Audience Engagement in Theatre for Young Audiences: Teaching Artistry to Cultivate Tomorrow's Theatre-Goers

Julie Woods-Robinson
University of Central Florida

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AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT IN THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES:
TEACHING ARTISTRY TO CULTIVATE TOMORROW’S THEATRE-GOERS

by

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B.F.A. New York University, 2006

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts
in the Department of Theatre
in the College of Arts and Humanities
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term
2018
ABSTRACT

As a teaching artist and theatre educator, I believe an important part of the theatre-going experience is when an audience engages with the play before and after the performance: learning about context, analyzing the production, and identifying themes relevant to the play. Theatre is a powerful teaching tool with regards to empathy and political and social awareness, but also, for young audiences, theatre can help students understand content in other subject areas like language arts, history, and even health. This thesis develops best practices for creating effective audience engagement with young people in theatre in the form of Field Trip Plus at Orlando Repertory Theatre, an enrichment program linking professional season productions to pre- and post-show workshops. It explores the following questions: What is audience engagement, and what are the benefits of audience engagement practices on retention and meaning-making? What is the history of audience engagement in Theatre for Young Audiences, and what are some examples of TYA companies intentionally engaging young people before and after performances? It focuses specifically on the development of Theatre-In-Education in the United Kingdom as an example of integrated drama and education practice which is supported by the pedagogy of Lev Vygotsky, Dorothy Heathcote, and Augusto Boal. It considers how the work of these theorists can also be applied to Field Trip Plus. This thesis is the personal exploration of a teaching artist practicing engagement strategies within Orlando Repertory Theatre, an established Theatre for Young Audiences, that will help young people make connections between state education standards and the play, cultivate their curiosity for learning through the arts, and become life-long active audience members.
For Jordan, Olivia, and Elliot Woods-Robinson, who are the grounding forces of my life.

You are the reason I create. You are the reason I teach. It is only because of your love that I have the power to change the world.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to give special thanks to all the people who have helped me throughout my graduate career and along this thesis journey.

Thank you to the staff of Orlando Repertory Theatre, especially to Jennifer Adams and Emily Freeman, whose confidence in me has not only afforded me the chance to work on Field Trip Plus but has also nurtured me as an artist and a leader in the field. Thank you for your guidance and your friendship throughout this process.

Thank you to the faculty of the Theatre for Young Audiences M.F.A. program. You have shaped the theatre artist that I am today, and for that, I am truly grateful. Thank you, Vandy, for always being available to listen to my fears and concerns. Thank you, Julia, for your passion for writing and research which has awoken my academic passion after years of being set aside. Thank you, Sybil, for helping us fly. Thank you, Elizabeth, for your leadership, your drive, and the inspiration you give me, whether that be as a director, a teacher, a writer, or a researcher.

Thank you to my committee, Elizabeth, Vandy, and Be, who have been my cheerleaders throughout this exploration.

Most of all, thank you to the remaining three of the Core Four: Maria, Leah, and Michelle. I could not have imagined a more perfect set of women to have walked this road with. Everything we have accomplished, everything we have learned, we have done it together. I simply could not have made it through this journey without you, and I will be forever changed from knowing you. Thank you for your unending friendship and your constant support.
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>AWTY</td>
<td><em>Are We There Yet?</em> by Jane Heather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWTY-CURA</td>
<td><em>Are We There Yet?</em> Community-University Research Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orlando REP</td>
<td>Orlando Repertory Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCYPT</td>
<td>Standing Conference of Young People’s Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIE</td>
<td>Theatre in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYA</td>
<td>Theatre for Young Audiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

What does remain of a theatrical experience in us when the experience is over? In
the short run, what remains is a confusion of sensations, impressions and half-
thoughts, bits of dialogue, moments of acting, strong visual images, lights,
sounds, a sense of atmosphere and mood, a physical memory of the play’s energy,
and, overall, a blurred but vivid sense of occasion. But what remains in the long
run? That is, I think, the essential question we have to ask if we want to
understand how the theatre teaches. (Levy 24-25)

Positioning Myself Within the Research

My personal history with audience engagement began as a graduate student and a
researcher. In 2015, during a class on Dramatic Literature for Children, I encountered Theatre for
Young Audiences scripts for the first time that were challenging, interesting, and deep. The
characters in these plays faced real-life dilemmas—dilemmas that young people face every day
or fear that they will face. Scripts like The Yellow Boat by David Saar and The Wrestling Season
by Laurie Brooks showed me the value of young people being exposed to a play in which they
saw themselves reflected accurately. Through reading The Yellow Boat, a story about a young
boy facing his fear of death, and The Wrestling Season, an allegory about the complicated web of
high-school relationships and rumors, I understood that there is a real opportunity with these
scripts, and others, to create change in the minds of young people and to teach them social and
emotional skills through theatre (Saar 605-668, Brooks 775-830, 2005).
Until that class, I had approached TYA as an educator and teaching artist who was primarily concerned with teaching young people how to act and create theatre. After that class, I started to consider what it means to produce theatre for young audiences, as well. I wondered about the responsibility that we hold as TYA artists when producing beautiful and emotional plays like the ones listed above. Does our audience in TYA require more guidance than a general theatre audience? Should we make a special effort to help young people navigate challenging material presented in a play? How can TYA theatres enhance an audience’s interaction with a text by placing it inside a broader curriculum designed to unpack the themes and initiate dialogue?

I became obsessed with the notion that a TYA theatrical experience did not need to stop with the play. It could include activities outside of the performance itself that complement the play and increase its educational value by directly engaging with young people, whether that be immediately before or after the performance or well in advance of or well after the production. I call these “extra-theatrical activities.” I studied the efforts of early productions of The Yellow Boat and The Wrestling Season to engage young people in contextual activities and active analysis before and after the show. I longed to design whole theatre experiences like this for young people, too.

Early in my exploration, I had the opportunity to create extra-theatrical experiences when I served as Education Coordinator for Writes of Spring. Writes of Spring is an annual writing competition for students from kindergarten to the twelfth-grade conducted through Orlando Repertory Theatre, in Orlando, Florida. The winning entries are turned into a play which is produced by Orlando REP for a public audience. I was tasked with helping teachers and students
connect the writing prompt to their classroom curriculum at the beginning of the competition, in the fall of 2016. I created “pre-show” style workshops, workshops that delved into the theme through exploratory activities, and offered them pro-bono to school groups. The workshops, however, did not gain much traction. Teachers said that they were interested, but they found a hard time making room for them in their school schedules.

Still determined to foster dialogue on the theme, I turned to the public performance of *Writes of Spring* as an opportunity to engage with the winning students and the rest of the audience. With fellow graduate student and *Writes of Spring* coordinator Maria Katsadouros, we designed a lobby full of interactive and, we hoped, dialogue-inducing activities for the audience to explore before the performance. Our goal was to make the pre-show period a time of active reflection on the theme of the writing competition that year: “Voice Your Choice: How do you use your freedom of speech?” We asked audience members to test their own knowledge on the American right to free speech; we invited them to listen to a video of students talking about what free speech means to them; and we asked audience members to recall at what age they started to realize the power of their own voice. (See Appendix A for examples of the lesson plans and lobby engagements that we designed for *Writes of Spring* 2017.) Audiences were excited to participate in the activities and to celebrate the thought-process behind the winning students writing entries. The success of the evening fueled my desire to create more experiences like this one, but how does one do that for a production outside of the context of a writing competition?

After *Writes of Spring*, I directed a production of *Puddin’ and the Grumble*, book and lyrics by Becky Boesen and music by David von Kampen, at the University of Central Florida. *Puddin’ and the Grumble* is a TYA play that exposes the problem of food scarcity in working
families and in our school systems. This play is a powerful story about a young girl who is not only plagued by hunger but also by the difficulty of reaching out for help, and our team felt strongly that we wanted to connect with students to discuss some sort of call-to-action after the play. Indeed, it felt incomplete to leave right after the performance without finishing the community discussion that the play had started.

With my graduate cohort and faculty advisor, we partnered with Second Harvest Food Bank, a food aid organization in Orlando, Florida, and toured the production to elementary school audiences. We had big plans to create a pre-show experience with an interactive Q & A, to end the performance with the participatory creation of a canned food sculpture, and then to follow the performance with breakout groups and workshops during which students could devise a solution to the food problem in their community. We were almost always able to begin the show with a brief contextual introduction by the experts from Second Harvest Food Bank, but, unfortunately, a few minutes at the beginning of the show seemed to be all the time we could manage to secure from the schools. Even with the backing of a community partner, it was still difficult to get schools to give us the adequate time to facilitate pre- or post-show engagements.

After one performance, I journaled about the frustration of this struggle:

The students craved…I craved… an after-performance opportunity for them to interact with the cast and the team… It ended so abruptly it’s like we only had time to say ‘hello’ and not ‘goodbye.’ We interrupted their school day and didn’t have a chance to let them debrief or put [the play] in the context of their own lives. (Appendix B)
I wondered if some sort of tour/workshop hybrid would be a better course of action for a school tour. Would it be more appealing to school administrators to keep the whole experience in one space and at one time? Is an interactive model preferable to pre- and post-show workshops? I wondered, how can we reposition this work so that students will benefit from it and schools will prioritize it?

As I was grappling with how a performance can feel incomplete without extra-theatrical experiences to engage students in interactive learning, the opportunity arose to start Field Trip Plus. In the spring of 2017, I was approached by Jennifer Adams, the Education Director at Orlando Repertory Theatre, to design and develop pre- and post-show workshops that would complement Orlando REP’s professional season productions. The program, called Field Trip Plus, was intended to supplement field trips made to the theatre by school groups. A teaching artist would visit those schools during the weeks before and after their field trip to facilitate arts integration activities that would connect the play and the theatre-going experience to other subject areas and education standards in the classroom. Finally, I thought, a way into the schools! Orlando REP has a strong reputation with schools from their field trip program and in-school arts residencies. Now, I had the chance to create pre- and post-show workshops that would actually make it into the schools, each with a full fifty-minute lesson plan. Field Trip Plus also came with the added responsibility of creating workshops for every show in the season, not just the socially or emotionally heavy ones. I had to consider what the educational hook would be for each show and how I could teach that concept through drama.

I set out to create a program that would cultivate young theatre-goers who ask questions of the plays that they see, of themselves, and of their world. I hoped to increase the impact of
theatre on these young people and to help them exercise the skills that active audience members use when making meaning out of a performance. This paper is an exploration of how to engage young audiences in an effective conversation about theatre. I seek to provide theoretical and historical support for my work as a teaching artist who creates curriculum that helps young people engage with theatre.

Methodology

At first, I was unsure which avenue I wanted to pursue in my research of audience engagement. I had experimented with two different types of audience engagement strategies throughout my graduate career: lobby engagement and supplemental pre- and post-show workshops. (At one time during this exploration, I created fully interactive pre- and post-show lobby displays for a production at the University of Central Florida of 26 Pebbles by Eric Ulloa, a play about the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in 2012.) Public lobby displays and private workshops existed under the same umbrella in my head because both involve identifying an educational hook and creating activities that guide the audience to begin a dialogue on the themes of the play. The practical applications of each, however, are very different. Lobby engagement strategies are often linked to a public exploration of the themes and are sometimes part of a greater strategy including talk-backs, director show notes, and the like. The workshop model is more pointedly connected to teaching strategies for smaller, private or school groups. In a workshop, lesson plans are longer and more in-depth than lobby engagement. In my research, I even found some companies doing a third type of audience engagement: using participatory elements within the performance, creating something much more akin to a
performance/workshop hybrid. Through gathering accounts of audience engagement practices, I identified three core types of audience engagement: performance enhancements—those that occur \textit{at} the performance event, participatory theatre—engagement strategies that occur \textit{during} the show, and pre- and post-show workshops—engagement in separately curated workshop sessions (see Figure 1).

\textbf{Figure 1:} An explanation of the components of three types of Audience Engagement
Source: Julie Woods-Robinson, 2018

Although, I am interested in and my work is informed by a combination of these models for audience engagement, for the purposes of this paper, I focus on the third model: pre- and
post-show workshops, specifically those that I wrote and facilitated for Field Trip Plus at Orlando REP. To arm myself with all the information necessary to create effective pre- and post-show workshops, I start my exploration addressing the question: What is audience engagement and why do it? For this answer, I explore the relationship between the theatre and its audience, through scholars like Susan Bennett and Jeanne Klein, and examine the findings of Intrinsic Impact, a 2011 study by Wolf Brown on the effectiveness of audience engagement.

Next, I ask: what is the history of audience engagement in TYA, and what are some examples of TYA companies focusing intentionally on directly engaging young audiences? I revisit Metro Theater Company’s production of *The Yellow Boat* and The Coterie’s original production of *The Wrestling Season*, as well as the groundbreaking work of the Concrete Theatre Company in Alberta, Canada on their participatory play *Are We There Yet?* I consider the question, how are these models different from Field Trip Plus? Then, I reference Emilie FitzGibbon’s guidelines for the differences between pre- and post-show content, and examine how they can be useful in my development of Field Trip Plus.

Directed by my research, I then turn to the Theatre-In-Education movement that began in the 1960s in the United Kingdom. I explore the historical roots of Theatre-In-Education as an ideal model of direct school engagement with theatrical productions, and examine the question, what does it mean to serve the dual objectives of theatre companies and schools when using school time for theatre workshops? Of all the examples of audience engagement that I explore in this paper, TIE is the most supported by educational and social theory. In his book *Theatre In Education in Britain*, Roger Wooster identifies three major theorists who contributed to the development of and legitimization of Theatre-In-Education: Lev Vygotsky, Dorothy Heathcote,
and Augusto Boal. I examine their theories in detail in Chapter Four and consider the following questions: How are these theories used in TIE, and how can they help support the work that I do in Field Trip Plus?

Finally, I use Reflective Practitioner Research throughout an entire season at Orlando Repertory Theatre as I create, facilitate, and revise workshops for Field Trip Plus. I implement the strategies from my research on audience engagement and TIE in my pre- and post-show lesson plans, collect a list of best practices based on my research, and consider my next steps as a teaching artist continually searching to improve and refine my praxis.

Limitations of this Research

It is important to acknowledge there are some limitations to this research. First, I am only drawing from companies in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. This is simply due to the availability of research on TYA companies who are creating extra-theatrical activities to maximize the educational value of theatre. I am also operating under the assumption, from my personal experience, that many other countries around the world who are active in the field of TYA enjoy the luxury of art for art’s sake. Beth Juncker, a Danish TYA practitioner, writes in *TYA, Culture, Society: International Essays on Theatre for Young Audiences* that “the meaning of [TYA] is *not* to contribute to the schools’ formal teaching, *not* even to teach children about art. The meaning is to make laughter bubble, to make the roof of the theatre symbolically rise, to make tears burst, to make silence noisy” (Juncker 15). Even in the U.K., there is a socially understood value placed on the experience of cultural events for people of any age. I find that, however, American TYA companies are often fighting to prove their educational value to their
primary booking agents: schools. For this reason, I believe that it is important to study extended educational experiences and the value they can provide to these organizations.

Second, in keeping with Reflective Practitioner Research, my examination only focuses on my own perceived successes within the lesson plans. Due to research restrictions, I do not have qualitative evidence from the students themselves. I, as the researcher, had no control over which schools participated in Field Trip Plus and was unable to ensure the diversity of the population of students participating in the program. The determinant factors were two-fold: in the pilot program, the school was determined by Orlando REP, and for the rest of the following season, the participants were simply determined by which schools contacted Orlando REP to book workshops after receiving the informational email from the Field Trip Coordinator. Future plans for the program include a research study that will evaluate the effectiveness of the workshops by soliciting direct feedback from the students who participated in Field Trip Plus and comparing it with that of those who attended the performance but did not participate in the workshops.

Instead, in this document, I offer a best-practices approach for myself and other teaching artists to consider when writing pre- and post-show workshops. It is also important to note, however, that although my experimentation spans a full year in the program, it is only a year. The goal of Field Trip Plus is to create a lasting program utilizing multiple teaching artists, and, while these best practices reflect my research at this current juncture, they will continue to evolve and grow over time.
Additional Questions

As my conclusion will reveal, the engagement strategies from my research contributed a lot of clarity to the development of Field Trip Plus. I created a list of working best practices that can help teaching artists write effective lesson plans for pre- and post-show workshops. As I look towards the future, however, I have additional questions about which audience engagement strategy is the best. What does “best” mean? Most effective at increasing student learning? Most attractive to teachers and schools? Most practical? All three? Also, how can TYA companies engage family and public audiences, in addition to school audiences? There is still a lot of work to do in my own quest to provide audience engagement, but Field Trip Plus has given me the opportunity to refine my practice as a teaching artist and program writer and to think intentionally about the design and purpose of audience engagement for young people.
CHAPTER TWO: THEATRE AND THE AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE

We walked into a crowded theatre—myself, my two-year-old son, my four-year-old daughter, and her best friend. The crowd was bustling with excitement, and I was already prepared for the big job of wrangling three toddlers with their myriad of snack and bathroom needs while we sat through a long show. The show was Newsies, the Disney musical by Harvey Fierstein about newsboys at the turn of the century who went on strike because they were being manipulated out of their rightful salary by powerful newspaper men. I thought, surely, that my little group would be excited by the singing and the dancing that the show would provide, but I found myself inundated with questions: “Why are those men so mad? Why are the boys so mad? What are they fighting for? Why did they send that boy away? What is a ‘settlement house’?” and on and on they went. It turns out that my young ones spent most of the show hungry for context! Their questions started me thinking about how, although this was a high-quality theatre experience, to my children, it was just a wash of stimuli, and the overall effect was confusion. They made no connections to the powerful message of the show that young people can take ownership over their voice and use it to affect change in their communities. My children felt the tension onstage, but it only caused them to worry, not understand. How could I help my children connect with this show?

This experience as a parent in the theatre reminded me of the importance of audience engagement. In this chapter, I will explore the definition and benefits of audience engagement and consider how one company is using audience engagement regularly in their practice.
What is Audience Engagement?

Bertolt Brecht famously wrote in his essay “Emphasis on Sport” that “a theatre which makes no contact with the audience is a nonsense” (7). Audience engagement is when a theatre “makes contact” with their audience. Brecht makes a passionate claim that if theatre is not making a lasting impact on and engaging with the audience, then there is no point to the theatre at all. Indeed, history does not disagree with him. As far as back Greek festivals, theatre was primarily a storytelling art form with active engagement from the audience, who ultimately voted on the winners of festival competitions. In her book Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception, scholar Susan Bennett writes that the creation of private theatres in the seventeenth century began a cultural shift away from the communal atmosphere of Greek festival theatre. Bennett writes that audiences became “increasingly passive and increasingly bourgeois” with the advent of indoor professional theatre as we know it today (3). Since Brecht, who experimented with tearing down the passive and the bourgeois elements of theatre in his day, many theatre companies have continued to strive to get audiences actively involved in the theatre once more through audience engagement. I define audience engagement as the perceived involvement of audience members at a play: Are they invested in the story? Do they respond enthusiastically when appropriate? Are they discussing the themes of the play afterwards?

Researcher Jeanne Klein puts it another way. She classifies audience members into two types. There is the ritualistic viewer who seeks entertainment by watching theatre “passively out of habit, although their minds are still quite actively processing information,” and there is the instrumental viewer who “actively seek[s] further education by expecting to learn social information of specific interest to their personal identit[y], in relation to characters’ dramatized
situations” (Klein 44). The ritualistic viewer is the type of audience member to whom Brecht was so vehemently opposed. Conversely, the instrumental viewer is the type of audience member theatre makers try to cultivate through audience engagement strategies.

Why Engage Audiences?

What is the value of actively trying to engage audiences? Why should theatres create extra-theatrical experiences, as I call them in the introduction to this paper? In 2011, the research firm Wolf Brown conducted a major study in the United States called Intrinsic Impact to evaluate audience engagement in the San Francisco Bay Area and to answer this very question. The value of pre- and post-show engagement can be seen through the survey results from Intrinsic Impact. The study’s final report by Alan Brown and Rebecca Ratzkin, Making Sense of Audience Engagement, reports that seven out of ten people surveyed believe that “benefitting from arts experiences often requires a great deal of contextualization and interpretation” (18). The argument for contextualization is that audience members will get more out of a theatrical experience if they have access to some background information on the play before they see it.

Brown and Ratzkin point to Nello McDaniel and George Thorn’s “Learning Consciousness Framework” to identify the benefits they saw resulting from audience engagement efforts: 1) creating public value, 2) promoting relationships, 3) highlighting relevance, 4) supporting meaning making, 5) unifying programming, and 6) defining and measuring success (14). Although each of these benefits mean something different to each theatre company depending on the overall structure of their audience engagement, I can measure
the success of Field Trip Plus against whether the program, by its structure, inherently achieves any of these benefits. I believe that the program is structured to address four of the above measures of success (see Table 1).

### Table 1: A comparison between the "Learning Consciousness Framework" and Field Trip Plus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEASURES OF SUCCESS IN FIELD TRIP PLUS</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Creates Public Value</td>
<td>Field Trip Plus does not currently add to the public value of the performances at Orlando REP as it is limited to the school groups who book and pay for the workshops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Promotes Relationships</td>
<td>It promotes relationships between schools and the theatre. It also promotes relationships between the students in the audience as they work together in collaborative activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Highlights Relevance</td>
<td>It highlights the relevance of each play by pointing to Florida state education standards that are addressed in the plays and explored in depth through the workshops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Supports Meaning Making</td>
<td>It supports meaning making directly in the workshops when students are guided through activities that help them find and articulate the meaning of the play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Unifies Programming</td>
<td>It unifies programming by providing a link between the work of the Education Department and the Production Department, making a seamless connection between the thematic explorations of the season and the education initiatives making their ways into schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Defines and Measures Success</td>
<td>There is not currently a measure in place to evaluate the success of the program, but student surveys are a part of future planning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Julie Woods-Robinson, 2018; adapted from *Making Sense of Audience Engagement* (Brown and Ratzkin 14)
In addition to simply professing the importance of audience engagement, Brown and Ratzkin identify a few productive strategies. One key, they write, to successful audience engagement is “getting people in touch with their own powers of perception” (Brown and Ratzkin 18). Beyond providing audiences with the information they need to know, it is important to help them think about how to make meaning through what they perceive happening in the play. Brown and Ratzkin also conclude that, during the post-show processing period, it is helpful to offer engagements that are both social and solitary—active and passive—to allow for different types of learners to process in their own way (25). The research suggests that the “level of impact that an audience member derives from an arts experience can be dramatically affected through his or her participation in meaning-making activities or self-guided reflection” (Brown and Ratzkin 19).

What follows is an account of a dance/theatre company whose multi-pronged approach to engagement programming provides an example of how a theatre company can use audience engagement to achieve all six benefits identified by Brown and Ratzkin. Ballet Austin, in Austin, Texas, utilizes integrated audience engagement strategies in their practice that are both solitary and social, provide contextualization, and awaken the powers of perception.

Closing the Gap: Audience Engagement at Ballet Austin

Starting in 2015, Ballet Austin began participating in the Building Audiences for Sustainability initiative, with the support of the Wallace Foundation (Decker). Prior to this, Ballet Austin reported strong ticket sales to traditional, familiar, narrative ballets like The Nutcracker and Swan Lake, but the company was having a hard time filling seats for their new
works. What began as an audience development initiative to create sustainability for new and unfamiliar work ended up yielding some unexpected results.

Julie Loignon, Director of Audience Engagement for Ballet Austin, explains in a video on the project produced by New York Public Media that the company had been “under the assumption that people gradually warm up to new and non-narrative work” (Hercules, dir.). Ballet Austin argued, if audiences were being exposed to ballet through something safe and familiar like The Nutcracker, that was enough grow their audiences for the rest of the season. What they found, however, was that audiences did not necessarily move from attending traditional performances to attending performances of new work; there was no “continuum” along which audiences grew in their knowledge of and relationship to ballet (Decker). They found, through market research, that audiences felt uncomfortable and/or unqualified to attend and enjoy the ballet in general. It wasn’t about the newness of the work; they didn’t feel at home at the ballet at all. They didn’t have enough knowledge to make meaning out of what they were seeing.

Associate Artistic Director Michelle Martin believes that Ballet Austin’s results can be understood by looking at it through the lens of fear:

The idea of familiarity [with new works] seems to imply that people need more information… whereas an uncertainty is much more personal. You can give somebody a lot of information, but that’s not necessarily going to reassure them that they’re going to belong in that audience, that they’re going to be able to engage with [and enjoy] that material. (Hercules, dir.)
Executive Director Cookie Ruiz calls it a “gap of uncertainty” (Hercules, dir.). Ballet Austin was looking to close that gap, and they found that they needed to create audience engagements that addressed both the intellectual and social comfort of their audiences to enhance their overall experience.

Ballet Austin has since implemented several engagements to tackle this problem. They started live-streaming portions of rehearsal, a program called “Ballet Live!” to let audiences understand ahead of time what they can expect at the ballet. They also implemented pre-show information sessions with the Community Education Director for audiences who would like a more technical and detailed knowledge of the work. Most excitingly, they premiered “Ballet-O-Mania!” In an article on The Wallace Foundation’s website, author Andrew Decker describes Ballet-O-Mania! as an interactive, high-tech exhibition that is open one-hour before the show and at intermission. It includes music listening stations, interactive tablets with information about featured composers, a table displaying common shoes and other materials used by dancers, and an actual ballet floor where an associate ballet dancer acts as instructor for any audience members who would like to test their hand (or foot, as it were) as a dancer. The last is “an especially popular feature with young girls, much to their parents’ delight” (Decker). Ballet-O-Mania! is a public educational experience, somewhat like a workshop, but also like a fair with different booths and displays. Responses from Ballet Austin’s patrons tell them that the social element of the event is significant in enhancing their overall experience and comfort level as patrons. Ballet Austin’s multi-pronged approach allows them to bring the benefits of audience engagement outlined by Brown and Ratzkin to their audience members (see Table 2).
### Table 2: A comparison between the "Learning Consciousness Framework" and Ballet Austin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEASURES OF SUCCESS AT BALLET AUSTIN</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Creates Public Value</td>
<td>They create public value by offering Ballet-O-Mania! to the general audience at no extra cost. During this program, they are increasing public knowledge about a highly-refined art form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Promotes Relationships</td>
<td>They promote relationships between audience members with the social nature of Ballet-O-Mania!, structured like a pre-show party or a festival. They are also offering a happy hour in a separate lobby for patrons who would like to increase the social experience of the ballet without attending Ballet-O-Mania!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Highlights Relevance</td>
<td>Pre-show information sessions with the Community Engagement Director and Ballet-O-Mania! both help to highlight the relevance of a ballet to everyday life and to the current season at Ballet Austin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Supports Meaning Making</td>
<td>Pre-show information sessions with the Community Engagement Director help audience members learn how to read a ballet performance for symbolism and story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Unifies Programming</td>
<td>They unify programming across different departments with these audience engagement initiatives. They collaborate between production, development, education, and community engagement to facilitate the messaging that brings context to their ballets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Defines and Measures Success</td>
<td>Ballet Austin is actively engaged in defining and measuring success through their research study with the Wallace Foundation to increase audience engagement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Julie Woods-Robinson, 2018; adapted from *Making Sense of Audience Engagement* (Brown and Ratzkin 14)
Decker reports that so far, over two separate three-day runs, Ballet-O-Mania! has seen close to 1,000 engaged visitors for each production (Decker). In her video interview, Ruiz refers to this as cultivating the “social-emotional connection” to the ballet (Hercules, dir.). The goal of Ballet Austin’s Ballet-O-Mania! is to induct audience members into an appreciation of an art form that is generally concerned to be exclusive and quite refined. They provided audiences the information they needed to understand and appreciate the show. In the end, Ballet Austin’s audience engagement efforts have translated to increased sales at the box office and a larger community of people actively participating as audience members of the ballet.

Reflection

As I try to relate the work being done at Ballet Austin back to my work as a TYA artist, I am drawn to the idea of “inducting” audience members. Ballet Austin struggled with general audiences that did not feel like they belonged at the ballet nor that they understood how to interpret what they were seeing. Many children have their first interaction with theatre through a TYA company, and they need to be inducted into an appreciation of theatre in the same way that Ballet Austin’s audience needed to be inducted into an appreciation of ballet. If TYA artists want to engage young people in active participation in the theatre, they must first introduce young people to effective ways to talk and learn about theatre. In the next chapter, I will explore the history of audience engagement in TYA and look to examples of other TYA companies who are engaging young people for inspiration to use in Field Trip Plus.
CHAPTER THREE: AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT IN TYA

As many teachers have learned, merely working with plays that might somehow relate to students’ lives does not automatically result in a shift in understanding about the world or a change in behavior. We must deliberately help students find connections between what happens onstage and what happens in the world. This transfer of insights from a class or production to a student’s life and vice versa is a goal of both drama and formal theatre and must be facilitated by a skilled teacher-director. (Lazarus 156)

My experience with Newsies in Chapter Two is a microcosm of many young peoples’ relationship to the theatre. Admittedly, Newsies is not generally intended for children as young as mine, but luckily they were in the presence of a teacher and theatre maker who took the time to discuss the play with them: What did they observe? What did they think the story of the play was about? Why would the theatre want to show this play? These are all questions that theatre makers inherently ask when they create or produce a play.

As I had this discussion with my children, I began to wonder what other children, regardless of their age, were taking away from the same production. Were school groups, for instance, able to leave with an understanding of the power of a young person’s voice or were they swept away in the excitement of it all? Were their parents and teachers encouraging them to reflect on the play? What is our responsibility, for any production, as TYA practitioners, to guide the conversations young people are having before and after they see our plays?
In this chapter, I will explore how pre- and post-show activities arm young people with the tools to process a piece of theatre. What evidence is there that audience engagement works in TYA? What models are other TYA companies using? How can I use this information in my practice in Field Trip Plus?

**Increasing the Cultural Capital of Young Audiences**

Each audience member brings their own cultural capital to the theatre. By this, I mean they come to any theatre piece with their own understanding of the subject matter, their own familiarity with theatre as an art form, and their own set of life experiences that affect how they will interpret and receive the performance. For general theatre audiences, one might assume a certain base level of knowledge about the theatre, but in TYA, young audiences are in the process of building up their cultural capital. This will provide the basis for their future involvement as life-long audience members in the theatre.

**Theatre-Active Versus Theatre-Restricted Schools**

In *Young Audiences, Theatre and the Cultural Conversation*, researchers Kate Donelan and Richard Sallis conducted a research study of two groups of Australian school children. In their study, one group of students came from “theatre restricted” schools—schools with little access to arts programming (Donelan and Sallis 67). These students saw a piece of theatre without any prior contextualization. The other group came from “theatre active” schools—schools with lots of access to arts programming (Donelan and Sallis 67). They saw the same
piece of theatre after participating in a theatre class that prepared them for the experience. Donelan and Sallis’ study highlights the fact that, because young people come with different levels of cultural capital, teachers “play a vital role in inducting young people into professional live theatre” (65-66). They showed, through documented student comments, that there is a direct correlation between the level of students’ engagement with and appreciation of a theatrical performance and the amount of preparation they received from their teacher and their school.

Students from theatre-restricted schools often felt “inadequate and alienated” and “lacked a cultural framework and conceptual language to make sense of a theatre experience they found inaccessible and irrelevant” (Donelan and Sallis 67). These students reported perceptions of the performance like “I thought it was boring. I don’t know why…” and “I just didn’t get it” (Donelan and Sallis 67). These students did not feel like they belonged in the theater. One student commented, “I feel like my friends that have had theatre experience, got more out of it than I did. I kind of just like saw it and didn’t really think anything—like wasn’t really thinking like they were when they were just watching it” (Donelan and Sallis 67). These students emotionally shut themselves out of the theatrical event because of a self-identified inexperience with the art form.

However, the study showed that students from theatre active schools had an entirely different experience. When teachers provided students with background on the play and gave them a supportive environment in which to explore their responses after the show, students’ comments displayed much more confidence in their ability to appreciate theatre. One student wrote, “It just makes your interest so much more and you get so much more out of it. Like you notice things that I just wouldn’t have noticed a couple of years ago” (Donelan and Sallis 73). As
one teacher in the study notes, it often lands on the shoulders of the teacher alone to act as a “theatre guide” and create buy-in with the students (Donelan and Sallis 70). This can put incredible strain on teachers who are not trained theatre professionals. TYA companies have an opportunity—and, arguably, a responsibility—to help provide this type of assistance.

Increased Recall Through Post-Show Workshops

In another study of young audiences and their ability to make meaning after a theatrical performance, Matthew Reason set out to measure the effectiveness of combining a show with post-show workshop. In his book The Young Audience: Exploring and Enhancing Children’s Experiences of Theatre, he discusses how deliberate reflection and personalization “change[s] the nature of that which [one] is observing” (Reason xii). Reason writes that, when children in his study participated in the post-show workshop, “the process of drawing and talking gave the children the chance to reflect upon, develop, and deepen their engagement,” thereby positively affecting their whole theatre experience (xii). He goes on to recount how the children were not able to recall details after only viewing the performance, but, after the workshop, their memory of the performance had grown significantly (Reason 115). It was not the workshop they were recalling, but rather, that the workshop allowed them to recall the play. After completing his research, Reason writes, “I maintain that increased knowledge increases engagement and intensifies the pleasures and satisfactions associated with engagement with the arts…it makes the experience mean more to them” (139).
Three Models of Audience Engagement in TYA

The anecdotal evidence from these studies offers proof for the value of contextualization and post-processing in TYA. In this section, I will be looking at three different models of TYA audience engagement and analyze how each aligns with each of the six benefits of good audience engagements defined by Brown and Ratzkin. Through an examination of the effectiveness of these models, I will better understand how I can use this information to increase the effectiveness of my work in Field Trip Plus.

Partnerships and Post-Show Workshops with Metro Theater Company and *The Yellow Boat*

Metro Theater Company, in St. Louis, Missouri, produced the first touring production of *The Yellow Boat* by David Saar. Metro exemplifies the fusion of theatre and education. Their mission statement, as stated on the website, is to “nurture meaningful learning through the arts,” and this is what they did through *The Yellow Boat* tour in 1994 (MetroTheaterCompany.org). In an interview with former Artistic Director Carol North in 2015 about their audience engagement practices in regards to this production, North highlighted two models for audience engagement: utilizing community partnerships and facilitating post-show workshops with school audiences.

Community Partnerships

*The Yellow Boat* is the true story of the life and death of a young boy, Benjamin, who contracted HIV through a blood transfusion (Saar 601-668). As is Metro’s regular practice, the play was toured to schools in different cities in the surrounding area, but given the sensitive
nature of the play’s topic, North knew that they would have to intentionally start dialogue within the community before they would be able to approach schools. North recalls that many parents and educators were worried about the upsetting nature of the death in this show. She thought, “We’ve got to be completely transparent about what the play is, what the story is, [and] what it is not” (North).

One strategy adopted by the company was to connect with community partners to provide legitimacy for the type of emotional education they were doing. They assuaged parent and educator fears by connecting with what North calls “powerful partners” in St. Louis, including Washington University’s research hospital, with its host of epidemiologists, grief counselors, and child life specialists. “We were building a real network of advocates,” says North. Partners like the hospital and the local chapter of the Hemophilia Foundation, among others, not only provided additional resources for audiences, but also gave credibility to the production as they booked their tour with schools and venues in the area (North).

North points out that the schools also functioned as partners during their tour. “[They needed to] work with us to present it,” says North. “It was not something that could happen in isolation.” Metro set the terms of the partnership by requiring schools to lay the groundwork in the community. Sometimes the schools would send home prepared letters to parents or host a parent and educator preview to allow concerned adults to preview the material. In general, most schools and venues did an excellent job with this, North recalls, sometimes going above and beyond to bring in their own experts, workshops, or lobby artwork to enhance the production. It was evident, however, when the groundwork was not laid properly, North cautions. There was at
least one instance in which a last-minute parent panic sent a principal running to pull kids off the bus and prevent them from seeing the show (North).

Post-Show Workshops

Metro performers led educational workshops in schools after each performance (North). They facilitated discussions and led creative activities to get students interacting with the themes of the play. Their activities honed in on the coping mechanisms that Benjamin used in the play, like identifying inside feelings versus outside feelings, as he was approaching the end of his life. Metro required young people to engage with the script in a personal way by creating drawings of their own inside and outside feelings and creating personal strength metaphors that mirrored Benjamin’s metaphor of the yellow boat that floated off into the sunset (Metro 7-8). These activities allowed young people to personally connect to the material through introspection and reflection. The play elicited emotions, and the post-show workshops allowed for dialogue to begin between young people and adults.

Lessons from The Yellow Boat Tour as Applied to Field Trip Plus

When I examine Metro Theater’s The Yellow Boat tour against Brown and Ratzkin’s benefits for good audience engagement, it meets four of the six benefits: creating public value, promoting relationships, supporting meaning-making, and highlighting relevance. They created public value and promoted relationships through their efforts to connect with parents, schools, and communities before performances. They supported meaning-making and highlighted the
relevance of the play in the post-show workshops by helping students connect the themes back to their own lives.

Metro Theater Company’s audience engagement strategies are specific to the fact that their show was structured as a tour, but *The Yellow Boat* tour illustrates the value of bringing proof of legitimacy to one’s work. If I apply this concept to Field Trip Plus, I find that I can provide legitimacy by making sure my methods are pedagogically sound. Even if the play is not as emotionally dense as *The Yellow Boat*, Field Trip Plus lesson plans need to be supported by strong educational theories to provide legitimacy to our methods, and those theories need to be communicated to teachers before they book the workshops. I strive to make sure the lessons are firmly rooted in the Florida state standards, a language familiar to classroom teachers that will allow them to place our workshops in the context of their larger classroom objectives. It is astonishing, however, how many times I facilitate a Field Trip Plus workshop and am met with amazement on the part of the classroom teacher. One teacher shared with me once, “That was not what I expected!” He was surprised that the lesson was as educational as it was, teaching vocabulary and parts of speech along with the context of the play. In response, I made a list of resources available to potential Field Trip Plus teachers that outline the benefits of pre- and post-show processing. I am also looking to make the learning goals as clear as possible in our promotional materials.

Another takeaway that I glean from Metro’s methodology is the value of using arts-based activities to stimulate reflection and personal connection to the script in the workshops. This is a concept I explore in Field Trip Plus, particularly later in the season with the show *Flora and Ulysses*. In the post-show workshop for *Flora and Ulysses*, I invite students to create and
embody their own personal animal superheroes, just like Flora creates her pet squirrel superhero. Students demonstrate their animal superheroes through individual tableaux and then draw a comic book version of their character’s story, including beginning, middle, and end (see Appendix J). These activities allow students to use visual and theatre arts as forms of individual reflection and to put themselves in the shoes of the show’s main character, Flora.

The Forum
with The Coterie and The Wrestling Season

In 2000, The Coterie’s world premiere of The Wrestling Season by Laurie Brooks, in Kansas City, Missouri, experimented with an entirely new model of audience engagement in TYA, the Forum (Brooks 831-839, 2005). The Wrestling Season follows a group of high school students through a complex web of social and sexual conflicts as they grapple with definitions of self amid rumors and lies. A constant refrain from the characters is “You think you’ve got me pegged. Pinned. You think you know me, but you don’t…I’m not even sure I know myself” (Brooks 830, 2005). This play opens a dialogue with high-school audiences about the pressure on young people to act or feel a certain way and how that affects the choices they make.

Playwright Brooks writes in an article in TYA Today that her desire to experiment with a post-show Forum was “born largely out of my own ardent impulse to dialogue with others following a play” (31, 2016). The Coterie was the perfect place for Brooks to explore a post-show experience because, similarly to Metro, The Coterie’s mission is to create “theatre which challenges audience and artist and provides educational, dramatic outreach programs in the community.” In an interview for Stage of the Art, Jeff Church, artistic director of The Coterie,
says that he believes that “good theatre for youth is an active process, an inquiry for both the artist and the audience member” (Matetzschk).

The Forum stops short of being a fully participatory form of theatre, but rather consists of a theatrically-activated pseudo talk-back after the play is complete. (The Forum was eventually published with the script as an optional post-show activity.) Brooks outlines the basic tenants of her Forum model: 1) the actors stay in role and answer questions in a loosely scripted fashion, not improvised; 2) the Forum includes dynamic visuals and action with the characters in role; 3) there should be no judgment on the part of the facilitators and no “correct” answer; 4) no one in the audience is forced to speak; 5) the goal is exploration with no pre-determined outcome; 6) the Forum is not personal about the characters or actors, it is about their actions and decisions in the play; and 7) “Back Door Education,” meaning that answers are not dictated to young people in the audience, but they learn by way of agreeing and disagreeing with the responses of their peers (32-33, 2016). The forum was created at The Coterie to be a natural extension of the play during which the referee character comes onto the stage to ask the audience for their opinions on the behaviors they just witnessed. The rest of the characters return to provide some final comments and even apologies for their bad behavior. In Dramatic Literature for Children: A Century in Review, editor Roger Bedard explains, “The forum builds on the emotions and ideas generated by the play by moving the audience members from passive spectators to participants in a discourse of these ideas” (772). Brooks echoes this sentiment in the resource guide for the play, “We need to give them the space to say it—to search for answers for the questions raised” (Marcy 6).
Lessons from *The Wrestling Season* as Applied to Field Trip Plus

*The Wrestling Season*’s Forum model, when analyzed through the lens of Brown and Ratzkin’s benefits of good audience engagement, primarily addresses three of the six benefits: promoting relationships, highlighting relevance, and supporting meaning-making. It promotes relationships by creating a social learning environment for the teen audiences—social with each other but also with the actors. Listening to the reflections of teen audiences allows them to highlight how relevant this play is in their own lives, particularly for any adults who are present. Lastly, the audience is making meaning through this “Back Door Education,” learning by comparing your response to that of others.

While Laurie Brooks’ Forum model does not fit the structure of Field Trip Plus (Field Trip Plus limits the workshops to a space outside of the theatre and does not allow for the use of actors from the show), it does have several components that are interesting to think about applying to my pre- and post-show workshops. What is useful from the Forum is the spirit of allowing the students to drive their own reflection. The Forum uses tableau or images from the performance as tools that students can use to reflect (Brooks 831-839, 2005). It also creates a social learning environment for student audiences—social with each other but also with the actors. The students are making meaning by comparing their own responses to those of others. This type of social reflection is a component that I experiment with regularly in Field Trip Plus.
Participatory Theatre  
with Concrete Theatre Company and *Are We There Yet?*

In 1998, Concrete Theatre Company created a participatory play in partnership with Planned Parenthood to address the need for better sexual health education for high school students in Alberta, Canada. The play, *Are We There Yet?* by Jane Heather, was designed in such a way that actor-educators would tour to schools, simultaneously performing the play and leading breakout workshops as they worked with students to find solutions to the problems facing the characters in the play. Concrete Theatre Company collaborated with author Jan Selman and a team of university researchers known as the Are We There Yet Community-University Research Alliance (AWTY-CURA) to study the effect of this interactive play on students’ understanding of safe sexual health practices. They published their findings in *Theatre, Teens, and Sex Ed: Are We There Yet?* distributed by the University of Alberta Press.

In the book, playwright Heather theorizes that participatory theatre experiences can “help students sift through emotionally sensitive topics” by empowering the students to practice real-world problem-solving in a safe environment (Woods-Robinson 100). By working together as a group, the students could test and challenge their own perceptions of sexual situations, and many students reported that it was surprising and encouraging to find they were not alone in their confusion. The company focused on the goal of helping students move from a factual understanding of sexual health to action that they can apply to their own lives: “modifying behavior rather than just building knowledge” (Selman 32). The *Are We There Yet?* tour was using theatre as a tool for social change by creating effective and engaging educational experiences.
What is interesting about the Concrete Theatre Company is that they chose to restructure the play itself rather than add pre- and post-show events to achieve its audience engagement goals. The students cannot simply sit passively and observe this story. In fact, the story cannot finish without their input. In fact, *Are We There Yet?* could almost be classified as a highly interactive workshop, rather than a play. The actor-teachers use teacher-in-role, collaborative problem-solving, and improvisation with suggestions from the audience throughout to play to create a highly engaging and unique educational experience.

**Lessons from *Are We There Yet?* as Applied to Field Trip Plus**

In my opinion, *Are We There Yet?* met all six measures of successful audience engagement set forth by Brown and Ratzkin. Like *The Yellow Boat* tour, it created public value by bringing public awareness to a personal health issue, and it promoted relationships by utilizing community partners. It also promoted relationships between the students throughout its structure by leaning on a social learning model, much like that of *The Wrestling Season*. The performance/workshop design allowed students to make meaning and highlight the subject’s relevance in their own lives by working collaboratively and problem-solving for the characters on the stage. It unified programming by working in concert with the sexual health education programs in the school system. Lastly, it defined and measured success through a formal research study, the AWTY-CURA, that ultimately confirmed that *Are We There Yet?* did, in fact, convince students to modify their sexual health behavior in an unprecedented fashion (Selman 293).
I can see that *Are We There Yet?* accomplished many of these measures by teaching through dramatic structures within the play. In Field Trip Plus, I can use *Are We There Yet?* as inspiration and proof for the effectiveness of dramatic structures, such as teacher-in-role and forum theatre, within my pre- and post-show workshops.

Many of these companies used models in which they processed the play with students after or during the show, but I still wondered what it would look like to create both pre- and post-show workshops. Pre-show workshops often become a source of historical or dramaturgical context, but they run the risk of limiting a young person’s perception of a play by defining it before they have a chance to observe it with fresh eyes. If done properly, a pre-show workshop can set the stage for the play and awaken an audience member’s senses to the themes explored in the play. What kind of content is most beneficial to explore in pre- and post-show workshops?

On my quest to deepen students’ engagement with the plays at Orlando REP, I discovered Emelie FitzGibbon of the Graffiti Theatre Company and her examination of pre- versus post-show workshops. I considered how her observations could help me write effective lesson plans for Field Trip Plus.

**The Distinct Functions of Pre- and Post-Show Activities**

In “Planting the Seeds: The Nature and Function of Pre-Show Workshop in Theatre-in-Education Practice,” Emilie FitzGibbon provides clarity on what makes certain activities effective based on when they are placed in relation to the performance. FitzGibbon is Artistic Director of Graffiti Theatre Company, in Cork, Ireland. Graffiti Theatre Company pairs workshops or classroom work with set theatrical performances. Using this model, she illustrates
the importance of workshop placement on the potential impact of its content. She writes, “Sometimes a few minutes taken to observe a rich and challenging stage image … is more effective than forty minutes of feedback ‘chat’” (FitzGibbon 22). What kind of introduction would be instrumental in a pre-show workshop in helping young people be ready to receive the play? How can I connect post-show workshop activities directly back to students’ observations of the play? According to FitzGibbon, it is important to delineate which content should come before and which should come after the show. In her article, she lists the distinct functions of pre- versus post-show workshops to guide practitioners on how to craft effective lesson plans (see Figure 2).

The Functions of Pre- and Post-Show Workshops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRE-SHOW</th>
<th>POST-SHOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TO ACT AS A STIMULUS FOR ENGAGEMENT</td>
<td>TO ANALYZE WHAT IS KNOWN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO OPEN A RANGE OF RESPONSES</td>
<td>TO ENGAGE CRITICAL RESPONSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO FRUSTRATE PERCEIVED RESPONSES TO A TOPIC</td>
<td>TO CLARIFY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO FORM A CREATIVE LINK BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE PLAY</td>
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Figure 2: An explanation of the distinct functions of pre- versus post-show workshops
Source: Julie Woods-Robinson, 2018; adapted from “Planting the Seeds: The Nature and Function of Pre-Show Workshop in Theatre-in-Education Practice,” by Emilie FitzGibbon
FitzGibbon writes that pre-show workshops should be “planting the seeds of thought” to allow students to head into a performance in the right headspace to have an even deeper reading of the semiotics of the play (22). It is about finding a tangential way into the story to which the students can relate, but not dictating what they should think—staying far enough away from the plot to put thematic ideas in their heads but still honoring the element of surprise so as not to lessen the impact of the show. If the pre-show workshop’s function is to “allow a creative link to occur between the individual and the imagined…by putting [young people] in possession of the dilemma,” then the function of the post-show workshop is to engage students in a critical response to the play in the light of the subject matter that the teaching artist suggested before the performance (FitzGibbon 23)

In one example of a pre-show workshop, FitzGibbon demonstrates how her company uses the functions of a pre-show workshop in practice. The following is a summary of her workshop: Lives Worth Living is a play about a man with a mental handicap and his sister that takes place on the beach. Before the show, the facilitator starts by simply standing on the beach set and asking what kind of people might one find on the beach? This is his tangential exploration. It is light-hearted, fun, and easy to grasp. When the facilitator asks for volunteers to demonstrate these types of people, he proceeds to place physical labels on them. He labels one group of volunteers “teenagers.” This is the moment when the students start to personalize the idea of labels. They see themselves or their friends standing onstage with a label stuck to their chest and begin to think, “What is my label? Do I fit the stereotypical label of ‘teenager’?” Then, the facilitator demonstrates how the labels can be taken off and changed when a person chooses to change, or even simply as they grow older. One “teenager,” however, suddenly becomes stuck
in their label—it won’t come off. This disturbs the audience’s perceived notions of how labels work. The facilitator asks the students what it would be like if you had to live with that one label of “teenager” your entire life? “Now, luckily,” he says, “this doesn’t happen to you. You grow up. One day you’re not a teenager anymore” (FitzGibbon 23). He, then, lets the students know that the play is about to start, and just before the play begins he adds, “Oh, yes…and one more thing: Mark is mentally handicapped” (FitzGibbon 23). This quick drop-in line at the end jump-starts the audience’s thinking, so that the play will begin while the audience is still considering the injustice of being stuck with one label your entire life and how that might relate to the character Mark.

This workshop is simple, but quickly and effectively covers all four functions of pre-show workshops identified in the article. In my Field Trip Plus lesson plans, I often struggle with how to divide the content between the pre- and post-show workshops. FitzGibbon’s guidelines and example show me that I can take a tangential approach in the beginning, and that I can save analysis for post-show. I will outline in Chapter Five how I directly consider FitzGibbon’s guidelines concerning the pre- and post-show workshops for Polkadots: A Cool Kids Musical.

Reflection

Laurie Brooks writes that her inspiration for pursuing a new form of audience engagement came from “a hybrid [of] Augusto Boal’s classic text, Theatre of the Oppressed... British drama-in-education practitioner Dorothy Heathcote... and working in Ireland with Graffiti Theatre, a company that employed numerous forms of pre- and post-encounters with young audiences” (31, 2016). Theatre communities from around the world have been
experimenting for decades with different ways to engage young audiences, but no movement has been as significant in the development of these practices as the Theatre-In-Education movement in the United Kingdom. Like the TYA companies explored in this chapter, TIE relies on actor/teacher guidance through a prepared extra-theatrical experience and uses theatrical forms to facilitate that learning. Although early TIE is structured as participatory theatre, later TIE companies, like FitzGibbon’s Graffiti Theatre Company, use the same theoretical base to inform many different incarnations of teaching through and with theatre. In the next chapter, I will explore the history of and theories behind TIE, as I continue to search for techniques that will help me create effective pre- and post-show engagement in Field Trip Plus.
CHAPTER FOUR: THEATRE-IN-EDUCATION IN THE U.K.

In the 1960s, a branch of Theatre for Youth emerged in the United Kingdom that created immersive theatre experiences in schools called Theatre-In-Education. TIE focuses heavily on interactive performances and collaborative workshops. In the same way that Are We There Yet? arose out of a perceived gap in traditional education, TIE researcher Roger Wooster writes in Theatre in Education in Britain that its development was born out of a desire to reform the education system and was less about a desire to revolutionize the theatre. In this chapter, I will explore the circumstances that gave rise to TIE, the early methodology, and some criticism that the movement has faced. Then, I will examine the theories the support the pedagogy of TIE, so that I can examine how they apply to my work in Field Trip Plus in Chapter Five.

Background

In the 1960s, secondary education in the U.K. was still systematically classist, separating students by ability at an early age into three groups: academic, vocational, and “less able” learners who were trained for factory work (Wooster 17). TIE practitioners were concerned with the delineation by the age of eleven of “those who we are going to train to think, those who will design and craft what the thinkers have thought of, and… those who will toil at making the things that others have thought of and designed” (Wooster 19). They thought that theatre could break through old education practices and be used to level the playing field of opportunities being offered to students and allow all students to access higher-level thinking functions.
The general model of early TIE was, first, to offer a lesson on context, then, to facilitate a participatory event, and, finally, to follow it with a theatrical event. Wooster defines TIE as “using techniques of theatre arts to educate” (57). It is not primarily about putting on a play for schools or the teaching of theatre skills; its goal is to supplement the school curriculum with a theatrical form that will allow students to connect with subject matters like social studies, current events, or interpersonal health on a personal, social, and emotional level.

One of the earliest experiments in TIE was in Coventry, England, in 1962. The Young Stagers’ Club received a grant from the city council to start “Theatre-In-Education,” allowing students to explore the world around them through drama (Wooster 33-34). It is important to note that this program was specifically designated for education funding, not theatre arts funding. The program was free to schools, and the theatre company spent the entire day with students, first presenting a performance and then having them act out and problem-solve a story similar to the one in the performance. Unfortunately, this early experiment was pedagogically weak and not curriculum-based. Because of this, TIE had a hard time gaining ground in schools.

In the 1970s, however, the TIE movement became more popular and programs began popping up around the country. Wooster notes that a major departure from early TIE was the practice of placing students within the dramatic conflict rather than simply as observers (43). At this point, TIE moved closer to participatory theatre and away from a prepared performance. A great example of this is The Lunt Fort at Baginton. In this TIE program, the students were role-players in a play about social responsibility. With the historical backdrop of the Roman invasion of the Celts, students were divided into two groups (the Romans and Celts) and each learned
about their respective culture. The two groups met face-to-face, argued about taxes, rebelled, failed, and then debated within their communities about how they should handle the situation. Wooster recounts this first attempt at participatory theatre:

…the children were both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the events at the same time. They knew they were ‘playing’ but the play was being structured to allow them to examine their feelings of oppression, dominance, anger, injustice, cultural confusion and personal loss within a safe context. Whether the Celts or Romans would get the upper hand was not in doubt; outside the drama they knew the history. The value lay in what they could learn from that history of relevance in their own lives. (45)

The Lunt Fort at Baginton shows how this TIE company used a historical backdrop to focus on students’ emotional growth in a safe space while teaching about history. (In the 1990s, at the time of Are We There Yet?, the AWTY-CURA proved that emotional education through the theatre can have a lasting effect on students, and one can see the echo of language like the “safe context” of the theatre space in their work.) The story in The Lunt Fort at Baginton became a “frame” from which the students could analyze the personal elements of the play (Wooster 60). Notably, giving the students the historical context of the drama did not lessen their engagement even though it took out the suspense in the plot of “What will happen?” Wooster writes that this allowed students to “address the far more interesting question of ‘why does what happen [sic], happen?’” (102). The use of effective devices in The Lunt Fort at Baginton, like collective roles for students, immersion in dramatic action, and group reflection, marked the beginning of a change for TIE towards more instances of participatory theatre.
Criticism

When reflecting on the participatory play *Are We There Yet?* from Chapter Three, one could conclude that the project’s educational goals, in a way, supplant its theatrical integrity. This play serves primarily to educate; it is hard to imagine the text existing on its own as a piece of artwork for the theatrical canon without considering the genius of its educational strategies. In the same way, the professional theatre community has often accused TIE of being dogmatic. Is this theatre or is it a workshop?

If the goal of the theatre is for theatre makers to bring the audience into a communal experience and for the audience to leave changed, then, yes, TIE and *Are We There Yet?* both seem to be reaching those goals. At the 1968 ASSITEJ Congress in The Hague, however, delegate Eric Vos of the Netherlands criticized the theatrical integrity of TIE: “The task of the theatre is to raise questions, not give answers” (Congress minutes recorded by Eek, Wooster 156). Vos misunderstood one major goal of TIE: good TIE does not try to convey a moral message or give answers. Instead, Roger Wooster explains that it offers “a tangential exploration” of the academic subject and a chance for students to “reflect and understand” in an active way, with the guidance of engaged adults and their peers (29). Wooster points out that TIE does not lead students toward a pre-determined outcome. It is designed to engage students so that they will drive their own learning by investing in the narrative. It is not lost on me that “tangential” is, once again, an important word in the design of extra-theatrical programs. “Tangential” emphasizes the importance of keeping a certain amount of distance between what is
dictated by the facilitator and how the students respond or make connections between the narrative and their own world.

Theoretical Support for TIE

Jeanne Klein, TYA practitioner and assistant professor of Theatre for Young Audiences at the University of Kansas, writes in the Journal of Aesthetic Education that “cognitive psychologists have finally discovered what dramatic theorists have known about narrative structures since Aristotle’s *Poetics*: Powerful stories contain universal themes about the human condition” (41). The act of observing a story in the theatre allows the audience to apply the narrative of the play to greater stories about humans in the world. Roger Wooster writes that well-structured TIE allows children to apply “their own humanity to the material facts and events” in the play (107). While theatre practitioners know this to be inherently true, intentionally applying cognitive theory to teaching artistry can ensure consistency across programs and help teaching artists verbalize why and how they do what they do.

In 1976, TIE practitioners felt it was necessary to begin to define their pedagogy and identify the cognitive and educational theories at work to support what they observed in the classroom (Wooster 63). They unified under the Standing Conference of Young Peoples’ Theatre and disseminated critical thought through the establishment of an academic journal and professional development conferences (Wooster 64). The SCYP offered direction to a burgeoning field and identified several thinkers whose philosophies on theatre and education shaped the work of great TIE companies, including Lev Vygotsky, Dorothy Heathcote, and Augusto Boal (Wooster 64).
Vygotsky and Social Development Theory

Lev Vygotsky was a Russian psychologist in the early 20th century who looked at the way young children learn new skills and become independent thinkers (David L., Learning Theories). TIE practitioners claim his Social Development Theory as evidence of support for the practice of teaching through theatre, and it is important to understand the basics of Vygotsky to see how his influence infiltrated their practice.

Social Learning

Audience researcher Susan Bennett writes about the process of making meaning in the theatre. She says that it happens on two levels: a personal and social level: the “social phenomenon” of a night at the theatre (Bennett 86). She references a study by Frank Coppieters conducted in 1981 in which he concluded that a sense of unity or community within an audience prior to the performance affects each audience member’s ability to make meaning out of the play (Bennett 91). They are more likely to be affected by the theatre if they feel that they are a part of the social makeup of the audience.

Vygotsky’s Social Development Theory happens on a personal and social level, as well. Sandra Smidt describes Vygotsky’s learning theory in her book Introducing Vygotsky: A Guide for Practitioners and Students in Early Years Education as a “social and liberating force,” meaning that children first learn together with people and then head out into the world with their newly discovered knowledge (Smidt x). Theatre could also be described as a “social and liberating force:” audiences come together to watch a performance, then leave as individuals who
carry a deeper understanding of their relationship to the world. It is no surprise, then, that when theatre makers began creating content for educational experiences in TIE, they used theatrical techniques in the classroom to create social and imaginative learning environments that emulate many of Vygotsky’s teachings.

Vygotsky theorized that social activities allow children to discover new concepts with the aid of others. Vygotsky elaborated on this hypothesis:

> Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). (David L., Learning Theories)

Only after participating in the social activity can the child internalize the concept and turn it into lasting knowledge.

**The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

Vygotsky called the space in which active learning takes place the “Zone of Proximal Development. It is the gap between a child’s “performance level” and their “potential level” (Smidt 117). The ZPD is the time when the child is working socially, mediated by a teacher “to move beyond what they have shown they can do”—through scaffolded lessons and using “cultural tools”—to arrive at what they have the potential to do (Smidt 117). The ZPD is when a child creates a deeper understanding of the concept that is being taught through immersive and imaginative play.
In one TIE program from 1986, *Careless Talk* by Theatr Powys, the students experienced a day-long participatory play about World War II. They approached the story from a comfortable point of view, that of school children, only this time they were pretending they were in a school in 1939 (Wooster 96-98). Wooster writes that the students lived in the ZPD during this program. He says that they were able to “connect their own knowledge, understanding, and intuition about the world with the complex realities of international conflict,” thus allowing them to not only *know* about World War II but to *understand* it (Wooster 96).

**Higher-Level Mental Functions in TIE**

Students in a traditional TIE program achieve higher-level mental functions through participating in the practical social activity of interactive drama. They compare their experience participating in the drama to the historical context of the play. This could be seen clearly in the way the students interacted with World War II in *Careless Talk*. As students in the 1939 classroom, they met an older brother who was proud to be going off to war and a refugee from Ireland who had been displaced by the war (Wooster 101-103). Each time the facilitator paused the drama so that the students could examine what they know, they had the opportunity to consider how the characters would have felt in that context. Can they understand the points of view in the story?

Next, they go through a process called generalizing. Smidt defines generalization as “the ability to draw from an individual case to the general” (Smidt 18). Students draw upon their own experience in the drama or the experience of the main character to consider how that story relates to our world today. Smidt writes that “learners need access to the concrete…in order to be able to
think abstractly” (19). This is when they consider, “How can I use the information in this play?” They apply the story to an understanding of an abstract idea about the world. In *Careless Talk*, some of the abstract notions that were dealing with were the moral complexities of war, the reasons that people emigrate to a new place, and how to deal with grief (Wooster 101-107). They begin to take the facts of history and apply their own empathy to the situation. They can generalize the information from this one war, and this one family’s story, to the damaging effects of international conflicts anywhere.

**The Vocabulary of Social Development Theory**

There are several concepts and vocabulary in Social Development Theory that require further exploration in their relationship to the direct audience engagement and teaching techniques used in TIE which allow students to reach higher-level mental functions. These are active learning, cultural tools, mediation, scaffolding, and the use of reflection.

**Active Learning**

Sandra Smidt defines active learning as “a learner not being passively filled with information or knowledge but actively trying to make sense of all experiences and encounters” (16). Active learning is directly applicable to audience engagement in the theatre, particularly in the development of young people as cultural viewers and engaged thinkers.

At the creation of TIE, practitioners saw it as a wasted opportunity for young people to simply come and passively enjoy a piece of theatre. Active learning makes a case for getting
students to interact more directly with the theatre, and TIE moved this effort beyond the pre- and post-show moment and into the dramatic form. Vygotsky said that for true learning to take place, the students must interact with knowledge through activity. TIE artists work together with students to discover not only the meaning of the play, but also the outcome of the play and how it relates to their lives.

Cultural Tools and the Semiotics of Theatre

When Vygotsky refers to a cultural tool, he is referring to anything that facilitates the student’s learning. Smidt describes cultural tools as “the objects and signs and systems developed by human beings over time and within communities to assist thinking. They include things like language, symbols, music, art, and others” (18). In the case of TIE, drama is the cultural tool; it is a system we have developed as a society for understanding the world. When we speak about increasing a young person’s cultural capital, we are talking about their ability to use and read theatre as a cultural tool.

Theatre scholars have given a name to the reading of signs and symbols in the theatre: the semiotics of theatre. Although not an example of a TIE program, Donelan and Sallis’ study of the effects of post-show workshops from Chapter Three concluded that students’ understanding was greatly increased by exercising their ability to discuss and analyze the theatre in their school and social groups. Students reported that hearing the input and reflections of peers added to the meaning they found in the play. One student said that it felt like “you went to see it with eleven pairs of eyes instead of just one” (Donelan and Sallis 75). The social nature of this analysis had a democratizing effect on the group’s experience of the signs and symbols in that piece of theatre.
In keeping with Vygotsky’s ideas on education, TIE is structured so that students drive this exploration through their observation of the drama. They decode the semiotics of theatre through a dialectic conversation with the teaching artists and other students. Wooster writes that the interpretation of these symbols “together with the pedagogical context offered by TIE…become powerful tools in understanding the personal, political, and social worlds of the child” (73).

The use of cultural tools in Vygotsky’s theory also assists in creating lasting memories, as we could see through Matthew Reason’s study in Chapter Three about post-show processing through visual art (Smidt 23). This internalization facilitates a shift to higher-level mental functions like logical reasoning, making connections, and categorizing experiences. Sandra Smidt explains that it allows a student to “use this experience independently” in future interactions with the art form (Smidt 27).

Mediation

Mediation refers to the use of cultural tools as guided by a “more expert other,” an adult who already knows how to use the cultural tool (Smidt 25). In this case, the more expert other is the TIE artist. The goal of Social Development Theory is that a student will gain the skills to eventually use the cultural tool on their own. One of the benefits of TIE is that it is training young people how to engage with the theatre as they become adult theatre-goers.
Scaffolding

Over time, TIE artists have become incredibly adept at guiding students in a step-by-step process through the things they need to know to use their cultural tool. A great example of this can be seen later in Dorothy Heathcote’s influence on TIE. This process is called scaffolding, and it is an important part of Social Development Theory. Students in TIE programs are often encountering theatre for the first time, so basic theatre concepts, like performing in role and the use of mime or tableau, need to be introduced in small pieces to ensure the success of the interactive drama experience. Students need these tools to feel comfortable participating in the performance. Wooster writes that TIE artists allow students “to climb the scaffold from what they already know to what they are capable of knowing” (102). They do this by using dramatic teaching structures like pausing the action to decode a scene or using flashback to give the students pertinent pieces of information one at a time. Use pause or flashback is followed by a period of reflection, which is when the students are climbing that scaffold to which Wooster is referring (102).

The Importance of Reflection

Vygotsky saw learning as the process of cultivating a student’s ability to move “from the simple to the complex, and from the actual to the theoretical” (Wooster 20). They can only do this through reflection, a chance for them to voice the connections they are making and gather new information from the connections other students are making. TIE practice includes a heavy reliance on reflection as a social act of learning. Sandra Smidt summarizes the importance of
reflection in relationship to achieving higher level mental functions: “Conscious thought implies the ability to think about or reflect on what has been learned” (69). It is the distinction between conscious and unconscious thought which is the distinction between higher and lower-level mental functions. The use of reflection is also one of the main distinctions between TIE and other forms of theatre (Wooster 102).

Dorothy Heathcote

The Mantle of the Expert

Dorothy Heathcote, a pioneer in educational drama, was also a strong voice in the development of a pedagogy for TIE. In “Dorothy Heathcote—Pioneer of Educational Drama,” David Farmer explains that she created an approach to teaching called the “Mantle of the Expert” that greatly influenced TIE (2015). The Mantle of the Expert assumes that if the child or student is treated as the expert, they will commit a sense of personal responsibility, creative thinking, and discovery to the learning environment. Wooster calls this “a Socratic approach” (Wooster 101). In TIE, this often looks like putting the child in-role as the problem-solver in the drama and letting the teacher be in-role as the one who needs help or advice. Careless Talk is also a great example of the Mantle of the Expert in practice. At the end of the drama, one of the teacher-actors was in role as the mother of the soldier who cannot understand why her son is suffering from PTSD. The company handed this portion over completely to the students, allowing them to put the lessons of the day in their own words and teach the mother what her son may be thinking or feeling and help the family begin to heal (Wooster 107).
Leaving Space for Dialogue

Heathcote also put a strong emphasis on reflection as a mode of codifying learning. In “Exploring Theatre and Education,” an article Heathcote wrote for the SCYPT Journal, she stresses the importance of leaving space for the students’ discoveries, instructing actor/teachers to never let on that they know the answer in a moment of dramatic conflict (Wooster 71). She liked to use tableaux in the classroom, although she called it depiction, a moment in which the drama would freeze, giving students an opportunity to analyze it before continuing with the play (Wooster 71).

Finding Answers Through Drama

Heathcote says of her own work that, by analyzing what is happening in the drama, students can move from the specifics of the play to “a more ‘universal’ observation of the human condition” (Heathcote in “Exploring Theatre and Education,” quoted by Wooster 71). For Heathcote, like Vygotsky, reflection is the key to students’ ability to discover a link between the play and reality (Wooster 71), and the most important aspect of that reflection is that the students are put in the driver’s seat. This allows them to direct their own learning and rekindle their “desire to find answers rather than know answers” (Wooster 65). Heathcote’s approach highlights a desire in TIE to educate the whole child, not stopping with addressing the plays’ themes in other subject areas but also cultivating the students’ as learners in general.
Augusto Boal and Theatre of the Oppressed

The work of Augusto Boal, founding father of Theatre of the Oppressed, found its way into TIE techniques, an echo of the TIE movement’s leftist political roots. Boal believed strongly in opportunity equality, and TIE artists valued his ideas about creating a safe space where questioning is encouraged and “not knowing does not equal stupidity” (Wooster 65). Theatre as a framework allows all the children in a class to work as an ensemble to find answers to a historical or social problem. Through the lens of Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed, the collaboration and the attempt become the most important parts of this educational exchange, not the final performance product.

In *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, Boal describes the goal of Theatre of the Oppressed. Theatre of the Oppressed is a collaborative theatre form in which members of a community come together to look at their situation through recreated on-stage scenes (Boal 5-7). Boal writes that Theatre of the Oppressed is “reality…shown not only as it is, but also, more importantly, as it could be” (6). The community uses their collective voice and experiments with how they can change their social or political position through the performances by opening a forum in the theatre and attempting to rewrite the ending.

TIE draws closely from Theatre of the Oppressed in its desire to empower a disenfranchised population. For TIE, that population is children. Many TIE performances encourage children to look at either current or past political situations and, in connecting those stories back to their current world, they will hopefully learn empathy which they will apply to their lives moving forward. Just like the techniques used by Heathcote, Theatre of the Oppressed activities are designed to put the young people in the driver’s seat. Many of Boal’s exercises, like
Forum Theatre, have been adapted and utilized in TIE to allow students to try their hand at considering how they would act within the story and whether they have the power to change it or not.

**Reflection**

The techniques of TIE, plus the theories behind them, are perfect for helping me create Field Trip Plus workshops that are effective teaching tools that are full of active theatre exercises. In the next chapter, I will describe how, armed with audience engagement strategies and TIE educational techniques, I created a program of pre- and post-show workshops that spanned the 2017/2018 season at Orlando Repertory Theatre. Each play presented a different challenge and the rich history of audience engagement in TYA gave me tools to use to tackle each challenge.
CHAPTER FIVE: FIELD TRIP PLUS

The Origin of Field Trip Plus at Orlando REP

Field Trip Plus began as a pilot program at Orlando Repertory Theatre in the spring of 2017. The program consists of pre- and post-show workshops that expand upon the field trip experience for school groups and strengthen students’ appreciation for theatre. Each production for which I wrote lesson plans for Field Trip Plus, from the pilot program through the 2017/2018 season, presented a new set of challenges and offered a new opportunity for experimentation. When I began the pilot program, I was at the beginning of my exploration into audience engagement practices. Based on failures and successes from the pilot program, I used my research to refine my practice and create lesson plans with more intentionality. Throughout the following year, I experimented with strategies drawn from my research. Upon reflection at the end of the season and based on my observations and the research outlined in this paper, I identified a list of best practices that I will use as a guide for creating more pre- and post-show engagements in the future.

In this chapter, I will describe the journey that led me to developing best practices for pre- and post-show workshops, beginning chronologically with the pilot program and the second round of workshops. Afterwards, I will outline my best practices for Field Trip Plus, how they connect to my research, and examples of how those strategies worked individually within the 2017/2018 season of the Field Trip Plus program.
When I was first asked to develop pre- and post-show engagement for Field Trip Plus, I was so excited. The first show for which I created workshops was *Nancy Drew and Her Biggest Case Ever* by Jeff Frank and John Maclay. One of the biggest challenges for me in developing this first round of workshops was navigating how to be a guest artist in someone else’s classroom. I only visited each classroom twice, for fifty minutes at a time. In the past, as a teaching artist with my own theatre classes, I was accustomed to establishing my own classroom expectations and way of speaking with my students over time. As a guest teaching artist, my presence brought excitement, but also destroyed decorum.

Another challenge was that the pilot program, unlike Field Trip Plus in the following season, was funded by a private donor and directed specifically at Title I schools in Orlando, schools with a high percentage of students from low-income families. I was aware that a lot of the students I was teaching would be experiencing theatre for the first time and had very little prior knowledge about theatre.

**Addressing Audience Etiquette**

I began the pre-show workshop with an activity about audience engagement. I asked them to create tableaux, or frozen pictures, to demonstrate how a group of people would act at different types of public events, like sporting events and movies. The tableaux gave us the opportunity to begin a conversation about audience etiquette by comparing audience expectations in the theatre to other types of events with which they were familiar. What I learned
from this activity was the value of addressing audience engagement with Field Trip Plus students, and, since then, some version of a discussion about audience etiquette has remained an important part of every Field Trip Plus pre-show lesson plan. One of the problems with this first incarnation, however, was that the students and I ended up spending a good deal of time embodying and talking about other types of public events, and not the theatre. The other problem was that although the beginning of the activity was interactive and engaging, the ensuing conversation about theatre etiquette became primarily a lecture and the students quickly lost interest (see Appendix C).

Successes

One activity that also found its way into later Field Trip Plus lesson plans was the Vocabulary Face-Off. This vocabulary activity successfully kept students focused and engaged. It was also popular with teachers, because it was clear exactly what the students were learning: they would walk away from this activity with a list of 1930s vocabulary that would help them better understand dialogue in the play. I asked students to read aloud the vocabulary words and perform them in the context of a short dialogue. The rest of the students would then discuss what the word or phrase might mean, after which the whole class would repeat the word or phrase together. Although I did not know it at the time, the built-in reflection time was reminiscent of TIE and the influences of Vygotsky’s Social Development Theory and Heathcote’s Mantle of the Expert. As a result, this activity was well-paced and student-driven, using the students’ performance as the cultural tool through which the class learned the vocabulary.
Failures

The post-show workshop was both a success and a failure. I had the students identify the true beginning, middle, and end of the play, which had multiple plot lines. Doing this required them to reflect on and recall the play, and I think that was a useful part of the exercise. In reality, however, this activity was a hopeless disaster! I realized, after reading about Dorothy Heathcote and the way she ushered students into role-playing, that I had mistakenly asked my students to be actors when they had no prior training. All the examples that Roger Wooster cites in his book of successful student-in-role activities show students being asked to basically be themselves in new circumstances. I, on the other hand, was asking the students to recreate moments from the play and become the characters. Another problem with this activity was that I structured this activity as small group work. This required each group to work independently of the rest of the class and without much guidance. I found that, because I did not know the students well enough nor did I know their skill level at collaboration, a lot of disagreements broke out in the group work. I had not properly scaffolded the theatre and collaboration skills necessary to allow them to participate successfully in my activities.

I did try to revise this lesson plan for other groups, but the fifty minutes available for the lesson was not adequate time for scaffolding these skills. When I tried to revise the lesson to include more step-by-step activities in which the students would learn how to collaborate and create tableau, I realized that we had used up the entire lesson without having any time to reflect on the tableaux themselves. I left feeling like the students never fully understood the purpose of the activities nor did they create meaning in any way. All I did was disrupt the status quo of their school classroom. I had wanted to end each workshop set with some sort of practical theatre
activity, because, as recognized in a report by the National Endowment of the Arts, “the fundamental processes of art-making are profoundly cognitive—reinforcing the building blocks of all thought” (Rabkin 42), but I had to find new ways to get students actively engaged and learning about theatre while also keeping them close to their desks, not too rowdy, and still ticking off Language Arts standards.

After this initial foray into Field Trip Plus, I reflected on the experience and began my research into audience engagement and TIE. Throughout the 2017/2018 season, I found ways to apply new techniques to my teaching artistry. As I set out to create a second round of workshops for the new season, I was determined to use less activities, leave more room for reflection, and find a structured way to teach through the dramatic form without completely losing control of a classroom.

The Second Round of Workshops: Defining Pre- and Post-Show Content

After reading the article by Emelie FitzGibbon, “Planting the Seeds: The Nature and Function of Pre-Show Workshops in Theatre-in-Education Practice,” I had a surge of ideas for how to approach my second round of Field Trip Plus workshops. The article suggests that pre-show workshops should be a tangential exploration of a theme and disrupt the way students think about an issue. After the show, the teaching artists can bring in more specifics and dramaturgical information as the students begin to make meaning from what they just saw. This article brought to light that my original Field Trip Plus workshops told the students what the play was about instead of allowing them to figure it out for themselves. For instance, in the spirit of observation and reflection, I tried a pre-show activity for Nancy Drew during which I had students look at
pictures of the set and costume designs so that they could make inferences about the 1930s time-period and style of *Nancy Drew*. This activity did not engage the students. They had no tools for how to discuss what they were seeing, and no reference for what these designs would look like in the theatre. Also, the pictures were not big enough for them all to see details in the design. I ended up using the pictures more as a visual aid as I described for them what I hoped they would observe in the designs. I learned from FitzGibbon’s article that it is so much more powerful for a student to derive meaning from a stage picture based on what they already know and can perceive. These students could not effectively use their power of perception. This activity might have been more effective as a post-show activity after students had seen the play in person and could draw upon observations that they made during the performance.

When crafting my second round of workshops, I intentionally modeled the lessons based on FitzGibbon’s guidelines. The play was *Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical* by Melvin Tunstall III, Douglas Lyons, and Greg Borowsky, a story set in a fictional world in which people with a square pattern on their skin did not want to let a girl with polkadots on her skin into their school (Tunstall, et al). Even once they let her into the school, the characters struggle with how to integrate and find equality. The play is directly based on the story of Ruby Bridges and school desegregation in America in the 1960s, but was also written in a way that the story could be about what it feels like to be an outsider in more ways than just race (Lyons, 2017).

I intended on addressing the history of Ruby Bridges in the Field Trip Plus workshops; however, I struggled with how and when to introduce her story to these young students. FitzGibbon’s article caused me to consider that too early of a historical introduction would make the whole experience incredibly didactic: indicating that this play is about being black and being
white. Instead, I decided to pursue a tangential exploration: This play is about being labeled and being treated differently. From this angle, I was able to craft a lesson in which students could consider the impact of labeling a person, even being labeled themselves, based on something arbitrary that they couldn’t control. We played a theatre game called “Wax Museum” in which the students are asked to freeze in positions that show different kinds of characters or actions. While the game served as a great introduction to the use of frozen pictures to tell a story—a theatrical device that I would need to call upon in the post-show workshop, the main point of this game was to get students thinking about what it feels like to be unfairly treated based on a label that is beyond your own control. Without telling the students, I adjusted the game by rigging the rules to favor one team over another. Afterwards, I gave the students the opportunity to express their feelings and reflect on the fairness of the game, for which they had developed an investment. Together, we determined a “fairer” approach and tried again, this time giving favor to the other team to even the score. This facilitated a larger discussion on how to create equality. The students, already very invested in the game, drove a lively discussion that perfectly set them up to view the production and empathize with the plight of the main character, Lily Polkadot.

In the post-show workshop, I was able to turn their empathy for the main character into a call to action by putting the story into its historical context—now a surprisingly personal story for these students. These second-grade students had a much deeper connection to the importance of their history lesson because they had experienced what they perceived to be injustice themselves and had already applied that empathy to a fictional character. It was only one more step to applying that empathy to actual history. This lesson was successful in connecting the students personal experience to their social studies curriculum. Based on my observations of this
success, I made a regular practice of creating an empathetic connection between the students and the main character. Good examples of this can be seen in the pre-show workshops for *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical* and *Flora and Ulysses* (see Appendices G and I).

**Creating Best Practices for Field Trip Plus**

Throughout the year, I have found that Field Trip Plus students get the deepest meaning out of a play when I present them with an engaging question and allow them to debate the merits of the play on their own. Rather than dictate answers, I strive to use participatory activities to spark discussion which will allow the students to personalize their experience of the play, simultaneously hitting Language Arts school standards and training future theatre-goers to do this process on their own. One of the Florida State Standards that I address in all Field Trip Plus workshops is “Review and respond to the key ideas expressed within a collaborative discussion” (LAFS.5.SL.1.1). Theatre is an inherently collaborative art form and, by collaborating in the workshop, students are practicing theatre skills and their ability to communicate their ideas to others at the same time.

After such success with the *Polkadots* lesson plan, I decided to come up with a language that would allow me to recreate this experience with other subject matters and other plays. I looked to TIE and its influences for inspiration, and it gave me a solid framework of pedagogy from which to continue writing Field Trip Plus lesson plans. My research on audience engagement, Social Development Theory, the Mantle of the Expert, and Theatre of the
Oppressed each helped shape my lessons throughout the first full year of Field Trip Plus. From these, I developed some best practices.

In this section, I will list my best practices and then define and provide examples for each one. These examples are from my research-based experiments throughout the year. It is upon reflection that I have categorized them into six best practices for future workshop development. My best practices state that, for each set of pre- and post-show workshops, I should strive to do the following:

1. Explore a concept on its feet, in a social environment, first. Reflect, after.
2. Cultivate cultural capital.
3. Scaffold the lesson.
4. Pre-show engagements should be tangential in nature; post-show engagements should work with students’ perceptions of the show.
5. Leave room for discovery.
6. Value “finding” over “knowing.”

Each of these practices is drawn from the theoretical lenses that I explored in this thesis: Vygotsky’s Social Development Theory, which focuses on social interaction to facilitate learning and building upon what a student already knows; Dorothy Heathcote’s Mantle of the Expert, which puts an emphasis on student-driven reflection; Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed, which uses community story-building to devise solutions to problems; and my research on audience engagement, which outlines the need for increasing an audience’s cultural capital so that they can feel more comfortable at the theatre. To better understand how each of these practices overlaps with the theoretical lenses that inspired me throughout this exploration, see Figure 3.
Figure 3: A visual representation of how the six best practices for Field Trip Plus are derived from theoretical lenses
Source: Julie Woods-Robinson, 2018

Just as they do in TIE, the theories of Vygotsky, Heathcote, and Boal overlap in their priorities for students. This is especially true for the use of active, social reflection. All three theorists emphasized reflection. It is only through reflection that students can create new learning, or move into the ZPD, as Vygotsky would say. One part of the diagram that needs special attention is “cultural capital.” This exists outside of the three theorists because this was not an express
priority in their theories, but the use of cultural tools in Vygotsky’s Social Development Theory and Heathcote’s and Boal’s insistence that theatre can be learned and performed by anyone all support the goal of increasing the cultural capital of all. By increasing cultural capital, we introduce them to the language of the theatre and induct these young people into a greater appreciation of the art form.

In the remainder of this section, I will move through each practice, one by one, and provide examples of how they have been applied to my work.

1. Explore a concept on its feet, in a social environment, first. Reflect, after.

Field Trip Plus lesson plans follow Vygotsky’s general model of a social, participatory exploration guided by an expert (the teaching artist) which results in a period of reflection that solidifies personal learning and development. Like Vygotsky and Heathcote, I draw upon reflection heavily in my lesson plans for Field Trip Plus. I have found that the most practical way to do this is to lessen the amount of activities that I try to facilitate in the class period in favor of ample reflection time. I ask a lot of open ended questions in my lesson plans and leave time for the students to ponder the answers and how they relate to either the activity we are doing or to the play itself, like “How does one make a friend?”

I design each lesson around at least one social activity to stimulate thinking followed by deep, collaborative reflection. For example, in the pre-show lesson plan for *Flora and Ulysses* a play by John Glore, again inspired by FitzGibbon’s delineation of appropriate pre- vs. post-show activities, I took a tangential path into the themes of the play by focusing on social dynamics to which the students can personally relate. The play, based on the novel by Kate DiCamillo of the
same title, is about a young girl who desperately wants to feel that she has a place in her family but struggles with connecting to her mother and father, and subsequently decides that she is a “cynic” and proud of it (Glore). With the students, I wanted to help the students understand the web of emotions that lead Flora to admit that she does not actually want to be a cynic, but instead wants to believe in the goodness of people.

To help students visualize and personally identify with these emotions, I led them in a spectrum activity called Exploding Atom. In this activity, students stand in a circle and respond to statements by taking one step in to signify agreement and one step out to signify disagreement. I gave the students a series of statements designed to help students identify their own behavior in a variety of situations. Cynical responses would lead students to step out of the circle, and non-cynical responses would lead students to step into the center. For example, “Step out if …when one thing goes wrong in your day, it ruins your whole day” and “Step in if …you feel betrayed by an unhappy ending” (see Appendix I). If a student had a lot of cynical responses, they would see that they ended up more alone than other students. This gave us a strong visual upon which to reflect and, to use Heathcote’s language, “wonder” how cynics feel about the world (Wooster 101).

There were two important keys to the success of this activity. First, we began by simply playing the game. The statements held no judgement and most students had some responses that were cynical and some that were not. It is also important that the students are working individually (deciding personal answers to each question) and socially (seeing themselves in relationship to others). This provided a relatively “safe” opening activity to the workshop. Second, we did not define the word “cynic” until after the activity. The students experienced
something socially, then reflected on how it made them feel and what it might mean to their lives. Only *then*, did I introduce the word “cynic” and ask the students if it had any relevance to the activity that we just experienced. On their own, the students observed how cynical behavior can make it difficult to connect with people—much like Flora who has a hard time connecting with other people in her family or making friends, an essential dilemma for her at the beginning of the show. Now, they are primed to look at Flora’s journey through the lens of a young person who is struggling to connect with the world. It allows them to identify with the story even if their personal, family circumstances are different than the character’s.

Defining “cynic” was the main Language Arts learning goal of this lesson. The students got there through their own reflection on a social activity that will also, hopefully, cement the concept in their memory.

2. Cultivate cultural capital.

I observed that it was necessary to increase the cultural capital of the Field Trip Plus students to increase their comfort level and ability to make meaning at the theatre. We have seen, through the explorations in Chapters Three and Four, that once students know what to expect at the theatre, they can free themselves up to look for and notice details so that they can analyze it. If we give them the tools to talk about theatre, then they can translate that skill to all kinds of narratives and get in the habit of looking for meaning in all different kinds of art and literature. A beautiful side-benefit of the spectrum activity from the *Flora and Ulysses* pre-show workshop, for example, is that the students were also practicing making meaning from the observation of people in space, a tool that they can use to make meaning out of the show later.
An important part of that process also involves letting the students know what they can expect at the theatre so that they can feel welcome and comfortable. They can then have a sense of what the experience will look and sound like and what is expected of them in terms of proper audience etiquette. The Education Director was interested in me creating an audience etiquette activity that could be packaged and recreated for every Field Trip Plus pre-show workshop. It needed to be engaging and interactive, not like the lecture I gave in the Nancy Drew pre-show workshop. I wanted it to be social and student-driven, but relay all the facts about a trip to Orlando Repertory Theatre. After a few different rounds of experimentation, I came up with a Social Story for Orlando REP that satisfied all those requirements. I wrote a Readers’ Theatre script about two kids who visit Orlando REP and created a set of nine puppets for students to manipulate to tell the story. Each puppet has a line typed onto the back of it for the students to recite at the appropriate time. In Readers’ Theatre, the teaching artist reads the script out loud, pausing to let each student recite their line. The script is written so that each puppet represents a different experience or expectation for the audience. For instance, one puppet represents an usher in a white shirt like the ushers wear at Orlando REP. That character says, “The house is open!” This lets the students in the workshop know how they can identify an usher and to expect that the usher will tell them where to go. Other puppets represent things that the audience is supposed to do like stay quiet and focus on the stage (see Appendix K). At the end of this activity, I have observed that students usually have extra questions about the theatre experience and stay engaged in what otherwise might be a very dull conversation about a list of rules.
3. Scaffold the lesson.

I find that one way to help students build on what they already know as they are grappling with new or complex ideas is to ask students to make deductions through comparison to their own lives. For instance, in the Polkadots pre-show lesson plan, the students began with a form that was familiar to them: a game. During this game, they had a personal experience. Then, they could consider the word “equality” when applied to human beings and fairness. Through comparison, they can begin to see the nuances of a complex word by applying their personal experience to their understanding of that word. Students in that workshop were so insightful and reflective, based on their personal investment in the game, that they asked theoretical questions about what is “fair” and what is “equal” that moved even beyond what I could have hoped for in the best possible scenario of that lesson.

Throughout the year, I also discovered that it is possible to scaffold the lessons between the pre- and post-show workshops. That is to say that if I want students to create tableau in the post-show workshop, and I do not have time to teach tableau in that same workshop, I can introduce the concept in the pre-show workshop so that students are building on their knowledge from one workshop to the next. For example, when crafting Field Trip Plus lesson plans for the Christmas show The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical by Jahnna Beecham and Malcom Hillgartner, I used individual tableaux in the pre-show workshop to test students’ understanding of vocabulary words. Then, I had them expand to small group tableaux in an activity in the post-show workshop (see Appendices G and H).
4. Pre-show engagements should be tangential in nature; post-show engagements should work with students’ perceptions of the show.

I have already described how the idea of tangential exploration inspired by pre-show workshop for Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical, but I have not addressed the second half of this practice, which is to work with students’ perceptions of the show in the post-show workshop. I experimented with this concept to great success in the post-show workshop for The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical.

In the post-show lesson plan for The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical, I asked students to analyze tableaux to find the symbolic meaning within. The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical is based on the book of the same name by Barbara Robinson, and the story centers around a family of terrible kids known as the Herdmans. However, everyone else in the play is so busy bemoaning the terrible-ness of the Herdmans that they do not reach out to this family to help or to listen and end up behaving pretty badly themselves (Beecham and Hillgartner). The production utilized tableaux or iconic images in the show to introduce each set of characters. During the workshop, I presented the students with laminated pictures of these tableaux from the show and asked them to consider the story being told in the staging of tableau. Could we tell who was the hero, or protagonist, in each scene? Who was the antagonist? How did this picture give us that information? (see Appendix H)

After refreshing our memory by making observations of these pictures, we revisited several key moments of the play by creating our own tableaux, each time using observation to see how the protagonists and antagonists of the play shift over time from the beginning to the
end. The reflection on this activity allowed the students to make inferences about the message of the show, which was that someone you think is bad might not be bad after all.

Analyzing tableau is a strategy regularly used in TIE. Dorothy Heathcote used the word *depiction* rather than *tableau*, but the idea is the same: to use a theatrical device in the classroom and to read it in the way you would read any other cultural tool. Roger Wooster writes that “Theatre contains symbols for interpretation and, together with the pedagogical context offered by TIE, they become powerful tools in understanding the personal, social, and political worlds of the child” (73). In this Field Trip Plus lesson plan, the students connected to their world by considering what it means to look at an issue from both sides and show compassion to those who are at the fringes of society, but the lesson also connected to language arts standards at the same time.

5. Leave room for discovery.

Often championed by Dorothy Heathcote in her practice, leaving room for discovery is essential to pre- and post-show lesson plans. This is exactly the goal of allowing students to pause and analyze a tableau. Wooster writes that Heathcote liked to use the “I wonder why/what” model as a useful way of inviting a range of responses during a facilitation (101). The teaching artist must not dictate what they are supposed to learn, but instead allow the students to come to their own conclusions. In my early Field Trip Plus facilitations, I found that reflection was stiff and stilted because I was too dictatorial within the lesson. I had to find a way to ride the line between meeting an educational standard and leaving room for discovery. One solution that I found is that I can write this into a lesson plan by posing an open-ended question and then, below
it, identifying key concepts or vocabulary that I would like the students to discover within the conversation. An example of this can be seen in Appendix J in the post-show lesson plan for *Flora and Ulysses*. This allows myself and other teaching artists to know the goal of the reflection, without teaching it outright, and only steer the conversation if necessary. Time and time again, the students in Field Trip Plus have surprised me with connections that I didn’t even anticipate them making.

6. Value ‘finding’ over ‘knowing.’

Each of my lesson plans were designed to help students find answers together rather than try to give me a pre-determined rote answer. In the pre-show workshop for *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical*, I used teacher-in-role (also pioneered by Heathcote [Wooster 98]) inside Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed activity, “Activating the Oppressor.” In this case, the oppressor was a hypothetical bully (an allusion to the Herdmans in the show). I wanted the students to encounter a bully (in this case, myself in role), to freeze the action, and to come up with a plan to address this bully. I guided the students through three rounds of considering what outside causes might have caused this bully to act the way they do. “What has put this bully in a bad mood?” (see Appendix G) There is no right or wrong answer in this hypothetical situation; it is entirely up to the students to imagine from their own understanding of how kids and bullies work what might have been said to this bully that morning, that week, or that year. In the final round, the students were invited to try different tactics to get through to the bully and get them to stop their behavior. The earlier identification of the bully’s point of view, led the students to try approaching the bully with compassion, a solution that they discovered on their own.
Reflection

Focusing on these best practices has allowed me to become a more efficient and effective program writer and facilitator for Field Trip Plus. Recently, I sat down to write an entirely new set of workshops for the next production and all I had to do was revisit these best practices to know how to approach and structure the lesson. Positive student and teacher feedback has gotten stronger over the course of the season, and my confidence in the ability of these workshops to teach has solidified. I now have the language to use to support my work and promote this program to schools and teachers so that it will grow in the future.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION: CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

Throughout the course of this thesis, I have crafted my own definition of audience engagement, examined why it is important to invest in engagement strategies with audiences, and explored how to use education and theatre theories to craft effective, interactive pre- and post-show lesson plans for school-age audiences. While Field Trip Plus is an excellent opportunity for reaching young people before and after a performance, giving them space for guided reflection on the play, I still have questions that remain for the future. How can I help extend the engagement opportunities within Field Trip Plus at Orlando REP? What does it look like to craft pre- and post-show lesson plans for different age levels or groups with different needs? How do I guarantee success in each classroom when classroom management varies from teacher to teacher? Is there a structural revision I can make that may facilitate better retention and/or classroom management? Finally, how and when can we extend audience engagement to public audiences as well?

Reaching More Schools

During the 2017/18 season, only one or two schools booked Field Trip Plus workshops for each production. Interest from teachers varied based on whether they wanted the workshops to be conducted at Orlando REP on the day of the field trip or at their respective schools during the weeks before and after their field trip. Each time the workshops were facilitated, teachers and students gave positive feedback, and teachers were generally surprised and impressed at the level
of state standards that were addressed. Often, I would hear teachers saying things like “That is not what I expected!” or “When is the next one?”

Just as often, however, when trying to contact other teachers to book more workshops, they would tell me that had they only known about these workshops and the price sooner, they would have loved to have participated and could have been prepared to do so. As a teaching artist in this field of study, this feedback helps me think about what it looks like to make a program between theatres and schools successful. My interactions with these school teachers have shown me that getting the message out early is key to making a pathway for this type of work. I have also learned throughout the year that it is not helpful to use general language about the work that I do or allude to the idea that I can make the workshops into whatever the teacher wants. I saw firsthand that teachers are generally looking for one of two types of workshops: a “behind the scenes” theatre experience or a curriculum-heavy educational experience. Clear and concise, yet enthusiastic and specific, information proved to be the most helpful when speaking to teachers in getting them excited to invest time and resources into extended theatrical experiences. I am continuing to revise and refine the language that I use to speak about Field Trip Plus to school teachers.

In the future, I think that it would be interesting to have myself or other teaching artists act as ambassadors for the program by visiting schools and giving demonstrations of the kind of open and reflective lessons Field Trip Plus has to offer. This strategy has the potential to quickly let teachers see that the workshops are theoretically supported, relevant to their classroom, and engaging for students. More importantly, it helps build sustaining relationships between artists.
and teachers, and gives the teaching artists a chance to listen to teachers’ wants and needs so that they can continually ask the question, “How can we do better?”

**Different Age Levels and Needs**

As I look towards a growing program, one question that I ask of my work is: how can I prepare for a large volume of workshops when the cultural capital of each group is so different? Many of the classroom exercises and teaching strategies that I have implemented from my research are geared towards upper elementary students: they require a certain independence in reading level, yet they gently introduce concepts that might seem too simple for middle-school age students or higher. For my most recent Field Trip Plus workshops, I had lots of interest from kindergarten classrooms whose reading proficiency would have prohibited the students from participating in several activities. In another instance, I facilitated Field Trip Plus workshops for a class of theatre students for whom several of the introductory theatre activities were rudimentary. It is clear that there should be separate lesson plans for different grade levels, but it is also difficult to know the students’ capabilities before I meet them. Should there be alternate activities prepared so that I can change strategies if I perceive a need to adjust mid-workshop? How do the different students’ needs affect the development of my best practices?

**Classroom Management**

Another issue that I continue to examine for Field Trip Plus is classroom management. As a guest in another teacher’s space, it is hard to plan for the various styles of classroom
management that may exist there. During the post-show workshops for Flora and Ulysses, I noticed some disparities in the working environments of classrooms in the same school. Three out of the four classes that I visited for Flora and Ulysses Field Trip Plus workshops were very easy to facilitate through organic group discussions. The first three teachers obviously nurtured a culture of creative thinking and open discussion. They regularly used the rug at the front of their room for students to sit and have frank discussions about new subjects. These students were highly engaged in the workshop; it was the perfect example of how a Field Trip Plus lesson should go. The last classroom teacher, however, did not give the students as much independence. When I entered, I noticed that some students’ desks were separated and facing away from the rest of the class to show that they were being punished. These same students were unruly whenever I gave them the freedom to stand up from their desks, and it made it very difficult for me to do the types of physical, social activities that I had planned. This experience made me wonder how I could ensure that every lesson would run smoothly when I am not in control of the culture of the classroom. Does this mean that we need to prepare classroom teachers for the kind of open structure that we, as teaching artists, bring into the classroom? What is the best way to do that? I do not have any answers to these questions, but they remain for future consideration. In the meantime, I think that strong teaching techniques and flexibility are the only tools that a teaching artist can use when visiting a new classroom.

Rethinking Structure

Over the course of the past year, I have experimented with several different ways to schedule Field Trip Plus workshops. Partly, this was spurred on by requests from teachers to
accommodate their schedules, and, partly, it was because I was and still am experimenting with the best way to structure the workshops to increase retention and ease classroom management concerns. There are two possible structures: 1) a teaching artist visits the school classroom once in the week before the field trip and once in the week after the field trip, and 2) a teaching artist leads the pre- and post-show workshops in a separate space at the theatre on the day of the field trip, immediately before and after the performance. Conducting workshops in the schools requires teachers to set aside two classroom periods and needs to be planned far in advance when the schools initially book their field trips. Adding workshops on the day of the field trip day at Orlando REP has proven somewhat useful in addressing this issue. However, Orlando REP does not have the space to do that for more than one school at a time. Also, I have experienced the pre-show workshop working well at the theatre itself, but it is less ideal to conduct both workshops on the same day. By the time the students reach the post-show workshop, they are tired from a long day and ready for lunch. Accommodating lunch at the theatre is not a viable solution as it would extend our teaching artist’s work day significantly, but proceeding directly to the post-show workshop is stressful on students’ attention spans and focus.

In TIE, the workshops and the show happen at the same time, and it makes sense to me to “plant the seeds” in a young person’s head directly before the performance, rather than a week before the performance. However, it seems that the space of a week after the performance allows students to let the experience sink in before reflecting on it. A viable suggestion may be to conduct the pre-show workshop at the theatre before the performance and then visit the school one week later to conduct the post-show workshop. In my experience, I think that this would be the optimal structure for the students to get the most out of Field Trip Plus. I believe this would
help students maintain their best focus, and it would also allow the teaching artist to establish their own classroom management technique at the theatre before transferring it to the school classroom. A bonus is that this would cut down on the amount of classroom time that teachers need to devote to this program; it would happen over the course of two weeks, rather than three.

Public Audience Engagement

The last piece of the puzzle is public audience engagement. What does the kind of pre- and post-show questioning and discussion look like when it is translated to public audiences and not just school groups? For this answer, I turn to the New Victory Theater in New York City. The New Victory is a TYA company who does not produce their own shows. They are a touring house and, because of this, their education department is free to invest a lot of energy into audience engagement.

I recently took my family to see a performance at the New Victory and attended the pre-show event in their brand new lower lobby. The new lobby has been specifically designed to house audience engagement activities. It is outfitted with video walls that hold instructions for hands-on activities and is staffed with teaching artists at every show to help audience members interact with each other and with the theme of the show. The show that I saw with my kids was a magic show. I was prepared to spend the performance explaining the illusions to them, but after spending a half an hour together learning how to do some simple magic tricks in the lobby with the help of a teaching artist, my kids understood immediately what was happening on stage. I did not have to lean over and tell my daughter, “See, that’s amazing because she is floating without
holding on to anything.” Instead, she turned to me and told me, “Mom, see how she’s floating? That’s magic.”

After our experience at the theatre, I was able to have a conversation with Renata Melillo from the New Victory’s Education Department. She shared with me that “the goal is that it will spread that the experience of going to the New Victory isn’t just the show. There will always be something for you to do before the show” (Melillo). According to Melillo, public lobby engagement is a high priority to the New Victory but still fairly new. It began as a school program called Spark that is very similar to Field Trip Plus, but now they see active engagement at the public performances of up to seventy people at every show (Melillo). Melillo also drew my attention to the other professional theatres in their area, “What is exciting to me is that I have noticed other theatres starting to use some very light touches audience engagement.” She cited examples of even Broadway theatres just down the street from the New Victory who are adding lobby engagements, like the large map in the lobby of Come From Away that invites audience members to mark where they are from. Why do they do it? Why do they invest so much energy in creating these interactive, whole theatre experiences? Melillo says the real reason to invest in audience engagement for the public, and not just for the schools, is to answer the question: “Why do we go see art and what are we trying to get from it?” (Melillo). The answer, as she sees it, is community building. In other words, the theatre is not just a place for seeing; it is a place for learning, for conversing, and for being together. The beauty of the public lobby engagement at the New Victory is that once they can get parents and families to have conversations about what they are seeing in the theatre with their children, those children can move on to start those conversations themselves, the next time and the next time.
Conclusion

There is a long way to go from a brand-new workshop program to a fully integrated public engagement experience, but this exploration has taught me that there is true value in the social, learning, and cultural experience of seeing and then talking about the theatre. Through my study of audience engagement and the theoretical lenses of TIE, I have strengthened my ability to plant seeds and stimulate discussions with young people who are visiting the theatre. I believe that pre- and post-show engagements like Field Trip Plus are critical in the cultural education of a child, and I hope to continue carving out a space in the industry for audience engagement in all its forms.
APPENDIX A: WRITES OF SPRING 2017:
PRE-SHOW LESSON PLANS AND LOBBY DISPLAYS
VOICE YOUR CHOICE:  
How do you voice your freedom of speech?

Activities for Students and Teachers

Pre-Writing Activities

Vote With Your Feet (K-12)
Students respond to a series of statements by moving from one end of the classroom to the other along a spectrum. One end is total agreement and the other end is total disagreement. Students are invited to share their reasoning after each statement. Here are some sample statements:

- I feel free to make choices everyday.
- My voice is powerful.
- My choices affect other people.
- My choices affect the government.
- There are certain places or situations in which my voice is more powerful than others.

Word Web Brainstorming (K-12)
Help students brainstorm by creating classroom Word Webs: one for “Voice” and one for “Choice.” Start with these words at the center in a bubble. Brainstorm sub-topics as a group to stream off of each center bubble. From there, students can add specific examples off of each sub-topic bubble. Visit below for a printable example:
https://sixtraitswriting.wordpress.com/tag/brainstorm/

Mixed Up Poems (1-2)
Invite each student to write down one sentence or phrase that inspires them after listening to the prompt. Students should mingle around the room until they land in a small group. They can put together their phrases in any order to write a creative poem. Optional: add music while they find their group.

Explore the Anti-Model (3-5)
What does it look like when someone does not have choice or does not have the ability to voice it? Lead a group discussion considering instances both personal and historic examples.

Time to Debate! (9-12)
Pose a debate that allows students to provide support for their ideas and give the class a chance to challenge each other in a little fun. Nothing controversial! (i.e. Is Instagram or Facebook the better app for a teacher to join?) Assign teams and let the debate begin!
Post Activity reflection: How did you voice your choice? Was it difficult? How was it perceived by others? Did vocalizing your choice enhance or take away from the final outcome? How so?

Did you know?

In 1982, there was an American girl named Samantha Reed Smith who wrote a letter to Soviet leader Yuri Andropov when she was only 10 years old! She asked Andropov about relations between the US and Russia and her letter was published in the Soviet newspaper. She was known as “America’s Youngest Ambassador”, after she received a response from Andropov in 1983. Talk about using her voice!

Writing Activities

Picture Prompts (K-5)
Allow students to draw a picture of a person voicing their choice. (This is a great time to reference the voting rights timeline from our first resource guide! Or visit http://www.kqed.org/assets/polleducation/digitalmedia/us-voting-rights-timeline.pdf.) Students may title their picture, and younger grades may wish to write a few sentences or even a few words that tell this story.
Older students may want to expand this activity into a series of pictures which will become a full storyboard from which to write their story.
Lobby Design: Julie Woods-Robinson and Maria Katsadouros
Photo Credit: Julie Woods-Robinson
APPENDIX B:
PUDDIN’ AND THE GRUMBLE JOURNAL
March 1, 2017

Today was our first school performance for *Puddin’ and the Grumble*. There was no talkback or workshop to coincide with the show, but some of the students stayed after the show to talk to the actors at the edge of the stage. The students craved…I craved… an after-performance opportunity for them to interact with the cast and the team. They had some questions, and stayed to have them answered. Also, there was a large deaf population at this school and the deaf students wanted to stay and talk to our student interpreter. I watched all these students rush the stage and then be pulled back to class by their teachers. It ended so abruptly it’s like we only had time to say ‘hello’ and not ‘goodbye.’ We interrupted their school day and didn’t have a chance to let them debrief or put it in the context of their own lives.
APPENDIX C:
NANCY DREW AND HER BIGGEST CASE EVER PRE-SHOW LESSON PLAN
Nancy Drew and Her Biggest Case Ever

Field Trip Plus Pre-Show Workshop Plan

Materials for the Day:
- REP Audience Etiquette Handouts (1 per student)
- Print outs: Nancy Drew Poster, original book jackets, costume renderings, and production photos
- Dialogue Cards (A1-5, B1-5)
- Dry erase markers for board (possible to find in classroom)

Essential Questions: What can we expect at the theatre when we go to The REP to see Nancy Drew and Her Biggest Case Ever? Who is Nancy Drew?

Learning Goal: In preparation for their trip to the theatre, students will identify appropriate audience behavior. They will draw evidence from media materials, Nancy Drew books, and language in the script to support their pre-show analysis of the play.

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards Addressed:

LAFS.K12.SL.1.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

LAFS.K12.R.2.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

LAFS.K12.SL.1.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

TH.4.O.1.In.b: Identify audience behavior required to attend a theatrical performance.

TH.4.F.1.Su.a: Create, re-create, or respond to props, costumes, and dialogue that support a story.
**Warm Up Activity:** Welcome and Tableau
6 Min.- This activity can be done with students at desks.

Hello! My name is _______________ and I’m here from Orlando Repertory Theatre to help you get your minds and bodies ready for your field trip to see Nancy Drew and Her Biggest Case Ever. Today, we are going to talk about what to expect when you walk into the theatre and what is expected of you. Also, we will talk a little bit about who Nancy Drew is and what the play is about.

For Nancy Drew, you will be visiting the theatre for a live performance. With a show of hands, who has seen a live theatre performance before?

- Pause for students to raise their hands.
- Whether you have or haven’t attending the theatre before, it is important to remind ourselves how a theatre audience behaves.

We are going to begin by **comparing and contrasting** the way a crowd or audience of people may act at different types of events or performances.

- Instruct the students to close their eyes and imagine that they are watching a football game (not playing in one). Give them some descriptors of the experience to help them create a picture in their minds.
  - Imagine that it is hot and you are outside on the stands. You are watching the players run back and forth, and your team just scored a touchdown. They are about to kick for 2 points. The cheerleaders are jumping up and down, and maybe you just got a snack at the concession stand.
- Instruct students to open their eyes when they have the picture in their minds. Introduce the vocabulary word **Tableau**, and write “tableau” on the board and have students repeat the word.
  - We are going to create a tableau. Tableau is a French word that we use in the theatre to mean a “still image” or “picture” that we create with our bodies. In this picture, we want active bodies and facial expressions that are frozen to tell a story. The viewer should be able to snap an image of you and understand that you are at a football game. Remember that a statue makes no sound!
- Instruct the students to stand next to their chairs.
- Revisit the picture in your mind of people at a football game and get ready to make a tableau when I say “Freeze.”
  - Count 1-2-3- Freeze!
- Highlight the interesting choices that you see students making.
  - Give yourselves a round of applause for making your first tableau!
  - Instruct student to sit back down for another round.
- Instruct students to close their eyes and imagine that they are visitors in a museum.
Imagine that you are visiting a museum with your class. It is cold inside in the air conditioning. You are following a tour guide around and they have asked you to stay behind the rope so you do not touch the paintings. They tell you an interesting fact about a painting that you see. Imagine what you would do with your body if you that that was really interesting. “Hmm!” Perhaps you are taking notes or pointing at artwork on the wall.

- Repeat tableau game for visitors at a museum.
- Instruct students to sit at the end.

Now let’s compare and contrast the ways that a person acts when they attend either of our examples (a football game or a museum) versus how they act when they see a live theatre performance.

- Raise your hand and tell me one way that attending either a football game or a museum is the same as attending a theatre.
  - Take 2-3 answers from students. It may be helpful to have them start their answer with “Attending _ (a football game)_ and the theatre are the same because….”
- Raise your hand and tell me one way that attending either a football game or a museum is different than attending a theatre.
  - Take 2-3 answers from students. It may be helpful to have them start their answer with “Attending _ (a museum)_ and the theatre are different because…”

**Introductory Activity:** Audience Etiquette- REP Behavior
11 Min.- Students stay in their seats (or their circle).

At The REP, we have a way of remembering our audience etiquette for visiting the theatre. We call it our “REP Behavior.”

- If possible, use the marker board in the classroom to write out the acronym.
  - R- Respect the space
  - E- Enjoy the show!
  - P- Pay attention
- Use the following points to elaborate on the acronym:
  - R- Respect the theatre space
    - Staying off the stage:
      - When you enter the Universal Theatre where Nancy Drew is playing, you will see that the room is a big rectangle.
        - Drawing a diagram on the board or demonstrating in the room may be helpful.
      - Unlike other theatres, the stage is not raised up. It is on the floor right in front of you. The actual stage is separated on the floor by where it is painted and not painted. Just like you would be asked to
not crawl up onto a raised stage, we ask that you do not walk on the painted floor. Why?
  o Take 2-3 answers from students.
    ▪ Also, there are trap doors! Stay clear for your safety.

□ Keeping entrances clear:
  • During the show, stay clear of the entrances at the front corners of the stage. Actors will be entering through these areas—sometimes quickly and sometimes with big props in their hand—they will not be looking out for audience members. If you have an emergency, an usher can help you find the safest way out.

□ Props left onstage:
  • You will also notice that at the break or at the end, you may see props left onstage. Who can define what a prop is?
    o Take 1 answer from students.
      ▪ A prop is an object that an actor carries during the show to help tell the story. You may see a chair, for instance, left onstage at the break. If you are respecting the theatre space, what do you think is your responsibility towards that prop?
    o Take 1 or 2 answers, looking for the answer: “To leave it alone.”
      ▪ A stage manager or crew member will remove that prop after the show, but just like the audience doesn’t walk across the stage, they also don’t touch props.

o E- Enjoy the show!
  ▪ Most importantly, you are there to enjoy the show. Don’t be afraid to react to the show! If an actor does something really funny, what do you do in the audience?
    • Let students answer: Laugh!
    • Let’s laugh all together. 1-2-3- Laugh!
  ▪ If an actor does something onstage that you think is wonderful and they just finished, what do you do?
    • Let students answer: Clap!
    • Let’s all clap together. 1-2-3- Clap!
  ▪ If something happens onstage that shocks you, what do you do?
    • Let students answer: Gasp!
    • Let’s all gasp together. 1-2-3- Gasp!
  ▪ Remember that the actors are live people in the room with you. They can hear and see everything that you do just like you can hear and see them. If they do something you love, let them know! That’s also your opportunity to participate in the show with everyone around you.
P- Pay attention

- Speaking of that fact that actors can see and hear everything you do: we ask that you pay attention during the show. You probably know what this means because you are asked to do it at school too. What are some ways that we can pay attention?
  - Take 2-3 answers from students.
  - Key points: Focus, eyes on stage, not missing part of the story
- To illustrate this point, I have a concentration challenge for you.
  - Have the class try to hold their body still and maintain their concentration on the front of the room.
  - Select a couple student volunteers who, without touching other students, may walk around the desks making silly faces at the other students, trying to break their concentration.
  - Let the game last for 1 min.
- The actors are trying to do exactly what you were trying to do: hold their concentration onstage to create the world of the play.
- We can help the actors by minimizing distractions, like cell phone, eating, or talking to our neighbors.
- We can also minimize distractions by staying in our seats until the break. In the theatre, we call that break an Intermission.
  - Write “Intermission” on the board in the vocabulary column.
  - Intermission is about 5 minutes long, and it is your opportunity to use the restroom, get a drink of water with your chaperone, or talk to your friends about all the fabulous things you just saw.
  - It is also a great time to stand and stretch to get your mind ready for the second act.
    - Have students stand in their place and stretch. Then, sit back down.

Activity 1: The World of Nancy Drew and Her Biggest Case Ever: Four Corners
12 Min.- Students will listen to the questions while sitting at their desks, move to corners for answers, and then return to their desks for discussion.

That was a little bit about what it’s like to enter a theatre, but now we’re going to talk about Nancy Drew, herself.

This game is called Four Corners. I’m going to ask you a question and four possible answers, one for each corner. Wait to hear the question and all the answers before you move to your corresponding corner. Please walk calmly without running or pushing.
• How familiar are you with the character of Nancy Drew, from either her books or her movies? (Very familiar/ Pretty familiar/ A little/ Not at all)
  o Give students time to go to a corner.
  o Invite one student who responded favorably to share their favorite things about Nancy Drew.
  o Instruct students to sit back at their desks.
  o Hang the print out of the show poster at the front of the classroom.
    ▪ Based on what you already know about Nancy Drew or what we can infer from this poster, who is Nancy Drew?
      • Take 1-2 answers from students.
        o Ask them what they saw in the poster that gave them their answer.
    ▪ She is a teenage detective, but in many of her books and in our play, they use the word “sleuth.” A sleuth is just another word for detective.
      • Write “Sleuth” on the board and have students repeat the word.
  o Pass out the print outs of Nancy Drew book jackets. (Preferably one to each desk group.)
    ▪ Nancy Drew started as a book series in which she solves crimes and mysteries. These are some covers from her early books, starting in the 1930’s and continuing today. Our production is based on two early novels, The Bungalow Mystery and The Quest for the Missing Map.
    ▪ Did you know the Carolyn Keene is a pseudonym for all the authors who have ever written about Nancy Drew? Can anyone define “pseudonym”?
      • Answer: “fake name”
    ▪ The original author, Mildred Wirt-Benson, wrote her first book when she was just 24. That was a big deal in the 1930’s. In the 1930s, most young women were expected to either fulfill a limited number of career choices, like librarians or nurses, or to become wives and mothers. Nancy Drew, teenage detective, was way ahead of her time and has been inspiring to many generations!
  o Pass around the print outs of the costume rendering.
    ▪ This is a costume rendering from our production, which means that these are the drawings and inspiration pictures from our costume designer.
    ▪ If you are also being a sleuth, what you can learn about these people or this time-period from looking at the clues in the picture?
      • Take 2-3 answers from students.
  o Pass out the print outs of the production photos to each desk group.
• From observing these production photos, do you think that the set looks like it was designed in a realistic style? (Very realistic/ Pretty realistic/ Only a little realistic/ Not at all realistic)
  o Give students time to change corners.
  o Why did you choose your corner?
    ▪ Take 1 answer from 1 student in each section.
Instruct students to move back to their seats.

Answer: *The production lives in a world in between. Some of the individual pieces look realistic, but the set is left very open and actors called Kokens operate all the set pieces and furniture. You can see them behind the front of the car in the picture. Kokens are a type of puppeteer who rely on our “willing suspension of disbelief” to create the adventures that Nancy goes on, starting with a ski chase!*

**Activity 2: One-Liner Face-Off**

14 Min.- Students volunteers will line up at the front of the classroom. The rest of the students will stay at their seats.

We talked about the 1930’s costumes and the way the props look, but something else that you will notice about *Nancy Drew and Her Biggest Case Ever* is that the characters have a particular way of speaking. Our next exercise will show us some 1930’s phrases to be on the lookout for as we watch the show! We are going to listen for the new vocabulary and try to define it from our context clues.

- Ask for three volunteers to line-up at the front of the classroom on the left and for three volunteers to line-up at the front of the classroom on the right. Place dialogue cards, face-down, in two piles at center (A cards in one pile, B cards in the other pile). The student from either side who is the closest to center will pick up a card and read the dialogue aloud.

Those of you standing at the front of the room are going to have the chance to be actors and try out some of the **dialogue** from the show. Can anyone define “dialogue”?

- Take 1-2 answers from students.
- Answer: Two or more people talking in a conversation.
- Write “dialogue” on the board.
• The dialogue cards should pair as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When you get to school, make sure to ___</td>
<td>I shall <strong>endeavor</strong> to remember that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I brought you a present! It’s a ___</td>
<td><strong>You’re the pancakes!</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh, no. We’re late to ___!</td>
<td>We better <strong>make tracks</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disgusting! Look at this ___</td>
<td>That gives me the <strong>jim jams</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ah! Did you see that awful ___?!</td>
<td><strong>Hypers</strong>! We better get out of here!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Invite the two students closest to the center to pick up A1 and B1 and to read them silently to themselves. Remind the student with the A card to fill in the blanks with their own words.
• Inform the rest of the class that the vocabulary word from the first scene is “endeavor.”
• While the first student actors are preparing, rehearse the rest of the students in a chant to cue the scene: 1-2-3- Curtain up!
• When students are ready, cue the scene as a class: 1-2-3- Curtain up!
• Have first pair repeat the pair of lines twice so that everyone can hear, and then ask the class to define “endeavor,” meaning “try.”
• Model the vocabulary sentence once (“I shall endeavor to remember that!”) and then have the whole class repeat.
• Give a round of applause and have those two students actors sit back at their desks.
• Repeat for each set of lines.
• If there is time, ask for 2 more

**Closing Activity:** Review and Things to Look For
2 Min.- Every student goes back to their seat.

- Pass out audience etiquette handouts while you wrap up the class.

*When you go on your field trip, I want you to think about the things that we talked about today:*
  1. **Be on the lookout for the ways you can use your REP Behavior.**
  2. **Look for visual clues during the show in the costumes and the way the actors use the props. I want to hear about what you observe.**
  3. **Look for the vocabulary we heard here today and even more that we will review next time.**

*Finally, just like in every Nancy Drew book, there is a mystery afoot during the show. Keep track of the clues in your head as you watch and, the next time I see you, I want to hear if you solved it before Nancy did!*
APPENDIX D:
NANCY DREW AND HER BIGGEST CASE EVER POST-SHOW LESSON PLAN
Nancy Drew and Her Biggest Case Ever
Field Trip Plus Post-Show Workshop Plan

Materials for the Day:

- Nancy Drew music to play at the top (optional)

Essential Questions: What are the sequence of events in Nancy Drew and Her Biggest Case Ever and what theatrical elements helped tell the story?

Learning Goal: Students will work as a group to sequence the events of the play as text, using tableau and character work, and reflect on the overall theme of the play.

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards Addressed:

LAFS.K12.R.1.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

LAFS.K12.R.1.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

LAFS.4.RL.2.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

LAFS.4.RL.2.5: Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.

LAFS.4.SL.1.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

TH.4.O.2.In.a: Sequence the major events in a performance.
**Warm Up Activity:** Welcome!  
5 Min.- Greet students at their seats

*How did you like the show? Did you solve the mystery before Nancy did?*
- Allow students to respond with a show of hands.

*Did anything surprise you?*
- Take 2-3 answers from students.

*What did you like most about the show?*
- Take 2-3 answers from students.

Let’s do a warm-up activity that gets us thinking in the theatre frame of mind again. Do you remember how we made tableaux during our first visit of a football game and students in a museum? Who can tell me what “tableau” means?  
- Gather answers from students. Correct answer: still image or statue

We’re going to make tableaux that illustrate the meaning of some of our Nancy Drew vocabulary. There will be a few from our last visit and we will add in some new words as well.  
- Direct students to stand up and find a partner. Preferably, they will use their direct desk mate as a partner, but they can do this activity spread out in any space in the room.

I’m going to give you a vocabulary word that was used in the play and count down from 3. When I say, “Freeze!” You and your partner should freeze in a tableau that shows me what that word means.
- Cycle through the following vocabulary words. Each time, count down from 3 and yell “Freeze!” Choose one pair of students each time to verbally define the word. The definitions are below in parentheses.
  - Make tracks (hurry)
  - Jim jams (to feel nervous or scared)
  - Chums (friends)
  - Vanquish (to defeat thoroughly)
  - Capsize (to overturn a boat in the water)
  - Telepathic (capable of transmitting thoughts to other people)

Transition: Great job mastering tableaux as a pair! You can move back to your seats.

**Introductory Activity:** Character Traits  
5 Min.- Students answer questions from their seats and then stand for the tableaux.

*What are some adjectives you would use to describe Nancy Drew? What are some of her character traits? (Possible answers: confident, brave)*
What does she do in the play that is like those character traits?

- Instruct all the students to stand at their desks and show with their body how Nancy Drew embodies those traits.
- Instruct students to take their seats.
- Ask one student at a time to stand and embody the character trait that corresponds with each of other characters below:
  - George (tough)
  - Bess (nervous)
  - Laura (quiet)
  - Ned (kind/supportive)
  - Stumpy (confident/foolish)

In thinking about these characters and their character traits, raise your hand if you can remember some things that they did to move the story forward.

- Take suggestions from the class and write them on the board. Allow the class to select their own. Below is a list of possible answers. If answers lag, you can ask “And then what happened?”
  - Stumpy Dowd falls off a cliff.
  - Nancy, Bess, and George get rescued from the lake by the Pendleton sisters and learn about the mystery.
  - Nancy, Bess, and George discover a hidden message on one of the papers.
  - Nancy and George fight a burglar at the Pendleton’s who is after the note.
  - Nancy gets kidnapped and escapes.
  - Nancy figures out that the map is in the Warwick.
  - Nancy discovers the real Jacob Aborn & that Stumpy Dowd is alive!
  - Hannah switches the maps to keep it from Stumpy Dowd.
  - Nancy and friends charter a boat to South Fox Island which is then blown up.
  - Stumpy Dowd and Bellows make the friends dig for treasure.
  - The friends fight Stumpy Dowd and Bellows and win!

From this list, you are going to try and determine which are the 3 “main events”: beginning, middle, and end.

Activity 1: Tableaux Beginning, Middle, and End
20 Min.- Students will listen to instructions at their desks and then get into groups of 4 or 5 and sit in their own area of the room.

To do this, you will be forming tableaux with a group. You will need to make three tableaux—you will have 5 minutes for each. They should represent the beginning, middle, and end of the play, as determined by your group.
Before we begin, it’s important to know that every person in the group must be involved in every picture. Let’s practice a way that we can make sure everybody’s ideas get heard. I’d like everyone to start by crossing your arms over your shoulders.

- Demonstrate and wait for students to cross their arms as well.

When your arms are like this, you are thinking about your own idea for the tableau. Now open your arms with your hands out and your palms facing up.

- Demonstrate and wait for students to open their arms.

When your arms are like this, you are sharing your idea with your group. When I split you up, I want to see everyone start by crossing their arms and thinking silently. Then, go around the circle and each person share your idea. That person should be the only one talking. When everyone has shared, you can work together to make your tableau.

- Instruct students to split into groups of 4 or 5 and find a place in the room away from other groups. Ideally, they will be able to use the ready-made groups of their desk groupings.

So, face in to your group and cross your arms.

Start with just the beginning. Think first quietly about what event you think represents the beginning, then take turns around the circle sharing your idea for tableau 1 and what part you would like to play. Once everyone has shared, you can start planning as a group. I will let you know when to stop working on Tableau 1.

- Put on some music for the students to work.
- Circle the room making sure all the students have a chance to participate in creating the tableau. Prompt them with questions that keep them on the right track. Encourage them to practice the tableau on its feet and to use different levels in the tableau.
- At the end of the five minutes for tableau 1, choose one group to demonstrate a successful group tableau.
- Repeat the five-minute block for tableau 2 (middle) and tableau 3 (end). Remind students to begin by crossing their arms and sharing in a circle. Each time pick one group to show their tableau. (You can reassure students that they all will show their tableaux at the end of the class.)

**Activity 2: Stringing it Together**

5 Min.- Students should be back sitting with their groups.

In our last activity, we’re going to string it all together! Each group will perform their 3 tableaux: beginning, middle, and end. But we are going to add one more thing. After your tableaux, I want your group to finish the performance with one saying, or “aphorism,” like the ones Nancy Drew said to the audience throughout the show. This should be short thought that tells us what you think is the main theme of the play. All the people in the group can say it
together or you can have one person say it. You have 2 minutes to write your short thought for the aphorism and to practice it all together!

- Allow students 5 minutes to plan and practice. Circle the room looking to add dimensions when applicable and clarify when necessary.
- Use the last 3 minutes for sharing. Students can stay in their own spaces and turn to face each group as they present or the presenting group can go to the front of the room and the rest can go to their desks. It is helpful to play music during their presentations.
- Congratulate students on a job well done! Invite brief comments, if time allows, on what worked and the similarities that appeared between the groups.

**Closing Activity:** Thank them for their good work and invite the class back to the theatre any time!
APPENDIX E:
POLKADOTS: THE COOL KIDS MUSICAL PRE-SHOW LESSON PLAN
Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical
Field Trip Plus Pre-Show Workshop Plan

Materials for the Day:
- Pencils-- usually provided in the classroom
- Bag of Red Squares and Blue Squares (construction paper and laminating sheets)
- Expo Marker-- usually provided in the classroom
- Social Story & Puppets

Essential Questions: What is segregation, and what can we expect when we go to Orlando REP to see Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical?

Learning Goal: The students will think critically about the words “discrimination,” “segregation,” and “equality.” They will also identify the expectations of the audience in a theatre space.

Florida State Standards Addressed:

LAFS.4.L.3.AP.4a: Use context to determine the meaning of unknown or multiple-meaning words, or words showing shades of meaning.

LAFS.5.SL.1.AP.1c: Review and respond to the key ideas expressed within a collaborative discussion.

TH.4.O.1.In.b: Identify audience behavior required to attend a theatrical performance.
Warm Up Activity: Welcome
10 Min. - This activity can be done with students at their desks or in a circle.

Hello! My name is _______________ and I’m here from Orlando Repertory Theatre.

How many of you have been to Orlando REP before?

How many of you have seen a live play before?

I’m here to help you get your minds ready to see Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical. Before you see the show, we’re going to play a game, talk about some ideas and vocabulary we will see in the show, and go over good audience etiquette. Ready?

Activity 1: Wax Museum, Polkadots Edition
25 Min. - This activity can be done with students standing by their desks or in their own space.

ROUND 1
- Teaching artist will introduce the game by telling the students they are statues in a wax museum. Normally, statues don’t move or make noise, but in this wax museum, they can move when no one is looking at them. The teaching artist will give them a theme and they need to make a statue that shows that theme.
- The teaching artist is a visitor to this wax museum, and, if they catch one of the statues moving or making noise, that person will be “out.” When a person is out, they will sit right where they are and stay quiet for the remainder of the game.
- The teaching artist will turn their back to signal the start of the game. They will say, “I am visiting a wax museum and I’m excited to see statues of ______.” These should be physically active prompts. Examples of themes to fill that blank: People impatiently waiting for the bus, chickens pecking the ground, Olympic athletes about to win the gold medal. Teaching artists will continue to give prompts, turning their back whenever they change the prompt so that students can strike a new pose. Teaching artists will mark students as “out” when appropriate.
- Continue until only a few students are left standing. They will be the winners.

ROUND 2
- This time the game will be the same PLUS a few new rules. The teaching artist will put a line of tape on the ground, indicating a separation between the Blue Team and the Red Team. This is now a team competition.
- Teaching artist says: Let’s imagine that the Red Team is on top. They are better. And the Blue Team has a new rule.
- NEW RULE: Blue Team members, just the Blue Team, must do every pose standing on one foot. If they are not on one foot, they will be out even if they are not moving.
• It is important the teaching artist remain completely impartial and dispassionate. These are simply the rules.
• Play until one team wins.

DISCUSSION: How did you like that version of the game? Do you think it was fair? What was unfair about it? How did it make you feel to tell the other team that they are “better?”

VOCABULARY: (write on board)
1. Giving different opportunities to someone based on something they can’t control-- like which team you are on-- is called DISCRIMINATION.
2. Me separating you into two different groups is called SEGREGATION.
3. Have you heard these words used before? When?

ROUND 3
• This time let’s try to make it a little more even, but don’t worry, Blue Team, I’ll be looking out for you this time.
• NEW RULE: Everyone must stand on one foot the whole time.
• NEW RULE FOR TEACHING ARTIST: This time, without letting the class know ahead of time, the teaching artist will make lots of excuses for the Blue Team: they are now the “better” team. Some examples of this may be, “That doesn’t count, because that was just a mistake,” “You didn’t move that much, so you can stay in,” or “I know you didn’t mean that. You can stay.” Remember: these concessions are ONLY for the Blue Team.

DISCUSSION: Red Team, how did that feel? Do you think it’s fair to be grouped this way?
• Teaching artist should collect the color cards during this discussion.

VOCABULARY: (write on board)
• What does EQUALITY look like? How could we have achieved this?

These thoughts and feelings you’re having right now-- I want you to keep them in mind while you watch the show. When I come back/ after the show, we will see what we think.

Now, we’re going to switch gears and talk about audience etiquette.

Activity 2: Audience Etiquette
10 Min.
• For this activity, the teaching artist will cast the following characters to come stand at the front of the room:
  o Barrie
  o Carrie
  o Adult
  o Box Office Person
- Usher
- Lights
- Not speaking
- Listening
- Seeing

- Teaching artist will pass out the puppets/signs and tell the students who volunteered to listen for their character’s name so they will know when to show their part of the story.
- Teaching artist will then tell the group that there will be a part at the end that everyone will join in and to listen for the word “Everyone.”
- Then, the teaching artist will read from the Reader’s Theatre script (see Appendix K). In general, expect to read the action and dialogue, then instruct the student to speak the lines themselves while doing the action.

**Closing Activity:**

- *You are ready to see Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical. We played our special version of Wax Museum, we talked about our vocabulary words, and reviewed proper audience etiquette. All that’s left is to enjoy the show!*
APPENDIX F:
POLKADOTS: A COOL KIDS MUSICAL POST-SHOW LESSON PLAN
Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical
Field Trip Plus Post-Show Workshop Plan

Materials for the Day:
- Pencils-- usually provided in the classroom
- Radio and track of the “Squa-dot”

Essential Questions: What was effective about the way the story was told? How can we be the “next generation of thought?”

Learning Goal: The students will learn about the history of the Little Rock 9 and Ruby Bridges, on which Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical is based. Students will devise alternate endings to scenes from the play and celebrate diversity.

Florida State Standards Addressed:

LAFS.4.L.3.AP.4a: Use context to determine the meaning of unknown or multiple-meaning words, or words showing shades of meaning.

LAFS.5.SL.1.AP.1c: Review and respond to the key ideas expressed within a collaborative discussion.

LAFS.3.RL.1.AP.1a: Answer questions related to characters, setting, events or conflicts

TH.4.C.3.Pa.c: Recognize an element of a selected scene that supports an effective presentation of an event or person.

SS.4.C.2.Su.b: Recognize ways to work with a group to help solve a community problem, such as voting, meeting together, and sharing information.
**Warm Up Activity:** Dramaturgy and Play Analysis
10 Min.- This activity can be completed with students at their desks.

*I hope you enjoyed the show! Did you have any favorite moments from the play?*

*I want to let you in on a little of the history that inspired Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical.*

(Show pictures as you tell the story.)

- In 1960 in New Orleans, Ruby Bridges became the first black child to attend a previously all-white school. She was six years old. She was escorted to school on the first day by four federal marshals who protected her as she walked through angry mobs. Even though the mobs threw objects and insults at Ruby, she continued to stay strong. When she got to school, she found an empty classroom, and her teacher taught her alone for an entire year until the white parents finally decided to send their children back to school.
  - Source: *The Civil Rights Movement for Kids* by Mary C. Turck

- Even before Ruby Bridges, another group of young people faced angry crowds and certain danger to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. They became known as the Little Rock Nine. In 1957, their famous march into this public high school put the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision to end school segregation into motion.
  - Source: The Little Rock Nine Foundation

- **VOCABULARY:** INTEGRATION *is what it is called when groups of people who are different are woven together in society and given the same opportunities.*
  - Do you think that Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical accurately portrayed these stories?
  - What did you see the playwright use in the story that was directly from history?
  - How did they change facts from history to tell the story in a different way?

Let’s take a look at some of the scenes we remember and see what would happen if the characters had approached the situation differently.

**Activity 1:** Forum Theatre
20 Min.

- Teaching artist will ask students to recall a scene in the show in which someone was treated unfairly or was segregated against.
- The teaching artist will lead the class to summarize the events of the scene together, and then ask for a few volunteers to act that out.
- The teaching artist will call out “Freeze” when they get to the point of the scene in which the character could have made a more positive decision that would allow everyone to be integrated.
- The teaching artist will invite the students in the audience to “tap in” to the scene and offer an alternate ending. They may try several alternate endings per scene.
- Repeat as time allows.
DISCUSSION: Do you feel that we offered better choices for the characters in the scene? Did this solve the problem? If not, why? How can we model behavior in our everyday lives in which we treat everyone equally?

Activity 2: Learn the Squa-dot!
5 Min.- This activity can be completed with students standing next to their desks or spread out throughout the room.
- Teaching artist will teach the chorus of “The Squa-dot” with the choreography from the show.

Closing Activity: Thank you for spending the time with us to discuss Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical and please come see us again at Orlando REP!
APPENDIX G:
THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER: THE MUSICAL PRE-SHOW
LESSON PLAN
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical
Field Trip Plus Pre-Show Workshop Plan

Materials for the Day:
- Laminated Signs that say “Angelic” and “Menace”
- Expo Marker-- usually provided in the classroom
- Social Story & Puppets

Essential Questions: Why does a bully act the way they do? What can we do to reach out to someone in need? What can we expect when we go to the theatre?

Learning Goal: The students will think critically about the words “menace” and “angelic” and identify ways to reach out to someone who is a bully or an outcast. They will also identify the expectations of the audience in a theatre space.

Florida State Standards Addressed:

LAFS.4.L.3.AP.4a: Use context to determine the meaning of unknown or multiple-meaning words, or words showing shades of meaning.

LAFS.5.SL.1.AP.1c: Review and respond to the key ideas expressed within a collaborative discussion.

TH.4.O.1.In.b: Identify audience behavior required to attend a theatrical performance.

HE.4.B.4.In.a: Identify effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health, such as practicing assertive, aggressive, or passive responses and demonstrating empathy for others.
Warm Up Activity: Welcome
10 Min. - This activity can be done with students at their desks or in a circle.

Hello! My name is _______________ and I’m here from Orlando Repertory Theatre.

How many of you have been to Orlando REP before?

How many of you have seen a live play before?

How many of you have read the book The Best Christmas Pageant Ever by Barbara Robinson?

I’m here to help you get your minds ready to see The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical. Before you see the show, we’re going to play an imagination game, talk about some ideas and vocabulary we will see in the show, and go over good audience etiquette. Ready?

Activity 1: Activating the Bully
25 Min.

Embodying Vocabulary- I am going to give you a sentence with a vocabulary word in it and I want you to see if you can give me a definition.

- The first vocabulary word is ANGELIC: “That student is so wonderful in my class they are almost angelic.”
  - The teaching artist will show the laminated word and take 1-3 suggestions from students about the definition of the word “Angellic” before defining the word.

  VOCABULARY:
  ANGELIC- pertaining to angels, good
    - Does it look like this? - Teaching artist will put the word down on the board and take a pose representing “Angellic.”
    - Teaching artist will then invite students to stand at their desks and do an angelic pose as well.
    - If someone said you were angelic, how would it make you feel? If they asked you to help them with something, would you want to help them?

- The next vocabulary word is MENACE: “It’s impossible to get anything done with you here! Stop being such a menace!”
  - Teaching artist hold up a laminated sign that says “Menace” and take 1-3 suggestions from students about the definition of the word “Menace” before defining the word.

  VOCABULARY:
MENACE- a person or thing who is likely to cause harm

- *Does it look like this?* - Teaching artist will put the word down on the board and take a pose representing “Menace.”
- Teaching artist will then invite students to stand at their desks and do a menacing pose as well.
- *How would it make you feel if someone called you a menace? Would you want to help that person?*

**DISCUSSION:** *In the play, the characters use these words to refer to the good kids and the bad kids. Why might someone use these words? Is it helpful? Why or why not?*

**Investigation-** *Often, a bully can be called a “menace.” Let’s investigate what is behind how a bully behaves. Why do they do what they do?*

- *Let’s imagine that I’m a bully.*
  - Teaching artist stands in the center of the room and goes into role as the bully (“Get out of my way!” or “Give me your lunch money”), stepping out of role to give instructions and take suggestions.
- **ROUND 1**
  - The teaching artist will invite the students to imagine one sentence that the bully may have heard this morning before getting to school, from a parent or a bus driver or another student outside. What has put this bully in a bad mood?
  - The teaching artist will take three suggestions.
- **ROUND 2**
  - The teaching artist will invite the students to imagine one sentence that the bully may have heard during the past week.
  - Take three suggestions.
- **ROUND 3**
  - The teaching artist will invite the students to imagine one sentence that the bully may have heard at a past birthday.
  - Take three suggestions.
- *That sounds awfully hard to hear all those things for all those years. I think our bully might need some cheering up- what can you say to her/him?*
  - Teacher goes back into role as the bully, but this time she/he is very sad and defensive.
  - The students will talk to the “bully” to cheer her/ him up. The bully can resist a little bit with “I don’t care what you say” or “I don’t need anybody” before letting themselves be affected by what the students are saying.
  - Teaching artist may step in and out of role if the students need more prompting to speak to the “bully.”

**DISCUSSION:** *Why did you choose to say what you said to the bully at the end? What are some simple ways that we can try to reach out to someone instead of labeling them a “menace”?*
• use humor
• not make assumptions about them
• invite them to work in your group
• ask questions about their day
• ALWAYS speak to a trusted adult, however, if you continue to be bullied by someone

I want you to keep these things in mind while you watch the show and consider if they apply to some of the characters that you see on stage.

Now, we’re going to switch gears and talk about audience etiquette.

**Activity 2:** Audience Etiquette
10 Min.
• For this activity, the teaching artist will cast the following characters to come stand at the front of the room:
  o Barrie
  o Carrie
  o Adult
  o Box Office Person
  o Usher
  o Lights
  o Not speaking (prep this student to say “Shhh!”)
  o Listening (prep this student to say “Huh?”)
  o Seeing (prep this student to say “What happened? What happened?!”)
• Teaching artist will pass out the puppets/signs and tell the students who volunteered to listen for their character’s name so they will know when to show their part of the story.
• Teaching artist will then tell the group that there will be a part at the end that everyone will join in and to listen for the word “Everyone.”
• Then, the teaching artist will read from the Reader’s Theatre script attached. In general, expect to read the action and dialogue, then instruct the student to speak the lines themselves while doing the action.
  READ FROM THE READERS’ THEATRE SCRIPT (see Appendix K)

**Closing Activity:**
You are ready to see The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical. We talked about our vocabulary words, explored why someone might be acting like a bully and how we can try and reach out to that person, and reviewed proper audience etiquette. All that’s left is to enjoy the show!
APPENDIX H: 
THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER: THE MUSICAL POST-SHOW 
LESSON PLAN
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical
Field Trip Plus Post-Show Workshop Plan

Materials for the Day:
- Pencils-- usually provided in schools
- Expo marker (& white board at the theatre)
- Character Map & Figures, prepped with tape
- Paper and crayons
- (If workshop is happening at Orlando REP, use tape to define a seating area on the floor for the students to minimize classroom management. Small groups can sit in a circle.)

Essential Questions: What can we learn about the play by identifying the protagonists and antagonists?

Learning Goal: Students will define and identify the protagonists and antagonists in The Best Christmas Pageant Ever the Musical. They will embody moments from the play and analyze when the protagonists and antagonists of the story change. Students will use critical thinking to determine the message of the play.

Florida State Standards Addressed:

LAFS.4.L.3.AP.4a: Use context to determine the meaning of unknown or multiple-meaning words, or words showing shades of meaning.

LAFS.5.SL.1.AP.1c: Review and respond to the key ideas expressed within a collaborative discussion.

LAFS.3.RL.1.AP.1a: Answer questions related to characters, setting, events or conflicts

LAFS.2.RL.1.AP.3b: Describe or select a description of how characters respond to major events or problems in a story.

TH.2.S.3.In.a: Pretend to be someone or something else using basic acting skills.
**Warm Up Activity:** Play Analysis
10 Min.- This activity can be completed with students at their desks.

*I hope you enjoyed the show! Did you have any favorite moments from the play?*

*Were you able to pick out the kids who were the bullies? What was that word that they used to label those kids, again?*

Answer: MENACES

- Let’s have everyone stand up where you are and show me your best menacing “Herdman” in 3-2-1!
- Repeat the activity but this time ask everyone to freeze in the “most menacing” position.
- Ask students to sit back down.
- *When we freeze in a position like that in the theatre-- one that shows the absolute best representation of a character or a moment-- it is called “TABLEAU.”*
- Have students repeat the word “tableau” and write in on the board.

**Activity 1:** Analyzing the Text: Protagonists and Antagonists
30 Min.

*We’re going to come back to “tableau” in a moment so keep it in your mind, but first I would like to throw two other words out there:*

**PROTAGONIST:** the person that the story centers around; it is usually from their point of view; often “the hero”
**ANTAGONIST:** the person who is causing the conflict with the protagonist; “the villain”

- Teaching artist should first introduce the words and write them on the board. Then, ask students if they have heard of or can define these words. Then, offer the definitions.
- Teaching artist should bring out the Character Map board and the character figures.
- Teaching artist will present the character figures as options: *Who do we think was the protagonist in The Best Christmas Pageant Ever?*
  - Coach students to think about the point of view of the story.
  - Tape up the character that the students decide is the protagonist under “Protagonist.”
  - Ask the students to stand and make individual tableaux representing the protagonist.
- *Who do we think was the antagonist in The Best Christmas Pageant Ever?*
  - Coach students to think about who created the conflict.
  - Tape up the character that the students decide is the antagonist under “Antagonist.”
  - Repeat tableau of antagonist.
Let’s review some important moments of the play. We are going to make some tableaux and see if these are always the protagonists and antagonists.

- Teaching artist should write each moment on the board as the class discusses them (listed below).
- With each one, the teaching artist will cast the characters in the scene, one by one, to add on to a tableau at the front of the room. Encourage students to really commit to their characters.
- Teaching artist will lead the rest of the students through observing and analyzing the tableau.
  - Whose point of view are we seeing here?
  - Is that person the “hero” of this scene?
  - Do we sympathize with them? (optional)
  - Who is causing the conflict or the problem in the scene?
- Switch any character figurines as necessary on the Character Map board to reflect the discussion after each tableau.

Part 1: Mrs. Bradley finds out that she will be directing the show.
Part 2: The Herdmans take over the audition.
Part 3: Ivy and Alice blame Beth’s mom for the Herdmans.
Part 4: Beth and her Mom take a basket to the Herdmans.
Part 5: The Herdmans come back and they do the show!

DISCUSSION: What happens when the Herdmans switch to the protagonists? What is the lesson that we think the original author Barbara Robinson was trying to tell us? What can we take away from this?

Closing Activity: Thank you for spending the time with us to discuss The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical and please come see us again at Orlando REP!
APPENDIX I:
*FLORA AND ULYSSES* PRE-SHOW LESSON PLAN
Flora and Ulysses
Field Trip Plus Pre-Show Workshop Plan

Materials for the Day:
- Laminated Dialogue cards (color coded in pairs)
- Expo Marker & White Board-- usually provided in the classroom
- Social Story & Puppets

Essential Questions: What does it mean to be a “cynic?” How does that influence how a person makes friends? What can we expect to see and hear during the show?

Learning Goal: The students will identify and explore the definitions of vocabulary from the play. They will practice basic improvisational skills like thinking on your feet and creating dialogue. They will also identify the expectations of the audience in a theatre space.

Florida State Standards Addressed:

LAFS.4.L.3.AP.4a: Use context to determine the meaning of unknown or multiple-meaning words, or words showing shades of meaning.

LAFS.5.SL.1.AP.1c: Review and respond to the key ideas expressed within a collaborative discussion.

TH.4.O.1.In.b: Identify audience behavior required to attend a theatrical performance.

HE.4.B.4.In.a: Identify effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health, such as practicing assertive, aggressive, or passive responses and demonstrating empathy for others.
**Warm Up Activity:** Welcome
5 Min.- This activity can be done with students at their desks or in a circle.

*Hello! My name is _____________ and I’m here from Orlando Repertory Theatre.*

*How many of you have been to Orlando REP before?*

*How many of you have seen a live play before?*

*How many of you have read the book Flora and Ulysses by Kate DiCamillo?*

*How many of you have read a comic book or imagined you were a superhero before?*

I’m here to help you get your minds ready to see Flora and Ulysses. Before you see the show, we’re going to talk about some ideas and vocabulary we will see in the show, play a few improv games, and go over good audience etiquette. Ready?

**Activity 1:** Spectrum Activity- Cynic or Believer? *(COLORED CARDS for in-school workshops- how many of each color did you end up with?)*
10 Min.

*For our first activity, I’m going to give you a few statements and ask you to respond by moving your body.*

- Ask students to stand in a circle. Instruct students that they should take one step after each question to show their answer.
- Give students the questions, one by one, allowing time for students to decide if they will step in or out.
  - Step out if … when one thing goes wrong in your day, it ruins your whole day.
  - Step out if … you prefer doing a project by yourself.
  - Step in if … you prefer doing things with a group.
  - Step in if … you generally like to think that everything will turn out okay.
  - Step out if … it makes you nervous thinking about if people will show up to a party.
  - Step in if … you feel betrayed by an unhappy ending.
- Instruct students to stay where they landed while you ask the reflection questions.
  - REFLECTION: *Did you find yourself only stepping in, only stepping out, or doing a little bit of both?*
  - *What kind of feeling did you have each time you stepped in? What about each time you stepped out?*
  - *What kind of feeling does it give you to look around at where you landed?*
- Instruct students to have a seat. Write the word “cynic” on the board.
  - In Flora and Ulysses, Flora uses the words “cynic” a lot. She says, “I am a natural-born cynic.” Sometimes we hear the word “cynical” used to describe
someone who believes that every person is only out for himself or herself. There are times when I think all of us feel a little cynical. Do you think there were times in this activity when you were channeling your inner cynic?

Follow-up question: When can being a cynic be a good thing? When can it get in the way?
- Allow a few minutes for discussion. Have students redefine “cynic” at the end.

**Activity 2:** How Does One Make a Friend?: Improv 101
10 Min.

Sometimes when you are feeling cynical and it stops you from connecting with other people. How does a person make a friend in that case?

The next game is called “What are you doing?” and it helps us practice listening and working together-- which is helpful when making a friend but are also important skills for our actors on stage.

Instruct the students to form a standing circle. Invite the student to your left to pair with you as an example. -- **IN-SCHOOL SETTING: use only two volunteers in front of the class at a time**

- Player B (teaching artist) turns to Player A (student on left) and says, “What are you doing?”
- Player A thinks of an action that can be accomplished or mimed right there in the room (jumping, reading, counting the ceiling tiles…) and tells that action to Player B.
- Player B then begins (and does not stop) acting out that action.
- Player C (the next student to the right of the teaching artist) notices Player B doing an action. Player C asks Player B, “What are you doing?”
- Player B (while continuing the first action) thinks of a new action and tells it to Player C.
- When Player C begins the new action, Player B can stop.
- Play continues around the circle.
- The trick of this game is that you have to do the action said by the other person, not the one you are saying to them.

**REFLECTION:** What was difficult about this game? What did you have to do to succeed? How did it feel trying to make up actions for other players on the spot? How did you feel toward your partners who made up actions for you? Why do you think we did this activity?
**Activity 3:** Vocabulary in Action: Improv 102
15 Min.

In our story, Ulysses is a superhero, and he and Flora are out to stop villainy wherever they may find it- and a cynic can find villainy many places because what is the definition of a cynic again? (Let the students answer)

Let’s do a little bit more thinking on our feet and see if we can find the definition of some of the words they use in the show while they are on their quest.

- Let the students practice the form first:
  - Ask the group: *Imagine you are in a detective story. Can you fill in this sentence for me?*
    - “Gasp! The suspect left behind a ___________."
  - When they have filled in the sentence, give them the responding vocabulary word in a sentence:
    - “I posit that they left in a hurry.”
  - What do you think the word *posit* means in the context of this sentence?
- Places two piles of cards (Set A and Set B) down on the floor in the front of the room, center.
- Instruct the students: *On one set of cards (Set A), I have sentences with blanks in them. On the other set of cards (Set B), I have matching sentences with vocabulary words in them. I need volunteers who have loud, clear voices to come up and complete and read these sentences-- like we just practiced-- with energy, so that we can determine the definition of the word.*
- Ask for four volunteers to line-up at the front of the classroom on the left and for four volunteers to line-up at the front of the classroom on the right. Lay the piles of cards in the center: Set A in front of one line and Set B in front of the other. The two sides will face towards the middle.
  - On each turn, the pair closest to the middle will come together, select the card on top of each pile, and do their scene.
- After each pair reads/completes their cards, ask the class to define the word based on the context clues.
- The student with card B can read the official definition on the bottom of the card out loud to the class.
- Then have everyone repeat the sentence that uses the word together.
- When finished, Students A and B can either return to the back of the line or have a seat with the rest of the class.
• The cards should pair as follows: (They are color-coded to match.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Someone stole my _____________!</td>
<td>We have to stop this <strong>malfeasance</strong>!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Evil Laugh)</strong> You thought you were going to ________________, but now you’re trapped!</td>
<td>Oh no! I’ve been <strong>shanghaied</strong>!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’ve ruined everything! I will never be able to complete my evil plot to ____________!</td>
<td>You have been <strong>vanquished</strong>!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wow! This room is as big as ____________!</strong></td>
<td>Yes! It is <strong>capacious</strong>!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Something really big)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(ka-PA-shus)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Great job! Look for these words while you watch the show!**

**Now, we’re going to switch gears and talk about audience etiquette, what is expected of you during the performance.**

**Activity 4: Audience Etiquette**
10 Min.

• For this activity, the teaching artist will cast the following characters to come stand at the front of the room:
  o Barrie
  o Carrie
  o Adult
  o Box Office Person
  o Usher
  o Lights
  o Not speaking (prep this student to say “Shhh!”)
  o Listening (prep this student to say “Huh?”)
  o Seeing (prep this student to say “What happened? What happened?!”)
• Teaching artist will pass out the puppets/signs and tell the students who volunteered to listen for their character’s name so they will know when to show their part of the story.
• Teaching artist will then tell the group that there will be a part at the end that everyone will join in and to listen for the word “Everyone.”
• Then, the teaching artist will read from the Reader’s Theatre script attached. In general, expect to read the action and dialogue, then instruct the student to speak the lines themselves while doing the action.

READ FROM THE READERS’ THEATRE SCRIPT (see Appendix K)

Closing Activity:
You are ready to see Flora and Ulysses. We talked about our vocabulary words, explored what it means to be a cynic and a believer and how to make a friend, and reviewed proper audience etiquette. All that’s left is to enjoy the show!
APPENDIX J:
FLORA AND ULYSSES POST-SHOW LESSON PLAN
**Flora and Ulysses**  
**Field Trip Plus Post-Show Workshop Plan**

**Materials for the Day:**
- Pencils—usually provided in schools
- Expo marker (& white board at the theatre)
- Comic book Storyboard Templates

**Essential Questions:** What does it mean to have a character arc? How can we demonstrate that through multiple forms of storytelling?

**Learning Goal:** Students will discuss and discover the differences between multiple story forms. They will use tableaux to examine and understand character arcs. They will create their own superhero animal and character arc in the form of a comic book storyboard.

**Florida State Standards Addressed:**

**LAFS.5.SL.1.AP.1c:** Review and respond to the key ideas expressed within a collaborative discussion.

**LAFS.4.RL.2.5:** Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.

**LAFS.3.RL.1.AP.1a:** Answer questions related to characters, setting, events or conflicts

**LAFS.2.RL.1.AP.3b:** Describe or select a description of how characters respond to major events or problems in a story.

**TH.2.S.3.In.a:** Pretend to be someone or something else using basic acting skills.
Warm Up Activity: Check-In
5 Min.- This activity can be completed with students at their desks.

I hope you enjoyed the show! Did you have any favorite moments from the play?
- Teaching artist should take 2-3 answers from the class.

Activity 1: Introduction to Story Forms
10 Min.

We’re going to look at a couple different forms that a person can use to tell a story. For instance, the story of Flora and Ulysses was told this time as a play.

- In the book, the moment when Flora sees Mrs. Tickham with the vacuum cleaner sounds like this:
  - “She got up from her desk and looked out the window and saw Mrs. Tickham running around the backyard with a shiny, oversize vacuum cleaner. ‘Hey, now,’ said Flora. She banged on the window. ‘Watch out!’ she shouted. ‘You’re going to vacuum up that squirrel!’ She said the words, and then she had a strange moment of seeing them, hanging there over head. ‘You’re going to vacuum up that squirrel!’ There is just no predicting what kind of sentences you might say, thought Flora.”

- In the play, the moment when Flora sees Mrs. Tickham with the vacuum cleaner looks like this:
  - Teaching artist should set up the following scene. Use a student volunteer to play Flora and the squirrel. Quietly, give the volunteers instructions to act out the following script. Teaching artist can play Mrs. Tickham.
    - “Mrs. Tickham: Well, here goes nothing. She turns on the vacuum. It makes a loud roaring noise, and then it pulls Mrs. Tickham with a lurch, dragging her around the yard. Flora is quietly amused. She is less amused when the machine heads straight for the unwitting squirrel.

Flora: Watch out for that squirrel!”

- How are these two versions of the story different?
  - Teaching artist should allow students a few minutes to brainstorm some ideas.
  - Key Concepts to Address: (write emboldened vocabulary words on the whiteboard)
    - A book uses a lot of narrative. It describes the action happening.
    - A play uses mostly dialogue-- two or more characters speaking to each other-- and action to show what’s happening.
**Activity 2:** Creating Your Own Animal Superhero!

5 Min.

*If we were to create our own stories about animal superheroes, think about what your animal would be.*

*Close your eyes and picture this animal.*

Guided imagination (Students will silently consider the following questions):
- *How does this kind of animal normally stand in the real world? All fours? Upright on two legs?*
- *Does it fly, run, jump, swim?*
- *What kind of things is this type of animal normally good at?*
- *Where does it live?*
- *What does it eat?*

*When I count down from 3, open your eyes and shape your body to look like this animal in the real world. You may stand up from your desks. 3-2-1- Freeze!*
- Teaching artist can take a moment to remark on the good work they see happening.
- Have students return to their seat for the next prompt.

*Now close your eyes, and think about what their superpower would be.*

Guided imagination:
- *Does your animal superhero have the super strength or super speed? Does it have super intelligence? Does it fly when it didn’t before?*
- *Does your animal superhero talk out loud or just think, like Ulysses?*

*When I count down from 3, strike a superhero pose that your animal would do-- Remember, an animal body sometimes moves differently than a human body. 3-2-1- Freeze!*

*Would anyone like to share what their animal is and what it’s superpower is?*
- Teaching artist can call on 1-3 students to share their examples.*
**Activity 3:** Story Form: Comic Book Storyboards, Crafting an Arc
20 Min.

**Something that’s important in both story forms we talked about earlier is that they both have a beginning, middle, and end. When we’re thinking about our new character that we created, that means our character starts out one way, something happens in the middle to change them, and ends a new way. This is what we call a character arc.**

- Teaching artist should write the emboldened vocabulary word on the board. They can also draw an arc to help visualize this concept.

**We’re going to think about how our own animal superheros get from regular animal (at the beginning) to superhero animal (at the end). Some big event needs to happen to them in the middle. We’re going to show it through yet another story form that is used a lot in the book of Flora and Ulysses and inspired the look of the play: comic books!**

- **What is special about the way a story is told in a comic book?**
  - **Key Concept:** The story is told through pictures, only a little dialogue, and virtually no narrative.
- Teaching artist will pass out comic book templates and direct students to sketch out 3 pictures (beginning, middle, and end) to tell their story. They may include a line of dialogue in the speech bubble if they wish!
- Share with the class.

**Closing Activity:** *Thank you for spending the time with us to discuss Flora and Ulysses, and please come see us again at Orlando REP!*
Audience Etiquette Activity for Field Trip Plus
10 Min.

- For this activity, the teaching artist will cast the following characters to come stand at the front of the room:
  - Barrie
  - Carrie
  - Adult
  - Box Office Person
  - Usher
  - Lights
  - Not speaking (prep this student to say “Shhh!”)
  - Listening (prep this student to say “Huh?”)
  - Seeing (prep this student to say “What happened? What happened?!”)  
- Teaching artist will pass out the puppets/signs and tell the students who volunteered to listen for their character’s name so they will know when to show their part of the story.
- Teaching artist will then tell the group that there will be a part at the end that everyone will join in and to listen for the word “Everyone.”
- Then, the teaching artist will read from the Reader’s Theatre script attached. In general, expect to read the action and dialogue, then instruct the student to speak the lines themselves while doing the action.

READ FROM THE READERS’ THEATRE SCRIPT
Barrie and Carrie’s Visit to Orlando REP

One day there were two kids who were going to see a show at Orlando Repertory Theatre. Let’s call them Barrie and Carrie.

When they got to the theatre, they walked up the front steps and under the awning. They were so excited! (Kids say: We’re so excited! Etc.)

They even took pictures outside. Barrie pointed out to Carrie that they have to take pictures now because they can’t take them inside the theatre. (Barrie says: We can’t take pictures in the theatre! It would disturb the show.)

After their adult picked up the tickets from the box office, they waited in the lobby. (Adult picks up tickets from Box office person. Barrie and Carrie show us “waiting.”)

When the ushers opened the doors to theatre, they said “The house is open!” (Ushers say: The house is open!) And Barrie and Carrie went inside. (They go inside.)

The usher helped them walk around the stage floor, not across, and they make sure not to touch anything on the stage. They sat and chatted until the lights start to go down. (Barrie and Carrie “chat.” The Lights person show the lights going down.)

During the show, they stayed quiet so others could hear. (Student shows sign of covering your mouth and says “Shhh!”)

They listened closely so they didn’t miss any of the story. (Student shows sign of listening and says “Huh?”)

They focused on the action onstage instead of each other. (Student shows sign of looking and says “What happened? What happened?!”)

At intermission, they stood and stretched their legs (They stretch), talked excitedly about what they saw (They talk excitedly), and used the bathroom (Teaching artists and Barrie/Carrie stare at each other-- I won’t make you do that!)

Then, they enjoyed Act II. Everybody laughed at the funny things and clapped at the end of the scenes. (All, including teaching artist, laugh and clap.)

At the end, if they enjoyed the show, they show it by clapping as the actors bow. (Encourage all to stand and clap. Barrie, Carrie, et al, bow.)
LIST OF REFERENCES


Lyons, Douglas. Email interview. 19 September 2017.


North, Carol. Telephone Interview. 5 November 2015.


