

## **COVID ADAPTATION: VERBATIM THEATRE**

### **Secondary Drama Senior Public**

#### **COVID ADAPTATION: Lesson 3: The Overheard Conversation**

### **Physical Distancing Adaptations**

When conducting these warm-ups and conventions, it is important to adhere to the Physical Distancing guidelines from your school board. Students should remain 2m apart at all times. Students in grades 4 - 12 are required to wear a mask. Although the government allows students with masks to work 1 metre apart, CODE recommends that all dance and drama work be done with 2 metres of social distancing in effect. Think about using alternate learning spaces such as the gymnasium, library or school yard.

**Whole Class Instruction:** With floor tape, demark areas where students can stand in the classroom with a metre grid or a peripheral circle so that they can participate in drama/dance conventions at a safe distance from one another. Floor tape that is slip-resistant and made of vinyl to prevent wear and tear during cleaning is recommended.

**Partner work:** Students can face a partner 2m across from each other. When face to face, outstretched hands should not touch one another. Refer back to personal-space warm-ups.

**Small Group work:** No more than 3 or 4 students per group to allow for recommended spacing of 2m between students.

**If you must move your desks** to create space, please ensure that each student is moving only their own desk and chair and then retrieving their own desk and chair in order to avoid contact with others belongings.

Refer to *General Tips for Safety in our Classrooms* in the overview.

**Safety adaptations specific to the instructional strategies and drama conventions in this lesson are embedded in green throughout it.**

## **Critical Learning**

In this lesson, students will revise and perform two versions of their Overheard Conversation Assignment from the previous lesson. Students will learn about and reflect on the revision process that may occur while creating Verbatim Theatre

## **Guiding Questions**

How does it feel to record other people's conversations?

How can you record people in a way that feels responsible and ethical?

Are overheard conversations dramatically interesting? Can overheard conversations be used as raw material or inspiration for a script?

What editing choices can be made to improve a 'real life' script while maintaining its truthfulness?

How can the writer help the actor to create a character from a script?

How does the actor search for clues about the character in the script?

Think about reality television: do you think those conversations get 'edited'? In what ways?

Should it be called reality television when a lot of it is edited?

## **Curriculum Expectations**

B1.1 use the critical analysis process to reflect on and justify or revise decisions in creating drama works

C3.1 identify and follow safe and ethical practices in all drama activities

## **Learning Goals**

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- revise a Verbatim Theatre script

- create a staged reading of two Verbatim scripts
- reflect on the revision process for Verbatim Theatre

## **Instructional Components**

### **Readiness**

Each student must have a script to work with based on the homework assignment from the previous lesson. **Students could work collaboratively on scripts in google docs.** Students should have some experience with editing and revising original scripts.

### **Terminology**

Editing

Writing in Role

Inner Monologue

Dialogue

### **Materials and BLMs**

An 'overhead conversation' script for each student. Teacher will need to photocopy students' scripts.

### **Equity Considerations:**

When inviting students to create something at home to bring to the classroom for personal use, teachers need to be aware of possible equity issues for students without the resources or ability to do this without support; teachers may choose to have craft materials in their original packaging available to distribute to those who need them.

When deciding if technology and online applications or software is the best route for your adaptation to physically distanced learning, you must be aware of the technological needs, internet capability and capacity of your students. The utilization of technology to substitute in person collaboration can create equity issues related to the socio-economic status of the household, or access to the internet (e.g., rural versus urban internet capacity). Please take into account the differentiations and adaptations that meet the needs of your students.

## How to use Materials and BLMs during Physical Distancing

In a classroom following physical distancing guidelines it is important to reduce the amount of paper and other materials distributed in class. Many Dance & Drama experiences include source images and text which can be projected safely instead of distributed to students. To avoid the use of hand-held manipulatives and artifacts, take photos of them and project the images to students.

Often *Black Line Masters* (BLMs) are given to students to generate ideas, report, self-assess, peer assess, reflect, and to use as final exit cards. BLMs in our resources are all PDFs. Some can be projected, however others will need to be converted for independent or group use.

A few ways to do this include:

1. Convert the PDF to a Word or Google Doc and assign it to individuals or groups of students via Google Classroom:
  - Download the PDF onto your hard drive
  - Upload the PDF into your Google Drive
  - Open *file as a* Google Doc
  - Reformat as needed
  - Share copies with students
2. Create slides and assign them to individuals or groups. The slides have the original document as a background and add a text box on top of it so that students can type into it.
3. Put the questions on a Jamboard or other collaborative interactive program and assign a board to each group.

**Minds On: Approximately 10 minutes**

### **Pairs > Sharing and Reflecting**

Invite students to work with a partner, **while maintaining physical distancing**, to share their thoughts and feelings about documenting someone else's conversation in their Overheard Conversation Assignment. Ask them to reflect on what was challenging about the assignment. *What was interesting? What did you learn about writing dialogue?*

Invite the students to share some of their answers with the larger group.

## **Action: Approximately 60 minutes**

### **Small Groups > Editing the Overheard Conversation Scripts**

Ask students to move into groups of three **maintaining physical distancing protocols during the entire collaborative process.**

Have students read their Overheard Conversation scripts to each other and select one script to edit. Instruct students to write a new version of the script that is edited down to ten lines. They may add or omit words to make the ten lines coherent as a script. Instruct them to write one new line anywhere in the script that will help introduce a conflict or a reversal (change). **As an alternative to passing paper scripts between students, use a file sharing app such as Google docs that students can access on their own devices.**

### **Small groups > Rehearsing Overheard Conversation Scripts**

Give students photocopies of each group's scripts (the edited and the original) so that there are enough copies for each speaker in the scene. **As an alternative to passing paper scripts between groups, use a file sharing app such as Google docs that students can access on their own devices.** Then, instruct groups to electronically share the scripts to another group to rehearse and perform. When working in partners or small groups please ensure physical distancing.

Give students time to rehearse their staged readings in their groups. Encourage them to work on their feet, adding some blocking to the scene even though they will still be reading from the script. Instruct students to recreate the original setting of the first Verbatim Theatre script but change the second (if possible) in the second edited script.

**When rehearsing, remind the students to maintain physical distancing and use the physical distancing gesture to politely remind each other to maintain distance..**

### **Whole Class > Presenting Overheard Conversation Scripts**

Direct students to perform the two versions of the script for the class. After each presentation, invite students to comment on the verbatim and the revised scripts.

Students are asked to maintain physical distancing during the viewing of presentations and sharing. Students acting as “audience” should be further than 2 metres, as far away as the space allows, if masks are not being worn by those sharing their work. In Flipgrid, students can post videos to be viewed by others and there are comment threads to allow for feedback.

### **Key Questions for Discussion:**

*Which version was more compelling--the original or the edited version?*

*Did the edits maintain the essence of the verbatim script or change it radically?*

*How did the new setting impact the script?*

Ask the original writers to comment on what it was like to watch actors interpret the voices in the script. *What new interpretations did the actors bring to the script? What did they miss in their interpretation?*

Explain that Verbatim Theatre, although it always aims for 'word for word' authenticity, is often edited or mediated to enhance or create new meaning. Ask students to brainstorm a list of ways that a Verbatim Theatre script might be edited. Record this list as an anchor chart on the board or on chart paper.

### **Consolidation: Approximately 15 minutes**

#### **Individual > Writing in Role**

Ask students to imagine that they are one of the people in either their own or someone else's Overheard Conversation Script and write a monologue in role as that person. **Students should use their own writing utensils and notebook or device.** The inner monologue should explore their thoughts about the conversation recorded and can take place before or after the conversation. The inner monologue could be recorded and played as a voiceover during movement work. While writing, instruct students to keep the voice of the person in mind and to try to recreate the speech patterns in their writing.

#### **Assessment for Learning (AfL)**

Use the scripts to gauge how much students understand the structure of writing plays. Collect them or conference with writers to offer formative feedback as they are editing.

Use the Creative Process Observation Checklist to give students feedback on their rehearsal process during the staged reading.

### **Assessment as Learning (AaL)**

By sharing and editing with partners and receiving feedback from the class, students can assess and refine their own abilities to create original scripts.

### **Differentiation (DI)**

If a student feels uncomfortable 'eavesdropping' on conversations outside the classroom, give them an opportunity to record conversations that happen within the classroom.

If students find the ten line script too limiting, be flexible about how much they need to edit.

### **Quick Tip**

By passing their scripts to another group, students are interpreting the verbatim script with 'fresh' eyes and ears. The writer of the original script can impersonate the people overheard from memory. This way the writer can see how helpful the script was in allowing the actor to create a character from it that is close to the original speaker.

Create an opportunity for students to share the Overheard Conversation monologue in the next lesson.

Make the Overheard Conversation monologue in to a more in depth assignment by asking students to link the monologues to the scenes and create a performance

The Overheard Conversation monologue could be an option for students when they do their polished performances in the final culminating task.

### **Link and Layer**

Explain that many writers use the technique of eavesdropping to create characters and dialogue. For example, Judith Thompson borrowed a lot of her characters and dialogue from the work she did as a social worker.