

Drama and Movement Curriculum

Curriculum Revision

December 2022

Drama

Mission

Drama/Theatre as an artistic discipline within the school day nurtures the social, emotional, artistic, and intellectual aspects of the whole child essential for 21st century learning. In Drama/Theatre, we strive to create an atmosphere where students build basic theatre and acting skills; develop social-emotional-skills including: empathy, perspective taking, problem-solving and collaboration; practice innovation and divergent thinking; cherish individuality and boost confidence; and promote reflection. Drama/Theatre provides an active and positive environment in which students explore the complexities of life through artistic self-expression.

Drama Department Key Beliefs

We believe that the arts are the voice of our humanity (Winnetka: a Community of Learners, 1999).

Ww believe that…

- The 21st Century learner requires a skill-set reliant on collaboration, presentation, and elements of technology, all of which are directly taught in the drama classroom.
- Drama/theatre process and practice is uniquely suited to developing the social-emotional competencies necessary for success in a dynamic society.
- The study of drama/theatre enhances both verbal and non-verbal communication, and reinforces literacy in students.
- Drama/theatre develops empathy and helps students understand complex emotions, relationships, and issues.
- Drama/theatre processes help students connect with and accept others and to recognize and understand other points of view.
- Drama/theatre encourages children to practice emotions and problem-solving strategies in a non-threatening and supportive environment.
- Drama/theatre challenges students to work cooperatively in what is by definition a collaborative art form.
- The drama/theatre process reinforces analytical, reflective, and evaluative skills essential to success in life.
- Drama/theatre is the one art form that draws upon elements from all of the other fine arts including dance, visual art and design, and music.
- Drama/theatre helps children learn how themes and ideas raised in our classes relate to issues in other disciplines, society, and the world.

FIFTH GRADE

CREATIVE DRAMATICS AND MOVEMENT

Transfer Goal
Students will understand that creative dramatics and movement are universal expressions of the human experience.

Essential Questions

- Why is storytelling a universal human experience? How do performers create and tell powerful stories?

Supporting Questions:

- CREATING
    - How are performers inspired?
    - How do performers develop their craft?
- PERFORMING
    - How do performers tell stories?
    - How do performers create with others?
- RESPONDING
    - How does feedback impact/influence performers?
    - How do constraints and circumstances foster creativity?
- CONNECTING
    - Why is empathy important in life and essential to the performing arts?
    - How do the performing arts enhance and deepen our understanding of the human experience?

Understandings-*Students will understand that…*

- People tell stories to make sense of life through a shared narrative. Performers have tools and techniques to create and tell powerful stories.
- CREATING
    - The human experience inspires performers to create.
    - Performers develop their craft through creative play, experimentation, repetition, presentation, and reflection.
- PERFORMING
    - Performers use the actor's toolbox and elements of dance to tell stories.
    - Performing requires the collective talents and skills of individuals from multiple disciplines.
- RESPONDING
    - Performers must evaluate and respond to feedback.
    - Performers must adapt to constraints and circumstances.

- CONNECTING
    - Empathy is a key component of, and a natural response to, the performing arts.
    - The performing arts increase concentration, awareness, self-control, well being, and belonging.

Key Knowledge -*Students will know…*

- Elements of Plot and story structure:
- Beginning, Middle, End, Character, Plot, Setting, Rising/Falling Action, etc.
- The Actor's Toolbox : Body mind & Voice.
- Theatre/drama is a collaborative art form by definition.

Essential Skills- *Students will become skilled at…*

- Playing with the 4 C's of Drama: Concentration/Commitment/Compromise/ Collaboration.
- Practicing work in improvisational activities with others.
- Listening to and making creative decisions together with others.
- Developing awareness of one's own body and voice, and practice using it in a shared, creative process.
- Exploring the body, mind, and voice through Actor's Toolbox exercises & activities.

SEVENTH/EIGHTH GRADE

UNIT - ACTOR'S TOOLBOX CREATING A CHARACTER FOR PERFORMANCE

Transfer Goal

Students will be able to use their actor's toolbox skills of body, mind, and voice to develop, refine, and present believable characters within the context of a story for an audience. They will create, perform, and respond to dramatic work, connecting their own artistic ideas to the world around them and deepening their understanding of the human experience.

Essential Questions

- Why is storytelling powerful and universal to the human experience?

Supporting Questions:

- How do actors incorporate all of the tools in their toolbox to create believable characters on stage and enhance the telling of a story for their audience?
- In what ways do actor's manipulate their bodies and voices to strengthen character development?
- What impact do an actor's physical and vocal choices have on the audience's response to the character?
- What benefits does a foundation in improvisation offer stage actors?
- How does the study and practice of improvisation strengthen ensemble skills that have application outside the drama classroom?
- How do drama activities foster empathy?
- How do culture and societies use drama/theatre to articulate, process, and address the greater issues of their time?
- Why is it important for performers to reflect on their work, both the process and product?

Understandings-*Students will understand that…*

- Actors are storytellers who create and refine characters by using the skills in the actor's toolbox of body, mind, and voice to communicate emotions and intentions.
- Qualities of movement (direction, weight, speed, and flow)and of vocal production (rate, pitch, and tone) are key ingredients in the portrayal of a character.
- The artistic choices artists and performers make influence the audience's response to a character.
- The basic rules of improvisation are fundamental to ensemble work and enhance the communication of collaborating theatre artists.
- Ensemble skills such as staying in the moment, listening, and reacting honestly to your partners are elements of a successful improvisation and have application outside the drama classroom.
- Empathy is a key component and natural response to the exploration of drama and character.

- All cultures have historically used some form of drama/theatre to tell their stories and preserve history and culture.
- It is essential for performers to reflect upon their own and other's work.

Key Knowledge -*Students will know…*

- Three forms of non-verbal communication: facial expression, gesture, and body language.
- Spatial awareness of objects in pantomime: size, shape, and weight.
- Qualities of vocal production: rate, pitch, and tone.
- There are multiple artistic choices for each character and how to select the most supportable choice for the moment.
- Basic rules of improvisation as applied to scenework.
- How to employ playwriting techniques for improvisation using the 5 W's.
- Qualities of performance that contribute to an audience's positive or negative response to the character.
- Appropriate feedback and critique helps performing artists refine their work.
- Artists and performers reflect on their own process and performance as a means to develop their skills and hone their craft.

Essential Skills- *Students will become skilled at…*

- Practicing and observing key pantomime skills in a variety of solo and group activities.
- Using facial expression, gestures and body languages to effectively communicate objects' size, shape and weight.
- Manipulating the rate, pitch and tone of their voice to reflect a variety of characters.
- Experimenting with a variety of vocal and physical elements to design a character that accurately reflects the playwright or creator's intent.
- Demonstrating commitment and a spirit of cooperation in skill-building improvisation games.
- Collaborating with peers in casting, planning, rehearsing, and performing scenes that demonstrate an understanding of dramatic structure.
- Applying criteria to evaluate drama/theatre works and providing appropriate audience feedback.
- Reflecting on their own process and performance.

SEVENTH/EIGHTH GRADE

UNIT -THEATRICAL PRODUCTION AND DESIGN

Transfer Goal

Students will apply basic knowledge of technical theatre to the design process while conceptualizing an artistic work, designing and constructing the environment for a collaborative stage production.

Essential Questions

- Why is storytelling powerful and universal to the human experience?

Supporting Questions:

- What influences theatre artists in making individual design choices?
- What limits theatre artists' choices?
- How do technical theatre elements enhance the telling of a story?
- What procedures led to safe and collaborative use of technical elements in the theatre?
- How, when, and why do theatre artists' choices change?
- How do individual theatre artists share the storytelling responsibilities with other artistic collaborators to create a unified experience?
- How does culture affect the content and production of dramatic performances?
- How are social concepts reflected in theatre and daily life?
- What distinguishes theatre from other performing arts?

Understandings-*Students will understand that…*

- Theatre artists rely on intuition, curiosity, and critical inquiry as they use their imaginations and skills to bring a story to life on stage.
- The script provides designers with essential story information, while leaving room for artistic interpretation.
- Technical elements of a theatrical production support the acting by creating the "world do the play" for the audience.
- Environments created for the stage must be safe and functional.
- Theatre artists work to discover different ways of communicating meaning and use feedback to revise their designs.
- Theatre works involve the collaborative efforts of artists whose individual work serves the whole. Directors, designers, actors, crew members, and the audience share in a cohesive creative experience.
- The role of theatre in a community is influenced by its cultural values.

- Construction projects in the theatre invoke many 21st century skills such as creativity, collaboration, communication, critical thinking and problem solving.
- In live theatre, the audience is in partnership with the actors and both influence each other in a one time, temporal event. Theatre is the one artform that incorporates visual art, music, and dance.

Key Knowledge -*Students will know…*

- Stage areas, basic stage terminology, and roles and expectations within the theatre.
- The elements of theatrical design (costumes, props, lighting, sound, scenery).
- The different strands of technical theatrical production.
- The artist's design process: define the problem, collect information, brainstorm and analyze ideas, develop solutions, present ideas to others for feedback, and improve the design.
- The interconnectedness of a successful theatrical production requires the collaborative efforts of many.
- Theatrical designs inform the construction of stage props, costumes, set pieces, lighting and sound effects.
- Each technical theatre strand requires knowledge and manipulation of crew-specific tools and safety measures.
- Specific running crew members orchestrate the scene changes and technical elements of a staged production in performance.

Essential Skills- *Students will become skilled at…*

- Interpreting stage directions from a script, reading a prompt book, and transferring director's blocking to the stage.
- Articulating the visual details of imagined worlds and stories that support the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.
- Demonstrating appropriate use of technological elements (sound, lights, props, costumes, scenery) to enhance the stage production.
- Explaining and presenting solutions to design challenges in a drama/theatre work.
- Aligning personal aesthetics and creative ideas with the playwright's intent and collaborating with peer designers to create a cohesive story for the audience.
- Assuming the responsibility of hands-on learning during design and construction phases.
- Manipulating the tools specific to the crew safely.
- Serving as running crew for a staged production performed for an audience.