

Ann Sidoti

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Teaching Drama in the Classroom

Drama Demonstration

Title: Born Under Bad Stars: Problem Solving & Resolving Conflict in *Romeo and Juliet*

Objectives: Students will use process drama to explore themes in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Students will use writing skills in response to process drama.

Students will use critical thinking skills in process drama.

Students will use problem-solving techniques in process drama.

Students will use cooperative learning groups in process drama.

Materials: Index Cards

White paper

Markers

Rings

Procedure:

Pretext: Conflict resolution/Solving problems

Stage 1:

Motivation:

*The teacher will grab the students' attention by asking the following question:

"What would you do if someone told you that you were forbidden to be with the person you love? Imagine what it would have been like for Romeo and Juliet."

*Students will be asked the big question: "What if Romeo and Juliet had lived at the end of the play?"

The teacher will continue by saying, "We have a major problem here, and we have to think about how to fix it. Remember, Romeo and Juliet are already married, so what is going to happen to them now that they are alive and well? What are their families going to think about this?"

***Split-half**

Students take on the role of citizens of Verona: either Capulets or Montagues

Make name cards

Teacher assumes the role of Escalus, Prince of Verona

***Warm-up activity**

Teacher presents Romeo and Juliet's wedding rings to the citizens

Citizens pass rings around room and say the first thing that comes to mind

Stage 2:

*Town meeting between the citizens who are Capulets and Montagues without the presence of Romeo, Juliet, or their parents

*Prince Escalus, leads the students into the drama by serving as the mediator: "We have a serious problem because the children of these two sworn enemies are married. As the Prince of Verona, I need your help in reaching a decision about what we should do."

*Students voice opinions in role of citizens

*Write a letter in role to the King of Verona (Escalus' father) telling him what he needs to do about the situation (Teacher will collect, to be used later)

Stage 3:

*Tableaux

*Picture of the citizens to be on the front page of The Verona Daily News tomorrow

*Students will pose themselves and FREEZE for the picture.

*Students will be tapped, and must say the first thing on their mind.

*"Unfreeze" and return to seat

Stage 4:

*Escalus announces that Lord Capulet and Lord Montague have arrived

*Answer questions that the audience asks them

*Escalus pulls our rings: "Do you think we could help the kids salvage their marriage?"

Stage 5:

*In *The Verona Daily Times* editorial room

*Teacher, in role as editor in chief, announces that she has "been given" the letters written by the citizens to the King.

*Students, in role as the staff, needs to decide which letters to publish.

*Questions to consider: Do we leave the letters the way they are, or do we turn them into headlines (tabloid info)?

Assessment:

Students will be assessed based on whether or not they are participating in the drama activity. One method is to see whether or not the students wrote a letter. Another would be to see if the students are staying in role. If the students are concentrating on the drama and not letting outside things get in the way, then they will be successful. I would probably have a more formal method of assessment, ie. essay, test, etc., after completing the entire drama structure. With just a small episode, I think formal assessment is difficult.

Rationale:

The reason I created this episode is because I know that teaching Shakespeare can be difficult for students. Many students need to go beyond the text in order to understand some of the major themes and hidden meanings in the play. Process drama is an effective tool in guiding students through problem-solving and conflict resolution techniques. I would like to use this as a starting point for a longer drama structure. I feel as though I was limited in this drama demonstration because I have so much information related to this topic. It took me a while to get the wheels spinning in my head, but once I got going, I couldn't stop. I know that there are many ways that I can change this drama demonstration in the future.

The context/situation that I used is how students can learn how to solve problems related to romantic and family relationships. I know that many of my students are going through awkward times in their lives and need some guidance for typical teenage issues. I think that this lesson will help answer some of their questions without singling out any particular student. This will create a "safe" atmosphere for my students. I will use this lesson with my 9th grade Language Arts students, however, I think it can be used in middle school, too.

After receiving guidance from some of my classmates, I created this drama demonstration on my own. I did not model my demonstration after any of the specific structures in the book. I did, however, use some of the techniques I have practiced in class so far this semester. My complete drama structure project will contain elements from different resources.

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