

## **COVID ADAPTATION: VERBATIM THEATRE**

### **Secondary Drama Senior Public**

## **COVID ADAPTATION: Lesson 5: Polishing and Performing the Verbatim Theatre Text**

### **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 culminating task, students will create a polished performance from another student's monologue that was developed in Lesson 1 or 4. Through acting techniques and activities, students will make the character specific and receive feedback as they build toward a performance.

## **Guiding Questions**

How can you create your own character from a verbatim text?

What clues can you find in the text to help you build your character?

How can you use setting and audience as a means of creating character?

How can we as a class move forward into collective creation following this unit?

## **Curriculum Expectations**

A1.2 select and use a variety of drama forms to present original drama works

A1.3 create and interpret a wide range of characters using a variety of acting approaches

A2.1 use the elements of drama to achieve specific purposes in drama works

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

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

C1.3 demonstrate an understanding of how various media can be used in the production and promotion of drama works

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

## **Learning Goals**

### **(Unpacked Expectations)**

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

- build a character from a Verbatim Theatre text
- make interpretive decisions about setting and audience that will aid in the development of the character
- rehearse a monologue performance inside and outside of class time
- co-construct a rubric for the performance
- give feedback on other student performances using the rubric
- perform a monologue in front of the class
- identify further directions for a collective creation

## **Instructional Components**

### **Readiness**

Students should have prepared a polished (word processed) version of their Verbatim Theatre monologue from Lesson 1 or 4. The polished version should have incorporated teacher feedback. Students should have some familiarity with Stanislavski concepts such as objectives, tactics, etc.

The monologues generated in this culminating task could be used as the basis for a collective creation project undertaken by the class as a whole.

### **Terminology**

Gesture

Collective Creation

### **Materials and BLMs**

A Verbatim Theatre monologue for each student.

## [BLM #6 Character Creation Sheet](#)

## [BLM #7 Monologue Performance Rubric](#)

## [BLM #8 Verbatim Theatre Reflection](#)

### **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 30 minutes**

### **Whole Class > Walking and Talking with the Monologue**

Ensure that students have a copy of the monologue they are going to perform. Instruct them to walk around the room reading the text silently several times. For physical distancing please be sure to use large space so that the students can maintain a 2 metre distance from each other while walking around the room and changing direction. During this exercise the students can practice using their physical distancing reminder gesture to help normalize and reinforce its use. Tell them to continue walking around the room or have the students standing still in the space, facing different directions or taking on different poses and adapt their reading according to your instructions:

- Mouth the words to the monologue
- Speak them in a whisper
- Speak them in a normal volume
- Speak them as you imagine yourself in the Arctic
- Speak them as you imagine yourself at the beach on a hot day
- Focus on punctuation. Stop when you reach a period, semicolon, exclamation mark or question. Slide when you see an ellipses. Change directions for a dash. Jump on a comma.

To prevent heavy breathing and increased droplets avoid the rushing when late and the projecting prompts unless the students are wearing a mask.

### **Individual > Character Creation Sheet**

Give students [BLM #6 Character Creation Sheet](#). Ask them to fill out the sheet, making specific choices about their character that are grounded in the text. Remind them to first search for clues about their character within the text rather than imposing a character onto the text.

## **Action: Approximately 200 minutes**

### **Individual > Create Set and A Gesture**

Invite students to find a spot in the room where they can work individually. Have them create a set for their monologues. *Students should use only basic furniture available (not to be shared between multiple students ) and bring essential props /costumes from home. Allow these to be minimal or not used if possible. Students could do a filmed monologue in a safe space e.g. home, outside, etc. Significant connections can be made to site-specific theatre.* Ask students to begin with one line from the script that they think is the most important or most revealing for their characters. Tell them to memorize the line and find an action or gesture to accompany the line.

Instruct students to rehearse their one line again and again so that they find a beginning and ending to the action and gesture as well as the line. Explain that if we were to catch this ten second glimpse into your character's world, we would learn everything we could about them through this gesture and line.

Stop the rehearsal when you think students are ready and invite each student to perform their line and gesture. Give students feedback on how strong or revealing their choices are and what they could extend further.

Repeat the above process but this time ask students to create the "moment before" and then the first line and gesture.

### **Paris > Creative Process**

Ask students to work for at least one class in pairs with one student directing and holding the text while the other student is given (by the director) the lines and ideas for creation. *Directors and actors are reminded to maintain physical distancing while collaborating.* Ask the director to keep these questions in mind while helping the actor:

*Is the opening moment believable (where is the character coming from and what are they doing)?*

*How are they using their set?*

*Are the objectives and obstacles being played?*

*Can the audience hear them?*

*To whom are they speaking?*

*Can I help the actor to make this clearer?*

### **Whole Class > Co-construct Success Criteria**

Stop rehearsal at an early point in the creative process to develop the success criteria for a performance rubric. Ask students to suggest categories (like voice, movement, set, objective). For a sample performance rubric see [BLM #7 Monologue Performance Rubric](#).

### **Whole Class > Sharing and Evaluating**

Share the Verbatim Theatre monologues with the class. At the end of each performance, ask students to comment on one positive aspect of the monologue.

Students need to maintain physical distancing during the sharing process. Although all students and teachers must be wearing masks, students watching the work must be as far away as possible from one another and performers in the space. CODE recommends not less than 2 metres although 1 metre is allowed for folks wearing masks.

### **Consolidation: Approximately 5 minutes**

#### **Whole Class > Discussion**

After presentations have concluded, use the critical analysis process to facilitate a discussion with the class based on their observations of their peers' work. *The class must be physically distanced for this debrief discussion.*

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

*Were there common themes running through our stories? What were they?*

*If you could choose a Verbatim Theatre topic that would be interest or importance to the school, what would it be and why?*

*How are the examples of Verbatim Theatre that you have seen in this class different from the version of 'reality' that is popular on television?*

*Do you think Verbatim Theatre makes for compelling theatre? Why or why not?*

*Whose voices get silenced in this school? In our community? In Canada? In the world? Why is it important to hear their voices and stories?*

### **Individual > Written Reflection**

Hand out [BLM #8 Verbatim Theatre Reflection](#) and ask students to begin answering the questions. Ask them to return the reflection within 3-5 days for evaluation.

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

While students are walking around the room, check in with them that they can read and understand the words in their given monologue.

Circulate and give students help and feedback on their Character Creation sheets to ensure that they are making their character as specific as possible.

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

Co-construct the criteria for the Performance Rubric with the students.

Ask students to use the Performance Rubric to peer evaluate each other before the performance.

### **Differentiation (DI)**

Depending on your class, you can distribute the monologues in advance (keeping in mind what would either be a challenge or a good fit for your student) or distribute them randomly or ask each writer to suggest two actors to perform their monologue and make your decision based on their choices.

If students are struggling with the Character Creation sheet, consider partnering them with the writer who can help them make discoveries within the text.



**Quick Tip**

For the performance, students can pick names from a hat to create an order or volunteer to perform. You can decide to have students perform individually, facing everyone or perform in the round, where students perform from the space they were rehearsing in the room.

**Link and Layer**

The techniques in the Character Creation Sheet are borrowed from the Stanislavski system (and Uta Hagen). Make this explicit to students, especially if they have already studied these techniques.

Consider using the material generated in this final task as the basis for a collective creation. The class may decide to focus their collective creation on one or a combination of the monologues performed, or may wish to choose a theme or issue from their discussions and reflections for further investigation.

**Hyperlinks in the Lesson**

[BLM #6 Character Creation Sheet](#)

[BLM #7 Monologue Performance Rubric](#)

[BLM #8 Verbatim Theatre Reflection](#)