Experiencing Shakespeare
Through Performance:
A Handbook for Teachers

By
Paul Peter van Gestel

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As I reflect on this journey I realize that so much of it actually began years before my first year here started in the fall of 2011. Perhaps the seed of this journey was planted when I was going to the National Theatre School, or perhaps when I was in the Stratford conservatory. Or perhaps the journey began when I first stepped on to a stage. When did I receive the call to adventure? As I reflect on this journey I actually can not remember the moment when I received and answered the call. But what I can remember are the people in my life who affected me and made it possible in the first place.

First and foremost I must thank my first ever mentor Len Whalen. He was the one responsible for my becoming an actor in the first place. I think it is fair to say that I am Luke Skywalker to his Ben Kenobi. I suppose I have just answered my question...the call to adventure came directly from him.

Next I must acknowledge a trio of instructors from The National Theatre School of Canada and The Stratford Conservatory. It was David Latham who introduced me to Joseph Campbell and the hero’s journey through neutral mask, a form of work that resonated with me so profoundly. Gratitude and thanks to Janine Pearson and Ian Watson for teaching me that at times it is best to surrender and give over to the work, to trust that the work is there and that in the end, it is just a play.

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I am the youngest of two older sisters, so you can imagine the teasing I have endured in my life. Yet I love them so, and would not be the man I am today if not for them. To Desiree and Angela, my angels whom I know are always looking out for me.

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“But we in it shall be remember’d;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother”

And finally to the two people that made this paper possible in the first place. To my Mom and Dad, I know you two have been with me every single step of the way. When I have felt the most alone, I knew then that it was you two that were carrying me. You are the greatest parents I could ever have asked for. This past year, spending this time with you has been a gift and a blessing.

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When I was a teenager in high school I hated William Shakespeare. Not only did I hate him I resented him and dreaded having to sit in an English class and struggle with trying to find meaning in the heightened language that is the poetry of William Shakespeare. I found myself in a constant state of questioning the relevance of being forced to read these epically long and difficult plays. Now looking back, I can identify what my resistance to Shakespeare was. I was bored. It was like being forced to listen to a story in another language without having any frame of reference or understanding. Of course there were moments of clarity. It was not difficult to understand the tragic events of *Romeo and Juliet* and if looked close enough, it would not be too difficult to see *Macbeth* as a tragic twenty first century action hero.

So why was I bored in the first place? Why was Shakespeare so inaccessible to me? It was not until I actually witnessed my first live performance of a Shakespeare play that I began to understand the potential impact not only of Shakespeare's language but of the theatre itself. I remember very vividly going on a class outing to see a production of *Henry V.* From my perspective as a fourteen year old anything was better than sitting in that English class watching the hands of the clock move backwards. In my mind *Henry V* was going to be a play about a big fat English monarch who married six times, executed a few wives and ate chicken legs.

Little did I know that the production of *Henry V* I was about to see would change my own personal journey in a very profound way. I was completely engaged by the production and invested in the struggles, defeats and triumphs of the characters before me. For the first time I was able to make meaning and understanding of the poetry of Shakespeare because for the first time I was experiencing it as it was intended to be experienced: as a living breathing entity. Why? Because I was experiencing the play through multiple perspectives and voices. Actors were infusing their own lives, experiences and emotional
into the words and for the first time I could associate action with the language. For the first time the language was clear and I was able to understand the potential of how these plays could be relevant to my own life.

“Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue. But if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, by use all gently, for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. “ Hamlet Act 3 Scene 2
“This above all
To thine own self be true”

I am a trained Shakespearean actor and I have been so for twelve years. I have only recently become interested in the potential for theatre to be a tool for education. I began to notice that with every role I played, with every experience I gained at telling a story through role play, my own perspectives were shifting. I was different at the end of a performance than I was in the beginning. Sometimes this occurred on a nightly basis but mostly it was at the end of a contract. I was able to identify in myself that I had changed and transformed from what I thought I was at the beginning of rehearsal to what I was now that the production had closed and I was now returning to the life I left. That is what it is to be an actor in this country. We are true pilgrims traveling from job to job, living out of suitcases in hotels or strange lovely people’s homes who have taken us in while we build a life in a strange town usually for six week periods at a time. A standard block of time for any contract is usually six weeks, although there are longer contracts available if you are lucky, like at Stratford or Shaw. The larger companies that hire artists for 6 to 8 months at a time!!! These contracts are glorious and also fairly lucrative. The standard though is to breeze into a town and then six weeks later, go right back to the life you left. This is where I notice the most change: coming back to the life that was left behind.

Kingston is my hometown. I was born here and raised here, and when I left it was to go into the world and begin a journey that oddly enough, took me back to where I started, although 17 years had passed. There were things about the city that were different. A new business here, a new building there. Some businesses that were considered Kingston institutions were gone. These were things I definitely noticed but upon reflection, what I noticed the most was not how much Kingston had changed because in actual fact it hadn’t really changed that much, but rather, what became strikingly apparent was that it was ME that had changed. When I left Kingston it was 1995, or as my best friend’s son says “the 1900’s” I was 22. When I came back the century and millennium had changed and I was 39 and the world looks a lot
“and it must follow as the night the day
Thou canst not then be false to any man”

a lot different at 39 than it does at 22. But again I stress that it wasn’t so much the changes in Kingston. The change was in me. I was seeing the world, particularly my hometown which I love, through a much different lens.
This is what my project is all about.
Once I discovered that Shakespeare was writing about real human people and after I was taught both how to read and how to make sense of the language, I learned to appreciate the epic scope of the plays, the characters and their struggles. I cheered along side King Henry and his men when they defeated the French at the Battle of Agincourt, and I lamented the tragic end of the star crossed lovers Romeo and Juliet. How similar are the tyrants from Shakespeare’s plays to the tyrants of our past...or our present? Why is it that we repeat the same mistakes again and again? Like an endless loop of both human achievement and human shame? Is that both the blessing and the curse of what it is to be alive? To question our purpose? To seek, to strive, to find?

Shakespeare's poetry and plays are elegant articulations of the human condition, the relevance of which may become apparent if looked at through the lens of drama. There is a reason why Ben Johnson, an Elizabethan playwright and contemporary of Shakespeare said of his colleague “He was not for an age, but for all time”. And it is the responsibility of educators, in whatever capacity they can, to make the plays accessible and relevant for students in this time.

The purpose of this book is either as a resource for the English or drama teacher who is seeking performance approaches to teaching Shakespeare or it could be for teachers interested in initiating an after school or summer program. I have designed a twelve day intensive course framed around *The Tempest* but any of the plays can be approached using these methods and exercises. For those who are really keen, I have devised and mapped out a schedule if a summer camp type experience or as a unit in a drama class is what you are looking for. If you are using some of these exercises and techniques in an English class, I caution you with regards to the “dropping in” exercises and the neutral mask work because they involve time and a physical space that you may not have. Also, not everyone in your English class may be interested in performance and that is ok. For you English teachers, I have included some interesting activities that may help you get “in” to the story and the language.
The casting of a play can be very tricky. How does one go about doing it? There are a few different ways and it is going to depend on what you want to accomplish as the facilitator and guide of this process and how you want to use it. Are you an English teacher interested in exploring some facets of theatre and performance? Are you a drama teacher working on a Shakespeare unit or a summer camp experience?

One place to start might be to ask the students themselves what they want out of this experience. How much text are they interested in exploring? How big or small of a role do they actually want?

The voice of the participants is a valid one and the purpose of this project is not to put a participant in a place of pressure or fear, but rather to show the door and offer the participant the chance to take their first steps into a much larger world.

I find one of the best ways to cast a play is to begin from a place of observation. Use the early exercises as a way of getting to know the participants not only as students, but as people. Consider their physicality and personality and above all, don’t push a participant into a role that makes them in any way uncomfortable.

Another helpful approach to casting might be found in partnership. Cast two participants in the same role and challenge them to work together and explore the role as a team. Ultimately, it is the facilitator of this class who will decide what is best for their participants. If there is any objective for the facilitator it is in using the activities and performance approaches in this book to ensure a rich and satisfying experience through a meaningful engagement with the play. Casting should be carried out with the goal in mind of maximizing the effectiveness of the experience for all students.
Shakespeare is probably best known for his tragedies like *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *King Lear* as well as the comedies *Much Ado About Nothing*, *A Midsummer Nights Dream* and *Twelfth Night* but his later plays grouped into what most scholars call the romances are seldom performed and rare to see. These were plays believed to have been written at or near the end of his career and they illustrate a major shift in his writing and story telling style. They include, *Pericles Prince of Tyre*, *A Winter’s Tale*, *Cymbeline*, *The Two Noble Kinsman* and *The Tempest*.

Unlike the tragedies, the romances end very happily for the protagonists taking on magical fairy tale like qualities. Reading the romances, it almost feels as if maybe Shakespeare had intended for them to be tragedies and somewhere along the line had a change of heart. What the romances have in common with the tragedies are epic themes of love, loss, forgiveness, redemption and the power that the characters (and in a sense all of us) have at surrendering to destiny and fate sometimes due to supernatural influence.

*The Tempest* is a beautiful, magical fairy tale that encompasses all of these themes and invites both the artist and the audience on a journey of reflection and transformation. At the end of the play the characters are not the same as they were when the play started, and neither is the audience.

Whether you are teaching a summer drama camp, a unit of Shakespeare in a drama class or studying the plays in an English class, reflecting on the stories, the characters and the journeys they take will be key in helping to make the works of William Shakespeare relevant to a twenty first century teenager and may make these plays that were once inaccessible once again relevant.
What is the function of drama? More specifically what is its function drama in education? “Drama may increasingly become a method of teaching and a way of learning for everyone. Ultimately drama is a valuable tool, but first the tool itself must be fashioned” (Way, 1967, p.7). Whose responsibility is it to develop drama as a tool for education and how does this process work? We the teachers fashion the educational tools within our classrooms on a daily basis and we do this based on our own experiences as students and our training. Our experiences as teachers are valid as we sometimes have to test theories and practice through trial and error. And in many cases the experiences of the students themselves play a key role within this process. “Direct experience, transcending mere knowledge, enriching the imagination, possibly touching the heart and soul as well as the mind” (Way, 1967, p.1).
Transformational learning came to me at just the right time. It is amazing how sometimes we are provided with just what we need, when we need it. Transformational learning is a theory of learning that was developed in the 1970’s by Jack Mezirow when he was conducting a study on adult learners going back to a school for further education. The theory resonates with me on both a personal level and a professional level, as I try to figure out my own journey. I came to the realization that we are always in a state of transformation, that even now as I sit here typing this my body is being transformed on levels the human eye can not even fathom. As I go through the day, as I go through any day, I am not the same when I go to bed as I was when I got up in the morning. Something has changed. My experiences of the day, various random encounters, planned meetings, schedules...all of these events have shaped me and played an active role in changing me. The question then becomes, how much do we acknowledge these changes? Or are we even aware of these changes in the first place?

We go through the world every day and we both make and seek meaning. That’s what it is to be human and that is what it is to learn. We are constantly seeking to strive, seeking to understand. Exploration is in our nature and can be a driving force in human achievement. Curiosity is one of our greatest gifts and it is what propels us forward...constantly asking questions and actively seeking the answers and when acknowledged by educators curiosity can be a valuable tool in our classrooms. I think of curiosity as being one of the actor’s greatest gifts as well. Mezirow articulates the drive of curiosity very well, “A defining condition of being human is our urgent need to understand and order the meaning of our experience, to integrate it with what we know to avoid the threat of chaos. If we are unable to understand, we often turn to tradition, thoughtlessly seize explanations by authority figures or resort to various psychological mechanisms, such as projection and rationalization to create imaginary meanings” (Mezirow, 2000, p.3).
“Now my charms are all o’erthrown
And what strength I have’s mine own”

As a theatre artist and educator, my primary interest with this project has been about using theatre and techniques that actors employ as a way of making Shakespeare more accessible. Perhaps once the language has been explored physically, meaning and connections can be made. Shakespeare’s greatest accomplishment was his ability to capture the human condition and spirit in such an eloquent and poetic way.

So what needs to happen for transformation to occur? “when people critically examine their habitual expectations, revise them, and act on the revised point of view, transformative learning occurs” (Cranton, 2006, p.19). Critical reflection, revising a point of view based on that reflection, acting on it, and taking on a new role is key in a transformational learning environment. So to is a dilemma that can have a disorienting effect. A challenge to one’s behaviour and expectations. These are some of the factors Mezirow identified for transformational learning to occur and are essential to how we make meaning:

- Understanding one’s frame of reference...how we make meaning
- The role of the disorienting dilemma
- Critical reflection
- Dialogue with others
- Taking on new roles

“throughout their lifetime, people make meaning out of their experiences. They build a way of seeing the world, a way of interpreting what happens to them, and accompanying values, beliefs, and assumptions that determine their behavior” (Cranton, 2006, p.19).
John Dirkx, a contemporary of Mezirow moves away from the *Logos* of Mezirow and uses a different lens to examine Transformative Learning, that of *Mythos*. Too often talk of soul can be seen as irrelevant, flighty, and it can be easily dismissed because the idea or concept of soul can be and has been debated for centuries. And I think the reason for that is because soul is often linked to spirituality. Dirkx raises a good point in his article: Nurturing the soul in adult learning. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 74, 79-88.

“We are products and members of a culture that devalues matters of the soul as mystical or new age jargon” (Dirkx, 1997, p 84).

“Soul has to do with authenticity, connection between heart and mind, mind and emotion, the dark as well as the light” (Dirkx, 1997, p. 83).

One of the arguments that drives my project is that teaching Shakespeare from the perspective of theatre and drama may help students create links to their own lives as opposed to the traditional seat bound approach to Shakespeare taught as English literature. Dirkx supports this, “Learning through soul calls for a more central role of imagination and fantasy in our instructional methods and contents. Stories, narratives, myths, tales and ritual capture aspects of this world in ways not readily available through more traditional methods” (Dirkx, 1997, p.85).
Another reason why I believe transformative learning is so appropriate for a theatre class is because there are similar resonances and themes that continue to present themselves. The links between drama and transformative learning are present and exciting to me. What are those links? Taking on a role in a play can in many ways be a disorienting dilemma and reflecting on the work either privately or within a theatre company is a collaborative process shared and practiced by many theatre artists.

I think about what theatre is to me, and the value it has had in my life. I have always believed that theatre can be a powerful tool for an educator and one that is seldom used and in many ways dismissed. Theatre is a collaborative art form where students have the opportunity to “transform, act, and reflect upon the human condition” (Taylor, 2000, p.1). It is that very reflection I will be asking students to make. But more than just reflection. I am searching for relevance as well. How can Shakespeare be relevant to a twenty first century 15 year old. Too often Shakespeare is seen as boring, old fashioned, and dull. English teachers in high schools across the country do their best to make the plays and the language more accessible through films, games, comic books, and sometimes outings to a theatre where students can witness a play as it was meant to be witnessed, live and in a communal space.

What if students were able to experience the plays from the inside? In other words, actually walking in the footsteps of some of the most iconic characters in the English language?
The Value of Reflection

Reflection is a key component in the theatre as it is in transformative learning as well. Students are asked to keep journals of their class work as a way of documenting progress, reflecting on challenges and as a platform for asking question about the work itself. The transformation occurs within the practice of the plays themselves. Transformation is at the very core of what it is to be an artist in the theatre in the first place. But why and to what end? Hamlet says that the very purpose of the theatre is to “hold the mirror up to nature”, in other words to reflect back to those who are witnessing what it is to be human, or to reflect their own natures back on themselves. Within this program reflection takes on two meanings. Self reflection and the reflection of human nature back on itself.

That is the power of theatre, and I believe that power lies within the language of Shakespeare. Looked at through the lens of performance, both audience and actor “can be participants as they work towards aesthetic understanding” (Taylor, 2000, p.4). Understanding of the language, plot, and characters but ultimately an understanding of themselves. Drama can mirror the struggles and achievements of humanity which may allow a clearer understanding of the world and the various roles within it. One need only think of the great Greek plays and Shakespeare's eloquent thoughts on the human condition to begin to understand the role that theatre has played throughout history.
Why teach Shakespeare? For teachers who are involved with teaching Shakespeare “the question of whether the playwright should hold such a dominant position in the curriculum rarely if ever crosses our minds” (Willson, 1990, p.208). For many he is considered “the major writer among writers, the strongest link in the British Survey chain” (Willson, 1990. p.208).

I wonder if Shakespeare may be more accessible to students if studied through the lens of drama and human behaviour as opposed to a study based in English literature? I also wonder and question if there has been too much emphasis placed on the study of Shakespeare as a poet and not enough focus on the theatrical possibilities?

“If we believe that poetry is essential in education, then Shakespeare provides us with dramatic and lyric poetry which speaks powerfully and directly” (Allen, 1991, p.44).
The challenges of teaching Shakespeare

What then is the challenge teachers face within a Shakespeare class? How do we find a way to convince students that the study of Shakespeare can play a part in enriching their lives? Students are usually introduced to the plays in a grade nine English class in which “the classroom becomes a site of resistance to Shakespeare. There are two key youth objections to Shakespeare, boredom and inaccessibility. Often the role of educators is to make Shakespeare both interesting and accessible to the students” (Hulbert, Witmore & York, 2006, p.2).

That is a difficult task to undertake. I think the answer to addressing boredom and inaccessibility may rest in the causes that create these impressions in the first place, while at the same time appreciating the value in a performance based approach. “One reason students have trouble reading Shakespeare is that they are not trained to transform the words on the page into imagined voices and imagined actions or to imagine how radically the meanings of the words uttered by such voices can be transformed through a performer’s choice of action” (Rocklin, 2005, p.50).

I would expect that teachers with no background in the performance of Shakespeare would find designing a class in this fashion very difficult. “For teachers, the challenge includes designing classes that teach not merely the results of the performance approach but also the approach itself” (Rocklin, 2005, p.50).

There is a reason why his plays are studied and considered mandatory in the English curriculum and I believe that reason is because the themes found throughout the plays transcend time. And it is the responsibility of educators, in whatever capacity they can, to make the plays accessible and relevant for students in this time.
The teaching process I have developed is a combination of training I have received at The National Theatre School of Canada and The Stratford Shakespeare Festival of Canada. It has a very strong element of movement incorporated into it which is designed to help the actor achieve a deeper connection between what is happening on a physical level and with the text they are required to deliver. The difficulty and challenge of the theatre is that it is a living art. A performance can change on a nightly basis due to so many variables that cannot be accounted for and, unlike a painting, there is no permanent record of the performance. It happens in the moment and exists only in the memories of those who witnessed it. Consistency and the pursuit of excellence are achieved through vigorous examination of the actor as an instrument.

The foundation of this process rests on four building blocks of classical theatre training. These building blocks are supported by the theories and practices of some of the greatest theatre artists and thinkers of the twentieth century and even further, into ancient civilizations such as Konstantin Stanislavski, Rudolph Laban, Joseph Campbell and the ancient Greeks. The four building blocks are:

1) Text analysis

2) Movement

3) Objectives/Action

4) Neutral Mask.

When applied together this foundation may give the student the freedom and confidence needed in order to gain a deeper understanding of Shakespeare's language by allowing them to actually tell the stories as they were meant to be told: through performance.
Catharsis and theatre

Throughout human history drama has provided a lens through which people could explore and grapple with social issues. Drama has also served a therapeutic purpose. The connection between healing and the arts is an ancient one. In *Poetics*, Aristotle wrote of the cathartic function of tragedy as the release of deep feelings by audience members and empathetic connections to the characters they were watching. Aristotle wrote that through sharing of cathartic and empathetic feelings, audience members released harmful emotions allowing them to move toward greater harmony and social healing. The cathartic process remains a foundational concept of drama therapy across many different approaches to the field.
Info for facilitator:

Background

The approach to text analysis comes from the work of Konstantin Stanislavski (Stanislavski, 1961). Stanislavski’s system proposed creating a physical map of action as reference points throughout the play of the character’s emotional journey.

Goals

In order to create this map, Stanislavski developed points of reference for the actor known as units. A unit is a portion of a scene that contains one objective for the actor and it changes whenever there is a shift in thought or when a character enters or exits a scene. Together as a class, look at the first scene of the play and draw a line on the page where the unit shifts happen. When the scene has been unit-ed out, it should look like a sequence of blocks in the script clearly illustrating where the shifts in the scene happen.

Rationale

Stanislavski’s system proposed “that a series of physical actions arranged in sequential order would trigger the necessary emotions in an actor’s performance. These emotions were based in the unconscious or sub conscious and could not otherwise directly come to the surface when needed. They would have to be brought out through indirect means. Hence his search led him to create a method of physical action; a physical map plotted out for the actor” (Moore, 1984, p.58).
Info for facilitator:

Background
Laban is to movement what Stanislavski is to text analysis, having created a foundational system for analyzing and exploring human movement. He broke movement down into factors with each factor consisting of effort elements such as shape, space weight and time.

Goals
The function of this work is for the actor to explore the qualities of the factors in combination with the effort elements. It is a process that requires total commitment from the student. Any fear of looking stupid or silly in front of peers must be set aside in order for the work to reach a place of honest exploration. This process is what I call the 'Drop In' process. Dropping in is when the student plants the idea or energy of a word, verb or element into their imaginations and through a guided process explores all of the various movement possibilities their physical abilities will allow. This process lays the foundation for the objective and action work that is to come.

Rationale
The actor’s body is their instrument and getting to know what it can do and what it is capable of is of key importance. The basis of the movement work rests in the work of Rudolph Laban.

Laban believed that we “move in order to satisfy a human need” (Laban, 1960, p.1).
The Four Building Blocks

Building Block Three: Objectives/Action

Info for facilitator:

Background

The third building block of this process goes back to the work of Stanislavski. Once the students have completed the first step of text analysis and have begun to understand the Laban drop in process, they are ready to begin the process of actioning, also called verbing. Guided by the instructor or director the participant is required to go back to their texts and apply an action or verb to each unit. These actions are also called objectives. Once these objectives are in place, they create a through line or map for the actor to follow. But where does this map lead?

Goals

This work is about achieving a level of clarity and understanding of action. Questions such as: What am I doing? What do I want from the other character in the scene? What is in my way? These questions are vital in order to gain an understanding of character, plot, and story.

Rationale

“Stanislavski is credited with developing the concept of the 'Super Objective' which can be looked at "as the spine with the actions as vertebrae. For example, the super objective of one character could be to win back the love of the other character. In order to achieve this super objective, the first character would have successive unit objectives (or actions) such as to tease, to please, to excite, to provoke, to placate. These actions when strung together reveal the super objective, the logical coherent through line of action” (Moore, 1984, p.49-50).
Info for facilitator:

Background

The fourth and final building block of this process combines elements from the second and third but uses a very special, very ancient instrument. The neutral mask is a mask that covers the entire face and displays a non-expressive neutral exterior. The neutral mask demands story telling from a completely physical perspective. Neutral masks are inexpensive and can be purchased as most costume stores. Or they can be made as a class. Depending on your class size and budget, they can be easily provided for your class.

Goals

This kind of work incorporates the drop in process only now with the mask on, actors are given even more freedom with which to explore their imaginations from a place of safety. The mask offers a certain level of anonymity and the concepts to be explored with the mask go far beyond that of the movement factor and element functions from the Laban work. It combines the drop in process with the work of Joseph Campbell, a mythologist, writer and lecturer more popularly known for his work in comparative mythology and comparative religion. His crowning work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* was his attempt to demonstrate similarities between eastern and western religions. The term monomyth, also called the hero's journey, is a pattern or structure which can be found in all of the world's myths and stories.

Rationale

“The modern hero, the modern individual who dare to heed the call and seek the mansion of that presence with whom it is our whole destiny to be atoned, cannot, indeed must not wait for his community to cast off its slough of pride, fear, rationalized avarice and sanctified misunderstanding. It is not society that is to guide and save the creative hero, but precisely the reverse” (Campbell, 1949, p. 391).
Chapter 5
Inside the tool box
The Neutral Mask

Background

A major element of this mask is that since the entire face is covered, actors are not free to speak (unlike character masks or commedia dell'arte masks where the face is not entirely covered encouraging a vocal quality). As a result of the lack of voice, actors wearing the neutral mask are forced to use their bodies to communicate. Where will stories come from? Students will be asked to tell fairy tales and myths but without words. Wearing the masks, they must tell the stories through their physicality alone. Through neutral mask, participants will explore qualities of story and character that go far beyond the mundane, contemporary or domestic and it encourages actors to potentially change their world view.
Background

Joseph Campbell was a mythologist, writer and lecturer who was not a theatre artist at all but more commonly known for his work in comparing mythologies and religions from around the world. His crowning work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* was his attempt to demonstrate similarities between eastern and western religions not so much to illustrate how the various cultures are different, but what they share in common. His term *Monomyth*, also called *The Hero's Journey*, is a pattern or structure which can be found in all of the world's myths and stories. The work of Joseph Campbell is monumental, covering many if not all facets of the human experience. This is a quality he shares with William Shakespeare.

*(The Accolade by Edmund Blair Leighton)*
Goals

For the purposes of the neutral mask work, I have simplified and adapted the structure of the hero's journey, yet for the most part the hero's journey remains intact. The following is my adapted structure from Campbell's hero's journey:

1) The call to adventure
2) Supernatural aid
3) The crossing of the first threshold
4) The belly of the whale
5) The road of trials
6) The ultimate boon
7) The magic flight
8) The crossing of the return threshold

Rationale

These structures are vital in understanding story structure and the journey a character takes through the story itself as well as developing and understanding the epic nature of myth and legend. An understanding of the size and epic scope of the hero's journey matches the size and epic scope of many of the stories and plots presented in many of Shakespeare's plays particularly in a play like *The Tempest* which deals with epic themes like love, loss, magic, revenge, redemption, exploration and forgiveness.
Breaking down the hero’s journey

The call to adventure

The call to adventure is the point in the hero’s life when a major change is about to occur. And they may or may not even be aware of it. This level of story can represent the hero’s willingness to begin transformation.

Supernatural aid

Once the hero has decided to commit to the journey or quest either from a conscious or unconscious place, his or her guide (usually a guide with ties to the world of magic) appears.

Crossing the first threshold

At this point in the story the hero crosses into the realm of adventure, leaving behind the boundaries of the world they previously knew into unknown and potentially dangerous realms where the rules, laws and limits have yet to be discovered and learned.

The belly of the whale

This point in the story is sometimes described as the hero’s direst. This experience for the hero can be represented by darkness, danger and the unknown.

The road of trials

The road of trials is a series of tests, tasks, or obstacles that the hero must overcome in order to begin the transformation. The hero may fail these tests.
The ultimate boon

The ultimate objective of the journey. It may take the form of the magic ring or sword or perhaps the ark of the covenant or even the holy grail.

The magic flight

Sometimes the hero must escape with the objective if it is something that the gods have been guarding or protecting. Returning from the journey can be just as adventurous as it was to begin it.

The crossing of the return threshold

The key in the return is for the hero to remember any knowledge or experience gained on the journey in order to teach what has been learned.
Chapter 6
The Nuts and Bolts
Week One Day 1 Morning:

Get ready for the day!

Goals
- To get the group ready for group work and/or voice work.
- Stretching, stimulating imagination, body contact, creativity.
- Introduce students to Building Block Two...Laban and Movement

The Warm Up

The facilitator joins in the following warm-up, taking the group through the exercises in sequence. *(Being in a circle can help, as everyone can see each other.)* *Use each warm up to build on each other going into the next day’s activities.*

- Stand and shake the whole body out.
- Stretch up to the ceiling and then flop down, bending at the waist with your hands pointing towards the floor (or touching your toes if you can stretch that far).
- Shake out the head and shoulders while flopped down.
- Slowly come up to an upright position, letting your vertebrae slot together one by one.
- Continue standing; keep the shoulders down. Loosen the shoulders by rolling each shoulder in turn back 10 times; then roll them back together 10 times, and finally shake them out.

The Game of Machines

The group performs a circle and sits. One person is asked to go into the centre and imagine they are part of a complicated mechanical machine. They start making a movement with their body and vocalizing sound to go with it. Everyone else watches and listens. One by one people are asked to add themselves to the machine, becoming another part of it, until eventually the whole group has made a synchronized, complex machine.

Tips for Facilitators

Warm ups and theatre games are not merely school yard games; they do serve a purpose. They are meant to get the body and mind into a place of readiness for the work that is to come. Focus, and concentration are key points, but so is an element of accessing imagination and a sense of play.
Week One
Day 1 Morning Schedule: The Nuts and Bolts

9:00am-10:30
Warm up Exercises
And theatre games
10:30am-10:45am
Break
10:45am-12:30pm
Introduction to Laban and Movement…the “drop in” process
12:30pm-1:30pm
Lunch

Laban Work: Dropping In

To begin the Laban process students must first gain an understanding of what it is to be in a “Neutral” place physically. Imagine the body as an empty (neutral) bucket. From that empty, neutral place plant the seed of a word/movement quality into the bucket. Begin with discovering what neutral is, then move on to the elements: water, earth, air and fire. Allow the seed or the element to “grow” from a physical place as you explore the room and the body. Give over to the movement quality from a physical perspective but be aware of others in the room. This process lays the foundation for the objective and action work that is to come.

Questions

- What was the experience of neutral like?
- Was one element easier or harder than the other? Why?

Connections

One of the most difficult concepts to master in drama is the link between movement and text, sound, and voice. How does one go from the printed word to embodying those words in a way that is truthful to what the writer is trying to accomplish?

“This is one of the functions of drama- to help every child and young person to achieve complete mastery of his or her physical self, thus enabling an emotional harmony to develop regarding their own bodies, on the basis of full personal confidence and sensitivity” (Way, 1967, p.65).
The Set Up

The Tempest

*The Tempest Activity: The scene before the scene*

Play around with images and pictures and encourage the use of voice to **paint the picture of the storm before the scene starts.**

**Goals**

- To gain an insight an understanding as to where the characters are coming from before the scene starts.
- To access imagination and creativity.
- To set the beginning of the scene through tableau. To explore and ask questions.

*The Tempest Rehearsal*

- Read Act I Scene 1 and assign roles.
- Begin Building Block One...look for changes of thought in the scene.  *Refer to appendix A*
- Begin Building Block Three...What are the characters actions/objectives/obstacles.  *Refer to appendix B*
- Rehearse the scene and “drop in” the verbs/actions you have discovered

**Tips for Facilitators**

Play with the entire class being an active ensemble member of the scene by making them active participants of the storm in *Scene I*, even if they do not have speaking roles in the scene.

- As a class create your performance space and build the ship.
- Encourage high stakes and play
- Give yourself and the students some time at the end of the day for discussion and write some thoughts, impressions and reflections on the day. Use the questions on the next page as a guide.
Week One
Day 1 Afternoon Schedule: The Nuts and Bolts

1:30pm-3:00pm
Act I scene 1:

3:00pm-3:15pm
Break

3:15pm-4:30pm
Build the storm sequence of the play first without text, then add in the text.

4:30 End of Day 1

Questions
- Are the participants who are not speaking playing active roles in the storm? If so, what are they doing and why?
- Are there any clues in the scene that may tell us where the characters are coming from?

Reflections
Key points to consider when beginning this journey:
- How to focus outside the self.
- Playing with a strong objective and tactics.
- Raising the stakes; enhancing the urgency of a scene.
- The idea that emotion comes as a result of action.
- Using beginnings, middles, and ends effectively when playing actions.
- The idea that action is character.
- How to play predetermined outcomes as though spontaneous.
- Listening and reacting.
- Working together as an ensemble.
- Building a story arc.
Week One
Day 2 Morning: The Nuts and Bolts

Get ready for the day!

Goals
- Learning what the body is capable of.
- Stretching, stimulating imagination, body contact, creativity.

The Warm Up
*Start with yesterday’s warm up and then add today’s.*
- Relax the head by moving it from side to side, looking over each shoulder alternately.
- Then move the head up and down (as in a nod).
- Finally roll the head around, encompassing all these moves in one smooth movement (when your head is leaning backwards make sure that you drop open your bottom jaw, so that you do not hurt the top of your spine).
- Centre your body weight onto the balls of your feet rather than your heels.
- Lie on the floor on your back with your knees crooked up towards the ceiling.
- Feel your back and spine spread in every direction possible.
- Allow for the sensations of widening, lengthening and freedom in different sets of muscles around the body to be experienced separately—the group must be talked through this.

Paper Dance
Split the group into pairs. Give each pair a sheet of paper. Without hands being used, the paper must be touching both partners at all times. The leader asks each pair to create a dance without letting the paper touch the ground. Invite volunteers to present their dances to the class.

Tips for Facilitators
- This first week is a good time to build a routine for you and the students with regards to healthy warm up practices and building a sense of trust. Introduce a new warm up element each day in this first week.
9:00am-10:30
Warm up Exercises
And theatre games

10:30am-10:45am
Break

10:45am-12:30pm
Exploring Weight…Heavy/Light

Laban Work: Dropping In

Yesterday was an exploration of finding neutrality in the body first, then exploring the physical qualities of the elements: water, earth, air and fire. Today’s Laban work is about the physical exploration of weight. Ask the students to find a space in the room on their own with enough space around them and begin the exercise from a place of neutral. From that neutral place, “Drop In” the word ‘heavy’ into the body, and slowly begin to explore the room physically from a place of heavy. Allow for time to really explore this movement quality. Play with levels and play with speed as well. How does a person embody heavy? How do they get up again? How do they walk? How do they run? Allow for time to heavy to run its course, shake it out, the begin again with the exploration of light.

Questions

- What was it like to explore the room as heavy? As light?
- Did you prefer one over the other? Was one harder or easier than the other?

Connections

As educators how much do we value the experience of our students? What do they bring into the class and what do they get out of the class? Is there any value in the potential for a shared experience to unite a class, for a bond to be created? “Looking into the details of an experience to bring into sharp focus the quality for experience that creates its unity, as the participants construct a sense of meaning for themselves” (Martin-Smith & Schonman, 2005, p.3).
Week One
Day 2 Afternoon: The Nuts and Bolts

The Set Up

*The Tempest Activity*

- As the play moves forward from this point, we are on Prospero’s island. Similar to yesterday’s activity, we need to now create our performance space. Together as a class, build the island of Prospero. Where is his cave? Where has Ferdinand landed? What about Alonso and his party? Where is Caliban’s living space?
- This next activity is great for getting the creative juices flowing! Once our space has been created divide the class into groups of three or four. Ask the students to investigate where the characters have come from before the scene actually starts and improvise a scene using modern language to tell the story of where the characters are coming from. Use these questions as guidelines in creating the scene before the scene:
  - Are there any clues in the scene that may tell us where they are coming from?
  - What off stage sounds might the audience hear?
  - What pictures or tableaus might the groups make to paint the picture?

*The Tempest Rehearsal*

- Read Act I Scene 2 and assign roles.
- Begin Building Block One...look for changes of thought in the scene.
- Begin Building Block Three...What are the character’s actions/objectives/obstacles
- Rehearse the scene and “drop in” the verbs/actions you have discovered

*Tips for Facilitators*

- Act I scene 2 of the Tempest is a huge scene. Multiple characters are introduced at various points through out the scene. Work slowly and break the large scene down into smaller scenes based on the entrances of new characters. For example, Caliban’s entrance is the beginning of another “small scene” contained with in the larger scene. Do the same with Ariel’s entrance and the entrance of Ferdinand.
- Allow for time at the end of the day for students to make reflections on the day’s work and activities.
- Use the questions on the next page to initiate discussion before going into reflection.
Week One

Day 2  Afternoon Schedule: The Nuts and Bolts

1:30pm-3:00pm
Act I scene 2

3:00pm-3:15pm
Break

3:15pm-4:30pm
Continue Rehearsal and Activity

4:30 End of Day 3

Questions

- What is happening in the story so far?
- Can you identify each character’s actions, objectives and obstacles?
- Using words, paint the picture of our playing space. Describe Prospero’s island.

Reflections

What are the challenges teachers face with teaching Shakespeare at the secondary school level when trying to introduce performance approaches to the text? What are the key barriers students face when reading Shakespeare?

“For teachers, the challenge includes designing classes that teach not merely the results of the performance approach but also the approach itself” (Rocklin, 2005, p.50).

“A performance-framed model enables students to explore the nature of the dramatic medium and the theatre event. The word theatre calls attention to the complex ensemble of playwright, whose ideas are embodied in the play text; players; and playgoers; and to the ways in which the players and playgoers must function as co-creators of the performance and thus focuses on the collaborative nature of the medium. The word event focuses attention on the temporal nature of the play in performance” (Rocklin, 2005, p.73).
Week One
Day 3 Morning: The Nuts and Bolts

Get ready for the day!

Goals
- Discovery of boundaries and embracing challenges to move past them.
- Discover and explore the concepts of breath support and control.

The Warm Up
*Start with the physical warm up then move on to these vocal exercises. The group leader should talk the group through the following exercises.*
- Breathe in through the nose to a count of three
- hold it for three seconds and then breathe out through open mouth to slow count of six
- relax to breathe again. Do this six times. The more often this exercise is done the easier it is to do. When breathing out to six is mastered then breathe out to 10, 15, 20 and on. But only go up to 10 today. See if you can take the class further tomorrow.

Sculpting Part I
- Ask the group to form two lines facing each other. Call one line “sculptors” and one line “the clay”.
- The sculptors are now invited to mould their clay into a sculpture of their choice: the sculptors move parts of their partner’s body into positions (which their partner then holds) creating a sculpture. The sculptors may not speak and must use touch only.

Tips for Facilitators
- The key point of this exercise is to see what we look at, communication, creativity, sensitivity, concentration, imagination, movement and group interaction.
Day 3 Morning Schedule: The Nuts and Bolts

9:00am-10:30
Warm up Exercises

10:30am-10:45am
Break

10:45am-12:30pm
Exploring shape…rising/sinking

12:30pm-1:30pm
Lunch

Laban Work: Dropping In

Exploring shape…rising/sinking. From a place of physical neutrality, students “drop in” first one quality, then the opposite, exploring these qualities through movement. It is important to stress beginning from a place of physical neutrality, freedom of movement and non judgement.

Questions

- What was the experience like?
- What were the differences between the two qualities of shape?
- Was one quality easier or harder than the other? Why?

Connections

What can we learn through Shakespeare’s plays? In particular, what can we learn through his poetry?

“there are so many enticing fields of study to which Shakespeare's plays lead us—Elizabethan history or social customs, connections with other playwrights, and human nature itself” (Willson, 1990, p.604).

“If we believe that poetry is essential in education, then Shakespeare provides us with dramatic and lyric poetry which speaks powerfully and directly” (Allen, 1991, p.44).
The Set Up

The Tempest Activity

The lists and the debate...Put Antonio, Sebastian and Alonso on trial for their rebellions and they in turn will accuse Prospero. Ask the students to go through the scenes they are in up to this point in the play and make 3 lists for each scene.

- A list of everything your character says about themselves
- A list of everything other characters say about you
- A list of everything you say about others

- Divide into two groups- one to put Prospero’s view and one to plead mitigating circumstances in the case of each of the others. Use the list activity to collect as much evidence from the actual lines of the play as you can in order to argue your particular case.

- When the material is prepared, hold a public debate. The Prospero group accuses each of the others in turn; they defend themselves as well as they can and point out Prospero’s faults in their case.

The Tempest Rehearsal

- Read Act II scene 1 and assign roles.
- Begin Building Block One...look for changes of thought in the scene.
- Begin Building Block Three...What are the character’s actions/objectives/obstacles
- Rehearse the scene and “drop in” the verbs/actions you have discovered

Tips for Facilitators

- The list activity is a great exercise in getting “in” to the play and the language. It helps to clarify what the characters are doing and why.
- The debate component of this activity introduces students to the Elizabethan device of rhetoric and debate. Characters in Shakespeare’s plays are actively pursuing their wants through argument.
- Encourage the students to really go after their debate points. In other words, encourage them to “Raise the Stakes”.
Week One
Day 3 Afternoon Schedule: The Nuts and Bolts

1:30pm-3:00pm
Act II Scene 1

3:00pm-3:15pm
Break

3:15pm-4:30pm
Continue rehearsal and activity

4:30 End of Day 3

Questions
- What are your character’s objectives up to this point in the play?
- Do they achieve their objectives or not?
- What are your character’s obstacles in each scene in Act II?
- Who or what gets in the way of your character’s objectives?

Reflections

What are some other benefits to a performance based approach to teaching Shakespeare?

“A performance model enables students to explore the play text in the roles of playwright, players, and playgoers, which means that students are taught to move through phases of conception, enactment, and reception” (Rocklin, 2005, p.73).

“A performance model initiates students into reading the play text as script, reading the words on the page as a design for eliciting their own explorations as potential actors and directors. In particular such a model teaches students to ask, “What do these words do?”; “What can these words be made to do?”; and “What do the words make the actors make the audience do?” (Rocklin, 2005, p.73).
Get ready for the day!

Goals

- Energizing the mind, body, imagination and creativity.
- Working together as a group, playing with strategy and tactics.

The Warm Up

*Continue to build on the physical and vocal warm ups.*

- Everyone should breathe in to a count of three and then the group should count from one to ten in a whisper.
- Breathe in again to a count of three and count out to 15. Then challenge the class to do the same again for 20.

Sculpting Part II

- Expanding on yesterday’s warm up the group leader now asks the sculptors to move away from their clay.
- they should continue sculpting, but at a distance making the same movements as if they were touching the clay still moulding but with realistic gestures.
- The clay should respond as if being touched.

Tips for Facilitators

- Encourage play and fun within this activity, but stress safety and care when working with a partner.
- Emphasize that this activity is a continuation of the sculpting exercise from yesterday and use the exercise to review and build on the previous day.
Week One
Day 4 Morning: The Nuts and Bolts

9:00am-10:30
Warm up Exercises

10:30am-10:45am
Break

10:45am-12:30pm
Exploring time...quick/slow

12:30pm-1:30pm
Lunch

Laban Work: Dropping In

Exploring time...quick/slow. From a place of physical neutrality, students “drop in” first one quality, then the opposite, exploring these qualities through movement. It is important to stress beginning from a place of physical neutrality, freedom of movement and non judgement.

Questions

- What was the experience like?
- What were the differences between the two qualities of shape?
- Was one quality easier or harder than the other? Why?

Connections

In his book Development Through Drama renowned drama educator Brian Way articulates the importance of imagination not just in the arts but in education as well. Way identifies that those children who show any degree of achievement in the arts are labeled as being “imaginative” only because we equate art with imagination. Anyone else then must be no good at art and are therefore lacking in imagination.

“imagination is closely interwoven with the fabric of life as a whole; home and environment, clothes and cooking, activity and relaxation, the capacity for full enjoyment of all kinds and, possibly most important of all, every aspect of personal friendship and sensitivity to others, all these and many other factors of life are closely bound up with imagination” (Way, 1967, p.42).
The Set Up

The Tempest Activity

For this activity you will need:

- a number of cards, each with a different phrase or line from the scene written on it.

Examples of lines from this scene:

- “All the infections that the sun sucks up from bogs, fens, flats, on prosper fall, and make him by inchmeal a disease!”
- “What have we here? A man or a fish? Dead or alive?”

- Give each student a card and give them time to explore all the possible meanings and possible ways in which the line can be said.
- Then divide the students into groups of three to four and use the given lines to create a short scene with any setting or characters they like, not necessarily from within the play.
- Lines may be delivered by different people to the ones that were given to them, and may be split up if the students wish.
- No adding of contemporary dialogue is permitted but there is no limit to interpretation. Feel free to use as much gesture and movement. The resulting scene does need to make some sort of sense. As if it were a fragment of a play.

The Tempest Rehearsal

- Read Act II scene 2 and assign roles
- Begin Building Block One...look for changes of thought in the scene.
- Begin Building Block Three...What are the characters actions/objectives/obstacles
- Rehearse the scene and “drop in” the verbs/actions you have discovered

Tips for Facilitators

- Encourage imaginative play and big choices. There are no mistakes. Looking foolish should be the goal of today’s work.
Week One
Day 4 Afternoon: The Nuts and Bolts

1:30pm-3:00pm
Act II scene 2

3:00pm-3:15pm
Break

3:15pm-4:30pm
Continue rehearsal and activity

4:30 End of Day 4

Questions

- Who are Stephano and Trinculo and how are they different from any other character we have met up to this point?

- Is there a different rhythm to the way they speak? How is it different? What does that say about them?

Reflections

The imagination is such a vital tool for an actor to have in their toolbox. Is it somehow lost to us as we grow into adults?

“In terms of education, it is vital that each human being is helped both to develop his or her own imagination and to feel confidence in it. Neither the development not the confidence will happen if educationists confine acknowledgment of imagination to the comparatively narrow field of the arts and then judge the quality of imagination according to interest in, appreciation of, and skill at either one or all of the arts, comparisons often being made with professional activity.” (Way, 1967, p.43).
Get ready for the day!

Goals

- To energize and build confidence on yesterday’s work in accessing the imagination.
- To see what we look at, sensitivity, visual dialogue, silence, movement, creativity, imagination, trust, co-operation and following impulse.

The Warm Up

*continue to build on the physical and vocal work from earlier in the week.

The Mirror exercise

- Split the group into pairs.
- Tell the class that the object of this exercise is to do nothing but face your partner and mirror everything that your partner does. The slightest movement (even if it was just a reaction to an itch) must be mirrored by your partner.
- Both partners are the initiator and the mirror, and will be reflecting themselves being reflected.

Sculpting part III

- The group leader now gets the sculptors to move further away from their sculptures, making sure that they can still see their partners’ faces.
- The sculptors make movements and gestures to make their sculptures move up and down, backwards and forwards—almost like a remote-controlled robot, except that again the gestures must be realistic.

Tips for Facilitators

- While this game is going on feel free to use the following prompts “Did you initiate that movement? Or did you reflect what you saw?”
Laban Work: Dropping In

Exploring space...bound/free. From a place of physical neutrality, students “drop in” first one quality, then the opposite, exploring these qualities through movement. It is important to stress beginning from a place of physical neutrality, freedom of movement and non judgement.

Questions

- What was the experience like?
- What were the differences between the two qualities of time?
- Was one quality easier or harder than the other? Why?

Connections

Confidence in imagination, confidence in the work, and overall confidence in terms of what we know of the world and our place in it. I think too often we forget as educators the importance the role confidence plays in the lives of our students. At the very least it is our role as educators to build confidence by creating the space and the atmosphere to foster and facilitate a growth and interest in the exploration of imagination and its development. How does one actually do this?

“To build confidence in personal imagination it is necessary for the practice in using imaginative faculties to take place in a constructive atmosphere, free from fear of failure, from competition and comparison, free from sarcastic or caustic comment, free from criticism (either praise or blame), free from audience reaction and free from judgements based on ability at other activities” (Way, 1967, p. 43).
The Set Up

*The Tempest Activity*

- Choose pieces of text of about fifteen lines in length from Act III scene 1.
- Photocopy the lines and blot out selected words, then re photocopy the passages.
- The deletions should be words that can be guessed at by logical deduction, but others should involve examples of imaginative language where a metaphor has to be guessed.
- Divide into groups of three to four and ask each group to discuss the words they think might fill the gaps of the passages given to them.
- Give 30 to 40 minutes to discuss and compare.

*The Tempest Rehearsal*

- Read Act III scene 1 and assign roles.
- Begin Building Block One...look for changes of thought in the scene.
- Begin Building Block Three...What are the character’s actions/objectives/obstacles
- Rehearse the scene and “drop in” the verbs/actions you have discovered

**Tips for Facilitators**

The goals for this activity are:

- To access imagination and creativity.
- To encourage students to take ownership of the language.
- To have fun with the language.
Week One
Day 5 Afternoon: The Nuts and Bolts

1:30pm-3:00pm
Act III scene 1

3:00pm-3:15pm
Break

3:15pm-4:30pm
Continue rehearsal and activity

4:30 End of Day 5

Questions

- What is the environment of the scene like?
- What is the relationship between the performance space and the audience?
- What is the setting?
- What time of day is it?
- Who enters?
- What do they say?
- What do they do?

Reflections

In the article *Teaching Shakespeare Through Performance* author Miriam Gilbert argues “that using performance in a classroom was not merely desirable but a necessary way of getting students involved in what drama is really about” (Gilbert, 1984, p.601). What is the main objective of a performance based approach?

“Performance makes students close readers and exact speakers, and it does so without actually calling their attention to those ends. Aiming at coherence, they usually achieve detail, specificity, even power” (Gilbert, 1984 p. 604).
Get ready for the day!

Goals

- Spontaneity, getting in touch with what we can see and hear, group interaction, body skills, movement and voice skills.

- Introduce students to Building Block Three...The neutral mask

The Warm Up

*continue to build on the physical and vocal work from earlier in the week.

Wink Murder!!

Materials needed:

- Enough pens and pieces of paper for each group member to have one of each. Write on two of the pieces of paper: “you are a murderer- if you wink twice at people they will die”

- Ask the group to form a large circle and to sit down. Ask them to call out the names or titles of people from different walks of life and write them down separately on the remaining pieces of paper. Fold and shuffle all the pieces of paper, then hand out one each to the participants. Inform them that they are going to meet at a party and that, as their character, they are to mingle with the other people there.

- When the party has been underway for 10 minutes or so, inform them that there is a murderer amongst them and that to kill them the murderer will wink at them twice. If this happens they must count to 30 and then die as dramatically as possible. When they die they are out. The game ends in one of two ways: (a) everyone except the murderers is left alive or (b) both murderers are identified. Anyone can identify a suspect at any point in the game.

Tips for Facilitators

- In a circle, give each participant the opportunity to speak to the experience.
Neutral mask

After the Laban work from this week, today is a good day to introduce the neutral mask...Building Block Four. Go back to the elements, earth, air, fire, and water and in groups of three, as the rest of the class watches, see what happens when students “drop in” the elements while wearing the neutral mask.

Questions

- What was the experience like? How was the element drop in different with the mask?
- For those watching….what did you see? What did the mask do?
- For the next mask class, ask the students to bring in a favourite fairy tale. Emphasize that the story can come from any culture and background.

Connections

The drop in work and the up coming mask work is really about encouraging students to inhabit a form that is new, exciting and potentially liberating. Students are encouraged to explore the movement work from the week, but now with the mask as an added element that may encourage questions from both the mask wearer and those that witness it.

“I saw the Masks as astounding performers, as offering a new form of theatre, and I didn't care what Mask creatures arrived, so long as they were possessed” (Johnstone, 1981, p. 144).
The Set Up

*The Tempest Activity*

- Exploring the themes of magic, divide the class into groups of three.
- Each member of the group must be connected physically to each other.
- Physically connected, they are to narrate an improvised fantasy story which must be physically acted out as they narrate. Each group member contributes to the narration in turn.
- Begin with the phrase “Once upon a time three friends began their journey to….”
- Give the students time to rehearse their journeys and then present them to the class.

*The Tempest Rehearsal*

- Read Act III scenes II and III and assign roles
- Begin Building Block One...look for changes of thought in the scene.
- Begin Building Block Three...What are the characters’ actions/objectives/obstacles
- Rehearse the scene and “drop in” the verbs/actions you have discovered

*Tips for Facilitators*

- Encourage physicality and play.
- The challenge in this exercise is in the physical contact.
- Remember some of the physicality and themes the students have discovered and incorporate them into the scene work of *The Tempest.*
Week One
Day 6 Afternoon: The Nuts and Bolts

1:30pm-3:00pm
Act III scenes 2 and 3

3:00pm-3:15pm
Break

3:15pm-4:30pm
Continue rehearsal and activity

4:30 End of Day 6

Questions

- How important a role is magic in *The Tempest*?
- Can we include what we have discovered in our activity within the scenes of magic in *The Tempest*?
- How can we create and what are the different ways we can create magic on stage?

Reflections

We have reached the end of the first week and now would be a good time to engage in a class discussion about where we have come to with the work so far. In a circle, have a discussion about where the class is at. Use this as a “check in” time. Are connections to the text being made? If so why? If not why?

“One reason students have the trouble reading Shakespeare is that they are not trained to transform the words on the page into imagined voices and imagined actions, nor to imagine how radically the meanings of the words uttered by such voices can be transformed through a performer’s choice of action” (Rocklin, 2005, p. 64).
Get ready for the day!

Goals
- The goal of this exercise is to “offer students the opportunity to start thinking for themselves while contributing to the overall collective storytelling obligation of the ensemble” (Miller, p. 13).

The Warm Up
*continue to build on the physical and vocal work from earlier in the week.

Knee Jousting!
- Knee jousting is an exercise that takes place over several rounds. It is essentially a sword fight without swords the objective of which is to touch your opponent on the knee before you are touched there yourself.
- Players face off against each other in “classic” sword fighting stance with an arm extended as if it was in fact a sword. The game is played tournament style over several rounds.
- After each round, the instructor builds in parameters designed to build in character development and scene building, so that by the last round the exercise has moved “from a game to a legitimate acting situation; the making and responding to moments becomes far more important than winning and losing” (Miller, 2010, p. 15).
- Together with the students, the instructor can build a sequence of moments that can lead to a scene, maybe even a full play. The world in which this tournament takes place can have echoes and resonances of Shakespeare and the game itself, puts the students in the place of asking questions about characters and story development. Questions such as “What is the story they are telling? How do their actions in battle reveal who they are?” (Miller, 2010, p. 16).

Tips for Facilitators
- A key point for the instructor when implementing this exercise is that the students must commit to the given circumstances of the game.
- “There will be plenty of moments that you and the class can shape together: how the royal court members make their entrances and exits. How the spectators respond. Defining who the worthy contestants are- the heroes, the villains, those who earn respect of the crowd through their actions in the tournament” (Miller, 2010, p. 15).
Week Two
Day 7 Morning: The Nuts and Bolts

9:00am-10:30
Warm up Exercises

10:30am-10:45am
Break

10:45am-12:30pm
Neutral mask and fairy tales

12:30pm-1:30pm
Lunch

Neutral mask and The Hero’s Journey

For this activity you will need copies of several fairy tales. Anything by The Brothers Grimm or Hans Christian Anderson or even various mythologies from around the world. Depending on your class size, bring in enough stories for at least five groups of four.

1). The call to adventure
2). Supernatural aid
3). The crossing of the first threshold
4). The belly of the whale
5). The road of trials
6). The ultimate boon
7). The magic flight
8). The crossing of the return threshold

Questions

• What is myth and fairytale? What purpose do they serve? Can you identify the components of the hero’s journey within the fairytales?

Connections

“Throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, the myths of man have flourished, and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind. It would not be too much to say that myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation” (Campbell, 1949, p.3).
The Set Up

*The Tempest Activity*

Divide the class into groups of three or four. You will need the following materials for this exercise:

Newspapers and/or magazines, scissors and tape.

- Imagine you are writing a story for young children, eight to ten year olds, and describe the magical events in this scene in a language and style they would readily understand. You may also include the Miranda story, and finish by telling them that Prospero now has all his enemies in his power.
- The story may be illustrated with drawings or a collage of fragments cut from magazines. The exercise will help to clarify understanding of the plot and the workings of Prospero’s magic which will prepare us for elements of the story that are to come.

*The Tempest Rehearsal*

- Read Act IV Scene 1 and assign roles.
- Begin Building Block One...look for changes of thought in the scene.
- Begin Building Block Three...What are the character’s actions/objectives/obstacles
- Play the scene and “drop in” the verbs/actions you have discovered

**Tips for Facilitators**

- Create this story within the students’ journals.
- Use this exercise as a way to build a bridge between the text and the students’ personal experience.
Questions

- Who has the focus?
- Where are the characters in relation to others on stage?
- What are they wearing?
- What props do they use?
- What is the tempo of the scene?
- When do characters exit?

Reflections

I was always taught that theatre is a collaborative art. A performance approach to teaching Shakespeare opens the door wide open for collaboration with students on character interpretation and scene interpretation. Theatre is a three dimensional art. As the collaborators on deciphering a Shakespeare play, we must work together at building the bridge from the two dimensional (the written word on the page) to the three dimensional (a fully realized production).

“Traditional literary analysis and teaching tend not to allow sufficient collaborative student exploration of the emotional impact and social functions of art. Teaching students to read too closely has too often meant teaching them how to interpret a text as certain teachers and critics interpret it” (Frey, 1993, p. 73).
Get ready for the day!

Goals

- Trust, sensitivity, interaction, engaging other senses.
- To further explore the Neutral mask and how it relates to The Hero’s Journey

The Warm Up

*continue to build on the physical and vocal work from earlier in the week*

The blind car

- Ask the group to split up into pairs and name themselves A and B.
- A closes their eyes and becomes a blind car, B stands behind A and is the driver.
- B steers A by pressing a finger on A’s back: middle of back is straight, left shoulder is left and right shoulder is right, hand on the neck is reverse.
- Speed of the car is determined by softer or harder pressure with the finger and the car is stopped when the driver stops touching them.
- Ask the pairs to explore as much of the space as possible then switch.

Tips for Facilitators

- Important to create a safe space free of obstacles.
- Encourage care of each other as partners.
- Stress non judgement. These exercises are less about “getting it right” and more about trust and surrendering to the unknown.
Week Two
Day 8 Morning: The Nuts and Bolts

9:00am-10:30
Warm up Exercises

10:30am-10:45am
Break

10:45am-12:30pm
Neutral Mask

12:30pm-1:30pm
Lunch

Neutral mask

Using the formula of the hero’s journey and wearing the neutral mask, ask students to improvise the hero’s journey, without sound only through movement and mask on their own. They do not need to copy any of the fairy tales studied, using them only as a springboard into this activity.

Questions

In a circle, give each participant the opportunity to speak to the experience.

• What did they find difficult?
• What did they find easy?
• What was it about the exercise that made them feel in a particular way?
• What tricks did they find they got up to?
• As the exercise progressed, how did students find the silence that they had to work in?

Connections

Exploring the hero’s journey through neutral mask can be an overwhelming experience. Due to its improvised nature as an instructor you are literally asking your students to dive into the deep end.

“Using non-rational parts of themselves allows people to access their imaginations and thereby perhaps experience a breakthrough or deepen their self-knowledge and understanding of others” (Bassett, 2000; Bassett, 2006).
The Set Up

*The Tempest Activity*

Investigate the context of these lines. What do they suggest might follow, after the end of the play?

Prospero: This thing of darkness I

    Acknowledge mine.            (Lines 275-276)

Prospero: And thence retire me to my Milan, where

    Every third thought shall be my grave.   (Lines 310-311)

Prospero: I’ll break my staff

    Bury it certain fadoms in th’ earth
    And deeper than did ever plummet sound,
    I’ll drown my book.   (Lines 54-57)

    Working in pairs, imagine one or two of the characters after several years and discuss what you think their lives might be like.

*The Tempest Rehearsal*

- Read Act V scene 1 and assign roles
- Begin Building Block One...look for changes of thought in the scene.
- Begin Building Block Three...What are the characters actions/objectives/obstacles
- Play with the scene and “drop in” the verbs/actions you have discovered

**Tips for Facilitators**

- Act V is really about tying up all lose ends in the story, but it is fun to use imagination and think about the lives of the characters after the play.
- There are other lines within this scene that foreshadow what life will be like upon return to Milan. Feel free to investigate those lines as well.
Questions

- How is magic used in this scene?
- What is Prospero saying about his future? And the future of others?
- What happens to Ariel?
- Describe the futures of the other characters? Where will they be?

Reflections

Building the bridge between theory and practice has always been of interest to me. In creating this program I have always tried to be aware of the importance of the experiences of those who will be teaching it and those who will be participating. In the end we are all on a journey of transformation, of seeking meaning and trying to find a way to move forward with that new information.

“What the dramatist and the teacher share, then, is a poetics, whether a poetics of drama or a poetics of pedagogy. Despite the differences in their mediums and goals, the dramatist and the teacher share the challenges that arise when we seek to compose designs that, when performed, will provoke both actors and spectators to learn more about their worlds and their ways of world making” (Rocklin, 1999, p.364).
Get ready for the day!

Goals

- The point of focus for today and for the next few days is about telling the story that we have discovered and mined through various activities and in rehearsal.

The Warm Up

Follow the Hand

- Split the group into pairs.
- Name each partner A or B. A must put his or her palm 5 inches or so from B’s face.
- Wherever A now puts his or her palm, B must follow, keeping the same distance from palm to face.
- A now takes B on a journey around the space. People must be aware of their partner’s capabilities and try to take them a little bit beyond them. Encourage people to use the vertical space as well as horizontal space.
- Swap over A and B, then change.

Tips for Facilitators

- Emphasize that the next few days are not about judging a performance, but more about what we are learning through performance, theatre and acting.
- Lines do not need to be memorized. The students can work with the book in hand.
Week Two
Day 9 Morning: The Nuts and Bolts

9:00am-10:30
Warm up Exercises

10:30am-10:45am
Break

10:45am-12:30pm
Review Act I scene 1

12:30pm-1:30pm
Lunch

Review Act I scene 1

- Arrange the class in a circle. The performance space is inside the circle with the class surrounding and witnessing the work as it is presented on its feet.

- This is a true 3D experience. For those who are not in the scene, either as characters or creating the storm keep them active by taking notes in their journals.

Questions

- Has there been any growth or changes since the last time we looked at this scene?
- Does this scene make more sense now than it did one week ago?
- What is the “story of the scene”? How high are the stakes for the characters?

Connections

As witnesses to a performance, or as a participant in a performance the potential power of the play is to reflect back to those watching a glimpse into their lives. To perhaps view a situation or a story that very well may mirror our own and see it from a place that is not necessarily passive, and yet honest in a way that we may not be able or willing to admit.

“Plays add the dimension of watching people engage with one another in ways that tend to reveal what is in their minds, thoughts and feelings that they might not be aware” (Taylor, 2000, p. 356).
Week Two
Day 9 Afternoon: The Nuts and Bolts

Review Act I scene 2
- Continue with the full 3D experience of the circle or arrange the class traditionally...clearly delineate between performance space and the space of the audience.

Tips for Facilitators
- You may find that arranging the space in a more traditional fashion may allow for some to take a more passive role. Be alert to those who may try to hide! Put don’t push....not all are interested in being performers.
- The benefit of a circle is that it allows for all to be seen...those who are performing and those who are witnessing the performance. And it was how the actors would have performed *The Tempest* in Shakespeare’s day.
Week Two
Day 9 Afternoon: The Nuts and Bolts

1:30pm-3:00pm
Review Act I scene 2

3:00pm-3:15pm
Break

3:15pm-4:30pm
Run through Scene 1 and 2

4:30 End of Day 9

Questions

- What is the story so far?
- What is the difference between how Prospero treats Caliban and the way he treats Miranda and Ariel?
- Is he fair? What is the cause of his unfairness?
- What do we learn about Caliban’s back story? Where does he come from? Who was his mother?
- What do we learn about Ariel? How does magic factor into the story so far?

Reflections

It is a challenge to cover the entire text of *The Tempest* from a performance perspective. So don’t feel as if you have to. Look for the key points of the scene and go from there. The main objective of the exercise is to give everyone in the class a feel or taste of what it is to “walk in the shoes” of these characters.

“Once you can admit to yourself that you simply won't cover the entire play, it becomes possible to start thinking of what happens when you only examine a very small piece of it, but in detail. Here it is that teachers are discovering what actors and directors find out on a daily basis, namely that the close scrutiny of small sections of text can produce extraordinary results” (Gilbert, p.602-603).
Get ready for the day!

- The point of focus for today and for the next few days is about telling the story that we have discovered. The story that we have mined through various activities and in rehearsal.
- Coming near the end of this program, the next few days are for going back over the play and reviewing what we have gleaned from the play so far.

The Warm Up

The Magnet!!

- Ask everyone to close their eyes and fold their arms in front of them with their hands covering their elbows. They then begin to move around the space slowly, no sound.
- The group leader calls out that the magnet is negative: if they collide with anyone they must back off quickly. Everyone tries to avoid touching anyone else.
- After a time the group leader calls out that the magnet is now positive: if anyone accidentally touches they must now stay stuck together for several seconds, still walking (people might have to end up walking backwards or sideways).
- After a while the group leader should say, “Stay stuck”. Participants should now stay stuck to anyone they touch, still walking. Will the whole group stick together?

Tips for Facilitators

- Emphasize safety and trust when engaging in this warm up exercise.
- Encourage and reward team work.
Review Act II scene 1

- Start including more theatrical elements into rehearsal. You have already started with the space, clearly defining the performance area from the audience space. How about costumes? And perhaps some props? Include the class in these decisions as well.

Questions

- The last time we saw Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio and Gonzalo they were on a ship in a storm. How did they get to the island?

- What are there relationships in terms of status? Alonso is the King of Naples so who are everyone else? How are they connected in terms of status?

- What are the implications of status in our everyday lives? What does status mean?

Connections

Status plays a huge role in Shakespeare's plays combining lower and higher class characters within the same scenes all the time. The grave digger scene in Hamlet is one example and King Lear's relationship with The Fool another.

“Many people will maintain that we don't play status transactions with our friends, and yet every inflection of the voice implies status. My answer is that acquaintances become friends when they agree to play status games together” (Johnstone, 1979, p.37).
Review Act II scene 2

- This scene introduces us to the comedic elements and characters of *The Tempest*.
- We are meeting Stephano and Trinculo for the first time...who are they?

Tips for Facilitators

- Encourage clowning and fun in this scene.
- Go back to some of the warm ups from earlier in the class...particularity the physical warm ups for ideas and thoughts on physical comedy.
Week Two
Day 10 Afternoon: The Nuts and Bolts

1:30pm-3:00pm
Review Act II Scene 2

3:00pm-3:15pm
Break

3:15pm-4:30pm
Run through scenes 1 and 2

4:30 End of Day 10

Questions

- Who are Stephano and Trinculo? Were they in Act I scene 1? Are they in King Alonso’s court?
- How do you mine the comedic elements within the text?
- What do you look for?
- What is the difference between the language of Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban? Is there a difference?
- What could that difference mean in terms of status?

Reflections

Are you giving time for students to reflect on the work and the experience so far? As human beings we can’t help but make meaning as we go through the hero’s journey also called life. What is the meaning being made as students explore Shakespeare through theatre?

“To get into another’s head-space requires some understanding or identification with how this character sees the world. What he/she is experiencing, how are they led to certain behaviours, does the character have other choices? Not surprisingly, engaging in this intimate way with ‘the other’ often leads the role player to experience a shift in their own perspectives” (Taylor, 2000, p.355).
Get ready for the day!

- Communication and creativity is the point of focus for today.
- Also...to listen to what we hear, building on trust, and vulnerability.

The warm up

The Interpreter

- Ask everyone to find themselves a partner and go with them to an area of the room as far from anyone else as possible.
- One person in each pair is going to tell their partner about something that has happened to them in their lives.
- The partner who has listened (the interpreter) can now ask the story-teller any question about the story. The story-tellers answer only the questions they choose to.
- After 20 minutes ask the interpreter, in turn to face the group and retell the story as if it had happened to themselves.

Tips for Facilitators

- Emphasize care and trust within this exercise.
- This exercise is about building trust, sharing perspectives, and experiencing a slice of the world from another’s perspective.
- In a circle, give each participant the opportunity to speak to the experience.
Review Act III scene 1

- Ah Love! This scene explores the romance, the themes of love and youth, in *The Tempest.*

**Questions**

- What is the story of Miranda and Ferdinand before this scene and within the scene itself?
- What are the obstacles that they face?
- What is Prospero’s perspective?

**Connections**

Theatre at its best is a collaborative art. Education can have collaborative echoes as well.

“One part of the work that you're really trying to get the students to do consists in their collaboration, as they try to figure out what to present. Discussion should produce argument about the scene itself, plus close attention to the text to see what images can be used for the exercise. The second part of the work comes in the full class discussion after the presentations” (Gilbert, 1984, p. 605).
Review Act III scene 2

- Another scene of comedy!
- An important key for this scene…What have Stephano and Trinculo been doing since last we saw them?

Tips for Facilitators

- Comedy can be very fun to do yet at the same time it can be scary and intimidating.
- Find a way to include the entire class in this scene for example: Can there be other character’s in the scene? Unnamed characters passing by? What would happen if you moved the scene to another location?
- Try telling the story of the scene as a class first. Look for the details in the text and what the objectives and obstacles of the characters are.
Questions

- How is status used in this scene? What is the value of analyzing status?
- What are Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban scheming? What are there intentions? The scene is a scene of comedy and can be very funny...but what are they actually trying to do?
- How can you incorporate movement in this scene? Or any of the neutral mask work that has been done so far?
- What are the actions found within the scene?

Reflections

Status and comedy are linked. Status is not merely confined as an exercise within the theatre, but taken from our real life experiences. It seems to be a matter of whether we are aware of it or not. The term itself can be confusing until it becomes clear that status is not necessarily what or who someone is, but what they are actually doing. In other words, a character of low status can be played as if high in status allowing those in the audience an insight into the contrast.

Charlie Chaplin was the kind of performer who “liked to play the person at the bottom of the hierarchy and then lower everyone” (Johnstone, 1979, p.36).

We in the audience enjoy this because it is fun to see the tramp become the boss and the boss become the tramp.
Get ready for the day!

- Coming near the end of this program we have been going over the play, scene by scene through performance and theatre. What have we been discovering so far?

The warm up

Excalibur

- Before the exercise begins you the instructor must decide how this exercise is to be resolved.
- Ask the group to imagine a giant stone with a sword sticking out of it in the middle of the room. The object of this exercise is to get the sword out of the stone.
- Ask each person in turn to act out how they would free the sword from the stone. They may use any method they want, including using others in the group and they must mime their attempt. Use of sound and language is acceptable.
- They will know they have achieved the objective when they find the solution to the problem when you give the signal!

Tips for Facilitators

- Be sure to set clear boundaries for the class as to what the rules of this activity are.
- This exercise is about the ensemble working together to find various strategies and ways in which to achieve the objective and overcoming the obstacles that are in their way.
Week Two
Day 12 Morning: The Nuts and Bolts

9:00am-10:30
Warm up Exercises
10:30am-10:45am
Break
10:45am-12:30pm
Review Act IV scene 1
12:30pm-1:30pm
Lunch

Review Act IV scene 1

- Act IV is filled with magical elements...the Gods literally make their presence known.

Questions

- What are the connections with this scene and classical mythology?
- Who are Ceres, Iris, and Juno? How do they serve the story?
- How is music and dance used in this scene?

Connections

How does one assess a performance? Theatre is a living art that exists in the moment and can change on a daily basis. This program is not necessarily meant to replace a conventional curriculum approach to the study of Shakespeare but rather to enhance it.

“If Shakespeare is only assessed by written examination then teaching and the assessment of pupil learning will be limited. Shakespeare's plays are, like all dramatic texts, a literary form and medium which are primarily meant to be experienced in performance and pupil's understanding should not be assessed solely through written responses, but also through using more appropriate methods, such as oral and dramatic presentations” (Batho, 2006, p.170).
Review Act V scene 1

- The wrap up scene. *The Tempest* is only one example of a Shakespeare play where all lose ends get tied up in one scene. Everything gets resolved in this scene, all plot lines and all characters in a sense get what is coming to them, either good or bad.

Tips for Facilitators

- Engage in a discussion about the themes present in *The Tempest*. Themes of love, loss, revenge, redemption, forgiveness, family...are there more?
- Explore with the class some of these themes and try to relate some of these themes back to their own lives. Are there differences? Are there similarities?
Week Two
Day 12 Afternoon: The Nuts and Bolts

1:30pm-3:00pm
Review Act V scene 1

3:00pm-3:15pm
Break

3:15pm-4:30pm
Run through Acts IV and V

4:30 End of Program!

Questions

- How does the story and various plot threads of The Tempest resolve?
- Are there any characters you relate to more than others?
- What was it like, telling the story from the perspective of the characters...in other words what was it like “to be” Prospero, Caliban, Miranda etc.?
- Has anything changed in you from when you began this program to now? If so what?
- How has the experience of transforming into these characters changed you?

Reflections

Going back to the original question I ask myself when developing this program, how can the study of Shakespeare through theatre and performance help a student make connections with the language and characters from plays written centuries ago? In fact is there any relevance or connection to be made at all? If I were to simplify and synthesize these question down to one question it would be “What do the arts do?

“The arts enable students to commit, and they do so by providing participants (teachers and students) with the chance to reflect on themselves and their world.” (Taylor, 2000, p.90).
Chapter 7

Conclusion and connections

The whole basis of theatre is one of transformation because it occurs on so many levels and in so many facets of the art. Actors transform themselves into other characters, other human beings that may or may not share a similar life perspective or a similar history. It certainly is easier to play a part that is closer to one’s self in terms of how you see the world, but the challenge and joy of an actor is to inhabit another skin for a time and be someone else…for a time.

The transformation takes place in other forms as well. Directors and designers transform a space into another space, depending on what the play itself requires. Directors and designers sometimes have to go very far in their imaginations to fully create a worlds that may be vaguely written. In both cases imagination plays a vital role and can be seen as a kick start to the transformation that is to take place. And then there is the transformation of the audience, those who witness the event (that can be a disorienting dilemma) and either passively or in some cases very actively become involved in the conditions of human nature that is being reflected back to them. Are they the same when they leave as when they walked into the theatre? Maybe and maybe not. I think in some cases it very well may depend on the person and if they are open to the possibility of change.

At its very best, the power of theatre lies in its ability to show us, from either a stylized form or a very domestic form, the full and complete range of what it means and what it is to be a human being. Insights and reflections into human nature and human depravity. That is the connection that needs to be made.

I have enjoyed creating this project and have further enjoyed researching this field and I take great comfort in the fact that I am not alone in my belief that these words, these plays have more than stood the test of time for a reason. These plays have outlived generations and will continue to do so for generations to come.
Shakespeare has often been labeled as boring and I have heard adults who come to performances expressing a fear of coming to the production in the first place because of a fear of not being able to follow the story, an inability to understand the language and feeling stupid as a result. No one should be afraid of Shakespeare. The plays are for everyone to enjoy and learn from regardless of age, class or cultural experiences. The plays are about what it is to be human. I used to hate Shakespeare. In grade nine having to read *The Merchant of Venice* was akin to getting teeth pulled with no pain relief. Shakespeare did not start to resonate for me until I began to see it.

The key point of this project is using drama and role play as a way of challenging a pre-existing perspective, and perhaps being open to the potential and possibility of literally trying on a new one. Not only will perspectives be challenged but an understanding of what it is that makes us different may very well unite us.

Shakespeare himself says, in Hamlet, that one of the functions of the actor is “to hold a mirror up to nature”. I think we need theatre for that very purpose because in many ways we can’t be objective to our lives. If our lives are films, and we are the stars, producers and directors of our films/lives, sometimes a reflection is important for us to see a different perspective. Within this project reflection can mean to literally be that mirror to nature, but also of importance is the self reflection necessary to make meaning and learn from the experience. The reflection that occurs with an audience witnessing a performance that may or may not “reflect” a moment or characterization of their own lives takes on an entirely new dimension. The complete and full investigation of literally walking in another person’s shoes can lead to dramatic changes or at the very least, a challenging of one’s own perspectives.
“Now my charms are all o’erthrown,
And what strength I have’s mine own”

Why is it important to study Shakespeare? What relevance can students find in the words of 400 year old plays? It is still my firm belief that Shakespeare is less a study of literature and more a study of the human condition. It could be argued that although the world has changed dramatically in 400 years with respect to culture, sciences, art, technology and our overall sense of how we as human beings fit into the universe, human behaviour remains a constant. Wars are still fought and atrocities are still committed on a daily basis. One only need look into a newspaper, turn on the television, or go online to discover that we have not changed much since the time of our ancestors in the Elizabethan era. Stories from the CBC could be directly lifted from the plots and storylines of the plays. A love affair gone bad here, a revolution there, a world leader deposed by the people he tyrannized for decades. How different is Ramzan Kadyrov, the leader of Chechnya, to Richard III?

This is why I believe in the importance of studying these plays. Not because they are considered canon and widely believed to be the greatest plays ever written, but because they are a perfect study of humanity, specifically what makes us who we are.

Shakespeare's poetry is an elegant articulation of the human condition, the relevance of which becomes more apparent if looked at through the lens of drama. There is a reason why his plays are studied and considered mandatory in the English curriculum and I believe that reason is because the themes found throughout the plays transcend time. And it is the responsibility of educators, in whatever capacity they can, to make the plays accessible and relevant for students in this time.
It has been said that the only way to know where you are going is if you acknowledge both where you came from and where you are. Governments come and go yet human nature remains a constant. When I think about how I look at the world with a twenty-first century lens into 400 years past, my initial instinct is to look at the people of that world as ancient and lacking in any kind of sophistication. But I am wrong to jump to that conclusion and I am wrong to judge. The people of that time were merely products of their own systems of power and governance and if we could go back and witness the past with our twenty first century perspective, I believe we would be shocked and forced to acknowledge that there is not much of a difference between us.

I think back to when I was a teenager and how lost I felt sometimes. The path was not always clear to me but I did find a way through theatre and later in life through Shakespeare’s plays. So perhaps, through this project, it is possible for other lost youths to find meaning and engagement the same way. The study of theatre and Shakespeare can became a kind of compass, a north star that one could turn to for comfort and shade in times of stress or difficulty.
“As you from crimes would pardoned be
Let your indulgence set me free”

I do not hate Shakespeare any more. Through the performance of Shakespeare and in my study of transformative learning I have gained a much deeper and richer understanding of who I am and what my place in the world is. I have challenged myself, I have accepted who I am as a person and I have moved passed barriers that at one time I thought were in passable. I know the kind of life I want to live and the kind of people that I want to live it with.
ACT I
SCENE I. On a ship at sea: a tempestuous noise
Off stage thunder and lightning heard.

Enter a Master and a Boatswain

Master
Boatswain!

Boatswain
Here, master: what cheer?

Master
Good, speak to the mariners: fall to', varely,
or we run ourselves aground: bestir, bestir.

Exit

Notes on Stanislavski Unit Breaks

- Begin with building in the unit breaks through Entrances and Exits.
- When a character enters into a scene that is the beginning of a new unit. When a character exits within the scene that is the end of a unit.
- Then look for changes of thought. When a character introduces a new idea a new unit has begun.
- Once the scene has been broken down into units apply appropriate verbs to each characters line. For example:

  Master
  To command  Boatswain!

  Boatswain
  To question  Here, master: what cheer?

- Unit breaks and applying verbs to the lines creates an emotional road map of the play for the actor and allows for clarity of story and objective.
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<td>To accuse</td>
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