body is drawn onto a large poster board. This outline represents Dominic Boot.

- Have participants stay in circle on floor or sit in desks to listen to key moments in Dominic’s journey
- Participants are told that on the inside of the body they should write words or phrases that capture the internal world of the character – including thoughts, emotions, hopes, dreams or anything that takes place “internally.”
- On the outside of the body, participants are asked to write words or phrases that capture the external world of the character – including what people think of this character, what this character shows to the world, the physical appearance of this character, external influences or environment, other people and situations that the character interacts with, and anything else that is considered by the group as “external.”

Improvisational Scene Discovery

- Divide students into 4 groups and give each group a copy of a selected scene from *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot*.
- Instruct participants to explore and rehearse 2-3 emotional/character choices for each character in the scene.
- Have 2 groups share their scene, the other groups will listen with their eyes closed.
- After each group shares, the other groups will guess the emotional lives of each character presented based upon the scene they “heard”.

Introduction to Microphone

- Segue into discussion of how a microphone might affect some of the emotional choices just explored in the above activity.
- Showcase the microphone – the history of the microphone and its use in radio, the parts of the microphone, how the microphone changes the way sound travels, and the relationships actors, directors and sound engineers have with microphones in creating quality audio theater.
- Have 3rd group stand around the microphone to record their scene. As scene is recorded, the other participants close their eyes and listen.
- Upon listening to the recording, ask participants what emotional life comes through on the recording as opposed to what they heard “live”, does what they hear match the “action” of the scene, and how could they do it differently to achieve a different/similar effect.
- Have 4th group record their most scene and explore/discuss. As the last group presents, Teaching Artists will add soundscape for the scene (rain, door closing, car horn, etc.)
- Ask participants about the soundscape and what it added to the “live” scene and listen to the recorded scene and analyze the addition of the soundscape. (This is the opportunity for the Teaching Artists to set-up the soundscape workshop for the following week.

▪ **Closing Discussion/Activity**

- Have participants sit in circle on floor and inquire about: “What did we do today?” and/or “What’s something you discovered today?”
- Share with participants that this workshop was an exploration of how external, emotional and technological factors affect how the voice is heard.
- Instruct participants over the next week to pay attention to the soundscape of their daily lives for next workshop.

- **Closing exercise** - to seal in the ensemble energy we've created. An example is below.

Ensemble Agreement

- Group stands in a circle, holding hands with eyes closed
- Group repeats after the Teaching Artist
- Teaching Artist says, "Using our creativity, our awareness, and each other we make art. Therefore, we are artists."
- On the count of 3, as a group we inhale and exhale.

Vocabulary:

Vocal Warm-Up, Physical Warm-Up, Character, Emotional Choices, Microphone, Amplification, Actors, Directors, Sound Engineers, Proximity, Soundscape