LIVE Arts

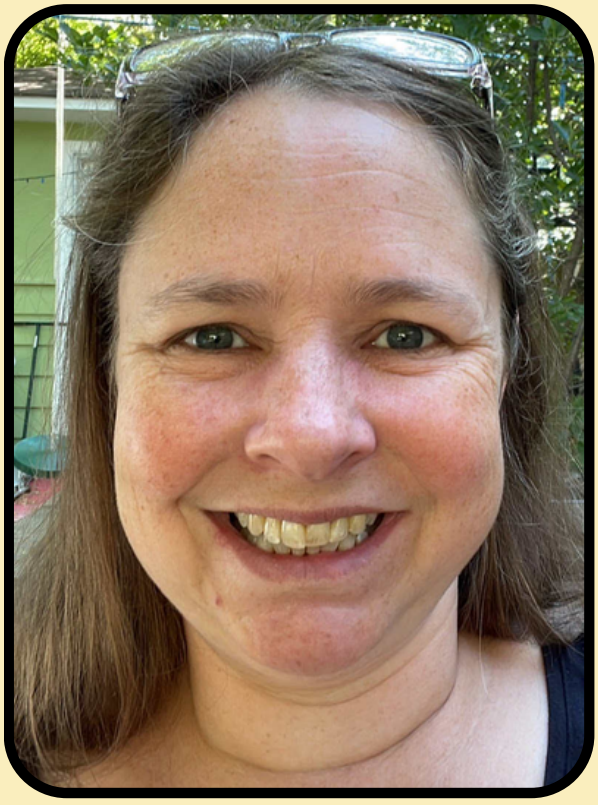
TEACHER GUIDE

CRAFTING A CHARACTER

With: Angela Christie
Grade: 5/6
Date: Jan 26 2024
Artistic Discipline: Theatre

OVERVIEW

Join Angela as she walks your class through the basics of how to create a character using only your body and your voice. She will use the basics of professional theatre methods to bring your students some of the joy and play in theatre



ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Angela Christie is a Saskatoon-based theatre artist and educator. For over 20 years, Angela has worked as an actor and stage manager with an array of theatre companies across SK. As the co-founder of Theatre Ecstasis, Live Five, and Ferre Play Theatre, Angela has been a part of producing over 30 productions. Angela holds a BFA degree in drama and a BEd from the U of S. She is the creator and coordinator for Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan's school program, works annually at The Fringe's Collaboration Station, and over the past 4 years, she has taught Arts Education at École Victoria School, Princess Alexandra, and École Henry Kelsey. Angela currently teaches Grade 2 French Immersion at Forest Grove. Bonjour mes amis!

MATERIALS

- No materials needed

CLASSROOM SETUP

Clear the center of your classroom so that students have space to move around.

Curriculum Outcomes & Indicators

GRADE 5

CREATIVE PRODUCTIVE	CRITICAL RESPONSIVE	CULTURAL HISTORICAL
CP5.4 Create drama using pop culture as inspiration (e.g., pop musicians and movie stars, street theatre, or stories and myths from pop culture). d. Identify new ways to further the drama based on discussions of the work.	CR5.1 Examine the influence of pop culture on own lives and societies, and investigate the work of selected pop culture artists (e.g., Andy Warhol, popular musicians, movie stars). b. Investigate arts expressions that are currently part of mainstream popular culture, and research historical influences on these expressions (e.g., the influence of James Brown or Elvis Presley on contemporary music)	CH5.3 Analyze and describe how arts and pop culture expressions convey information about the time and place in which they were created. c. Explain how knowing more about the context in which an arts expression was created can help in understanding the work.

GRADE 6

CREATIVE PRODUCTIVE	CRITICAL RESPONSIVE	CULTURAL HISTORICAL
CP6.4 Initiate and develop roles in selected drama forms (e.g., contextual, improv, puppetry, radio drama). d. Demonstrate a willingness to take a risk in developing new roles.	CR6.1 Create personal responses to a variety of arts expressions (e.g., respond to music using poetry, or respond to visual art using music). c. Discuss interpretations of arts expressions and create own expressions in response to the original work.	CH6.1 Investigate how personal, cultural, or regional identity may be reflected in arts expressions. a. Apply critical thinking when analyzing and describing how identity is expressed in arts expressions (e.g., hip hop, blues, country music).

Fransaskois Curriculum Outcomes & Indicators

GRADE 5

Création/Production	Critique/Appréciation	Culture/Histoire
5CP.3 Démontrer comment divers rôles, stratégies et éléments, tels que la tension, le contraste et les symboles, fonctionnent dans une oeuvre dramatique. a. Réagit aux autres, en personnage de façon à faire avancer l'action dramatique	5CA.1 Examiner l'influence d'un style ou d'une forme sur sa vie et sur la société. b. Examine les formes d'expression artistique qui font présentement partie de la culture populaire générale et leurs influences historiques.	5CH.1 Examiner les points de vue sur la vie contemporaine exprimés par les artistes et les médias. d. . Examine les carrières possibles dans le domaine de la culture populaire, p. ex. animateurs, acteurs, modéliste, chorégraphe, cinéaste, musicien.

GRADE 6

Création/Production	Critique/Appréciation	Culture/Histoire
6CP.4 Explorer des rôles par le biais d'une variété de formes et de techniques, y compris l'improvisation. d. Met en praque l'exploitation de nouveaux rôles.	6CA.1 Réagir à une variété de formes d'expression artistique dans les domaines de la danse, de l'art dramatique, de la musique et des arts visuels. d. Crée ses propres oeuvres en réaction à une oeuvre originale.	6CH.1 Explorer comment l'identtié personnelle, culturelle ou régionale peut se retrouver dans des formes d'expression artistique. b. Participe, quand c'est possible, à des partenariats avec des artistes et des organismes du domaine des arts en Saskatchewan en vue d'approfondir sa compréhension des contenus et pratiques artistiques.

Workshop Vocabulary

Elements of Dance (B.A.S.T.E)

Body
We lead with body parts that start our action and affect our thoughts and emotions.

Action
What does our body do when we move? Think about locomotor and non-locomotor movements.

Space
Where does our body move through space? (ie: Levels, Direction, etc)

Time
When does our body move? (ie: Fast or Slow)

Energy
How does our body move? (ie: Heavy or Light)

Non-Locomotor
Our bodies stay in place. (ie: twist, bend, turn, stretch)

Locomotor
Our bodies travel from one point to another. (ie: walk, run, gallop)

Pre-Workshop Activity

Name: Getting to Know Ourselves

Duration:	Materials:
1 Hour	• Whiteboard • Projector • Laptops

EXERCISE 1 - Knowing Ourselves

• The purpose of this exercise is to help the students start to develop an understanding of how they naturally move in order to better know how to change their body to appear as a different character.
• If you have a large mirror you can bring to class, or a wall of mirrors (like in a dance studio) in your school, that would be useful for this exercise.
• Clear the center of your classroom and have the students mill about in the middle.
• Once they've gotten warmed up, have them walk around the classroom the way they normally would
• Ask them to think about how they walk (ie: how fast they normally walk, whether they have heavy steps, whether they turn their feet outwards or inwards, how they hold their shoulders etc).
• Have the class sit on the ground facing the board/'stage' and have each student take a turn walking from the left of the stage all the way to the middle of the stage. Here they'll turn to the audience, say 'My name is_____' and then exit to the right. Ask the students to walk across the entire stage as normally as they are able to.
• As a class you can discuss the different ways students walk and use their body language. Remind students that it is ok to make observations, but it is not ok to be mean. Everybody walks differently for various reasons and we want to be aware of how we walk, but not embarrassed or self-conscious about it.

EXERCISE 2 - Learning How To Watch Movements

• The purpose of this exercise is to dive into the CR6.1c outcome and the CR5.1b outcome.
• Have your students each search Youtube and choose a scene from a film (you could have a small collection of scenes from Youtube ready to show them to simplify the process).
• Have the students focus on choosing a scene where there is a clear focus on a character' movements.
• Have each student write down 3-5 distinct elements of one specific character's movements (ie: heavy/light, quick/slow, choppy/smooth etc).
• Then ask your students to write down 3-5 reasons for why a character might move that way. Ask them to have at least one reason that specifically talks about how the context influences the movement (ie: the character is moving quickly because it is cold and they are outside).
• Have your students write down at least one identity-related reason why their character might move that way. (ie: the character is an anxious person and moves very erratically)
• Have each student attempt to recreate the movement of this character but with a major change made to the context the character is in. (ie: they're no longer out in the snow, now they are in a saw mill)

Broadcast Program

00:00 - 00:05:
• Artist Bio Video + Introduction

00:05 - 00:15:
• Personal Introduction
• Introduction to the roles Angela has played

00:15 - 00:20:
• An exercise on how to ‘lead’ with different parts of your body

00:20 - 00:30
• Instruction on: Indirect & Direct movement, Light & Heavy Walking, Using our body at different speeds

00:30-00:40
• Students put these elements together to create a character

00:40-00:45
• Students show off their character

00:45 - 00:50
• Artist Q & A

Post-Workshop Activity

Name: Hot Seat Work

Duration:	Materials:
1 Hour	• 3 Chairs • A Clear Classroom

EXERCISE 1 - Hot Seating

• For more context on 'Hot Seating' click on this link.

• The point of these exercises is to have the students continue their learning on character and have them grow this character through short, guided improv.

• Start off by having each student start to remember the character that they crafted during the workshop broadcast (make sure each student has really settled on what that character is, even if it's something as simple as 'I'm a lion').

• Ask the students to all walk around the classroom as their character would.

• Have all of the students sit down facing a 'stage' and set up ~3 chairs on the stage.

• From here, have the students take turns walking up to the stage and taking a seat (in character) until all the chairs are filled.

• Now the teacher can start to ask the characters questions that they will improvise answers for. The goal of this is to get them to think of the who, what, when, where and why of their character and their motivations. (ie: 'Who are you?', 'Why did you come to school [or whatever scene you set] today?' 'What is something that you love?').

• You can also start to ask the students questions that get them to interact with the students that are also on stage (ie: how does the anxious journalist feel about the sick giant sneezing next to him?).

• If your class is up for it, they can also contribute questions.

• Once you've given the students on stage a good amount of time, cycle your next students on to the 3 seats and repeat.

EXERCISE 2 - Observing Ourselves

• In an attempt to develop the student's self-reflection, have them reflect on their character and identify which elements of B.A.S.T.E they used.

• ie: When it came to how their character used space, what levels did they use? When it came to energy, were they heavy or light?

EXERCISE 3 - Observing the World Around Us

• In the same way that your students observed themselves and each other in the Pre-Workshop Exercises, have each student choose a place outside of school (ie: their home, the bus, the grocery store with their parents) where they can see other people.

• Over the course of a week, have the students report back to the class about a person they saw outside of school and tell you how they moved (in relation to the Elements of Dance you learned about)

Additional Information

Upcoming Workshops

Feb 28-29 - Shawn Cuthand - Stand Up Comedy/Storytelling
March 26-28 - Hailey Weber - Painting (French & English Program)
April 10-11 - Greg Orrē - Music
April 24-25 - Katherine Lawrence - Page Poetry

More Art By The Artist

To find out more about the theatre scene in Saskatoon, check out these theatre companies:
-https://shakespearesask.com/ -https://www.25thstreettheatre.org/ -https://persephonetheatre.org/
-https://livefive.ca/