



**BMO
STAGE
COACH**

2018/19 TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

THEATRE WORKSHOP



CREATING ENSEMBLE

THEME INTRODUCTION

In a world where so many of us are focused on our devices, where social media is feeling less social and becoming more about the media, it's easy to feel isolated and more difficult to interact with others in a meaningful way. It's important to remember that we're not alone; we're all in this together. Acting, whether on-stage or on-screen, is an inherently collaborative art form. This makes it a perfect vehicle in which to explore the theme of Creating Ensemble. Take a look at any theatre program or stick around to see the closing credits of any movie, and you will see just how many people it takes to put a production together. There are directors, designers, stage managers, stunt coordinators, producers, and more; the list goes on. Humans are social creatures and learning how to work together is integral to who we are. Creating ensemble is not just about the final performance, it's about the process—which includes respect, support, and acceptance of everyone involved.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will

- Be present and aware of themselves and other performers, and respond in a supportive manner while working collaboratively;
- Reflect on and describe their emotional experience of a theatrical activity as an observer and as a participant;
- Trust their emotional experience and actively participate by making and accepting offers while working in a group;
- Demonstrate a willingness to take risks by exploring and experimenting with various emotions and physicality within the exercises.



MEET THE INSTRUCTORS



KAREN WORROD

Karen is entering her 10th year at Arts Umbrella, where she teaches a wide age range of students in a variety of programs. She trained at Gastown Actors Studio and continues to study in workshops when time permits. Her most recent stage appearance was in “The Antagonist” at the 2016 Vancouver Fringe Festival, with Little Mountain Lion Productions. Karen enjoys inspiring creativity in a fun, safe, and supportive environment, as well as sharing her passion for acting with all her students.

TERRI-LYN STOREY

Terri-Lyn Storey is a Vancouver-based theatre creator who loves all aspects of acting, creating, writing, directing, and teaching. Terri-Lyn studied acting at Vancouver Film School and the renowned Actors Studio in New York City. Since then, she has created over two dozen original and fully produced plays and she is currently working on publishing a collection of her original children’s plays, affectionately titled Play. Terri-Lyn has produced and performed in over 35 festival and main-stage shows across North America, including touring two solo shows on the Canadian Fringe Festival circuit. She has created several award-winning short films and she teaches Acting for the Camera and Creative Drama classes at Arts Umbrella. She has also been an artist-in-residence at the Vancouver School Board for the past 10 years.



ERIKA BABINS

Erika is a graduate of Musical Theatre from Capilano University. Since then, performance, choreography, production, and writing work has taken her across the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, and the Kootenays. As an Artistic Associate for Awkward Stage Productions, Erika has choreographed the award-winning “TITUS: The Light and Delightful Musical Comedy of Titus Andronicus” and “Cry-Baby: The Musical.” She is also a writer, actor, and producer for KalamaTea Productions, a company that creates web content, and has choreographed for other local companies including Dramanatrix, Uncle Randy, and Play on Words Productions.

DARYL FRETZ

Arts Umbrella has been in Daryl’s life since her childhood when she became a student in Art of Acting. After training with three of Arts Umbrella’s theatre troupes—Junior, Senior, and Musical Theatre—Daryl went on to further her craft at Capilano University’s Acting for the Stage and Screen Program. She continues to further her acting knowledge with current workshops and classes throughout Vancouver. Daryl is thrilled her journey has led her to be a part of Arts Umbrella’s instructional faculty, inspiring children and youth.



WORKSHOP OVERVIEW



INTRODUCTION

We will begin in a circle with all the students so they can see everyone in the group. After reviewing guidelines and safety for the workshop, we'll ask students some questions like: What is Arts Umbrella? Who are we? What is an artist? What are actors? Where do you find actors and artists doing their jobs?

Next, we'll introduce the workshop theme: Creating Ensemble. We'll discuss respect, both for ourselves and each other. We'll pose questions like: What is an ensemble? How do actors work collaboratively together?

From that point on, every student will be an actor and it will be their responsibility to help create the ensemble as we go through the following activities.

WARM-UP ACTIVITIES

Group Shake Out

Students stand in a circle. Sticking their right arm into the middle of the circle, they shake it as big as they can while counting up to eight as loudly as possible. Repeat with left arm, right leg, and left leg, and then the whole body. Repeat the whole sequence counting to 7, 6, 5, and all the way down to 1. By all moving and vocalizing at the same time, students begin to build their ensemble.

Circle Clap

Students stand in a circle. The instructor will turn to the student next to them, and make eye contact. The instructor and student will clap at the same time. Once they do, the first student turns to the person next to them and does the same. The process repeats until the clap comes back to the instructor. By working together, and being available and ready for their neighbours, the students can build the speed of the clapping.

Stop/jump/turn around

Students stand in a generous circle, such that when they're all turned in one direction and looking toward the centre of the circle they can still see everyone in their peripheral vision. They begin to walk the perimeter of the circle. Once everyone's walking, a leader chooses to either jump, stop, or turn. Everyone should try to follow the leader's action at the same time. Once the group is proficient, they can try to do it without establishing one leader; moving both as a leader and follower at the same time.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES

Speed Tableaus

The group begins in a circle. Three basic tableaus are established and students all get a chance to learn them and apply them with their bodies. These are used as examples for what the students will be creating.

The instructor stands in the middle of the group and points at a student, calling out the name of a tableau, like “elephant”. That student becomes the middle of the tableau. For example, the trunk of the elephant. Other students then step in to become the ears of the elephant to complete the tableau.

Split into smaller groups, the students will create their own three-person tableaus. A specific theme may be provided to the class, such as jungle or fairy tales. The students also name their tableau.

Once all the group tableaus are established, each student teaches a student from another group their tableau and name.

The class returns to the circle and the activity is played out with the new tableaus.

Mirror 1

In groups of two, students take turns being the leader and being the follower. They stand a comfortable distance apart and, as if looking in a mirror, copy the actions of their partner. They take turns leading and following, progressing to the point where an audience member would have difficulty determining who is the leader and who is the follower. This exercise can progress to larger groups as the students get more comfortable.

** Intermediate Modification: one actor leads the body and the other leads the face; they must collaborate to mirror one another simultaneously.*

Environment

One actor starts an activity in an environment without telling anyone where they are. As other actors think they know what the environment is, they join in and add to the scene. The activity continues until there are 6–8 actors on stage. At that point, students in the audience will share what they saw and guess the environment. The exercise continues until everyone has had an opportunity to be part of an environment.

** Primary Modification: an environment will be provided to the first student.*

WRAP UP

Speed Clap

The group stands in a circle. One student claps once, and then the person beside them claps once, and the clap travels around the circle with increasing speed.

Actor Bow

Each actor places one hand on their belly and one hand on their back and does an actor bow for all of their acting work. They can switch arms and do another bow.

Final Clap

Everyone claps their hands in a circle in the air as a giant round of applause for all of the acting work of the ensemble.



HOW TO PREPARE YOUR STUDENTS

It's important that students understand that this workshop is not just about free time away from math class, but that each exercise has a purpose. To help your students thrive in the workshop, we ask that you stay in the class and participate, either physically or through active observation. A big part of acting is that there are no wrong choices as long as you follow the directions. The more fun they see you having, the more the students will feel supported and safe. There are, of course, a few logistical things that can make a big difference in the success of this workshop as well. Our teaching artists may ask you to help with partnering or grouping for success. We don't know your students like you do and there may be some relationships within the class that work better than others. Please have large and legible name tags ready for the beginning of the workshop. It also helps to take a few minutes with our teaching artists at the beginning of the workshop to touch base about any work you have been doing with your students relating to art or any classroom management tools you employ.

Required materials

- Access to the gym
- Name tags for each student

EXTENDED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

GROUP TABLEAUS

In small groups, students will create three tableaux—beginning, middle, and end—that represent the story of a fairy tale. Students will practice moving from once tableau to the next in order to present their tableaux to the class. Once they've been shared, students can expand their tableaux by adding additional ones for each section. Students rehearse again before presenting to the class. Tableaus may be expanded upon as many times as needed in order to fully tell the story. For example:

The Three Little Pigs

Round 1

1. Pigs building houses
2. Wolf huffing and puffing and blowing a house down.
3. Wolf falling into a boiling pot.

Round 2

1. Pigs building houses
2. Wolf knocking on the door with pigs in fear
3. Wolf huffing and puffing and blowing a house down.
4. Pigs running to the brick house
5. Wolf falling into a boiling pot.

Round 3

1. Pig 1 builds house out of straw
2. Pig 2 builds house out of sticks.
3. Pig 3 builds house out of bricks.
4. Pig 1's house being blown down
5. Pig 2's house being blown down
6. Pig 3's house standing up to the wolf's huffing and puffing.
7. Wolf getting ladder to climb into pig's chimney
8. Pig putting boiling pot onto fire in fireplace.
9. Wolf falling into boiling pot.

CAR AND DRIVER

Students are paired off and find their own space in the room. One student in the pairing is the driver while the other is the car. The driver has to maneuver their partner-car around the gym using only signals such as a tap on the head to take one step forward, a tap on the back to move one step back and a tap on the shoulder to turn right or left. Students must watch out for other cars and drivers so that everyone stays safe. If the group is comfortable, the "cars" can close their eyes.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Artist

A person who produces works in any of the arts that are primarily subject to aesthetic criteria.

Actor

A person whose profession is acting on the stage, in movies, or on television.

Audience

The assembled spectators or listeners at a public event, such as a play, movie, concert, or meeting.

Creation

An original product of the mind, especially an imaginative artistic work.

Character

A person in a novel, scene, play, or movie; a part portrayed by an actor.

Choice

An act of selecting or making a decision when faced with two or more possibilities.

Collaborate

To work jointly on an activity, especially to produce or create something.

Connection

A relationship in which a person, thing, or idea is linked or associated with something else.

Ensemble

A group of musicians, actors, or dancers who perform together.

Instincts

A natural or intuitive way of acting or thinking; a natural propensity or skill of a specified kind.

Present

Ready to hand; ready with assistance; in the moment.

Relationship

The way in which two or more concepts, objects, or people are connected, or the state of being connected.

Respect

Attention to or consideration of others; treat with consideration; regard with esteem or honor.

Role

An actor's part in a play, movie, etc.; the function assumed or part played by a person or thing in a particular situation.

Role-playing

The acting out or performance of a particular role.

Scene

A sequence of continuous action in a play, movie, opera, or book; a subdivision of an act of a play in which the time is continuous and the setting fixed, and which does not usually involve a change of characters.

Stage

The area, typically in a theatre, on which actors, entertainers, or speakers perform.

Tableau

A frozen picture; a moment in life that is active and yet still.

Visualization

The visual pictures that come up in one's mind when they are engaged in a creative activity.

Vocal

Of or relating to the human voice.

Warm-up

A period or act of preparation for a performance, involving practice.