



**BMO
STAGE
COACH**

2019/20 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 Connection to Yourself and Others.

Humans are social creatures and learning how to make mindful connections enables us to connect with ourselves and others in the world around us.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will

- Be present and aware of themselves and other performers, and respond in a supportive manner while working collaboratively.
- Reflect 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 Connection to Yourself and Others." We'll discuss respect, both for ourselves and each other. We'll pose questions like, "what is a connection?" "Give examples of things that connect." "How do you create connections?" "How do you connect to yourself, others, and the community around you?" From that point on, we will be building connections 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, down to 1. By moving and vocalizing together, students begin to build their ensemble.

Circle Clap - Primary

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 up the speed of the clapping.

Group Counting - Intermediate

Students form a circle and face outwards. Dialing into their connection with one another, one student starts the counting by saying "1." The object of the exercise is to count up to the number of students in the class. We can only hear one of each number; if a number is repeated or said by two people at once, the group must take a mindful breath and restart. Each student can only say one number in the sequence; if it's completed easily, extend the number they have to reach!

EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES

Physical Gesture – Action & Reactions

Level One - The instructor will create physical characters using their body and voice, such as a dinosaur, robot, or royalty. This action is then repeated by the students as a reaction. This process has the students learning to connect to their bodies and voices as the actor's instrument to build characters different from themselves.

Level Two - One student can create a physical gesture; the other students will repeat it as it goes around the circle.

Level Three - A student creates a physical gesture and visually connects with another student across the circle, "passing" the physical gesture. That student repeats that physical gesture and creates their own. They then "pass" that gesture along, and so on.

Mirror - Energy Release

In groups of two, students take turns being the leader and 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 leading and who is following. 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.*

Body Building - Energy Building

Students are paired or put into groups of 3 or 4. The teacher will call out different objects and the students will create sculptures of that object using their bodies. Students then collaborate to create one sculpture together, by connecting their physicality with the rest of their group. Encourage the

students to give big physical offers and to avoid discussion. Instead, go with first instincts.

Machine - Primary

Level One - Each student will create a sound and gesture that they can repeat and sustain with a neutral expression. They will connect to one another without physical contact. They can connect with high, medium, and low levels, and create spacial awareness by connecting in front, behind, or side to side (rather than in a straight line). Together they will name the machine they have created.

Level Two - Same as above, but adding facial expression to connect emotionally with their partner.

Level Three - Reverse the process. Students will name the machine, then create it in partnership with their group.

Negative Space - Intermediate

Level One - One at a time, students enter the circle and make a shape with their bodies, creating as much "negative space" as possible. Negative space is the space surrounding them, so the more open they are, the more negative space they will create. The next person connects in a way where they are not physically touching the first person but filling their negative space. Participants must hold their pose with a neutral expression. This level is about making a physical choice and connecting with others. Finally, they will give their sculpture a title.

Level Two - Same as above, but adding facial expression to connect emotionally with their partner. Name the sculpture.

Level Three - Reverse the process. Students will name the sculpture, then create a negative space sculpture in partnership with the members of their group.

WRAP UP

Speed Clap - Primary

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.

Group Counting - Intermediate

As in the warm up, students will count up to the number of students in the class, one number at a time with no repeats. To highlight the connections built throughout the workshop, we may try it with eyes closed or scattered about the space to add an extra level of mindful connection to the exercise.

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

ENVIRONMENT

One actor starts an activity in an environment without telling anyone where they are. As the other actors think they have figured out where they are, they join in and add to the scene. The activity continues until there are six to eight 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 an opportunity to be part of an environment.

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

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.

Mindfulness

A mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment.

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.