

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
SANTA CRUZ

**Boal the System Over**

The efficacy of dramatic play as a teaching tool in secondary classrooms

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF THE ARTS

in

THEATRE ARTS

by

**Alyssa M. Pierce**

December 2018

The thesis of Alyssa Pierce  
is approved:

---

Professor Michael M. Chemers, Chair

---

Professor Patty Gallagher

---

Professor Kathy Foley

---

Lori Kletzer  
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

Copyright © by  
Alyssa M. Pierce  
2018

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	iv
Acknowledgements & Dedication .....	v
Introduction .....	1
Is there a Better System? .....	9
Boal in the Classroom.....	15
My Project & Theatre of the Oppressed .....	17
What Actually Happened: Lesson Plans VS. Reality .....	18
Analysis .....	34
Figures .....	40
Evaluation: Why this “Play” Now?.....	42
Conclusion.....	46
Appendix A: Games and Exercises .....	50
Appendix B: Lesson Plans & Notes .....	52
Appendix C: Worksheet Samples .....	62
Appendix D: Survey & Statistics.....	66
Works Cited .....	71

## Abstract

### **Boal the System Over:**

The efficacy of dramatic play as a teaching tool in secondary classrooms  
by Alyssa M. Pierce

*A Nation at Risk*, published in 1983, led to a number of reformations to the United States education system with the goal of increasing the ranking of US education on a global level. These reformations have led to a test-based “banking” model of education which does not adequately support underrepresented and non-normative students. Moreover, it fails to support all students by encouraging rote memorization without supporting comprehension or practical skill-building.

Using Paulo Freire’s critique of traditional education systems, and the pedagogically focused theatrical tools of Augusto Boal, I examine the efficacy of integrating arts-based learning practices into US high school classrooms with the objective to provide more diverse learning tools and improve the quality of education for disadvantaged students. I student-taught in a Monterey Bay area high school and found that many of the obstacles I faced in implementing such a program were systemic in nature and supported Freire’s critiques.

## Acknowledgements & Dedication

I would like to thank Professors Patty Gallagher, Gary Young, Micha Cardenas, Elizabeth Sewensen, Cynthia Ling Lee and Michael Chemers for providing me with a great well of guidance and support. I would also like to thank Professor Kathy Foley for providing the opportunity to work through the ArtsBridge program.

I would like to thank my community of peers at UCSC. In particular I would like to thank Victoria Gardiner, Claire Ganem, and Quest Sky Zeidler for always being ready for shenanigans and for helping me to laugh at my failures and celebrate my successes. I would like to thank Sarah Cowell for making sure I was never alone.

I would like to thank Riley for sticking by my side and believing in my work even in the moments that I pulled them into a maelstrom of bad fortune. I love you.

This research is dedicated to and likely would not have come to be without Whitney Grummon (1965 -2018) who taught high school English, but also taught her students how to find humor, empathy, activism, passion, and joy in their classes. She challenged her students to think outside of their own experiences, to face difficult tasks, to support one another, to dare to do things that made them uncomfortable, and to fight for the things they believed in.

## Introduction

Using Paulo Freire's critique of traditional education systems, and the pedagogically focused theatrical tools of Augusto Boal (which are heavily influenced by Freire's methodologies), I will examine the efficacy of infusing US high school classrooms with innovative arts-based learning practices with the objective to provide more diverse resources and improve the quality of education for disadvantaged students. After examining some of the systemic problems with the United States Education System that pose challenges to teaching non-normative and disadvantaged students, I attempted to take this arts-focused methodology into a high school 9th grade classroom with the assistance of the ArtsBridge program.

ArtsBridge is a national program that aims to bring the arts into K-12 classrooms using ambassadors who are current students at local universities. These ambassadors spend at least 24 hours in a local classroom over the course of a 12 to 15-week period, teaching a module in their<sup>1</sup> area of expertise. This module can be designed by the student alone with varying degrees of input from the teacher, or the student and teacher can work together to create a module based on the needs of the school. The program aims to bring arts back into schools where programs have been cut or eliminated, especially in low-income and underserved districts. ArtsBridge

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this paper I will use the singular they in lieu of gendering subjects or using he/she, s/he, or he or she when referring to a hypothetical subject for the sake of inclusivity and clarity

requires ambassadors to administer pre- and post-tests to gauge the effectiveness of the teaching modules.

The ArtBridge program is designed to support student-teachers in what might be their first experience teaching in a primary or secondary classroom by offering these students a handbook<sup>2</sup> with examples of lesson plans, information on how to structure a pre/posttest, and tips on how to engage students and teachers alike. The program offers the student-teacher participants a stipend upon completion of the program, but funding was not available for use towards the workshops themselves. This did not present an issue for me as I was frequently designing exercises that did not require any extraneous resources. The student-teacher is typically assigned to a classroom by the program coordinator, but in this case, I was asked if I could set up my own classroom visitation because I had connections with a school in Castroville, California approximately 40 miles South of UC Santa Cruz.

Because the United States academic system has shifted towards a test-focused atmosphere, performing arts have taken a backseat, leaving students in a cycle that inadvertently encourages students to memorize information prior to tests without retaining the information after the test is over. Even before I took my lesson plans into the classroom, I found myself up against some challenges, but I found that many of these problems were systemic and had little to nothing to do with my lesson plans. Many of the problems I encountered once I was in the classroom connected back to the

---

<sup>2</sup> I did not receive this document until the morning before my last visit to the classroom and was therefore unable to use these resources in my own planning

same systemic issues criticized by Paulo Freire, and later by education scholars and journalists like Marion Brady and Ronald Wolk who have criticized the reform in US education over the last 35 years.

In the following pages I will explain my methodology for devising coursework around Boalian classroom techniques and, using data gathered from my ArtsBridge courses which I analyze through a Freirean lens, I will be able to describe some of the most difficult challenges facing innovative or alternative programming in arts in education.

### **Education Reformation and Standardized Testing in North America**

The United States education system has seen several reformations over the last 35 years since the National Commission on Excellence in Education published *A Nation at Risk: the imperative for educational reform* in 1983. The No Child Left Behind Act was born from this document and was signed into law by George W. Bush in 2002. The Act was intended to increase the level of progress made by North American schools in order to make United States education more competitive on an international level. The underlying assumption of No Child Left Behind was that all students should be able to complete the same milestones of learning at the same age or grade level.

The Act was immediately criticized for its pedagogical tone-deafness. In an article originally published in the *Orlando Sentinel* in 2002, “School Tests: A Circus,”<sup>3</sup> educator and education journalist Marion Brady critiqued the Act on pedagogical grounds:

Given enough drill, given painful penalties for failure, a reading program [for example] can look successful. Hammer hard enough, and words may stick in memory long enough to allow the kid to recognize familiar phrases on multiple choice tests. But if reading means making sense of what’s being read, bubbling in a multiple-choice test item correctly doesn’t necessarily prove anything. (41)

While multiple choice tests can be designed in such a way that they check for learned skills, this is most often not the case, and students must instead rely on rote memorization. Brady in another 2002 article, “What Do You Do When You Don’t Know the Answer”<sup>4</sup> that, “if we’re trying to create students who are ‘learners’ rather than merely ‘learned,’ ... Instead of, ‘What’s the answer?’ the tests should ask, ‘What do you do when you don’t *know* the answer?’ And then, ‘What do you do when *nobody* knows the answer?’” (44) which fails to teach students the skills they need in order to learn outside of the classroom. Brady’s opinions of the Act did not improve over time as evidenced by his 2005 article, “Standardized Tests: A road map to nowhere?”<sup>5</sup> in which he explains that:

---

<sup>3</sup> For the original article see <http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2002-02-06/news/0202060053>

<sup>4</sup> For the original article see <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/os-xpm-2002-03-30-0203300184-story.html>

<sup>5</sup> For the original article see <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/os-xpm-2005-08-04-brady04-story.html>

[Standardized tests] confuse cultural differences and ignorance, aren't keyed to or adult success, lend themselves to political game-playing, cost enormous amounts of money, short-change non-tested fields of study, deaden or penalize creativity, hand local control of education over to faceless corporate interests, undercut teacher professionalism, divert attention from myriad non-educational factors affecting school performance, and are crude measures of even simple abilities. (92)

Brady and many other educational experts recognized the inherent ineffectiveness and perils of the act and predicted that it would only further divide the country by ensuring that access to quality education would be the exclusive purview of the wealthy.

Unfortunately, no meaningful reforms have appeared since, and the current system of education in the United States still fails to support all students in an effective and efficient way. Disadvantaged students who do not have the same support or external resources as their more affluent classmates are less likely to succeed in the classroom.<sup>6</sup> This standardized style of education prevents students from realizing their full potential because they are trained to focus on rote memorization of material rather than on the comprehension and application of ideas. National graduation rates prove that certain demographics are not being supported well enough because in 2011, “While White and Asian American students had graduation rates at 93.5 and 83 percent, respectively, the rates for African American and Hispanic students landed at 66.1 and 71.4 percent, respectively.” (Welner and Carter 3). This statistic is also reflected in standardized test scores, but Hispanic and African American students are not the only students who are affected. These achievement gaps affect many

---

<sup>6</sup> Comprehensive information about the achievement (as measured by nation-wide standardized testing) of demographics by year, state, district, and school can be found on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) website, <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>.

underrepresented students including migrant students, students from low-income families, students whose first language is a language other than English, non-neurotypical students, homeless students and foster youth, among other demographics.<sup>7</sup> The North American education system not only provides these students with a poor foundation for retaining information long-term, but also alienates students who learn in non-normative ways and students who need additional support for other reasons. This educational system does not provide the scaffolding to allow its students to succeed.

What explains this failure? Ronald Wolk, author of *Wasted Minds*, a critique of the United States education system published in 2011, writes that:

*A Nation at Risk* completely missed the real reasons for the poor performance of America's students and schools. It did not even mention poverty, race, urban schools, new immigrants or the impact of popular culture, all of which are major contributing causes of most of today's educational problems (Wolk 17-18)

This refusal to address the root causes of the educational issues in North America contributes to an inability to make any headway in fixing those issues. On the contrary, there is significant pressure placed upon students to adhere to a particular model of “success”, which ignore these root causes and turn classrooms and schools into competitive environments that are not conducive to learning. After *A Nation at Risk* came many iterations of the same idea; standardization that raises the expectations

---

<sup>7</sup> More information about nation-wide test scores and the fluctuation of achievement gaps can be found on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) website, <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>

placed on students and teachers, and threatens consequences for those students, teachers or schools that do not achieve a particular caliber of work. Wolk calls this a “get tough” approach to education and explains that it is ineffective because:

Teachers claim that they routinely see students who can pass state tests but cannot apply what they “learned” to anything that is not in a test format. In other words, the test becomes an end in itself. Students pass tests but are inept at ordinary school tasks like looking up a word in the dictionary. (37)

Wolk notes that that, “No Child Left Behind intended to focus on the plight of the disadvantaged, but its emphasis on increased testing and accountability has probably widened the educational gulf between the haves and have-nots” (21).

Despite these cogent warnings, the ineffective and discriminatory “get tough” strategy remains in the mainstream of educational reform to the detriment of economically disadvantaged and educationally non-normative students. As part of No Child Left behind, schools that failed to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) faced additional pressure to meet or exceed the AYP in future years because if they failed to do so they could lose significant funding and be forced to replace art and other elective classes with remedial English and Math classes.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, not only are students in individual classrooms struggling with the standards derived from systems like No Child Left Behind, but sometimes entire classrooms or entire schools suffer fiscal punishment for poor performance which further impedes their ability to provide quality education

---

<sup>8</sup> With the recent shift from No Child Left Behind to Every Student Succeeds, Academic Yearly Progress and Program Improvement are no longer in use as of Fall 2017, but there is not enough data to determine whether the new laws are more successful in creating better assessments and providing better support for underrepresented students

because of learning conditions, teacher availability, poor teacher training, and a myriad of other factors that prevent students from learning at their full potential. This “reverse Robin-Hood” scheme puts schools that have a high concentration of low-income students at greater risk to suffer consequences. Wolk recognizes that, “until a high-quality education is available to all minority children, standards-based education is a form of discrimination” (29). Children and young adults from all different walks of life cannot be expected to complete the same standardized goals at the same age if students from disadvantaged backgrounds are not provided with the proper support and:

Many, if not most, of the students at the lower end of the achievement gap are minority students who come from single parent homes and live below or near the poverty line. Unlike their more affluent peers, their environment has not prepared them for school, and because they are not ready (and the schools are not ready for them), they tend to fall further and further behind and become mired in a culture of failure. (29)

At present, the standardization and testing-focused atmosphere in North American public schools alienates under-resourced communities and divorces those students from channels of learning that do not fully meet their needs. Wolk extrapolates that *A Nation at Risk's* “greatest contribution was that it created an opportunity for a much overdue assessment of the purpose and goals of public education in a democracy and the structure and culture of public schools.” (18). Instead of students being taught how to think and solve problems, they are being taught to regurgitate information. This drives the idea that students should be learning problem-solving skills that will aid them outside of the classroom instead of being taught trivia by rote memorization.

## Is there a Better System?

Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (1921-1997) devoted much of his life to developing an educational method that would support underrepresented students rather than force those students to catch up with the system. As a low-income student himself, Freire had a very well-defined idea of the kind of resources and large-scale organizational adjustments that could be made to better support students like himself who were not well-served by the education system in Brazil in the 1960's. In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire defines oppression<sup>9</sup> as, "Any situation in which 'A' objectively exploits 'B' or hinders his and her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person" (55) and explains how this kind of relationship can appear in a classroom with the teacher acting as the oppressor, often without meaning to or realizing that their behavior is non-inclusive. One thing that Freire took particular issue with was the focus on what he called the "banking method" of education in which:

Education ... becomes an act of depositing... Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat. This is the 'banking' concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. (72)

Freire preferred what he called the problem-posing concept of education.

---

<sup>9</sup> While the presence of oppression in United States classrooms is certainly very different than that of Brazil in the 1960's and 70's where Freire and Boal conducted the bulk of their research, there is an inherent oppression in any education system where the banking system of education is utilized.

Freire suggested that rather than ignoring environmental and economic discrepancies between educational communities, education should instead be a dialogue between the oppressed and the oppressor; one in which teachers and students are given an opportunity to learn with one another, and one in which students and teachers become collaborators to create a more holistic method of learning. Freire observes that “from the outset, [the educator’s] efforts must coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization... To achieve this, they must be partners of the students in their relations with them.” (75) Freire goes on to explain how this approach allows students to engage with the material they are learning and make connections to real-world problems:

Students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that challenge. Because they apprehend the challenge as interrelated to other problems within a total context, not as a theoretical question, the resulting comprehension tends to be increasingly critical and thus constantly less alienated. Their response to the challenge evokes new challenges, followed by new understandings; and gradually the students come to regard themselves as committed. (81)

Reframing educational concepts as problem solving tools that continue to be valuable outside of the classroom makes the learning more valuable to the student and provides a stronger motivation for the student to engage with ideas presented in the classroom.

Heavily impacted by Freire, another Brazilian educator, Augusto Boal (1930 - 2009) developed a series of acting techniques that were designed to function both as educational tools and as accessible instruments of political change. Boal used this

system to advance the education of underrepresented communities in Brazil and has since seen an expansion into North American Theatre summits as well as influencing groups like Cardboard Citizens in the UK and the Centre for Community Dialogue and Change in India. In combination with the influence of several other ideologies including Aristotle's *Poetics*, Bertolt Brecht's *Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction*, and Konstantin Stanislavski's *Method for Actors*, Boal used Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as the underlying theoretical framework for what he called "Theatre of the Oppressed," giving it an inherent aptitude to function as an educational tool. In addition to the adaptation of these models, Boal utilized this collection of theatrical forms in many places around Brazil, and later around the world<sup>10</sup>. In each new location, allowed the participants to shape their own experiences, and add to the form in order to strengthen Theatre of the Oppressed into a comprehensive and modular system. Most of Boal's work happened in public community spaces rather than traditional classrooms, and the communities he served were comprised primarily of adults rather than adolescents.

For Boal, the educational and the artistic were inseparable from the political. In 1844, Karl Marx (1818-1883) wrote *Estranged Labour* in which he discusses the effect of working in a capitalist society, and the alienation caused by the commodification of the working class. Marx explains that:

---

<sup>10</sup> For a brief but precise timeline of some of Boal's work, see Patterson, Doug. "A Brief Biography of Augusto Boal." *Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed*. Accessed November 27, 2018. <https://ptoweb.org/aboutpto/a-brief-biography-of-augusto-boal/>.

The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labor becomes an object, an external existence, but that it exists outside him, independently, as something alien to him, and that it becomes a power on its own confronting him. It means that the life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien. (Marx Engels Archive np)

In this way, the worker is separated from their sense of self, leading to a dehumanization of the individual that can only result, for Marx, in political chaos and violence. This same sense of estrangement also affects the factory and land owners, or ruling class, although each class interacts with this alienation and is affected by it in different ways as Marx explains in chapter four of *The Holy Family*:

The propertied class and the class of the proletariat present the same human self-estrangement. But the former class feels at ease and strengthened in this self-estrangement, it recognizes estrangement as its own power and has in it the semblance of a human existence. The class of the proletariat feels annihilated in estrangement; it sees in it its own powerlessness and the reality of an inhuman existence. (Marx Engels Archive np)

Marx describes culture as a tool that obscures the potential power of the working class in order to perpetuate power structures and protect the hierarchical placement of the ruling class within a capitalist society. Marx suggests that what prevents the working class from joining together to revolt is this carefully curated culture, controlled by wealthy members of society in such a way that the working class does not even consider revolt as an option thus maintaining the rigid class structure. Marx also outlines the potential for another kind of art that flips this structure to call attention to inequalities by alienating the audience from the structure itself.

Boal places *Theatre of the Oppressed* into conversation with Marx's theories by recognizing the power of theatre to act as an alienating force on audiences and participants. Boal designed the Theatre of the Oppressed because he saw a lack of literacy and a corrupt political situation and he believed that theater had the ability to act as an inexpensive but powerful weapon and agent for change. In the introduction to *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Boal explains that:

Theater is a weapon. A very efficient weapon. For this reason one must fight for it. For this reason the ruling classes strive to take permanent hold of the theater and utilize it as a tool for domination... But the theater can also be a weapon for liberation. For that it is necessary to create appropriate theatrical forms. (ix)

The tendency for traditional theatre to contribute to a classist social rift drove Boal to develop an accessible form of theatre which would lead to an inversion of the system of obfuscation described by Marx in order to alienate the power of art from the ruling class and transfer that same power into the hands of the working class people in Brazil as a tool for communication, political change, and education.

Boal talks about the difficulty of using only language-based exercises while he was working with groups in Peru where the rate of adult literacy was low, "because of the vast number of languages and dialects spoken by its people," (120), Boal used a combination of verbal, visual and dialogue-based games in order to allow individuals of different cultural and educational backgrounds to participate in the experience together. Boal and his collaborators wanted to, "Provide literacy in both the [participant's] first language and in Spanish without forcing the abandonment of the

former in favor of the latter,” (Boal, 121) unlike the United States education system, which often forces English as Another Language students to disregard the language that they speak at home, putting them into a sink-or-swim relationship with their education.<sup>11</sup>

Boal worked under many different conditions and allowed his workshop participants to determine the content of the scenes based on their own interests and experiences. Boal worked with groups of varying social status and Boal explains that eventually:

We started to find situations where oppression was not so clear cut, yet both parties claimed to be oppressed: inside a couple, among friends, parents and children, teachers and pupils . . . confrontations that were not purely antagonistic, in the sense that conciliation was possible and desirable. In these particular cases, replacements could be made on both sides, since both sides claimed to be the oppressed party. (*Games...* 9-10).

This ambiguity between the oppressed and the oppressor opened up a new kind of dialogue through the games that Boal designed where participants existed in a liminal space between oppressor and oppressed, increasing the possibility for interaction for both parties.

In *Games for Actors and Non-actors*, Boal reflects on working with Peruvian indigenous people, “I thought: ‘I will work with these people as though they were familiar experienced actors!’ So I did, and it worked well,” and of the Royal Shakespeare Company, “I will work with them as though they were Brazilian Slum

---

<sup>11</sup>For just one example of this see García, Marcela. “Sink or Swim in an English-Only Classroom - The Boston Globe.” *BostonGlobe.com*, May 21, 2013.

people.' It worked again" (1). In this way, Boal found a sense of equality, "They are all... just human beings." (2). By approaching different demographics in the same manner with the same expectations he sent a message that their voices would be heard regardless of their backgrounds, and allowed them to recognize that the exercises, "should be done as a dialogue: receiving from others what others have created, giving them the best of our own creation" (2). In this way, Boal encouraged the participants of his workshops to share their own knowledge and skills in order to focus on what could be done when the strengths of a diverse community were combined. By treating every individual as a unique source of valuable knowledge Boal aimed to make the education, he offered accessible and beneficial to as many people as possible.

### **Boal in the Classroom**

Over the last 40 years, teachers in secondary schools all over the world have used Boal's practices in the classroom for workshops, after school, and extracurricular programs. In many cases, the schools employing these resources and approaches are nontraditional learning environments like continuation schools. Much of the research that has been done in schools using Boal's approaches have been in alternative schools or classrooms, where students have learning disabilities, deemed "at-risk" or otherwise unlikely to graduate by the district for a myriad of reasons, which seems to line up effortlessly with Boal's ideologies regarding Theatre of the Oppressed. In these situations, school administrators and, in some cases, teachers have low expectations for student achievements. The opportunity to work with kinesthetic learning techniques

can make all the difference for these students. Carol Lloyd Rozansky and Colleen Aagesen (2010) discuss the expectations for Aagesen's students from the administration of the school, explaining that:

Administrators did not expect these low-achieving readers to exhibit critical literacy. We make this assertion because the students were relegated to a class that was supposed to adhere to two reading programs: one that students and teachers found stultifying in its low level repetitious format and one that merely required students to read and answer multiple choice questions on a computer (458).

This showcases a tendency to put curriculum decisions into the hands of administrators based on their assumptions of students rather than trusting the educators who have the first-hand experience to assess student performance in the classroom. Rozansky further explains that, "Colleen attempted to make the prescribed and prescriptive reading programs interesting and engaging, they were not designed to encourage problem solving or critical thinking" (459). These programs are designed to help students who have not been successful in typical classroom settings, but rather than focusing on helping the students by offering alternatives to traditional learning outcomes, they took learning tools away from students and simplified the coursework. The act of simplifying lessons rather than making adjustments to the system in order to offer better support does not, in fact, teach, and furthermore sends a message to already disadvantaged students that they not worth teaching.

Boal's Methodologies for theatre have been utilized in educational settings and has shown enough success to be popular with certain open-minded teachers. My project was initially designed to test how Boal-inflected curricular models could be put to work

in the service of local schools. What I discovered was that the problems facing the US educational system are themselves not dependent so much on what tools are in place in the classroom as they are on inherent widespread pervasive systemic obstacles that seem designed to thwart innovation.

### **My Project & Theatre of the Oppressed**

I set out to prove that theater is capable as acting as a pedagogical tool in high school classrooms and can be integrated into existing coursework in a way that can provide students with additional learning tools, specifically aimed at increasing the presence of kinesthetic learning tools in a classroom setting and combining learning techniques in order to promote lessons that are valuable in and out of the classroom setting. I wanted to begin with the most basic building blocks and expand upon them each time I visited the classroom, beginning with breath and body awareness. I wanted to begin with the students' relationships to their own autonomy for several reasons. I expected that students would not have much, if any, exposure to theatre and would not be comfortable jumping straight into games and exercises that would require them to let go of acting "cool". I also wanted to begin with the idea that while many of us have habits that are inefficient, like holding our breath or keeping our knees locked when we stand, these habits were formed over a long period of time and we cannot expect to change them immediately. If we do choose to try to change our habits, we need to work to be aware of them on a daily basis and give ourselves time to form more efficient habits.

Through the ArtsBridge program, I first set out with the intention of guest teaching in an English language arts classroom to introduce students to techniques that would allow them to connect the literature assigned in class to modern issues being faced in their school and greater community. I designed the workshops to combine Boal's Image Theatre and concepts from Barbara Houseman's *Finding Your Voice*. My initial lesson plans had a strong focus on characterization and included concepts from various theatrical

My classroom placement was in a low-income school district with high concentrations of foster youth, people of color, and English as Another Language Students<sup>12</sup> who were often unable to engage in regular coursework. The teacher had to rely on other students to translate rather than the school or district providing resources for communication that did not require the student-translator to provide free labor in the classroom on top of her own class work.

### **What Actually Happened: Lesson Plans VS. Reality**

Day One:

During the first day of my classroom placement I began by introducing myself, and my project to the students. When administered a pre-test which was mandated by the ArtsBridge requirements to determine the level of prior knowledge students had regarding the key terms I had chosen based on my original understanding of the class

---

<sup>12</sup> Although the district I worked in, like many others, still refers to these students as ESL (English as a Second Language) Students, this is a misnomer as many of these students already speak two or more languages fluently

structure. I also included some questions regarding students' comfort speaking, presenting and asking questions in the classroom. After giving the pre-test I wanted to get the students up on their feet and engaged in a game of Zip Zap Zop<sup>13</sup> before going over a set of scenarios provided by the teacher employing techniques from Augusto Boal's Forum Theatre.

During the first period class students were hesitant to engage and refused to speak while other students were leaning against walls, talking to one another or otherwise not paying attention. I asked if anyone was comfortable improvising and one hand shot up while everyone else avoided making eye contact with me. I asked the student who raised their hand to join me at the front of the classroom and showed him one of the scenarios. I asked the student to react to my actions with the "incorrect" responses with the intention of asking the class "what could have gone better?" or "how might you have reacted differently?". He misunderstood what I was asking him to do and responded in a way that would dissolve the situation. I used this to lead into the variety of different ways that the situation could be dissolved by asking if anyone else had a different response. We talked over the remaining scenarios and I asked students to problem solve to come up with several ways to respond to each situation. Students initially responded to my questions with jokes, purposely answering questions incorrectly. I decided that if I was going to continue to use forum theatre in the first

---

<sup>13</sup> A description of games and exercises can be found in Appendix A

period class, I would need to bring in well-developed scripts in order to get students to fully engage with the material.

The second period class was tentative, but by the time we wrapped up with Zip Zap Zop, they were laughing and enjoying themselves and correcting one another when the rules were not followed. We did not have time to try the improvised scenario and jumped straight into problem-solving rather than employing more direct TO techniques. Students gave several joke answers which I treated as serious answers, asking them to support what they were saying with evidence.

---

Day Two:

Although I had initially planned to expand upon the scenarios we had talked about on the first day and go into more detail about forum theatre starting with image theatre, the teacher informed me that they would be switching units and working on career presentations the next time I came into the classroom. I asked students to list some speakers they thought were engaging and asked them to identify what tactics those speakers used to make their speeches more engaging. I asked students if they thought they could employ these same tactics in their own speeches, then I asked students to stand and pay attention to their breath as they adjusted the amount and placement of tension in their bodies.

The first period students stared at me like I was an alien and refused to do what I was asking them. Rather than expecting them to begin doing the exercises, I began to demonstrate how certain adjustments affected my ability to project or clearly articulate

what I was saying. When the first period class had extra time, I asked them how many had seen any kind of live performance and what, if anything, about the performance captured their attention. We discussed how they could use some of these aspects in their class presentations like working jokes or wordplay into the content or utilizing costumes.

The second period class dove into these same exercises and started asking questions about how they could maximize the efficiency of their breath. I asked students to note the difference in their breathing when they stood versus sitting down or lying on their backs.

---

Day Three:

I had planned to continue discussing presentation skills the next time I visited, but the date of my visit got pushed back several times and by the time that I came into the classroom again the students had finished their career presentations and the teacher informed me that the students would be starting a new unit on cyberbullying. I used this as an opportunity to revisit forum theatre and introduce image theatre based on their reactions to a film. Prior to jumping into Image Theatre, I wanted to use Whoosh as a warm up to get students moving and listening to one another, but because the students had not yet finished the film I only had about fifteen minutes to teach on this date. I led a very short demonstration with the teacher to explain image theatre, making sure to explain that images did not have to be literal and could be figurative. I asked students to come up with a list of five words in reaction to the film

they had just finished watching and to work with the other students in their table groups in order to come up with a tableau using one of the words they had come up with. I spent the remainder of the class period walking around the classroom to try to spend more one-on-one and small group time with students.

The students in the first period class were talking about anything but the assignment I'd given them, and some students blatantly ignored me as I made my rounds in the classroom. When I sat down at one table to have a conversation with a student, she put her hand in my face and turned around to talk to one of the students at the table behind her. I gave the students ten minutes to come up with an image and asked a couple of groups to present what they had come up with when there were only a few minutes of class remaining, but students talked back to me and refused to show their tableaux.

The second period class was hesitant and seemed to be unsure of where to start after I asked them to begin making tableaux. I began to walk around and asked each group what word they had chosen in reaction to the film. If they seemed to be having trouble coming up with a tableau, I sat down and worked through some of it with them, asking how the word they chose felt – did it make them want to hold tension in a particular part of their body or did it make them want to release tension entirely? Students had very little time to finalize their tableaux and only one group was able to present, but students began to ask questions and problem solve regarding the representation of abstract ideas and feelings.

---

Day Four:

My lesson plans for the next class period began with students warming up with a game of Pass the Impulse then finishing the tableaux they had begun in the previous class, responding to one another's images first without interpreting the images and just describing the elements of the images, then moving onto interpretation of the image before the group revealed the word they had chosen. Following the completion of the image theatre exercise I planned to have students revisit forum theatre with more clearly developed scenarios and character motivation. When I arrived, the teacher asked me to go over a different set of case studies and have the students fill out a worksheet.

Students in first period just waited for me to give them the answers to their worksheets and would not engage in conversations about the case studies. Students said that they would not do anything if someone they knew was in the same scenario as the case studies.

Second period students went through the scenarios quickly and students began to discuss their own experiences with cyberbullying. Students began to talk about some of the ways that they felt that adults or mentor figures in their lives might help in some of the scenarios, and the ways that it might make a situation worse in some cases.

---

Day Five:

Following the unit on Cyberbullying, students had to take a series of assessments to "learn about themselves" and the first assessment addressed their

learning style. I used this as an opportunity to engage more deeply with memorization techniques, hoping to help students prepare for their final presentations and introduce alternative tactics that might help students with material they were learning in other classes. I created a visual presentation and a worksheet for students to complete alongside it that would walk through some different techniques and tools to go along with my lesson plans. Students had difficulty seeing the presentation, so I ended up relaying a lot of the visual information verbally, asking them to look at parts of their worksheets or copying the information onto the whiteboard. I used tongue twisters as a demonstration.

After students took the assessment in period one, we had a brief discussion regarding the kinds of directions we interact with on a regular basis in and out of classroom interactions. I asked students to identify the learning styles that these directions catered to and offer suggestions of other examples that they encountered in their own lives.

The second period class spent a lot of time taking their assessment and students were hesitant to engage in the conversation until we reached the discussion about scansion and students began to speak with exaggerated stresses as they confronted the concept.

---

Day Six:

I planned to continue the previous lesson and introduce open scenes following the assessment they were scheduled to take on this date beginning with contrastive

emphasis, then moving on to open scenes. I introduced the concept of contrastive emphasis by asking if they could change the meaning of a sentence without changing, adding, subtracting words from the sentence. I had index cards with contentless scenes written on them and asked the students to try the same exercise with the lines they had to start developing an individual character and a relationship to the partner they were working with.

We switched classrooms for first period because the district could not find a substitute prior to the start of class and another teacher agreed to take the class during her free period, though she had me run the class. Students were initially rowdier than usual, but quickly realized that this teacher was not going to allow them to goof off or have their phones out during class. Students took much longer than expected to complete the assessment and got a slow start on the task that I assigned to them. Students began asking questions about the worksheet I passed out if they did not understand it as I walked around the classroom. One student who usually refused to do any work asked me to go through the open scene with her and I agreed. Some of the students were not engaging with the open scenes as I walked around, but when I sat down with individual groups and started asking questions, they began to think about the scenes. There were several groups who were really digging into what I had asked them to do and creating a scenario for the open scenes.

We moved back to the regular classroom for second period and a substitute came in and handed the class over to me. The students assumed they could get away

with wasting time and goofing off, playing games on their cell phones, or on the chromebooks while they were supposed to be completing the online assessment. They did not expect me to take charge and tell them to put their phones away. When I passed out my worksheets, several students asked for clarification, and once they understood what was being asked, they seemed to enjoy going through the contrastive emphasis. When I handed out the open scenes, I asked them to write down the character and scene information they had come up with on the back of the worksheet.

---

Day Seven:

On March 12th Students took an assessment that grouped them into one of five “personality groups” which I wanted to use as a segue into stock characters, drawing attention to the ways that these characters stay constant or change based on context. I began my lesson with a game of categories as a warm-up, asking students to toss a ball across the room and name some of the characteristics that the assessment had given them. After the students had been on their feet for a while, I asked them if they knew what stock characters were, gave a brief explanation for those who didn’t, then asked them to name the stock characters they had run across in film, TV shows, or books. Once we had a list of some of the common character archetypes, we talked about how certain characters might move, speak, or interact with others, and I introduced some of the basic viewpoints exercises designed by Mary Overlie to get students to think about how gesture and movements might be used to exaggerate or

communicate something about a character. I wanted to end this lesson with a discussion about status and begin to explore some status shifting exercises.

Period one was not interested in the activities and groaned when I asked them to get up and form a circle. They refused to participate in the viewpoints activities until the regular teacher got frustrated and intervened. We did not have time to discuss status.

Second period students almost immediately started making connections between the assessment they had taken and what I was asking them to do. Once I explained what a stock character was the students began to come up with some of their own examples and they dove right in to the viewpoints exercise. We began to talk about status but were only able to do so briefly before we ran out of time.

---

Day Eight:

I knew that I would have an abbreviated amount of time to teach the next time I visited the class. I wanted to touch back on Theatre of the Oppressed often and planned to have students complete a free-write about some issues they were passionate about that they or people in their community faced. We would then use these issues to revisit Image Theatre and then students would have some time to work with groups in order to come up with some short scripts that might work for Forum Theatre or Invisible Theatre Scenes. I was not able to use any of this lesson plan.

Period one took longer to complete the assessment than expected and they had to complete an assignment that they had not gotten to finish the day before. Some of

the students were asking questions about the protests/walkouts that were happening later in the day in response to the school shooting in Parkland. When the teacher explained that students could not be penalized for walking out of the classroom for the protest one student jokingly left.

All of the students participated in the walkout aside from one student so there was no time to complete the lesson plan. When one of the teacher's first period students walked by, she stuck her head in to ask why the student had not left yet, insulting him. The teacher told me she had given up on this student because the student had told her that she was just going to drop out anyway.

---

Day Nine:

The teacher asked me to bring in more warm ups and exercises that would help students to get more comfortable with eye contact for a presentation they had been assigned to give in pairs. On this day I asked students to warm up with a game of Pass the Clap to get them more comfortable making eye contact with one another, and to strengthen their listening and nonverbal communication skills. After this we moved on to a review of some of the things we had discussed on the second day of class about ways to make speeches more engaging, and easier for their classmates to understand. I asked the students to take each segment of their presentation and write one sentence about each, and then choose the word they thought was most important for each sentence. I introduced this as a roadmap and then had students get together with their partners and share their road maps.

Students in first period were very engaged, although when I tried to have a conversation with the full class regarding their presentations, they mostly stared at me blankly. We did not have time to play pass the clap, but instead utilized the time to have students work on portions of their presentations individually or in pairs. As I asked them to begin practicing portions of their presentations, I walked around and talked with students in smaller groups about what made them uncomfortable with presenting and was able to offer some advice regarding tricks to help them make eye contact/look up while presenting. I then shared some of the tactics I had talked about with individuals with the rest of the class and some students began asking further questions. We talked about ways in which they could prepare themselves for their speeches beyond just practicing aloud.

I had a limited amount of time in second period and we did not play pass the clap, instead prioritizing the work they needed to complete for their presentations. After walking around and helping each student come up with the road map for their presentations, I asked them to isolate the most interesting fact that they learned and share it to practice their projection and eye contact. After going around the room we talked about whether each person was clear, loud and coherent without drawing attention to anyone. I shared some presentation tips for those students who were still struggling or uncomfortable and then opened up a conversation about preparing for presentations and working with obstacles.

---

Day Ten:

Students were preparing for one-minute speeches the last several times I visited the class and I wanted to come up with some exercises that would be both interesting and helpful as they completed their assignments. Students were going to be giving a one-minute speech on an assigned topic, so I wanted to help students who might not have an interest in the topic they were assigned. In order to do this, I had students write down a list of five things they loved and five things they hated. Then I asked students to choose one thing from each list and write about each for one minute. Then I asked students which was easier to write about. Following this, I asked students to make a web connecting the items on both of their lists and then to find a way to integrate their speech topic into the web, finding ways to connect it to the things they were passionate about.

The first period students had not yet been given their topics for the one-minute speeches and many of them did not know that the one-minute speeches were going to be assigned. After I asked students to complete the polar opposites exercise, I asked them which category was easier to write or talk about and students did not want to answer. I asked students for any one item that they had on either list. I wrote that item up on the board, then asked if other students had items on their own lists that related. We did this several times before I asked them to create a web using their own lists.

Students in period two already had their topics for one-minute speeches which made the polar opposites exercise go smoothly. Students were split half and half about whether it was easier to speak on a subject they loved or hated, and they had a critical

discussion about it. After explaining the mapping exercise to them, I asked them to also find a way to include their assigned topic into the map and most students had no trouble doing this. Because students finished with this early, we went back to talking about polar opposites and came up with some examples of topics that were polarizing, and the students began to form arguments to support their view.

---

Day Eleven:

In order to get students more comfortable presenting or speaking in class without preparation I began to introduce some of the warm ups that we had not been able to use previously because of time. I began with Pass the Clap to get students listening to one another and reacting quickly, then moved on to Electric Company and finished with Thunderdome, first asking students to just act and react to one another quickly and then introducing more parameters.

Students weren't comfortable with Pass the Clap. There were students who refused to participate and students who were clapping just to distract from the activity. Students also weren't excited about Electric company. After a while, we switched to playing whoosh. Students were slightly more engaged than they had been in the past. When we played Thunderdome, there were a few students who really picked upon it, and one student remarked that he was enjoying it. The energy levels picked up and although it was only a handful of students who were fully engaged, they brought a lot more energy to the room.

Students picked up pass the clap quickly and were listening and watching one another carefully. They began to pick up electric company but seemed hesitant about it. This class was much more excited about Thunderdome. They picked up on it quickly and thoroughly enjoyed the competitive nature of the game.

---

Day Twelve:

I brought in another set of exercises to help students with nonverbal communication and listening to one another even when the cues were silent cues. I used Snap Catch as a warm up to expand on the skills they had used in the previous class to play pass the clap. Following the warm up I asked students to line themselves up silently, first by height and then by age. Then Students will work in groups of 10 and work to clap together. When they have successfully done this, they will try to jump together. Then, they will count to 10 with each student speaking only once, starting over whenever students talk over each other. Then they will repeat the exercise with their eyes closed. If they can complete the exercise in smaller groups, the full class will try the same exercise.

Students were snapping to distract from the warm-up and were having side conversations. When we did the line exercise, students were disregarding the instructions and talking. Despite this, students were unable to line up according to their birthdays. When we split the class into smaller groups, there was one group that was intently working to complete the exercise and enjoying themselves while doing so. The other group groaned each time I gave them a new direction but was eventually able

to complete the counting exercise. When I combined the two groups and asked them to complete the larger counting exercise, they talked back, complained, and refused to follow directions and the teacher had them sit silently for the last 5 minutes of class.

As the students started with the warm up, they goofed around for a few minutes but eventually they picked up on the exercise. Students were much quiet during the lines activity and were mostly successful in completing it accurately. The group on this day was small enough that we did not split the group for the later activities. To start, they communicated a bit about how they would clap, or jump at the same time, and I slowly asked them to complete the same exercise with fewer and fewer cues. I had them complete the counting exercise first with their eyes open. It took them a while to complete it and they were beginning to get frustrated. When I asked them to do the same thing with their eyes closed, a few students groaned and commented that they didn't think it was possible, but within 3 tries they had completed the exercise. They were very happy to play Thunderdome again.

---

Day Thirteen:

I planned to have the students complete the post-test, answer any final questions from students and then play Thunderdome with any remaining time since the students seemed to enjoy it previously.

Period one completed the posttest and played Thunderdome for a while before groups of students began separating themselves from the circle to socialize and we had everyone sit back at their tables and work on an assignment.

Period two was completing the posttest slowly until they heard the teacher mention Thunderdome. I had several students thank me for coming and the teacher told me that this group had been playing Thunderdome every day since I had taught it to them.

### **Analysis**

At the time of our initial meeting, the teacher I was working with made it clear to me that she was concerned about the learning outcomes for the class staying the same. I was ready to adjust my lesson plans as needed in order to accommodate. I asked her to share her regular lesson plans with me in order to best design my plans with the learning outcomes in mind but received very little information from her prior to the start of my first day teaching. I quickly realized that there were going to be days that I would have to change my plans on the fly and that no matter how many emails I sent, there was no way for me to guarantee that I was getting all the information that I needed in order to prevent this from happening. While this prevented me from being able to implement my lesson plans in full as they had been designed, it also told me a lot about the state of the classroom. The teacher felt the need to provide an equal experience to all of her students in the sense that she wanted the classes to complete the same assignments, watch the same videos, and take the same assessments.

In relation to this goal, I quickly realized that each class was going to react very differently to both the normal classwork and the units I had designed. Period one was an early morning class. From the initial survey, I found that most of the students in

period one were extremely uncomfortable speaking in front of a group. There were several students that were second language learners or students who worked with educational aides on a regular basis; these students were in the classroom on and off throughout the time that I was able to visit, and this prevented me from working one-on-one with these students as much as I would have liked to. It was extremely difficult on the first day to get these students to engage with me at all and as I began asking questions related to the lesson plans for their regular classwork, students began giving me joke answers. As this began to escalate, instead of being thrown by their jokes, I asked them to explain why they were giving the answers they chose to give and told them that I wanted to hear their point of view. The students were initially taken aback by the fact that I was taking their jokes seriously, but eventually they came to realize that I both wanted to hear what they had to say, and that they couldn't joke around without being able to justify their jokes.

I quickly realized that the students in period one were trying to create a situation in which they held power over me in the classroom dynamic. This meant that I had to find ways to try to balance the power in the classroom without making the students feel as though they could take advantage of me or feel that they had no voice in the activities that we were going to be working on. There were several students in this class that proved to be particularly challenging for me, including one student who often insisted on not doing the classwork because, as she informed the teacher she was "just going to drop out anyway." This student consistently tried to throw off the

activities when I asked the whole class to work together and seemed to find pleasure in disrupting the structure of the class overall. As I continued with my lesson plans, I tried to incorporate more individual and small group exercises with students like her in mind. By doing this, I was asking students to get in touch with some of the skills involved in large groups activities that we would attempt in later workshops. I asked students to complete worksheets and examine various kinds of texts and performances. One of the main goals that the teacher asked me to focus on was the presentation skills, mentioning that many students had issues regarding eye contact and projection.

Period two began just after 9:00 AM. The students in the second class were more energetic, and more engaged from the start of my visit. These students shared stories when prompted, even in cases where the stories were personal and regarding topics that were difficult to discuss. I believe that this difference in willingness to step outside of their comfort zone and share personal experiences came down to the students listening to one another carefully, treating each other with respect, and encouraging one another to get involved in the activities I had brought in. Even when they were frustrated, and even when I presented them with challenging tasks, these students found a sense of accomplishment when they were able to

Even though this class did not fall into the category of one of the core subjects, the environment in the classroom was heavily test-focused. Most of the tests that students took, and most of the assignments they completed made use of chromebooks provided by the school. It took me some time to get accustomed to this and to decipher

how to make the best of a resource that seemed to be more distracting than beneficial at times. Although none of my lessons included the use of the laptops, there were several class periods where the activities I had been asked to lead required the use of technology<sup>14</sup>.

Students understood that they would have to complete the pre and post-tests and used these occasions to spend as much time as they could visiting other websites to take up more class time and diminish the amount of time that they would be actively engaging in the class. The students did not seem to value the class, or to understand why they were made to take it, which I felt had a deleterious effect on their attitude towards the units I had designed. The attitude that the students had towards the class also seemed to make the regular teacher more hesitant to hand control over to me and let me lead my lessons as I had planned them.

In addition to the classroom environment being test-focused, the ArtsBridge program also requires student-teachers to administer a pre and posttest similar to those given before and after their regular units. I was ambitious in choosing what I wanted to place on the test for several reasons. I knew that the tendency is to underestimate the abilities and knowledge of young people in public education and I knew that it was a self-imposed challenge, especially as I overhauled my lesson plans several times in the last week leading up to the first class visit based on the few messages I did receive from

---

<sup>14</sup> More information regarding the use of technology in the classroom and the positive and negative effects of this technology can be found on Harvard University David Bok Center for Teaching and Learning website at <https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/technology-and-student-distraction>

the regular teacher. These pre and post tests are deemed necessary by the ArtsBridge Council(?) in order to gauge the effectiveness of the program and determine whether there is any worth in retaining the program's funding. Because of this requirement, I occasionally fell into the same trap that is set for K-12 teachers and felt like there was pressure on me to teach vocabulary and teach "to the standards" rather than involving students in the active exercises I had designed for the class. I tried to ignore this feeling as much as possible and remind myself that the pre and post tests were working in direct opposition of what I was trying to do. I did find it difficult to exhibit to students that test scores are not the end-all of their achievement when I was required both by the regular teacher and by the ArtsBridge program to administer tests, whether or not I prefaced them with "these tests are designed to judge my effectiveness as a teacher and not your achievement as a student," though I did ensure that this was communicated to students in the case of the pre and post tests for ArtsBridge.

Students were often uncomfortable with the exercises I was asking them to participate in, though they communicated their discomfort in different ways. Period one often outright laughed at what I was asking them to do or complained that they were being asked to get out of their seats and interact as a class. Period two seemed to be more comfortable with one another and rather than shying away from the exercises entirely they would dare one another to engage in what they found uncomfortable. Both period one and period two seemed to be more engaged when I was explicit about the connections between their normal classwork and the activities I organized. I

expected this would be the case for several reasons. I was not only connecting the material I was teaching to their other classwork but attempting to connect both my material and their classwork to their lives outside of the classroom as much as possible with the hope that this would increase the perceived (and actual) value of the lessons to the students. I also treated the students as equals in the classroom who had as much to teach me as I had to teach them, and by granting them the same honesty and respect that I would grant one of my own colleagues, I hoped to create a dialogue that was applicable to the students. I wanted the students to feel not only like the material they were learning was applicable to them, but that what they had to contribute to our conversations was valuable.

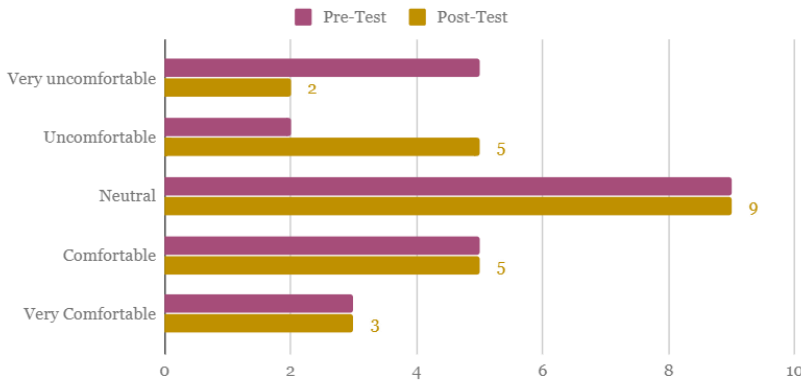
Over the course of twelve, one-hour classroom visits the students self-reported increased comfort in speaking and presenting in classroom settings as seen in figures one through six<sup>15</sup>. While this cannot be solely attributed to the implementation of arts into the coursework without having conducted double-blind studies, asking students to engage in theatrical play in the classroom also meant asking them to engage with one another more often and in a more critical manner than they were accustomed. While there was little to no fluctuation in the number of students who indicated that they were comfortable or extremely comfortable in classroom settings, there was a decrease in the number of students who indicated that they felt uncomfortable or very uncomfortable speaking, asking questions or presenting in front of an audience. These

---

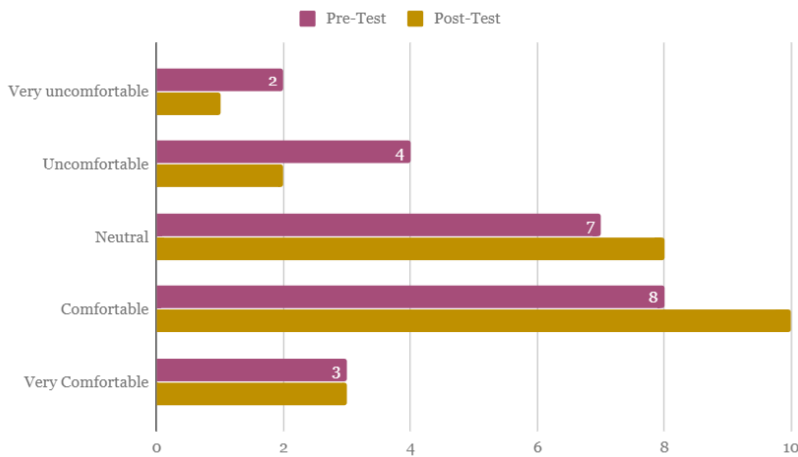
<sup>15</sup> The pre-test and post-test survey results can be found in Appendix D

small shifts in comfort were not only self-reported by students, but noticeable in the way that students interacted with their peers and with me.

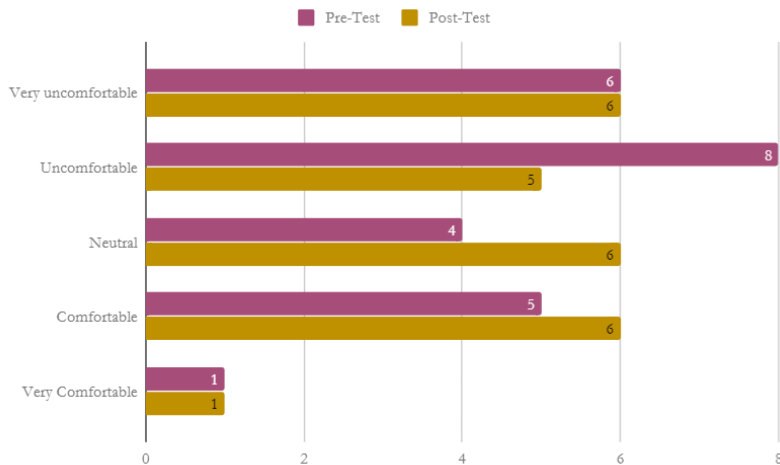
## Figures



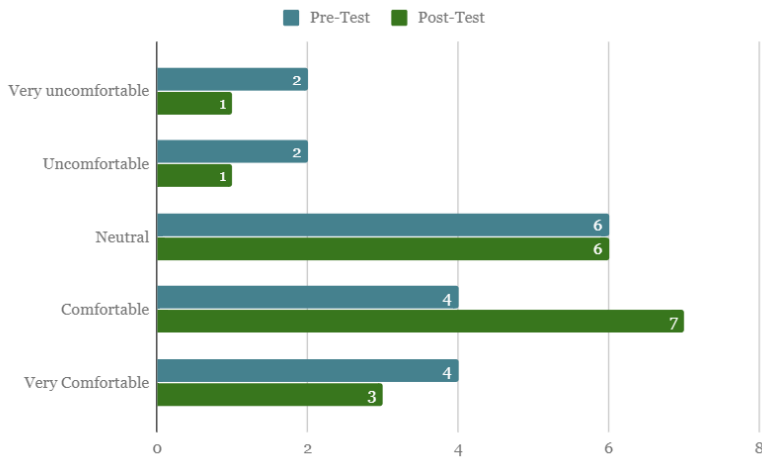
**Figure 1:** Survey Results for Period One, student comfort speaking in the classroom



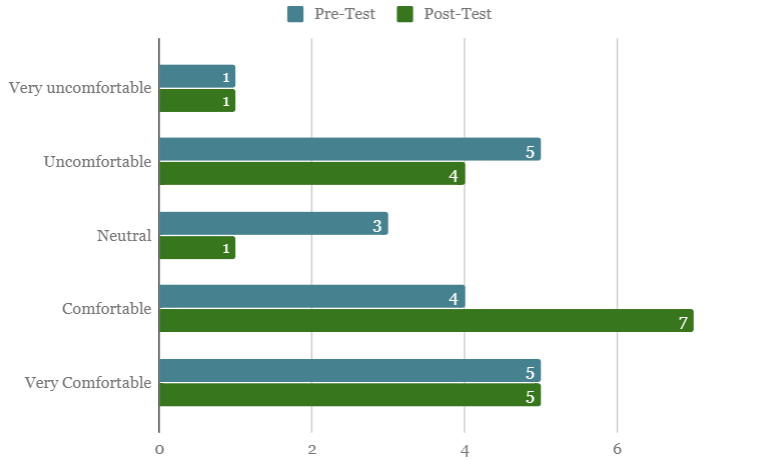
**Figure 2:** Survey Results for Period One, student comfort asking questions in the classroom



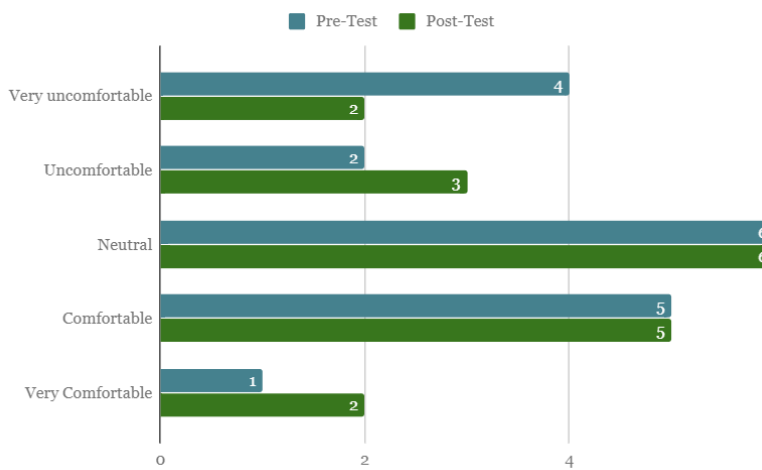
**Figure 3:** Survey Results for Period One, Student comfort giving presentations



**Figure 4:** Survey Results for Period Two, student comfort speaking in the classroom



**Figure 5:** Survey Results for Period Two, student comfort asking questions in the classroom



**Figure 6:** Survey Results for Period Two, Student comfort giving presentations

### **Evaluation: Why this “Play” Now?**

Because of the systemic problems in the US educational system, the problems that Freire predicted regarding a banking system of education, confirmed by Ronald Wolk and other educators in the US, there is not an effective and genuine way to determine the sufficiency of these techniques. The challenges that I faced in carrying out my own lesson plans were as much a product of the under-resourced, one-size-fits-all educational environment that actively discourages innovative experimentation as they were a product of my lack of training in the classroom. The irony is that Boalian games and exercises would allow students and teachers to problem solve together; to offer different solutions from diverse perspectives and, in some instances, solve smaller-scale issues within the classroom to foster a more productive and supportive learning community that caters to all students.

As Brent Blair, the founder of Teen Education in Liberation Art, or the TELA program notes in his essay, “Telavisions” in *Youth and Theatre of the Oppressed*, “Working with teens at the margins of power during the last twenty years taught me that there is certainly a compelling hunger for freedom... perhaps concurrently there is a powerful craving for structure” (Blair 105). Although I set my sights on creating a program that offered the students a sense of freedom while maintaining structure in the classroom, the circumstances of my classroom placement prevented this from being possible. Trying to create structure from the ground up in a classroom where certain rules and expectations that actively worked against some of the non-traditional aspects

of my lesson plans had been established proved to be near impossible, and poor channels of communication prevented me from gaining the amount of foresight and prior knowledge that I hoped to have regarding classroom expectations and the students with whom I would be working. This meant that when I arrived on the first day, I had to read cues that the students were offering in order to gain as much information as I could that would allow me to reach the students and offer them something that would be valuable to them. Despite this aim to provide structure for the students, I also wanted to do so without relying on a one-size-fits-all model. I also realized that by allowing the regular teacher to step to the side, I took students out of their usual routine, especially because my schedule for visiting the classes was irregular.

The banking model of education transforms students into depositories; they become nothing more than their test scores as they relate to achievement in the school, district, county or state. As Freire points out, “The oppressed have been destroyed precisely because their situation has reduced them to things.” (68). The use of the banking model in US secondary education has created a system in which all students are oppressed. There is additional stratification between students based on other factors like race and class, which is only exacerbated by the fact that the education system attempts to create a one-size-fits-all system. This attempt was clear in my classroom placement through frequent requests to adapt my plans to match those that the teacher was using with her other classes. The other thing that was clear through my placement was that this kind of system did not work. The two classes I taught could not

have been more different, and each class often reacted in opposing ways to the same assignments or activities. Although I did not spend enough time in the classroom to adequately assess the reasons for the distinct differences between the actions and reactions of the two classes, I can speculate that one reason for this is the presence of a single student in period one who made a point of trying to make the learning environment hostile for everyone. While many of the students in period one seemed at odds with each other, the students in period two seemed to have a stronger sense of community from day one and seemed to be more comfortable with one another.

Although this tendency to create one-size-fits-all lessons within the banking model of education does not appropriately support any student, those who fall into minority groups are more deeply affected by the shortfalls of the system. There were EAL students in the classes I was teaching who could not effectively participate in normal class activities because of language barriers, but I did not have an opportunity to use lesson plans with these students in mind.

In addition to EAL students, those with non-normative learning styles are not supported and are taken out of the classroom on a regular basis rather than having lessons designed in such a way that they can be integrated into the classroom. The teacher forewarning me that certain students would not participate in the class. Students that I saw once or twice throughout the course of visiting the class, some students who were deemed to have special needs were present only on my first and last day. One of these students made a point to ask if the class had learned any of the

material on the post test. One of the other students responded that they hadn't. We had done some review in the last 20 minutes of the two previous class periods.

In the introduction to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Donaldo Macedo says that the pedagogy, “has its roots in Paulo Freire’s lived experiences” (13). Freire was especially well-equipped to teach as someone from an underrepresented background and had a keen understanding of how the shortfalls of the educational system tended to negatively impact students from underrepresented backgrounds. Students have a basic right to be given access to resources for their education, even if they learn in non-normative ways, or need additional support. School Districts have a responsibility to provide teacher training and teachers and schools have a responsibility to provide every resource that they possibly can in order to support their students. Instead, students are pulled out of regular classrooms when their status as a non-normative student is determined.

Because the student demographic is so varied, teachers must be prepared to adjust and problem-solve in the moment if they hope to support their students as healthy and fulfilled individuals. Freire asserts that “Those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly” (Freire 60). Lesson plans should not and cannot be definite because change is constant, and each group of students will have a different way of interacting with lesson plans based on their own lived experiences, so teaching must also be flexible. Teachers who teach for their students as humans and not just as estranged vessels must be ready to accept that the

plans they have made need to undergo scrutiny not only from the school board but from the students who are meant to be benefitting from the plans in the first place. Teachers must constantly ask themselves how their students experiences are different than their own, and how the challenges to underrepresented students has changed, and how the scope of underrepresented students has shifted. The only way that education can be considered one-size-fits-all is if it is completely modular and the resources offered to students are expanded in such a way that students are able to access small group and one-on-one learning time with teachers and their peers.

## **Conclusion**

Perhaps most importantly, Blair explains that, “There is no solution” (117). With what little time I had in the classroom, I understood that I could not instantly change the systems, and that in working with students who did not choose to participate in a theatre workshop the possibility of an uninterested class was likely. I went into the classroom hopeful that I could help one student understand a concept or provide new study tools or techniques for presenting material for a student who might be struggling with public speaking. I didn’t go into the classroom looking for or trying to provide a solution. I knew that I did not have the time or resources to take the project beyond the classroom, but if I were to continue the project I would first begin with educating teachers; I would help them develop ways to incorporate kinesthetic learning, forum theatre, and other theatre games and workshops into their regular curriculum in order to create a program that would provide a sense of structure and

ease students into performance. Although the short-term program that I developed over the course of 12 weeks was not always successful in the ways that I hoped it would be, I saw students become more confident. I saw students being more empathetic to one another and listen more carefully. I saw students begin to feel comfortable asking questions when they didn't understand something rather than just refusing to complete the work. I encouraged students to take new approaches to traditional assignments.

Had I taken this same set of lessons into a school district with more resources and students from more privileged backgrounds, I likely would have seen more comfort and willingness to participate from day one. This is not a fault of the students, teachers, or district I worked with, but a fault in the equity of resources within the education system in the United States. These kinds of lesson plans cannot be “successful” without the full support and engagement of teachers. Teachers need to understand why this work has the potential to make a positive impact on students before they can be a part of the process, and they need to be an involved part of the process for it to be “successful”. In order for teachers and schools to be supportive of this kind of education, there needs to be support from the larger academic system for under resourced schools. Mentorship for teachers, especially those teachers who are new teachers in order to acclimate them to the challenges and obstacles that they will inevitably face due to systemic issues is also crucial in supporting the students who are currently being failed by the system.

Before continuing my research, I would sit down with a group of high school teachers to design a lesson plan that would not only integrate pieces of the regular coursework but enrich it as well. I would ensure that the lesson plans encouraged the regular teachers to interact with the lessons in addition to the students, and I would lead workshops with the teachers prior to going into the classroom. This would mean that even if my schedule were irregular, I would have the same classroom structure as the regular teacher and be able to provide some kind of structure for the students. Additionally, I would like to work with different demographics in order to examine how different groups interact with the same or similar lesson plans based on age or location.

The school and teacher I worked with did not have the power to change the systemic issues but although in many ways there was hesitation, they did open the door for change and innovation. This project served to bring to light many of the greater flaws in the education system in the United States but it also suggests that arts in education can be a tool to empower students and help them take charge of their own education. A classroom in which students are more comfortable sharing their ideas and asking questions of their teachers and peers is a classroom that creates a community and provides opportunities for a more diverse and enriched education for students and teachers.

Augusto Boal said in *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* that, “The role of utopias is not to be reached: it is to stimulate us to try harder and go further” (Boal 10). A

perfect system for education cannot exist, but as long as there are students who are not being adequately served by the systems in place, educators need to strive for the impossible in order to take small steps towards a model that is more inclusive, more supportive, and better equipped to create as equitable an environment as possible.

## Appendix A: Games and Exercises

Games are listed alphabetically. I have picked up the following games and exercises from acting classes and workshops over the last 13 years since I became involved in theatre. Many of these games go by a number of different names and some of the names I have chosen to represent the games I used may also represent a number of other, completely unrelated games. Many of the games that are represented here have supertextual connections to those found in Augusto Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. More information about how these games were used and the purpose of the games can be found in the lesson plans in Appendix B.

**Clapping Together, Jumping Together, Counting to Ten:** Students will stand in small groups of ~ 10 in circles and work to clap together. When they have successfully done this, they will try to jump together. Then, they will count to 10 with each student speaking only once, starting over whenever students talk over each other. Then doing the same thing with their eyes closed. If they are successful, the full class will try the same exercise.

**Electric Company:** The group forms a circle and snaps in common time (four quarter notes to a measure). Someone will begin the game by turning to the person on their right and saying the first word that comes to mind. The next person will say the first word that comes to mind then the whole group will repeat the first word, followed by the second word, followed by duhdoo dadoo. Ideally, each cycle would take eight beats (first word, rest, second word, -rest-, first word, second word, duhdoo, dadoo). The second person in the circle will begin the next round and play will continue in this way.

**Pass the Clap:** Students stand in a circle and pass energy around the circle by clapping. The goal is to clap at the same time as the person next to you. Start by sending the energy in just one direction, then introduce the option to change directions once students are comfortable. This requires students to listen to cues from one another and make eye contact.

**Pass the Impulse:** Students stand in a circle and send an impulse (a movement and a sound) around the circle, each person should try to exactly mimic the student before them (not the person who originally started the action).

**Silent Lines:** Students will silently order themselves in a line first by height, then by birthday. This requires students to practice non-verbal communication.

**Snap Catch:** Students stand in a circle and play catch, using a snap as the ball and snapping once to catch the ball and once to throw, roll or bounce the ball to another

student, following the arc of the invisible ball and making eye contact to communicate where in the room it is, how quickly it's moving, etc.

**Thunderdome:** Students stand in a circle, clap out a rhythm while chanting "Thunderdome" until two students enter the circle. Once two students enter the circle, someone on the outside of the circle will shout out a category. The two students in the center will take turns listing off things in that category until someone repeats something that has already been said, says something outside of the category, or cannot think of anything else in the category

**Whoosh:** Students stand in a circle and send the "whoosh" around the circle. In order to reverse the direction, students can put up both arms and say "boing". To send the energy across the circle they can say "interstate"

**Zip Zap Zop:** Students arrange themselves in a circle and pass energy to one another, making eye-contact and pointing using the words Zip, Zap, and Zop to pass the energy along

## Appendix B: Lesson Plans & Notes

Lesson Plan for 21st Century Skills - Online Safety		
Learning Objectives: Students will be able to identify risky situations and behaviors on the internet in emails, on virtual reality sites, in chat rooms, and over instant messaging platforms		
Activity	Description	Goal
Introductions & Questions	Introduce myself and my goals to the students, have the students introduce themselves	-
Pre-test	Students will be tested on the key terms	To determine the initial knowledge of terms that will be taught through the ArtsBridge segments.
Zip, Zap, Zop	Students arrange themselves in a circle and pass energy to one another, making eye-contact and pointing using the words Zip, Zap, and Zop to pass the energy along	Increase focus and connection between students, get them thinking about energy, eye contact and concentration
Scenario and introduction to forum theatre	As a group, the students will identify what makes a particular scenario risky, and what actions they can take to stay safe	Encouraging critical thinking and engagement in discourse and collective problem solving
If there is additional time/activities do not take as long as expected, Scenarios can be expanded, students will be asked to come up with their own risky scenarios in groups which the class can then discuss, or can be used on Wednesday in the expansion of the forum theatre exercise		

Period One: Students were hesitant to engage. Some students did not want to speak during Zip, Zap, Zop. One student said he was comfortable improvising and came up to improvise a scenario with me. It was clear that students were not comfortable speaking up and need more direction for scenes in front of the group. If I get the opportunity to work with Forum theater again, I will have scripts prepared, at least for the first period. Following the individual improvised scene, which was not entirely successful, we discussed some other scenarios and had conversations about choices that individuals could take in particular situations. When students gave initial answers, they were making jokes and purposely answering questions incorrectly.

Period Two: Students were hesitant, but were laughing and enjoying themselves, correcting one another on the rules of Zip, Zap, Zop as we played. Short time forced us to talk about scenarios rather than work through improvised scenes, though this group seemed more energetic.

Lesson Plan for 21st Century Skills - Career Presentations		
Activity	Description	Goal
Successful Speeches	Engage students in a discussion about speeches and presentations. Who do they consider to give good speeches? Good Performers? What qualities do they have?	Students will begin thinking about what might make a speech successful, what tools do we have that might make a presentation more interesting for the audience?
Breath techniques	First, asking students to just be aware of their breath. Do they hold their breath before releasing it?  Have students breathe into their diaphragm, placing their hand just below their belly button and taking a deep breath in.  Students may close their eyes if they are not comfortable	Introduce students to efficient breathing techniques which will help to support voice for presentations and help ground them before their presentations
Articulators	Start bringing voice into the breath. First with sounds coming straight from the diaphragm, then moving into simple sentences: "My name is.."	Students will be able to connect voice and breath in order to strengthen speech skills
If there is extra time... How does breath move into speech? What did they notice about their own breathing? Did it change when sound was added into the mixture? Move into a few simple tongue twisters.		

Period One: When I asked students to think about the way they stood, and engaged with breath they just stared at me and would not complete the exercises. Because students were unwilling to engage with the breathing exercises, the lesson did not take as long as expected. When we finished early, we talked about the requirements for their presentations, had a discussion about the kinds of theater that they had experienced, and what aspects of theater they found engaging and which of these aspects could be used in classroom presentations.

Period Two: Students were curious about what I was teaching them about breath and the position of the body and one student asked if lying down changed breathing as much as sitting, standing with weight in one hip, with our heads jutting forward or backwards. After asking this question, we talked about how easily we breathe lying down, and I asked students to lie down and we talked about whether it was easier for them to feel the breath in their diaphragms when they were lying vs. standing.

Lesson Plan for 21st Century Skills - Cyber Bullying		
Activity	Description	Goal
Warm up: Whoosh	Students stand in a circle and send the "whoosh" around the circle. In order to reverse the direction, students can put up both arms and say "boing". To	To get energy levels up, to increase focus

	send the energy across the circle they can say “interstate”	
Image Theater	In groups, students will discuss their reactions to the movie, <i>Cyberbully</i> . Students will choose a one word response to the movie and develop a tableau to	Students will engage with the film they watched and identify and communicate their response to the film Students will understand how nonverbal communication can provide information.
If there is extra time, discuss what they took away from forum theatre; what is the difference between reading or hearing a story, and seeing it performed onstage? What was it like to be able to stop the action? Was it different being involved in a scene than watching a scene? How else could this tool be used?		

When I showed up on this day, the teacher wanted students to finish watching *Cyberbully*, so there was very little time to teach. Instead of playing whoosh, we discussed the suspension of disbelief and what they found believable or not about the film, then quickly began talking about Image Theater. The teacher and I gave an example of a tableau before letting students break into table groups and discuss the film and create their own images.

Period One: Students blatantly ignored me as I walked around the room and asked questions, trying to help them put together their images. Students did not want to show their images.

Period Two: I spent more time with each group and students did not have enough time to show their images, but students were engaging with the questions I asked and I had several students asking questions about how to represent an abstract feeling.

Lesson Plan for 21st Century Skills - Cyber Bullying		
Activity	Description	Goal
Warm up: Pass the Impulse	Students stand in a circle and send an impulse (a movement and a sound) around the circle, each person should try to exactly mimic the student before them. Following this exercise we will talk about what students noticed as the impulse continued around the circle	Students will be able to act on impulse and listen carefully to verbal and nonverbal communication
Continuation of Image Theater	Continue image theater workshop using the words students chose on the 19th. Show pieces and respond to one another. Do not tell the audience what the word chosen is. Discuss the scenes and how students interpret them as performers, as viewers.	Students will be able to devise a response to an emotion or Students will be able to describe what they see without interpreting Students will be able to interpret images

Scenarios using Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed	Each student will receive an index card outlining a character; either an online predator, or an online victim. In pairs, they will present improvised scenes, as in Boal's Forum Theatre, the action will be paused after moments of emotional intensity to allow students to make suggestions, or to insert themselves into the scenes	Engage students in discourse about the scenarios they are given. Use the community of the classroom setting in order to collectively talk about potential solutions and tactics
If there is extra time, discuss what they took away from forum theatre; what is the difference between reading or hearing a story, and seeing it performed onstage? What was it like to be able to stop the action? Was it different being involved in a scene than watching a scene? How else could this tool be used?		

We did not use this lesson plan. We talked through two case studies, students were given the opportunity to talk about instances of cyberbullying they have encountered

Period One: Students seemed to just wait for answers for their worksheets. They did not want to engage in a dialogue about the case studies. When asked what they would do in a scenario where their friend was being bullied, one student stated that they would not do anything.

Period Two: Students engaged in discussions about the case studies and willingly talked about their own experiences with cyberbullying. Students were more interested and engaged in the discussion than period one.

Lesson Plan for 21st Century Skills - Be Your Own Hero - Learning Styles		
Activity	Description	Goal
Eureka quiz	Students will take the quiz, "How do I learn"	Students will understand the different learning styles and which learning style they might identify with and benefit from using
Directions we receive	We will talk about the kinds of directions we encounter everyday. What kinds of learning styles do these directions focus on?	Students will be able to identify different kinds of learning tools and identify which kinds of tools best help them learn
Memorization Tactics	We will discuss memorization tactics using tongue twisters - repeating after a leader, copying down the tongue twister, reading it aloud, tapping out rhythms(scansion), mapping the order of events, interpreting or drawing	Students will be able to engage in the learning style they are most comfortable with as well as exploring other styles
Tongue Twisters - Part 2, Breath and Speech, Vocal	Using worksheet, students will practice scansion, and will be introduced to inflection and contrastive stresses and how these factors change	Students will be able to identify stressed and unstressed syllables and

Variety	the way we interpret language.	understand how this will help them to present in an engaging way
---------	--------------------------------	--

Period One: Students began to speak as a group with the tongue twisters, answered questions, though it was mostly one student who was engaged. Once this student began talking, there was a bit more conversation and engagement from other students.

Period Two: Students were more hesitant to engage than in previous classes. When I asked questions, I had difficulty getting students to engage up until we discussed scansion, when students started to talk through what I was teaching them.

We did not have time in either class to go over inflection and contrastive stresses as planned. I will include this in the next lesson.

Lesson Plan for 21st Century Skills - True Colors		
Activity	Description	Goal
True Colors	Students will take <a href="#">an assessment</a> and fill out a worksheet provided by their teacher	-
Contrastive Stresses and Inflection	Given a few basic sentences, students will examine contrastive stresses in a sentence and discuss how this can change the meaning of the sentence.	Students will understand how emphasis and inflection can change the way we interpret people when they are speaking.
Contentless Scenes	In Pairs, students will receive open scenes and discuss what kinds of characters these might be and the scenarios in which this kind of language would be used? Are the conversations or characters familiar?	Students will learn to develop scenarios and characters from a very loose structure.

Period one: Students were initially rowdier than usual due to the fact that there was a sub on this day. However, students quickly realized that the sub (another regular teacher who agreed to take the class for first period) was not going to let them get away with goofing off. Students began asking questions about the worksheet I passed out if they did not understand it. One student asked me to go through the open scene with her and I agreed. Some of the students were not engaging with the open scenes as I walked around, but when I sat down with individual groups and started asking questions, they began to think about the scenes. There were several groups who were really digging into what I had asked them to do and creating a scenario for the open scenes.

Period two: We were with a different sub during this period and the students assumed they could get away with wasting time and goofing off, playing games on their cell phones, or on the chromebooks while they were supposed to be completing the online assessment. They did not expect me to take charge and tell them to put their phones away. When I passed out my worksheets, several students asked for clarification, and once they understood what was being asked, they seemed to enjoy going through the contrastive stresses. When I handed out the open scenes, I asked them this time to write down the character and scene information they had come up with on the back of the worksheet.

Lesson Plan for 21st Century Skills - The Big 5 Personality Traits		
Activity	Description	Goal
The big 5	-	-
Warmup - Categories	Students will pass a ball across the circle, each time they pass the ball they will share a word from a category, the first category will be personality traits from the assessment they've just taken, then we will move on to characters	Students will reflect on the assessment they have just taken
Discussion: Stock Characters	We will talk about what a stock character is and discuss some of the stock characters and archetypes they experience in popular culture and media	Students will understand what a stock character is and why stock characters might be used in all types of media
Viewpoints	Students will walk around the space in a neutral body. Next, students will imagine there is a string, coming from the center of their forehead, then from their nose, their chin, and so on.	Students will practice the application of non-verbal communication and begin to understand the ways in which body language might convey character traits, class, etc.

Period one: when asked to stand up and get into a circle, the students groaned. They half-heartedly completed the exercises. They did not want to do viewpoints.

Period two: We got through more of the materials, students were interested in what I was asking and came up with some stock characters on their own and we discussed how they fit into "the big 5" assessment that they took. When I asked them to embody different characters in viewpoints, they were engaged and enjoying the work.

Lesson Plan for 21st Century Skills - World of Work and Me		
Activity	Description	Goal
World of Work and me Assessment	-	-
Theatre of the Oppressed	Students will do a free write about some of the topics they are passionate about with a particular focus on social and political issues they find pressing We will revisit image theater using these topics, then move into forum theatre	Students will hone verbal and nonverbal skills in relation to issues that are important to them. They will be able to connect these issues back to the class and the assessments they have been completing  Students will practice critical problem solving

The Assessment took up the majority of the class time and the teacher asked me to lead an alternate activity during first period. Students during second period walked out for the protest.

Period One: Some of the students were asking questions about the protests/walkouts that were happening later on this day. When the teacher explained that students could not be penalized for walking out of the classroom for the protest one student jokingly left.

Period Two: All of the students participated in the walkout aside from one student. When one of the teacher's first period students walked by she stuck her head in to ask why the student had not left yet, insulting him. The teacher told me she had given up on this student.

Lesson Plan for 21st Century Skills - Staff Presentations		
Activity	Description	Goal
Warm Up	Pass the clap	Students will listen to nonverbal communication and get more comfortable with making eye contact
Review Terms & Strengthening Speeches	Students will have a chance to go back over some of the concepts we discussed the last time we discussed speeches	Students will gain greater understanding of how to give engaging speeches
Creating a "Road map"	Students will map their speeches, writing down key terms for each section of their speech	This will help students ground themselves for their speeches and help them to determine the main points of their presentations

Period One: Students were more engaged than they had ever been although when I tried to have a conversation with the full class regarding their presentations, they mostly stared at me blankly. As I asked them to begin practicing portions of their presentations, I walked around and talked with students about what made them uncomfortable with presenting and was able to offer some advice regarding tricks to help them make eye contact/look up while presenting. I then shared some of the tactics I had talked about with individuals with the rest of the class and some students began asking further questions. We talked about ways in which they could prepare themselves for their speeches beyond just practicing aloud.

Period Two: Students in the second period class are, for the most part, more comfortable speaking and presenting in front of groups, but there were still a few students who were still not comfortable making eye contact during their speeches. After walking around and helping each student come up with the road map for their presentations, I asked them to isolate the most interesting fact that they learned and share it to practice their projection and eye contact. After going around the room we talked about whether or not each person was clear, loud and coherent without drawing attention to anyone in particular. I shared some presentation tips for those students who were still struggling or uncomfortable and then opened up a conversation about preparing for presentations and working with obstacles.

Lesson Plan for 21st Century Skills - Staff Presentations		
Activity	Description	Goal
State Survey	Students will complete a state-mandated survey	-
Polar Opposites	Students will write down a list of 10 things they love and 10 things they hate, then choose one from each list to complete a free-write on for one minute each. We will discuss whether it was easier for students to write for a minute about what they loved or about what they hated	Students will gain skills to help them prepare for their one-minute speeches
Making Connections	Students will create webs connecting the things on their love/hate lists. For students who already have their one-minute speech topics, they will work their topic into their web.	Students will gain skills to help them prepare for their one-minute speeches

Period one: Students took much longer to complete the state survey than expected or disregarded the instructions and used the chromebooks for other things. Eventually the teacher got them to put away the chromebooks and we focused on building tools that could be used for their one minute speeches. The students had not yet been given their topics for the one-minute speeches and many of them did not know that the one-minute speeches were going to be assigned. After I asked students to complete the polar opposites exercise, I asked them which category was easier to write or talk about and students did not want to answer. I asked students for any one item that they had on either list. I wrote that item up on the board, then asked if other students had items on their own lists that related. We did this several times before I asked them to create a web using their own lists.

Period two: Students in period two already had their topics for one-minute speeches which made getting into the polar opposites exercise a little easier. Students were split half and half about whether it was easier to speak on a subject they loved or hated and they had a critical discussion in this regard. After explaining the mapping exercise to them, I asked them to also find a way to include their assigned topic into the map and most students had no trouble doing this. Because students finished with this earlier, we went back to talking about polar opposites and came up with some topics that were polarizing. The students had some miniature debates.

Lesson Plan for 21st Century Skills -		
Activity	Description	Goal
Pass the Clap	Students stand in a circle and pass energy around the circle by clapping. The goal is to clap at the same time as the person next to you. Start by sending the energy in just one direction, then introduce the option to change directions once students are comfortable.	Students will get more comfortable with eye contact and careful listening
Electric Company	The group forms a circle and snaps in common time (four quarter notes to a measure. Someone will begin the game by turning to the person on their right and saying the first	Students will become more comfortable with improvisation and

	word that comes to mind. The next person will say the first word that comes to mind then the whole group will repeat the first word, followed by the second word, followed by duhdoo dadoo. Ideally, each cycle would take eight beats (first word, rest, second word, -rest, first word, second word, duhdoo, dadoo). The second person in the circle will begin the next round and play will continue in this way.	thinking on their feet.  Students should be speaking loudly and clearly enough for all other students to hear and understand them
Thunderdome	Students stand in a circle, clap out a rhythm while chanting "Thunderdome" until two students enter the circle. Once two students enter the circle, someone on the outside of the circle will shout out a category. The two students in the center will take turns listing off things in that category until someone repeats something that has already been said, says something outside of the category, or cannot think of anything else in the category	Students will become more comfortable with improvisation and thinking on their feet.  Students should be speaking loudly and clearly enough for all other students to hear and understand them

Period One: Students still weren't comfortable with Pass the Clap. There were students who refused to participate and students who were clapping just to distract from the activity. Students also weren't excited about Electric company. After a while, we switched to playing whoosh. Students were slightly more engaged than they had been in the past. When we played Thunderdome, there were a few students who really picked upon it, and one student remarked that he was enjoying it. The energy levels picked up and although it was only a handful of students who were fully engaged, they brought a lot more energy to the room.

Period Two: Students picked up pass the clap quickly and were listening and watching one another carefully. They began to pick up electric company but seemed hesitant about it. This class was much more excited about Thunderdome. They picked up on it quickly and thoroughly enjoyed the competitive nature of the game.

Lesson Plan for 21st Century Skills -		
Activity	Description	Goal
Snap Catch	Students stand in a circle and play catch, using a snap as the ball.	Students will become more comfortable with eye contact
Silent Lines	Students will silently order themselves in a line first by height, then by birthday.	Students will practice nonverbal communication skills
Clapping Together, Jumping Together, Counting to ten	Students will stand in small groups of ~ 10 in circles and work to clap together. When they have successfully done this, they will try to jump together. Then, they will count to 10 with each student speaking only once, starting over whenever students talk over each other. Then doing the same thing with their eyes closed. If	Students will practice nonverbal communication skills, eye contact and careful listening.

	they are successful, the full class will try the same exercise.	Students should be speaking loudly and clearly enough for all other students to hear and understand them
Thunderdome	Students stand in a circle, clap out a rhythm while chanting “Thunderdome” until two students enter the circle. Once two students enter the circle, someone on the outside of the circle will shout out a category. The two students in the center will take turns listing off things in that category until someone repeats something that has already been said, says something outside of the category, or cannot think of anything else in the category	Students will become more comfortable with improvisation and thinking on their feet  Students should be speaking loudly and clearly enough for all other students to hear and understand them
Because of a student election convention on this day, the classes were smaller than usual.		

Period One: Students were snapping to distract from the warm-up and were having side conversations. When we did the line exercise, students were disregarding the instructions and talking. Despite this, students were unable to line up according to their birthdays. When we split the class into smaller groups, there was one group that was intently working to complete the exercise and enjoying themselves while doing so. The other group groaned each time I gave them a new direction but was eventually able to complete the counting exercise. When I combined the two groups and asked them to complete the larger counting exercise, they talked back, complained, and refused to follow directions and the teacher had them sit silently for the last 5 minutes of class.

Period Two: As the students started with the warm up, they goofed around for a few minutes but eventually they picked up on the exercise and were more engaged than period one. Students were much quieter during the lines activity and much more successful in completing it accurately. The group on this day was small enough that we did not split the group for the later activities. To start, they communicated a bit about how they would clap, or jump at the same time, and I slowly asked them to complete the same exercise with fewer and fewer cues. I had them complete the counting exercise first with their eyes open. It took them a while to complete it and they were beginning to get frustrated. When I asked them to do the same thing with their eyes closed, a few students groaned and commented that they didn’t think it was possible, but within 3 tries they had completed the exercise because they were being patient, and listening critically to the group. They were very happy to play Thunderdome again.

Lesson Plan for 21st Century Skills -		
Activity	Description	Goal
Post-test	Students will take the post-test	Determine how much the students “learned <sup>16</sup> ”

<sup>16</sup> I am not including the text of the pre and post test in this paper as this testing practice undermined my goals for the program. While I did see some “improvement” between the pre- and post-test I was more concerned with non-test-based output. For the text and results of the survey I administered alongside the pre- and post-test, see Appendix D.

## Appendix C: Worksheet Samples

### Breath and Speech

The \_\_\_\_\_ is a muscle that plays a large part in the process of respiration, or breath.

What habits do we have when we breathe? That we are aware of? That we aren't aware of?

How do these habits affect our breath?

Does the way we stand affect the way we breathe?

The teeth, the tongue, the lips and the hard palate (the part of your mouth right behind your top teeth) are all \_\_\_\_\_ and allow us to create speech

What makes a vowel sound different from a consonant?

\_\_\_\_\_ are sounds in which we use our articulators to obstruct, but not fully stop the airflow of speech (like 'ssss' 'vvvv' or 'zzzz') while \_\_\_\_\_ are sounds in which we fully stop the airflow (like 'puh', 'buh', 'tuh')

Other types of consonant sounds include nasals (m, n) where air escapes through the nose, laterals (l) where air escapes around the sides of the tongue, and approximants (r) where the articulators approach one another but do not actually touch.

### Strengthening Speeches

\_\_\_\_\_ is an argument or statement that appeals to logic

\_\_\_\_\_ is an argument or statement that appeals to emotion

\_\_\_\_\_ When a word or phrase is mistaken for a similar sounding one, often humorous. — "*chester* drawers" instead of "chest of drawers"

## Tongue Twisters and Memorization Techniques

### Verbal Repetition

#### Writing

---

---

---

#### Rhythm

Whether the weather is cold, or whether the weather is hot, we'll be together whatever the weather, whether we like it or not.

#### Creating Images/Mapping out the Concepts

What a to do to die today at a minute or two 'til two. A thing distinctly hard to say yet harder still to do. For they'll beat a tattoo at twenty 'til two with a rat-a-tat-tat-a-tat-tat-tat-too and the dragon will come when he hears the drum at a minute or two 'til two today, at a minute or two 'til two.

## Vocal Variety

\_\_\_\_\_ is a shift in pitch or tonal quality, usually at the end of a sentence or word.

\_\_\_\_\_ : determining the rhythm of a piece of text by marking stressed and unstressed syllables

Try this with your own name using / to mark stressed syllables and ∪ to mark unstressed syllables

\_\_\_\_\_

Then try it with the following lines from William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

"But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon"

## Emphasis and Contrastive Stress

Do the meanings of the following sentences change if you put the emphasis on different words?

What tools do we have that help us put emphasis on certain words?

*I* wanted her number. I *wanted* her number.  
I wanted *her* number. I wanted her *number*.

I thought it looked good on her. I *thought* it looked good on her.  
I thought it looked *good* on her. I thought it looked good on *her*.

Can you do that now? Can *you* do that now? Can you *do* that now?  
Can you do *that* now? Can you do that *now*?

I'm not going. I'm *not* going. I'm not *going*.

For each sentence, write down a scenario and one or two adjectives to describe the emotion of the speaker when the stresses are on the *italicized* word. There is an example below.

***I wanted her number.*** - Someone else got her number. Jealous

***I wanted her number.*** - The speaker did not get her number or does not want her number anymore, depending on the inflection of "wanted". Disappointed or disgusted

***I wanted her number.*** - The speaker got something from her but it wasn't her number. Confused

*I* thought it looked good on her. \_\_\_\_\_

I *thought* it looked good on her. \_\_\_\_\_

I thought it looked good on *her*. \_\_\_\_\_

Can you do that now? \_\_\_\_\_

Can *you* do that now? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you *do* that now? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you do *that* now? \_\_\_\_\_

## Image Theater & Forum Theater

Image theater is part of a greater theater movement called \_\_\_\_\_ which was created by theater artist, practitioner and educator, \_\_\_\_\_.

This movement was influenced by Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed and is used both as an educational tool, and a catalyst for social and political change with a focus on upward mobility and fair rights for groups that are underrepresented, denied civil rights, or otherwise treated poorly, especially because of gender, race, sexual identity, or social class.

Some categories of Theater of the Oppressed include Image Theater, Forum Theater and Invisible Theater.

\_\_\_\_\_ is the research that is conducted before putting on a play. In the case of forum theater, it continues as the audience contributes their own perspectives and experiences to the conversation.

## Appendix D: Survey & Statistics

The Survey was Comprised of the following questions:

### Section One:

How comfortable are you doing the following on a scale of 1 (not at all comfortable) to 5 (extremely comfortable)?

1. Speaking in a classroom setting  
1      2      3      4      5
2. Asking questions in a classroom setting  
1      2      3      4      5
3. Asking questions one-on-one  
1      2      3      4      5
4. Speaking in front of a group or giving a presentation  
1      2      3      4      5

### Section Two:

On a scale from 1 (not at all useful) to 5 (extremely useful) how useful do you find the following when you are learning something new?

1. Written Instructions, Informational reading, other written materials  
1      2      3      4      5
2. Spoken Instructions, Live lectures  
1      2      3      4      5
3. Images showing me how to complete a task, someone demonstrating a task  
1      2      3      4      5
4. Getting hands-on and completing the task myself, Having someone help me complete a task  
1      2      3      4      5

### Section Three:

1. Have you seen a live play? (Yes or No)
2. Have you seen any kind of live performance? (Yes or No)

**Period One**

24 Students who completed both the pre- and post-tests are represented

Section One: How comfortable are you doing the following on a scale of 1 (not at all comfortable) to 5 (extremely comfortable)?

Speaking in a classroom setting					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	5	2	9	5	3
	20.8%	8.3%	37.5%	20.8%	12.5%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	2	5	9	5	3
	8.3%	20.8%	37.5%	20.8%	12.5%
Asking questions in a classroom setting					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	2	4	7	8	3
	8.3%	16.7%	29.2%	33.3%	12.5%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	1	2	8	10	3
	4.2%	8.3%	33.3%	41.7%	12.5%
Asking questions one-on-one					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	2	3	5	6	8
	8.3%	12.5%	20.8%	25%	33.3%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	1	3	2	11	7
	4.2%	8.3%	8.3%	45.8%	29.2%
Speaking in front of a group or giving a presentation					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	6	8	4	5	1
	25%	33.3%	16.7%	20.8%	4.2%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	6	5	6	6	1
	25%	20.8%	25%	25%	4.2%

Section Two: On a scale from 1 (not at all useful) to 5 (extremely useful) how useful do you find the following when you are learning something new?

Written Instructions, Informational reading, other written materials					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	5	1	9	5	4
	20.8%	4.2%	37.5%	20.8%	16.7%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	1	7	9	6	1
	4.2%	29.2%	37.5%	25%	4.2%
Spoken Instructions, Live lectures					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	6	8	4	5	1
	25%	33.3%	16.7%	20.8%	4.2%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	2	4	5	11	2
	8.3%	16.7%	20.8%	45.8%	8.3%
Images showing me how to complete a task, someone demonstrating a task					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	6	8	4	5	1
	25%	33.3%	16.7%	20.8%	4.2%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	2	1	6	6	9
	8.3%	4.2%	25%	25%	37.5%
Getting hands-on and completing the task myself, Having someone help me complete a task					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	6	8	4	5	1
	25%	33.3%	16.7%	20.8%	4.2%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	1	2	2	8	11
	4.2%	8.3%	8.3%	33.3%	45.8%

Section Three: Have you ever seen a play or live performance?

	A live play?		Any live performance?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
PRE-TEST				
# of students	20	4	23	1
	83.3%	16.7%	95.8%	4.2%
POST-TEST				
# of students	20	4	23	1
	83.3%	16.7%	95.8%	4.2%

## Period Two

18 Students who completed both the pre- and post-tests are represented

Section One: How comfortable are you doing the following on a scale of 1 (not at all comfortable) to 5 (extremely comfortable)?

Speaking in a classroom setting					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	2	2	6	4	4
	11.1%	11.1%	33.3%	22.2%	22.2%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	1	1	6	7	3
	5.6%	5.6%	33.3%	38.9%	16.7%
Asking questions in a classroom setting					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	1	5	3	4	5
	5.6%	27.8%	16.7%	22.2%	27.8%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	1	4	1	7	5
	5.6%	22.2%	5.6%	38.9%	27.8%
Asking questions one-on-one					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	3	1	3	3	8
	16.7%	5.6%	16.7%	16.7%	44.4%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	0	4	4	2	8
	0%	22.2%	22.2%	11.1%	44.4%
Speaking in front of a group or giving a presentation					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	4	2	6	5	1
	22.2%	11.1%	33.3%	27.8%	5.6%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	2	3	6	5	2
	11.1%	16.7%	33.3%	27.8%	11.1%

Section Two: On a scale from 1 (not at all useful) to 5 (extremely useful) how useful do you find the following when you are learning something new?

Written Instructions, Informational reading, other written materials					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	1	2	10	3	2
	5.6%	11.1%	55.6%	16.7%	11.1%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	0	2	7	7	2
	0%	11.1%	38.9%	38.9%	11.1%
Spoken Instructions, Live lectures					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	1	2	5	7	3
	5.6%	11.1%	27.8%	38.9%	16.7%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	0	4	6	5	3
	0%	22.2%	33.3%	27.8%	16.7%
Images showing me how to complete a task, someone demonstrating a task					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	0	1	5	5	7
	0%	5.6%	27.8%	27.8%	38.9%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	0	1	5	5	7
	0%	5.6%	27.8%	27.8%	38.9%
Getting hands-on and completing the task myself, Having someone help me complete a task					
PRE-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	0	1	1	4	12
	0%	5.6%	5.6%	22.2%	66.7%
POST-TEST	1	2	3	4	5
# of students	0	1	3	5	9
	0%	5.6%	16.7%	27.8%	50%

Section Three: Have you ever seen a play or live performance?

	A live play?		Any live performance?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
PRE-TEST				
# of students	14	4	17	1
	77.8%	22.2%	94.4%	5.6%
POST-TEST				
# of students	14	4	17	1
	77.8%	22.2%	94.4%	5.6%

## Works Cited

- Blair, Brent. "Telavisions." In *Youth and Theatre of the Oppressed*, edited by Peter Duffy and Elinor Vettraino, 97-124. New York, UNITED STATES: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Boal, Augusto, and Adrian Jackson. *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. London, UNITED KINGDOM: Routledge, 2005.  
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ucsc/detail.action?docID=241887>.
- Boal, Augusto, and Charles A. McBride. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. New York, UNITED STATES: Theatre Communications Group, 1993.  
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ucsc/detail.action?docID=1394257>.
- Brady, Marion. *The Road to Hell: Contrarian Commentary on Education Reform*. Compiled by Howard Brady, 2010.  
<https://www.marionbrady.com/documents/TheRoadtoHell.pdf>
- García, Marcela. "Sink or Swim in an English-Only Classroom - The Boston Globe." BostonGlobe.com, 21 May 2013.  
<https://opinion/columns/2013/05/21/sink-swim-english-only-classroom/xONS1ZILQ4mRYOdM0Ex6fN/story.html>.
- Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. "The Holy Family." Marx/Engels Library. Accessed 9 October 2018.  
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/holy-family/ch04.htm>.
- "NAEP Assessments - Assessments." Accessed 27 November 2018.  
<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/assessments/>.

Patterson, Doug. "A Brief Biography of Augusto Boal." *Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed*. Accessed 27 November 2018. <https://ptoweb.org/aboutpto/a-briefbiography-of-augusto-boal/>.

Rozansky, Carol Lloyd, and Colleen Aagesen. "Low-Achieving Readers, High Expectations: Image Theatre Encourages Critical Literacy." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 53, no. 6 (2010): 458–66.

Schmitt, Eric C. "THE 3 TEACHING METHODS IN BILINGUAL CLASSES," n.d., 3. "Technology and Student Distraction | Derek Bok Center, Harvard University." 27 November 2018. <https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/technology-and-student-distraction>.

Welner, Kevin G., and Prudence L. Carter. "Achievement Gaps Arise from Opportunity Gaps." *Closing the Opportunity Gap: What America Must Do to Give Every Child an Even Chance*. : Oxford University Press, September 26, 2013. *Oxford Scholarship Online*. Accessed 27 November 2018 <http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199982981.001.0001/acprof-9780199982981-chapter-1>.

Wolk, Ronald A. *Wasting Minds: Why Our Education System Is Failing and What We Can Do About It*. Alexandria, UNITED STATES: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 2011. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ucsc/detail.action?docID=698913>.