

EXPRESSING WITH PASSION



INTRODUCTION

Tim Hart, a fifth grade teacher at Ravenswood Elementary School, works with Tanera Marshall, a theater artist, to collaboratively teach an arts-integrated unit. The fifth grade teacher has two goals for his students: 1) to improve their public speaking voices and, 2) to develop their inner voices to create, evaluate, and have opinions.

He is aware of their need to be heard and understood when presenting before the class, which they often must do. The teacher recognizes that students at this age can be reticent to speak their minds, either because they are not sure what they think or because they are nervous about speaking up. By exploring their voices in a number of theater-inspired methods, students strengthen their connection to who they are and what they think about, and become more confident in their presentation skills. Among the chosen texts for the unit are a poem by William Carlos Williams, “This Is Just to Say,” and a short play, *The Greensboro Sit-In*, by Mary Pat Chapeau, which documents the sit-ins held by the “freedom riders” of the early 1960s in protest of segregation in the U.S. Listen to the voices of the teaching team as they process with the students to create meaning out of the learning experience.

The elements, principles, and tools of theater included in this unit are role, pitch play, operatives and emphasis, onomatopoeia, stage directions, upstaging, blocking, rehearsing, memorizing lines, focus, improvisation, reading vs. performing, and stage presence.

ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS THAT ARE BEING MET INCLUDE:

English Language Arts

Standard 4 B: *Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.*

Fine Arts - Theatre

Standard 25 B: *Understand the similarities, distinctions and connections in and among the arts.*