

Unit: Theater Making/Literacy

Ancient Myth: Page to Stage

Grade:
2nd Grade

Class Sessions:
8-10 Sessions

Teacher:
**Cynthia
Blackwell**

School:
PS 29

Instructional Goal:

- Students will take a story from the page to the stage by creating a script from improvised dialogue, blocking from exploration of movement, and mood/setting from choice of movement.

Theater Benchmarks Addressed:

- Playmaking: Students recognize and understand the dramatic elements of a story (Understanding Dramatic Structure), and Students imagine, analyze and understand play making processes by listening, retelling, and creating stories and dramas (Imagination, Analysis, and Process).
- Design and Technical Theatre: By defining the playing area of a stage/classroom, students use and respect theatrical space and elements.
- Developing Theatre Literacy: Students develop an understanding of dramatic structure and theatre traditions.

Project Description:

- Early elementary students will use their creativity and imaginations to create a play from an ancient Mexican Myth. This unit is designed for one fifty-minute session each week for eight weeks, and can easily be condensed or expanded based on scheduling needs.

Big Idea(s) of this Unit:

- Children can create original theatre.

Indicators of Student Learning - Key Knowledge, Skills & Understandings

Students will know:

1. Stage area from audience area
2. Script format: lines/cues/stage directions

Students will be able to:

3. Sustain concentration, focus, and commitment in group activities with a shared performance goal
4. Contribute positively and responsibly to ensemble activities
5. Use the body and voice expressively
6. Identify the beginning, middle, & end of a story
7. Respond to and incorporate directions and demonstrate physical self-control
8. Retell a story in a group with attention to accurate sequencing

Students will understand that:

9. Characters have specific wants and needs
10. Sequencing of character actions is required to create a play

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Assessment

Assessment/Evidence

Self

- Students use listening and observation skills to answer (and ask) questions about the story, dialogue, and staging

Peer-to-Peer

- Guided Questions, sessions #1 & #2 (see attached examples)
- Student Observations, session #3 (see attached examples)

Teacher

- Character Worksheet (see attachment), session #5
- Review of written work, sessions #2 & #5
- Observation of daily work & performance, sessions #1-8

Teacher Self

- Through daily anecdotal notes, teacher reflects upon what is working well and what needs to be changed, sessions #1-#8

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Learning Plan: the sequence of Learning Experiences aligned with when & what assessments occur--journals, rubrics, reflections, critiques, surveys, etc.

Learning Experiences	Theater Strands				
	<i>making</i>	<i>literacy</i>	<i>connections</i>	<i>resources</i>	<i>careers</i>
<p>Session 1 Alliteration Name Game warm-up. READ the story “How Music Came to the World” retold by Hal Ober. Make a Beginning/ Middle/End Chart and record student responses. Divide the class into three groups to create B/M/E tableaus (frozen pictures) with all children taking a person, animal, or inanimate object. Guided Relaxation to close (attached).</p>	◆	◆	◆		
<p>Session 2 Pass a ‘Story Word’ with a movement in a circle warm-up. Review the story using B/M/E chart. Make three groups and have them make a list of events in chronological order for their ‘part’ of the story. Teacher uses lists to guide class creation of some dialogue with a few actors at a time. Guided Relaxation to close.</p>	◆	◆			
<p>Session 3 Movement/Freeze with hand drum (images from story— waves, wind, sky, sun, hurricane, etc.) Have groups devise scenes with improvised dialogue then share. Teacher records some of the dialogue created by students in each scene. Work with class to make a list of ‘characters’ and discuss the use of a narrator. Use this to create script before Session 4. Guided Relaxation to close.</p>	◆	◆			
<p>Session 4 Movement/Freeze warm-up with instrumental and vocal music from several genres. Survey students or have them try-out for roles, then assign parts. First read-thru of the script (sample script attached). Guided Relaxation to close.</p>	◆	◆			
<p>Session 5 Warm-up students by taking moments from script that need creative movement and working with imagery. Have students work on character worksheets (attached). Model first. Guided Relaxation to close.</p>	◆	◆	◆		
<p>Session 6 Warm-up from Session 5. Block the play (this may take more than one session if it is blocked by the students). Guided Relaxation to close.</p>	◆	◆			
<p>Session 7 Warm-up by having students circulate through the space repeating one line of dialogue at varying speeds/volumes/physical levels. Rehearse. Guided Relaxation to close.</p>	◆	◆	◆		
<p>Session 8 Students form a circle and Pass the Impulse (squeezed hand) around the circle with eyes closed. Final rehearsal. Share with peer group or other audience.</p>	◆	◆			◆

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Peer-to-Peer: Guided Question Examples

What is _____ doing to suggest want or character?
student name

Did this group use levels in their tableaux? How?

What else could character do to show us their want or emotion?

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Peer-to-Peer: Student Observations Examples

It's helpful to hang these up in the room somewhere.

I noticed...

I observed...

I saw...

I liked it when she/he...

Because...

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Guided Relaxation: to be used at the end of each session

Have the children lie down on their backs with their arms at their side.

Turn off the lights in the room and have them close their eyes.

Say...

"Take a quiet deep breath in... (wait a few beats) and out.

Breathe in... and out.

One more breath in... and out.

Tighten your toes inside your shoes, let that tightness travel up thru your lower leg, thru your knees, let the tightness travel into your upper legs and bottom... and relax.

Tighten your fingers into a fist, let that tightness travel into your lower arm, up thru your elbows, and into your upper arms and shoulders... and relax.

Tighten your stomach, let the tightness travel into your chest, lift your shoulders to your ears... and relax.

Take another quiet deep breath in... and out.

Now tighten up your face like a raisin... and stretch it out really big like a watermelon. Tighten it up like a raisin... and stretch it out like a watermelon."

Wait a few beats before walking around to dismiss each child one by one by tapping each child gently on the head

with my 'magic wand' (I use a long plastic wand that's used to blow big bubbles that I have ribbons attached to.)

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Character Worksheet

My character is...

What is my character's job or purpose in the play?

What is most important to my character? What does she/he want?

Is there anything in the way of my character getting what they want? Is there an obstacle?

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How Music Came to the World An Ancient Mexican Myth
adapted into play form by C. Blackwell (and class 2-311)

Narrator 1
Narrator 2
Narrator 3
Tezcatlipoca
Quetzalcoatl
Cane and Conch
Water Woman
Water Monster
Sun
Musicians
Singers/Dancers
Clowns
Animals

Narrator 1 One day two gods met on a wild and windy plain.

Tezcatlipoca I am Tezcatlipoca, the sky god.

Quetzalcoatl I am Quetzalcoatl, the wind god.

Narrator 2 These gods are very powerful.

Narrator 3 Usually they don't get along too well, but today they are here to help each other.

Tezcatlipoca What took you so long?

Quetzalcoatl I was busy whipping up a hurricane.

Tezcatlipoca This is more important than hurricanes. Listen...what do you hear?

Quetzalcoatl Nothing.

Narrator 1 The two gods discovered that it was so quiet because there was no music.

Narrator 2 They both knew that the Sun god had all of the music and was greedy and would not share.

Narrator 3 The sky god decided to send the wind god to the House of the Sun to bring back some music for the earth.

Quetzalcoatl I will need the help of your three servants.

Tezcatlipoca Of course...*(entering as each of their names are called)* Cane and Conch! Water Woman! Water Monster! You will each help Quetzalcoatl get to the House of the Sun.

Cane and Conch Let us all three work together

Water Woman Yes, we can twist together and make a bridge.

Water Monster Then we will stretch high up into the sky towards to House of the Sun.

Narrator 1 The wind god climbed higher and higher.

Narrator 2 Until he finally reached the bright House of the Sun.

Narrator 3 Getting in was not easy because he had to find his way through a long and winding maze.

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How Music Came to the World An Ancient Mexican Myth

adapted into play form by C. Blackwell (and class 2-311) continued

Music starts playing in the background

Quetzalcoatl That sound... what is it... ahhh, it must be music.

Narrator 1 The wind god finally found his way out of the maze where he came face to face with the Sun (*Sun enters slowly*).

Narrator 2 There were flute players (*Musicians enter playing flutes and Clowns enter juggling*).

Narrator 3 There were lullaby and love song singers (*Singers enter singing*).

Sun Stop singing, stop the music! It's that terrible wind.

Quetzalcoatl Musicians, come with me.

Narrator 1 The wind god was not used to being ignored.

Narrator 2 And he did not like it one bit.

Quetzalcoatl I command you to come with me.

Narrator 3 The wind god exploded with anger (*Quetzalcoatl spins*).
Lightning crackled and thunder roared.

(The Musicians run to Quetzalcoatl and huddle at his feet)

Quetzalcoatl My children... come with me to a lovely planet that is waiting for you.

Animals Where's the music? We can't wait to hear the music. I wonder what it will sound like?

(Musicians walk around the Animals, playing and singing)

Narrator 1 And the music covered the earth.

Quetzalcoatl And the sky god was happy

Tezcatlipoca And the wind god was happy.

Narrator 2 And the musicians were happy in their new home.

Narrator 3 And ever since that day, the earth has been filled with music.

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Resources

“How Music Came to the World” *An Ancient Mexican Myth* retold by Hal Ober

“Playmaking-Children Writing and Performing Their Own Plays” by Daniel Judah Sklar

Drama Games File-Drama Education Network

Various pieces of music (vocal and instrumental) all downloadable from iTunes or other music website.