



# TEACHING AND LEARNING RESEARCH EXCHANGE

Walking in Two Worlds: The Role  
of Drama in Creating Cross-Cultural  
Understanding and Student  
Engagement in School

Accompanied by:

Opening Up About Oppression  
Through Forum Theatre: A Drama  
Unit and Teacher's Guide

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# Executive Summary

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This report documents a drama project carried out by Grades 10-12 students in a Drama 10 course in which they explored what it means to live and to go to school in a culturally mixed community. Fort Qu'Appelle and the surrounding areas are comprised of several diverse communities made up of descendants of many First Nations, Métis, and white settlers. Students from the various communities seldom have opportunities to interact which may contribute to stereotyping, racism, and disengagement in school. Moreover, in the year preceding this study, the community had been the subject of several negative news stories that reported on murders, bomb threats, teen suicides, and drug issues. The purpose of the project was to give students a voice so they could express what it means to them to live in the area and to see whether participation in a meaningful drama project could engage students in school and help to build positive relationships within the school and community.

The students participated in a process known as Forum Theatre where events in their lives were turned into a drama performance. They also studied the lives of Canadians working in the performance industry and two plays by Drew Hayden Taylor, a well-known Ojibwa comedian and playwright. Throughout the process, the students learned several aspects of theatre and performing. Their play was performed in front of several appreciative audiences including their home community, other schools in the division, University of Regina Education students, and for attendees at the Learning from Practice conference sponsored by the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching.

The results of the study indicated that the Drama 10 students developed close ties and positive relationships with their classmates, and were acknowledged positively by other students throughout their own school and others in the division. This resulted in a higher sense of self-esteem and personal agency by the drama students. Several community members who attended the play commented that they were pleased to see the students address difficult issues such as racism and stereotyping.

The study concludes with some recommendations for teachers who may be considering undertaking a similar project. A teacher's guide with detailed lesson plans accompanies the report.

# Acknowledgements

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We gratefully acknowledge the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching for the grant that made this project possible. This project helped to positively affect the lives of the students who participated in it.

We would also like to thank the students of Bert Fox Composite High School (BFCHS) who participated in this project. Their hard work and dedication helped to forge some strong bonds among the participants and to raise awareness of important issues within their school and community.

Thanks also go to the principal and staff of BFCHS for allowing students to miss class time in order to perform in other communities. Their flexibility helped to reinforce to the drama students that learning truly does take place beyond the classroom.

Finally, the students and I would like to acknowledge the teacher, Mrs. Melissa Marley, whose knowledge of theatre, understanding of youth, patience, and dedication to this project helped to change attitudes and to possibly change some young lives. She is an outstanding teacher and role model and we hope her hard work and dedication will inspire others to use drama to explore their own circumstances.

Carol Fulton

# Introduction

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*This is theatre—the art of looking at ourselves.*

Augusto Boal (1992, p. xxx)

This study documents the experiences of a teacher and the students in the Drama 10 class at Bert Fox Community High School (BFCHS) in Fort Qu'Appelle as they explored the use of drama for developing skills and creating cross-cultural understanding within their classroom, community, and surrounding areas. The teacher researcher, Melissa Marley, and a university researcher, Carol Fulton, posed the question, “Can participation in a drama production where culturally diverse students create performance pieces based on their own life experience help to increase cross-cultural understanding and promote student engagement in school?”

# Objectives of the Study

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This study was intended to:

- promote cross-cultural understanding in the school and community;
- develop students' awareness and appreciation of their own and each other's cultures through research, dialogue, and working together;
- increase student knowledge of Indigenous playwrights and performers in North America;
- develop literacy skills in relation to reading and understanding scripts;
- develop students' communication, collaboration, and performance skills;
- develop students' sense of identity and empowerment through participating in a meaningful project, which may also lead to improved engagement in school;
- provide insights into the use of drama for developing students' skills and attitudes/appreciations; and
- serve as an example or guide for other teachers who may wish to undertake a similar project.

# Purpose

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The purpose of the study was to determine if a meaningful drama project could engage students in school and help to build positive relationships within the school and community.

# Rationale for the Study

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As the former site of a Hudson's Bay Trading Post, Fort Qu'Appelle has a rich history where nations met, conducted business, and negotiated treaties. With the interaction of cultures, however, came misunderstandings, stereotypes, and racism that still exist today, primarily because of colonialism and the government's attempts to assimilate First Nations peoples. We believe, however, that stereotypes also exist partly because people from different cultural communities seldom have opportunities to mingle socially and to gain insights into each other's worlds. Furthermore, because many First Nations students come from nearby reserves and many Métis students come from another small community, students rarely have opportunities outside of class time to interact with students from the town and farms unless they play on one of the school's sports teams. The lack of positive interaction may be affecting the relationships among the students and contributing to the phenomenon of many First Nations and Métis students leaving school early.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, in the year preceding this study, the community had been the subject of several negative news stories that reported on murders, bomb threats, teen suicides, and drug issues. We believed allowing students to create performance pieces about their lives would give them a voice to express their views on living in the community and surrounding area.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the 2006 Canadian census, only 68 percent of Aboriginal Canadians have completed high school (and only 49 percent of Aboriginal Canadians living on-reserve) compared with 90 percent of non-Aboriginal Canadians who have done so (Statistics Canada, 2006).

# Description of the Project

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BFCHS is a culturally diverse school where approximately 60% of the students are of First Nations or Métis ancestry and the rest are descendants of European settlers. The drama course that was the focus of the project took place over the course of one semester, although the performances by the students extended well into the following semester. Students in the Drama 10 course included those in Grades 10-12 who chose to take the course as an elective. The class began with 29 students from various communities in the area including the town, farms, and nearby First Nations. Many of the students did not know each other when the course began. By the end of the semester, 23 students remained.

The semester began with the teacher employing a number of drama games to build a sense of group identity, trust, and cohesiveness. A particularly important aspect of the course for achieving this goal was a one-day anti-racist, cross-cultural training workshop (ACT) held in September at the nearby Calling Lakes Conference Centre. Because students were off campus and spent the entire day in the workshop, they were able to build trusting relationships without being distracted by other influences usually found in a school.

During the remainder of the semester, the students studied the works of Canadian artists including two plays by Ojibwa author and playwright, Drew Hayden Taylor. They also attended local performances based on Forum Theatre, and wrote about and discussed their own life experiences. From their writings, the students created performance pieces that they turned into a play to help others understand the complex and diverse perspectives that youth develop when living in a culturally diverse community. The next steps were to create the sets and to perform their play in front of audiences.

The students performed twice for the general public in Fort Qu'Appelle, once for the BFCHS student body, once at the University of Regina, and three times at other schools within the school division. The performances took place from January to April 2009. In order to determine the impact, after each performance audiences were invited to complete a short survey that identified sensitive issues raised by the youth (See Appendix B for the complete set of survey and interview instruments used in the project). Several students who participated in the project were interviewed before and after the project to determine whether their participation in the Drama 10 course influenced how they viewed themselves, their classmates, and their community. The teacher was also interviewed throughout the study. One of the highlights for the students was being interviewed on CBC Radio after a reporter had heard about their project. A similar project was also underway about the same time that involved students from one of the First Nations. Because of these projects, CBC Radio then featured a week where students from Bert Fox Community High School assisted with aspects of the local morning broadcast such as giving the weather report and reading some of the news.

The most significant highlight of the project, however, was an invitation for the students to perform their play at the Learning from Practice Conference sponsored by the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching in November 2009. The sense of pride and accomplishment the students felt because of this experience was palpable to any observer. A guide for teachers who may be considering undertaking a similar project accompanies the study.

# A Brief Review of the Literature

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The use of drama to raise social issues is not a new concept. Augusto Boal, a Brazilian theatre director, writer, and theorist, and close friend of Paulo Freire, author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), introduced *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1973) to Brazilian peasants as a way to help them have a voice to confront local problems. Soon, various forms of this type of theatre spread throughout South America and the rest of the world. The most well-known of these participatory forms of theatre is Forum Theatre.

FORUM-THEATRE presents a scene or a play that must necessarily show a situation of oppression that the Protagonist does not know how to fight against, and fails. The spect-actors are invited to replace this Protagonist, and act out—on stage and not from the audience—all possible solutions, ideas, strategies. The other actors improvise the reactions of their characters facing each new intervention, so as to allow a sincere analysis of the real possibilities of using those suggestions in real life. All spect-actors have the same right to intervene and play their ideas. FORUM-THEATRE is a collective rehearsal for reality. (Boal, 2004, n.p.)

Numerous theatre groups in North America have since used Forum Theatre to address issues in their own communities. For example, Vancouver's Headlines Theatre, is a

worldwide leading example of healing art, of theatre for social change, with projects in collaboration with First Nations and multicultural communities through hundreds of theatre workshops, Power Plays and Forum Theatre events around the world on issues such as violence and suicide prevention, anti-racism workshops, youth empowerment, bullying and community development. (WiserEarth, 2005-2011)<sup>2</sup>

Kennelly (2006) described how democratic citizenship was carried out through Forum Theatre in downtown Vancouver as residents portrayed to others the effects of poverty on their lives. Similarly, in 2006, the city of Regina enlisted David Diamond, one of the founders of Headlines Theatre, to work with people in the inner-city community to identify issues they face and to work through possible solutions. City and provincial officials were invited in the hopes that some of the issues would turn into actions and legislation to address the problems.

Three Vancouver groups that use Forum Theatre have partnered to create the Aboriginal Youth Harm Reduction Project, a youth-driven, peer-based, culturally sensitive HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C prevention program. The program aims to engage youth in nonjudgmental, peer-led discussions to both explore issues Aboriginal youth are facing and to provide youth with information and skills.

Diane Conrad (2005) of the University of Alberta researched the transformative potential of drama and arts-based inquiry with incarcerated youth. In one article she described her doctoral research:

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<sup>2</sup>See Headlines Theatre: <http://www.headlinestheatre.com/intro.htm>

My doctoral study involved doing a popular theatre project with a group of high school drama students in a rural Alberta community as a participatory, performative research method. Our process explored issues students identified as relevant to their lives, giving them an opportunity to represent and re-examine their experiences, including experiences that might deem them “at-risk”, and giving me insight into their perceptions. (p. 27)

Schools also use Forum Theatre. The Regina Public School Division, for example, has been training student leaders for several years in anti-racist and cross-cultural training (ACT). ACT is based on Forum Theatre, where students participate in workshops and learn how to help their peers reduce racism and other forms of oppression in their schools.

Numerous other examples of youth participating in various forms of drama to identify social issues and to address oppression illustrate how students have gained recognition, a voice, and a sense of efficacy and power. For instance, the students, most of whom were of First Nations or Métis ancestry, at the former Native Survival School in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (subsequently named Joe Duquette High School and then Oskayak High School) made a name for themselves in the 1980s and 1990s by creating dramas based on their lives and performing for schools across the country. Similarly, a documentary film entitled *Beating the Streets* (Thomas & Krepakevich, 1998) illustrated how participating in drama projects turned lives around for street youth in Edmonton. Several others working with youth have explored how drama can be a form of research when youth are exploring aspects of their lives, reflecting upon these aspects, and taking action to change circumstances affecting them (Bolton, 1996; Conrad, 2002; Norris, 2000). Similarly, Kana and Aitken (2007) used Forum Theatre with Maori students in New Zealand to explore social and cultural exclusion and to develop youth leadership skills. We hypothesized that drama could provide similar beneficial effects for the students of BFCHS and the community of Fort Qu’Appelle and area.

The key to developing student voice in participatory drama such as Forum Theatre is the use of theatre games to develop critical thinking and improvisation skills. The games also help to build trust relationships, often raising issues of power whereby the actors develop possible solutions to social issues. Numerous books on theatre games are available. Many are based on Augusto Boal’s (1992) *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*.

# Description of the Play

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The play the students created can best be described as short scenes or vignettes that represent some of the elements of the Grade 10 drama class. In the play, the teacher, Mrs. Marley, led the students through some theatre games or other typical activities they did during their class. These were interspersed with scenes that resulted from discussions the students and teacher held in class.

The play opened with a scene where the students entered a gymnasium and most of the Aboriginal students sat on one set of bleachers and the non-Aboriginal students sat on another. The message was obvious. A new student to the school was introduced and was horrified by some of what she encountered, including students who were having interpersonal conflicts such as jealousy over a boyfriend and students reading headlines from the newspaper that reported on the various crimes and violence that had shaken the community in the past two years.

Other issues emerged. The performance showed which students typically dropped out of school, which students were overcome with stress because of expectations placed upon them, which students faced stereotypes and racism, and which students would have a less-than-successful future.

The play was not without its humour however. One stereotypically nerdy student delighted the audience with his shyness and naiveté; another said he would help the teacher unlock her car with his “Indian key”. This same student stepped forward when the teacher asked who thought he or she would be earning \$100,000 after graduation, but he had to step back when she specified that she meant legally.

A positive note began to emerge as the students participated in a hallway fashion show where teenagers, in stereotypical modes of dress, modeled for three so-called judges who silently held up posters indicating their assumptions about the models through words such as prostitute, good student, virgin, and so on. The models then turned to walk off the stage. As they did, the posters on their backs totally negated the assumptions of the judges. Interpersonal conflicts became resolved and newspaper headlines reported on some positive aspects of the school and community. The play ended with students entering the stage gymnasium and once again taking their place on the bleachers, but this time there was no division between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students—they had all become friends.

# The Process

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## GETTING STARTED

Besides promoting cross-cultural understanding, the drama project was intended to:

- increase knowledge of Indigenous playwrights and performance artists in North America;
- improve students' literacy skills in relation to reading, writing, and performing scripts; and
- give students a voice to express issues of concern to them.

At the beginning of the course, the teacher told the students what to expect. Melissa Marley stated:

Right from the beginning I was very upfront that we would be building a production about our lives in the Fort and the issues we face. I think that's what actually sold them because they were going to talk about their own experiences, they were going to talk about their own lives, and they were going to put their own personalities and experiences into the play, and that's not scary. It's easy to talk about yourself. It's not intimidating and I think they considered it to be somewhat avant-garde. It hadn't been done before at the school. To them it was an opportunity to be rebellious in a way, to challenge people and they liked that idea.

During the first two weeks of the semester, the students focused on questions such as, "What is theatre and what is the purpose of it?" They discussed the history of Dionysus and a brief history of Western theatre. The teacher stressed that there are many types of theatre in different cultures, but this was Greek and European theatre. Melissa wanted the students to understand that the purpose of theatre was about entertainment and bringing a community together, but it was also about social action. In her words, "The real purpose was to talk about issues that people really didn't want to talk about."

## THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED AND POWER PLAYS

Near the beginning of the semester, Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) was also introduced whereby Melissa provided a lecture explaining the background and uses of TO. The students also participated in a number of theatre games and Power Plays<sup>3</sup> that would help them develop teamwork, think critically and creatively, and provide a basis from which the final play would emerge. We recognized that although adults often see high school students as

a homogeneous population in terms of their place in the education system, they are heterogeneous in terms of race, class, sexual orientation, gender, and ability. Attention must be paid even more to these aspects in the development of plays and the workshop process itself to ensure that the politics of difference are taken into account. (Linds, 1998, n.p.)

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<sup>3</sup> Power Plays are theatre games that show issues of power and are used in Forum Theatre where spect-actors intervene in situations of oppression.

If we were to pay attention to student differences and the power differential among students, it was critical that the semester start well. Melissa explained how this was done:

The springboard day, or the day the students really understood where we were going with this, was the day we did the drama workshop out at Calling Lakes Conference Centre. That day was all built around Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed and I had done a fair amount of those types of activities already, but when Rhonda (the workshop facilitator) and I planned that workshop, I very specifically said these are the things I want my students to do and these are the areas I want to address: I really want to hit racism; I really want to hit sexuality and how our students react to homosexuality; and I really want to target where people are from and the location of the reservations because that's such a big deal out here whether you are a town kid, or a lake kid, or a Lebreton kid, or whatever reserve you are from. That really matters to them because that's the way we divide ourselves here in the Fort. We really wanted to hit stereotypes. I think to leave the school, which was the first time we had left the school together as a big group, was very important. We shared meals together and we played together. In the morning I took them out on the grass and did some team building activities outside and we played childhood games such as What Time is it Mr. Wolf? and Princess, Dragon, Knight, which I taught them earlier. We played. We built that sense of community and comfort, and giddiness and belonging, and then we went inside and started to do drama work. That was the first time they really started to look at each other and have those important conversations such as "Why do you think I'm this way because I dress this way?"

Throughout the remainder of the semester, Melissa continued to use theatre games and Power Plays as warm-ups to each class, whether students were studying academic material or performing. Students seemed to engage with these activities, from which issues surfaced and often became part of the final production. Melissa served as the Joker or facilitator. Dwyer (2004) noted "the Joker is able to exercise a high degree of control over what gets talked about in Forum Theatre and that such discursive regulation may be critical in shaping the 'ideological contours' of the event" (p. 199). Melissa undoubtedly was instrumental in influencing what issues the students felt comfortable bringing forth but did not control what would happen or what would be included in the play.

## **RESEARCHING CANADIAN DRAMATISTS**

The group then discussed plays that challenged social boundaries. They looked at First Nations playwrights, at famous Canadian performers and dramatists, and at the theatre scene in Canada. The students were assigned research projects on famous Canadians and then created in-role performance interviews of their characters where a classmate would interview each student and he or she would respond as his or her character. This assignment provided a vehicle for students to practice creating and performing a piece of work that was relatively risk free. According to a student in the focus group, "That assignment was really a lot of fun and we learned a lot about different famous Canadian performers and playwrights."

Next the students studied two plays by Drew Hayden Taylor, an award-winning playwright, author, columnist, filmmaker, and lecturer, from an Ojibwa First Nation in central Ontario. The teacher organized the class into small, collective groups and had them perform scenes from two of his short plays, *The Boy*

*in the Treehouse* and *Girl Who Loved Her Horses*. This was the students' first opportunity to perform a play, the purpose of which was to help them understand the components of a play: the content, costumes, props, directing, focus, lines, timing, and rehearsals. The two plays are comical looks at the process of becoming an adult and the misconceptions and misunderstandings that persist between Aboriginal and colonial cultures in Canada. The plays also focus on identity and what it means to live one's culture. Questions students addressed in class included: What does it mean to be white? What does it mean to be First Nations? What if you're not one or the other? Do you consider yourself to be one or the other? What is theatre and what are the components of it? How has it impacted Canadian culture? Who are some of the people who raise awareness of issues of identity through the arts?

## **BUILDING THE PLAY**

One of the assignments given to students was to write about issues in their lives. Some of these writings became scenes in the play as did some of the conversations that emerged from the theatre games and Power Plays. With a lot of material, the teacher and students sat down and decided what material should be incorporated and what should not. Melissa took charge of creating a script from the various elements the students thought should be in the play. The play changed over time, however, as some students left school and others joined the class.

The class periods were divided between academic and on-stage days. During the academic days, the teacher would provide information on some aspects of play creation and production and on the on-stage days, the students would perform. The students particularly liked the on-stage days as these were considered the fun days when attendance was almost perfect.

The students also decided what they would use for a set and it was agreed that they would create black boxes that could be moved around the stage and used in a variety of ways. Other than costumes and posters for the hallway fashion show, no other set was required.

The script was created by the end of the semester and the students performed their play for their school and community at the end of January before the beginning of the second semester. One of the intentions of the project was to take the play to other communities, so the principal of the school gave permission for the students to miss classes and to perform their play during the following semester in three other communities and at the University of Regina. Their final performance was at the Learning from Practice Conference on November 21, 2009 in Saskatoon. Although not all of the original cast members could attend, other students willingly took their place.

## **DATA COLLECTION**

Data collection began with surveys of the Drama 10 class to determine their attitudes toward school, their community, and relationships among students. Semi-structured interviews were held at the beginning and at the end of the project with five individual students, although not all of the students in the second group were the same as in the first group due to some students moving away and others joining the project later. Besides the interviews, a small focus group of six students was implemented at the end of the project. Audiences were surveyed after each of the students' performances to see if the drama had any impact on the audiences. Discussions between the two researchers were

also recorded as a way to keep track of highlights and challenges that arose throughout the semester. Initially, we had intended to use student attendance as a source of data to determine whether the project encouraged students to attend regularly, however, some students would come to school to attend the drama class but would skip the other classes, making attendance in school not a reliable source of data.

## **ANALYSIS**

Survey results were compiled to determine the average scores of the students' attitudes and the audience surveys. Additional voluntary comments in the surveys were also recorded as well as the frequency of comments that were similar. Key themes were then identified in the student interviews, focus groups, and conversations with the teacher. Critical incidents that attested to the impact of this project on the students were also noted.

## **FINDINGS**

### ***THE STUDENTS***

At the beginning of the semester, students were given a questionnaire to determine their attitudes toward school, their classmates, their community, and themselves. The survey was also intended to determine whether students thought there was any racism among people from the various communities that make up the Fort Qu'Appelle area. Following the survey, individual students were interviewed to augment the results of the surveys.

The initial student surveys completed by the Drama 10 class indicated students generally thought relationships among students and community members were fairly good and they thought of themselves as average-to-good students academically. Most of the students said they joined the drama class because of the teacher (Mrs. Marley had taught most students in Grade 9 English Language Arts) or they thought it would be a fun class. Students did not seem to see any issues related to race relations. One student asked on the survey "Why are you asking about this anyway and creating a problem when there isn't one?"

Some divisions among the communities soon became apparent however. On one occasion when the researcher was visiting the class during a drama lesson, one of the First Nations students from one reserve jokingly called another student from a different First Nation a *Ne Chee*, which is an Ojibwa term for close friend or brother (Ne Chee Friendship Centre, n.d.). To the students in this school however, it has become a derogatory term and an insult. When Melissa queried the students as to the meaning of the word, the students replied "dirty Indian". In later classes, this incident was explored more fully regarding why it is all right for a person from one racialized group to call another from the same group a derogatory name, but not for someone of another racial group to do so.

In the interviews with the students, more evidence surfaced that indicated an awareness of racism in the community. Although all of the students who were interviewed felt they got along well with most people, all but one noted that they only hung out with other kids from their own community. Most of the Aboriginal students also said they didn't usually talk with other students who were not in their immediate circle of friends. Two First Nations students explained that there was also considerable tension among people from some of the reserves in the area. "The people of [one First Nation] are not respected at all, and [another two First Nations] just don't get along."

One white student who self-described as a very hard-working person, popular and able to get along with just about everybody, admitted to making racist comments now and then and that “race sticks with race . . . it’s labels people put on each other and they stick with their own groups.” This student went on to say that there have been a few incidents in the town, but “It’s mostly one race” and that, “We can’t respect them if they don’t respect themselves.”

This student also felt that there was not enough cross-cultural education in the school because usually only the “Native kids take Native Studies” and “We don’t learn about each other.” The topic of education prompted the researcher to ask if the interviewee knew of any reasons why so many of the First Nations and Métis students drop out of school before graduation. The answer was, “Lack of discipline, I guess.” The topic then prompted the student to go on to say, “I don’t see why those kids get free money to go to school. What is this money and what is it for?” Although the researcher tried to explain that education for First Nations students is guaranteed in the treaties, which would include money for books, transportation, etc., the body language of the student seemed to indicate a resistance to hearing an explanation to the question so the interview came to a conclusion.

When the students were asked whether they thought the drama project would make a difference to racial relations in the community, all replied that they didn’t know. They did, however, note that they were starting to feel more comfortable with other students in the drama class and they were getting to know each other.

By the end of the project, the students thought of their drama classmates as family. Every student who was interviewed talked about how they viewed all of their classmates in the drama class as friends, even those with whom they would have never associated before, either because they were in a different grade or lived in a different community. “We’ve been through a lot together,” said one student. When asked to provide an adjective to describe the project, the comments included:

- Fantastic. We got to go to a lot of different places and miss school.
- Awesome, super fun. We got the idea out [about what it is like to be a teen in the school] and we touched people.
- Really fun. We developed a lot of new friends.
- Spectacular. People you wouldn’t normally talk to became your friends.

The students also noticed a difference in the attitudes towards members of the drama group throughout the general student body. Three students who were interviewed mentioned how others outside their drama class, whom they didn’t even know, would often say to them in the hallway compliments such as, “Great job on the play,” or “You guys rocked”. When asked whether the play was well-received by students in other schools, the focus group answered, “Balcarres really liked it because they are like us [a racially mixed school] and they laughed and clapped for us.”

The students were asked which parts of the project they particularly liked. Some said they liked it when they had to research the biographies of famous Canadian performers and then assume the role of that person and act out an interview. Others enjoyed the theatre games and others particularly liked the hallway fashion show.

When asked what advice they had for teachers who might undertake a similar project, the students had this to say:

- Be patient. Miss was really patient but she made us work.
- Don't rush them. It takes time to get to feel comfortable with other people before tackling the hard things.
- Have fun.
- If there are students with poor attendance, put them in roles that are not so important.

Finally, when the students were asked what they learned from this project, these were some of their responses:

- I learned that we really do get along. That was surprising.
- You can't judge a book by its cover. Everyone has a good side.
- How to be more open and not as shy.
- I learned how to feel comfortable being myself and being on stage and speaking alone.
- I learned that we actually taught the community something. It was weird watching the play—like it was real life.
- I never noticed that the white kids sat on one side of the gym and the brown kids on the other until we noticed it one day in class.

### ***THE AUDIENCE***

As stated previously, the audiences from the Fort Qu'Appelle area and the middle years students from the University of Regina were most appreciative of the play, although the survey results from students in three other schools in the school division were generally quite good. Table 1 indicates the responses from all surveys in all the communities.

# Table 1

## *Summary of Responses to Audience Survey*

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
The students' performance had an emotional impact on me.	12	14	67	107	22
The performances provided new information to me about issues students face.	16	41	21	118	26
The performances showed other people's perspectives I hadn't considered before.	10	29	39	120	24
The performances helped me to understand students better.	9	22	48	110	33
The performances helped me to understand people from other communities better.	9	14	51	116	32
Drama can help people understand each other.	6	7	28	124	57
It is necessary for people from different cultural groups to learn about each other.	8	3	18	109	84

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See Appendix C for a summary of audience comments.

### ***THE TEACHER***

Although the project was a tremendous amount of work with several frustrations, the teacher thought it was very worthwhile, particularly in terms of the students' relationships with each other. When asked what she thought was the biggest success of the project, Melissa answered:

I think the biggest success was the relationships that were established. Even now walking down the hall I see the kids from this class talking with each other and high-fiving each other. They have real relationships with each other, even beyond the typical acquaintances you make in high school. They have done something amazing. The relationships and bonds they have formed were invaluable. This project was worth that alone.

The students also learned from the experience of putting together a drama production. As Melissa stated:

Do they learn best from experience? Absolutely. And have they learned a ton about drama without me having to tell them? Of course—things such as discipline and stage presence, adaptations and improv—they've done it all in all of our performances. We've worked in every kind of environment, with all kinds of stages. We've had to drop lines, drop characters, have kids pick stuff up.

See Appendix A for the full interview with the teacher where she describes how the project was carried out as well as the successes and challenges.

### ***THEMES***

Several themes arose from the project including: racism and stereotypes, relationships, truancy and attendance issues, time constraints, student self-esteem/confidence and the role of the teacher. Each of these themes is discussed briefly.

- **Racism and stereotypes:** At the beginning of the semester, students seemed unaware of racism in their school and communities, or at least did not talk about it or think about it. During the course of the semester, however, it surfaced during the Power Plays and discussions of personal issues. Students talked about being stereotyped and how much they disliked it. When the students presented as part of their play the subtle forms of racism they experienced, the audience recognized it and commented on it. One audience member wrote “As a grandmother I’m not tuned into current high school issues, but I am concerned about racism in the community and glad to see the issues addressed creatively and with such good participation.” Another member of the audience stated “A great performance and gave lots of examples of racism.” Still another said “Fantastic! This puts a lot of issues out there that we are often afraid to talk about.”
- **Relationships:** Both the teacher and the students commented several times about the bond that was created among the students as a result of participating in the play. At the beginning of the semester, students hardly knew each other and would rarely speak to each other, especially when students were in different grades or from different communities. By the end of the project, that had all changed as illustrated by comments such as “I used to judge people because of how they look. I don’t do that anymore.” or “There were people I never used to talk to but now we’re really good friends because of this.”
- **Truancy and attendance issues:** Despite the project, attendance was still an issue, although some students would skip the rest of their classes but come to the drama class. Students commented that it was frustrating at times when some people who had key roles wouldn’t show up occasionally. Melissa also noted, “My class is packed with kids who are typical non-attenders and who have behavioural issues, are truant students, but they did well here. But it doesn’t mean they didn’t skip. They just skipped less.” Often the script had to be changed because students would be suspended or they would drop out of school.
- **Time constraints:** Having enough time to cover the material for the course, put together a play, and practice for the performances was a considerable challenge faced by the teacher and the students. Melissa describe this challenge:

Really you’re trying to squeeze it all in during four short months because you have the Christmas break in there. Also trying to have rehearsals with teenagers who have busy schedules in multiple grades, 10, 11, and 12, so you’re looking at kids with jobs, and work experience and some can drive so they can make it, and others are coming off reserves so they can’t make it in for rehearsals on the weekends, or they can’t make it in before classes. So scheduling rehearsals became a real area of concern and frustration.

- Student self-esteem and confidence: The teacher and students alike commented on how much everyone had grown in confidence because of this experience. Many Aboriginal students talked about how shy they were at the beginning of the project, but now they have the confidence to get up on stage and say their lines. The students also commented on how proud they felt when other students or teachers in the school would stop and congratulate them.
- The role of the teacher: That the teacher played a huge role in helping the students learn from this experience and feel successful and proud of their accomplishment was very apparent. These students had the greatest regard for their teacher whom they described as cool, patient, funny, and strict but fair, and as having high expectations. They thought that not all teachers could carry out a project such as this. Melissa, too, commented:

I think when teachers consider doing projects like this in the future, I think there is a lot a project like this can offer to the day-to-day teacher who is not a drama teacher. I think there are lots of activities and suggestions that will help to establish the trust and comfort in the classroom, but you still have to be patient, flexible, have a sense of humour, and be willing to let the students take ownership of the process. You have to learn to let go.

# Conclusion and Recommendations

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The results of the study indicated that participation in this drama project increased cross-cultural understanding, particularly among the students in the drama class. From the audience surveys, it seemed it also helped to raise some awareness of issues students face and helped some people in the community to begin talking about issues they perceived as negative. Although the project did not decrease student truancy in school, most of the students did come to school on days when they knew they were practicing their performances. They felt they were part of something important and that they were needed. It also helped the students increase their academic and performance skills as well as skills in collaborating with others. The teacher described how the older students would regulate the younger ones by telling them they were needed in the cast and had to show up. Perhaps Melissa's words best sum up the benefits of this project:

They learned that they are a unit, and that they are a cast. They are not individual performers. They will take that with them outside of the classroom and their performance. They had that sense that "I'm a part of something, I am responsible, I am accountable." That's why kids show up on play day. I've never gone to a performance where half my kids are missing. They are here. They know, "I matter. My one line matters. My physical presence on the stage matters." I think that's a huge success for kids who rarely have an opportunity to do anything truly meaningful in high school.

For teachers planning to undertake a similar project at their schools, Melissa and Carol have the following recommendations:

- Use games at the beginning and throughout the semester to help students develop a comfort level with each other. Games may be used as a warm-up to each lesson or as a closing.
- Arrange for a large block of time for a one-day workshop, if possible, to introduce Forum Theatre, the notion of oppression, and to have the students participate in various Power Plays. If students are away from the school, there are fewer opportunities to be distracted.
- Arrange for students to see other examples of Forum Theatre, preferably live, if possible.
- Arrange for opportunities for students to present their production to an audience.
- Allow students to have a voice and resist the temptation to make the play into what you envision.
- Have the project carry over for two semesters, if possible.
- Secure funding for the set, scripts, and travel.
- Practice patience, flexibility, and humour. You and your students will be rewarded with a product that will engender pride, self-esteem, and enthusiasm for drama.

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## APPENDIX A

# An Interview with the Teacher

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## GETTING STARTED

### *HOW DID YOU START THE PROJECT?*

The first couple of weeks were spent learning about the history of theatre. Even if the students had taken drama classes before, I assumed they knew nothing. We were going to start from the very beginning, exploring what is theatre and what is the purpose of it? The reason I started there was because I wanted them to understand that the purpose of theatre is all about social action. It is also about entertainment and getting a community together and being really creative and applying the best of what you have to a performance, but the real purpose is to talk about issues that people really didn't want to talk about.

We talked about the history of Dionysus and I took them through a brief history of Western theatre and I really stressed that this was European, Greek, Athens, and that it wasn't First Nations history or theatre or African theatre. It was just Western culture. We then talked about plays that challenged social boundaries. We started looking at First Nations playwrights, and at famous Canadians and famous dramatists in Canada and how much theatre means in Canada. They had each done research projects on famous Canadians themselves and performance interviews of their characters in role, which was a lot of fun, but then we specifically zeroed in on Drew Hayden Taylor. We looked at two of his small plays, *Girl Who Loved Her Horses* and *The Boy in the Treehouse*. I split them up into groups and had the kids perform scenes out of those plays in small collective groups. That was their first opportunity to perform something and the purpose of that was to help them understand the components of a play: the costumes, the props, the directing, the focus, the rehearsals, the need to remember lines, the timing, and also the content of the plays, obviously. The content of those two plays is about First Nations and Métis identity and what it means to carry your culture, whether you were white or First Nations, and those were the issues we were addressing. What does it mean to be white? What does it mean to be First Nations? What if you're not one or the other? Do you consider yourself to be one or the other? So that is how I eased them into the process. What is theatre? What are the components of it? How has it impacted Canadian culture? Who are some of the people who are still doing this today? How about if we tried a bit of this?

# INTRODUCING THE IDEA OF CREATING PLAYS

## ***HOW DID YOU INTRODUCE TO YOUR STUDENTS THE IDEA OF CREATING THEIR OWN PLAY?***

I told the students on the first day because there were no secrets and I wanted to give the students who didn't want to participate in the research component of it the opportunity to drop the class. I told them that we would be building our own play and performing and that is a huge task that requires their complete commitment. And at that point, they didn't really know what they were committing to. They were just putting their complete faith in me (those who had me as a teacher before), and the older students were thinking "Well that sounds challenging and fun so let's give it a whirl." So right from the beginning I was very upfront that we would be building a production about our lives in the Fort and the issues we face. I think that's what actually sold them because they were going to talk about their own experiences; they were going to talk about their own lives, and they were going to put their own personalities and experiences into the play, and that's not scary. It's easy to talk about yourself. It's not intimidating. Plus for them, they considered it to be somewhat *avant-garde*. It hadn't been done before at the school. To them it was an opportunity to be rebellious in a way, to challenge people and they liked that idea. I told them we would be travelling and doing a bunch of things together such as drama workshops and going to other schools to perform our story. Of course, there were some who said "I'm scared to perform," but I said "You won't be. By the time we get there, you'll be fine." So they just accepted that. We did a lot of the academic portion, such as the history of theatre, first, but as we were doing that, we were building experiences and material for our play. They hopped on board really quickly.

# BUILDING MATERIAL FOR THE PLAY

## ***HOW DID YOU START TO BUILD MATERIAL FOR THE PLAY?***

The springboard day, or the day the students really understood where we were going with this was the day we did the drama workshop out at Calling Lakes Conference Centre. That day was all built around Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed and I had done a fair amount of those types of activities already, but when Rhonda [the workshop facilitator] and I planned that workshop, I very specifically said these are the things I want my students to do and these are the areas I want to address. I really want to hit racism; I really want to hit sexuality and how our students react to homosexuality. I really want to target where people are from and the location of the reservations because that's such a big deal out here, and whether you are a town kid, or a lake kid, or a Lebret kid, or what reserve you are from. That really matters to them because that's the way we divide ourselves here in the Fort. We really wanted to hit stereotypes.

I think to leave the school, which was the first time we had left the school together as a big group, was very important. We shared meals together and we played together. In the morning, I took them out on the grass and did some team-building activities outside and we played childhood games such as What Time is it Mr. Wolf? and Princess, Dragon, Knight, which I taught them earlier. We played. We built that sense of community and comfort, and giddiness and belonging, and then we went inside and started to do drama work. That was the first time they really started to look at each other and have those important conversations about why do you think I'm this way because I dress this way.

Some thought-provoking comments came from students that day, particularly from one girl who generally keeps to herself. She is considered a very aggressive student and sticks to her own group of girls, but she sat and talked to the group and said, “Everybody thinks I’m mean. Everybody thinks I’m an angry person because I don’t smile all the time.” And it’s true. Everybody did believe that in that circle, but for her to step forward and say, “But I’m not that person, this is just the look on my face. I was just born with this look,” that’s when the real sharing started to happen and the real conversation and dialogue. That’s when we started to build material for the play. We talked about female fighting that day. We talked about the experiences they had fighting over boys, and why women turn on each other. All those experiences ended up in our final production, including race issues, stereotype issues, the what-they-had-in-common issues, not just what they didn’t have in common. We played a lot of games about how are you similar regardless of your race and all of that ended up in our play.

## THE STUDENTS’ REACTIONS

### ***WHAT WERE THE STUDENTS’ REACTIONS WHEN YOU TOLD THEM WHAT THEY WOULD BE DOING?***

The students got on board right away, and sure, they were nervous, but they wanted to do it. I had to talk to a couple of students repeatedly about “You need to commit, you need to be here.” The question became “Are we on the stage today?” They wanted to know if this was an academic day, a typical structured day where I’m going to shove some information at them, or is this (in their mind) a fun day when they were going to be on the stage. So, of course, on the days when they were on the stage, my attendance was nearly perfect, and then on classroom days for kids who don’t do well in that setting, those days I had less attendance. That is the nature of this beast. My class is packed with kids who are typical non-attenders and who have behavioural issues, are truant students, but they did well here. But that doesn’t mean they didn’t skip: they just skipped less. There were some nerves but in general there was a lot of excitement and enthusiasm. They wanted to do something.

## FRUSTRATIONS AND CHALLENGES

### ***WHAT WERE SOME OF THE FRUSTRATIONS AND CHALLENGES YOU FACED?***

Truancy. Attendance was an issue. We lost multiple students to division-wide suspensions so they could not participate in our process. There were also addiction issues and having kids in class who were high and needed to be removed. We lost quite a few students this year. We lost two from the division. We lost one because he moved and then came back later and rejoined the drama troupe. A couple of students were suspended for the year. Another was in and out but he has now dropped out of school, which is too bad because he accomplished something good with this play. Even when the semester was done and he didn’t need to perform, he and another girl showed up at my door asking, “Miss, can we travel with you today?” And I had to tell them, “No. You’ve been skipping your classes so I can’t take you.” I would have taken them to perform, because if the only thing you are going to do is show up for school so you can perform today, then you should perform. But school policy says if you are skipping other classes, then you can’t go. I think the school looks at performing as a reward for academic consistency, showing up, and basically towing the line. I don’t see it that way. I think that the reward the *school* would see is better attendance and better attitude if they allowed the kids to take and enjoy experiences they have, because it’s all about confidence-building and having a sense of personal worth. Those

kids were showing up those days because they wanted to do it. So that was tough to say no to them, but I did because that is part of my professional obligation.

Not enough time was another frustration. We just built an entire production plus had to work on the academic portion. Do students learn best from experience? Absolutely. And have they learned a ton about drama without me having to tell them? Of course, they have learned things such as discipline and stage presence, adaptations and improv. They've done it all in all of our performances. We've worked in every kind of environment, with all kinds of stages. We've had to drop lines, drop characters, have kids pick stuff up. We have definitely learned a routine and we could perform that play anywhere, anytime now. But time. To put together a production with that many students where you have 20 kids on stage for a majority of the time, is hard to do. It's hard to organize. It wasn't hard to keep them motivated to practice and to do the play wasn't hard at all. But to select which ideas we were going to pull and have it all make sense, that was a challenge for us for sure. Really, you're trying to squeeze it all in during four short months because you have the Christmas break in there. Also trying to have rehearsals with teenagers who have busy schedules in multiple grades, 10, 11 and 12, so you're looking at kids with jobs, and work experience and some can drive so they can make it, and others are coming off reserves so they can't make it in for rehearsals on the weekends, or they can't make it in before classes. So scheduling rehearsals became a real area of concern and frustration.

I would say the only other frustration I had that the kids weren't concerned about but I was, was I wanted to bring in a lot more First Nations content. I wanted to show them performances by other First Nations groups addressing addiction issues and so on, and every time I went to show them something somebody else did, particularly First Nations, they shut down completely. Their behaviour got to the point where one day I reprimanded them and I almost never have to reprimand them. They don't want to hear other people's stories. They want to hear their own or something that closely reflects their own. Otherwise, they don't care, which is why I think our performances went over so well in other high schools—I think those kids saw themselves on the stage. If we had just done a performance of any play, we wouldn't have had the success that we did, but because we were a mirror reflecting students' issues who attended other schools, we found success.

## PLAN TO HAVE ELDERS

### ***WE PLANNED TO HAVE ELDERS INVOLVED BUT WE DIDN'T. WHY NOT?***

We had originally planned to have Elders work with the students, but I don't think it would have been successful because I don't think that's where the project was leading. I think that would have implied a voice, and I think some of my First Nations students would have had to follow that voice in a certain way and I don't think that's what this was about. This was about these kids exploring who they were, not who they should become or what an Elder said their culture should be about. This was about "Where are we right now? Who are we, and who are we to each other? What are we and what is our school like?" And because Elders don't play an active role in our school, it wouldn't have made sense to have them participate in the process of the play. If Elders were an everyday event and we included them daily, then it would have made sense, but we don't have an active, First Nations component in the school, so we addressed that in some ways, but it wouldn't have made sense to start something new that wasn't already established in the school. So I think we made a good decision.

# SUCCESSSES

## **WHAT WERE SOME OF THE SUCCESSSES YOU SAW?**

Besides the successes I have already mentioned, such as self-discipline, confidence, stage presence, better attendance, and so on, I think the biggest success was the relationships that were established. Even now, walking down the hall I see the kids from this class talking with each other and high-fiving each other. They have real relationships with each other, even beyond the typical acquaintances you make in high school. They have done something amazing. The relationships and bonds they have formed were invaluable. This project was worth that alone. It was really worthwhile. And they had opportunities to talk. Some of the conversations they have had with each other about their cross-cultural differences are phenomenal. To have them ask questions about “What does it mean if you’re treaty?” or “Why can you call yourself a Ne Chee and I can’t?” and “Don’t you think there is racism in First Nations cultures too?” “Why should I feel guilty for being white?” They had really honest conversations in a safe and controlled environment and they’re doing that. It’s not me initiating that. It’s them self-regulating. There was lots of peer accountability. There were lots of students stepping up on performance day and saying “Look . . .” Really, the older ones, in some sense, controlled the younger ones. “This is what we’re doing right now. You need to be on task.” And many people saying, “You are all involved in this. You are part of a whole. You are not allowed to screw it up for everyone else. You need to be on par, so do it now.” I didn’t need to do that because they were self-regulating each other. They learned that they are a unit, and that they are a *cast*. They are not individual performers. They will take that with them outside of the classroom and their performance. They had that sense that “I’m a part of something, I am responsible, I am accountable.” That’s why kids show up on play day. I’ve never gone to a performance where half my kids are missing. They are here. They know, “I matter. My one line matters. My physical presence on the stage matters.” I think that’s a huge success for kids who rarely have an opportunity to do anything truly meaningful in high school. Who cares about an essay? When I ask for an essay, I get about a third handed in. But if it’s performance day, I have 100% of students there because they are doing something. They are actively creating. There is such a sense of making a difference and accomplishment. There is such a growth in confidence. Any one of those kids can get up on stage now. And they’re all signed up again for next year. The class went from one drama class to two now. There are enough kids for two whole classes now. But that is good because it means that other kids in the school saw that this was a big thing to do—talk about and perform all the issues in your school. That was a big deal.

The day that we performed for this school, to me was the highlight. We’ve had some really awesome moments. The day we performed at the university, they just walked out of there with their chests all puffed out. “We impressed adults and teachers!” But when we performed for our school, there was just silence. You could have heard a pin drop. There were great bursts of laughter, but then for my kids to walk through the halls after, they were so scared. And there was such a conversation in the school. There were so many kids walking by them and saying, “That was awesome. Good for you.” Some of mine were saying, “I never wanted to talk to that person before. I didn’t even like that person, but they told me ‘good job’.” That will never go away. Our school has seen this, and now maybe some other kids who weren’t so brave will try it now, so good for them for inspiring others.

## NEW CAST MEMBERS

***YOU HAD SOME NEW CAST MEMBERS JOIN THE GROUP AT THE END. HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT?***

We had some new students join the cast in the second semester who weren't even part of the drama class, and I guess I should have had more faith in them. That came about because we didn't get the play finished until the end of the semester. So we performed on semester turnaround. At that point, the semester was done and I had evaluated their process and assignments and they got their credit for the course. They had no obligation to continue with the play even though we hadn't yet travelled around to all the different schools. So I thought that I was going to lose a significant number of my students which would leave all these gaps in the performance of the play. I was wrong. Hardly any kids left the performance. I think only two left the performance. But I had opened up to anyone else who would like to perform and invited them to join us. So we had three students join who integrated very quickly and who actually took on major roles. They just flew with us, so that was very exciting, and all of those kids will be with us next year.

## KEEP, ADD, DELETE

***FIRST, IF YOU WERE TO DO THIS AGAIN, WHAT WOULD YOU KEEP?***

I would keep all the team-building activities. That was the key to our success. They helped facilitate the talking with each other, laughing with each other and touching each other. We don't obviously start with those kinds of activities but we definitely get to them. There is something about touching people, such as laying your hand on their stomach and making them laugh, or leading them blindfolded around the football field, that helps build trust. I would definitely keep all that.

I would definitely keep all the small performances where I started the kids off with a small scene to get that sense of organization of a play. You really don't get that from reading a play. You have to perform it to get that sense.

I would definitely keep the research project where they were doing the study of who's made it. To make it in the theatre world is pretty darn hard in Canada, but they needed to appreciate our Canadian culture and what we have contributed to the world-wide stage of theatre. And I liked them performing as their person. They each did character interviews, which were really good. I encouraged them to look at only First Nations authors, but I obviously let them research whomever they wanted.

I liked the travel concept. That's what theatre initially was: travelling around as a travelling troupe and that's what we called ourselves. We were a travelling troupe of performers. I think that gives you a sense of audience. Why perform if there is no audience? If you only get to perform it once, you don't get to improve. We added so many things to the play and it kept changing and growing. It was this organic thing that we worked with and I think that's a good thing for them to learn. Not everything is cut and dried. It's okay to drop lines and it's okay to change things up. I loved that component of it. I loved to be able to perform again and again and improve and see the growth.

I liked the multi-grade grouping. I think it worked well for mentorship. I realize that's a function of school population numbers, but it worked well.

I would definitely keep the drama workshops. They were invaluable.

### ***WHAT WOULD YOU ADD?***

I really wish we could have taken the kids to a performance. We just kept missing that. I think for them to see others perform is to give that gift back to them that they have given to others. I think this is important. We were very fortunate, though, that we had a lot of performances come to the school. That night that Crash or Crank came to the school, which was Theatre of the Oppressed, my kids got up there and performed and I got up and performed with them. Because, what the heck, that teacher needs to do that too. That was a great night.

I know that they are going to remember these years and they will be better people for it. I don't think they will be perfect people and I don't think it's life-changing stuff we are doing everyday, but I really, truly believe that students are getting a really good, solid education, maybe not so much academically, but a solid education. And that's my goal. When they leave here I want them to know something.

## THE TEACHER'S INFLUENCE

***IT SEEMS TO ME THAT FOR A PROJECT LIKE THIS TO HAPPEN IT DEPENDS ON THE SENSE OF COMFORT AND TRUST THAT HAS TO BE BUILT BY THE TEACHER. YOU WERE ABLE TO SET THE TONE AND GET THE COMFORT AND TRUST LEVELS HIGH. I'M NOT SURE EVERYONE COULD DO THAT. WOULD YOU AGREE?***

Yes, I think so. I think you know if you're that teacher or not. I think when teachers consider doing projects like this in the future, I think there is a lot a project like this can offer to the day-to-day teacher who is not a drama teacher. I think there are lots of activities and suggestions that will help to establish the trust and comfort in the classroom, but you still have to be patient, flexible, have a sense of humour, and be willing to let the students take ownership of the process. You have to learn to let go.

## APPENDIX B

# Survey and Interview Instruments

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1. Student Consent Form
2. Student Survey
3. Student Consent to be Interviewed
4. Student Interview Questions
5. Audience Survey

# STUDENT CONSENT FORM

This survey is part of a research project to see if and how participating in a drama project that students create about their lives, can increase understanding among students and community members about issues that students face each day. The information collected from the project will help your teacher, Mrs. Melissa Marley, and Dr. Carol Fulton create a guide book and provide information for other teachers who hope to help their students develop drama projects.

This survey will be conducted before the project begins and after it is over to see if your views have changed. The survey may take 10-15 minutes to complete. *Your name is not required and your participation in the survey is completely voluntary. You will not be penalized in any way if you choose not to complete it.* Your participation will be greatly valued and appreciated however. By completing the survey and returning it in the accompanying envelope, you are indicating that you have read this section and understand it and that you are giving permission for the researcher to use the information you provide.

Only Dr. Carol will be involved in collecting the data and analyzing the data. Mrs. Marley will not be involved in data collection and analysis involving students.

If you would also like to take part in a confidential interview with Dr. Carol Fulton to give more in-depth answers to questions similar to those on the survey, please sign the attached sheet and place it in the envelope with this survey. You will also be required to have a parent/guardian sign the consent form if you wish to take part in an interview. If you or your parents have any questions or concerns about the survey or interview, please contact the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, University of Regina at 306-585-4161.

# STUDENT SURVEY

**PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR ATTITUDES.**

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
I enjoy school.	1	2	3	4	5
I get good grades in all or most subjects.	1	2	3	4	5
I get along with most students in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
I have a lot of friends in school.	1	2	3	4	5
I get along with most of the teachers in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
I think Drama is an important subject.	1	2	3	4	5
Students get along well in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
There is good school spirit.	1	2	3	4	5
I often socialize with students from the various communities.	1	2	3	4	5
I know a lot about the different cultural groups in this area.	1	2	3	4	5
Race relations among the students at this school are positive.	1	2	3	4	5
Students from the various communities (Fort Qu'Appelle, Lebret, the First Nations and the farms) get along well.	1	2	3	4	5
I know of some First Nations and Métis playwrights.	1	2	3	4	5
I chose Drama 10 because I have an interest in it.	1	2	3	4	5
I have to deal with difficult issues in school.	1	2	3	4	5
I have to deal with difficult issues outside of school.	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
Drama can help me express some of the issues I have in my life.	1	2	3	4	5
Adults listen to students' concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
Race relations among community members are positive.	1	2	3	4	5
Race relations could be better if people understood each other.	1	2	3	4	5
Students can help improve race relations in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
Students can help improve race relations in the community.	1	2	3	4	5
Students can help people understand each other through drama.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for completing this survey. Please place it in the envelope provided and seal the envelope and hand it in to the school office. If you would like to be interviewed by Dr. Carol Fulton, please sign the consent form below with a time that would be convenient for you to be interviewed.

# STUDENT CONSENT TO BE INTERVIEWED

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to be interviewed by  
(your name)

Dr. Carol Fulton to give more complete answers to questions similar to those in this survey. I understand that I will be interviewed when I do not have any classes.

Please indicate some times when you don't have classes and that are convenient for you to participate in an interview.

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, who is the parent/guardian of  
\_\_\_\_\_, give my permission to have my child  
interviewed for this study.

Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe yourself as a student?
2. How would you describe your relationship with most of the students in your class?
3. How would you describe the relationship among students from the different communities who attend the school?
4. How would you describe the relationships among the people who make up this community and the surrounding area?
5. How much do you know about First Nations and Métis cultures?
6. What role do you think drama can play in educating people about each other's cultures?
7. What role do you think drama can play in educating adults about the concerns of youth?
8. What do you expect to learn from participating in Drama 10? (1st interview).  
What did you learn from participating in Drama 10? (2nd interview).

# AUDIENCE SURVEY

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
The students' performances had an emotional impact on me.	1	2	3	4	5
The performances provided new information to me about issues students face.	1	2	3	4	5
The performances showed other people's perspectives I hadn't considered before.	1	2	3	4	5
The performances helped me to understand students better.	1	2	3	4	5
The performances helped me to understand people from other communities in this area better.	1	2	3	4	5
Drama can help people understand each other.	1	2	3	4	5
It is necessary for people from different cultural groups to learn about each other.	1	2	3	4	5

## APPENDIX C

# Audience Survey Comments

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### Audience Survey Comments:

- It was good but some people need to speak louder and more clearly. (16)
  - Spoke too fast. (7)
  - Couldn't hear most of the performance.
  - Went to 2 performances. 1st show much easier to understand than 2nd.
  - Need mics perhaps. (2)
  - Couldn't read signs when not holding them in the stage lights.
- Really enjoyed the fashion show: (5)
  - Really showed how we do judge people based on how they dress.
  - True to reality. (3)
  - Very funny.
  - Best part of the play. (2)
  - Most impacting.
  - Showed that first impressions & stereotypes are often wrong.
- It was really fun when the guy said "I will use my Indian key."
- I learned more about people.
- Liked the signs on their backs.
- Could use more "drama."
- It was cool and funny. (2)
- Hilarious and worth watching.
- Really enjoyed the performance.
- A great performance and gave lots of examples of racism.
- I thought the play showed a good representation of our community. (2)
- Liked the way students our age were performing.
- It should have been longer so that people could really understand.
- Really liked Max. (3)
- More Nightly.

- Fantastic! This puts a lot of issues out there that we are often afraid to talk about.
- Good job. (6)
- Great/Amazing/Awesome/Deadly/Loved it! (20)
- Entertaining.
- Hope to see more. (3)
- It showed me what other schools and people in the community are like. It helped me understand more about other people.
- Looked really fun. (2)
- It really made me think about how teens in high school act with one another.
- I could really relate to it.
- Great to see all the perspectives.
- Fun but powerful!
- Would create great conversations in other classrooms.
- Bravo!
- Best play I've ever seen!
- Way to go Bert Fox. Your play & acting is something to be proud of.
- The ideas were not new so marked disagree on some of the questions but good to see the ideas exposed. (3)
- The play shows both the good and bad sides of Fort Qu'Appelle.
- As a grandmother I'm not tuned into current high school issues, but I am concerned about racism in the community and glad to see the issues addressed creatively and with such good participation.
- Drama is so important to creating "team", to bring awareness to issues, to draw out potential of students.
- It was great to see a cross-section of the youth at BF and the FQ area voice their challenges/concerns about life. I also liked the positive versus negative images of the Fort in the recent past.
- I would be interested to learn the methods that were used to get the kids thinking and working together. Lots of energy and talent! Congratulations!

# Opening Up About Oppression Through Forum Theatre

## Teacher's Guide

Developed by  
Melissa Marley

With Adaptations by  
Carol Fulton

for the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching  
2010



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# Unit Overview

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## DESCRIPTION OF UNIT

This drama unit consists of 15 lessons to help students learn about oppression and how to deal it with using games and exercises from Theatre of the Oppressed and Forum Theatre.

The Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) was developed by Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal during the 1950s and 1960s. In an effort to transform theatre from the “monologue” of traditional performance into a “dialogue” between audience and stage, Boal experimented with many kinds of interactive theatre. (Paterson, 1995, n.p.)

Although this unit could be used to address any type of oppression, such as racism, sexual harassment, homophobia, etc., it focuses on one form of oppression that is common to all school-aged children: bullying. The unit leads the students through a series of exercises to help them identify bullying issues in their own lives. The students then prepare for a performance and a workshop they can put on for other students to help them address bullying or other forms of oppression.

## FOUNDATIONAL OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS

This unit is suitable for secondary and middle years students. It addresses the three main components of the Saskatchewan Arts Education curriculum:

- Creative/Productive component
- Cultural/Historical component
- Critical/Responsive component

At the secondary level, the unit meets the following foundational objectives as outlined in *Arts Education 10, 20, 30: A Curriculum Guide for the Secondary Level* (1996):

The drama strand is designed to provide students with opportunities to:

- increase their understanding of others, themselves and the world around them
- increase their ability to construct and communicate meaning through language and action
- deepen understanding of cultural and social traditions
- gain a lasting appreciation of the dramatic art form through critical reflection upon drama experienced as participant and as audience. (p. 341)

According to the Saskatchewan's *Drama 10, 20, 30: Curriculum Requirements* (1993), the creative/productive component is:

Drama in context [and collective creation] means, as it suggests, that dramas are structured to provide a context, a situation, or a metaphoric framework in which students and teacher work together. Within the dramas students and teachers assume roles and, taking with them their own unique set of experiences and perceptions, enter into a fictional world prepared to accept and "live through" an imagined situation. (p. 22)

The collective creation is a play or a collection of episodes or scenes that is developed by a group and intended for an audience. As stated by Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment (1993):

Each collective creation is unique to the group that creates it. There may be as many different ways of developing a collective creation as there are collectives themselves.

The collective creation process:

- involves every student in the class in the process of expressing ideas in dramatic form
- requires that students learn to work together "collectively"
- taps into the interests, ideas and experiences of the students
- offers experience in a broad range of dramatic forms of expression . . .
- encourages student ownership and initiative in every stage of the process
- extends the students' understanding of issues and situations being explored in other curricular areas
- easily incorporates the common essential learnings
- can be used in combined grade classes by providing opportunities for students to achieve particular grade-specific learning objectives
- can provide an opportunity for interested students to develop and apply knowledge and abilities in scriptwriting, directing and technical aspects of theatre
- can result in a performance that is relevant to the community because it reflects the experiences, knowledge and insights of the students in the school. (p. 23)

At the middle years level, the unit meets the learning outcomes and indicators for drama in the various grades. For example, see Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's *Arts Education 8* (2009) outcomes and indicators for drama (pp. 20-21):

Outcomes	Indicators
<p><b>CP8.5 Investigate how theatrical elements (e.g., story, character, design, space) are combined to achieve dramatic purpose.</b></p>	<p>a. Identify how theatrical elements (e.g., story, role or character, technical design) can be manipulated to achieve a creative purpose and consider how such elements relate to own drama work.</p> <p>b. Analyze how each character's actions and the consequences of those actions affect the progression of the drama.</p> <p>c. Consider and analyze how set, costumes, lighting, and sound/music design can be manipulated to achieve different effects in own work.</p> <p>d. Demonstrate imagination when creating imaginary places and situations in own drama work.</p> <p>e. Analyze the use of movement, and the use of space and time in own work.</p>
<p><b>CP8.6 Express student perspectives on social issues (e.g., poverty, racism, homophobia, sustainability, gangs) in drama and/or collective creation.</b></p>	<p>a. Analyze and discuss how drama may be used to explore perspectives on social issues and promote understanding of topics of personal significance.</p> <p>b. Use inquiry in drama to investigate topics of importance to students (e.g., issues of concern to youth or recent news items):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with other students to explore compelling questions through drama (What if a new law was passed that ...?).</li> <li>• Brainstorm and negotiate with other students to determine how fictional situations and dramatic episodes might be explored.</li> <li>• Collaborate on the development and refinement of several drama episodes or collective creation to address the selected issue.</li> <li>• Recognize how research contributes to the authenticity and significance of the drama work.</li> <li>• Contribute to the creation of a plan to document the creative process (e.g., reflective journal entries, video, photography, blog, or web-based diary).</li> </ul> <p>c. Demonstrate awareness of how to use language and negotiate the use of drama strategies to achieve dramatic purpose.</p> <p>d. Analyze and describe the effectiveness of own drama to convey perspectives.</p>

For foundational objectives or outcomes and indicators for other grade levels in Arts Education, please consult the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's website at <http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/arts-ed-curricula>

# Opening Up About Oppression

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## LESSONS

### LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED AND FORUM THEATRE (1 HOUR)

**Description of Lesson:** This lesson provides students with an introduction to Theatre of the Oppressed and Forum Theatre. Students begin to start thinking about how power inequalities can be represented visually with objects.

**Materials/Resources:** computer projector, 7 chairs, 1 water bottle, flip chart, paper and markers, digital camera

**Presentation:**

1. Begin with a whole-class brainstorming activity. Respond to the question “What is oppression?” Pose question to the class and write down all of the students’ responses on a poster paper.
2. Short lecture on Augusto Boal and Theatre of the Oppressed. Forum Theatre outlined, using a PowerPoint presentation.
3. Conduct chair activity: Place 7 chairs in the middle of the room. Ask one student at a time to rearrange the chairs to show a power relationship. Halfway through students introduce a water bottle as an additional prop. After chairs are arranged, ask questions such as: “What image does this form in your mind?” or “Does this set-up evoke a personal memory for you?” (Students do not need to respond out loud.)
4. Have students discuss how this activity has helped them better clarify their understanding about oppression and then revisit the brainstorming list and add new ideas or concepts that students can offer.
5. Allow students to find a quiet time and place to write in their drama journals and respond to the following journal prompt: **If someone asked you to explain Theatre of the Oppressed, what would you say to them or what would you do to help them understand?**

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For a biography of Augusto Boal and background on Theater of the Oppressed, see Paterson’s (1995) explanation in Webster’s World of Cultural Democracy at <http://www.wvcd.org/action/Boal.html> or a shorter version in Justin’s Theatre Links at <http://www.theatrelinks.com/theatre-of-the-oppressed/>

## LESSON 2: REPRESENTING OPPRESSION (1 HOUR)

**Description of Lesson:** Students will have an opportunity to experience various ways of representing oppression through the use of visual images, drama activities, and their own expression of oppression in small groups creating various tableaux.

**Materials/Resources:** computer, projector, digital camera

### **Presentation:**

1. Have a PowerPoint presentation with the opening title “Images of Oppression” cued up at the beginning of class. Wait for class to become silent and then begin a PowerPoint presentation that will include various images such as hunger, war, bullying, losing a game. No one should be talking—teacher or students—while PowerPoint presentation is running.
2. Bring up the images again, one at a time, and ask a student to identify who or what is acting as the oppressor and then ask other students who or what is being oppressed in the image. Ask which images were most powerful. Why?
3. Move on to hypnosis activity: Class will form a circle, and every second person to the teacher’s left will step into the circle and face the person who had been beside him or her. Teacher participates if numbers are odd. One person in the pair will place his or her hand two inches from the other individual’s face and that person must try to keep himself or herself two inches from the hand. Move around the room. Switch after two minutes.
4. Debrief by asking students: “How did you feel when you had your hand in the other person’s face? How was that different from having a hand in your face? What other moments in our lives are like this?”
5. Conduct tableaux activity: Ask students to line up in alphabetical order according to their *middle* names. They must do this without speaking—gestures are allowed. Count off everyone into groups of four. (Last group must have at least three or they join other groups.) Once in groups, students will have 10 minutes to prepare three frozen images (tableaux) of oppression on a global scale. Each group presents their images and the class comments on each image.
6. Groups then create three new images based on oppression with the school. Images are presented and the class is encouraged to make general comments, identifying the oppressor and the oppressed.
7. Close the lesson with comments summarizing the day’s class and the recognition that oppression is global, local, and individual.

## LESSON 3: BULLYING AS OPPRESSION (1 HOUR)

**Description of Lesson:** This lesson introduces bullying as oppression within the school and students begin experimenting with freezing improv and building frozen scenes.

**Materials/Resources:** poster paper, markers, large circle taped on floor

### **Presentation:**

1. Conduct Mingle and Lifeboats activity: Within a defined space in the classroom, have students move around to fill up any empty space, using different pathways, levels, or ways of moving. Stop students at different intervals and ask them to form different geometric shapes, i.e., square, circle, triangle with certain numbers of students. Then ask students to group themselves by physical characteristics such as height, eye/skin colour, hair, clothing, etc.
2. Conduct class discussion about how grouping leads to oppression. Have students sit in a circle and reflect on the activity. Ask questions such as: “How do we group ourselves in the school environment?” “How does that lead to oppression?”
3. Introduce freeze improv activity. Remind students that Forum Theatre is based on improvisation and the ability to create powerful meaning within images. Have two students enter the circle and shake hands with no expression or activated movement. A person from the circle then replaces the other person. The image changes as each new person adapts the image. Near the end, add four to five people into the image. This is a good opportunity to take pictures.
4. Explain that as a class we are going to develop a Forum Theatre presentation on bullying to present to a live audience. Explain the time line and general method of developing a Forum Theatre (members investigate topic through activities, consider their own experiences, build off the group, etc.).
5. Create a concept map with bullying as the centre and then link strands with words such as perpetrators, victims, feelings, scenarios, etc. Record ideas from students on each strand.
6. Separate class into three large groups. Each group chooses a word or scenario from the brainstorm and creates a large tableau (adding one person at a time) to express that idea. Each group selects one person to be their Joker. This person helps organize the group by watching how the image looks and by providing feedback (they do not say *how* the image should look, only *what* it looks like, who is being blocked, is it clear, does it make sense). Each group creates their image and shares it with the class.
7. Hand out a script on bullying. Each student has been assigned a role that is highlighted on the script being handed out. Their homework is to preview the script and be ready to read their parts aloud next class.

## LESSON 4: TURNING BLIND EYES (1 HOUR)

**Description of Lesson:** Students will have an opportunity to read through portions of the script, *Turning Blind Eyes* by Ian McCormack. This script will help students consider the different ways that the issue of bullying can be explored through drama.

**Materials/Resources:** *Turning Blind Eyes* by Ian McCormack (ISBN: 1872365213 – available through Amazon), student copies (have extra on hand in case some students forget theirs at home)

### **Presentation:**

1. Organize class into their three respective groups. Ensure that every group member has a copy of the script and knows his or her role. Groups can be sent to their locations to read. Some groups may have shared roles. They can decide how they want to divide the text.
2. Each group should be informed that they should highlight parts of the text that they think are the most critical to the development of the plot. These are the climactic moments or beats within the scenes.
3. Students will read through the script with each person reading his or her character's lines with as much authenticity and emotion as possible to make the reading engaging and interesting.
4. Each group will choose one member to share with the class which sections of the script they felt were the most relevant or poignant (the beats). Discuss similarities and differences in choices and ask groups to justify their choices.

## **LESSON 5: FORMING GROUPS AND INTRODUCTION TO WORKSHOP (1 HOUR)**

**Description of Lesson:** During this class, students will be divided into workshop groups and they will begin learning how to work cooperatively.

**Materials/Resources:** group sign-up list, agenda outline on overhead, evaluation tools prepared

### **Presentation:**

1. Scene-builder activity:
  - a. Have students break into groups of four or five. Each group will be asked to stand and will then be instructed to create a tableau about oppression (of any kind) in only one minute.
  - b. Once the tableaux are formed, touch a character's shoulder and ask him or her "What are you feeling?" or "What do you want to happen" or "What are you thinking right now?"
  - c. When the next group forms the tableau, an audience member can act as the joker, touch a character, and ask an inquiry question. Allow multiple students to become jokers and tap-in.
2. Introduction to workshop:
  - a. Describe the workshop format. The class will be presenting a workshop on addressing bullying through Forum Theatre to another group of students. There will be three performance groups (assuming a class of 25): one all male, one all female, and one mixed group. Each group will address a bullying issue. There will be a fourth group of four students: two who will be jokers and two who will be responsible for the PowerPoint presentation. Those doing the PowerPoint presentation will be taking digital photographs throughout the coming lessons to document the process. They will then turn these photographs into a presentation with music.
  - b. Each performance group will be responsible for 20 minutes of the workshop.
3. Conduct bus driver activity: Divide students into pairs and ask them to stand one in front of the other. The person in front is the bus. The person behind is the driver. The students in front close their eyes and move according to the signals they receive from the bus driver behind them. Tap on the head means go; tap on left shoulder, go left; right shoulder, go right; tap on the back is reverse; and nothing means stop. Bus has arms crossed for safety. Bus drivers negotiate bus safely around the space. Have the groups combine to make progressively longer buses. Build trust with the group and have fun starting to work together.
4. Evaluation tools: Explain how the students will be evaluated during the unit (peer, self, and teacher) and show the instruments that will be used.

## LESSON 6: INVESTIGATING BULLYING (1 HOUR)

**Description of Lesson:** In this lesson, students reflect upon their own experiences with bullying and begin thinking about how they can use those experiences to create scenes within the Forum Theatre format.

**Materials/Resources:** half pieces of paper for students to make lists

### **Presentation:**

1. Introduce sculpting activity: Have students form a large circle. Beginning to the teacher's left, students will turn to the person beside them, forming pairs. Teacher will participate if numbers are odd. One person will step to the inside of the circle and face their partner. The person inside the circle will be the sculptor and the person on the outside will be the "intelligent clay". Using muscle, mimicry, or magnetism (teacher explains these concepts) the sculptor moulds the clay into a feeling or image given by the teacher (i.e., joy, sadness, shame, anger). Rotate positions. Debrief activity: How did you feel? Powerful, intimidated? When did you feel intimidated? (see glossary for explanation of sculpting).
2. Bully me activity: Students put themselves into pairs and face each other. They stare at one another in an attempt to get the other person to look away. Encourage students to put a lot of anger into their eyes and to use their body posture to intimidate the other person. Next the students join another group, then make three groups, etc. until there are only two large groups staring each other down.
3. Mini-lecture on improvisation in Forum Theatre: Provide a more in-depth look at how the audience becomes involved in Forum Theatre (see Paterson, 1995, <http://www.wvcd.org/action/Boal.html>) and how the actors must adapt to the changes the audience member introduces. Discuss beats or climactic points in the scripts where interventions or changes can take place.
4. Freeze improv activity: Teacher provides a scene about bullying for three or four students. They begin the improv and when someone from the audience yells "freeze," that person replaces one actor. The scene continues to adapt as more students freeze the scene and jump into the skit.
5. Reflective activity: Hand out paper to students and ask them to find a private space where no one will see what they are writing. Instruct them to think about all the people they do not like. Stress repeatedly that this is a private activity. No one is to see their list, and the class will not be sharing their lists.
6. Reflect on questions: Once students are done, say "Is it likely that all of the people you have on your list will have you on their list too? Why? What happened between you? Did you bully them? Did they bully you? Recognize that within each of you is all the material you need to create a scene. You have just completed your research."
7. Destroy the lists: Have the students destroy their lists and throw them into the trash can.
8. Journal writing: Students respond in their journals to the prompt "What experiences do I have with bullying and how can I use those to help my group create a scene. What issues do I think are most important to address?" Students bring these points to the next class.

## **LESSON 7: DEVELOPING THE SCENES (1 HOUR)**

**Description of Lesson:** Students begin developing their scenes and interventions.

**Materials/Resources:** teacher's anecdotal records

### **Presentation:**

1. Improv activity: Each student will write one sentence on a slip of paper and then place it into a hat. Three students will then draw a slip of paper and take the stage. The teacher will provide them with a scenario (you are all waiting at the bus stop, etc.) and they need to improvise a scene that will allow them to each say the sentence they pulled from the hat. Each student will have a chance to perform improv.
2. Individual and group work: Students will divide into their groups and find space to work on their scenes. They must have their scenes developed by the end of the class and the joker for each group must develop interventions for the scene. Student should be recording their lines or positions in the scene in their journals. The teacher circulates from group to group observing, offering suggestions, and responding to questions or concerns.
3. Circle discussion wrap-up: The teacher asks how each group is progressing. Students will have the next class to continue preparing and to practice their scenes and interventions.

## **LESSON 8: FINISHING THE SCENES (1 HOUR)**

**Description of the Lesson:** Students have the entire class to finish developing their scenes and interventions. The expectation is that they will have them completed by the end of today's class.

### **Presentation:**

1. Form groups: Students go to groups and previous work areas.
2. Work time: Students work on their scenes. Each group member must have a script or a format of some sort to follow. Scenes should be memorized and fluid. The teacher continuously circulates and monitors groups, responding to questions/concerns and offering encouragement and constructive feedback.
3. Class wrap-up: Students form a circle. Teacher reaffirms that all scenes and interventions must be ready to present to the whole class the following period. If students need additional time, they must arrange it outside of class time.

## **LESSON 9: PRESENTING THE SCENES AND GETTING FEEDBACK (1 HOUR)**

**Description of the Lesson:** Students use this class to present their group's scenes to their classmates and to provide one another with feedback about blocking, clarity of images, and effectiveness of intervention strategies.

**Materials and Resources:** none

1. Pop-off warm-up game: Students stand in pairs with arms linked. One pair splits and one person becomes the runner and the other the chaser. If the runner grabs a pair, the person on the other side becomes the new runner. If the chaser catches a runner, that person becomes the chaser. If the chaser catches a pair, that pair becomes the runner and chaser. Two pairs can become runners and chasers if the space permits. Remind students that everyone should have a chance to run and to chase.
2. Final touches to scenes: Students get into their groups and have a chance to make any last-minute adjustments to their presentations.
3. Peer feedback: Each group has 10 minutes to present their scenes as they would in the workshop. Their joker must also facilitate the interventions they plan to use. The audience will participate and then provide the group with any feedback. The two main workshop jokers will also share their plans and their introductory speech with the group.
4. Making adjustments: Students return to their original groups. Based on the feedback each group received, they can make any adjustments to their scenes or their interventions that they feel are necessary.

## LESSON 10: WORKSHOP AGENDA (1 HOUR)

**Description of Lesson:** During this lesson, the students must finalize their agendas for the workshop presentation. The outline has been previously prepared by the teacher but each group must now input their individual contributions. A run-through of the workshop must be completed and representatives must be chosen to speak to the teacher of the other group of students who will be participating in the workshop.

**Materials/Resources:** agenda outline to be filled in.

### **Presentation:**

1. Eye contact warm-up game: Students form a circle. Two people are in the middle. People on the outside of the circle have to change positions with anyone they make eye contact with on the outside of the circle. People in the middle try to take an empty spot and leave a new person in the middle.
2. Filling in the agenda: Teacher will ask each group what their final decisions are for their portion of the agenda. Jokers must provide specific activities and the format for these activities. Each group must describe their scenes and the accompanying audience activities or interventions they have planned to go with their scenes.
3. Dry run of the agenda: The students organize the space to reflect the condition and orientation of the gymnasium. The students then walk through the entire workshop without speaking the actual words of their scenes. Only a brief summary is stated. This is to develop blocking and flow of the performance and to familiarize each student with where they are supposed to be during all aspects of the workshop. Go through two times at least.
4. Choose two representatives: The class must select two representatives to meet with the teacher of the other class, outside of class time, to explain the agenda and review the expectations for participation from the other class. The students will take a completed copy of the agenda to the teacher.
5. Dead bear activity: Students lie on their backs on the floor and try to keep still and silent with no movement while bears try to distract them with sounds and movement. Students who make a reaction become the bear. (Variation: bear can move students who are playing dead.)

## LESSON 11: HEADLINES THEATRE (1 HOUR)

**Description of Lesson:** This lesson allows the students an opportunity to take a break from rehearsals and to observe how other groups have executed a Forum Theatre on bullying. It will provide them with some practical suggestions of what to expect from their audience and to understand what a final product of Forum Theatre might look like.

**Materials/Resources:** *Don't Say a Word* DVD (available for \$25 from Headlines Theatre at [https://id407.van.ca.siteprotect.com/headlinestheatre/forms/purchase\\_form.html](https://id407.van.ca.siteprotect.com/headlinestheatre/forms/purchase_form.html)), DVD player, appointment timetable.

### **Presentation:**

1. Introduction of Headlines Theatre: Introduce Headlines Theatre and their production on bullying, *Don't Say a Word*, joked by David Diamond. Provide some general background on Headlines Theatre and their work with Boal and the Theatre of the Oppressed. Write the company's website on the board if the students want to copy it and explore the site further. Introduce their workshop on bullying.
2. View Forum Theatre workshop: Students watch the DVD and make notes of points of interest and possible interventions.
3. Group discussion: Teacher poses the question: How close was this production to what you expected Forum Theatre to look like? How effective do you think Forum Theatre was as a way to engage students in a discussion and investigation of bullying? Defend your response.
4. Journal response: Have students copy the following prompt from the board and write their response in their journals: "Now that you have seen an actual Forum Theatre workshop, how has your opinion of Forum Theatre changed? What is your reaction to *Don't Say a Word*?"
5. Individual appointments: Distribute copy of timetable for students to fill in individual appointments with teacher for final interview.

## LESSON 12: FINAL DRESS REHEARSAL

**Description of Lesson:** Students have one final opportunity to run through their entire workshop in order to build confidence and to correct any last minute adjustments to their agenda.

**Materials/Resources:** all props that are being used during the scenes, the computer projector, agenda of the performance order for every student, chairs, and two balls of yarn.

### **Presentation:**

1. Potential problems list: Students dictate a list of potential problems that they think they may encounter during the workshop (i.e., difficult transitions, group member losing focus, student disruptions). This list will be on the board and the students will be asked to be mindful of this as they do an *Italian Run* (speeded up version of the play).
2. Italian Run: Students organize themselves for the Italian Run. This is a complete run-through of the entire performance where all the words are spoken but done very quickly and still coherently. Students assume the positions that they will be in for the workshop and organize their cue cards, props, and seating arrangements.

The teacher signals the Italian Run to start. The rehearsal does not stop for errors; the performance must continue; the teacher notes areas of concern. The other class is represented by four students from any group not presenting. All other group members not presenting will be lined up against the wall behind the students from other class during a performance to avoid being distracting.

3. Group discussion: Refer to original list and discuss whether all the potential problem areas or transitions have been addressed. Have any new issues arisen? Discuss these and run through these areas if time permits.

## LESSONS 13 AND 14: FORUM THEATRE WORKSHOP (2 HOURS)

**Description of Lesson:** The students lead another class of students through a mini Forum Theatre workshop. They present their scenes and lead discussions about bullying for the other class.

**Materials/Resources:** Students must bring small props they are using in their scenes, computer and projector, PowerPoint presentation of workshop presentation and bullying images, 2 balls of yarn, a circle of chairs (one for each student in the other class), gymnasium or other room booked for two hours

### **Presentation:**

1. Joker introductions: Two students introduce themselves as the jokers for today's workshop. They invite all of the other class to sit in the chairs. Any empty chairs are removed or extra chairs are added. Teachers do not participate or intervene unless necessary. Jokers provide a brief introduction to Forum Theatre and introduce the topic of oppression and how it relates to bullying.
2. Hypnosis game: Jokers invite their classmates (the drama group) to stand behind each chair according to numbers. The jokers describe the activity to the guest class. The host group begins by being the hypnotic hands and leading the guest students around the gym. They then switch roles and the guests lead the hosts.
3. Discussion: Jokers invite the guest students to return to their seats and pose the questions: How did it feel to be led? How did it feel to lead? Who had power? How did it feel to have (or to not have) power?
4. Group #1 presentation: Jokers introduce the first group and the joker for that group. The new joker invites the guests to sit on the floor in two lines in front of Group #1. Group #1 presents their four images slowly. The second time through the joker prompts the audience to describe what they think they are seeing in each scene. The joker touches the actors and asks them to share their intentions, thoughts, feelings, and desires to help clarify the images.
5. Guests dissect the scenes: Joker invites the guest students to decide whether each actor is an oppressing or an oppressed character and to explain their choice. Debate is encouraged if it arises. The original two jokers ask the guests to return to their seats.
6. Sculpting activity: Original jokers introduce the sculpting activity using mirroring and string movement (no touching). Each host student moves in front of one guest student and becomes his or her partner. The jokers call out images and emotions to be sculpted. After each sculpture, the hosts rotate one position to the left so that they work with a variety of students. For the last two sculptures, the guests sculpt the hosts. Jokers debrief this activity.
7. Group #2 presentation: Jokers introduce the second group. Hosts remain seated in chairs. The group's joker introduces self and the group. The group then presents their scene within the circle once. They present it a second time and the joker stops the action to inquire into the thoughts of the characters.

The joker invites the guests to brainstorm out loud how they think the scene could play out differently. Joker asks for specific changes and then instructs the characters to try out the new scenarios. Three interventions are attempted and debriefed. Did they work? Why or why not?

8. Group #3 presentation: Original jokers introduce the final group. The third group's joker introduces self and invites the guest to sit in front of the performing group. The group runs through their scene once and a second time. The joker asks an audience member to come up and touch one of the characters and ask them a question. The joker invites the guests to put themselves into various images (three at a time) and to explain how they think their presence will alter the scenario. Joker debriefs the activity.
9. Yarn activity: Each of the main jokers takes half of the students to the opposite end of the room and facilitates the yarn reflection activity. They ask each student to take hold of the yarn and share one thing they learned in the workshop—hosts also share what they learned from the guests. Once each person has shared, the yarn is passed to a new person so that it makes a web until everyone has shared.
10. PowerPoint presentation: Guests view a PowerPoint presentation of the hosts preparing for the workshop. The images are set to music and will help the guests see how much fun and effort went into preparing the workshop. The presentation also helps the host students reflect upon how far they have come. The jokers thank everyone for participating.

## LESSON 15: TIME TO REFLECT (1 HOUR)

**Description of Lesson:** In this lesson, students have the opportunity to reflect upon the previous day's performance and the whole process and to celebrate their efforts and achievements.

**Materials/Resources:** self- and group evaluation forms, poster paper, and markers

### **Presentation:**

1. Warm-up activities: Students choose 2 favourite warm-up activities by consensus or a vote. Students self-manage the activities.
2. Group reflections: Students divide into their groups (each performance group and the joker group) and list on a poster the strengths of their presentation and the areas they felt they could improve. Once this is completed, they share these with the larger group and receive feedback from their peers.
3. Teacher feedback: The teacher shares personal observations as well as provides feedback received from students in the other class and their teacher.
4. Journal prompt: Students are asked to respond in their journals to the following prompt for homework: "How do I feel about the process of creating Forum Theatre? What were the highlights for me? What were the lowlights for me?"
5. Self- and peer evaluation forms: Each student receives a self- and peer evaluation form. The teacher explains the assessment and asks students to complete them individually and hand them in.
6. Wildest dream images wrap-up: Students improve various wildest dream images. Starting with a handshake, students begin building images that reflect joy, fun, adventure, pride, achievement, or any other celebratory moment.

# References

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Paterson, D. (1995). *Theatre of the Oppressed workshops: Background: Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed*. Retrieved from <http://www.wwcd.org/action/Boal.html>

Saskatchewan Education. (1996). *Arts education 10, 20, 30: A curriculum guide for the secondary level*. Regina, SK: Author.

Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment. (1993). *Drama 10, 20, 30: Curriculum requirements*. Regina, SK: Author.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. (2009). *Arts education 8*. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/adx/asp/adxGetMedia.aspx?DocID=531b5d40-194a-422f-94aa-887f2393fb93>

## APPENDIX A

# Resource List

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### BOOKS

- Boal, A. (1973). *Theatre of the oppressed*. London, England: Pluto.
- Boal, A. (1992). *Games for actors and non-actors*. London, England: Routledge.
- Simmons, R. (2004). *Odd girl speaks out: Girls write about bullies, cliques, popularity and jealousy*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Books.

### SCRIPTS

- McCormack, I. (1995). *Turning blind eyes: A play about bullying*. London, England: Caryl Press.

### VIDEO

- Headlines Theatre. (2003). *Don't say a word* [DVD]. Available (for \$25) from [https://id407.van.ca.siteprotect.com/headlinestheatre/forms/purchase\\_form.html](https://id407.van.ca.siteprotect.com/headlinestheatre/forms/purchase_form.html)

### ORGANIZATIONS

- Saskatchewan Association for Multicultural Education (SAME) (provides workshops of Forum Theatre)  
Contact Rhonda Rosenburg, Executive Director  
144 Marsh Crescent  
Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 5J7  
(306) 780-9428

### WEBSITES

- Bullying Resources:  
Anti-Bullying Network (UK) – [www.antibullying.net](http://www.antibullying.net)  
Bullying Canada – <http://www.bullyingcanada.ca/index.php>  
Bullying.org – <http://www.bullying.org/#>  
Caring and Respectful Schools: Bullying Prevention – <http://education.gov.sk.ca/Bullying-Prevention>  
Deal.org: Bullying – <http://deal.org/the-knowzone/violence/bullying/>  
The MISadventures of Bully-Boy & Gossip-Girl – [www.bullyboy.ca](http://www.bullyboy.ca)  
S-Team Heroes – [www.teamheroes.ca](http://www.teamheroes.ca)

### THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED RESOURCES

- Headlines Theatre – <http://www.headlinestheatre.com/intro.htm>  
Justin's Theatre Links – <http://www.theatrelinks.com/theatre-of-the-oppressed/>  
Theatre of the Oppressed (Douglas Paterson) – <http://www.wvcd.org/action/Boal.html>  
Theatre of the Oppressed International Organisation – <http://www.theatreoftheoppressed.org/en/index.php>  
Theatre of the Oppressed (Wikipedia) – [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre\\_of\\_the\\_Oppressed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre_of_the_Oppressed)

## **OTHER THEATRE RESOURCES**

Arts on the Move – <http://www.artsonthemove.co.uk/resources/gamesmethods/methods.php>

Bright Hub – <http://www.brighthouse.com/education/k-12/articles/16200.aspx>

Drama Resource – <http://dramaresource.com/>

## APPENDIX B

# Sample Student Assessment Instruments

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## FORUM THEATRE ASSESSMENT BREAKDOWN

You will be evaluated in three areas

- 25% of your mark will come from peer and self-evaluations on your participation and contribution to the development of the workshop.
- 25% of your mark will come from an interview that will take place with the teacher (during a break or lunch hour) where we will discuss what you have been learning about Forum Theatre and the process involved in creating it. This is an informal interview.
- 50% of your mark will come from an evaluation of your reflections in your drama journal. Prompts will be given throughout the unit and you are expected to make additional entries based on your own observations and experience while developing the Forum Theatre workshop. A rubric will be used to assess the journals. You will receive a copy of this rubric.

## FORUM THEATRE WORKSHOP SELF- AND PEER ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

Participation and Contribution Rating Scale:

- 0= You *never* engaged in this behaviour  
1= You *rarely or seldom* engaged in this behaviour  
2= You *sometimes* engaged in this behaviour  
3= You *fairly often* engaged in this behaviour  
4= You engaged in this behaviour *almost all the time*  
5= You *always* engaged in this behaviour

Names	Contributed to scene development	Stayed on task during class time	Listened attentively when others spoke	Communicated positively and encouraged others to share	Did fair share of the work	Total out of 25
Your name						
Group Members' Names						

# INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT SHEET

## DURING THE INTERVIEW WE WILL DISCUSS:

1. What you learned about Forum Theatre.
2. How you would describe the process of creating Forum Theatre to someone (such as your teacher).
3. What other topics you think Forum Theatre would be useful to help explore.
4. How you feel you have contributed to the process of developing a workshop.
5. What you liked/did not like about this unit.

## YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING RATING SCALE:

0= offered no response

1= offered a completely unprepared response

2= offered a few thoughts; no detail

3= offered various thoughts; few details

4= offered organized and detailed responses

5= offered thorough responses with examples

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student was able to explain what (s)he learned about Forum Theatre.	1	2	3	4	5
Student was able to describe the process to create a Forum Theatre production.	1	2	3	4	5
Student was able to offer alternative topics that could be explored through Forum Theatre.	1	2	3	4	5
Student was able to thoughtfully discuss his/ her participation and responded to the teacher's observations.	1	2	3	4	5
Student was able to describe what (s)he liked or did not like about this unit.	1	2	3	4	5

**The total is out of 25. This will comprise 25% of your total mark for this unit.**

# FORUM THEATRE WORKSHOP

## ANECDOTAL RECORDS FOR REFERENCE DURING INTERVIEW

*CRITERIA BASED ON FOUNDATIONAL OBJECTIVES IN UNIT OVERVIEW*

Student Names	Are students participating in the activity?	Are students contributing ideas?	Do the students appear to be working cooperatively with their peers?	Are the students demonstrating critical and creative thinking?

**Additional comments:**

# YOU AND YOUR JOURNAL

Your journal is a notebook where you will record your thoughts, feelings, and answers to questions in this class. There are several reasons why journals are useful. First, it helps me to get to know you better. Second, it shows me how well you understand the ideas and techniques we are practicing in our class. Last, it helps me to figure out where to go next with the class. Over the semester, I will be providing you with many opportunities to respond in your journal. Your journal entries will also comprise 50% of your final mark for this unit.

You may be wondering, *What am I supposed to write?* The great thing about journals is that everyone is capable of writing absolutely fabulous, mind-blowing journal entries. A fantastic entry will have the following characteristics:

- Has a strong personal voice;
- Makes reference to the activities practiced in class, including the use of any specific vocabulary;
- Describes both the successes and challenges that one encountered during the activities;
- Describes the next steps or answers the questions: Where do I go from here? and What is it I need to do to keep improving in this skill area?;
- Describes potential ways the current skills can be applied in areas outside of the drama class; and
- Contains proper grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.

For this class, these elements may not always apply, but at the very least, your entry should include what you did during the class/week, what you learned, and what you think you need to do to improve the skills you are learning.

Adapted from: <http://mshs-teachers.asfm.edu.mx> (site is no longer available.)

# JOURNAL ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Criteria	Zone 1 (0-1)	Zone 2 (1.5-2)	Zone 3 (2.5-3)	Zone 4 (3.5-4)
	<i>Great place to start.</i>	<i>This is looking good.</i>	<i>This entry!</i>	<i>Wow!</i>
<b>Voice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The writer seems distant from the topic, audience, or both</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The writer seems sincere and willing to communicate with the reader, if somewhat on a distant level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The writer's energy and passion drive the writing</li> <li>The text is lively, expressive, and engaging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It's as if you are right there talking to me!</li> </ul>
	<b>Zone 1 (0-1)</b>	<b>Zone 2 (1.5-2)</b>	<b>Zone 3 (2.5-3)</b>	<b>Zone 4 (3.5-4)</b>
<b>Clarity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fuzzy, rambling, unfocused text</li> <li>Generalities and fillers outweigh quality detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear and focused more often than not</li> <li>Quality detail outweighs generalities and fillers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear and focused thoughts throughout</li> <li>Main idea expanded; well-supported by detail and evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear, focused and compelling; holds reader's attention</li> <li>Marked by insight, in-depth understanding of topic</li> <li>Takes reader on journey of understanding</li> </ul>
	<b>Zone 1 (0-1)</b>	<b>Zone 2 (1.5-2)</b>	<b>Zone 3 (2.5-3)</b>	<b>Zone 4 (3.5-4)</b>
<b>Ideas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entry makes only a few references to activities in class and includes little of the specific vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entry describes both the successes and challenges encountered during the activity/week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entry describes both the successes and challenges as well as the next steps, "Where do I go from here?"</li> <li>Entry describes potential ways the skill could be used outside of drama class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your ideas are amazing. You have included the successes and challenges, what you want to work on, and you are making people stop and think!</li> </ul>
	<b>Zone 1 (0-1)</b>	<b>Zone 2 (1.5-2)</b>	<b>Zone 3 (2.5-3)</b>	<b>Zone 4 (3.5-4)</b>
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entry has several errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or sentence structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entry has some errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or sentence structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entry has few errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or sentence structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entry is almost or is error free</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX C

# Glossary of Terms

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**Antagonist** – The character who provides the obstacles to the protagonist’s objective in a play.

**Aside** – An observation or remark made by a character to the audience that is not being heard by other actors.

**Beat** – The smallest division of action in a play; the length of time necessary for a character to play an objective (also called intention) from beginning to end.

**Blocking** – The pattern of movement actors follow while on stage.

**Casting** – Selecting which actors will play which roles/characters.

**Characters** – The personalities or parts that actors become in a play; roles played by actors in a play; the third of Aristotle’s Six Elements of Drama.

**Climax** – The point of highest dramatic tension or a major turning point in the action of the play.

**Collective creation** – A play or a collection of episodes or scenes that is developed by a group and intended for an audience; each collective creation is unique to the group who creates it.

**Conflict** – The point in a play where action meets obstacle; the opposition of persons, forces, or ideas that gives rise to dramatic action in a play.

**Costumes** – The clothing worn by the actors who play the characters.

**Critique** – The art of evaluating or analyzing the play.

**Denouement** – The solution to the conflict in a play; the wrapping up of events.

**Development** – The phase in the action after the exposition has been presented and the plot has begun to build toward the climax.

**Dialogue** – The words spoken by the actors during a play.

**Diction** – The word choices made by the playwright; the enunciation of the actors speaking the lines; the fourth of Aristotle’s Six Elements of Drama.

**Director** – Individual who is in charge of all aspects of the production of a play; generally responsible for the final decisions in all areas of production.

**Exposition** – Information about what has happened before the action of the play begins; the set-up.

**Foreshadowing** – Clues given to the audience about upcoming events in the play.

**Forum Theatre** – A type of theatre created by Augusto Boal where audience actors or “spect-actors” can take the actors’ places and participate in creating solutions to oppression.

**Freezes/Still Image/Tableaux** – Groups devise an image using their own bodies to crystallise a moment, idea, theme, or picture. Can use an individual to act as sculptor for a group. Contrasting images can be made to represent actual/ideal, dream/nightmare versions. Highlights important moments and focuses thoughts and ideas in a simplistic but very powerful way.

**Improvisation (Improv)** – Impromptu acting based on the following circumstances: who - the characters; what - the action; where - the place; and when - the time the action takes place.

**Joker** – The person in Forum Theatre who explains the rules, corrects errors, encourages interventions, and draws out themes and realizations, all without imposing him/herself on the process or dictating the course of events.

**Italian Run** – A rehearsal in which the actors deliver their lines and perform the action at a much higher rate of speed, usually trying to run the rehearsal at double time. Used to help with the common problem of slow or dragging pacing.

**Lazzi** – Comic business or gag/joke.

**Mime** – Stylized pantomime; more exaggerated than pantomime, often performed today in black clothing and white makeup.

**Monologue** – A work written to be spoken by just one person. This may be full-length, as in a one-man or one-woman show.

**Pantomime** – A scene or play without words; the actors use only action and gestures to express their meaning.

**Playwright** – The individual who writes a play.

**Plot** – What happens in a play; the order of events; the story as opposed to the theme; what happens rather than what it means; the first of Aristotle's Six Elements of Drama.

**Power Plays** – Used in Forum Theatre, these are short plays created from games and exercises that explore issues of power and help audiences or spect-actors find solutions to their problems.

**Props** – Objects used by characters on stage during a play. Hand prop is an object small enough to be carried easily.

**Protagonist** – The principal character around whom the action revolves.

**Rehearsal** – Preparing a play for performance.

**Reversal** – A plot reversal when an action produces the opposite of what was desired or expected.

**Role** – A part/character/person written by a playwright.

**Script** – The play in written form.

**Set** – The environment of the play; scenery and furniture.

**Soliloquy** – A speech in which an actor, usually alone on stage, speaks his or her thoughts aloud.

**Spectacle** – The visual elements of the production of a play; the scenery, costumes, props, makeup, lighting, and special effects; the sixth of Aristotle's Six Elements of Drama.

**Spect-actor** – A term created by Augusto Boal to describe those engaged in Forum Theatre. It refers to the dual role of those involved in the process as both spectator and actor, as they both observe and create dramatic meaning and action in any performance.

**Stage** – The area where the actors perform the play.

**Stage Left** – The left side of the stage as the actors look out toward the audience.

**Stage Right** – The right side of the stage as the actors look out toward the audience.

**Tension** – The state of anxiety induced in the audience by the threat of danger to a character in the play.

**Theme** – What the play means as opposed to what happens (plot); the main idea or message within the play; the second of Aristotle's Six Elements of Drama.

**Sources:**

Headlines Theatre – [www.headlinestheatre.com/intro.htm](http://www.headlinestheatre.com/intro.htm)

Justin's Theatre Links – [www.theatrelinks.com/theatre-of-the-oppressed/](http://www.theatrelinks.com/theatre-of-the-oppressed/)

Theatre of the Oppressed (Douglas Paterson) – [www.wgcd.org/action/Boal.html](http://www.wgcd.org/action/Boal.html)



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