

General Information

Teacher Name: Tim Hart, Tanera Marshall, Ravenswood Elementary

Subject: Theater arts/ Language Arts /Social Studies

Topic: Finding my voice

Time Frame: 6 - 8 weeks, ten 60-minute class periods

Guiding Questions: How can theater arts help students find their voice in writing and speaking?

Goals, Standards and Vocabulary

Overview (How and where this art-integrated unit fits into the curriculum):

Using language arts and theater to focus on the writing process, poetry, and reading historical fiction novels that take place during the Civil Rights Movement. Connect to social studies by focusing on events and people who changed history during the Civil Rights Movement.

Goals (What do you want to see your students realize by using the art form to activate content area?):

Students will find their voice through writing, performing and socially engaging with their peers. Students will grasp the abstract concept of a time in history in a concrete way (Civil Rights Movement).

Standards and Descriptors: Illinois State Standards in the content area that this unit addresses.

Stage E

1B. Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency

1.B.9. Apply self-monitoring and self-correcting strategies (e.g., reread, read ahead, use visual and context clues, ask questions, retell, clarify terminology, seek additional information) continuously to clarify understanding during reading.

3C. Students who meet the standard can communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

3.C.3. Write creatively for a specified purpose and audience (e.g., short story, poetry, directions, song, friendly letter).

4A. Students who meet the standard can listen effectively in formal and informal situations.

4.A.6. Formulate relevant and focused questions and comments based upon the content of a presentation and a variety of audiences or groups for authentic purposes (e.g., classroom and school government meetings, cooperative group learning and problem-based learning interactions).

14D. Students who meet the standard understand the roles and influences of individuals and interest groups in the political systems of Illinois, the United States, and other nations.

14.D.4. Explain ways that individuals and groups influence the shaping of public policy.

Fine Arts Standards and Descriptors: Illinois State Standards in the fine arts that this addresses.

25A. Students who meet the standard understand the sensory elements, organizational principles and expressive qualities of the arts.

25.A.1. Analyze movement and sound (both vocal and non-vocal) choices used to communicate mood and character.

26A. Students who meet the standard understand processes, traditional tools and modern technologies used in the arts.

26.A.1. Analyze ways the mind and voice are used to communicate character, setting, conflict, emotion, mood, and tension.

26B. Students who meet the standard can apply skills and knowledge necessary to create and perform in one or more of the arts.

26.B.1. Demonstrate a variety of vocal techniques (e.g. pitch, rate, volume) and movements to create a character.

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Dance

27A. Students who meet the standard can analyze how the arts function in history, society and everyday life.

27.A.1. Evaluate audience behaviors of self and others.

Vocabulary Lists – Content and Art:

Enunciation, pitch play, speed, “script reading”, onomatopoeia, assonance, alliteration, Voice – (literal) volume, pitch, pacing, and control, blocking, operatives, frozen statutes, Voice –(figurative) finding voice, finding the courage to share your voice, thought ideas, perceptions, and perspectives.

Day 1

Focus:

Pre-assessing students’ ability to read text with emotions.

Materials Needed:

Poetry books chosen by students.

Warm-Up and Pre-Assessment Activities:

Have students individually do a cold read of the poetry they have selected to the whole class. Observe each student’s reading and score a checklist that assesses volume, pitch, pacing, and enunciation.

Main Activity:

Explore the reading of different poems of the student’s choice. Ask the students to read their poems in a theatrical way deciding which words to enunciate and to use the emotion intended by the author or as interpreted by the reader. As a pre-assessment determine what skills the students need to learn specifically relating to dramatic interpretations and readings instead of simply reading the poems.

Teach students a theater strategy called “Grab a Line” by looking down at the text to quickly read a line, then look-up at the audience and say the line aloud. This helps the students chunk their reading into smaller, easier to memorize parts, and improves eye contact and delivery. Students perform the poetry readings again utilizing their new skills.

Wrap-Up and Post Assessment Activities:

Students discuss strategies they witnessed and share how actors use them to perform a poem.

Day 2

Focus:

Poetic Devices

Materials Needed:

Poetic Device worksheets (See Appendix A & B), EAEC Pass the Clap and Pass the Word Step-by-Step Guide, Tongue Twister handouts (See Appendix C)

Warm-Up and Pre-Assessment Activities:

Use Poetic Device Worksheet to ask students if they are familiar with poetic devices (onomatopoeia, assonance, alliterations, simile, figurative language, metaphors, etc.) Can the students identify the characteristics of various types of poems (haiku, free-verse, etc)?

Have students participate in the “Pass the Clap” activity to gain focus. Next, warm-up the students’ voice and enunciation abilities in a group activity by having them repeat aloud the Tongue Twisters. Emphasize that they make sure to not to cut off their words – especially those that

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end with consonants. To add variation, have the students use different tones when reading the Tongue Twisters (e.g. in a soft voice, in a loud opera voice, in a breathy voice). Remind them to always enunciate clearly.

Main Activity:

Students work on delivery of text and voice. These exercises help students improve their writing as they become more aware of the weight of the word in voice.

Poetic Devices: Use onomatopoeia and alliteration activities to help the students learn to play with their voices' tone, volume, level, pitch and assonance. Play a game called "Pass the Word" to emphasize onomatopoeia. Use words like "pow" or "ouch" to practice making sounds. These activities connect theater to poetry instruction.

Continue to play with onomatopoeia and alliteration by writing poetry that incorporates these devices. Brainstorm and write lists of onomatopoeia words and create onomatopoeia picture cards, i.e. student draws a picture of a dog that has the word "bark" coming out to illustrate the meaning of this poetic device.

Wrap-Up and Post Assessment Activities:

Students write onomatopoeia and alliteration poems. Collect the poems and use these writings as a formative assessment to structure further lessons.

Day 3

Focus:

How do professional theater artists use vocal techniques in their work? Students begin to practice using operatives and body language to evoke emotion while reading poetry.

Materials Needed:

Video "Fire in the Mirrors" by Anna Deavere Smith, (VHS) (1993), EAEC Statues Step-by-Step Guide, teacher selected poem.

Warm-Up and Pre-Assessment Activities:

Review vocabulary. In their journals, have students note the passion (the emotions the actor was able to evoke), and the actor's voice, body language, stature and pitch play as they observe a theatrical performance on the video.

Main Activity:

Put a poem on the board so it is visible to the students and read aloud as a class. Next, invite students one at a time to volunteer to read the poem aloud in front of their peers and identify which words are operatives (the words on which to put the emphasis) in the poem. Determine, as a class, which words are the operatives and underline them on the board. Read the poem aloud one last time altogether emphasizing the operatives.

As a group, have students explore gesture and practice showing emotion with their body in the theater game Statues.

Wrap-Up and Post Assessment Activities:

After watching each other perform, students pair off and give each other feedback with 2 pluses (2 positive observations) and 1 push (specific constructive criticism).

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Day 4

Focus:

Begin preparing for Civil Rights play by front-loading content about the Civil Rights time period.

Materials Needed:

Film: *Ruby Bridges*, DVD 1998

Warm-Up and Pre-Assessment Activities:

Main Activity:

Look at the film *Ruby Bridges* through 2 lenses, Social Studies content lens (Civil rights) and a theatrical lens and note the actor's use of body. By stopping and rewinding the film, we look at what the actors are doing as well as what is going on in the Civil Rights time period.

Wrap-Up and Post Assessment Activities:

The students critique the film acting by identifying moments of pitch play, passion, statue, operatives, and emotions.

Day 5

Focus:

Writing and reading poetry

Materials Needed:

Student poems, EAEC Operatives Step-by-Step Guide, student journals

Warm-Up and Pre-Assessment Activities:

Students determine the operatives, emotions and statues to use in the reading of their poems. They read their poems to each other and have a peer critique (2 pluses-and a push: two things the peer likes about the poem and its delivery and one area that could use improvement).

Main Activity:

Students work on writing poetry and practicing theater skills in the reading of their poems in their writer's journal. Students look at the poems from past assignments in their journal and use operatives, body language and emotion strategies to find their voice in their writing.

Wrap-Up and Post Assessment Activities:

Have students read their poems to a partner, then to their small groups and then to whole class. Students should give 2 pluses and a push to each other as well as identify operatives/emotions.

Day 6

Focus:

Theatrical skills

Materials Needed:

The Greensboro Sit-Ins scripts, pencils

Warm-Up and Pre-Assessment Activities:

Assign students a character temporarily. (Students can take turns performing and being an audience member.) Have students do a cold read of one page of the *The Greensboro Sit-Ins* script from the "Sit-In at the Woolworth Lunch Counter" act.

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Main Activity:

Operative day – In small groups students identify and underline emotions and operatives in The Greensboro Ins script. Students explore gestures for characters by creating frozen statues for their scenes.

Wrap-Up and Post Assessment Activities:

Students come back to the whole group to share. Teacher assesses comprehension of the text through looking at what the students underlined, what operatives the students delivered as well as how they deliver all their lines.

Day 7

Focus:

Character and choosing a role

Materials Needed:

Scripts for The Greensboro Sit-Ins and Women's Rights Convention of Seneca, NY

Warm-Up and Pre-Assessment Activities:

Have students use the “Grab the Line” strategy to read through both scripts (record progress in checklist developed earlier).

Main Activity:

Assign students a permanent role in one of the plays. Each student should have a role. Create a third or fourth group if needed. Expand on and use learned theater strategies to understand content and improve comprehension of their character's motivation and tone. Have students read with emotion to heighten the meaning of the text.

Wrap-Up and Post Assessment Activities:

Students choose roles and do a read through focusing on that character. For homework students practice the script of the character they chose.

Note to teacher: In between theater integrated language art lessons, students should be given time to practice fluency and memorization of lines so they can rehearse and develop their characters. Given this, students should be able to familiarize themselves with the rest of the lines of the play as a whole.

Day 8

Focus:

Blocking out the scenes

Materials Needed:

Scripts for The Greensboro Sit-Ins and Women's Rights Convention of Seneca, NY, masking tape for stage markings

Warm-Up and Pre-Assessment Activities:

Each group presents their lines with passion, operatives, and statues. Students give 2 pluses and a push.

Main Activity:

Students are introduced to the concept of blocking out a scene. Everyone is put on stage in their place making sure to remember to face the audience. The students draw blocking maps for their scenes.

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Wrap-Up and Post Assessment Activities:

Discussion about putting all the pieces of a play together; including lines, being on stage but not speaking, entering and exiting, body language and facial expressions.

Note to Teacher: In between arts integrated language arts lessons, students should continue rehearsing and work on developing their scenes. They can also design and create scenery and props.

Day 9

Focus:

Dress Rehearsal

Materials Needed:

Scripts for The Greensboro Sit-Ins and Women's Rights Convention of Seneca, NY, costumes, props and scenery

Warm-Up and Pre-Assessment Activities:

Have a pre-rehearsal discussion addressing ways to give feedback on a performance. Review theater strategies to be used while presenting the play.

Main Activity:

Students present their plays in costume with scenery and props. Group one The Greensboro Sit-Ins goes first, followed by the 2nd group who performs the Women's Rights Convention of Seneca, NY.

Wrap-Up and Post Assessment Activities:

The students give each other pluses and pushes. Give specific feedback for each actor/actress (record progress on the checklist developed earlier).

Day 10

Focus:

Final Performance

Materials Needed:

Scenery, props, costumes and live audience

Warm-Up and Pre-Assessment Activities:

Cast and teacher have a conversation remembering what they have learned. Performers warm-up with the Pass the Clap activity. Invite students to rehearse lines as time allows.

Main Activity:

The students give three performances for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders.

Wrap-Up and Post Assessment Activities:

Audience asks clarifying questions about the performance. Cast asks comprehension questions about the content. Peer feedback between shows gives the students a chance to improve their performance.

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Unit Assessments – Formative and Summative:

Theater checklist, Poetic Devices Worksheet, Onomatopoeia poems, Pluses and Pushes

Unit Support and Resources:

Texts, websites, primary and secondary sources, supplies, materials, outside resources, etc.

“Fires in the Mirror” Anna Deveare Smith

The Greensboro Sit In by Carole Boston Weatherford

Women’s Rights Convention of Seneca, NY script

Poetic Devices Worksheet (Appendix A & B)

Tongue Twisters handout (Appendix C)

Field Trip: Field trip associated with this unit.

There is no fieldtrip associated with this unit. Students from other classes are invited to attend the in-class performance. Students share their final performances for a whole-school assembly at the end of the school year.

Documentation (photos, student work, student interviews, etc.):

Photographs are taken of students working in small groups. Student writing is collected for developing grades. The final student performances are videotaped and shared back with the class.

Poetic Devices

Rhyme

Words that have the same ending sounds

“The tiny bird in the tree
Was singing songs just for me.”

Simile

A figure of speech in which things are compared using the words “like” or “as”

“The surface of the water
looked as smooth as glass.”

Metaphor

A figure of speech in which things are compared by stating that one thing *is* another

“The clouds are cottonballs
in the sky.”

Alliteration

Repetition of words with the same beginning sounds

“Polly planted plenty of
pretty pansies.”

Personification

A figure of speech in which objects are given human qualities

“The sun played peek-a-boo
with the clouds.”

Onomatopoeia

Words that sound like the objects or actions they refer to

“A pesky mosquito buzzed
around my head.”

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Appendix B

Poetic Devices Worksheet

Poetic Device	Definition	Example	My Own Example
end-stopped	when the end of a sentence or clause coincides with the end of a line, creating a logical pause at its close		
enjambment	occurs when the sense of a line runs over to the succeeding line; also called a run-on line		
refrain	a phrase, line, or lines repeated at intervals during a poem, especially at the close of stanzas		
alliteration	the repetition of a speech sound (typically a consonant) at the beginning of a word in a sequence of nearby words		
assonance	the repetition of identical or similar vowels		
consonance	the repetition of a sequence of two or more consonants, with a change in the intervening vowel; repetition of consonants, especially at the end of stressed syllables		
onomatopoeia	a word whose sound seems to resemble closely the sound it denotes		
rhyme	the repetition of sounds at the end of words		

Appendix C

TONGUE TWISTERS

EMPHASIS ON FINAL CONSONANTS/COMPLETING EACH WORD

Crisp crusts crackle crunchily.

The boot black brought the black boot back.

I slit a sheet, a sheet I slit, upon the slitted sheet I sit.

Amidst the mists and coldest frosts,
with stoutest wrists and loudest boasts,
he thrusts his fists against the posts
and still insists he sees the ghosts.

I need not your needles, they're needless to me;
For kneading of noodles, 'twere needless, you see;
But did my neat knickers but need to be kneed,
I then should have need of your needles indeed.

To sit in solemn silence on a dull dark dock
In a pestilential prison with a lifelong lock
Awaiting the sensation of a short sharp shock
From a cheap and chippy chopper on a big black block.

CONTINUANTS

It is time that my dame hath a tame crane that is home alone in a roman coat.

MIDWEST

In the autumn, the popular king asked the Cat in the Hat to stop singing all afternoon.

“STR” CLUSTER

A strong, striped, stray cat from down the street was struck and had a stroke.

TEXT FOR ENERGY, SIZE, CLARITY

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past, *(breathe)*
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste.

~Sonnet

O my childhood, my innocent childhood. Happiness awoke with me every morning. It was just like this. Nothing has changed—all, all white. / After the dark, dismal autumn and the cold, cold winter you are young again, full of happiness. The angels of heaven have not abandoned you. / Oh, if only I could free my neck and shoulders from the stone that weighs them down. If only I could forget my past.

~The Cherry Orchard