

UNIT OVERVIEW

<p>Unit Length</p>	<p>Eight 90-minute class sessions plus time for performances.</p> <p>Note on the lessons: I included three specific lessons around community-building for early in the unit that are specific to the unit objectives. It is important to have done many more community-building activities and beginning performance exercises before embarking on this unit. Trust and comfort in the theatre classroom are essential to the growth of the performers. The importance of establishing a safe performing space where students are encouraged to fail (and to learn from those failures) cannot be overstated as a baseline for starting a performance unit such as this.</p>
<p>Grade Level(s)/Subject(s)</p>	<p>9-12/ Theatre</p>
<p>Unit Overview</p>	<p><b>What is the power of the StoryTeller?                  How can we use the tools of theatrical performing to bring underreported or untold stories into the light?</b></p> <p>In this unit, theatre students will engage in a series of lessons which create a community of storytellers seeking to share stories that need to be told in order to bring us closer to each other. Their stories will be inspired by <i>The 1619 Project's</i> mission of telling underreported stories to reveal “the unvarnished truth.”</p> <p>Students will work on community building.</p> <p>Students will practice skills of listening, speaking, and community through a series of “circle games.”</p> <p>Students will practice skills of research to identify stories of individuals whose lives illustrate an element of our society that should be noticed, considered, and empathized with in order to effect positive change.</p> <p>Students will learn skills of technical theatre as they make choices for how to present their stories.</p>

<p>Objectives &amp; Outcomes</p>	<p>Students will be able to analyze and explain how story-telling empowers individuals and improves our understanding of our world.</p> <p>Students will be able to demonstrate strong vocal qualities and physical communication to tell their stories.</p> <p>Students will demonstrate the ability to make use of researched material to enhance or illustrate their stories.</p> <p>Students will be able to use elements of technical theatre -- lights, sound, and projections -- to enhance their stories.</p> <p>Students will demonstrate the analytical skills needed to make their audience understand why the story is important and why it must be told.</p> <p>Students will demonstrate their ability to evaluate their own work and the work of others using a rubric of skills and informal revision sessions.</p>
<p>Standards</p>	<p><a href="#">Link to National Core Arts Standards</a></p> <p>TH:Cr1.1.HSI.a Apply basic research to construct ideas about the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.</p> <p>TH:Cr1.1.HSI.b Explore the impact of technology on design choices in a drama/theatre work.</p> <p>TH:Cr3.1.HSI.a Practice and revise a devised or scripted drama/theatre work using theatrical staging conventions.</p> <p>TH:Re8.1.HSI.c Justify personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs through participation in and observation of a drama/theatre work.</p>

	<p>TH:Pr6.1.HSII.a Present a drama/theatre work using creative processes that shape the production for a specific audience.</p> <p>TH:Cn10.1.HSIII.a Collaborate on a drama/theatre work that examines a critical global issue using multiple personal, community, and cultural perspectives.</p>
Facilitation Resources	<p><a href="#">Link to story-telling games</a> <a href="#">Opening Video to <i>The 1619 Project</i></a> <a href="#">Response to <i>1619</i> Opening Video</a> <a href="#">Under-reported Stories Video</a> <a href="#">Under-reported Stories Video Response</a> <a href="#">Story Spine Activity</a> <a href="#">Story Spine--Adding Dramatic Details</a> <a href="#">Story Telling Research Links Document</a> <a href="#">Story Research Document</a> <a href="#">Story-telling structure</a> <a href="#">Dramatized Scene Outline</a> <a href="#">Peer Response Form</a> <a href="#">Performance Rubric</a> <a href="#">Unit Reflection</a></p>


Performance Task	<p>Students will demonstrate an ability to use researched narratives as a part of their theatrical piece to achieve a specific story-telling objective.</p> <p>Students may create either a solo or a small-group presentation. All group members must perform in ways that demonstrate rehearsal, memorization, and strong physical and vocal performances.</p> <p>Students will write reflections to demonstrate their understanding of the importance of story-telling in our community and to reflect on the effects of their own story-telling efforts.</p> <p>Students will create a live, multi-media performance piece that tells an under-reported story using performance techniques of voice, physical communication, and technical theatre elements.</p>
Assessment/Evaluation	<p><a href="#">Peer evaluation form</a> <a href="#">Rubric for live performance</a> <a href="#">Reflection assignment</a></p>

UNIT PACING/DAILY LESSONS

Pacing	Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson	Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)	Lesson / Activities	Lesson Materials
<p><i>Week 1</i>                      Introduction of Lesson Themes: Why do we tell Stories?</p>				
<p><b>Note on supplementing the unit with additional days and resources:</b></p> <p>There are undoubtedly other lessons you will want to be doing in conjunction with this unit. For my class we were additionally reading/ viewing our first full play together and studying character motivation and theme. "A Raisin in the Sun" is a nice fit for this unit, if you need the suggestion.</p> <p><b>What other lessons or ideas do you need to incorporate into this unit in order to make the research part (day 4)-- definitely NOT part of what I "normally" do in my classes -- meaningful and relevant to students?</b></p> <p>Also, you should be finding time and ways to get students focusing in on their answers to the question:  <b>What is the under-reported story of America's history that you want to tell?</b></p> <p>In my class, this happened through sharing responses to the "Underreported stories" final question, the "What can you do to be a part of the telling of America's truth?" as well as through discussions around the play we studied. Community circles "headline mining" are also effective ways to guide students into their research topics. Also, you may find some students have already started telling the story they want to tell when they did their individual "story spines" activity.</p>				
Pre-Unit Days	Community-building Trust and team-building Performance skills and practice	<b>What do we have to do as a class before starting this storytelling unit?</b>	I recommend this unit be used after students have had practice with basic performance skills -- pantomime, stage positioning, basic rules of improv, vocal quality, and possibly a performance	

			using music or sound effects (pantomimes work great for this).	
Day 1	The Power of Story-Telling	<p>Introduce the Project and the purpose: <b>Why do we tell Stories?</b></p> <p><b>Why is storytelling important to humanity?</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warm-up: <b>why do we tell stories?</b> Ask students to prepare a response to this in their journals (or wherever you have them write). Instruct them to use this sentence frame for the response: <b>“People tell stories to _____.”</b> Ask them to come up with as many responses as they can in the time you give them.</li> <li>2. After prep-time, use a share-out method of your choice to get students sharing. I recommend “share your partner’s response,” where they first share with their elbow partners, then if selected randomly, they are asked to report out on what their partner’s response to the prompt was. NOTE: this is one of those times when I would remind them of a “rule” of improvisation: “Make your partner look good” -- in this situation, for example, if a partner didn’t have a response, they could “cover” for them with something like, “my partner and I both agreed to share MY response which was...”</li> </ol>	<p>Theatre journals or other method for writing.</p> <p><a href="#">Story Spine Activity</a></p>

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. Record the responses on a class Jamboard or poster paper or other technique for collecting ideas you'll want to use later.</li></ol> <p>(Expected responses include ideas such as "People tell stories to...entertain each other, to teach lessons, to explain things that happened in the past, etc.")</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. Inform students that they will be telling stories that will fulfill these important storytelling ideals. Save the list for later.</li><li>5. Say, "And to get us into that storytelling mode today, we are going to play some storytelling games"</li><li>6. The following are a series of story-telling games that can be used to introduce the fun and energy of storytelling, listening, creating, etc. Teachers should choose how much time their class needs on these types of activities.</li></ol> <p><a href="#">One-word stories</a></p> <p><a href="#">Directed stories</a></p> <p><a href="#">Story Spine</a></p>	
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			7. Closure: Which of the “reasons for storytelling” did we experience today?	
Day 2	The Under-reported Story + Return to the story spine	<p><b>What is the importance of telling under-reported stories? +</b></p> <p><b>What parts of a story need more details?</b></p> <p><b>What parts of a story would make a great scene?</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Opening question (This could be a journal or a Think-pair-share): “Have you ever had your mind changed by a story? Explain that experience to a partner.”</li> <li>2) Conduct some discussion around this to see what they come up with. The focus here should be on how the stories we hear often shape our beliefs. And when we hear unexpected or unknown stories, our perspective on the world changes.</li> <li>3) Say, “And with those ideas in mind, the first part of our lesson today is around the idea of under-reported stories. What do you think is meant by the term “under-reported stories”?”</li> <li>4) Distribute the listening worksheet for the video. Show the video or allow students to watch on their own. (This is a good time to remind students about the importance of close-listening as a skill for being</li> </ol>	<p> <b>What are Under-Reported</b></p> <p><a href="#">Listening tasks for video, “What are Under-Reported Stories”</a></p>

			<p>a good story-teller.)</p> <p>5) After allowing time to work through the video tasks, ask students to share out their responses to the question, “What is the most important reason to hear and tell under-reported stories?”</p> <p>6) Say, “Our story-telling practice today will use stories we create(d) using the “Story Spine” pattern”</p> <p>Options: a) students can use stories that they wrote for homework last night, b) you can have them re-group and tell some new stories, c) They can reuse a story they came up with yesterday</p> <p>7) Say, “In your groups, you are to choose your group’s favorite story. Then you are to work together to complete the activities outlined in the <a href="#">slideshow</a> for each of your stories.</p> <p>Note: The goal of the group work is to focus their attention on questions such as: What makes a scene good for dramatizing on stage? This is very different from the kind of scenes many students want to create -- which are</p>	
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			<p>often big, cinematic dramatic moments. For story-telling in theatre, we try to create more dialogue-focussed drama. That is what I want to encourage them to play with for their story-spine scenes in this activity. The scenes from these spines will be improvised for the class and then we will have the discussion of “what worked and why”</p> <p>Further Note: For the purposes of preparing for improvisation, groups need only focus on one member’s story spine. I ended up having each student do their own story for the slideshow, not just as group work. It was helpful to know that each student had a story plotted and that they had considered the “dramatic dialogue” issue for their own story.</p> <p>8) Have groups present their improvised scenes. Before each group presents, they should introduce the scene by delivering the line of the story-spine that this scene comes from.</p> <p>Note: Since groups may have four or more members, but only two or three performers in the scene, one of the non-performers could introduce the story-spine line before the performance, and the other group members should be ready to talk to us about the setting of</p>	
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			<p>the scene and/ or the characters.</p> <p><b>Discuss:</b> Were there common parts of the story spine that groups chose to improvise?</p> <p>Closure (Journal write or Think-pair-share):</p> <p>Were we able to understand what each character in the scene wanted (the characters' objectives)?</p> <p>What makes an effective and engaging scene on the stage?</p>	
Day 3	Scene Improvisations	<p><b>Students will perform and discuss the scenes they created from their group's story spine.</b></p> <p><b>Students will create improvised dialogue that creates EMPATHY for the character from their story spine scene.</b></p> <p><b>EQ: How does dialogue help us empathize with the</b></p>	<p>Note: I added an extra day for the activities from day 2, as students needed more time for exploring dialogue. As I imagined, students often went to the most action-filled moment of their story and tried to make that into their scene. We all discussed how that leads to unrealistic, hard-to-believe or even hard-to-follow scenes.</p> <p>To counter that, we played the following traditional improvisation game --Park Bench -- that forces them to talk and listen to each other:</p> <p>1) Say: "To improve our EMPATHY</p>	

		<b>characters?</b>	<p>for the characters we created for our scenes we are going to get them talking to each other. We are going to play ‘Park Bench.’</p> <p>2) “You are to play the character you created for your group’s story spine. Imagine a reason they are in a park. They can be there at any point in the story structure you created. They will walk to the bench, sit down, and interact with the other stranger who is there -- a character from another scene, not your own. Once on the bench, they should engage in conversation with the other character the way their character would, as each of the two characters try to get to know more about the other.</p> <p>3) The game begins when one character (usually played by a confident performer) walks into the “park” and sits on the “bench” (three chairs or acting blocks work for this). They should find some reason to have the character talking -- to their dog, on the phone, to themselves etc. -- to establish some of their character’s story. This first character becomes the questioner of the second</p>	
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<i>Week 2</i>				
Day 6	Workshopping the dramatized scenes and the presentation script.	<b>What adjustments need to be made to our dramatized scene(s) or our presentation script?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Opener (Teacher discretion)</li> <li>2) Workshop time= time for any part of the creative process needed.</li> <li>3) Part of workshop time today should be for the group to divide the lines of their presentation script so individuals can memorize their parts.</li> <li>4) Part of workshop time should be for the group to rehearse their dramatized scenes.</li> </ol>	
Day 7	Rehearsal	<b>What adjustments need to be made to our dramatized scene(s) or our presentation script?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Opener (Teacher discretion)</li> <li>2) Students will use this day to practice their presentations for other groups.</li> <li>3) Show them the peer response form that they should use to give critique to the others. Explain that the performance assessment <a href="#">rubric</a> is essentially the same questions they are answering here.</li> </ol>	<a href="#">Peer Response Form</a>

			4) Teacher should be using this time to rotate among the groups and assist with their preparation.	
Day 8	Performances	<b>What stories can we tell that will tell the “truths” about America that we should all know?</b>	<p>Note: These performances are probably best done in-class only at this point (that is, not a public performance yet). The potential is high for creating a collection of devised theatre pieces for public performance, however, that should be considered by the teacher and their classes. Some form of wider performance is highly recommended and fits with the mission of <i>The 1619 Project</i>.</p> <p>After performances, students should complete this <a href="#">reflection assignment</a>.</p>	<p><a href="#">Performance Rubric</a></p> <p><a href="#">Unit Reflection</a></p>