

COVID ADAPTATION: VERBATIM THEATRE

Secondary Drama Senior Public

COVID ADAPTATION: Lesson 4: Creating Composite Characters

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 learn about composite character creation in Verbatim Theatre by seeing examples from contemporary theatre. Through interviews with many classmates, students will create composite character monologues.

Guiding Questions

What is a composite character?

Why is the purpose of creating a composite character in Verbatim Theatre?

How can we create one seamless voice out of many different interviews?

How do we conduct interviews to get the most interesting responses possible?

Curriculum Expectations

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

C1.2 use correct terminology for the styles, components, processes, and techniques of drama in creating and critiquing drama works and theatre performances

B2.2 describe ways in which their personal experiences in drama have influenced their attitudes to others and their world view

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

Learning Goals

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- explain the term composite character
- identify examples of composite character creation from contemporary theatre projects

- create a composite character monologue based on multiple interviews with classmates

Instructional Components

Readiness

In this lesson students are building on their experiences of monologue writing from previous courses and are honing their ability to listen and observe people in real life.

Terminology

Composite Character

Monologue

Materials and BLMs

Interview questions in a hat or envelope

Writing Materials

[BLM #4 Composite Character Interview Questions](#)

[BLM #5 Composite Character Monologue Instructions](#)

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.

Approximately 10 minutes

Minds On

Whole Class > Composite Character Definition

Write the word composite character on the board and invite students to explain what the word composite means in relation to character and Verbatim Theatre. Explain that Verbatim Theatre artists sometimes create composite character creations in which several different interview subjects are collapsed into a single voice.

Look at examples of composite character creations based on multiple interviews, including Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* or New York Theatre Workshop's *Aftermath*.

Approximately 60 minutes

Action!

Whole Class > Interviews

Explain that each student is going to create a composite character monologue based on interviews that they will conduct with their classmates. Cut up the questions from [BLM #4 Composite Character Interview Questions](#) and ask students to randomly grab the question carefully placed for them on the desk by the teacher after sanitizing their hands. Students will walk up one at a time.

Instruct students to organize themselves into 2 lines (split the class into 2 groups of 2 lines if space allows) allowing space for physical distancing. Have one line shift to a new partner (like speed dating), bringing their chairs with them when they change positions, and ask their peers the questions while taking notes. Remind them to record everything the interviewees say, including "umms" and pauses, etc.

Give students about 15-20 minutes to interview their peers. Try to do this activity alongside the students. When you observe that students have interviewed at least five people, ask them to find a spot in the room where they can write individually.

Individual > Monologue Writing

Explain to students that they will write a monologue for one character based on the notes generated from their various interviews. Give students the instructions ([BLM #5 Composite Character Monologue Instructions](#)) for writing the monologue. Give students 20-30 minutes to create their monologues as you work on yours.

Whole Class > Monologue Sharing

When students have completed their monologues, invite each student to share their monologue with the group. They can do this informally in a circle, or stand in front of the class to read the monologue. Students are also asked to maintain physical distancing during the viewing of presentations. If masks are not required, students must sit further away than 2 m to ensure safety. Invite students to comment on whether the monologue

sounds like one character. Ask the writer and students questions about the choices they made to make it sound like one voice.

Key Questions for Discussion:

How many interviews did you end up using in the final monologue?

Did you use one interview after another in the order you collected the information, or did you mix up all the interviews?

Are there any suggestions from the class about how we can make this monologue sound more like one character? What feels out of place?

Approximately 10 minutes

Consolidation

Individual > Journal Reflection

When the sharing has concluded, instruct students to **complete a journal reflection, in their own notebook using their own writing utensils**, by finished the following writing prompts:

When I heard my answer spoken in the monologue, I . . .

The most difficult thing about the assignment was. . .

A question I would have liked to ask my classmates during the interviews is. . .

In order to save paper and avoid sharing papers consider using an app such as google forms for the exit card, or have students fill in their own papers and drop them in a box instead of having them collected.

Individual > Homework

Instruct students to choose one of their monologues from either Lesson 1 or 4 for another student in the class to perform. Tell students to word process the monologue and make any changes to it based on the written feedback from you. **Students will need to share their piece electronically with the classmate who will be performing their monologue.**

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Working alongside the students will allow you to assess their commitment to the project as well as observe their interviewing and listening skills.

Assessment as Learning (AaL)

Collect the Composite Character Monologues (along with their notes) and give students written feedback on how to improve it so that it sounds like one character speaking.

Give students written feedback on their exit cards.

Differentiation (DI)

Allow students to choose other questions if they are unhappy with the ones they chose.

Consider pairing students for the final activity based on the needs and strengths of the students. Allow one student to scribe for another if necessary.

Quick Tip

Look for clips or examples of composite character creations on the Internet or in play scripts to show students.

Provide time between lessons 4 and 5 so that written feedback can be provided on the Composite Character monologues. Have students create the polished versions in a computer lab or consider doing a research project on recent Verbatim Theatre projects. See BLM #5 for a list of examples of projects.

Hyperlinks in the Lesson

[BLM #4 Composite Character Interview Questions](#)

[BLM #5 Composite Character Monologue Instructions](#)