

Teacher: Taylor Meng	Date: 10/22/21	Subject: Theatre	Grade Level: 7 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Lesson Title:</b> Black Acting Methods – Nudging the Memory - Ensemble/Community Building			
<p>In this lesson, the teacher will explain the importance of community and ensemble building in theatre as well as in our real lives. The teacher will lead the students through a series of improvisational activities and group exercises to help build a sense of responsibility and communion among the class while stressing the importance of individuality and differences within a safe classroom space.</p>			
<b>Common Core Theatre Standards:</b> TH: Pr5.1.7 a. Participate in a variety of acting exercises and techniques that can be applied in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.			
TH: Re8.1.7 a. Identify the artistic choices made based on personal experience in a drama/theatre work. b. Describe how cultural perspectives can influence the evaluation of drama/theatre work. c. Interpret how the use of personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs can be used to discuss drama/theatre work.			
<b>Materials Needed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Notebooks/Binders with Loose Leaf</li> <li>o Pencils/Pens</li> <li>o Activity Instructions Handout (Attachment 1)</li> <li>o Open Space</li> </ul>			
Student Friendly Lesson Objective (Purpose) I can...	Teacher Activities (Teacher Strategies)	Student Activities/Differentiated Instruction	Assignments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o I can explore and share my own story and work within a safe space.</li> </ul>	Anticipatory Set: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o As the students enter the classroom, they will take out their notebooks/binders.</li> </ul>	Guided Practice/Strategies (You Do): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Once the class has completed each of the activities listed on Attachment 1, the</li> </ul>	Bell Ringer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o See Anticipatory Set</li> </ul> Remediation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o As the students work, the teacher will</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o I can connect my individuality and past experiences with my classmates to build a stronger sense of community.</li> <li>o I can identify, analyze, and discuss artistic choices presented based on my personal experiences, cultural experiences, and personal preferences and beliefs.</li> </ul>	<p>On the board, the students will answer the following prompt:</p> <p><i>What does the word <u>community</u> mean to me?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Once all students have entered the classroom, the students will have 5 minutes to answer this prompt as fully as possible (one full page).</li> </ul> <p>Essential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o How can I connect with those who may be different from me?</li> <li>o Why is community important?</li> </ul> <p>Input (I Do):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The teacher will explain that today we will be using our past experiences and several group exercises to build an ensemble setting in a safe classroom community.</li> </ul>	<p>teacher will instruct them to take out a piece of loose leaf paper and record all of their thoughts about the activities. This self-reflection journal should answer the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What activity did you like the most? Why?</li> <li>2) Which activity did you like the least? Why?</li> <li>3) Which activity did you find the most beneficial?</li> <li>4) Which activity did you find the least beneficial?</li> <li>5) Why could these activities be important to our work within this classroom?</li> <li>6) How did these activities serve to build the ensemble/community of the class?</li> <li>7) Why do you think it is important to have a strong classroom community?</li> <li>8) Why is ensemble important in theatre?</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Once the directions have been given, the</li> </ul>	<p>monitor progress and intervene when help is needed and when concepts need to be re-explained.</p> <p>Enrichment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Each student will use their own understanding and thoughts about the activities to contribute to class discussion.</li> <li>o The student's will receive feedback and assessment based on their background in theatre.</li> <li>o Each student can choose how to complete their work (standing vs. sitting) based on their physical abilities/comfort.</li> </ul> <p>Daily Writing Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The journal prompt bell ringer assignment will serve as their daily writing assignment</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The teacher will ask the students to find a space in the room that they have room to move around in.</li> <li>o The teacher will guide the students through a series of warm up activities that require focus on the group as a whole. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Hand-Clap</u> - Going around the circle, clap at the same time as the person next to you. Then, turn and “send” the clap to the next person. They will receive it by clapping at the same time as you. Continue around the circle until a consistent rhythm is created.</li> <li>- <u>Counting Together</u> - Instruct the group to close their eyes. Explain that they must count to 20 as a group. If someone says the number at the same time as</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>students will be given 10 minutes to write a well thought out response to each question (at least one full page in length).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o As students work, they should consider the following criteria to ensure success:</li> </ul> <p><i>Self-Reflection Journal Criteria</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The journal was well written with little to no grammar errors.</li> <li>- The student’s thoughts were clearly communicated and all questions were answered to the best of the student’s ability.</li> <li>- The student demonstrates a clear understanding of the importance of community and ensemble within the theatre classroom as well as outside of it.</li> </ul> <p>Independent Practice/Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o After 10 minutes, the teacher will lead the students in a class discussion of their journals.</li> </ul>	<p>as well as the self-reflection journal at the end of class.</p> <p>Assessment / Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The Self-Reflection Journal will serve as the summative assessment for this lesson.</li> <li>o The process of learning and participating in the ensemble activities will serve as a formative assessment throughout the lesson.</li> </ul> <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o If not completed in class, the students will complete their Self-Reflection Journal at home to turn in the following day.</li> </ul>
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	<p>someone else, the entire group must start over from 1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Human Machine</u> - While laying flat on the floor, the students will close their eyes. As the teacher chooses, students will join in to the chorus with a sound. Each sound should play off of each other until all are participating. Repeat this activity with physical gestures as well as sound.</li> </ul> <p>Model (We Do):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The teacher will lead the class through a set of ensemble-based activities. See directions for these activities on Attachment 1.</li> </ul> <p>Check for Understanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o As the students are completing this exercise, the verbal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The teacher will eventually end on the most important question of the day - why is diversity and equality important in this classroom as well as outside of it?</li> <li>o The students will use their own personal experience, cultural backgrounds, and their own preferences and beliefs to respond to their classmates with compassionate rigor.</li> </ul>	
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	<p>and physical responses given will allow the teacher to check for understanding of the activity.</p> <p>Closure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o At the end of the hour, the teacher will lead a discussion with the students about the work done today (warm ups, ensemble activities, journal, etc.) and what impact it had on them.</li></ul> <p>Time Duration: 1 hour</p>		
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**Attachment 1 (next three pages):**

## **Stomp, Clap, Sing**

This is an exercise that is a physical warm up, as well as imparting concentration and coordination skills, community building, and increased musical participation.

- 1 The participants divide into three equal groups of 3–5 members.
- 2 Using hand claps each group is instructed to clap to a different simple rhythm (e.g., in 4/4 time first group claps on every beat, second group claps on second and fourth beat, third group claps on first and fourth beat).
- 3 Repeat step 2 with stomping the feet.
- 4 Vocals are then added by having the first group sing a simple melody, followed by the second group singing a different and counter melody, followed by the third group singing a different and counter melody.
- 5 The entire ensemble then moves across the floor as a community, but remain in their respective groups.

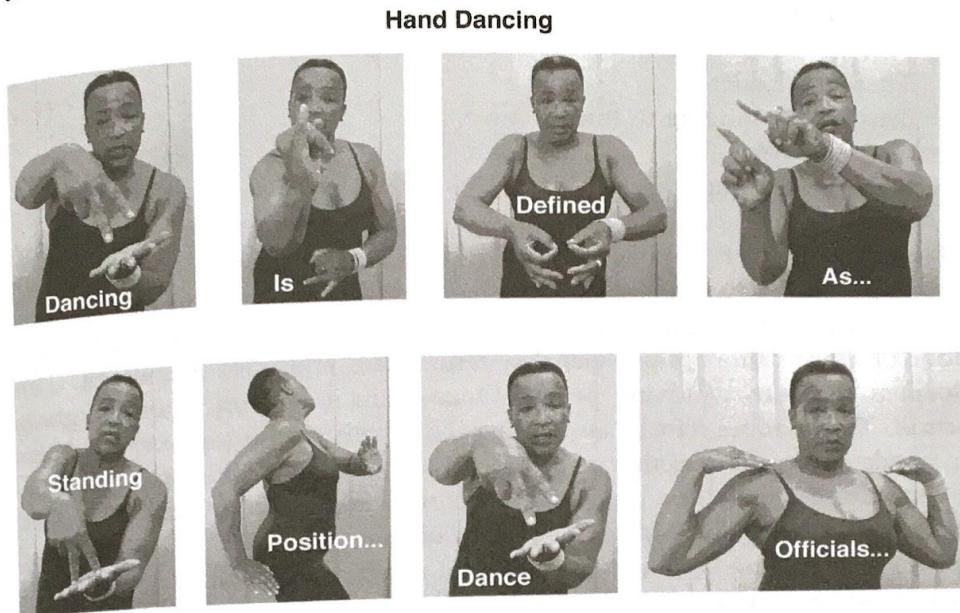
## **Tell Me Yours, I'll Tell You Mine**

- 1 Two women agree to sharing and hearing.
- 2 One woman agrees to tell her story while the other listens.
- 3 The other woman then agrees to listen to the other's story.
- 4 The women are then informed they must tell each other's story to the group. The director will instruct that each woman must work to make sure they honor each other's story, including the instruction to rehearse each other's story before "sharing" with the group.
- 5 The two women take the center stage taking turns retelling the other's story.

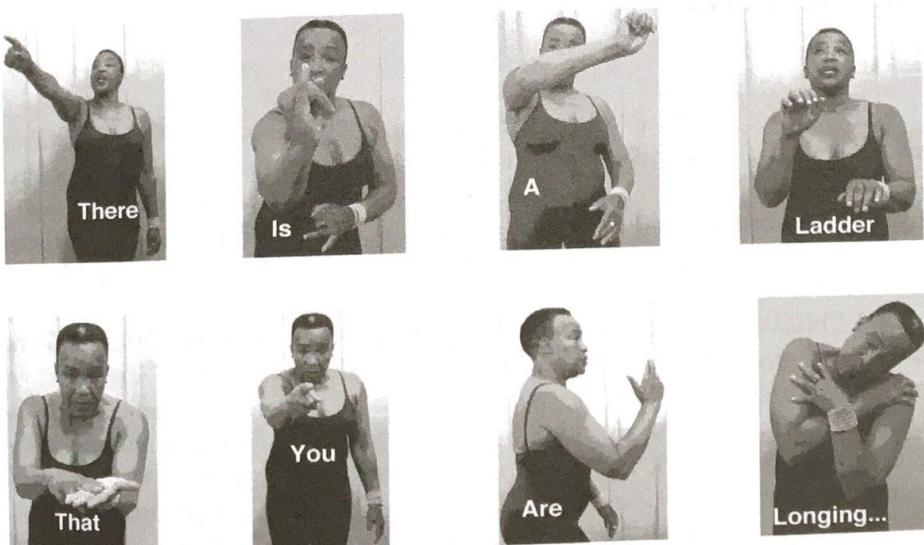
### ***Hand Dancing***

See top two rows of Figure 3.1.

Hand Dancing is based on American sign language. This is taught in unison. The intention of the exercise is to create a physical chorus. It is a way to “accelerate” the birth of the ensemble. I found that it is a way to impress



### ***Movement Meditation***



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Figure 3.1 Rhodessa Jones demonstrating “Dancing Is” and “There Is a Ladder” exercises (photo by Lorraine Capparell).

upon the incarcerated woman the idea of responsibility and accountability. “Hand Dancing” is one of the Medea Project’s methodologies that encourage positive group action, deepening a sense of community.

### ***There Is a Ladder: a movement meditation***

See bottom two rows of Figure 3.1.

There is a ladder  
that you are longing to find  
that leads you  
to a higher ground.

“There Is a Ladder” is a sound and movement exercise based on a found poem which is a written statement that I utilize as a part of my teaching method. I literally “found” the words of the previous poem discarded on the floor of a print shop. Inside penal systems chaos and crisis is constant. This poem is taught as a moving prayer. Once again it calls on a positive group action. The actresses start by assembling into a very tight formation and begin to speak and move together. This exercise is used as a bilingual vocal performance that involves participants reciting words in several languages, including English, Spanish, French, and Zulu simultaneously. This sound and movement exercise combines gestures and American sign language while the words are being spoken, similar to a Greek Chorus.