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Children Are to be Seen and Heard

Caroline McNelis

Submitted in Partial Completion of the
Requirements for Departmental Honors in Theatre

Bridgewater State University

May 9, 2023

Prof. Miranda Giurleo, Thesis Advisor Date: May 8, 2023
Prof. Sarah Elizabeth Bedard, Committee Member Date: May 5, 2023
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Prof. Jim Quinn, Committee Member Date: May 5, 2023
The stage is set for the next generation. Our classrooms are filled with young people who have lived through a pandemic, grown up on social media, and counted standardized testing methods in their sleep instead of sheep. Students should be encouraged to ask questions and be curious about who they are and what is going on in the world. By incorporating drama education into their daily curriculum, students can see themselves in positive ways. The opportunities are endless when the teacher believes in them. Students can see themselves as role models, world leaders, and academic achievers with the help of theatre education. Theatre Education’s benefits stretch beyond the classroom. They will notice a difference in their socialization, confidence, and public speaking skills. By integrating theatre into the classroom, the next generation can make positive changes to our world. Performing Arts can be utilized to understand world issues, yourself, and academic concepts.

Education is always evolving. Teachers are professional learners. They have to continuously rework their source material and concepts to meet the new generation at a place they will understand. Using elements of theatre and drama in their classroom pushes the students to break down the contents into smaller pieces that often can include body movement so they are easier to grasp and understand. For far too long, the public school system has been relying on old books that have mustaches and unibrows drawn on the Egyptians’ faces and the cathartic “S” that everyone knows and loves to draw. The resources that most school systems have are outdated and most likely feed into the systemic racism that over the past three years the younger generations have tried so hard to dismantle. After a global pandemic when the entire world was shut down and told to stay inside and work from home, the human body is craving movement and stimulation. By integrating movement and drama into the classroom, students are unlocking their knowledge in ways that they never thought they could after being fully remote and online.
just three years ago. For some students, remote learning is all they know. They knew their teachers as a tiny box on a screen. They didn’t get to go outside and have recess with their classmates and pretend that they were on a pirate ship. Student teachers are now being evaluated on how they are integrating technology into their daily lesson plans. Integrating technology into the classroom can be helpful when using it to show examples or a powerpoint presentation of basic knowledge. It makes prep work for teachers a little easier but, there is so much more value in letting the content move through their bodies. Students don’t need more technology, they need to interact with their classmates and have thought-provoking conversations. The screen time can wait for when they go home and build houses just to burn down on Minecraft. Students have sat in front of screens for too long, they all need blue light glasses now. Let them engage, not just retain the information. Let them think about it through movement and see what new ideas can be spurred by a tableau or script.

If a student is receiving a public education, each classroom is required to follow the frameworks of the respective state. “The Curriculum Framework provides a structure intended to guide the selection, development, and evaluation of arts curriculum and programming that builds students’ artistic literacy” (Massachusetts Frameworks 15). These frameworks are meant to be a skeleton so that each district is on the same page with its arts courses. Each standard for Theatre Education is split up into four sections; creating, performing, responding, and connecting. Some districts may customize these frameworks to meet the needs and resources of their community. Each section of the framework encourages space for cross-curriculum lesson plans. Theatre is made up of collaboration between artists, this can be applied to teachers in any school. Teachers are able to collaborate on connecting their lesson plans. Students having the ability to make connections throughout their day will make for more cohesive thoughts and be able to think
about the content they are absorbing with different approaches that may work better for them. “Creative exploration helps students find personal connections to content knowledge, enhance comprehension, and develop students’ point of view, making academic content compelling and memorable” (20). Children start at a young age playing make-believe including but not limited to doctor, house, school, restaurant, etc. Why should education stray far away from what students already know? Let students use their imagination in the common core learning.

Educators can note that the Arts Education Frameworks developed a section dedicated to connecting the framework to other areas like Social Studies and English. Students learn about the Harlem Renaissance and the Civil Rights movement from a textbook but really they should be learning about it from the people who lived it. Students should learn a first-person perspective from the art that came out of these time periods. Murals, Spoken Word Poetry, and Paintings to name just a few. Students can tap into their critical thinking skills and discuss what was the inspiration behind the artwork and study the first-hand experience to grasp the material in a way that a textbook cannot teach them.

Using drama in daily periods throughout the school day encourages students to engage with their learning rather than just retain it. According to data that will be discussed later, having a theatre class period is extremely beneficial to a student’s overall learning, but, the performing arts also have a place in all core curriculum classrooms and not just in the electives hallway. Drama can reach the students that have trouble engaging with course material that is just on paper. Having them move with their texts and coursework is what is going to make them relate to and contextualize the information they are learning. Sara DuBose and Ashley Thomas viewed a classroom that was reading the novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This novel is on almost every required reading list in the state. It teaches about racial prejudice, family life, and social justice.
The novel is from Scout’s perspective so, if students are merely just reading the novel and having a discussion they are most likely only viewing the scenes from Scout’s point of view. Students engaged in a writing exercise where they were tasked with developing a thought process for another character in the novel such as Boo Radley or Tom Robinson. This helped the students engage with other points of view and draw upon their critical thinking skills. They were able to see the motivations of each character more clearly and really see the dynamic characters that might not have been uncovered during a class discussion because they were thinking inside the mind of Scout. Students are not all made the same. They each need to be reached differently, sometimes the ones that struggle with reading or staying focused blossom into interested students and engaged readers when they are tasked with getting the text on its feet.

Access to theatre education during regular school hours translates in our Massachusetts school system. According to the Massachusetts k12 website data, there is a significant difference in drop-out rates in schools that have theatre courses and those that don’t. Wellesley and Brookline both have a drop-out rate of less than 1 percent. Both of these school districts have theatre classes during normal school hours and are accompanied by after-school theatre programs. This also translates into their SAT scores being above average at 1294. When you compare this to Fall River and Brockton High School’s access to the performing arts, they only have after-school programs. The drop-out rate for these districts is significantly higher at 6.7 percent (Fall River) and 5.1 percent (Brockton). This most likely comes from a lack of funding.

Theatre education needs to become more accessible to students in lower-income communities. The performing arts are not just for the wealthy, any student can benefit from becoming more self-confident and empathetic individuals. “Americans for the Arts report suggest that fewer schools offered theatre courses during the school day (79% sample) than offer
extracurricular theatre (95% sample).” The study then takes a closer look at the socioeconomic status of the students. “Wealthier students are more likely to receive theatre education during the school day (41-56%) than students in schools with a higher concentration of poverty (28%). Students should receive an equal opportunity to theatre education by providing more funding and space during normal school hours.

It’s difficult to teach compassion without conceptualization. Compassion and world issues go hand in hand. The next generation should be taught about the political climate but, it should be taught in a way that lets them understand the people and not just the numbers. In the 21st century, it’s easy for people in our society to assume that hatred, bigotry, and classism have diminished due to the progressive values that have been brought up in recent years. Karl Focner explored using Shakespeare outside the traditional classroom to discuss the working class and the stigma around Shakespeare being hard to understand and inapplicable. “80% of students claimed that Shakespeare has no relevance to their lives” (Focner 43). This statement is quite the opposite. The only major difference between our current political and class climate and the 1600s is better hygiene. Classism still exists and has a huge impact on our education system.

Shakespeare being labeled as difficult only furthers this idea. The first step would be to rid the students of the ‘language barrier.’ Once the students can adapt the Elizabethan language to their own, the themes become more apparent and they are able to apply their own experiences. Focner took a physical approach to the text. The students were able to recall these exercises. Through this process, Focner also took note that “class and confidence are intimately linked” (48). The students' connections to the text happened when they were up on their feet. When working-class students are not given the same resources, they are going to feel intimidated by the language. Learning through acting out the scenes and making modern adaptations is what is
going to drive the themes home to these students. When a student is given the resources, they will succeed. Focner makes the comparison to Shakespeare’s work. “It is not Shakespeare’s work itself that is the problem, but the wider issues of class confidence” (48). Society is still setting up different social classes to only succeed to the point that the world has deemed fit for them.

With the rise of visual learners, the use of process drama in the classroom is becoming more and more beneficial. Process Drama is described as “the genre of applied theatre in which participants, together with the teacher, constitute the theatrical ensemble, and engage to make meaning for themselves” (Powell and Heap). Process Drama encourages the collaboration of all students in the classroom. They are supposed to think critically about important elements of the piece they are working on. Students are encouraged to interpret the text into different elements that coincide with Process Drama.

The whole premise of Process Drama is centered around developing an understanding of the human experience and the relationships built with each other as collaborators. Educators should be working towards applying Process Drama into their everyday lesson plans in the core curriculum. Dorothy Heathcote based her life’s teachings around the ability that students are able to take a text and step into the shoes of the person being discussed. Heathcote outlines her concept in “Mantle of the Expert.” The term implies that students are learning to be “experts” in the topic that they are studying. The development of this concept and Process Drama are trying to pass the torch onto their students, making them more knowledgeable in the subject at hand. “Mantle of the Expert” is just one example of a Process Drama strategy. Educators may also utilize elements such as Decision Alley. This gives students a different way to step into the shoes of the subjects they are studying. Students line up in two lines on either side one student walking down the “alley.” The student walking is to be persuaded by either side to make a certain
decision one way or another. This exercise encourages students to apply their critical thinking. Students on the sides of the alley must come up with coherent reasons for why the student walking should agree with them while the student walking must think back on their own knowledge to also help inform their decision.

Educators should be encouraged to push the boundaries of what is being taught in their classrooms. Follow the standards of what they are teaching but don’t shy away from using the correct or big words because society says that they will not understand them. Too many times children are told that their vaginas are called “cookies” or their penises are called “pee-pees.” The cuteness of this language is doing them more harm than good. This does not just pertain to “private parts” but also major parts of human development and life cycle like birth or death. Let students be curious about these big topics. Their minds and words are powerful and they should be addressed no matter how uncomfortable the conversation is for the adult to have. Students deserve to learn about themselves and the world in a mature way. It ultimately will help them become more confident individuals which as discussed in this essay, speaks volumes across the core curriculum. Children are capable of doing so much more than older generations have given them credit for and it’s time to give these students the education they deserve.

Theatre for Young Audiences can often be misconstrued as throw-away and silly. Recent playwrights for young audiences are trying to change the way our society thinks about Theatre for Young Audiences. Children are capable of more than many adults give them credit for. Karen Zacarias is a playwright and founder of Young Playwrights Theatre located in Washington, DC. Its mission states that it is “a community-responsive organization that inspires young people to realize the power of their own voices” (YPT). Zacarias wants to teach children to not run away from their fears in the real world and explore them in a safe environment that gets the children on
their feet. The 21st century is the time to make important changes to drama education and how children should not be underestimated. Howlround Theatre Commons conducts an interview with Jacqueline Goldfinger, Idris Goodwin, and Karen Zacarias entitled, “Writing Incredible Theatre for Young Audiences.” The writers discuss the big ideas that can be addressed in a theatre setting. The students can be introduced to things that may be shied away from because the ideas may be too daunting to conceptualize.

The Howlround Theatre Commons interview brings the topic of agency to the forefront. Agency means having control over one’s body, and actions, and understanding the consequences of such. Educators and directors can use adaptations that children already know or are familiar with to drive home their discussions. Jaqueline Goldfinger brings up the project she’s working on which is an adaptation of *A Wind in the Door*, a sequel to *A Wrinkle in Time*. The characters are working through big and small adventures. The takeaway is that whatever the size of the problem or obstacle, a child should always have the option to say yes, no, or maybe. Letting them work through their problems without being told what to do is significantly more beneficial to their growth as a human and students. Their brains are still developing and giving children opportunities to exercise their right to think and feel will only make them stronger.

Idris Goodwin brings up the point that children are looking to engage. They want to be involved in the action going on which is what makes drama education so appealing to them. They are able to immerse themselves right into the topic of discussion. Goodwin then goes on to explain that as students get older, they grow out of wanting to be involved in the action because that's what is taught in our education system. Sit down, listen, and absorb. Drama education encourages active listeners because they are actually inside the lesson and story rather than just listening to a lecture. Laura Gunderson explains that students can pick up on the educational
values of theatre because it is right in front of them. They can interact with the problems and have real-life discussions about what is going on rather than screaming at Dora who can’t actually hear them. Interacting with a person right in front of them is going to let them put on the hat of someone else and see how they would respond in that situation.

Being able to understand another person’s perspective is what is going to teach a child about empathy. When a child is comfortable in their own skin, they are able to create a safe world for others around them. The topic of agency connects to multiple parts of a student’s life. Considerate and well-thought-out comes from confident learners. Teachers need to encourage students to think as an individual who is comfortable in their own skin. Feeling like they have control is going to make them confident individuals in the world and in the classroom.

In 2001, there was a study conducted with female-identifying middle school students that were centered around them developing a positive sense of self. This bleeds through to stronger collaboration in the classroom among peers. The study occurred during a 90-minute teaching block. The course emphasized discipline, practice, collaboration, and critique in order to challenge cultural assumptions about women” (ArtsEdSearch). The study explained that students were able to improve most noticeably in three skills; centering, open-mindedness, and self-expression.

The students were able to notice differences in themselves. They got to become different versions of themselves because they were thinking creatively. “The girls reported that the skills they developed in the theatre arts class translated into their other academic classes as well, increasing focus, confidence, and skill at relating to others” (ArtsEdSearch). Even if a class does not integrate creative arts into their daily classroom practices, having a designated theatre course is going to translate into student success. The students were able to identify skills as their
“actor’s toolbox” and stated that they were going to carry these skills with them throughout their life. While students can learn about themselves, educators should remember to utilize theatre to teach about other subject areas in the core curriculum.

The data discovered throughout this research is important and proves that theatre education is important to prevent dropouts, develop a sense of self-confidence, and truly understand academic concepts on a more in-depth level. Students should be present in their classroom interacting with their peers and thinking about the content. With the development of social media, the attention span of a human has been diminishing right before our eyes. Students are always looking to cut corners on an assignment and look up keywords on Google to get the correct answer and be done with it. Integrating theatre education prevents this from happening. They are required to look at the text or content in a thoughtful way. With some content, there will be a concrete correct answer but, they can get to that answer in a creative way.

Arts matter. Live theatre matters. Students will want to learn if their teachers inspire them to do so. Students ask all the time, “I’m never going to use this why do I have to learn it?” They have a fair point; when they are not being taught to engage with the content and only retain it for a test there really is no point to learning other than a good test score. We need to encourage students to be curious, not judgemental. When a classroom is on its feet and bringing the content material to life, they are making a muscle memory association and will be able to comprehend the information even if they are being tested on it later. Theatre education has a plethora of benefits ranging from emotional intelligence to academic achievement. After spending so many years inside due to a global pandemic, it’s time to think outside the box and give our future leaders the education they deserve.
Title: Three Branches of Government through Drama

Topic: Students will be doing a basic overview of the purpose of the US Government.

Essential Questions: What are the main responsibilities of the three branches of government

Lesson Objectives: Students will be able to understand the basic purpose of each branch of government (Specifically checks and balances)

Curriculum Framework: [8.T3] Distinguish the three branches of government (separation of powers): Congress as the legislative branch the Presidency and the executive agencies as the executive branch and the Supreme Court and other federal inferior courts as the judicial branch

Formative Assessments: Students being able to respond to other students in an accurate manner. The 5 question quiz

Materials: PPT presentation, quiz

Warm Up: In small groups, brainstorm what you know about each branch of government if anything

Procedure:
1. Share what each group talked about during their warm-up
2. Students are going to be given an overview of the essential functions of each branch.
3. In order for the students to understand the government as a whole, they need to understand how they are all connected.
   a. This lesson will focus on checks and balances.
4. Much like theatre, each part is connected and needs to work collaboratively with each other.
   a. Students are going to step into the roles of each branch of government and play a game of "fortunately, unfortunately"
   i. Students are going to be assigned the number 1, 2, or 3. (1 is Executive 2 is Legislative and 3 is Judicial Branch).
   ii. Students are going to stand in a circle telling a story about a problem that the 3 branches of government have to work through. Using their knowledge they are going to be responding to their neighbors' sentences beginning with "fortunately" or "unfortunately" to demonstrate the checks and balances that the branches have with each other.
5. Reflection Questions: How did that go? Were you able to pull knowledge from what we have learned so far and possibly things you already knew? Was it easier to say "fortunately" or "unfortunately?"
6. Students will then be asked to reflect in their small groups about their experience and how they had to adapt to their peers' responses.
7. Set the students up to be prepared to take an in-depth look at the Legislative Branch next class.

Closing/Ticket to Leave: 5-question quiz about the essential functions of the US government

Modifications/Adaptations:
Title: Three Branches of Government through Drama
Topic: What/Who is the Legislative Branch

**Essential Questions:** What are the main responsibilities of the legislative branch?

**Lesson Objectives:** Students will be able to understand the basic duties that the Legislative Branch oversees

**Curriculum Framework:** [8.T3] Distinguish the three branches of government (separation of powers): Congress as the legislative branch, the Presidency and the executive agencies as the executive branch and the Supreme Court and other federal inferior courts as the judicial branch

**Formative Assessments:** Students being able to respond to other students in an accurate manner. The 5 question quiz

**Materials:** PPT presentation, quiz

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**Warm Up:** In small groups, discuss what you learned about the Legislative Branch yesterday and what you hope to expand on today.

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**Procedure:**
1. Students will share their questions or expansion requests with the class and the knowledge they learned yesterday.
2. Presentation on the functions of the Legislative branch. Who are they? How many people are in the House/Senate-- what are their jobs? How do they balance out the other two branches?
3. Students will be tasked with becoming the "expert" of the legislative branch.
   a. There will be 3 volunteers and we are going to present as if we were on a talk show host.
   b. The teacher will be the host and will be asking them questions about the knowledge they have just learned from the presentation. They are able to phone a friend from the audience or if another "expert" knows the answer they may pass it on.
   c. This is a way for them to step into the roles of the legislation and think about what they are doing on a daily basis.
   d. Reflection Questions: How do the House and Senate work together as you did to answer the question? What about the exercise will help you remember this information?
4. In our legislature, there is a lot of miscommunication and disagreements when it comes to House and Senate discussions. In order to display that sometimes, they do not always agree- We are going to play Decision Alley. There is going to be a student walking through the center of an alley of students. One side is going to be the House and one side is going to be the Senate. Each side has to convince the party in the middle to share their opinion on some task at hand. (Rotate so a decent number of students have the chance to participate in different ways)
   a. Reflection Questions: How did you feel about being the person in the alley? Was it tough to make your decision? People in the house and senate, did you agree with the opinion that was assigned to you? (This could reflect Democrats and Republicans disagreeing being in the same Senate or House.)

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**Closing/Ticket to Leave:** 5-question quiz about the essential functions of the Legislative Branch

**Modifications/Adaptations:**
Title: Three Branches of Government through Drama
Topic: What/Who is the Executive Branch

**Essential Questions:** What are the main responsibilities of the executive branch?

**Lesson Objectives:** Students will be able to understand the basic duties that the Executive Branch oversees

**Curriculum Framework:** [8.T3] Distinguish the three branches of government (separation of powers): Congress as the legislative branch the Presidency and the executive agencies as the executive branch and the Supreme Court and other federal inferior courts as the judicial branch

**Formative Assessments:** Students being able to respond to other students in an accurate manner. The 5 question quiz

**Materials:** PPT presentation, quiz

**Warm Up:** In small groups, discuss what you learned about the Executive Branch and brainstorm any questions you may have about this branch.

**Procedure:**
1. Students will share their questions or expansion requests with the class and the knowledge they learned yesterday.
2. Presentation on the functions of the Executive branch. What is it? How do they balance out the other two branches?
3. Students are going to become speaking objects of the West Wing. They are going to be tasked with deciding what object think exemplifies the Executive Branch, it can be the President or advisor related. a. The students are going to then have the chance to draw these objects. b. The students will have to brainstorm a brief conversation that the object might have overheard and share it with the class. (They have the option to make it a descriptive paragraph or script style) If the seal in the oval office could talk, what would it say? c. Reflection Questions: What made you choose this object? What is the significance of the relationship between Presidents and Advisors? Do these objects hold a lot of symbolism?
4. Students are going to be playing a game known as "Dinner Party."
   a. I will have prepared pieces of paper to hand out to each student of different advisors and secretaries that reside in the Executive Branch.
   b. Students will only be able to use the knowledge they have gathered from these handouts/what we learned in the presentation about their assigned "character."
   c. Students will walk about the room speaking to each other as these people discuss policy, their job description, and characteristics that would mostly only pertain to their characters.
   d. Reflection Questions: Do you have any guesses on who was what in the Executive Branch? What did you talk about? What sort of clues were given to you?

**Closing/Ticket to Leave:** 5-question quiz about the essential functions of the Executive Branch

**Modifications/Adaptations:**
Title: Three Branches of Government through Drama  
Topic: What/Who is the Judicial Branch

**Essential Questions:** What are the main responsibilities of the Judicial branch?

**Lesson Objectives:** Students will be able to understand the basic duties that the Judicial Branch oversees.

**Curriculum Framework:** [8.T3] Distinguish the three branches of government (separation of powers): Congress as the legislative branch, the Presidency as the executive branch, and the Supreme Court and other federal courts as the judicial branch.

**Formative Assessments:** Students being able to respond to other students in an accurate manner. The 5 question quiz

**Materials:** PPT presentation, quiz

**Warm Up:** In small groups, discuss what you learned about the Judicial Branch and brainstorm any questions you may have about this branch.

**Procedure:**
1. Students will share their questions or expansion requests with the class and the knowledge they learned yesterday.
2. Presentation on the functions of the Judicial branch. What is it? Who is it? How do they balance out the other two branches? What is their main job?
3. Students are going to role-play being a member of the Supreme Court. The teacher will assign them a "bill/law" that they need to discuss if they should approve or decline.
   - Students are encouraged to use their notes as a guide
   - They are required to give reasoning to whatever way they are trying to sway their other members of the Supreme Court
   - *Reflection Questions: What do we think the Supreme Court has voted on recently? Can you name any instances that you remember the Supreme Court disagreeing on something in recent years?*
4. Students will be tasked with reviewing a case of cheating on a test *(Ensure that no names or subject matter relate to your classroom to prevent finger-pointing on a personal level)*
   - Students will have to review evidence as a class given to them by the teacher.
   - Carefully examine and discuss in an orderly manner
   - Determine your ruling and present it to the teacher based on your notes and evidence.
   - *Reflection Questions: What from the evidence pushed you to this verdict? Did you have difficulty coming to a conclusion as a class?*

**Closing/Ticket to Leave:** 5-question quiz about the essential functions of the Judicial Branch

**Modifications/Adaptations:**
Title: Three Branches of Government through Drama
Topic: Functions of the Government

**Essential Questions:** What is the typical procedure of something getting passed through the branches of government

**Lesson Objectives:** Students will be able to understand the process that a bill/agenda has to go through in our government system.

**Curriculum Framework:** [8.T3] Distinguish the three branches of government (separation of powers): Congress as the legislative branch the Presidency and the executive agencies as the executive branch and the Supreme Court and other federal inferior courts as the judicial branch

**Formative Assessments:** Students will be able to successfully carry an agenda through the three branches of government

**Materials:** Agendas, Bills, and papers provided by the teacher. Notes from previous classes.

**Warm Up:** Writing Assignment You are a citizen of the United States. You would like to see a change in your legislation for an idea that you have it can be as silly or as legitimate as you want it. Write what process you would have to go through to get this through all three branches of government

**Procedure:**
1. Students will have the opportunity to share what they worked on during their warm-up. What bills did you agree with? How would you edit it (constructively) to get it pushed through to the government?
2. The class will split up into the three branches of government.
   a. The Legislative branch will be given three bills. They will review and decide which one they would like to put through to the Executive Branch.
   b. The Executive Branch will then review the bill and decide if they would like to put it through to the Judicial Branch or veto it.
   c. If they approve, then it moves to the Judicial Branch for review, if they veto the law, then the legislative branch has the opportunity to modify the bill or send it over the Executive Branch’s veto.
   d. When the Judicial Branch is given a bill to review, they can either approve or deny and the cycle will continue until the three branches have reached an agreement.
   e. Reflection Questions: How are you feeling after that? What were the challenges that arose during the activity? Did you have more difficulty agreeing within your group or with other branches?
3. As a closing activity of the unit, students are going to be asked to write a monologue as if they were a member of whatever branch they were in the activity about their experience. Discuss your basic duties and how they were tested during the activity.
   a. Students will be given the option to share their monologues

**Closing/Ticket to Leave:** Name one new thing you learned today or discuss one thing you enjoyed about a classmates monologue with the class.

**Modifications/Adaptations:**
Title: Organization in Living Things  
Topic: Students will learn what the Digestive and Respiratory systems are and how they work

**Essential Questions:** What are the functions of digestive system?  

**Curriculum Framework:**  
6.MS-LS1-3. Construct an argument supported by evidence that the body systems interact to carry out essential functions of life.

**Lesson Objectives:** Students will understand how the digestive and respiratory systems work inside their own bodies.

**Materials:** PPT presentation on the digestive system, worksheet, bodies

**Warm Up:** *Writing assignment* what do you know about the functions of your digestive system? If you don't know, what do you think these words mean?

**Formative Assessments:** Are the students' responses to thought tracking accurate to the function of the part they are portraying? Ticket to leave Quiz

**Procedure:**  
1. Discuss what the students have written down in a large group.  
2. Explain the function of the Digestive System using a diagram.  
   a. The digestive system consists of the parts of the body that work together to turn food and liquids into the building blocks and fuel that the body needs.  
3. Students are then going to break up into small groups and fill in a worksheet labeling the digestive system and the functions of each part.
4. Each group is going to be tasked with making a *tableau* of one part of the digestive system.  
   a. Once the tableau is made, I will conduct *thought tracking* on each of the students. The students will be asked to make a noise that they think that part of the digestive system makes or a sentence/line describing what that part of the system is doing.
5. Ask them reflection questions asking *How did your section of the system connect to the other parts? If your section was not working, how would it affect your other parts of the system?*  
6. Once the students have a grasp on their section of the system, I will ask them to add movement and pantomime how the system moves with each other.

**Closing/Ticket to Leave:** Quick 5-question quiz on the different parts of the digestive system.

**Modifications/Adaptations:**
Essential Questions: What are the functions of the respiratory system?

Lesson Objectives: Students will understand how the respiratory system works inside their own bodies.

Curriculum Framework:
6.MS-LS1-3. Construct an argument supported by evidence that the body systems interact to carry out essential functions of life.

Materials:

Warm Up: Writing assignment what do you know about the functions of your respiratory system?

Formative Assessments:

Procedure:
1. Share the writing assignment with the class and what was written down.
2. View diagrams and presentation on the Respiratory system and its functions.
3. Students will complete a worksheet in small groups labeling the names of each part and what it does.
4. As a large group, students will be asked to create a soundscape of what the parts of the Respiratory system sound like. This can range from deep breathing, snorting, sneezing (appropriately), etc.
   a. Reflection Questions: Where were you making these noises from meaning what part of the respiratory system do they typically come from? Why do you think they make this noise?
5. A huge part of yoga comes from your breathing. Students will engage in Sun Salutation. They will be told to listen to their breathing and feel it as it goes through each part of the respiratory system. We will end this section with a guided meditation and focusing on their breathing
   a. Reflection Questions: Where did you feel your breath moving to and from? What parts of the respiratory system are connected to the digestive system?

Closing/Ticket to Leave: Quick 5-question quiz on the functions of the respiratory system.

Modifications/Adaptations: If students cannot participate in the yoga exercise then they will just be asked to sit criss-cross apple sauce and practice breathing with the class.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Questions:</th>
<th>What are the functions of the circulatory system?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Objectives:</td>
<td>Students will understand how the circulatory system works inside their own bodies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Framework:</td>
<td>6.MS-LS1-3. Construct an argument supported by evidence that the body systems interact to carry out essential functions of life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials:</td>
<td>PPT presentation, worksheet, notebook, pencils, bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm Up: Writing assignment</td>
<td>What do you know about the functions of your circulatory system?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative Assessments:</td>
<td>Students will be able to create a cohesive scene based off of what they know from the pre-activity discussion. The ticket to leave quiz.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedure:**
1. Share the writing assignment with the class and what was written down.
2. View diagrams and presentations on the Circulatory system and its functions.
3. Students will complete a small group worksheet labeling each part's name and what it does.
4. The students in small groups will be assembling for a meeting about the circulatory system. They are going to be playing the different roles of each part and discussing that there could be a problem with their system. Using their knowledge, they have to figure out a dialogue of 2-5 minutes on how they can function properly.
   a. Students will present their scripts of the conversation that each circulatory system had with each other.
   b. **Reflection Questions:** How were you able to connect each part to work cohesively together, were you able to create the script with ease?
5. Now the students have worked as a group to create a scene using their words, I will now ask them to create a pantomime of the circulatory system pumping through the body. The students will then be encouraged to add sound through side coaching.
   a. **Reflection Questions:** How did you work as a group to move around the circulatory system? What did you learn about the system when you put it into your body?

**Closing/Ticket to Leave:** Quick 5-question quiz on the functions of the respiratory system.

**Modifications/Adaptations:** If students cannot participate in the yoga exercise then they will just be asked to sit criss-cross apple sauce and practice breathing with the class.
Title: Organization of Living Things
Topic: Students will learn what the functions of the lymphatic system is.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Questions: What are the functions of the lymphatic system?</th>
<th>Lesson Objectives: Students will be able to understand the functions of the lymphatic system.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Framework: 6.MS-LS1-3. Construct an argument supported by evidence that the body systems interact to carry out essential functions of life.</td>
<td>Formative Assessments: 5-Question quiz, students will be able to give accurate answers during the hot seat activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials: PPT presentation, worksheet, quiz, pencils, notebooks, bodies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Warm Up:** *Writing assignment* what do you know about the functions of your lymphatic system?

**Procedure:**
1. Share the writing assignment responses and discuss them as a large group.
2. Presentation and diagrams discussing the functions and names of each part of the Lymphatic system.
3. Students are going to become parts of the Lymphatic system attacking white blood cells by using *millling and seething*.
   a. Students will be tasked with moving around the space. There will be sticky notes placed throughout the room. Using their soft focus, they must avoid bumping into each other and seeing the sticky notes around the room, and grabbing them as they move around the space. (The reason why we're using soft focus is to resemble the way they fight diseases out of instinct.
   b. *Reflection Questions:* How many sticky notes were you able to pick up? Was it difficult to use your soft focus?
4. Using the knowledge we have discussed, we are going to *hot-seat* the members of the lymphatic system with questions pertaining to how they combat diseases and what infections/diseases they combat

**Closing/Ticket to Leave:** Quick 5-question quiz on the lymphatic system

**Modifications/Adaptations:**
Title: Organization of Living Things
Topic: Students will learn what the functions of the Skeletal system is.

Essential Questions: What are the functions of the skeletal system?

Lesson Objectives: Students will be able to understand the functions of the skeletal system.

Curriculum Framework:
6.MS-LS1-3. Construct an argument supported by evidence that the body systems interact to carry out essential functions of life.

Formative Assessments: Students will be able to present a good representation of the section in their tableau

Materials: PPT presentation, worksheet, quiz, pencils, notebooks, bodies

Warm Up: Writing assignment what do you know about the functions of your Skeletal system?

Procedure:
1. Share the writing assignments and discuss them as a large group.
2. Give a presentation and diagram discussing the Skeletal system and its purpose
3. Students will be given a worksheet that they need to fill out with the names of the skeletal system and provided definitions of each part.
4. The students are going to be doing the human knot exercise to imitate the central framework that is the Skeletal System.
   a. Reflection Questions: How can we relate this exercise to the Skeletal System? Is it easy to find connections and ways to unravel them?
5. We will be employing tableau again and the students are going to be separated into small groups and assigned a section of the Skeletal system. The students will have to create a frozen picture of that section of the skeletal section making sure to use their bodies to mimic the curvature and lines of the section.
   a. Reflection Questions: What part of the skeletal system do you think would be the easiest to demonstrate? What is the function of each of these sections? Do they move differently than other parts?

Closing/Ticket to Leave: 5-question quiz on the Skeletal system

Modifications/Adaptations:
Title: Organization of Living Things
Topic: Students will learn what the functions of the muscular system is.

**Essential Questions:** What are the functions of the muscular system?

**Lesson Objectives:** Students will be able to understand the functions of the muscular system.

**Curriculum Framework:**
6.MS-LS1-3. Construct an argument supported by evidence that the body systems interact to carry out essential functions of life.

**Formative Assessments:** 5-Question quiz, students will be able to give responses during the activity.

**Materials:** PPT presentation, worksheet, quiz, pencils, notebooks, bodies

**Warm Up:** *Writing assignment* what do you know about the functions of your muscular system?

**Procedure:**
1. Share the writing assignment responses and discuss them as a large group.
2. Presentation and diagrams discussing the functions and names of each part of the muscular system.
3. Students will be speaking as different muscles in the body. They will be tasked with creating a monologue based on their functions and where they are located.
   a. We will be sharing these in front of the class (if you are not comfortable with presenting your entire monologue, then you may choose one sentence)
   b. Once we have heard pieces from each person's muscles, the class will work together to put together all of their monologues to create one cohesive piece about how all of the muscles in the system are connected.
   c. *Reflection Questions:* *Was it difficult trying to figure out how each muscle went together? How were you able to choose sections to highlight in the cohesive piece?*

**Closing/Ticket to Leave:** Quick 5-question quiz on the muscular system

**Modifications/Adaptations:** If the student does not feel comfortable sharing their monologue they may share a word related to the muscular system
Title: Organization of Living Things  
Topic: Students will learn what the functions of the nervous system is.

**Essential Questions:** What are the functions of the nervous system?  

**Curriculum Framework:**  
6.MS-LS1-3. Construct an argument supported by evidence that the body systems interact to carry out essential functions of life.

**Lesson Objectives:** Students will be able to understand the functions of the nervous system.

**Formative Assessments:** 5-Question quiz, students will be able to give responses during the activity.

**Materials:** PPT presentation, worksheet, quiz, pencils, notebooks, bodies

**Warm Up:** *Writing assignment* what do you know about the functions of your nervous system?

**Procedure:**
1. Share the writing assignment responses and discuss them as a large group.
2. Presentation and diagrams discussing the functions and names of each part of the nervous system.
3. We will be employing a *guided visualization* tool. The nervous system is very easily felt through pulses throughout the body. The students will be guided through a story with their eyes closed asking them to activate each part of their nervous system as we discuss them. When the students employ their focus, they should be able to hone in on each nerve.
   a. *Reflection Questions:* What was your experience like going through each nerve? Could you feel some more than others? What parts of the nervous system do you notice are engaged during the day?
4. The students will be tasked with creating a *pantomime* of the nervous system at work retrieving impulses and all of its functions. I will then employ *thought tracking* again for the students to get a better idea of what each nerve’s specific job is.
   a. *Reflection Questions:* How were you able to make connections to your other students to engage in making a nervous system?

**Closing/Ticket to Leave:** Quick 5-question quiz on the muscular system

**Modifications/Adaptations:**
**Title:** Organization of Living Things  
**Topic:** Students will be able to understand the connections that the human organ systems have to each other

<table>
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<th>Essential Questions:</th>
<th>Lesson Objectives: Students will be able to understand the functions of the organ systems and how they work together.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do our organs work together?</td>
<td>Formsative Assessments: Students will craft a script based on their knowledge they learned from the PPT and worksheets</td>
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**Curriculum Framework:**  
6.MS-LS1-3. Construct an argument supported by evidence that the body systems interact to carry out essential functions of life.

| Materials: | PPT presentation, worksheet, quiz, pencils, notebooks, bodies |

**Warm Up:** Generate a list of words in your small groups that you think pertain to all of the organ systems.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Share the list of words each group generated as a whole class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Students are going to be asked to gather all of their worksheets pertaining to each organ system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The class is going to be split up again into small groups and they are going to be asked to use the definitions and knowledge that they have gathered throughout the unit as source material.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Each group will collaborate to create a script explaining the functions of the organ systems and how they work together to create a healthy body.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4. This will take the whole class period and they are required to use body movements like the ones that we have used in class (tableau, moving pictures) to help assist in the explanation of how the systems work together.</td>
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<td>5. The students will get another class period to rehearse and block their scenes demonstrating the organ systems and we will present next class.</td>
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**Closing/Ticket to Leave:** Name one thing that you enjoyed from each scene and share with the class, did it help you understand something better?  

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Title: Organization of Living Things
Topic: Students will be able to understand the connections that the human organ systems have to each other

**Essential Questions:** What do our organs work together?

**Lesson Objectives:** Students will be able to understand the functions of the organ systems and how they work together.

**Curriculum Framework:**
6.MS-LS1-3. Construct an argument supported by evidence that the body systems interact to carry out essential functions of life.

**Formative Assessments:** Students will craft a script based on their knowledge they learned from the PPT and worksheets

**Materials:** PPT presentation, worksheet, quiz, pencils, notebooks, bodies

**Warm Up:** Generate a list of words in your small groups that you think pertain to all of the organ systems.

**Procedure:**
1. Share the list of words each group generated as a whole class.
2. Students are going to be asked to gather all of their worksheets pertaining to each organ system.
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**Closing/Ticket to Leave:** Name one thing that you enjoyed from each scene and share with the class, did it help you understand something better?

**Modifications/Adaptations:**
Works Cited


“Process Drama: Taking a Walk in Someone Else’s Shoes.” The Kennedy Center, 2019, www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/articles-