



My Grade 8 ArtsAround Short Range Drama Plan for Cycle 'A'

Submitted by: _____ Principal's Name: _____ Date: _____

This is 10 weeks ++ of ArtsAround's Short Range Drama Plan for Cycle A

Drama

APRIL

Drama Lesson # 1: Drama Games & Techniques: Creative Drama is dramatic activities which have the experience of the participants as the goal. This differs from theatre classes in which preparation for a performance is the objective. **In Grade 8 creative drama is a bigger focus than theatre.** The emphasis in Creative Drama is process rather than product. In this lesson the Laban Technique is practiced. Laban takes many of the elements of Drama the students learn all through elementary school and ask the students to go deeper and be more aware and precise.

As a professional development background knowledge piece, I watched a 10-minute *Laban Drama Class* on You Tube to get ideas. My students will play warm up games to prepare them so they can focus on paying attention to isolated movements. Laban teaches effort, modes of shape change, directions, demonstrating relationships with the environment through changing the time, weight and directions assuring the students are not just indirectly wandering. These concepts will enhance the **Elements of Dance Chart** techniques that are part of the Grade 8 Drama Curriculum.

APRIL

Drama Lesson # 2: The Holocaust: Role Play and Tableaux: To demonstrate with Grade 8 students that they are being asked to go deeper, this lesson, **The Holocaust** refers specifically to the Nazi **genocide** of the Jews. Genocide is the deliberate and systematic extermination of a national, racial, political, or cultural group. Intermediate students need to begin to realize that life's history can teach us a lot as individuals and as members of a thriving society. I would hope that the students come away being thankful for the life we lead here in Canada, offering gratitude that this type of slaughter or horrible life situations for others should be exterminated for good.

After reading an assigned article online about **Still Picture Tableaux** I was ready to get the students engaged in *Still Picture Tableaux* with a need to focus on their physical positioning, body language and facial expressions. Silent tableaux give students practice at '**suspending their disbelief**' that they cannot walk in another's shoes. They need to imagine themselves as that person including what they see, feel and hear. When they get good at it, they become that person. When they do get to add voice to the scene/tableaux, they will focus on using appropriate pitch, speaking clearly and with conviction in a slower speech pattern.

The mumbling Grade 8 student who won't look you in the eye is being re-trained in how to respond socially-if that has been a problem for them in the past. The intent is that life skills will be enhanced when needed when these young people go for a job interview! Students are placed on Drama Teams and given one picture to get their creative juices flowing as they try to gain the perspective of the Holocaust victim in that scene. This is a drama worth observing if you have time during your busy day, as a principal. I welcome the opportunity for you to see what my Grade 8 students can do when they are engaged in authentic, integrated, collaborative drama activities.

APRIL

Drama Lessons # 3 & 4: *Rapping*: All grades in Drama learn appropriate strategies used in **choral speaking**. If they ever need to make a speech or answer questions during a job interview, the Grade 8s really need practice in this area. Many Grade 8s give up expressive emotions for 'looking cool.' To keep them interested in the strategies of choral speaking they will study rap.

The theme is '**Worldwide Issues**'. This theme will continue through the next few lessons on *Forum Theatre* as well. One rap titled *Respect Rap* will be taught in this lesson and will be used again as their voice as activists during ***Theatre of the Oppressed***. The students will learn how and why rap got started and the difference between good and bad rap. It was written originally as a statement of our times which flows nicely as it gets integrated into other lessons too. In groups they will create beats and various rhythms to accompany their raps. Then they will need to memorize parts of a rap to be loudly proclaimed in another lesson.

MAY

Drama Lessons # 5 & 6: *Forum Theatre: Theatre of the Oppressed*: Grade 7 students were introduced to this concept too but in Grade 8 the seniors in the school really connect to their emotions using current news issues in their own community or globally. What isn't fair to them? What makes them angry? What solutions can they come up with? The students look at issues that occur in society that do not allow people to thrive and feel alive. These behaviours are very apparent to Grade 8s particularly because so much of their character continues to be challenged due to daily stressors-whether accurate or fabricated. The theatre of the oppressed or forum theatre inspires informative action through interactive theatre gaming.

They get the audience to participate or comment. The community interacts with the legislators or city councilors. Through active participation new ideas are generated with votes being processed with the audience involved. The aim here is that students begin to realize that handled appropriately their voices can be heard and they can make change in many positive ways. They are encouraged to become activists or advocates with a cause and a purpose. When this process is completed properly, the kids should feel solidarity with like-minded thinkers and a respectful empathy for those whose views differ. 'Theatre of the Oppressed' is empowering and powerful lessons!

MAY

Drama Lesson # 7: *Amy's Dilemma: Gang Violence: Part 1:* Grade 8 students who have the Nelson Readers as their literacy program would have read several stories like ***Secrets and How Words get Around Through Gossip***. (Often issues they deal with daily.) Many other literacy programs or stories have similar themes. In the next two drama lessons, students explore a situation based on a true story about gang violence and witnessing crime where a 13-year-old boy was stabbed and partly paralyzed in Toronto for trying to leave the Latin Kings gang.

The subject matter of this unit is very important to explore honestly with today's youth, who often deal with issues of 'snitching' related to bullying incidents and other problems. This is a critical aspect of character education and for them to consider their responsibility to their duty as a Catholic too. Students will use tableau, symbolic movement, improvisation, role-play, and reflection to analyze the issues at stake in the story. In this lesson the students read articles about gangs and watch a You Tube for media literacy to get a solid background on the statistics of hanging out with the wrong crowd. Using improvisation, the scenes are set up to provide the background needed to explore their feelings through an activity called ***Role on the Wall***. Please feel free to visit our classroom during the drama to see this lesson unfold.

MAY

Drama Lesson # 8: *Amy's Dilemma: Making Decisions: Part 2:* The students will decide on problems youth have and by using an activity called ***Voices in Your Head***, they try to get support from loyal friends who help them make better decisions. The students will be acting 'in-role' while my job is to be 'teacher-in-role' too. This provides me with the opportunity to coach and advise as a third party neutral. Hopefully, this will help students realize that they can trust their teacher to help them if they are stressed or worried. As Grade 8 students move on to high school, it is important that they get the message that their high school teachers care about them too.

For reflection the students will watch the success story of a young man who turned his life around. Victor Rios says he has lived two lifetimes. In his first, he was a gang member, juvenile delinquent and high school dropout. Today, he's a sociology professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, who studies at-risk youth. It is important to end with a hopeful message!

JUNE

Drama Lesson # 9: *The Underground Railway: The Patchwork Path:* In this lesson, the students explore other venues for justice, other than gangs, where people choose to step up to the plate and make a difference when others are unjustly suffering. Done with a good heart and a right intent.

Frozen Tableaux; Gallery Walk; Role on the Wall and Hot Seat are only some of the techniques used in today's lesson. In **Historical Media Literacy**, a five-minute video called **Freedom's Land** provides an interesting reflection of being fortunate to be living in a free country. An interesting quilt activity is also provided as a Visual Arts extension so the class can collectively complete a quilt using the coded messages used during the Underground Railroad. They are even invited to create their own coded designs. Acquiring a deeper understanding about how Canada was very much involved in this *Underground Railway Ride to Freedom* for black and white slaves makes every Grade 8 student proud to be Canadian by the end of this unit.

Drama Lesson # 10: The Underground Railway: The Patchwork Path Finale: Drama lessons will wrap up this year with a bang! After winding down with further exciting facts about the Underground Railroad, **students will be assessed** while working with their Drama Team competing in a culminating activity linked to the Underground Railroad. One task card per team includes the following topics: **The Station Scene; On the Road Again Scene; Runaway Slaves Scene and Secret Words and Symbols Scene**. The actors will already know how they are being assessed by **The Assessment on Role Play in a Scene** that they were introduced to in an earlier lesson. These scenes will be filmed so at some point before the year is out the class can see IF they were believable when they sat back and watched themselves on screen. Learning to celebrate those moments that worked well and to discriminate where any weakness lies is a HUGE life lesson. Self-critiquing and providing positive comments to others are important skills to practice.

