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The 230 Broadway Project:

Employing Playwriting and Community-Based Performance

in Our Classrooms

A Thesis in Theatre Arts

by

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Abstract

This thesis primarily explores three different models of theatre arts programming for children and young adults – after-school programs, teaching artist residencies in schools, and a hybrid model that combines the best practices of both. In order to better understand these models, my colleague Emma Barakat and I worked with and interviewed three separate companies: the 52nd Street Project in New York City; Writers Theatre of New Jersey in Madison, New Jersey; and AdvantageArts, a collaborative effort between Newark, New Jersey students and Drew University students in Madison, New Jersey. Using all of this information and thorough research on the climate of theatre arts education in the city of Newark, the state of New Jersey, and our country at large, I created a playwriting curriculum that adheres to Common Core ELA Standards as well as National Core Arts Standards. Over the Fall 2016 semester, I taught these lesson plans to high school students from Newark involved in the AdvantageArts program, at the Marion A. Bolden Student Center. The full contents of these lesson plans, the materials used in them, as well as the students' final plays, are published here. My belief is that these lesson plans could be used or adapted by secondary English and Literature teachers anywhere – but they are intended most for public school teachers, who have students with little access to other arts education.

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On a sunny afternoon in early September, a group of ten fourth-graders attend their first day of Playmaking at the 52nd Street Project in Hell's Kitchen, New York City. All of the students live within blocks of the Project's Clubhouse on 10th Avenue between 52nd and 53rd Streets. Playmaking is an eight-week course that teaches children in the community how to successfully write plays. Natalie Hirsch, the Associate Artistic Director of the Project, is their Teaching Artist. She stands in front of a large Post-it paper bearing the question, *"Why write a play?"*

"To tell a story," says one student. Natalie agrees with a smile, and writes the student's answer on the paper.

"To make people laugh," says another.

"To make money!"

"Because you want to."

Natalie keeps up with them, agreeing and writing each response as they share it. They are welcomed to call out – this isn't a typical class. Answers keep coming in from the eager and talkative group. As expected, the conversation quickly derailed as their excitement grew.

"Focus, guys," Natalie asks the class. "Why write a play?"

The room gets quiet as they try to think of more answers. One student quietly raises his hand, and Natalie calls on him.

"To fly," he says. He and the rest of the class laugh.

He has no idea how right he is.

Chapter One: The Issue

230 Broadway to 36 Madison Avenue: Understanding the Need for the Project

When it comes to the case for studying arts in schools in the United States, it seems in-school programs are often underfunded despite continuous evidence that the arts benefit students academically. For example, there is a positive correlation between the number of years a student is involved with fine arts, and high SAT scores (Rupert). Students who engage in the fine arts often have stronger literacy skills and spatial temporal reasoning (Rupert). In the state of New Jersey, programs are often significantly underfunded. In the most recent census done by the New Jersey Arts Education Partnership in 2012, data shows that more than half of all New Jersey public schools spent less than $10 per student to support arts education, despite an average per-pupil expenditure of $13,733 that same year (NJAE Partnership, NJ Department of Education).

While 97% of public school students currently have access to the arts, this is almost always limited to music and visual art (*Keeping the Promise* 3). Alarmingly, in the state of New Jersey, only 3.9% of all public high school students are enrolled in a theatre course (NJAE Partnership). This occurs despite evidence that theatre arts in particular benefits students, including a corresponding increased ability in story recall, reading comprehension, and "elevated self-concept" (American Alliance for Theatre & Education). Although many students are unable to study theatre arts in school, some still have the opportunity to engage in extracurricular programs like community theatres and acting workshops which often come at a cost to the student. Though there are a select and lucky few who can still participate in theatre-based programs, the number who cannot or

choose not to far exceeds the number who do.

Though all mediums of fine art have a valuable place in the lives of young people, this project specifically looks at theatre arts and related programming. The arts (theatre arts in particular) deserve a place in our schools, in the lives of each child that passes through our education system – here's why. To reiterate, there are data-driven results that show a positive correlation between student success in the classroom and their engagement in drama or theatre. There are studies that suggest that students who are involved in theatre arts perform well in school and are advocates for their community (Fiske IX). These students also maintain a certain level of engagement with the world around them, as they regularly practice empathy through their art.

Anecdotal evidence is also compelling in the argument for theatre arts education. Students as young as nine claim that "writing plays is so fun and so cool" (52nd Street Project, "Behind the Pencil"). Even college-age students cite the major co-curricular learning benefits of theatre arts, especially when it comes to discussing English literature: "The constant conversation about form and content that is so prevalent in the study of theatre arts has informed the ways I read and understand texts of a more literary nature" (AbiYouness). Another peer adds, "It is all connected. Some of the plays we've studied [in theatre classes] came in during English classes – understanding dramatic language in general, time periods, all of these things overlapped" (Pilkington).

Additionally, this thesis contends that theatre consistently improves students' ability to understand their own place in the world, and increases their sense of citizenship. As engaged citizens, these students are empathetic and active participants in their

communities. Most specifically, this thesis corroborates the claim that students who participate in theatre arts also gain literacy skills, which can help to improve their overall academic performance (American Alliance for Theatre Education). These students also see an improvement in their academic performance as compared to their peers (American Alliance for Theatre Education).

This thesis explores three models of extracurricular theatre-based programs in New York City and Newark in order to understand their benefits for students and challenges in operation. Currently, in the climate of arts programming for students, there are three forthcoming methods. The first is the *after-school* model, which encompasses programs that have little or no affiliation with schools or school districts. The 52nd Street Project is an example of a longstanding after-school model. These organizations independently select students and are free to do what programming they please. The second is the *in-school artist residency* model, in which teaching artists collaborate with classroom teachers to create a unit for students in school. Writers Theater of New Jersey is the residency model I explore in this thesis. The final model is a *hybrid* model, in which a program is beholden to a school district or teachers, but runs after school hours. The Drew University-Newark Collaboration is a hybrid model.

Using this information and evidence, I have attempted to create a playwriting curriculum that adheres to New Jersey Common Core and National Core Arts Standards so that all secondary ELA teachers can adapt it for their students. I call this method Integrated Playwriting, as it will integrate theatre with the secondary English classroom. The goal is to provide these proven and inferred benefits for all students in the state of

New Jersey, regardless of whether or not their district has a specialized theatre teacher. Finally, I reflect on a modified curriculum that I created and implemented with a group of high school students in an after-school program in Newark in play-making.

Qualifiers: Why this community partner? Why me?

The Dr. Marion A. Bolden Student Center in Newark, New Jersey was an obvious choice for a community partner based on Drew University's working relationship with them during the Newark Collaboration class offered each Spring and Summer. The Bolden Center first opened its doors on May 29, 2008, under Newark Public Schools Superintendent Marion A. Bolden (Jackson). Run by the Newark Public Schools system, the Bolden Center "is designed to offer a variety of student activities, particularly at the secondary school level …it [is also] used to promote student leadership and civic engagement" (Jackson). The Bolden Center is open almost every day that the Newark Public Schools are in session, from 2:45 to 7:00 PM. Within the Bolden Center, there are a number of programs for students to engage in: songwriting, dance, double-dutch, karate, math tutoring, and baking are among the workshops in which students can choose to participate. AdvantageArts, a theatre-based workshop, also runs at the Bolden Center two days a week. The students who are involved in AdvantageArts are often the students who need such a program most:

> The Newark students participating in [AdvantageArts] represent the city's poorer-performing high schools in which the student population is predominantly Black/African-American (97 percent). These schools serve

> neighborhoods in which less than 15 percent of the population holds a college degree and the median household income is less than $21,000. HSPA scores in math and language lag about 35 and 20 percentage points, respectively, behind the state average. These teenagers have a critical need for inspiring role models and peers who value achievement; for help in developing college readiness skills; for direction in identifying educational and career options; for guidance in exploring their gifts and talents; and for activities that give them structure and supervision when school is out to help them avoid becoming victims of drugs, violence, crime, and unwanted pregnancies. In partnership with Drew, the Bolden Center has been able to expand its mission to include college readiness (Grey).

The students who participate in the Newark Collaboration at the Bolden Center have the opportunity to devise and develop a performance with Drew students each spring, and perform in a full-scale production each summer. Despite Drew's heavy involvement with the Bolden Center students during one half of the year, the other half has significantly less programming between ourselves and them. I believe that as their community partner, we have a responsibility to extend theatre-based programming to continually engage Newark Public Schools students over the entire school year.

Additionally, there is less programming at the Bolden Center that focuses on reading and writing development. An after-school creative writing workshop series that focuses on these two major literacy skills could significantly enhance students' in-classroom performance. In implementing this workshop series, I hope to fill a void in the

Bolden Center programming and provide a necessary space for creative expression. Furthermore, having the learning outcomes align with Common Core standards for English Language Arts fulfills both their creative need and my responsibility as the facilitator to prepare the students for what lies ahead in the classroom.

Although this project will be very demanding, I feel that Drew has given me everything I need to take on this challenge. As a student taking the Newark Collaboration class for the second time, I feel acquainted with the students that attend the Bolden Center after school, and the actual location of the community partner is accessible and familiar to me. My course of study at Drew includes a concentration in the Master of Arts in Teaching program, which has familiarized me with Common Core standards, learning assessment, and other educational methodology and pedagogy. A double major in English and Theatre Arts has laid the foundation for me to engage in aesthetic education and talk about writing, reading, and performance. Outside of the classroom, I am a Writing Center tutor, which gives me inherent tools to teach writing skills. As a Civic Scholar, I've taken an in-depth look into the non-profit sector and community-partner engagement. This project is truly the culmination of everything I have studied at Drew: theatre arts and its application outside of performance, writing studies, youth literacy, and community service. Aside from the tangible skills that Drew has given me to complete this project, nothing qualifies me more than the passion I have discovered for this work in my three years here. I feel a responsibility and need to adapt this model and make it work for more students, and I care deeply about community-based theatre projects like this.

My collaborator, Emma Barakat, is also a senior at Drew University writing an

honors thesis that is symbiotic to this one. She was homeschooled for all of primary and secondary school, bringing a unique perspective to the concept of education. Emma is also a theatre major, with minors in music and arts administration. As a homeschooled student, Emma had little access to the arts growing up. While she did have the opportunity to perform plays with other homeschooled students, she realized that there was a wide margin of difference between her and other students when she arrived at Drew. She reflects:

> I had a lot less confidence and was nervous to put forth any original ideas. Meanwhile, the other students had all these experiences in high school that enabled them to be creative and take risks … I felt that other students had such a freedom to try new things and put their ideas out there, whether it was related to theatre or not, and I started to think about what kind of parallel that had with theatre education. (Barakat)

Emma has also worked with the Newark Collaboration for three semesters, building strong relationships with many students.

After considering the needs of the Bolden Center (Fall involvement with the Drew Theatre Department and literacy-based programming) and the skills I can bring to the role of Teaching Artist, the Playmaking model seemed like an achievable and fitting model to adapt and develop to meet the community partner's needs. Especially considering Emma's involvement in the process and her own qualifications, I am confident that our partnership will provide an adequate and successful program for the Newark students.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope.

The Bolden Center provided Emma and I an opportunity to implement and assess lesson plans with a group of willing and eager teenage (some in middle school, some in high school) students. In the case of this thesis, it can be assumed that each of the students involved in the program attend AdvantageArts on their own volition. Not only is attendance at the Bolden Center optional, but enrollment in the Theatre class is also one selection out of many programs offered at the Bolden Center. We can also assume that they are qualified to be in the grade level they are actually in because they attend certified public and charter schools.

One limitation of this thesis will be the inconsistency of student attendance at the Bolden Center. It is important to note that inconsistent student attendance is often not an indicator of a student's opinion of a program. Unfortunately, many of these students have to choose between attending recreational after-school programming and working to sustain their family. Others are often forced to choose between AdvantageArts and athletic programs. While the AdvantageArts class is well-attended, sometimes personal conflicts interfere with a student's ability to attend week-to-week. The students who are able to attend every week will likely progress more than their peers who are not able to attend each session. Another limitation is the amount of time students spent working on this project as compared to their other classes and activities. While the average teacher may have more flexibility in the amount of time spent working on a particular lesson or subject in class, unfortunately, Emma and I are more constrained in the time we are able to spend with the Bolden Center students. This program was scheduled to be completed

within eight weeks, with one two-hour session per week. To compare, students are in a high school English class as much as six hours in a given week, plus the time spent completing their homework.

Although AdvantageArts generously donated their classroom time to this project, it is important to note the difference between a public high school classroom and a classroom at the Bolden Center. The Bolden Center *is* beholden to the Newark Public Schools System, but teaching a classroom-like lesson in an after-school program offered significant challenges. Though the final result and findings are intended for use in a public high school classroom, there is no legal way for me to teach this at this point in time. As an undergraduate student without proper teaching credentials, it is impossible for me to implement these lessons in a public school. Despite this limitation, I hope to implement these lesson plans in my own classroom in the future. Student participation and enjoyment was not significantly altered by the fact that these lessons were implemented at the Bolden Center.

The scope of this thesis is focused on a specific group of students attending AdvantageArts at the Bolden Center. These lesson plans were designed with their skills, interests, and goals in mind. However, these lessons were adapted in an appendix to fit the needs of the typical 6-12 classroom. While I drew specifically on their skills, I would encourage any teacher to consider the needs and desires of their own students.

Benefits and Struggles: A Recent History of Arts Education in the United States

The United States government has been acknowledging the positive correlation between school performance and arts involvement for at least seventeen years. Department of Education Secretary Richard Riley prefaced the 1999 report *Champions of Change: The Impact of Arts on Learning*, writing, "Through engagement with the arts, young people can better begin lifelong journeys of developing their capabilities and contributing to the world around them. The arts teach young people how to learn by giving them the first step: the desire to learn" (Quote in Fiske VI). Just three years later in 2002, President George W. Bush's reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 passed, called No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (Sabol 1). Under NCLB, "the arts" were considered a core academic subject alongside English, mathematics, and science, which would in theory equate these subjects in a fulfilling and balanced education (Pub. L. 1149-195). Despite this, NCLB created many problems for arts educators: class time and funding for art programs were cut significantly, with districts across the nation instead using that time to prepare students for testing in subjects like math and English (Sabol 1). When schools failed to meet standards set by NCLB, the government cut their funding, in turn cutting access to arts even further (Paige).

Title I, Part A funding is government-provided "flexible funding to meet the educational needs of low-achieving students in high-poverty schools" (Chambers et. al 3). With issues like large class sizes attributing to schools' failure to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP), much of Title I-A funding allowed schools to hire more faculty

and staff (Sabol 2). These schools, facing the problem of low achievement with minimal funding to help correct it, clearly could not afford to hire arts-specific educators when hiring these new teachers. Priority went to teachers who could either teach multiple subjects, or teachers who specialized in the higher-need fields of English Language Arts and mathematics. In the 2004-2005 school year, only 18% of Title I-A funding was used for classroom instructional support tools like professional development, with over 59% of funding providing the salaries and benefits of new employees (Chambers et. al 145). Despite Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige claiming that schools could use Title I-A funding for arts enhancement, one can assume that many school districts felt that they could not achieve AYP while also funding arts programming (Paige). Clearly, change needed to happen in order to get low-achieving schools the tools that they desperately needed.

In December 2015, President Barack Obama signed into law another reauthorization of the ESEA, called the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (Pub. L. 1149-195). The arts and music were included as separate entities in what was called a "well-rounded education" (Pub. L. 1149-195). This new designation obligates school districts to equally support arts programming and arts educators as much as they support other academic programing and staff. Established in previous reauthorizations of ESEA, *Awards to Provide Assistance for Arts Education* continued in ESSA, without much of conditions established under ESSA's predecessors (Pub. L. 1149-195). This federal funding helped finance research while establishing and maintaining entities that provided arts education to young people living below the poverty line (Pub. L. 1149-195). In

another victory, ESSA also allowed states to adopt learning standards for other subjects, including the arts and music. In June 2014, a year and a half before ESSA became law, the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS) were updated for the first time in over twenty years (National Core Arts Standards "FAQ"). This updated version included content-specific learning goals for dance, media arts, music, visual arts, and theatre (National Core Arts Standards "FAQ"). While there was much progress for arts educators and the programs they championed on the federal level, the responsibility of implementing this well-rounded education still fell to the states.

New Jersey Education Policy and Arts Education.

The state of New Jersey was provided a waiver from NCLB by President Obama in 2012, in exchange for a promise to review how the state assesses students (Calefati). The state voluntarily adopted Common Core Standards in 2010, and these standards are still being used to assess student learning. By 2011, over 97% of the state had adopted core curricular standards for visual and performing arts (*Keeping the Promise*). The New Jersey State Council for the Arts, run by the State Department, lists "[the advancement of] quality arts education and lifelong learning for everyone" as a goal to forward their mission statement ("About the Arts Council").

Newark Public Schools.

Like nearly all urban areas, the city of Newark, New Jersey has often struggled to maintain quality of education for an ever-increasing population of socio-economically,

ethnically, racially, and linguistically diverse students.

In her book *The Prize,* reporter Dale Russakoff offers statistical information on the student population and educational climate. She writes,

> [In 2009] … in twenty-three of its seventy-five schools, fewer than thirty percent of children from the third through the eighth grade were reading at grade level. The high school graduation rate was fifty-four percent, and more than ninety percent of graduates who attended the local community college required remedial classes. Only 12.5 percent of Newark adults were college graduates, just over a third of the statewide average.
>
> In a predominantly white state, and one of the nation's wealthiest, ninety-five percent of Newark students were black or Latino and eighty-eight percent qualified for free or reduced-price lunches. Forty-four percent of city children lived below the poverty line – twice the national average – and seventy percent were born to single mothers. An astonishing forty percent of newborns received inadequate prenatal care or none at all, disadvantaged before drawing their first breaths. (4-5)

Additionally, the district itself suffered from issues involving bureaucracy: people in charge were motivated by self-interest; school administrators made poor funding decisions; and charter schools became more and more appealing to Newark citizens, thereby draining the Newark public school budget. Charter schools in Newark (and in other urban cities, such as New York) are often seen as the solution to the problems that plague public schools. Charter schools are "publicly funded but privately run, operating

free of the district schools' large bureaucracies and, in most cases also free of unions" (Russakoff 6). Despite their positive reputation, only "one in five charters in the country out-performed their district counterparts on standardized tests" (Russakoff 6). The controversy surrounding charter schools is primarily caused by issues of funding. If a student's parents choose to enroll their child in a charter school, their tax money follows that child to the new school, leaving the district schools at a loss for those funds. In New Jersey, funding in the wake of charter schools is difficult for the public schools, and for the charter schools themselves, who have to adhere to a specific funding formula: "[Charter Schools] are funded according to enrollment levels and receive public funds on a per pupil basis. In some states, [including] New Jersey, they receive less than 100% of the funds allocated to their traditional counterparts for school operations" (Uncommon Schools).

There are other factors to consider when looking at charter schools: in the United States, there are more high-poverty charter schools than there are public schools, with the percentages at 35% and 24% respectively ("Public Charter School Enrollment"). Additionally, the population of students of color in charter schools makes up 58% of the total school population ("Public Charter School Enrollment"). Students of color who are economically disadvantaged are making up the largest populations of enrollment at charter schools, which have the least government regulation (Uncommon Schools).

To echo Russakoff, the Newark Public Schools district currently serves a population that is ninety-five percent Black or Latino. This wasn't always the case. Russakoff writes, "African American students comprised ten percent of the district in

1940, fifty-five percent in 1961, and seventy-one percent in 1967" (17). Unfortunately, in Newark, access to arts education also becomes an issue of race and socioeconomic status. Students of color and students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch make up the majority of Newark Public Schools students and they are among the least likely to have theatre in school.

Current Access to Arts Education and Arts Programming.

School districts (in New Jersey and elsewhere) may choose to expose their students to the arts with one of two methods: *specialized arts education*, such as a dedicated visual art or music class; or *integrated arts education*, like reading *Hamlet* in English class aloud and having a better understanding of it through its intended, performed purpose. According to data compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics, the number of secondary schools with specialized theatre education is relatively slim (Parsad et. al 47). Consider schools where the number of students eligible for free lunch is 76 percent of the population or more. Only 28 percent of these schools have specific performing arts or drama classes (Parsad et. al 47). In the entire state of New Jersey, there are 7,033 teachers who specialize in fine arts (NJAE Partnership). Of these, only sixty-four teachers specialize in theatre arts, and they teach in only sixty-one schools across the state (NJAE Partnership). Again: of 114,584 teachers employed by the state of New Jersey, only sixty-four teachers specialize in theatre arts – a staggering 0.0 56%(NJDOE Factsheet).

Luckily, student accessibility to integrated performing arts access is higher. In the

most recent study, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that while only 4% of schools nationwide offered specialized art classes, 29% of schools incorporated drama and theatre into their English and language arts curriculum (NCES 47). Forty-six percent (46%) of schools reported that they integrated drama and theatre into other curriculum areas (NCES). This is what more schools are doing, so arts educators need to be taking advantage of what schools can reasonably provide.

Where is this work going?: The case for playwriting in public schools.

There are many excellent, highly specific, theatre-based curricula for any age group or experience level. For example, the Educational Theatre Association (EdTA) offers free, available-to-use curricula for high school students on acting, advanced acting, and theatre design ("HS Level Curriculum Maps"). All of these adhere to the latest, 2014 learning standards. None are offered in playwriting. Unfortunately, finding a curriculum based on the performing arts that is easily integrated into the typical school day is much harder to find. Here lies a significant gap in knowledge: we know that students stand to benefit from theatre and performance-based education. We also know that access to *integrated* arts classes is higher than specialized arts classes in nearly all school districts, especially low-performing ones. Yet, there are few resources that teachers can easily access and teach in their own classrooms. There are even fewer resources that aren't based primarily in the art of acting. While acting and roleplay give valuable lessons in empathy and other important skills, unfortunately, many English teachers feel underqualified to teach such a subject. Cheryl Ruiz, a secondary English teacher at

Lyndhurst High School in New Jersey, writes, "many English teachers are intimidated by the thought of teaching someone how to act … but if you understand the conventions of the English language and how to teach it, you understand playwriting... the symbolism in the words (and teaching how to craft that properly) is just as important and very similar to how that symbolism is presented from an actor and how that actor should be on stage to present and reinforce the words/meaning to the audience." (Ruiz).

A curriculum that marries a traditionally-taught subject with a performing arts subject could potentially solve all of these problems. Students would have meaningful access to the arts, and when ideally adapted, ELA teachers would be able to provide this access without the district needing to hire specialists. Here is the draw of playwriting – the act itself is inherently a combination of drama and literature. The average student is already familiar with plays and scripts based on their state-mandated study of Shakespeare and other canonical works of drama. Unlike an acting-based curriculum, a playwriting curriculum hinges on a skill set that the English teacher already has. The English teacher's expertise in coaching writing is the essential skill that they bring to the table.

Over the course of the Fall 2016 semester and into the Winter Interim, I have developed and integrated a series of lesson plans on the topic of playwriting. Of course, these lesson plans include content-specific learning goals. Like traditional playwriting curricula, students learn about characterization, settings and proper dialogue format, among other topics. Additionally, these lesson plans also ascribe to National Core Arts Standards – the state-adopted learning standards for the performing arts. Standardization

makes this curriculum viable in any New Jersey public school.

This work is shaping up to be legitimate for the classroom – but only 2.6% of New Jersey schools have any theatre arts classes at all (NJAE Partnership). So, who is using theatre for educational purposes? In designing my curriculum, I turned to three working organizations that all have their roots in theatre – the 52nd Street Project, Writers Theatre of New Jersey, and Drew University's Newark Collaboration class – with whom I have a personal connection. In order to really understand how we can adapt these models for classroom purposes, we must first get a better understanding of where they fit in the greater discipline of *applied theatre*.

Where has this work already been?: Applied Theatre Compared.

Community-based Theatre.

Aptly, community-based theatre is theatre performed *by and for* communities of people. According to Jan Cohen-Cruz in her well-known book *Local Acts: Community Based Performance in the United States*, successful community-based theatre has four basic tenets. These are "communal context, reciprocity, hyphenation, and active culture" (91). These principles are essential to successful community-based performance because they emphasize the participation of the community members. According to Cohen-Cruz's first principle, community-based art "emerges from a *communal context*; the artists' craft and visit are at the service of a group desire" (91). The collective is more powerful, creative, and impactful than the individual — and while the collective is somewhat concerned with the artistic and aesthetic value of their work, they are concerned more

with the social weight of the work. Artists collaborate with individuals who have "lived experience of the subject" the artist wishes to expose through performance (92). Without the community members, the artist would simply be appropriating, trivializing, or fictionalizing their experiences. Communal context also links "*where* the performance takes place with *who* the audience will be" (93). Community-based theatre is designed for the betterment of the community-at-large, seeing as performances usually take place where the intended audience typically gathers instead of the performance space best suited for the work.

There is also a need for community-based theatre projects to provide reciprocity, or a "mutually nourishing" relationship (93). The teaching artists, community members, and the audience are in equally important positions. The process and performances should be a mutual conversation between all parties. Cohen-Cruz writes that this sense of "reciprocity is reflected in joint ownership of work created by the community from whence it came and the artist/facilitator" (96). The community partners should feel just as much ownership of the final product as the teaching artist does. A sense of mutual ownership throughout the entire process facilitates an environment where everyone is putting in their best work, because they feel responsible for the project's outcome. In this same respect, the artists should feel that their voice also speaks to the final performance or culmination of the community-based theater.

The third tenet of community-based performance is called *hyphenation*, which means that the performance "[consists of] multiple disciplines — aesthetics and something else, such as education, community building, or therapy — and multiple

functions, having as goals both efficacy and entertainment" (Cohen-Cruz 97). The most important part of community-based theatre is that the project has some sort of social relevance beyond just the creation of art. Cohen-Cruz observes that many teaching artists want their art to have some social impact (97). Beyond this, community-based performance has a responsibility to give the members of the community a voice and a method of expression. Beyond this function, community-based performance is also inherently hyphenated in the fact that it typically draws on multiple artistic and theatrical elements. Successful community-based theatre is rarely devoted to one single type of art. Just as a community is comprised of many different backgrounds and cultures, community-based performance thrives on diversity within the art itself and within the people creating that art.

Cohen-Cruz's last tenet, active culture, "reflects the recognition that people frequently get more out of making art than seeing the fruits of other people's labors" (Cohen-Cruz 99). This last tenet values the involvement of the community members in the creation of art. Simply bringing performances or exhibits to underexposed communities does not meet the requirements of community-based performance. Community engagement quite literally needs to be a group *engaging*. This tenet works hand in hand with the earlier tenet of reciprocity. Again, when everyone has a mutual responsibility to the work, everyone participates in the highest capacity. One of the most important take-aways that Cohen-Cruz sets forth in her principles of community-based theatre is the idea that "everyone has artistic potential" (Cohen-Cruz 99). Triumphant community-based performance goes out into the world and ignites each person with the

realization that they too have immense artistic potential inside of them.

Applied Theatre.

Jan Cohen-Cruz is not the only scholar who has analyzed different types of community-based performance and their benefits. Philip Taylor, in his book *Applied Theatre: Creating Transformative Encounters in the Community*, also assesses applied theatre. Although applied theatre and community-based performance seem to be two separate fields, Taylor immediately places them in conversation with one another: "The community theatre is an applied theatre form in which individuals connect with and support one another and where opportunities are provided for groups to voice who they are and what they aspire to become" (Taylor xviii). According to Taylor, applied theatre is the overhead category, and community-based performance is one method of actually executing applied theatre. Community-based performance is always applied theatre, but the actual field of applied theatre can encompass many other methods.

Just as Cohen-Cruz lists essential qualities of community-based theatre, Taylor also believes that effective applied theatre has certain features. Taylor lists his guiding principles for successful applied theatre:

1. Applied theatre is thoroughly researched.
2. Applied theatre seeks incompleteness.
3. Applied theatre demonstrates possible narratives
4. Applied theatre is task-oriented.
5. Applied theatre poses dilemmas.
6. Applied theatre interrogates futures.
7. Applied theatre is an aesthetic medium.
8. Applied theatre gives voices to communities. (Taylor 27)

Taylor's first principle, thorough research, ensures that the artists engaging in a community have a genuine understanding of the population they are working with. The artists also need to have a thoroughly researched model, founded in text and perhaps in experience with other populations. The second principle of incompleteness relieves both the artist and the community partner of the pressure to produce a full-scale production in any sense. Successful applied theatre also demonstrates narratives by understanding the community's voice and using it to discuss possible scenarios and solutions. Through a thorough understanding of the community, applied theatre poses dilemmas because it confronts issues that face communities, and interrogates futures by posing possibilities for what happens next. This special kind of theatre shares dilemmas and possibilities most effectively when it remains an aesthetic medium. Finally, the last and most important of Taylor's principles is applied theatre's responsibility to give voice to communities. The main purpose of applied theatre is to strengthen communities by providing an outlet for expression. Without giving the community that way to share, strengthen, and stage their own view, applied theatre might as well remain traditional theatre.

If it seems as though community-based theatre and applied theatre embody similar values, that is because they absolutely do. They are so connected that it would be impossible for them to have different ideals. Above all else, both have a responsibility to provide their cooperating community with an artistic method of expression. Underneath the larger category of applied theatre, community-based theatre uses performative skills

to really heighten community member's self-efficacy. It engages in a community that may not otherwise have the tools to really communicate or express themselves in the way that theatre affords to them. Taylor writes that "the theatre is *applied* because it is taken out from the conventional mainstream theatre house into various settings in communities where many members have no real experience in theatre form." One of the most important ways we can assess community-based performance and applied theatre is by making sure that it really does *better* the community. It is not enough to use the community to create a piece of art; they must have the tools to create art, or have conversations long after the teaching artists have left for their next project.

Six years after Taylor published *Applied Theatre*, Sheila Preston and Tim Prentki co-edited a book entitled *The Applied Theatre Reader*. In the introduction to their text, which includes chapters written by various theatre artists, Preston and Prentki allude to the same values as Taylor. They write, "'applied theatre' [is] a broad set of theatrical practices and creative processes that take participants and audiences beyond the scope of conventional, mainstream theatre into the realm of a theatre that is responsive to ordinary people and their stories, local settings, and priorities" (1).

Preston and Prentki also introduce another way to categorize applied theatre – theatre 'by,' 'with,' and 'for' communities:

1. *Theatre 'for' a community*. An example could be a theatre company touring a piece of theatre or a workshop to young audiences in schools, or to local community groups.
2. *Theatre 'with' a community*. This could be workshop- or 'process'-based and involving participants in a devising or creative exploration that may or may not lead to presentation or performance to a wider audience.
3. *Theatre 'by' a community*. Here the community make and perform theatre

> themselves possibly to communicate to a specific audience and setting. This might involve a high level of facilitation by an applied theatre artist … (3)

Unlike Taylor's requirements for successful applied theatre, Preston and Prentki do not attempt to decide which of these three models is most successful. They only seek to give us another way to categorize the rather large umbrella term of *applied theatre*.

Taking Applied Theatre to the Classroom.

It is clear that the field of applied theatre, and its subset community-based performance, is broad. Its ideals are also not exclusive to theatre itself. In the field of applied theatre, artists and communities exist in a relationship quite like teachers and students. A classroom teacher who is interested in integrating arts into their classroom stands to benefit a lot from a better understanding of community-based performance and applied theatre. How can we use the tenets that Cohen-Cruz, Taylor, Preston and Prentki lay out for us in the classroom? Let us look at each of the tenets that Cohen-Cruz names for us, and apply it to a hypothetical classroom. Teachers that prioritize *communal context* would put the students' interests at the center of the curriculum. These teachers might ask, "what are my students interested in learning about?" Using this, the teacher can develop a curriculum that gets to the heart of the "group's desire" that Cohen-Cruz also talks about (93).

Reciprocity is already at the epicenter of most teacher's sense of purpose – they are lifelong learners. Teachers who mutually gain as much knowledge from their students as they impart to them are already engaging in reciprocity as Cohen-Cruz defines it.

Students who are reciprocal in the classroom are empowered in the knowledge that they have something valuable to share with their peers and teachers. *Active culture* is also important in a 21st century classroom; this is the concept that students are creating just as much as they are witnessing. Students should be engaging more actively in their learning: the student who discovers knowledge stands to benefit more than the student who is handed knowledge (Cornell, "Active Learning"). *Hyphenation* also has innate value in the classroom. If a teacher has an opportunity to combine their desired subject with another, it only serves to benefit the students. In fact, the concept of hyphenation is at the root of this project, which aims to hyphenate theatre arts and English language arts.

Teachers can also look to Taylor's eight-point list on tenets of successful applied theatre. Many of Taylor's points make perfect sense in classroom application: teachers should be giving the students work that is task-oriented, poses dilemmas, and demonstrates narratives. While these points translate well for teachers, there are also other points that seem less applicable to the classroom – for example, *all* classroom work might not be part of an aesthetic medium. Despite this, we should not rule out *some* aestheticism in the classroom. There is room for aesthetics in the classroom – again, this is where a curriculum centered on playwriting comes in. A lesson plan can also interrogate futures, and it should be giving voice to communities.

Even Preston and Prentki's by/for/with model is also applicable to theatre in the classroom. An example of theatre *for* the classroom could simply be a classroom trip to a professionally-performed play that includes a talk-back discussion or a classroom decompression. One way to participate in theatre *by* a classroom can be the creation of a

collective play. Our project is best understood as an example of theatre *with* a community: a process-based project in which students write plays using their learned experiences.

Conclusion.

In this thesis, I will be exploring the teaching styles of three specific theatre programs (52nd Street Project, Writers Theatre of New Jersey, and the Newark Collaboration) that represent three specific teaching models (after-school, teaching artist residency, and a hybrid model). I will also compare the work that they are doing with the tenets of applied theatre that Taylor, Preston, and Prentki wrote. I aim to find out where these companies fit into the greater field of applied theatre, what they are doing well, and where they can improve. A simultaneous exploration of their educational value and their adherence to these parameters will provide the best insight into what classroom teachers can glean from these programs. I will use this exploration of these companies, and adapt my lesson plans so that they can reflect what these programs do best. These lesson plans will aim to teach Integrated Playwriting – a form of playwriting I am creating to integrate it into the secondary English classroom.

Chapter Two: The After-School Model.

The first model we will look at is an after-school model. By definition, an after-school program is a "safe, structured program that provides children and youth ages kindergarten through high school with a range of supervised activities intentionally designed to encourage learning and development outside of the typical school day" (Little, et. al 2). After-school programming has a long history in the United States. The origins of after-school programming are in the enforcement of child labor laws in the late 19th century which brought more children to school for the first time (Mahoney et. al 2). Joseph L. Mahoney, Maria E. Parente, and Edward F. Zigler write in their article, "Afterschool Programs in America: Origins, Growth, Popularity and Politics" that "compulsory education led to an extended period of discretionary time during the afterschool hours for children in the U.S." after the late 1800s (2). The very first after-school programs were limited to "boys' clubs," but at the start of the 20th century, more programs were created that aimed to create social, academic, and supportive environments for kids (Mahoney et. al 2).

A factor that contributed to the growth of after-school programs includes women becoming a stronger presence in the workforce (Mahoney et. al 2). As women became breadwinners, their students remained unsupervised at home. Other socioeconomic factors, including the urbanization of cities, contributed to the growing need for after-school care. 92% of American cities reported having a gang problem in the past, and 79% had a problem between 2008 and 2012 (National Gang Center). Approximately 50% of gang members are projected to be under the age of seventeen years old (Office of

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention). On school days, juvenile crime peaks from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention). Clearly, after-school programs can have a hand in preventing students from participating in gang violence or delinquency.

In 2008, after 10 years of research, the Harvard Family Research Project found that after-school programs benefit children. In the study, titled, "Afterschool Programs in the 21st Century: Their Potential and What It Takes to Achieve It" Priscilla M.D. Little, Christopher Wimer, and Heather B. Weiss write:

> …the short answer is yes. A decade of research and evaluation studies, as well as large-scale, rigorously conducted syntheses looking across many research and evaluation studies, confirms that children and youth who participate in after school programs can reap a host of positive benefits in a number of interrelated outcome areas—academic, social/emotional, prevention, and health and wellness. (Little et. al 2)

Some of the benefits they cite include decreased behavioral problems, avoidance of drug and alcohol use, increased physical activity, and reduction in juvenile crime (Little et. al 4, 5).

Despite statistical evidence proving that long-term benefits come from after-school programming, they are still at risk for cut government funding. On March 16th, 2017, in a press briefing, White House Budget Director Mulvaney lambasted after-school programs:

> So let's talk about after-school programs, generally. They're supposed to

> be educational programs, right? That's what they're supposed to do. They're supposed to help kids who don't get fed at home get fed so they do better in school. Guess what? There's no demonstrable evidence they're actually doing that. There's no demonstrable evidence of actually helping results, helping kids do better in school. (The White House)

Fortunately, there are studies like the Harvard Family Research Project's that prove that there are, in fact, *many* benefits to students who have after-school programs to turn to. Even this comprehensive, long-term study does not encompass the specific benefits that theatre-based programs have for children who participate in them. We will look at the 52nd Street Project, a longstanding after-school theatre-based program, in order to better understand benefits and challenges of the after-school model.

52nd Street Project: Mission and History.

"We all belong, we all get along!" is proudly emblazoned on hand-made signs throughout the 52nd Street Project's dedicated space, known as "The Clubhouse." Though students of many ages are "Project Kids" – from fourth graders to high school seniors – they all share an ensemble mentality: everyone is part of the collective creation of art. Though their casual motto is easy for the students to remember, their official mission statement gives a full picture of what the 52nd Street Project does:

> The mission of The 52nd Street Project, a community-based arts organization, is to bring together kids from Hell's Kitchen in Manhattan, starting at age ten and lasting through their teens, with theater

> professionals to create original theater offered free to the general public. By building on the core experience of accomplishment and collaboration, the Project fosters a sense of inclusion in a place where the children belong and where their creative work is the driving force. Through long-term mentoring relationships and exposure to diverse art forms (including Poetry, Photography, Theatrical Design, Dance, Stage Combat and Filmmaking), the Project seeks to expand the children's means of expression and to improve their literacy, their life skills and their attitude towards learning. ("Our Mission")

It is clear that the 52nd Street Project seeks to better students' lives by creating a place for students to engage in an artistic craft. The Clubhouse is a safe, centralized place near the students' homes where they can go after school to participate in programming. As a requirement of membership, all of the students live in the Hell's Kitchen, Manhattan area. The youngest project members are fourth graders, and they attend through their final year of high school – an after-school location close to where these kids live is ideal. Despite living in the same area of the city, all of the students come from different socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. They even attend different schools, some public and some charter.

The 52nd Street Project was developed by Willie Reale in 1981. Curt Dempster, Founder and Artistic Director of the Ensemble Studio Theatre, encouraged Reale to teach an acting class at the 52nd Street Police Athletic League's Duncan Center ("About Us") The Ensemble Studio Theatre remained an important partner to the 52nd Street Project,

lending its theater space as the Project's primary performance home (Reale). In time, theaters all over Manhattan came on board to support the work of the Project by lending their spaces. For two decades, the Project borrowed spaces for performance from organizations like The Public Theater, Playwright's Horizons, and Vineyard Theatre and the Project hand-made props so that they could run on "almost no money" ("Show Archives"). (In fact, nearly all of the props are still hand-made by production manager George Babiak.) At first, funding was not easily secured – a note on one of the very first programs reads, "funding for tonight's program has not yet been found. If you or anyone you know can help, please contact Willie Reale" ("Show Archives").

Still, the Project continued to grow, serving dozens of kids each year. Eventually, the program grew at an exponential rate, and funding was secured from charitable organizations and government agencies, including the Theatre Communications Group and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (Reale). The Project moved from the PAL, to a Clubhouse on the corner of 52nd and 10th, and more recently into the grand space at 789 10th Avenue with support from the Chelsea/Clinton Redevelopment Campaign. In 2010, the Project opened this facility, named the Clubhouse ("About Us"). It stands on 10th Avenue, between W 52nd and W 53rd, right across from Public School 111 ("About Us"). After all the years of its existence, it was finally considered an "anchor arts organization" in the Chelsea/Clinton neighborhood and was given major economic incentives by the community and the New York City Mayor's Office to build out and occupy the 789 19th Avenue Space and the Five Angels Theatre. Each show that is performed in the space also provides an opportunity to fundraise by selling

merchandise and soliciting small donations.

While they are established as an official non-profit organization, the 52nd Street Project's guide *52 Pick Up: A Practical Guide to Doing Theater with Children Modeled after the 52nd Street Project* assures the reader that they do not consider themselves anything other than a place for children to do theatre: "The Project is a theater company not a social service organization." Author and co-founder Reale says that the 52nd Street project "[gives] a kid the opportunity to prove that he or she has something of value to offer, something that comes from within that he or she alone possesses, something that cannot be taken away" (Reale).

Interns are an integral part of the work done at the 52nd Street Project. Multiple students from colleges across the country volunteer their time in the form of an internship with the Project each semester. As a Project intern in the Fall of 2016, I had the opportunity to work directly with the Playmaking class and attend their weekend retreat to understand the process of Playmaking entailed. Due to a last-minute volunteer absence, I was also able to work directly with a student during their weekend retreat in Stone Ridge, New York. Interns also participate in the performances of shows, serving as the run crew and often getting the opportunity to participate in cameo roles.

Playmaking.

The cornerstone program of the 52nd Street Project is Playmaking – the very first program that students are able to attend. Ten fourth-graders, all of whom live in the Hell's Kitchen area, are selected by interview to participate. These students come to the

Project every Tuesday from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM, where they work with one teaching artist (at present, Associate Artistic Director Natalie Hirsch) and multiple class volunteers. Though volunteer attendance fluctuates, more often than not there is one volunteer for every student in the class. Over the ten-week course, students learn the basics of playwriting, including dramatic structure and play formatting. The class culminates in the students writing their first plays and a play reading with class volunteers, although these are not the final plays that are performed publically.

After the ten-week course is completed, all ten students attend a weekend retreat with their classmates, their teaching artist, Project staff members, and a new set of volunteers that serve as "dramaturge-directors." The dramaturge-directors are dedicated to one student, whom they work with for the rest of the program. They help the student write their final play over the weekend, and direct the final play with two professional actors. Both the dramaturge-directors and the class volunteers are trained in protocol, the most important rule being to always support the students while they write, rather than provide the students with answers or suggestions.

After the students return to New York, the plays are typed up by the staff and handed off to the director-dramaturges. Together with two actors, they fully stage the student's play. The student is invited back into the process by joining them in a rehearsal. Then, when the play moves into tech, the student again becomes part of the process. During each performance, they are seated at a special on-stage desk that bearing the words "THE PLAYWRIGHT." After each performance, the actors take a shared bow with the student, sharing their collective success.

Other Project programs.

While Playmaking is the program that develops "Project Kids," there are many other programs that students have the opportunity to participate in throughout their middle and high school careers. One of these programs is called *One-on-One*. Each participating Project Kid is taken on a weeklong retreat and paired with a professional playwright. After getting a chance to get to know the child, the playwright is tasked with writing a two-person play featuring themselves and the child. *Playback* is another subsequent program, an elevation of the original Playmaking program. Participating students are paired with an adult volunteer (usually a professional actor). On a weekend retreat, the student writes a play for themselves and their adult partner.

There are other short-term programs that are also available to kids. Dancemaking, Storytelling, and Filmmaking are all classes that students take. In these classes, students are given another opportunity to participate in an artistic curriculum. Additionally, when students aren't in structured programs, they can come by the Clubhouse every day for homework help with volunteers. They can also sign up to have a Smart Partner – a dedicated mentor they meet with once a week for activities inside and outside of the Clubhouse. Students are also able to become Teen Employees, where they can complete paid work as a secretary or an usher. Teen Employees are also volunteers in Playmaking class, serving as role models for their younger peers.

Finally, *The Teen Acting Ensemble* is the culmination of work a student does with the 52nd Street Project. Students belong to this program for two years, and they spend a

significant amount of time honing their skills through workshops before finally working with an adapted Shakespearean text. The process for students' selection is really interesting; it is not about finding the most talented students, but the students who were most willing to try something new and immerse themselves in the unknown: "Talent is relative. Consider it your job to bring out whatever talent each teen possesses by giving them a set of tools and providing a context in which they can shine" (Ceraso 9-10). The Teen Acting Ensemble, like the rest of the curriculum at the Project, engages the students' individual talents and strengths. It is the responsibility of the teaching artists to really hone these skills and bring them forth through proper script adaptation. The abridged texts are chosen to really allow the students to shine in the best way possible.

Aside from the unique marriage of playwriting and acting, there are other distinctive parts of the 52nd Street Program curriculum. Each of the programs is also attached to a weekend or weeklong getaway for the students and the teaching artists. While they typically don't travel far (perhaps a nearby beach town, or upstate New York), they are taken to new environments in order to encourage the children to step outside of the comfort zone. The 52nd Street Project is also associated with a number of host families who provide the children the opportunity to get "an inside look at the lives of other families" (Reale 51). Although kids living in New York City get an especially diverse look at life, bringing them to a new environment seems to be a great way to foster bonding between them and the professional teaching artists that they are working with. The getaways also provide guaranteed, dedicated work time with the students, and the location is just an added and inspirational bonus.

Other After-School Models.

Rosie's Theater Kids.

Another after-school model that serves the Hell's Kitchen area is Rosie's Theater Kids, founded by Rosie O'Donnell and formerly known as Rosie's Broadway Kids. This non-profit organization operates just seven blocks away from the 52nd Street Project – multiple students are participants in both programs. Like the 52nd Street Project, Rosie's Theater Kids (RTK) has their own space, the Maravel Arts Center. RTK focuses on conservatory-style training. Students are accepted in the fifth grade, and attend acting, singing, and dance classes after-school and through the summer. Students at RTK have multiple opportunities to perform throughout the year. They participate in class "showings," perform at galas, and have even been asked to perform at the White House. Rosie's Theater Kids also has a residency initiative with public schools in New York City. RTK staff members hold theatre-based classes for every fifth-grade class at 17 participating schools ("Schools We Serve"). Over 60,000 students have been impacted by this program ("Our Programs").

Like the Project, RTK also hires interns. in the Summer of 2015, I served as an intern and worked primarily with the oldest kids at Rosie's, aged 14-17. The major difference between Rosie's Theater Kids and the 52nd Street Project is the focus on performance. Students at RTK do not have the opportunity to engage in classes like playwriting, but their curriculum extends to movement classes that the Project doesn't regularly offer. Rosie's Theater Kids coaches their students for high school auditions, so that they can attend the best performing arts schools in the city. While the Project

encourages this and helps interested students, most Project kids do not attend performing arts high schools. There are other notable differences. RTK also has tutoring, but not nearly to the extent of the 52nd Street Project. RTK has one staff member that is a designated tutor for all of the students. RTK is also not designed to serve as an after-school resource in the way that the Project is. Students are typically only in the Maravel Arts Center on days that they have classes. Finally – there is little opportunity for volunteer work with Rosie's Theater Kids. Professional staff members teach the classes independently, without help from volunteers other than interns. As a result, attendance at open shows is usually limited to parents and friends of students, as opposed to the Project's significant audience.

Opening Act.

Another after-school program with a very different approach is Opening Act, operating out of an office in DUMBO, Brooklyn. Like RTK, Opening Act also focuses on student performance. Opening Act serves schools all over New York City, with programs in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. Currently, they are working with "400 students attending 40 public high schools on 16 high school campuses" ("Impact"). In a collaborative partnership with high schools, Opening Act hosts an open, club-like ensemble that any attending student can join. Opening Act has as staff of over fifteen teaching artists, who are assigned to particular schools. The curriculum for the first part of the school year focuses on improvisation skills, and the second half of the school year gives students the chance to devise an original piece.

Unlike Rosie's Theater Kids and the 52nd Street Project, Opening Act does not have their own studio location. This is a challenge in some ways because Opening Act must borrow space from the high schools they have residencies in. This could be problematic in that students are unable to differentiate "school" from "after-school program with Opening Act," because both things occur in the same place. Since Opening Act operates as a club out of high schools, only high-school aged children are able to join. Additionally, Opening Act students generally do not have the benefit of interacting with other students involved with the organization, except if they are selected to join the Summer Conservatory. The benefit in all of this is that Opening Act has the chance to work with kids from all over the city, instead of a particular area.

Benefits and Challenges.

A major benefit of the after-school model in general is the fact that it can offer a place for students to go, especially in high-need areas and low-performing school districts. Combined, Opening Act, the 52nd Street Project, and Rosie's Theater Kids serve over 2,450 students each year in New York City. There is a huge benefit in the fact that these programs are occurring outside of the typical 8AM – 3PM school day. To reiterate, studies have shown that students who participate in after-school programs are more likely to succeed socially and academically, and are less likely to engage in risky behaviors than their peers who do not participate in any extracurricular enrichment (Little et. al 1). As a program operating in an area that has a high-risk for juvenile gang affiliation, this organization helps keep kids engaged in more positive behavior. The 52nd Street Project,

as an after-school program, covers many bases: they provide a socially and artistically stimulating place for students while additionally providing some academic support. Perhaps the greatest benefit of all is the fact that there is a productive place for these students to go after school – for some kids, it is as close as steps away from their classrooms and homes.

A growing challenge for the 52nd Street Project in particular is the changing climate of the neighborhood of Hell's Kitchen. The neighborhood is rapidly becoming a "hip" area to live in, with rent costs rising as high as $2,500 a month for studio apartments (Jacobson). This is very different than the Hell's Kitchen of 1981, when the Project first took root.

One benefit does come from the changing climate of Hell's Kitchen: wealthy residents support this neighborhood organization. With a thirty-year history of impacting the lives of students in the Hell's Kitchen area, the 52nd Street Project's reputation allows it to secure funding from multiple sources. This, along with plentiful charitable donations of time, money, and goods means that the 52nd Street Project is highly sustainable. In fact, the Project is completely sustained by donations and charity funding. Obviously, after-school programs are not always as financially stable as the 52nd Street Project is, which could prove to be a considerable challenge. Aside from money, people are extremely willing to donate their time to the Project; volunteers are readily available in nearly every capacity. The Project clearly benefits from all of the financial and other help they receive.

A challenge of the after-school model is that students must attend on their own (or their parents') volition. Simply: students need to want to be there. On the other hand,

there is no guarantee that the students who could benefit most from this training will have access to it. Even the 52nd Street Project only takes twenty new fourth-graders in a given academic year. In order to provide the best possible programming for students, they need to limit the amount of students they can offer spots to.

In addition, while programs like the Project recruit from schools in the area, they do not have any specific support from any school district. One the one hand, this means that the programs can operate as they see fit. They are free to do what they please with the students they engage. As long as they have written permission from their parents, they can run their program as desired. However, there is also a disadvantage to not being beholden to a school district – they are not able to work with their students' teachers. They do not have access to inside information to their behavior in the classroom. Teachers are also not able to monitor what their students are learning in an independent program.

Conclusion.

When thinking about the tenets of applied theatre and community-based performance, it is easy to see how the 52nd Street Project fits into them. Taylor's words are echoed in the fact that the 52nd Street Project is "giving voice" to the Hell's Kitchen community. They are certainly using Cohen-Cruz's *communal context*, because the students are at the epicenter of the work that they do. *Hyphenation* comes into play because they also engage the student in multiple mediums –they are also studying dance, filmmaking, cooking, and other forms of artistic expression.

It is obvious that the programs at the 52nd Street Project adhere to the umbrella term *applied theatre* and the subsection of *community-based performance*. It is the literal application of theatre skills to a population that wouldn't otherwise engage in such activities. They are given a new voice through their developing ability to write plays, and perform in roles. Reale says that the 52nd Street project "[gives] a kid the opportunity to prove that he or she has something of value to offer, something that comes from within that he or she alone possesses, something that cannot be taken away" (Reale 1). Giving back the community by affording a child a chance they wouldn't get otherwise is perhaps one of the most impactful examples of community-based performance we have seen so far.

In the case of densely populated, urban areas, stable after-school programs are hard to find – but are essential. In their own way, after-school programs are helpful in supplementing the work done in classrooms. While they do not get support from classroom teachers, they are still vaguely familiar with what students do at each level of school. The 52nd Street Project with its Clubhouse, various programs and academic support, is all-around a high-level after-school program.

Chapter Three: The In-School Teaching Artist Residency Model

In-school Residencies.

Another model of theatre education is the in-school teaching artist residency. While residencies vary greatly depending on the community partner and the arts organization, they almost always have similar attributes. In-school residencies are negotiated between an arts-based organization and a school district. Teaching artists are beholden to the classroom teacher during an in-school residency. They are there to serve the needs of the classroom, rather than to pursue more individualistic goals with students on behalf of the organization they work for.

The in-school teaching artist residency model is directly descended from Theatre-in-Education (TiE). Originally, TiE was started at the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry, England under the influence of Brian Way and Gordon Vallins around the year 1965 ("Theatre in Education"). They formed troupes that entered schools, teaching students about different subjects and engaging them in role-play: "the idea of a high impact performance for a specifically targeted school audience became hugely popular. Because the audiences are small, they can be encouraged to participate through work in role and through debate" ("Theatre in Education"). It essentially aims to create learning opportunities among varying subjects, making theatre an interdisciplinary subject ("What is T.I.E.?") Eventually, TiE spread internationally, with groups forming in the United States.

TiE is rooted in the belief that theatre has a place in the *education* of all children, comparable in importance to other subjects they learn in school. It is another way of

contributing to their multifaceted education: “Dramatic education is a way of looking at education as a whole … It asks that we re-examine our whole educational system – the curricula, the syllabuses, the methods and the philosophies by which these things develop” (Courtney 58). TiE organizations would be pleased to see ‘the arts’ listed as a subject in a well-rounded education according to the Every Student Succeeds Act.

In addition to providing benefits for the classroom, Richard Courtney describes in the chapter “Drama and Play in Education” in his book *Play, Drama & Thought* how drama provides other benefits related to the education of students: “Drama is the basis of all creative education. From it all arts flow ... Dramatic expression provides the other arts with meaning and purpose for the child” (Courtney 57). Theatre arts is at the core of all arts education – students gain skills that are easily transferrable between artistic mediums and between subjects. Courtney also connects ability in drama with abilities in other artistic subjects. Further, he claims that dramatic expression allows the child to remain imaginative, creative, and spontaneous – all things that community-based performance and applied theatre aim to do with the populations they work with.

It is easy to see how teaching artistry evolved out of Theatre-in-Education. Like TiE, teaching artists focus on integrating the ‘typical’ education of students with theatre education. Both these forms take advantage of the fact that all children are already attending school. Above all, both teaching artistry and TiE value theatre arts as a standalone subject and as a methodology, rather than a tool to achieve other means.

History and Mission of Writers Theatre of New Jersey.

A conference room in a lower-level suite of the Madison Community Center is covered floor-to-ceiling in oversized Post-it notes. Each sheet is dedicated to a different educational theorist, philosophical movement, or theatrical practice. This place is the think tank of the Writers Theatre of New Jersey, a non-profit community-based theatre organization operating out of Madison, New Jersey. It is a transitional time at WTNJ, explains the Director of Marketing and Community Development, Walter F. Rodriguez. To be at "best practice," they are in the process of exploring new methodologies. As a company over thirty years old, WTNJ prides itself on innovating new ways to provide "quality writing programs to schools and community-based organizations" ("Program Descriptions").

The mission statement of the WTNJ educational programs is currently to help create "lifelong learning experiences in writing, theatre and the creative process" (Writers Theatre Education Programs). The Writers Theatre of New Jersey (WTNJ), formerly known as Playwright's Theatre of New Jersey, was founded in 1986 when playwright and Drew professor Buzz McLaughlin shook hands with the superintendent of Madison schools at the time, Larry Feinsod. McLaughlin's mission was to bring quality writing classes to school programs and community-based organizations throughout the state. Feinsod had always been a huge supporter of arts integration, and when it comes to theatre, playwriting is often the last thing people think about. Both McLaughlin and Feinsod wanted to find a way to educate their children and keep the arts alive . Their concept was based on the model of bringing professional writers and theatre practitioners

into the classroom to lead these workshop residencies, giving the students "life-long learning experiences in writing, theatre and the creative process" (Writers Theatre Education Programs). A few years after they were established, WTNJ created a partnership with New Jersey State Council of the Arts and the New Jersey Writers Project, adding poetry and prose to their offerings. Besides workshops that teach the writing aspect, their work includes residencies focusing on the performance of theatre and poetry.

While WTNJ hosts staged readings of new plays written and performed by professionals, their primary goal is education. They have a large array of educational programs for all ages throughout the state of New Jersey. One of their most common programs is the New Jersey Writers Project (NJWP) where they work with approximately 15,000 students annually to teach playwriting and the process of creating theatre. The residencies are offered to grades 3-12, lasting anywhere from four to twenty-one days. A professional teaching artist will come into the classroom and, either under the supervision of the student's regular teacher during school hours or completely on their own after school, will guide the students through the process of writing, each one finishing the residency with a draft of their own original play. Once the plays have been written, the Language-in-Motion Residencies allow the students' work to be read by professional actors to an audience. From there, they can be taken to the New Jersey Young Playwrights Festival, a contest where the playwrights work with professional actors, dramaturgs and directors to perform their script for written response and public feedback. These residencies can have a huge impact on the confidence and creative abilities of

students, allowing them to see that their work is always worth being read.

A fifth grade student at the Dennis O'Brien elementary school, located in Dover, New Jersey, is a testament to how a student can grow to feel more confident in himself, stating, "I used to think that my stories weren't good. I used to not want to read my stories, but I learned to write stories with meaning, and now I feel more confident" (Writers Theatre Education Programs).

In-school residencies.

To reiterate, WTNJ has expansive programming that reaches nearly the entire state. For the most part, their programming within schools is coordinated between the school district and WTNJ. Teachers will emphasize to WTNJ what they'd like to occur in their residency. Then, the program directors select a teaching artist for the program based on the skills needed by the classroom teacher. Though it varies from program to program, typically both the teaching artist and the regular classroom teacher will both be present in the room. In some cases, the teaching artist is the only educator, and in others, the program occurs after typical school hours, even though it is still partnering with the school district. In the Madison Young Playwrights program, parental permission is required in order to stay in the school building after typical hours.

Obviously, with the school district as a partner, there is an added layer of intricacy in finding appropriate funding for programming. WTNJ programs are funded in a variety of ways – sometimes through grant money, and other times the district pays WTNJ for their services. For example, the town of Madison pays WTNJ to participate in in-school

residencies. Areas with high need and low income – like, for instance, the city of Newark – receive programming based on the availability of grant money.

Writers Theater of New Jersey has been operating programs in the city of Newark for over twenty-five years, and maintains partnerships with the Newark School District and other non-profits in the area ("The Brick City Initiative"). In what is known as the Brick City Initiative, Writers Theater of New Jersey sponsors:

> 15-20 residencies in poetry, prose, and playwriting annually in Newark Schools and community-based organizations. Professional writers create flexible hands-on writing and performance programs to match the needs of the school and classrooms. At the end of the process professional actors are brought in to present staged readings of selected work. ("The Brick City Initiative")

Underneath the overhead Brick City Initiative is also a program called Newark Project Plus, which pairs academic work and artistic work in a summer school setting ("The Brick City Initiative"). For about twenty-five years, WTNJ has been working with Newark Arts Education efforts to bring classes to Newark students and, partnered with Newark Board of Education and a group of committed area nonprofits, they create programming for Project Plus, the summer school enrichment program of the Newark Schools. Programs also include the Newark Writers Festival and senior citizen workshops throughout the city.

Observation.

On December 20th, 2016, Emma Barakat and I attended the final session of a partnership with Central Avenue School, an elementary school right down the block from WTNJ in Madison. This program in particular is the oldest one of them all – the Madison Young Playwrights Program ("Program Descriptions"). Walter F. Rodriguez was the teaching artist for a class of fourth and fifth graders who were presenting final drafts of their plays. This particular residency was an interesting hybrid between a typical in-school program and an after-school program. It is part of the Rose City Initiative, the founding program of WTNJ. Though the class was sponsored by the school district, the actual sessions took place after-school in a classroom in Central Avenue School. The students had been working on a play for most of the residency, and finally reached the full drafting stage. In the previous session, the students were instructed to finish the final draft of their plays and email it to Rodriguez, or bring it with them to the program that day.

While we did not see much of the entire playwriting process, we did get to see the final product of the residency – a play reading in which professional actors came in and read the students' plays. Although Emma and I were the only outside audience members, the students' parents were also invited to attend the reading. Unlike the 52nd Street Project, these readings were very casual, the actors received the scripts only a few hours before and they remained seated the entire time. Despite the fact that this was the end of the residency with the class, Rodriguez still encouraged his students to work on their plays further: he encouraged them to submit their plays to a contest sponsored by Writers

Theatre. While the final performances at the Project bring a sense of closure to the work, the relatively casual nature of the WTNJ reading encouraged the students to keep working towards a final product.

One interesting facet of the class that I had not yet used in my lesson plans is the implementation of constructive criticism. After each student had their play read aloud, the adult actors gave feedback. Then, Rodriguez asked the other students in the class for feedback. The feedback given ranged from the very broad, "your story was funny and I liked it," all the way to the very specific, "I think you should add more of this scene. Like what if they said, 'I'm mad at you!'" Clearly, there are benefits and complications to such a straightforward way of receiving feedback. I agree that constructive criticism is an important part of any creative writing experience, and I incorporated it significantly into my lesson plans. However, I think that all situations that invite constructive criticism also invite a lesson in appropriate ways of delivering that feedback. At the 52nd Street Project, in a meeting prior to our weekend away, Natalie Hirsch talked about the importance of letting students figure the plot of the play out for themselves, regardless of whether or not it is the best possible ending. Students who admire the adults they work with will often take their suggestions without question. I feel that it is more effective to have the dramaturge-directors, actors, and adult partners ask questions and allow the playwrights to discover things themselves rather than providing lines that the student should insert into their work.

Other Examples of the In-School Teaching Artist Residency.

Lincoln Center Education.

The premiere teaching artist conglomerate in New York City is Lincoln Center Education. It is the education subdivision of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, which hosts prolific arts companies like the New York City Philharmonic and the New York City Ballet. Lincoln Center Education (also known as LCE) has a staff of teaching artists in multiple disciplines – visual art, music, theatre, and dance ("Teaching Artists"). LCE provides a number of different types of residencies for schools across the city, the most popular being the *Partnership Schools*:

> Partnership Schools work with LCE through a variety of flexible models of participation uniquely designed to fit the mission and needs of each school. The Partnership model is open to a broad range of pre-K through grade 12 schools that typically implement LCE in selected classes each year. Participation in professional development labs is required of the teachers working in those classes. ("Partnership Schools")

Like the WTNJ residencies, these partnerships are short-term and can be completed at nearly any age level. They are designed to meet the needs of students based on classroom teacher feedback.

Focus schools are long-term collaborators with the resources and capacity for a deeper level of engagement with LCE. LCE's pedagogical approach and the Capacities for Imaginative Thinking are integrated into an entire school curriculum ("Focus Schools").

Benefits and Challenges.

There are many benefits to the teaching artist residency model. If a teaching artist is working in a particular classroom, they can fill in a very specific gap in knowledge that the teacher helps them to identify. In turn, the teacher can also help the teaching artist understand specific student needs or other information that might be relevant to how the teaching artist conducts class. Classroom teachers can provide materials and tools that might otherwise be unavailable to the teaching artist. Finally, a present and engaged classroom teacher can provide a support that is beneficial both to the teaching artists and to the students, who often outnumber the teaching artist as many as 30:1. Since classroom teachers are acting as supports and not lead educators, no theatrical experience is necessary for the classroom teacher. Seeing as most teachers do not have extensive theatre arts-based training, this is likely the model with which most teachers would be comfortable.

In all, the classroom teacher's presence is both a benefit and a challenge to the teaching artist's work. While the classroom teacher can provide an authority figure for the students, the teacher could potentially undermine the teaching artist's work if they are in disagreement. Just as co-teachers often struggle to create clear and specific roles in the room, the teaching artist and classroom teacher must also work out a mutually beneficial system.

Oftentimes, teaching artists will come from the same community that the school is located in. This helps create a better sense of understanding between the students, the

teachers, and the teaching artists, who all inhabit a similar world. Unfortunately, in some cases, there are teaching artists who do not come from the same community.

In Daniel Judah Sklar's notable text *Playmaking,* he reflects on a teacher who challenged his work while he was working as a teaching artist in a public school in New York City. Sklar discusses his methodology by sharing his experience with one particular classroom at PS 34 in the Bronx. Instead of first listing his methodology in a specific structure, he describes what he does with the students and their reactions (and their teacher's responses). He writes of a particularly challenging moment with his cooperating teacher discussed the home lives of their students:

> Teaching in the South Bronx was different from the more affluent neighborhood surrounding Emory University in Atlanta. Worrying about unconscious impulses 'emerging' seemed terribly precious. What these kids needed was basic skills to deal with grim realities. I needed to work more directly and let go of the frills. (Sklar 13)

While Sklar had a hard time establishing himself in the teacher's classroom, there is also much to be said about their difficult relationship: she challenged his preconceptions about the students and his work, and in turn made him a better and more aware teaching artist. This all goes back to Cohen-Cruz's tenet of *reciprocity*, in which an appropriate teaching artist will teach for the betterment of the community instead of for their own gain. They are not intended to impose on the classroom, but instead to bring their talents and to help elicit the talents of students.

A benefit and a challenge to the teaching artist model is a stronger sense of

motivation because the students are still *in* school. Students are already writing frequently in their ELA classes and could easily transition into writing plays in the classroom. Students could even potentially complete some of their tasks as homework. If students' participation in the residency is graded by their teacher, they would need to be attentive and active participants in some capacity. Refusal to do so could result in a lower grade. While there are obvious benefits, this can also be a challenge for the model – unlike an after-school model that students voluntarily participate in, these students are mandated to participate. While some students might happily engage in the work, others might question its value or refuse to fully participate.

The in-school playwriting residency might also be a challenge for teaching artists working with older students. Students who are using playwriting to deal with their own struggles, whether they are "school-appropriate" or not might write disturbing material that implies abuse or neglect at home. Should a student write a play about a challenging subject, there are certain steps a classroom teacher might need to take as a mandated reporter. In the state of New Jersey, these laws are strict:

> By law (N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.10 and 18A:36-25) and Department of Education regulations (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11), any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected by a parent or caregiver is required to immediately notify DYFS. After reporting to DYFS, any school district employee, volunteer or intern must inform the principal or other designated school official so that law enforcement authorities can be notified. ("Teachers' Desk Reference on Child Abuse and Neglect")

Additionally, all student plays might need to be censored to be appropriate for school. While the limitations would probably be minimal, it is still a challenge to encourage your students to stretch their imagination while simultaneously telling them that what they are writing is inappropriate or not allowed. Of course, any program in New Jersey would also be required to report suspected child neglect or abuse, but the participation of the school district creates another opportunity for intervention.

Madison, Newark, and funding.

A major challenge of WTNJ's funding process is that there is still unequal access to the arts. The fact of the matter is that some school districts will be able to offer their students residencies that other school districts couldn't afford. The Newark School District does not have the taxpayer funding to partner with organizations like Writers Theater of New Jersey in a capacity similar to the Madison School District. Although WTNJ partners with towns and cities all over the state, there is not a program in *every* New Jersey school district, which inherently widens the achievement gap.

It is also abundantly clear that the work done by these organizations is very different for students coming from inner cities compared to the students who are living in towns like Madison, NJ. At Central Avenue School, 8.7% of students are classified as economically disadvantaged, as compared to 84.1% at South Street School, a similar PK-5 school in Newark (New Jersey Department of Education). At South Street School, 86.2% of students are students of color, while students of color make up only 27.4% of the population of Central Avenue School (New Jersey Department of Education). The

difference in the schools' needs is clear. Despite this, there is no consistent, year-to-year residency in any Newark Public School with Writers Theater of New Jersey. According to these statistics, when it comes to the Writers Theatre of New Jersey programming, students of color and economically-disadvantaged students are receiving less opportunity to study theatre in class than their peers. Of course, this is not to say that students at Central Avenue School should not be participating in the residency – rather, it seems that we should be striving for *all* students to receive some sort of in-class opportunity to study theatre. The students who might benefit from it the very most – students of color and economically disadvantaged students – are currently least likely to receive this chance.

Conclusion.

The teaching artist model is an effective method for exposing *all* kids, regardless of interest, to theatre. This is very valuable – so many students could possibly find a passion in theatre that they never considered before. More students are practicing empathy and more students are using a creative outlet to express their emotion. When every student in a classroom gets a chance to try theatre or playwriting, it shrinks that achievement gap just a little bit. It is no longer only about Student A, whose parents could afford to send them to a paid theatre program. Student B still gets a glimpse of what theatre is like and how it could affect their life.

Aside from accessing more students, the teaching artist model also accesses a different part of students' learning experience. When working with a teaching artist on school time and in the classroom, students are more likely to make connections to the

things they are learning in school. After learning about a particular moment in history, a student might be able to write a play set in that time, providing a way to explore the culture as they couldn't before. The student who learns about poetic devices in class now has a chance to use it in practice. The list of ways that students can mesh their other learning with playwriting is endless. As well, their classroom teacher is often there to help facilitate those connections by proofreading, discussion, and their own assessment. While the after-school model is more connected to the emotional engagement of students and is less concerned with their learning goals, the teaching-artist model takes advantage of the learning opportunity present in the work.

As a future teacher or teaching artist, this is the model I see myself using most often. I am most interested in exploring the connection between classroom material and theatre-based activities. The teaching artist residency model is the model upon which I based my lesson plans – however, I'd like to take a look at one last model for inspiration and best practice.

Chapter Four: The Hybrid Model

AdvantageArts@Drew

Students from Drew University enter the Marion A. Bolden Center in Newark, New Jersey. It is just after our Spring Break, and the groups of students had been separated for that time. **Z,** a Newark student, walks up to the group of Drew students and throws his arms around each of them.

"I missed you so much!" **Z** says, genuinely. He gives his Drew University student partner an extra big hug. "I can't wait to show you what I was working on while you were gone."

History and Mission.

Rodney Gilbert, founder of Yendor Productions, the overhead company that is responsible for AdvantageArts, credits the Summer Arts Institute at Rutgers with his current success. As he delved deeper into his passion, he realized that programs that teach the "discipline of the discipline" were necessary to making life better for young adults that shared his own experience growing up in Newark. The mission of Yendor Productions is "Art that Changes; Be a part of the change" – Gilbert and his company invite anyone with a passion for theatre to participate in this mentorship-based program ("About Us").

History of AdvantageArts. AdvantageArts is a partnership between Drew University in Madison, New Jersey and the Marion A. Bolden Center, an after-school center in Newark, New Jersey. The goal of Advantage Arts is to bring Newark public

school (NPS) students interested in creative expression together with Drew mentors, who will help students in the process of creating original theatre – devising their own pieces through writing, dancing, acting and singing. Meeting twice a week, half the time at the Bolden Center and half the time at Drew, the college students and NPS students develop the work together, each week requiring progressively more engagement and focus until at the end of the semester, original plays and pieces are produced for an audience. The partnership was initiated in 2010, after Professor Chris Ceraso, Rodney Gilbert, and then Drew President Robert Weisbuch began a conversation about increasing civic engagement at Drew. Ceraso had been a part of the 52nd Street Project (discussed above) and Weisbuch was interested in creating a program like that, where Drew mentors and Newark students would come together to create theatre. With that goal in mind, Ceraso and Professor Rodney Gilbert, an adjunct professor at Drew who also taught in Newark, joined forces to implement the Arts Advantage class, offered yearly at Drew in the spring semester. In 2011, Dr. Lisa Brenner joined the team, with Ceraso and Brenner running the class out of Drew and Gilbert facilitating the partnership with Newark.

The students come from Newark public schools, although in recent years, the program has opened up to charter school students as well. Whether they come from public or charter schools, the students that are a part of Arts Advantage represent Newark's underserved population, in which 97 percent of the student body is Black/African American. Less than 15 percent of the population has earned a college degree and the median household income is less than $21,000 (Brenner).

The Lesson Plans.

The following pages will contain the lesson plans used to teach playwriting at the Bolden Center in the Fall of 2016.

Drew University
Honors Thesis Lesson Plans

Lesson 1
Initializing and Primary Characters: What's a play? Who's in it?

Name: Michelle Taliento **Grade/Subject:** Playwriting, Grades 9 - 12

Date: November 1st, 2016

Location: Bolden Center, Newark NJ

1. **Rationale.** Students involved in this intensive playwriting course will spend a number of weeks learning how to write plays. A person could decide to write a play for a number of personal reasons, including a need to express or share a story, a desire to entertain, or an interest in the writing process. These students will embrace all three of these ideas; the goal of this learning unit is to offer students an opportunity to share a story they might not otherwise have the chance to give to the world. This lesson introduces the concept of creating characters from their imagination, giving them speech, and transferring those thoughts to the page. In this first meeting, they start developing these skills by putting them into practice. Also included in this lesson is the creation of ground rules, designed by the students to keep the space safe. A "safe space" indicates a place where students are allowed to share their ideas, thoughts, and words with one another without fear of judgment.

2. **Pre-requisite Skills.** The students do not need any prerequisite playwriting skills before beginning this unit. However, they should have some proficiency at general writing. Students should also have a basic understanding of the parts of a complete sentence. They will ideally be able to construct imaginary circumstances and convert them to the written word. Before they begin this unit, students should also have a working knowledge of what a play is, even if they have not seen one live, or read one independently.

3. Learning Standards.

ELA Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

National Arts Standards: Theatre

TH:Cr1.1.8.c

Develop a scripted or improvised character by articulating the character's inner thoughts, objectives, and motivations in a drama/theatre work.

TH:CR1.1.II.c

Use personal experiences and knowledge to develop a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.

4. Instructional Objectives.

Students will be able to:

- Identify the parts of a character profile.
- Develop a character profile from imaginary circumstances.
- Define what a monologue is and explain why playwrights use them.
- Compose an original monologue from the point of view of their created character.

5. edTPA Language Demands and Supports.

Students will be able to identify the parts of a character profile.	
Identified Language Demands	**Planned Language Supports**
Identify (Function)	Discuss purpose of a character sheet and its real-life application.
Character profile (Vocabulary)	Model proper way of organizing a

	character sheet.
Features of the profile: Name, Age, Family, Home, Wish, Fear (Syntax)	As a class, present and discuss examples of terms.

Students will be able to develop a character profile from imaginary circumstances.	
Identified Language Demands	**Planned Language Supports**
Develop (Function)	Lead the students through an imaginary sequence.
Imaginary circumstances (Vocabulary)	Discuss what "imaginary circumstances" means, model how they can use it.
The actual development of the character profile (Discourse)	Individualize students' needs by working with them one-on-one.

Students will be able to define what a monologue is and explain why playwrights use them.	
Identified Language Demands	**Planned Language Supports**
Define (Function)	Present and discuss the purpose of a monologue.
Textual structure of a monologue (Vocabulary)	Model what a typical monologue looks like (where the character name is, beats, provide the scaffolding for stage directions)
Explore the theatrical possibilities of a monologue (Discourse)	Provide examples of what monologues do for a play and for a character.

Students will be able to compose an original monologue from the point of view of their created character.	
Identified Language Demands	**Planned Language Supports**
Compose (Function)	Lead the students through a writing exercise.
Point-of-view (Vocabulary)	Explain what a "point of view" and explore
Use their developed character and create appropriate language for them	Individualize students' needs by working with them one-on-one.

(Discourse)	

6. Materials.

1. Large post-it paper.
2. Markers.
3. Notebooks.
4. Pencils.

7. Procedure.

- **Essential Question.** Why write a play?

- **Initial Phase.**

  Ball-Toss Name Warm-Up: Have everyone circle up. Toss a ball to another person in the group, saying their name. Keep following the same pattern. Eventually introduce a second ball into the circle, going the reverse way. (**10 minutes.)**

  Duck, Duck, Random Animal: Like the typical "duck, duck, goose," have the student sit in a circle. One volunteer goes around saying "duck, duck…" and taps the students' heads. When they decide they want to call on someone, they tap a student's head and picks a descriptive word and a type of animal. Example "random animals" could include: a lazy snake, a jumping jaguar, a tired cat, etc.

  Why Are We Here?: Explain the goal of the writing workshops to the students, and have them sign the consent forms to participate in the work. (**Goal:** To write a ten-minute play for two characters.) In our situation, students are required to sign off on a form that allows them to participate in this workshop, and allows us to use their writing as research material. Students will also be completing a baseline survey that attempts to capture their current opinions and feelings on a number of criteria. (**15 minutes.**)

  Playwriting Foundational Ideas: Writing on a piece of large post-it paper,

invite the class to think about the following ideas:

Why write a play?

What do we need?

What might get in our way? (**15 minutes.**)

Ground Rules: Establish ground rules for the group. Students will make suggestions for rules they'd like to see happen in the classroom. If there is consensus, it is added to the list. Once it is completed, have everyone sign them. (**10 minutes.**)

Example ground rules: 1) No cellphones during workshops. 2) Embrace what you shared, and don't judge what others shared. 3) Have fun.

1. **Middle Phase.**
   Each student should move to a part of the room where they can be alone with themselves, without distractions.

   Character Profile:
   Close your eyes and silently imagine a character. This imaginary person can be based on a real person, or they could be totally created by you. Imagine that this character has something in common with you. Maybe they live in a similar place as the student. Maybe they look like the student. Maybe they share the same wish, or same fear. Encourage them to think about this imaginary person, and create the following traits for them:

   - Name
   - Age
   - Family
   - Home
   - Wish
   - Fear

Write down all of these characteristics in your notebook in this listed format. (**20 mins**)

Brief Monologue: Review what a monologue is (a character talking onstage by themselves, a character's inner thoughts, etc.)

Write a monologue from the POV of the character you developed on your

character sheet. Imagine that they are sharing their greatest wish with someone, and how their fear is stopping them from attaining that wish. Monologues can be between six and twelve sentences. (**15 mins**)

- **Concluding Phase.**
  Share Out: Each student should share something they wrote today, whether it is all/part of the monologue, or all/part of the character sheet. (**15 mins**)

  Total lesson time: 1 hour, 30 minutes.

8. Differentiation.

- If students are unable to physically write in a notebook due to injury, visual impairment, or auditory impairment, the activities can all be completed by typing them. The lesson has a number of visual aids for students with auditory impairments to follow along. They can also be completed by orating their thoughts to a classroom aide.
- Students who struggle with organization could be provided a few 'sentence starters' such as "*Today was the worst day ever because…*" or "*I am so afraid of [my fear] because…*" These students could also be given a graphic organizer to help them better organize their monologues.
- Students who feel an urge to move are allowed to do so while they write. They can sit, stand, or make themselves comfortable as they see fit.
- Extensions are available for students who need an additional challenge:
  - In the character sheet, students can add other sections, like 'Hobby,' 'Worst Enemy' and 'Favorite Food.'
  - In the monologue, students can continue to extend their writing by writing a monologue *after* events have happened: did the character receive their wish? Did their worst fear come true?

9. Follow-Up.

- Students will have no written homework.
- Students will be encouraged to observe people throughout their daily lives.
    - How are they different from you?
    - How are they the same?
    - Take note of some interesting phrases that you hear throughout the week – what interested you about the way this person said that phrase?

Drew University
Honors Thesis Lesson Plans

Lesson 2
Secondary Characters: Who *else* is in my play?

Name: Michelle Taliento **Grade/Subject:** Playwriting, Grades 9 - 12

Date: November 9th, 2016

Location: Bolden Center, Newark NJ

1. **Rationale.** Students in the beginning phases of a playwriting unit will review different types of sentence structure, diversifying the sentences they will use in their final scenes. Students will also develop entirely new character profiles in order to start laying the foundation for their final scenes, which will be entirely new content. Finally, students will continue to hone monologue-writing skills which will also scaffold their scene-writing.

2. **Pre-requisite Skills.** Students should have some familiarity with basic sentence structure, based on their current grade level. After completing lesson one, students will also have some understanding of the character profile. They will know what a monologue is, why playwrights use them, and they have had some practice in the beginnings of writing a monologue from the point of view of the character that they developed.

3. **Learning Standards.**
   ELA Common Core
   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.D
   Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.

   National Arts Standards: Theatre
   TH:Cr1.1.8.c
   Develop a scripted or improvised character by articulating the character's inner thoughts, objectives, and motivations in a drama/theatre work.
   TH:CR1.1.II.c
   Use personal experiences and knowledge to develop a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.

4. **Instructional Objectives.**

Students will be able to:

- Differentiate a run-on sentence and a sentence fragment with a complete sentence.
- Revise sentences.
- Imagine a new character, and describe them using the character profile chart.
- Compose an original monologue that considers or solves their character's conflict.
- Discuss the importance of differences and practice empathy.

5. **edTPA Language Demands and Supports.**
   Students will need to understand basic sentence structures. In order to help them understand, I will model all of these on the white-board. To support their language acquisition, I'll have them share examples of each "type" of sentence, and have them identify issues with them.

6. **Materials.**
   - Large Post-it paper.
   - Whiteboard, chalkboard, or other erasable surface.
   - Markers. (And appropriate writing utensils for erasable surface.)
   - Notebooks.
   - Package of pencils.

7. **Procedure.**
   - **Essential Question.** Why are differences among people valuable, and why should playwrights think about these differences?

   - **Initial Phase.**
     Warm Up: *Cup bounce*. Students will stand in a circle, with one plastic cup. They will volley the cup back and forth between each other in the circle, saying one letter of the alphabet at a time. The cup shouldn't fall, and the same person shouldn't say a letter twice in a row.

     Ritual Review: Refer back to the "Why write a play?" "What do we need?" "What might stand in our way?" and the Ground Rules.

     Address Follow-Up from Previous Lesson: Did you see or meet anyone interesting this week? What were they like? Why did that person interest you?

   - **Middle Phase.**
     Discussion: Why does sentence structure matter if plays are heard, and not read?

Whiteboard Sentences:

1. Write an example of a run-on sentence on the whiteboard, and have a student read it out loud with regular inflection.
    - What kind of sentence is this? *(As a class, define the meaning of a run-on sentence.)*
    - Pass out a character type/character intention slip to a student, and have them read the same sentence.
    - What does this new reading do to the sentence?
    - Repeat with a new character type/intention, and new reflection on the sentence.
2. Repeat entire exercise with a sentence fragment example.
3. Discuss: Why might a playwright choose to have their characters speak in run-on sentences or sentence fragments? What could they add to a character? How might they distract an audience?

Character Profile #2

Students will develop entirely new characters, unique from anything they've worked on this semester.

Imagine a character that has almost nothing in common with you…They don't even have to be a human. This character could be based on a person you know in life that is very different from you, or a person you are completely imagining yourself.

1. Name
2. Age
3. Family
4. Home
5. Secret Wish
6. Biggest Fear
7. Most Important Being
8. Safe Place
9. Quirk (What makes them different from everyone else?)

Monologue #2

Based on these new character sheets, students will continue to hone their monologue writing skills by writing monologues from this new character's point of view.

Your character is in their safe place, talking to their most important being, about how much they want their secret wish. In this monologue, explain how your character's biggest fear is getting in the way of that wish. Would

your character use run-on sentences or sentence fragments?

- **Concluding Phase.**
  Share Out: Each student should share something they wrote today, whether it is all/part of the monologue, or all/part of the character sheet.

  Essential Question Discussion: *Why are differences between people valuable? There are lots of different people in the world. Why should we, as playwrights, think and write about people who are different from ourselves?*
  *Empathy: the ability to **share** and understand the feelings of another. Putting yourself in their shoes.* (Versus sympathy, which is just a feeling of compassion.)

8. **Differentiation.**
   Students who need an additional challenge will have the opportunity to generate sentence fragments or run-on sentences as an example for the rest of the class to look at. A student who might need an additional challenge can also write a character profile about their first character's Most Important Being. They will also have an opportunity to write a monologue from that character's perspective.

9. **Follow-Up Activities.**
   If students did not finish their monologue in class, they should take it home to finish it as homework.

   Students should observe people they do not know. How are these people different from themselves? What is interesting about their differences?

10. **Assessment.**
    One-word share out: Students will share something that they have learned in one word.

Drew University

Honors Thesis Lesson Plans

Lesson 3

Compelling Details: Want/Conflict/Change and Time/Place/At Rise

Name: Michelle Taliento **Grade/Subject:** Playwriting, Grades 9 - 12

Date: November 16th, 2016

Location: Bolden Center, Newark NJ

1. **Rationale.** Students in the middle of a playwriting unit will learn how to properly format plays according to Standard American format. Their plays will also include the *time*, *place*, and what is *at rise* at the top of the show. Students are also expected to understand the concept of '*want/conflict/change*' and include that in their plays as well. Proper formatting and inclusion of all appropriate concepts is important because it adds legitimacy to their scripts. They are held to the highest standards of formatting and components because it will challenge them to complete their best work.

2. **Pre-requisite Skills.** After working on monologues and character profiles, students are beginning to understand some of the basic necessities of drama. They have also brainstormed what they need to write a play. New concepts (elements of formatting, time/place/at rise) will be covered in depth and do not require pre-requisite knowledge.

3. **Learning Standards.**

   ELA Common Core

   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

   Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

National Core Arts Standards

TH: Cr1.1.4.a

Articulate the visual details of imagined worlds, and improvised stories that support the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

TH: Cr1.1.6.c

Explore a scripted or improvised character by imagining the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

4. Instructional Objectives.

Students will be able to:

- Apply "time," "place," and "at rise" to the beginning of their play to establish setting.
- Incorporate a definitive "want," "conflict," and "change" in the plot of their plays.
- Format their plays according to American Standard format.

5. edTPA Language Demands and Supports.

Students will need to understand a total of three new vocabulary words – time, place, at rise, and want, conflict, change. In order to support the acquisition of the vocab for time/place/at rise, I will use an anchor chart and ask for additional examples from while also providing examples myself. To model the elements of want/conflict/change, I will show them three short scenes that are missing one of the elements.

6. Materials.

- Anchor charts.
- Large post-it pad.
- Notebooks.
- Pencils.

Optional, but encouraged:

- Ambient music (preferably in a genre the kids enjoy.)
- Speakers/technology to play music.

7. Procedure.

- **Essential Question.** What are the essential components of a play, and why are they important?
- **Initial Phase.**
  - Warm Up: *Zip-zap-zop*. One player starts by saying the word 'zip' and pointing at another player in the circle. Then that person must point at a different player and say 'zap.' The next person must point again to a different player and say 'zop.' The cycle continues. Essential goals are keeping a consistent rhythm and avoiding mistakes.
- **Middle Phase.**
  - Time/Place/At Rise: The class will create a new anchor chart together. The teaching artist will write "TIME" "PLACE" and "AT RISE" on a new sheet of Post-it paper. The teaching artist will explain each concept. (*Time* refers to actual time of day, day of the week, month, year, etc.; *Place* refers to location; *At Rise* is what is happening at the moment the scene starts) Then they will ask for examples of each of those things, while also providing their own examples. As each student responds to the teaching artist, they will write it down near the corresponding word. The result is a finished anchor chart with their generated examples.

  - Want/Conflict/Change: The teaching artist will explain the concepts of want/conflict/change. (*Want* refers to what each character's goal or objective is. *Conflict* is the problem in the scene, likely because of two conflicting wants between characters. *Change* is how the problem gets solved.

Then the teaching artist will perform two scenes with an aide or a pre-prepared volunteer:

a. Example of a scene without *conflict*:

A: I want your shoes.

B: Okay!

b. Example of a scene without *change*:

A: I want your shoes.

B: No.

A: Please?

B: No way.

A: Are you sure I can't have them?

B: Nope.

After each scene, the teaching artist will ask the students why that scene was boring or unfulfilling. Then the teaching artist will prompt the students with a question: how can we make this scene have a conflict and a change? Students will suggest answers. Then the two volunteers will improvise the scene with the students' suggestions.

- Formatting: Before they independently write, students will receive a mini-lesson on the proper formatting of plays.
    1. Typed character name, bolded and capitalized over their lines.
    2. Stage directions indented in on the right.
    3. In-dialogue stage directions italicized in parentheses.
    4. Title and character page.

    As the teaching artist explains the formatting concepts, they will write out the newly improvised dialogue (including any stage

directions) in proper Standard American format. This will become an additional anchor chart that students can refer back to.

- **Concluding Phase.**
  - Write: Students will begin to write their drafts independently. The teaching artist will stay present in the room, asking prompting questions. (i.e. *What might the character say next? What is the character feeling in this moment?*)

  - Brief Share-Out: The teaching artist and aides/classroom volunteers will read the drafts of the plays aloud. The teaching artist will ask the class what they really liked about the play. Then they will ask what the class hoped the playwright added more of. (If necessary, the teaching artist can preface this with a conversation about constructive criticism and its components.)

  - One Word: The teaching artist will ask the student to reflect on the lesson in one word. This word could represent how they feel after the lesson or one thing they learned.

8. Differentiation.

- Students who require an additional challenge can draft longer plays than expected.
- Students who feel the urge to move can sit in any location in the classroom they'd like.
- Students who struggle with organization can use a graphic organizer to help them compartmentalize their thoughts.

9. Follow-Up.

No homework will be assigned. However, these drafts will be revisited again and

again until they are completed. Exercises in the next lesson will reaffirm their understanding of time/place/at rise and want/conflict/change.

10. Assessment.

- While the class is creating the anchor chart together, the teaching artist can assess who is contributing examples and who is not.
- The sharing out of their play drafts serves as a conclusive assessment of whether they understood the concepts.
- The one-word share out will clue the teaching artist in to concepts of interest and general mood.

Drew University
Honors Thesis Lesson Plans

Lesson 4
Organization: Storyboarding the Play

Name: Michelle Taliento **Grade/Subject:** Playwriting, Grades 9 - 12

Date: December 7th, 2016

Location: Bolden Center, Newark NJ

1. **Rationale.** Students in the middle of a playwriting unit will use a graphic organizer and a story map to visualize the direction of their play. This is especially helpful for students who might need additional inspiration to continue writing their plays.

2. **Pre-requisite Skills.** After drafting the beginnings of their plays, students will have some concept of the necessary tools. They will understand the components of a compelling and well-detailed story (want/conflict/change and time/place/at-rise). Students will understand proper play formatting, including dialogue and stage directors.

3. **Learning Standards.**
   Common Core
   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.C
   Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.
   National Core Arts Standards
   TH:Cr:1.1.I.c
   Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.

4. **Instructional Objectives.**
   Students will be able to:
   - Use a graphic organizer to identify their play's wants, conflicts, and changes.
   - Create a detailed story map with multiple options for story development.

5. **edTPA Language Demands and Supports.**
   After drafting the beginnings of their plays, students will have some concept of

the necessary tools. They will understand the components of a compelling and well-detailed story (want/conflict/change and time/place/at-rise). Students will understand proper play formatting, including dialogue and stage directions. This lesson plan provides a way to build upon knowledge. Now that they have learned some basic tools of playwriting, they have the opportunity to start writing with the help of a scaffolding tool – a graphic organizer.

6. **Materials.**
   - Anchor charts.
   - Large post-it pad.
   - Notebooks.
   - Pencils.
   - Graphic organizer. (Includes sections for want, conflict, and change.)

   Optional, but encouraged:
   - Ambient music (preferably in a genre the kids enjoy.)
   - Speakers/technology to play music.

7. **Procedure.**
   - **Essential Question.** How can we use visual tools to help us conceptualize the plot of a play?

   - **Initial Phase.**
     - Warm-Up:

       Word Scramble. Students will stand in a circle. The originator will say a word and point to someone. If the first word is *spork*, then the person they point to has to say a word that starts with the letter '*k.'* The game goes on, keeping a consistent rhythm.

       Silent Switch. There is one person in the middle, 'the villain,' surrounded by a circle of the other participants, 'the spies.' The spies must switch places without attracting the attention of the villain.

   - **Middle Phase.**
     - Graphic Organizer: Students will be provided with a graphic organizer that lays out each character's wants, what their conflict will be, and what has to change in order for a character to receive their conflict.

- Story Map: The teaching artist will show the students a story map, a visual representation of the progression of a story. It could be abstract, and it could have many different 'options' for where the story could go.

- **Concluding Phase.**
  - Share-Out: *What happened when you drew the outcome of the play, rather than writing it?*
  - One-Word Assessment: *What is one word you would use to describe your play?*

8. **Differentiation.**
   - Students who require an additional challenge can draft longer plays than expected.
   - Students who feel the need to move can sit wherever they'd like.

9. **Follow-Up.**
   - Students should be able to complete the plays, either as classwork or as homework.

What's next?: What happens after students write their plays.

Students have imagined their characters and the world they live in. They gave them a compelling story, and clear dialogue. Even better – all their formatting is correct. So, what's next? A final performance of some kind is essential to the success of these lesson plans. This doesn't necessarily mean that you need to have a budget for costumes, sets, lights, etc.; in fact, these design elements might put too much pressure on the *product* instead of on the *process*. A final performance simply means that students have an end-goal in sight. It is fine if their work is still in-progress or incomplete by the time of the final performance, but having the students see the final performance as a mile marker on their journey could push their work to some semblance of completeness.

A final performance could look like many things. For the first iteration of this project, it was a seated reading for the rest of the class and a public audience. Mentors took on roles in each student's play, and students read roles in each other's plays. If time allowed, the final performance could benefit from blocking, becoming a staged reading instead of a seated reading. Teachers could invite parents to see their child's play at a Back to School Night event, or if two classes were working on the same project, they could perform for one another. Depending on the students' progress and the availability of funding, the performance could look like anything the teacher wanted it to.

While the final performance can come in many different forms, what is most important is its results for the students. From a final showing, students gain a sense of accomplishment and a validation for their work in the form of applause and praise. It is another means of assessment in seeing their level of completeness. The final performance is not optional: in some form, it *needs* to be replicated, even if the students are just performing for each other.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The Final Performance.

On February 8th, 2017, we held an open class at Drew University. The entire department was invited, along with other professors and the Center for Civic Engagement. The audience was made up of forty-five members of the community, including other Drew students and others with vested interests in what our class was doing. Donors from the Victoria Foundation, which allow the Newark program to thrive, were present. Each student (with the exception of **T,** who could not attend class that day for personal reasons) read their play out loud with their Drew partners in front of the audience. **D,** who did not write a play of his own, participated heavily in the reading and had a speaking role in each individual play. Each Newark student had a speaking part in their own play with the exception of **K**, who chose not to read for himself, but had other students read on his behalf. When each play was finished, everyone in the reading bowed together, and then the playwright got to take an individual bow.

After each play was read, I hosted a short talkback with the audience and with the playwrights. I asked them if they had noticed any common themes among each of the plays. Many audience members noticed themes of unrequited love and loss as a common thread. One audience member included the theme of sacrifice strung throughout all the plays, both in the literal and in the figurative senses. Despite an open and unspecific prompt, there were still clear connections between each play that the students wrote. The students also had the opportunity to speak more about what writing a play was like – many of them said that they never realized they could actually do it, and they would like to write a play again. Luckily, through the Newark Collaboration class, these students have the opportunity to continue all of their work on these

plays through May of 2017.

Self-Assessment.

What did the lesson plans achieve?

Overall, I believe that Emma and I had a lot of success working on this project. Informally, it was clear that all of the students were keeping up with the workload and applying their new knowledge to their plays. In order to make sure that no student fell behind, throughout teaching the lesson plans, I informally assessed whether or not the students were reaching learning goals, noting student progression mentally and then writing them down. Using the results of the previous lesson, I planned subsequent lessons with their skills in mind. For example, when students weren't moving forward with the plot of their play, I created a graphic organizer activity that helped carry their narrative forward. I was adapting the goals of my lesson plans to meet the evolving knowledge of the students.

In looking at the student's notebooks and drafts of their plays, it is clear that there is something to gain by teaching Integrated Playwriting. They did, for the most part, achieve the learning standards in the lesson plans. A particularly excellent character profile was **Z**'s first; this character profile was written after receiving a prompt that asked him to "write a character like yourself." **Z** created the character Zaire Harrison, aged 16, who moved to Newark, New Jersey from Georgetown, Guyana. The character's safe place was the basketball court, and his quirk was loving stories. Zaire secretly wished that his crush, Joyce, would like him. His biggest fear was that Joyce's boyfriend Niles was in a gang. Clearly, **Z** is "us[ing] personal experiences and knowledge to develop a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work" (National Core Arts Standards). His play discusses the difficulties of moving to a new place,

especially being a different race and ethnicity than his peers. **Z** also touched on the topic of losing a parent in a play, creating a compelling world and circumstances for Zaire Harrison to live in. This certainly aligns with the ELA Common Core Standard of "writ[ing] narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences."

In some of the plays, available in this thesis in Appendix A, you might notice that some plays do not include the "time, place, and at rise." However, in all of the plays, including the ones with this element missing, the student initializes the play to help the audience understand where they are. In one particularly excellent example, "Phantom Reality" by **K** did not include a time, place, and at rise before his first scene. Nevertheless, in first drafts, he did have these things, however abstract they were. Originally, the time was "pudding," the place, "Smallville, Planet Chinabook, 10th Dimension," and at rise, "two intangible beings were conversing." As he began drafting, **K**'s play became more grounded in reality; the abstract scene he originally wrote became a daydream. While he didn't correctly format the final draft of the play, which started at the beach, he did include a blurb at the start of the first scene: "SCENE ONE: Sunset, a couple sitting on a blanket by the beach." Additionally, as per my suggestion to the entire class, **K**'s characters had lines that initialized the location for the audience: "I hate the beach." Clearly, **K** grasped what it meant to "articulate the visual details of imagined worlds, and improvised stories that support the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work," a National Core Arts Standard. Although his play had atypical content compared to his peers, **K** was also "produc[ing] clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience" (ELA Common Core Standards) The style of the play was highly

theatrical – obviously appropriate in a playwriting class.

Even the final play reading demonstrated some student learning outcomes. Each student stepped up even more than I could possibly imagine, all spoke loudly, clearly, and with purpose – a National Core Arts Standard we were not necessarily attempting to teach. One student, **J**, had been really quiet during lessons, preferring not to speak unless directly asked a question. However, watching her perform was really exciting – it was clear that she had been engaged the entire time. She really stepped up to the plate and gave a vibrant performance. As a whole, the students' oral literacy was improved. They were eager to speak aloud, and felt confident in front of an audience.

Emma is assessing the 230 Broadway Project on its ability to teach and impact students' *creative literacy* and *citizenship*. These terms, as defined by Emma, can be found in her honors thesis, "Assessment in the 230 Broadway Project and Beyond: What Can Theatre Arts in Education Give Our Students Besides Theatre?" According to Emma, students' creative literacy grew and their sense of citizenship is also measurable through their writing. Our success is now two-fold: not only did the students achieve something according to the standards that are set forth by the New Jersey state government, but they also achieved these other standards Emma and I developed independently.

What else worked?

The Drew students responded well to the material that the Newark students brought into the room. Likewise, the Newark students seemed to undergo a transformation once they had one-on-one help from students they admired. Even if they didn't necessarily enjoy the playwriting

process, their level of engagement was extraordinarily high as we moved towards the final reading. The impact of the mentorship was extraordinarily high; the one-on-one help was an extraordinary success for the students who felt validated by their partners.

Everything considered, the activity of playwriting as a method for teaching theatre skills was successful. Letting students write from the heart instead of under a specific direction worked. They wrote to their own interests instead of someone else's, and it showed in their passion for the topics of their own play. The prompt or scene could be specified in order to explore a particular topic (e.g. citizenship), however it is important to make sure that the prompt remains open enough to allow for the students' creativity, imagination, individuality, and personal experiences. Choosing a specific but open-ended prompt – "write a character *like* you and a character *unlike* you" – created a similarity among all plays without it being overwhelming.

Working within the greater Newark Collaboration class at Drew was massively helpful to the success of this project. Getting the students to and from our facilities, the additional classroom hands, funding, and other benefits came from the fact that this program has been established and already works well. That being said, mine and Emma's experience working with many of these students before gave us a rapport with students that we wouldn't have had otherwise. This isn't to say that every project would need a successful college class behind it. Instead, I offer the suggestion that any teaching artist planning on implementing this work should consider their necessities early in order to ensure that the project is a possibility within a working budget. As well, the successful teaching artist should have an understanding of the background of the student population in the community with which they are working.

What didn't work?

While we had much success with the Newark students, there were a lot of difficulties that came up. Our primary issue was time. For the first semester that Emma and I were working on this project, we only had about an hour of working time a week with the students. This time was sometimes cut to as little as forty-five minutes, and we often couldn't delve into the work in the capacity that we wanted to. It seemed that we never had enough time to complete projects the way we originally intended.

Another issue was meeting the educational needs of each student. With one person acting as teaching artist in the room, there simply wasn't enough help available to the students. **T,** a student who often seemed disinterested in the work, seemed to transform before my eyes when I was able to sit next to him and coach him through his writing. Additionally, at the beginning of our process, we couldn't offer each student a laptop to borrow to type their plays. Handwriting the plays was clearly a challenge for most of the Newark students. When the students had Drew partners available to dictate to, or to borrow laptops from, the number of pages written increased exponentially.

Overall, the classroom-based rigidity of the curriculum, partnered with the fact that we were working in an otherwise relaxed after-school environment, meant that we were working against what the students were used to. While this project is certainly viable for a classroom setting where the teacher has authority and resources to help each student, I would adjust the curriculum significantly for an-afterschool program.

How could issues be fixed?

In the next iteration of this project, I would recommend having a lot *less* to do in a lot *more* time. To put it simply – this is a large project to undertake in only two hours a week. I over-planned to the extreme, and unfortunately, many of the supplemental activities and warm-ups were forefeited to ensure they had adequate writing time. Luckily, the typical ELA classroom teacher would have much more time to dedicate to a project like this, that has standards-benefits and artistic benefits. I would allot, at minimum, one hour per week to exercises leading up to writing, two hours of writing, and an hour of reading plays aloud.

The next thing I would suggest is to have class helpers. Whether these come in the form of teachers' assistants, a professional aide, volunteers, or what-have-you, having other hands in the room is really helpful in this sort of environment. Having someone to bounce ideas off of for the students is helpful, and the helpers also became co-collaborators in our particular program. This sort of work is especially conducive to fostering an ensemble, and group-work in partners or trios is one way to help the work succeed while also managing an entire classroom single-handedly. Instead of creating one play per student, students could partner up to create a group play, in a sense "mentoring" each other.

A concern of mine is what is lost without the mentorship aspect of this project in the typical classroom. In converting these lesson plans from the after-school program to the school day, there is a major issue: a teacher is unlikely to be able to find a 1:1 mentor for each student. I find it essential to say that a huge chunk of the success of this program is lost when students aren't being mentored intimately. A classroom teacher hoping to adapt these lessons should be considering how to mentor each play to fruition depending on individual student needs – this

could come in the form of mini-conferences during class, lunch time meetings, or other forms of differentiation. This isn't to say that the teacher needs to be the sole adult in the room. Across the country, there community-based theatre organizations and freelance theatre professionals hoping to expose their art and work. If this lacks in the lesson plans, there is a concession being made. Teachers could (and should) be reaching out to these organizations to give their students the best chance at 1:1 adult mentorship throughout their entire playwriting process. Additionally, it exposes students to other career opportunities, as well as teaching them about the organizations that exist in their community. Unfortunately, American arts as a whole are being financially limited by the government; teachers providing opportunities for exposure and celebration of these art forms, especially theatre, can help keep them alive and engaged in our towns and cities.

In modern classrooms, teachers are integrating technology more and more. Students at the high school level will likely need a way to type their plays. If I had the opportunity to give them word processors or access to a computer lab, I think the daunting task of writing a play might have seemed less stressful to them. I worked my notebook-and-paper model off of the 52nd Street Project, who uses them in the place of computers. While this works for them, it also makes more sense, seeing as fourth grader's plays would likely be less wordy or complicated than a high school student's play. Overall, if accessible, I would encourage the use of computers for typing up plays in one form or another.

Pushing the final performance to higher standards could also work well. We ended up having a seated reading as our final performance, students and their partners sat in chairs and read for an audience from scripts. For a group that is especially eager to perform, making time for a staged reading might be an exciting part of the process, and would incorporate more acting

skills than a seated reading. Though a staged reading might be fun for the students and class helpers, I would not recommend a fully-realized version of their play (as in memorized scripts and full production values such as lights, costumes, props, etc). Much of the value in this work comes from the process, and to push students too hard towards a final goal is to miss out on the path that they used to get there.

Is this Applied Theatre and Community-Based Performance?

In the first chapter of this thesis, I briefly talked about the field of applied theatre and some of the major scholarship that helped define the field of applied theatre. I called on Philips' and Preston and Prentki's tenets for applied theatre, as well as Cohen-Cruz's principles of successful community-based performance. In all, I believe that 230 Broadway to 36 Madison Avenue is a clear example of both applied theatre and community-based performance. To better understand our place under the complicated and connected umbrella term "applied theatre," I've made a chart that places us in relation to other work.

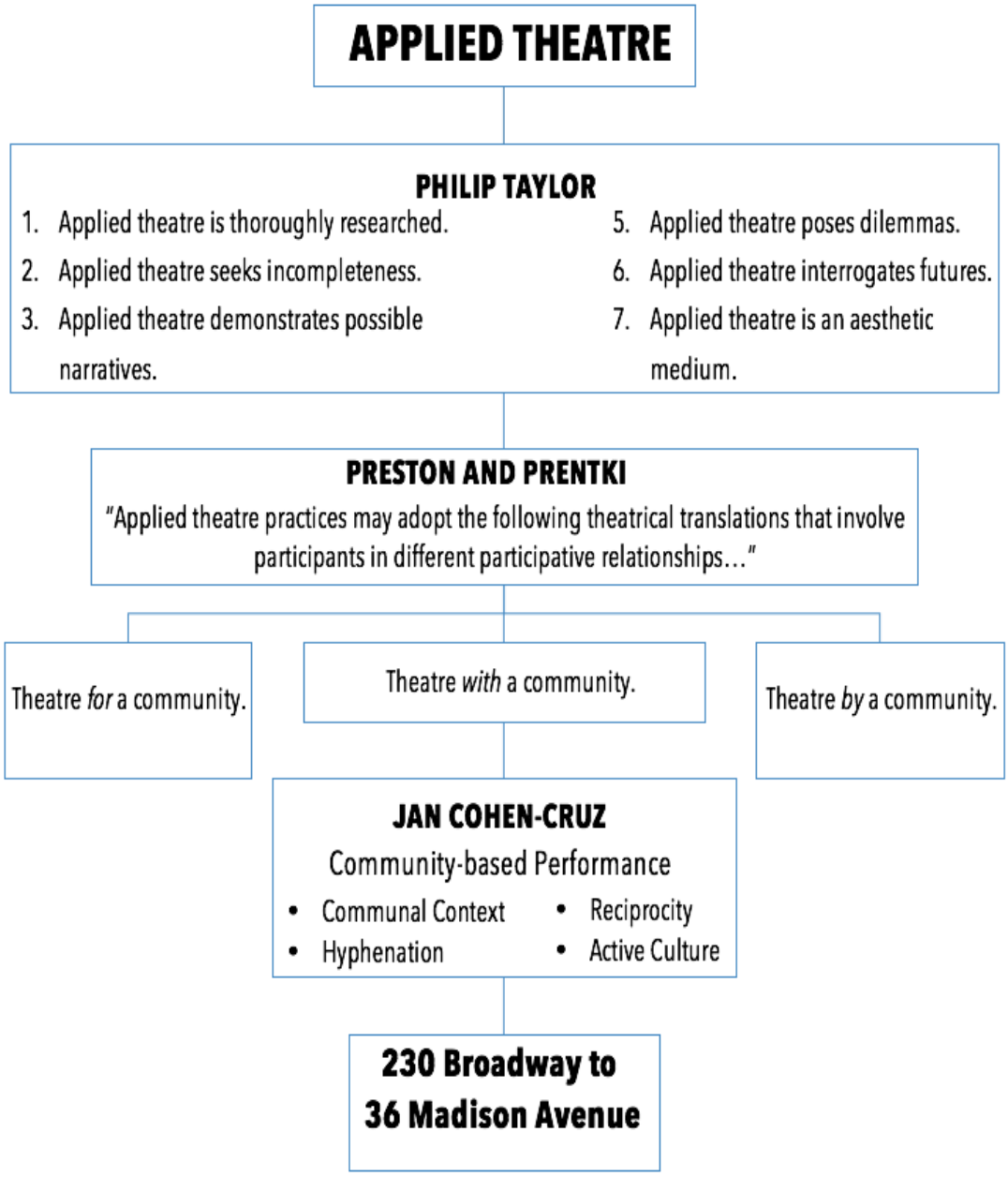

Fig. 1.

According to Preston and Prentki's for/with/by standard of applied theatre, we are certainly a group that does theatre *with* our community partner. We are constantly coaching them towards a final performance goal, but we too are engaged in the outcome of that final performance because we will also be in it. This definition of applied theatre seems to rely on

Cohen-Cruz' principle of *reciprocity*, in which the community partners get just as much out of the process as the teaching artists. Preston and Prentki also say that theatre *with* a community is "process-based," and while it doesn't always lead to a final performance, it does continually engage the community partner with teaching artists (Preston and Prentki 11).

Conclusion.

In writing this thesis, I attempted to offer a solution to a current dilemma for arts education. That is, many public schools in New Jersey are not able to offer full, specialized arts classes at all, much less specialized arts classes that teach theatre. Most schools are mandated to offer some arts by law, and so they are offering *integrated arts education*, classes that focus on major subjects like math, science, and English, but also provide artistic opportunities. I do want to express that Integrated Playwriting should not be considered a replacement for a fully-funded, specialized theatre class, or an art class of any kind for that matter. It is just one solution, of many, to the current situation at hand that forces many schools to give up their specialized theatre arts programming.

Integrated Playwriting offers the opportunity to give autonomy to the students. There are no limits to what students are allowed to write. Without limitations, students are truly able to invest emotionally in what they are writing. Writing plays allows them to explore their problems on a subconscious level. The struggles, desires, fears, and needs of their characters are often ones that they share, whether they realize it or not.

I believe that Integrated Playwriting is one kind of curriculum (ideally, one of many curricula) that successfully fuses ELA and theatre. What makes it viable in the typical classroom

is the fact that teachers do not need to be highly trained in theatre in order to use Integrated Playwriting. It does not primarily build theatre-based skills – instead, it is focused on writing and literacy based skills. As an English major *and* a Theatre Arts major, I possess a set of skills that is unique to my interests and served me especially well when teaching these lesson plans. While I think I had a depth of knowledge that helped the students, I think that much of it could translate well for the English teacher with no background in theatre whatsoever. To go back to Cohen-Cruz, the teacher who knows nothing about theatre stands to learn a lot about theatre through student plays – that's reciprocity!

I cannot claim that Integrated Playwriting is the only way theatre can work in the classroom. (Nor would I want to – for instance, how interesting could a theatre and science collaborative curriculum be?) What I can claim is that Integrated Playwriting can help teachers achieve learning standards in a new way, while also letting their students explore a beneficial art medium.

Overall, the work that we did felt successful. Although we only saw a certain number of finished plays, we have generated continued interest in the Newark Collaboration over the course of another semester. Even students who didn't have the opportunity to finish their play participated in activities that stretched their imagination, even if just a little bit. Students worked hard, wrote, drafted, collaborated, and revised. They took a walk in another's shoes, then saw again through a new perspective. They went to new places, spaces, and times, some of them real and some not. Yes – just like that fourth grader said at the 52nd Street Project on his very first day, these students learned to "fly.

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Appendix A: Student Plays

Pink Saturn, by T
A Hybrid's Secret Love, by A
Driven by Darkness, by S
Guilty, by J
Mental Phantom, by K
The Lovers' Pawn by Ta
A Guyanese Dream, by Z

PINK SATURN

By **T**

SCENE ONE

TIME: Night, October 7, 2017.

PLACE: In Brooklyn, around William High Library.

SHANTEL

I can't wait until these college acceptance letters come back.

CASSEY

I just want to go to Spelman sooo bad. That's all I ask!

SHANTEL

To go to Harvard is all I ask.

CASSEY

I just think it's better for me to connect with my black identity and as a black woman-being black in general in this country there is a lot of issues our people face. Yeah it would be nice to enjoy the infamous American Dream..but can't you see the gentrification, food deserts, police bru-

SHANTEL

So what's wrong with going to an Ivy League? I swear it is always black this black that with you, I hate when you speak like this...I just wanna be me and live my own life.

CASSEY

FYI Ivy Leagues don't matter Shantel, I mean they do, but I can go to Spelman and be just as or even more successful as anyone who goes to an Ivy League. Plus, Spelman is the #1 HBCU! I can be with my sistahs, learn, advocate, and have fun. Maybe you just need to open up your mind to the world these issues will affect you have been affecting you all your life. Do you see where we go to school?

SHANTEL

HBCU?

RAHEEM

(*Looking at books in the library, interferes into the conversation*.) Historically black colleges and universities. You should consider looking into them.

SHANTEL

Why do you think so? (*Faces his way curiously*.)

RAHEEM

For one, I know that it's very comfortable to be with those who understand you, where you come from and go through similar struggles in this world. They're also very family based. My cousin went to Clark Atlanta and he says everyone always looks out for each other...and no awkward history classes. (*laughs*) But I also agree with Cassey you should listen to her.

CASSEY

(*rolls eyes*) Exactly.

SHANTEL

So there's only black people?

CASSEY

And if there is? We gravitate to our own anyways, its natural.

RAHEEM

The majority, but it's very diverse and open to any race, it's just historically black.

CASSEY

Please look into them Shantel! I know for sure Howard has amazing doctorate programs. (*nudges her*)

SHANTEL

Yeah, yeah. It's almost five, I gotta go home.

RAHEEM

It's dark, let me walk with you.

CASSEY

Yeah let him walk you, I have to pick up my baby sister. (*faces Raheem*) Or you know she may be too blind of the world that she can't see it's dark and there's a such thing as gangs outside.

SHANTEL

(*rolls eyes*) I guess I don't mind. (*Shantel and Cassey begin to pack up their belongings*.)

CASSEY

See you tomorrow Shantel! Peace Malcolm X (*laughs and throws up black power fist*)

SHANTEL

See you.

RAHEEM

(*Raheem throws up black power fist*) Nah you're the Malcolm

SCENE TWO:

(*Raheem and Shantel leave the school and began to make their way to Shantel's house. As they're walking there is an awkward silence between them.*)

RAHEEM

(*breaking the silence*) What school did you originally want to go to?

SHANTEL

Harvard. (*opens up more*) I want to go to school and study, become a doctor and help my aunt out so she isn't piled with so many bills. Right now I'm an intern at Walkins Hospital.

RAHEEM (*nods*)

So what's after that?

SHANTEL

(*Shrugs*) I don't know....just live life I guess.

RAHEEM

You don't think about the things that Cassey tries to talk to you about

SHANTEL

Not really I just want to focus on myself and being financially stable when I'm older.

RAHEEM

You ever wonder why you have to worry about that in the first place? (*face full of confusion and sighs*)

You really don't see what's goin on in this wo-

(*Police pulls up on the curve of Shantel and Raheem and quickly jumps out of his vehicle holding his gun towards Raheem and his eyes on Shantel*)

POLICE

(*loud aggressive tone*) What are you kids up to?

(*Raheem attempts to move to protect Shantel*.)

POLICE

(*shouts*) Hey! (*Slams Raheem into the gate*.)

(*Shantel gasp putting her hands over her mouth. Raheem shifts his head towards her and they lock eyes*.)

END PLAY.

A HYBRID'S SECRET LOVE

By **A**

SCENE 1: JACE and CHARLIE sitting in a hut

(*CHARLIE is JACE'S favorite teddy bear, THEY have always been together. CHARLIE loves JACE genuinely but HE is tired of JACE always complaining about how much SHE likes CARTER (a boy) and always afraid to talk to HIM.*)

JACE

Why? I mean what's the point? I open up and get hurt. I want to love, I do but I'll basically be asking to get my heart broken.

CHARLIE

You have to open up to the possibility of love, because life is too short to be afraid, it's better to love and get your heart broken rather than not love at all.

JACE

You're right but I'm scared.

CHARLIE

That's okay, but you won't succeed unless you try.

JACE

That's why you're my favorite teddy bear.

CHARLIE

I'm tired of you complaining all the time, if you don't anything about Carter, then I will!!

JACE

Well damn!! why didn't you say that before!!

CHARLIE

Doesn't matter, what's the next step?

JACE

I don't know, I'm afraid.

(CHARLIE sighs)

SCENE 2: Near the river.

CHARLIE

(HE glances to the left near the river) Isn't that the guy you like?

JACE

Yes?

CHARLIE

Well, what are you waiting for? Go talk to him.

JACE

No! He's a human, I'm a hybrid and I'm blue and I live off of blood and meat, that will never work.

CHARLIE

You never know unless you try.

JACE

Ugh, fine.

(JACE walks over to CARTER)

CHARLIE

You go girl!!

JACE

Hi, Jace.

CARTER

What did you call me?

JACE

I mean Carter.

CARTER

Well, I'm busy.

JACE

That was rude.

CARTER

It was rude for you to walk over here and talk to me.

(JACE walks away)

SCENE 3:

(JACE and CHARLIE back at the hut, JACE is crying)

CHARLIE

It's okay don't give up yet.

JACE

But I want to so bad.

CHARLIE

But if you give up you will never know what it feels like to love again.

(JACE rolls HER eyes)

CHARLIE

(scoffs) Don't catch an attitude with me I'm trying to help you out.

(*JACE sighs in disappointment, storms out of the hut to hunt for tigers. CARTER did not mean to run into JACE, HE was walking home. CARTER runs into JACE who is eating a tiger. HE stands there paralyzed. JACE looks up, HER mouth is full of blood. CARTER runs away. JACE uses HER vampire speed to catch up to HIM.*)

JACE

Don't be afraid I won't hurt you.

CARTER

(cocky attitude) I'm not scared.

JACE

Well then, why'd you run.

CARTER

Okay you got me.

(Silence)

What are you?

JACE

I'm a hybrid.

CARTER

Well, that's cool!!!!

(CARTER makes a nervous face that JACE gets curious about)

JACE

Why the face?

CARTER

Because I have a similar secret

JACE

You can tell me I won't tell anyone.

CARTER

Well, I'm a vampire.

JACE

Well that explains a lot.

CARTER

Well yeah, that explains my crappy attitude earlier.

(*THEY both have visions at the same time, THEY are staring into space. The visions will be read aloud. JACE'S vision: SHE wants to meet HIS family, and maybe have babies in the future. CARTER'S vision: JACE doesn't know what can happen if SHE meets HIS family. SHE knows THEY might not like HER, but vampires kill wolves. THEY will try to kill HER after SHE meets THEM.*)

JACE

Are you ok?

CARTER

Yeah, I'm fine.

(*CARTER thinks HE should not share the vision with HER. The two walk away talking to EACH OTHER.)*

END PLAY.

DRIVEN BY DARKNESS

By **S**

SCENE ONE:
Time: BC Unknown
Place: Heaven

(AVARIS is walking through an old house. SHE sees a journal near a large brown mirror. SHE reads a page of it.)

AVARIS

To my courageous son, Jaxeous. Thou art destined to be king. If thou art reading this, that means that heaven has won and you are now locked in this mirror. Thy mother and I hath made the decision to keep you in this mirror for thy safety. Avenge thy siblings, thy mother, and I.

(SHE sits down, looks into the mirror at HER own reflection.)

Worthless. Useless. Unwanted. (She repeats these words a number of times.

(SHE caresses HER face)

FLASHBACK

ANASTASIA

(yelling) Why are you so different? What did we do wrong with you? The others are perfect.

MICHEAL

(looking HER in the eyes; with a cool yet angry voice) You are a disgrace. Do you need an example in life? Look at your siblings; they are greatness in itself.

AVARIS

(tearfully) I'm trying every/ day, I-

MICHEAL

(slams hand down) No, you don't try at all. I'm just tired of seeing your face. The only thing we see when we look at you, is failure. You are unneeded and unwanted.

ANASTASIA

You are the darkness itself.

SCENE TWO: Present day.

(AVARIS picks up the candlestick, and goes to smash the mirror. JAX (within the mirror) braces for impact. The mirror is hit and there is a large crack down the center. JAX appears)

AVARIS

Who are you?

(There is no response.)

What do you want.

(No response.)

Why are you in the mirror?

(No response.)

How did you get there?

JAX

One question at a time.

AVARIS

Who are you?

JAX

I am Jaxeous, prince of purgatory, and you my dear, are in my realm.

(JAX picks up a family portrait and examines it closely.)

AVARIS

How did you get in that mirror?

JAX

My parents put me here because Hell lost and Heaven won and blah, blah, blah, blah.

(HE lies on bed in room.)

Who are you?

AVARIS

I am--

JAX

You're the daughter of Anastasia and Micheal. The dark one, well, at least one of the dark ones. Now you're down here, ready to ask for my help to take over Heaven, isn't that right?

(HE gets off the bed, HE walks towards HER, inspecting random objects along the way.)

AVARIS

How do you know all of this? And since you know everything, how are we going to get up there and how are we going to take over Heaven?

JAX

(HE says this with a creepy smirk.) First, we'll need a blood sacrifice at the gate, which will take us days to get to. It's a lot of hiking through Hell and hard work. Are you ready for all of that, holy princess?

AVARIS

Don't call me that, my name is Avaris, okay? Got it Jaximus?

JAX

It's Jaxeous.

AVARIS

Whatever, I'll just call you Jax.

SCENE THREE: Hell

AVARIS

It's been three weeks Jax, can we take a break?

JAX

People in hell don't take breaks.

AVARIS

(SHE rolls her eyes) I just want to stop for a drink of water.

JAX

People in Hell want ice water.

(Laughs loudly at HIS own joke.)

AVARIS

(SHE looks confused) What?

JAX

(waves hands) It's just a human joke.

(THEY walk a little further.)

All right fine you can drink your holy water, go and rest your feathers.

AVARIS

One. It's not holy water. Two. I don't have feathers. Aren't you a little bit too rough to be royalty?

JAX

How do you mean?

AVARIS

Forget it.

JAX

So, what will you do once we are in Heaven?

AVARIS

First, I would find my sister Lilith.

JAX

Oh? I heard that she was a badass.

AVARIS

Once I am reunited with my sister, I will return to Heaven to spite my parents and my siblings, and I will become the queen of it and any place I shall choose.

JAX

Okay... Where do I fit in in all of this?

AVARIS

Well, you can be my dark knight.

JAX

(whispers to HIMSELF) Well, she has to go.

AVARIS

What?

JAX

Nothing. Let's continue.

AVARIS

Okay. What will you do if given the chance to be king of Heaven?

JAX

I would destroy Heaven and rebuild purgatory. Anyone who remains alive after that would become my slave.

AVARIS

Okay. Where do I fit in in that plan?

JAX

Who says you'll be around then?

AVARIS

Umm... nevermind. Let's just keep walking.

(THEY reach the gate.)

JAX

Okay, we're here. Now give me the knife.

AVARIS

But there's no animal to sacrifice, where is it?

JAX

Right in front of me.

AVARIS

So you lied to me? You dragged me along for all this time, just to sacrifice me in the end? What is your motive?

JAX

I want to take over Heaven. I need to avenge my family.

(HE lunges at HER, but SHE takes out the knife. SHE grabs HIM by HIS neck and holds HIM.)

AVARIS

I'm so sorry. I didn't want to do this. I am not evil. I am Heaven.

JAX

Before you do this, you should know that your sister is very evil. She kills without hesitation. If you open that gate, you give her the ability to take over the world.

(SHE slits HIS throat, killing HIM. The gate opens, revealing LILITH, who is holding a glass of blood.)

LILITH

Hello, sister. I came to rescue you.

(THEY grab hands)

AVARIS

Come sister, let's take over the world.

END PLAY.

GUILTY

by **J**

SCENE ONE: In The Bed

LILITH

Lilith's thoughts: Why am I still up it's midnight. I mean how the hell can I tell him this? He's going to think I'm insane. (*Turns around and kisses Jay on the cheek.*) Hey babe are you up?

JAY

(*In a very sleepy voice.*) Yeah babe, what's up?

LILITH

I've been thinking about us and I think we should take it to the next level.

JAY

(*Sits up wide and awake and slightly confused.*) What next level?

LILITH

(*Stalls kinda, but chuckles.*) We should go get pizza, we never ate it before together or have some tacos or something. I mean we can also talk about this sacrifice.

JAY

What sacrifice? Lilith stop talking jibberish. I think you watched too much *Vampire Diaries* and *Supernatural.*

LILITH

(in a very Sarcastic tone.) Akikiki whatever. I think we should talk about this sacrifice in the morning over Starbucks. I'm in the mood for a White Chocolate Mocha

JAY

What sacrifice babe?

LILITH

Why is he not understanding? This is so hard on me and he's not complying! I'm going to be glad when I

kill him! Wait... No I won't I love him. Why would I say that I'm so fucking awful. He deserves better.

(*Angry and annoyed.*) Stop asking about the sacrifice! Damn it!! (*Calms down.*)

Babe I have to tell you about something because it's very important and it involves you and some other things, and some other people, and um ... blood.

JAY

(*Scared and concerned*.) Blood?! What the hell Lilith. I need you to snap out of this.

LILITH

(*Sarcastic.*) And I need you to stop whining and being immature. I mean shit it's not every day that someone needs your blood.

JAY

(*Moving off the bed.*) Should I call the cops?

LILITH

No you should…

JAY

(*cuts her off*) Run?

LILITH

No just lay here.. please. Look let's forget about this and go on a vacation tomorrow.

SCENE TWO: Road Trip

LILITH

Who the hell is tapping me early in the morning! I just went to damn sleep.

JAY

Hey babe wake up. It's time for our road trip and I got the kids ready.

LILITH

Damn I should've thought this through I don't my kids around as I rip his throat out… I mean as we take a lovely trip to Mystic Falls. What is wrong with me? Maybe I shouldn't do this, but I have to find out what down there.

(*Lilith gets ready and Jay, Lilith and the kids get in the car.*)

LILITH

I didn't think we we're going to take Ama & Ana..

JAY

I thought this was family road-trip, but I'm kinda sleepy.

(Jay goes to sleep and Lilith drives. Later Ana starts crying)

LILITH

(*Stop by the Mystic falls sign*.) Come on baby don't cry are almost there. (*Pats Ana's back*) Stop crying you bastard before wake up your sister. Noo sorry baby… I didn't mean it like that.

(*Finally she gets Ana to stop crying and finish driving to the Salvatore Cemetery*)

LILITH

(*Waking Jay up)* Hey Babe wake up we're here.

(*Thinking:)*This is it. I don't know if I can do this.. I need to rip his damn heart with my teeth and get it over with, but I love him…What about my kids. You won't be needing them little bastards after you find Avarice.. Avarice?

JAY

(*Gets out the car and walks around and touching the gate*) Hey uhm, Why are we in a Cemetery?

LILITH

(*Reaching through his chest*.) This!... (*realizing what she did*) I'm so sorry. Babe

JAY

(*Gurgling and dying*) Why?

(*Pulls her hand and his heart out realizing it's not working*.)

LILITH

(*Crying*) WHY THE FUCK ISN'T IT WORKING!

END PLAY.

PHANTOM REALITY
By **K**

SCENE ONE: Sunset, a couple sitting on a blanket by the beach.

GEORGE

My goodness.

CASSEY

Huh?

GEORGE

I really dislike the beach.

CASSEY

Why say something like that? I mean, what's not to love about the beach?

GEORGE

Tons, the sun is too hot, the water is always salty, the sand gets in your… everything. But also there's something really special about this.

CASSEY

About the beach? What are you saying?

GEORGE

I'm talking about this moment in time, being here with you. We're both so young and we have our lives right there, in front of us. If I were to die here, with you that would be ok.

CASSEY

George! How can you say that! Don't talk about dying so casually.

GEORGE

I'm just saying that it's nice to spend time with you and I think this moment is so special.

CASSEY

Whatever, you always say stuff like that. George, I have to leave soon…

GEORGE

You've only been here for a little, can't I just enjoy this for a while longer?

CASSEY

I know. I'm sorry, George.

(CASSEY exits, as SHE leaves the scene changes)

NARRATOR

Entry 1; "it was the 10th dimension, time was pudding". (mumbled noise) recorded an encounter during a daydream...

Two CREATURES look at EACH OTHER in deep recognition of THEIR inability to exist but telepathically communicating EACH OTHER'S frustration at the current situation. THEY grab EACH OTHER'S face and distort THEIR faces into the scream painting.

CREATURE 1

OUR TALKS ARE EPHEMERAL.

CREATURE 2

PHANTASMAGORICAL.

(GEORGE watched, then realizing HIS place in this new world)

GEORGE

What is this place?

(GEORGE searches HIS surroundings)

NARRATOR

"There was a box on the ground. It just appeared"

(GEORGE explores the box, picking it up)

GEORGE

Woah, this is amazing. What is perception?

NARRATOR

But he said it rather, unimpressively.

(CREATURE speaks to GEORGE)

CREATURE 1

Perception is only what you want to see.

GEORGE

Trying to… Ugh, hard to... elaboration?

CREATURE 2

Time is eternal, thought is momentary.

GEORGE

Wait, I think I can hear what you're going to say before you say it. It's all clear to me now, I was a universe! I am continuous thought!

NARRATOR

As he expressed it, he was back at the beach… *(becomes muffled and trails off)*

(GEORGE is back at the beach, in the same position with HIS girlfriend)

GEORGE

Woah.

CASSEY

George…? You trailed off.

GEORGE

I understand now Cassey, I can make this moment last forever!

CASSEY

What are you on about now?

GEORGE

I can hear what you say before you say it.

(At the same time)

GEORGE

What?
What are?
Stop it!

CASSEY

What?
What are?
Stop it!

GEORGE

I am a universe, Cassey. A God. I can perceive reality.

CASSEY

Ok, you're scaring me George.

GEORGE

Let me show you.

CASSEY

No, I'm leaving.

(CASSEY exits, with HER departure the scene changes and we see GEORGE in a strait jacket. The NARRATOR a DOCTOR, talks with the NURSE.)

DOCTOR/NARRATOR

How is the patient?

NURSE

No progress today, unfortunately.

GEORGE

It's always nice to be present in the moment, isn't it?

END PLAY.

THE LOVER'S PAWN
by **T**

SCENE ONE:
Time: Noon.
Place: After school dismissal.
At Rise: KING walks into SAPPHIRE.

KING
I miss you, come to my house so we can chill.

SAPPHIRE
I can't today, and I hope you're not angry or upset with me.

KING
(KING gets angry) I fucking hate when you do that *(Storms off.)*

SAPPHIRE
Wait don't go! *(Chases after HIM)* Don't say that. Don't say those kinds of things.

KING
Is there another guy?

SAPPHIRE
No why would you say that?

KING
I've been hearing a lot on campus. Things like you're being unfaithful. I'm tired of your shit. I honestly feel like history's repeating itself. You obviously don't remember. Let me refresh your memory…

(KING has a FLASHBACK.)

SCENE TWO
Time: Afternoon, one year ago.
Place: After-school dismissal after King and Sapphire had basketball and volleyball practice in the back hallway. King plays basketball and Sapphire plays volleyball.

KING

Can you come to the movies with me?

SAPPHIRE

I'm busy.

KING

Okay, that's fine.

(SAPPHIRE leaves. TYLER and KENNY walk in.)

KING

I'm really not gonna go, Sapphire said she can't.

TYLER

Okay.

KENNY

No, you'll be fine, just come with us. We'll keep you company.

TYLER

Yeah, you'll be fine. You come with us and just get your mind off of it. She can come next time and y'all can be by y'allselves. You can have your alone time. Even if she came she'd be with all of us like Kenny and Rayquan and stuff.

KING

I don't know, I'm really not feeling it. I usually don't go if she's not tagging along.

TYLER

You couldn't hang out with us before because of Sapphire. You cancelled. And now you're gonna do it again

KING

It's not like that. (*Huffs.)* Fine. I'll just go.

SCENE TWO:A movie theater that same night.

(KING walks into the movie theater with HIS FRIENDS, THEY go to the concession stand)

CHRISTIE

Hey, how are you doing? My name is Christie, I'll help you with anything you need tonight. The concession stand is right here, and you can buy your movie tickets here too.

KING

I wish my girlfriend was here. It's not going to be the same without her.

KENNY

Just get your mind off of it, it'll be okay. Let's just figure out what movie we're going to see. I want to see a cartoon movie.

TYLER

No, that's boring. I want to see a scary movie. How about we go see *Rings*?

KING

(*Nervous*) Well that's not my really my preference, but if you guys wanna go see it, then I'll go see it.

TYLER

Okay, fine, King is going to be a wuss about it.

KING

Shut up. Let's buy tickets. What is everyone getting?

TYLER

I want popcorn.

KENNY

I want some M&Ms.

KING

I don't really want anything to eat right now but… I want a large Sprite.

TYLER

I want nachos too!

KING

Well… does everyone have enough money for whatever they want?

ALL FRIENDS

Yeah.

(CHRISTIE gives THEM THEIR stuff. THEY go to the theatre and wait for the movie to come on.)

TYLER

Is that Sapphire?

KING

There's no way she's busy

KENNY

Maybe she's here for you

KING

She don't know I'm coming, she thinks I'm home still

KENNY

She's with a guy

KING

I'm going to wait till they sit down.

(KING walks slowly over to THEM after THEY sit down. SAPPHIRE and this GUY start kissing. HE sees that it is SAPPHIRE. KING walks out of the theatre.)

SAPPHIRE

I can't believe he just caught me. I know he's going to end this relationship.

(SHE runs after KING, but HE is already gone.)

SCENE THREE:King's house, later that same night, midnight.

SAPPHIRE

Was this a waste of time? Should I have even came here? Did I make a mistake? I should just let the relationship end. Or should I fight for it? I'm going to call his sister.

(*Pulls out a cellphone.)*

Hello?

Yeah, are you home?
Can you open the door?
No, there's nothing wrong, it's just… me and King are having a problem right now and he locked the door.
No, we'll be fine, I just need you to open the door.

(*Hangs up.)*

(SISTER opens the door for SAPPHIRE and lets HER in. SAPPHIRE goes upstairs and sits in the living room contemplating what to say to HIM.)

What if he doesn't even want to talk to me? Will he even look at me? I made plans with Rayquan before King even asked me. So I didn't want to sit there and be a bad friend and cancel. I didn't know it was the same movie theatre, or we were gonna even see the same movie. Rayquan had ideas in his head. Rayquan had a different goal between me and him. I thought it was nothing, but Rayquan saw me as a girlfriend not as a friend. I see him as just a friend. But will King believe me?

(SHE gets up and walks in HIS room. KING is laying down.)

SAPPHIRE

King.

KING

Why are you here?

SAPPHIRE

Because I need to talk to you. What you seen at the movie theatre was a misunderstanding. I wasn't playing, that wasn't my intention. I don't have anything going with Rayquan, I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. It just so happens that Rayquan had a different intention than I did. What I thought was going to happen was totally different than what Rayquan thought was going to happen. I feel awful that you had to see that.

KING

Well… why didn't you at least tell me that you were going to the movies with him? You didn't tell me you had plans to go to the movies. I would've compromised so we could go to the same movie. But instead of telling me that you had plans with someone else, you just bluntly said, "I'm busy."

SAPPHIRE

I'm sorry, I should've told you. I admit in the situation, I was wrong. I should've told you. But I didn't plan that, I didn't want that to happen. It just happened.

KING

Okay, I realized it wasn't your fault. I can't believe Rayquan betrayed me and went against me knowing that I'm with you.

SAPPHIRE

I can't believe it either. I didn't think that Rayquan had that intent. I didn't think he liked me in that way. I didn't think he had feelings for me.

KING

Yeah, I understand where you're coming from. It's not your fault. I forgive you.

END FLASHBACK.

KING

Remember that? We need to take a break. We're in two really different positions right now. I want to take a break. I want to wait til the end of the semester to see if we can get back into this relationship.

SAPPHIRE

(With tears in HER eyes, SHE walks away.) Okay.

KING

My heart is broken but at the same time, I did what I had to do.

SAPPHIRE

I feel as though this happened once before and he saw that it wasn't my fault. I guess I won't have to go through all the trouble I did before. Maybe I should just give him his space for now. He's angry. I want him to cool down. I'll call him in two days.

KING

Never fall in love. No one should ever fall in love.

END PLAY.

A GUYANESE DREAM
By **Z**

SCENE ONE: Guyana, 10:00pm

(Flashback. ZAIRE SR. was a basketball star, but HE had a child at a young age so HE had to get a job, and crack was HIS only way to make money. The CRACKEAD and ZAIRE SR. meet at the basketball court behind ZAIRE'S house.)

ZAIRE SR.

You didn't give me all of the money.

CRACKHEAD

Yes, I did.

ZAIRE SR.

Don't ever come to me for drugs again, BITCH!

CRACKHEAD

Who you callin a bitch for two years I've been knowing you and you've been treating me like this.

(BOOM)

ZAIRE JR.

(Screams) Daaaad!

MOM

Oh my god, call 9-9-9!

SCENE TWO: Present day.

(ZAIRE JR. and HIS MOM are packing getting ready to go to the airport to fly to Newark, New Jersey)

MOM

Come on finish packing your stuff, we're going to miss our flight, hurry up

ZAIRE JR.

Why are we leaving?

MOM

We are leaving to have a better life. Ever since your father died it's been hard.

ZAIRE JR.

I can work, I guess.

MOM

No, I'm the provider. You just stay in school and play basketball. And don't worry about anything else.

ZAIRE JR.

(sigh) Whatever.

SCENE THREE: Newark, NJ

(THEY just got to THEIR apartment in Newark and ZAIRE JR. is already complaining. ZAIRE does not realize that HE will have a better life here than in Guyana)

ZAIRE JR.

Why does it look like this it doesn't look like home? It smells different here. Mom you always make these wrong stupid decisions

MOM

You're just like your father never satisfied. Be happy you have a roof over your head. Go unpack.

(ZAIRE JR. sighs)

MOM

Hurry up you have school tomorrow

ZAIRE JR.

Mom are you kidding me it's midnight.

(closes door)

She's already getting on my nerves man.

(HE sits on HIS bed, thinking about HIS father)

MOM

ZAIRE! Get up. You're going to be late have a good day at school, be careful these kids are different. Are you leaving without giving me a hug?

(THEY hug)

(*HE goes outside and HE notices the differences in Newark- Different people, and how they dress. This is not like Guyana. ZAIRE is very observant. HE walks into Fredrick Douglass High and meets with the PRINCIPLE*.)

PRINCIPLE

You're Zaire Harrison. You are our new student. Welcome, your room is English 102.

(As HE goes in the room, HE holds HIS paper with HIS class schedule.)

ZAIRE JR.

Hi, how are you? I'm your new student Zaire Harrison.

MS. WATSON

Oh we've been expecting you. Introduce yourself to the class, tell them who you are, where you're from.

ZAIRE JR.

I'm Zaire I'm from Guyana I'm 16 I play basketball, and I love curry goat.

(People in class hear the accent and start laughing. giggling Some guy calls HIM a loser.)

BULLY

What is curry goat? This guy is a loser; go back to where you're from

MS. WATSON

Class we don't do that here, apologize right now.

BULLY

Whatever, I'm sorry.

MS. WATSON

Please take a seat Mr. Harrison

(JOYCE comes in and goes to HER seat)

MS. WATSON

Good morning Joyce, take a seat

JOYCE

Hi

ZAIRE JR.

(to HIMSELF) Wow.

END PLAY.

Appendix B: Annotated Lesson Plans

Drew University
Honors Thesis Lesson Plans

Lesson 1
Initializing and Primary Characters: What's a play? Who's in it?

4. **Instructional Objectives.**

   Students will be able to:

   - Identify the parts of a character profile.
   - Develop a character profile from imaginary circumstances.
   - Define what a monologue is and explain why playwrights use them.
   - Compose an original monologue from the point of view of their created character.

1. **Materials.**
   1. Large post-it paper.
   2. Markers.
   3. Notebooks.
   4. Pencils.

2. **Procedure.**
   - **Essential Question.** Why write a play?
   - **Initial Phase.**

     Ball-Toss Name Warm-Up: Have everyone circle up. Toss a ball to another person in the group, saying their name. Keep following the same pattern. Eventually introduce a second ball into the circle, going the reverse way. (**10 minutes.**)

Comment [MT1]: As suggested in later lesson plans, I would recommend any independent writing time is accompanied with ambient background music.

Comment [MT2]: While this name game isn't the only one of its kind, any new group should start off with a warm-up exercise that merges movement and silliness with a way to memorize names. (Obviously, an activity like this might not have any place in the typical classroom where students already are familiar with one another.)

Duck, Duck, Random Animal: Like the typical "duck, duck, goose," have the student sit in a circle. One volunteer goes around saying "duck, duck…" and taps the students' heads. When they decide they want to call on someone, they tap a student's head and picks a descriptive word and a type of animal. Example "random animals" could include: a lazy snake, a jumping jaguar, a tired cat, etc. **(15 minutes.)**

Why Are We Here?: Explain the goal of the writing workshops to the students, and have them sign the consent forms to participate in the work. (**Goal:** To write a ten-minute play for two characters.) In our situation, students are required to sign off on a form that allows them to participate in this workshop, and allows us to use their writing as research material. Students will also be completing a baseline survey that attempts to capture their current opinions and feelings on a number of criteria. (**15 minutes.**)

Playwriting Foundational Ideas: Writing on a piece of large post-it paper, invite the class to think about the following ideas:

Why write a play?

What do we need?

What might get in our way? (**15 minutes.**)

Ground Rules: Establish ground rules for the group. Students will make suggestions for rules they'd like to see happen in the classroom. If there is consensus, it is added to the list. Once it is completed, have everyone sign them. (**10 minutes.**)

Example ground rules: 1) No cellphones during workshops. 2) Embrace what you shared, and don't judge what others shared. 3) Have fun.

- **Middle Phase.**
  Each student should move to a part of the room where they can be alone with themselves, without distractions.

  Character Profile:
  Close your eyes and silently imagine a character. This imaginary person can

Comment [MT3]: The movement around the circle should also embody the animal they've been. A 'lazy snake' for example, would wriggle very slowly and nonchalantly around the circle.

Comment [MT4]: Regardless of whether these lesson plans are taught in a workshop or classroom setting, it is invaluable to be transparent with students about the hopeful end-product of the work that they are doing.

Comment [MT5]: This question should generate some buzz. Why should they be excited about starting a unit on playwriting?

Comment [MT6]: Students can answer with things as practical as "a computer" and as abstract as "an idea." Encourage both types of answers.

Comment [MT7]: Students should be thinking about their obstacles. Understanding what the students fear will help you as a teacher/teaching artist to support them through their challenges.

Comment [MT8]: These should the rules that the students feel keep them safe and engaged in the work, whatever that means to them.

be based on a real person, or they could be totally created by you. Imagine that this character has something in common with you. Maybe they live in a similar place as the student. Maybe they look like the student. Maybe they share the same wish, or same fear. Encourage them to think about this imaginary person, and create the following traits for them:

- Name
- Age
- Family
- Home
- Wish
- Fear

Write down all of these characteristics in your notebook in this listed format. (**20 mins**)

Brief Monologue: Review what a monologue is (a character talking onstage by themselves, a character's inner thoughts, etc.)

Write a monologue from the POV of the character you developed on your character sheet. Imagine that they are sharing their greatest wish with someone, and how their fear is stopping them from attaining that wish. Monologues can be between six and twelve sentences. (**15 mins**)

- **Concluding Phase.**
  Share Out: Each student should share something they wrote today, whether it is all/part of the monologue, or all/part of the character sheet. (**15 mins**)

Total lesson time: 1 hour, 30 minutes.

3. Differentiation.

- If students are unable to physically write in a notebook due to injury, visual impairment, or auditory impairment, the activities can all be completed by typing them. The lesson has a number of visual aids for students with auditory

Comment [MT9]: This activating material is essential groundwork to the process you will have with your students. Consider carefully what you prompt the character profile with.

What do you believe is important for the students to get out of this process? As *citizenship* was an essential goal for Emma and I, we wanted them to think about people who might have differences with them, and how they still fit into their community and the world at large regardless of those differences.

Comment [MT10]: Encourage the students to write more than three words for each category (save Name and Age). The more details, the better.

Comment [MT11]: If appropriate, feel free to show examples from relevant movies, plays, television shows, etc. What did that monologue add to the story? Why was it important that just one character speak instead of having a conversation?

Comment [MT12]: It might be beneficial to break up students in small groups and encourage them to share with each other.

Comment [MT13]: As previously stated in the body of the thesis, I would recommend *all* students writing in their notebooks if possible.

impairments to follow along. They can also be completed by orating their thoughts to a classroom aide.

- Students who struggle with organization could be provided a few 'sentence starters' such as "*Today was the worst day ever because…"* or "*I am so afraid of [my fear] because…*" These students could also be given a graphic organizer to help them better organize their monologues.
- Students who feel an urge to move are allowed to do so while they write. They can sit, stand, or make themselves comfortable as they see fit.
- Extensions are available for students who need an additional challenge:
    - In the character sheet, students can add other sections, like 'Hobby,' 'Worst Enemy' and 'Favorite Food.'
    - In the monologue, students can continue to extend their writing by writing a monologue *after* events have happened: did the character receive their wish? Did their worst fear come true?

Comment [MT14]: Changing up the space is highly recommended for writing – letting students work as they are comfortable will help them complete their best work.

Comment [MT15]: While I provide specific examples here, in general, there are no limits to the extensions that a teacher can give in playwriting. There is always more to add. Students will often experience writing fatigue. That is an especially crucial moment: when they think they are "finished," keep asking them questions to push them forward.

4. **Follow-Up.**
    - Students will have no written homework.
    - Students will be encouraged to observe people throughout their daily lives.
        1. How are they different from you?
        2. How are they the same?
    - Take note of some interesting phrases that you hear throughout the week – what interested you about the way this person said that phrase?

Comment [MT16]: Students should be learning how to observe people and use details in their writing.

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Lesson 2
Secondary Characters: Who *else* is in my play?

4. **Instructional Objectives.**

Students will be able to:

- Differentiate a run-on sentence and a sentence fragment with a complete sentence.
- Revise sentences.
- Imagine a new character, and describe them using the character profile chart.
- Compose an original monologue that considers or solves their character's conflict.
- Discuss the importance of differences and practice empathy.

6. Materials.

- Large Post-it paper.
- Whiteboard, chalkboard, or other erasable surface.
- Markers. (And appropriate writing utensils for erasable surface.)
- Notebooks.
- Package of pencils.

7. Procedure.

- **Essential Question.** Why are differences among people valuable, and why should playwrights think about these differences?

- **Initial Phase.**
  Warm Up: *Cup bounce*. Students will stand in a circle, with one plastic cup. They will volley the cup back and forth between each other in the circle, saying one letter of the alphabet at a time. The cup shouldn't fall, and the same person shouldn't say a letter twice in a row.

  Ritual Review: Refer back to the "Why write a play?" "What do we need?" "What might stand in our way?" and the Ground Rules.

  Address Follow-Up from Previous Lesson: Did you see or meet anyone interesting this week? What were they like? Why did that

Comment [MT17]: This game can be replaced with any physical warm-up that combines letters/words and physical movement.

Comment [MT18]: Remind the students that these anchor charts are there. In creating a sense of community, having a small ritual at the beginning is essential. These charts will remind them of where they started, what stands in their way, and what is to come.

person interest you?

- **Middle Phase.**
  Discussion: Why does sentence structure matter if plays are heard, and not read?

  Whiteboard Sentences:
  1. Write an example of a run-on sentence on the whiteboard, and have a student read it out loud with regular inflection.
     - What kind of sentence is this? *(As a class, define the meaning of a run-on sentence.)*
     - Pass out a character type/character intention slip to a student, and have them read the same sentence.
     - What does this new reading do to the sentence?
     - Repeat with a new character type/intention, and new reflection on the sentence.
  2. Repeat entire exercise with a sentence fragment example.
  3. Discuss: Why might a playwright choose to have their characters speak in run-on sentences or sentence fragments? What could they add to a character? How might they distract an audience?

  Character Profile #2
  Students will develop entirely new characters, unique from anything they've worked on this semester.

  Imagine a character that has almost nothing in common with you…They don't even have to be a human. This character could be based on a person you know in life that is very different from you, or a person you are completely imagining yourself.

  1. Name
  2. Age
  3. Family
  4. Home
  5. Secret Wish
  6. Biggest Fear
  7. Most Important Being
  8. Safe Place
  9. Quirk (What makes them different from everyone else?)

  Monologue #2
  Based on these new character sheets, students will continue to

Comment [MT19]: Encourage students who are eager to talk during class time to share their thoughts at this moment.

Comment [MT20]: Have students think about the way that they speak versus the way that they write. What are the differences? Why don't we write and speak in exactly the same way?

Comment [MT21]: This activity is meant to show them *what* these types of sentences are in order to effectively use the language to suit their needs. The intention is to have them learn to give their characters a unique and truthful voice, which might not always adhere to proper grammar.

Comment [MT22]: The whiteboard sentence activity also increases oral literacy (and acting skills!)

Comment [MT23]: Again, feel free to change this prompt to suit your goals for students.

Comment [MT24]: Add these details for everyone in order to create a challenge, while also reinforcing the other details through repetition.

hone their monologue writing skills by writing monologues from this new character's point of view.

Your character is in their safe place, talking to their most important being, about how much they want their secret wish. In this monologue, explain how your character's biggest fear is getting in the way of that wish. Would your character use run-on sentences or sentence fragments?

Comment [MT25]: This prompt is identical to the prompt for the first character profile. Repeating the same prompt might not be necessary for advanced students. For students who are struggling with the concept, repetition will likely help reinforce the development of detail in their character profiles.

- **Concluding Phase.**
  Share Out: Each student should share something they wrote today, whether it is all/part of the monologue, or all/part of the character sheet.

Comment [MT26]: Students can also have a partner read their work.

  Essential Question Discussion: *Why are differences between people valuable? There are lots of different people in the world. Why should we, as playwrights, think and write about people who are different from ourselves?*
  *Empathy: the ability to **share** and understand the feelings of another. Putting yourself in their shoes.* (Versus sympathy, which is just a feeling of compassion.)

Comment [MT27]: This might seem a little "on the nose," but making these straightforward connections might push your students to take risks in the characters that they develop.

8. **Differentiation.**
   Students who need an additional challenge will have the opportunity to generate sentence fragments or run-on sentences as an example for the rest of the class to look at. A student who might need an additional challenge can also write a character profile about their first character's Most Important Being. They will also have an opportunity to write a monologue from that character's perspective.

9. **Follow-Up Activities.**
   If students did not finish their monologue in class, they should take it home to finish it as homework.

Comment [MT28]: Encourage students to continue writing at home regardless, where they might find interesting inspiration.

   Students should observe people they do not know. How are these people different from themselves? What is interesting about their differences?

10. **Assessment.**
    One-word share out: Students will share something that they have learned in one word.

Comment [MT29]: One-word share outs are an easy assessment tool because all students are required to reflect and answer.

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Lesson 3

Compelling Details: Want/Conflict/Change and Time/Place/At Rise

4. Instructional Objectives.

Students will be able to:

- Apply "time," "place," and "at rise" to the beginning of their play to establish setting.
- Incorporate a definitive "want," "conflict," and "change" in the plot of their plays.
- Format their plays according to American Standard format.

6. Materials.

- Anchor charts.
- Large post-it pad.
- Notebooks.
- Pencils.

Optional, but encouraged:

- Ambient music (preferably in a genre the kids enjoy.)
- Speakers/technology to play music.

Comment [MT30]: As I went through this process, I discovered that playing ambient music really helped the students maintain focus. I would absolutely recommend it, especially if your students are particularly chatty.

7. Procedure.

- **Essential Question.** What are the essential components of a play, and why are they important?

- **Initial Phase.**
  - Warm Up: *Zip-zap-zop*. One player starts by saying the word 'zip' and pointing at another player in the circle. Then that person must point at a different player and say 'zap.' The next person must point again to a different player and say 'zop.' The cycle continues. Essential goals are keeping a consistent rhythm and avoiding mistakes.

- **Middle Phase.**
  - Time/Place/At Rise: The class will create a new anchor chart together. The teaching artist will write "TIME" "PLACE" and "AT RISE" on a new sheet of Post-it paper. The teaching artist will explain each concept. (*Time* refers to actual time of day, day of the week, month, year, etc.; *Place* refers to location; *At Rise* is what is happening at the moment the scene starts) Then they will ask for examples of each of those things, while also providing their own examples. As each student responds to the teaching artist, they will write it down near the corresponding word. The result is a finished anchor chart with their generated examples.

  - Want/Conflict/Change:
    The teaching artist will explain the concepts of want/conflict/change. (*Want* refers to what each character's goal or objective is. *Conflict* is the problem in the scene, likely because of two conflicting wants between characters. *Change* is how the problem gets solved.)
    Then the teaching artist will perform two scenes with an aide or a pre-prepared volunteer:
    a. Example of a scene without *conflict*:

    A: I want your shoes.

    B: Okay!

Comment [MT31]: Again, feel free to adjust this warm-up based on what your students find fun and engaging. The goal is to warm up their bodies, in turn warming up their minds.

Comment [MT32]: I highly recommend creating the anchor chart in front of them as opposed to coming in with it already prepared. This way, they feel that they helped generate the knowledge instead of having the knowledge put upon them.

Comment [MT33]: Serious and imaginative answers are okay!

Comment [MT34]: Showing these scenes to students can be really fun! There is a reason they are funny – they're not working correctly. Let students "solve" these scenes by providing the missing element.

b. Example of a scene without *change*:

A: I want your shoes.

B: No.

A: Please?

B: No way.

A: Are you sure I can't have them?

B: Nope.

After each scene, the teaching artist will ask the students why that scene was boring or unfulfilling. Then the teaching artist will prompt the students with a question: how can we make this scene have a conflict and a change? Students will suggest answers. Then the two volunteers will improvise the scene with the students' suggestions.

Comment [MT35]: Help them out if needed. What would happen if each character wore one shoe?

- Formatting: Before they independently write, students will receive a mini-lesson on the proper formatting of plays.
    1. Typed character name, bolded and capitalized over their lines.
    2. Stage directions indented in on the right.
    3. In-dialogue stage directions italicized in parentheses.
    4. Title and character page.

    As the teaching artist explains the formatting concepts, they will write out the newly improvised dialogue (including any stage directions) in proper Standard American format. This will become an additional anchor chart that students can refer back to.

Comment [MT36]: I found that this was the anchor chart students referred back to most. Feel free to make two or more of these available to students, or make it a hand-out.

- **Concluding Phase.**
  - Write: Students will begin to write their drafts independently. The teacher will stay present in the room, asking prompting questions. (i.e. *What might the character say next? What is the character feeling in this moment?*)

  - Brief Share-Out: The teacher and aides/classroom volunteers will read the drafts of the plays aloud. The teaching artist will ask the class what they really liked about the play. Then they will ask what the class hoped the playwright added more of. (If necessary, the teaching artist can preface this with a conversation about constructive criticism and its components.)

  - One Word: The teaching artist will ask the student to reflect on the lesson in one word. This word could represent how they feel after the lesson or one thing they learned.

Comment [MT37]: Obviously, this might change depending on whether or not the teacher decides to have students write group plays, or partner up.

Comment [MT38]: Students, especially older ones, should be able to defend their work and choices. Getting feedback will help the students think more deeply about their decisions for characters. This sort of criticism activity encourages open dialogue, building a supportive community among the students.

8. **Differentiation.**
   - Students who require an additional challenge can draft longer plays than expected.
   - Students who feel the urge to move can sit in any location in the classroom they'd like.
   - Students who struggle with organization can use a graphic organizer to help them compartmentalize their thoughts.

9. Follow-Up.

No homework will be assigned. However, these drafts will be revisited again and again until they are completed. Exercises in the next lesson will reaffirm their understanding of time/place/at rise and want/conflict/change.

10. Assessment.

- While the class is creating the anchor chart together, the teaching artist can assess who is contributing examples and who is not.
- The sharing out of their play drafts serves as a conclusive assessment of whether they understood the concepts.
- The one-word share out will clue the teaching artist in to concepts of interest and general mood.

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Lesson 4
Organization: Storyboarding the Play

2. **Instructional Objectives.**
   Students will be able to:
   - Use a graphic organizer to identify their play's wants, conflicts, and changes.
   - Create a detailed story map with multiple options for story development.

3. **Materials.**
   - Anchor charts.
   - Large post-it pad.
   - Notebooks.
   - Pencils.
   - Graphic organizer. (Includes sections for want, conflict, and change.)

   Optional, but encouraged:
   - Ambient music (preferably in a genre the kids enjoy.)
   - Speakers/technology to play music.

4. **Procedure.**
   - **Essential Question.** How can we use visual tools to help us conceptualize the plot of a play?

   - **Initial Phase.**
     - Warm-Up:
       Word Scramble. Students will stand in a circle. The originator will say a word and point to someone. If the first word is *spork*, then the person they point to has to say a word that starts with the letter '*k*.' The game goes on, keeping a consistent rhythm.

       Silent Switch. There is one person in the middle, 'the villain,' surrounded by a circle of the other participants, 'the spies.' The

Comment [MT39]: Some students will need extra scaffolding in order to better understand the plot of their play. This lesson provides an opportunity to appeal to visual learners, and students who struggle with organization.

Comment [MT40]: I highly recommend this warm-up, especially towards the end of the process. It successfully merges active movement (pointing and eye contact) with oral literacy (hearing sounds and connecting them with spellings.)

spies must switch places without attracting the attention of the villain.

Comment [MT41]: This ended up being a class favorite – I would recommend especially if you have a particularly excitable group. It teaches the theatre skills of eye contact and intention – intention also being important in choosing the plot of a play!

- **Middle Phase.**
  - Graphic Organizer: Students will be provided with a graphic organizer that lays out each character's wants, what their conflict will be, and what has to change in order for a character to receive their conflict.

  - Story Map: The teaching artist will show the students a story map, a visual representation of the progression of a story. It could be abstract, and it could have many different 'options' for where the story could go.

- **Concluding Phase.**
  - Share-Out: *What happened when you drew the outcome of the play, rather than writing it?*
  - One-Word Assessment: *What is one word you would use to describe your play?*

Comment [MT42]: How did a different approach to thinking help them better understand the story they were trying to tell?

Comment [MT43]: How can they boil down the main message of their play into one word?

Appendix C: Lesson Plan Materials

Ground Rules
Anchor Charts
Graphic Organizer
Storyboard example

Ground Rules

1. No unconstructive criticism
2. No bad attitudes! But bring your good attitudes!
3. Be extra supportive!
4. Respect. ☺
5. Stay focused.
6. Give your best.
7. Take risks.
8. Don't let fear stand in your wa.
9. HAVE FUN! ☺
10. Be honest. Express your true opinions.

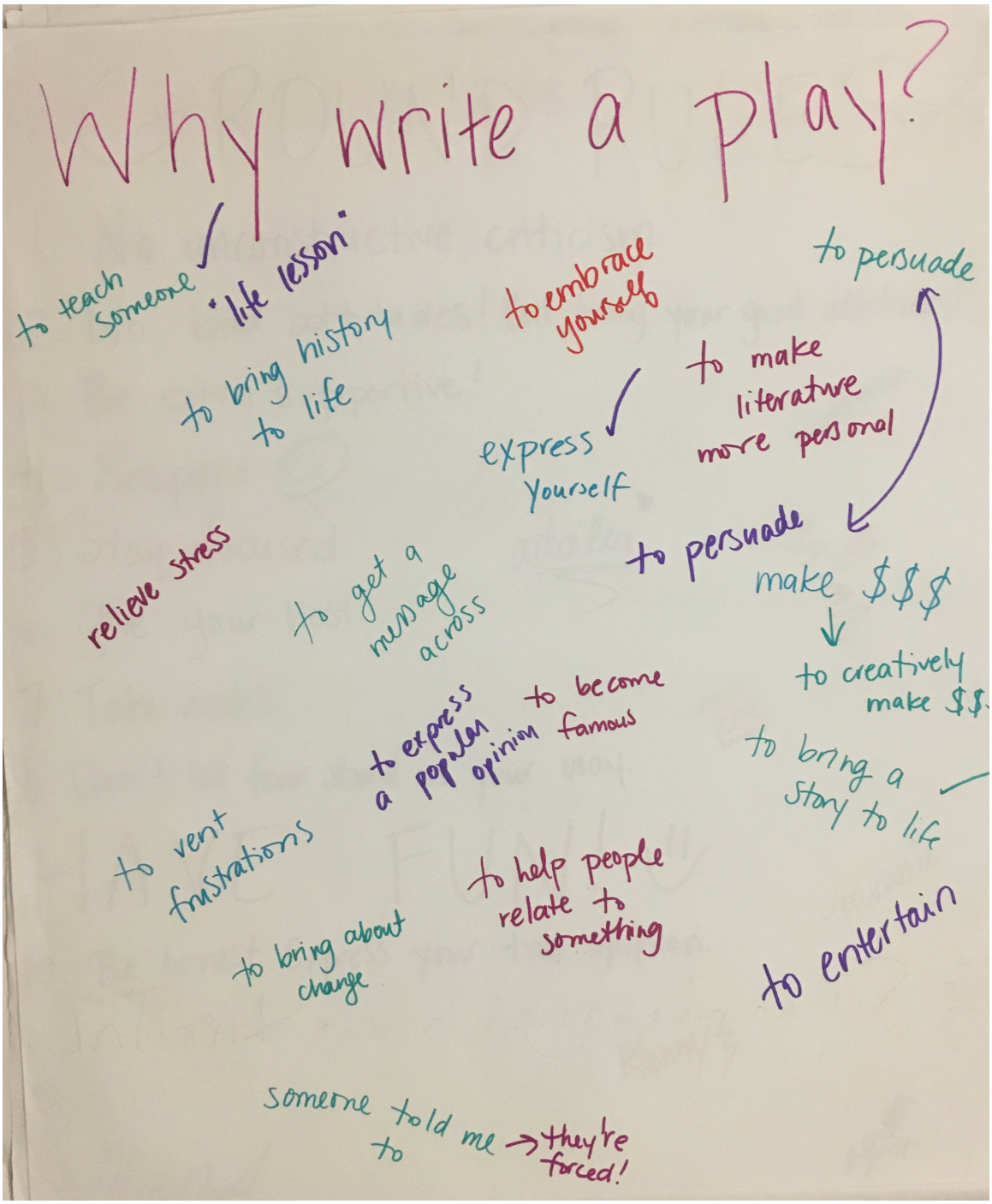

Fig. 2

Students' responses to the question, "why write a play?"

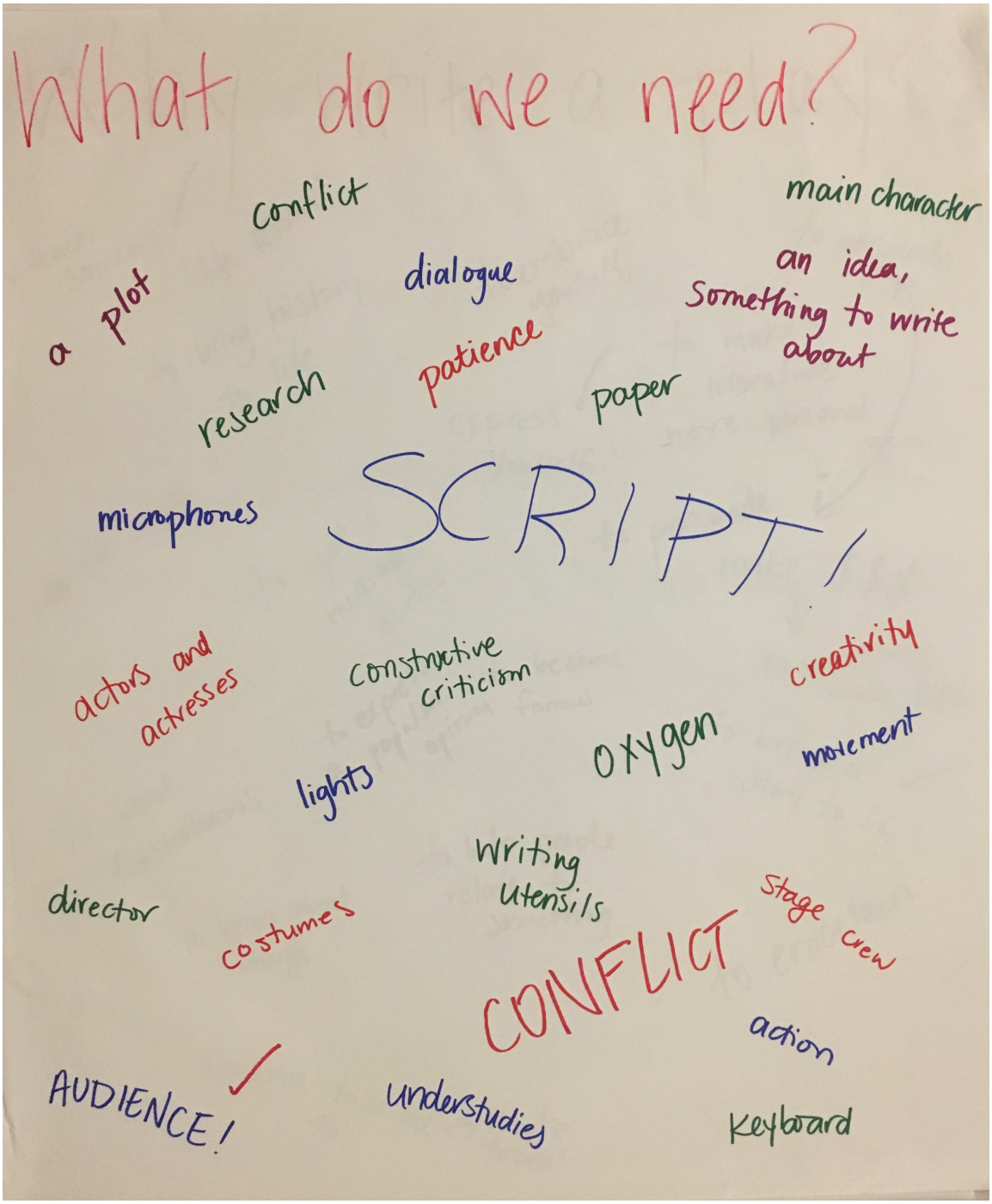

Fig. 3

Students' responses to the question, "what do we need?"

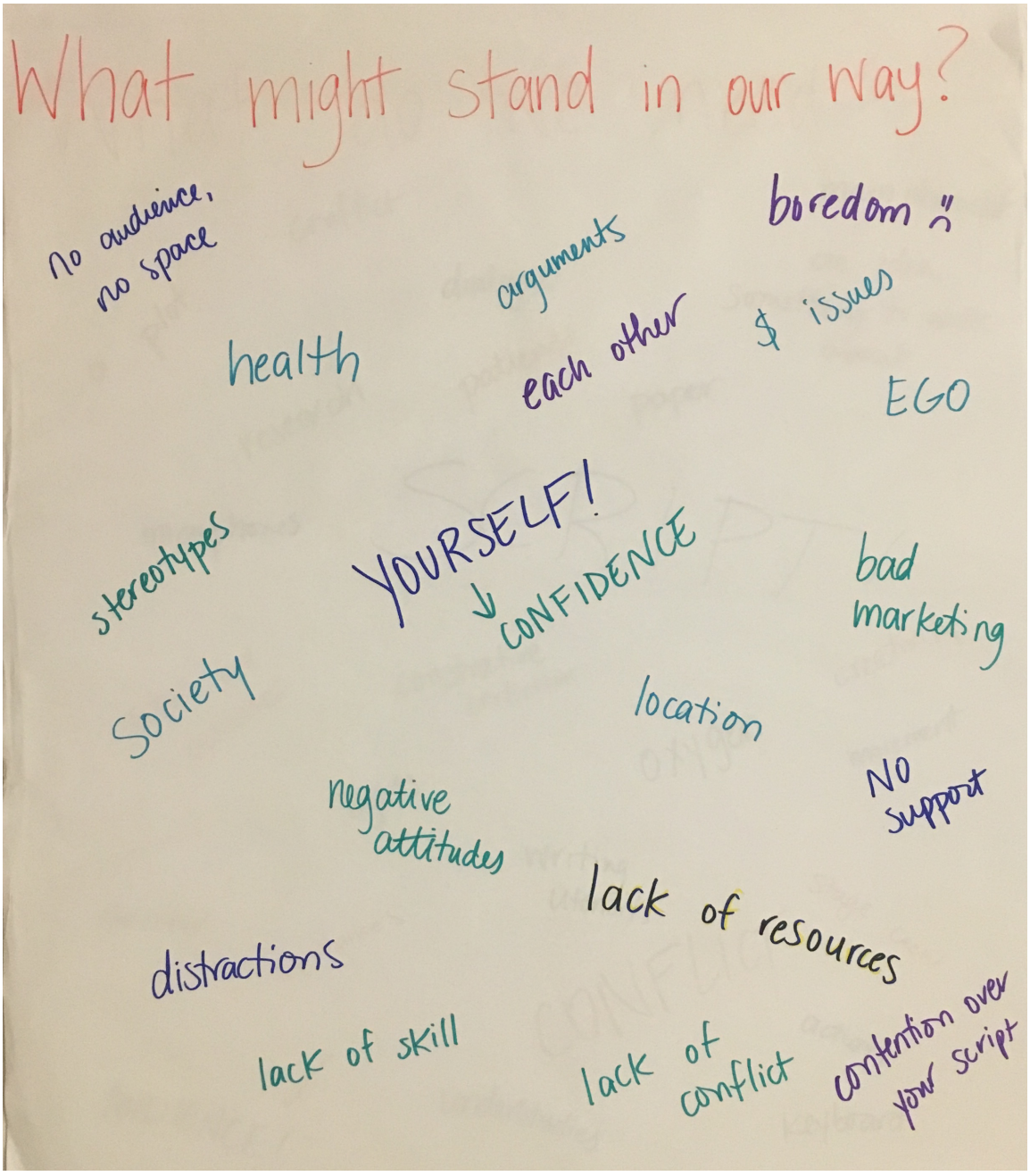

Fig. 4

Students' responses to the question, "what might stand in our way?"

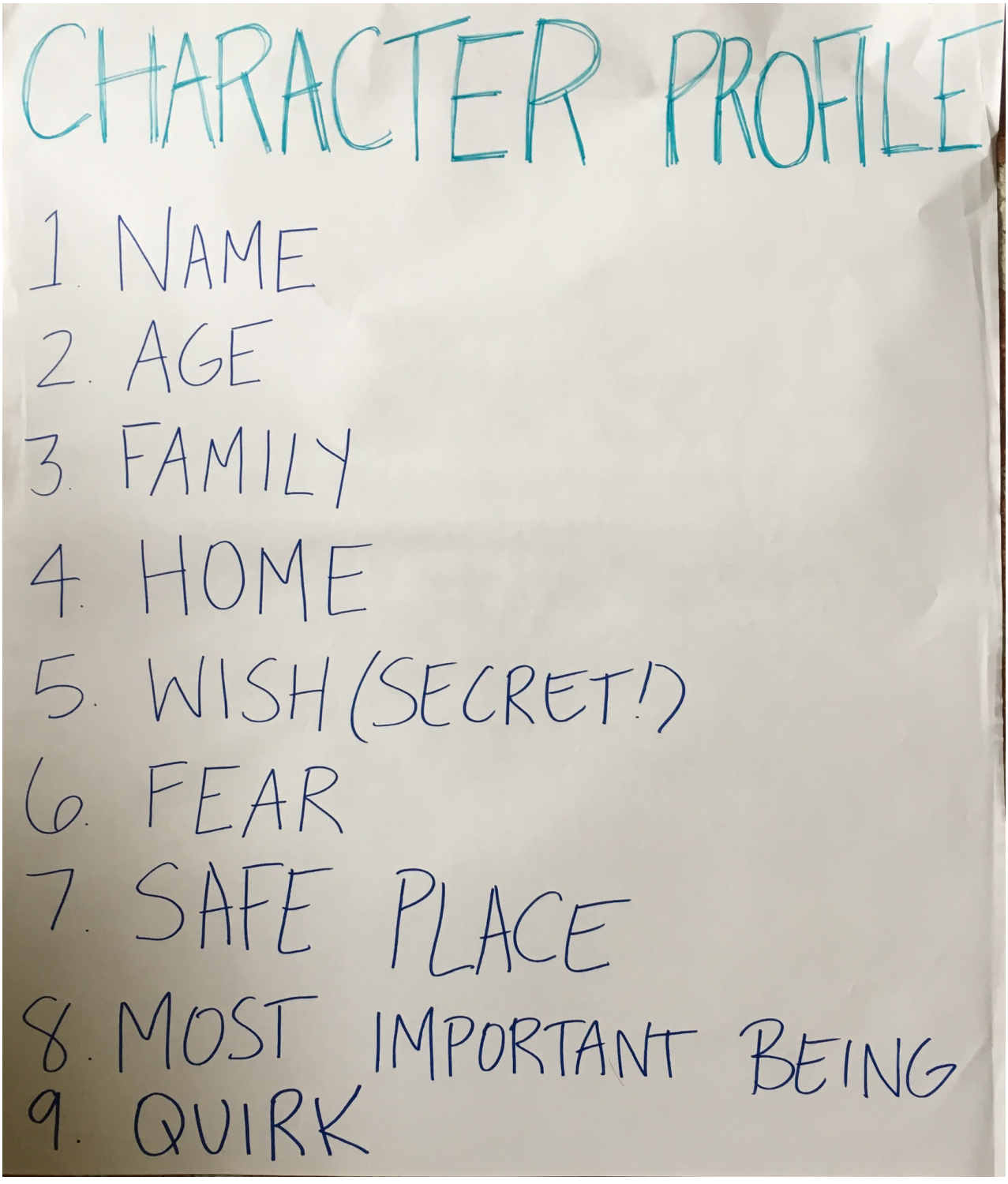

Fig. 4
Character profile anchor chart

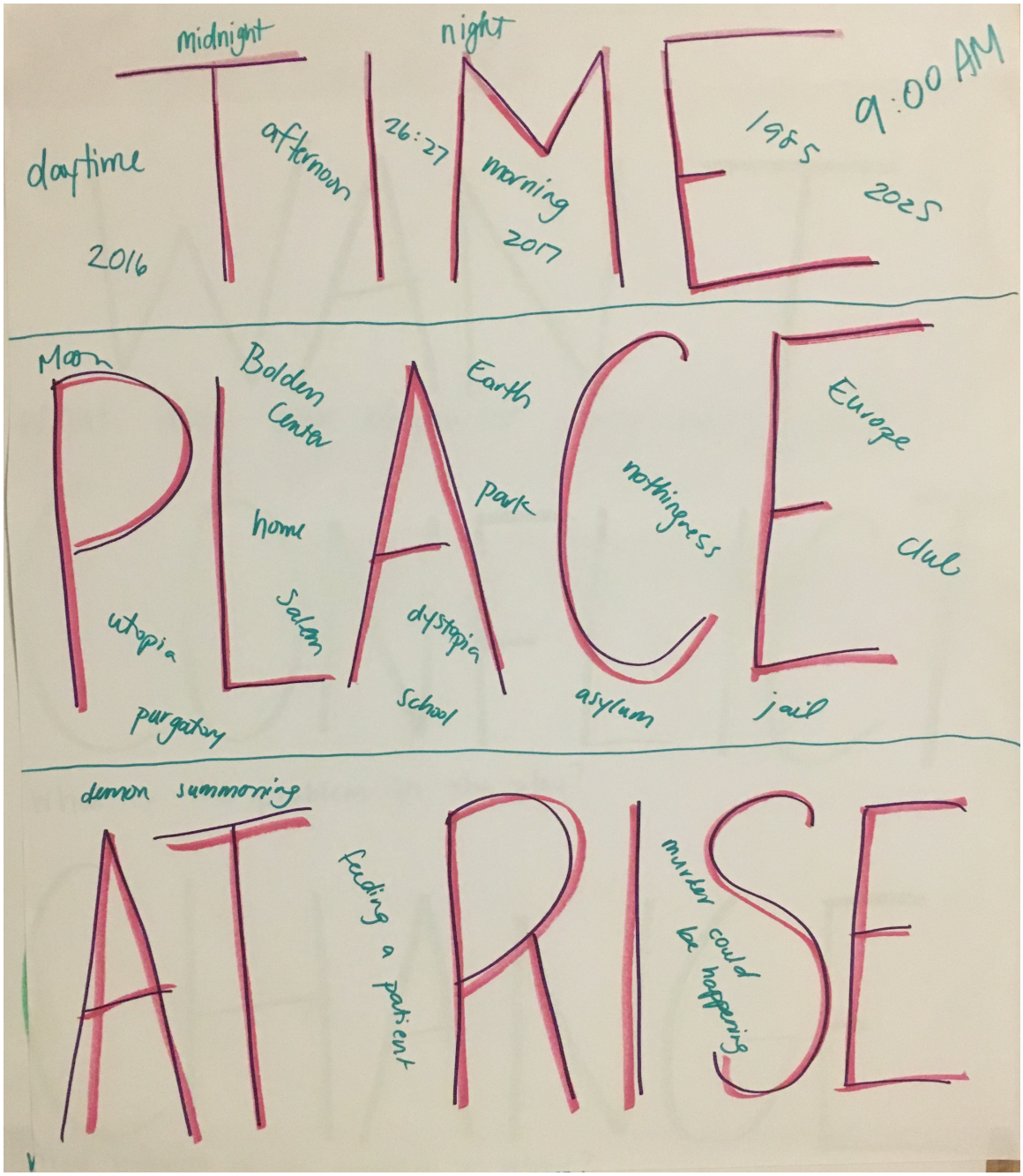

Fig. 5
Time/place/at rise anchor chart including students' suggestions

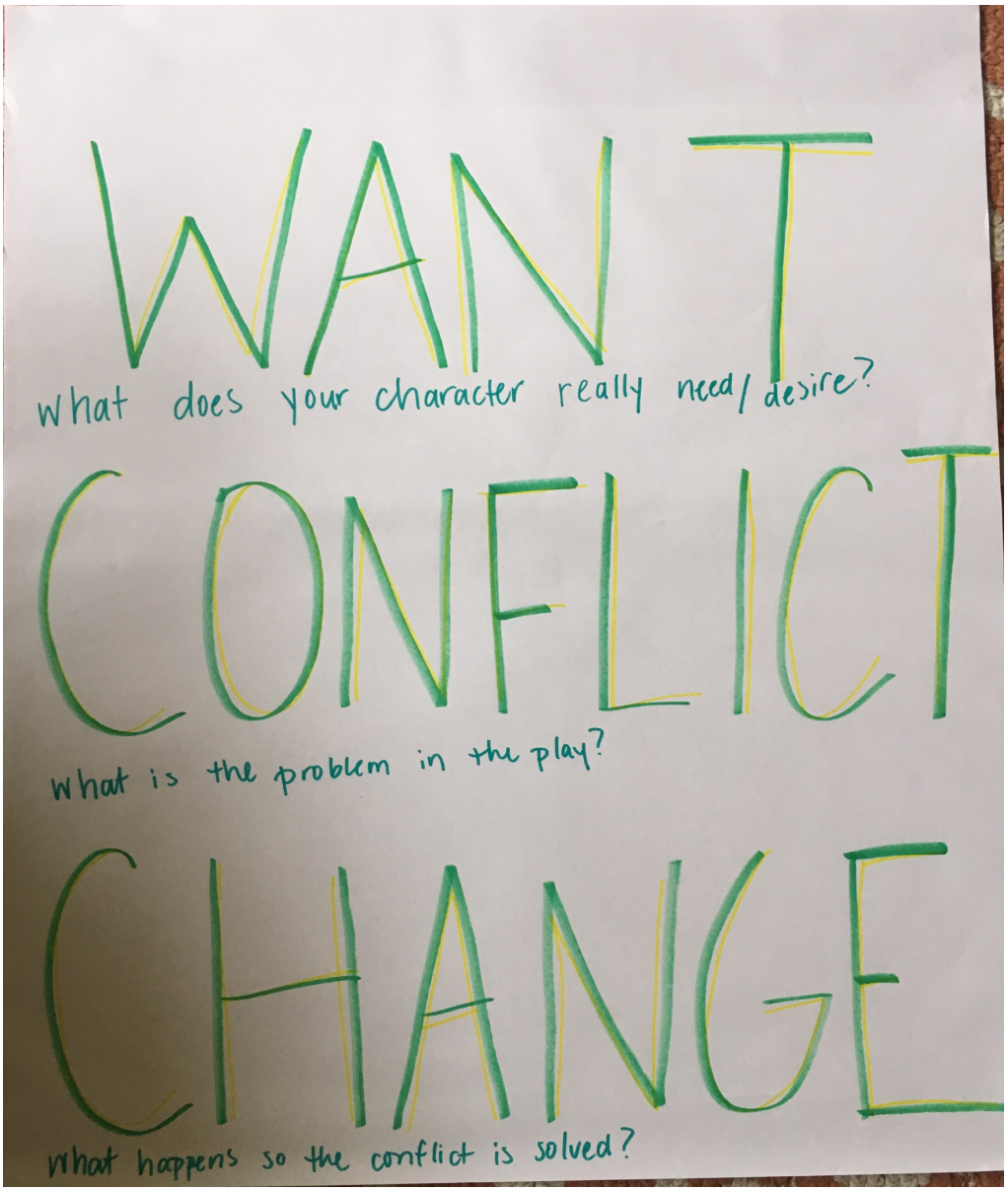

Fig. 6
Want/conflict/change anchor chart

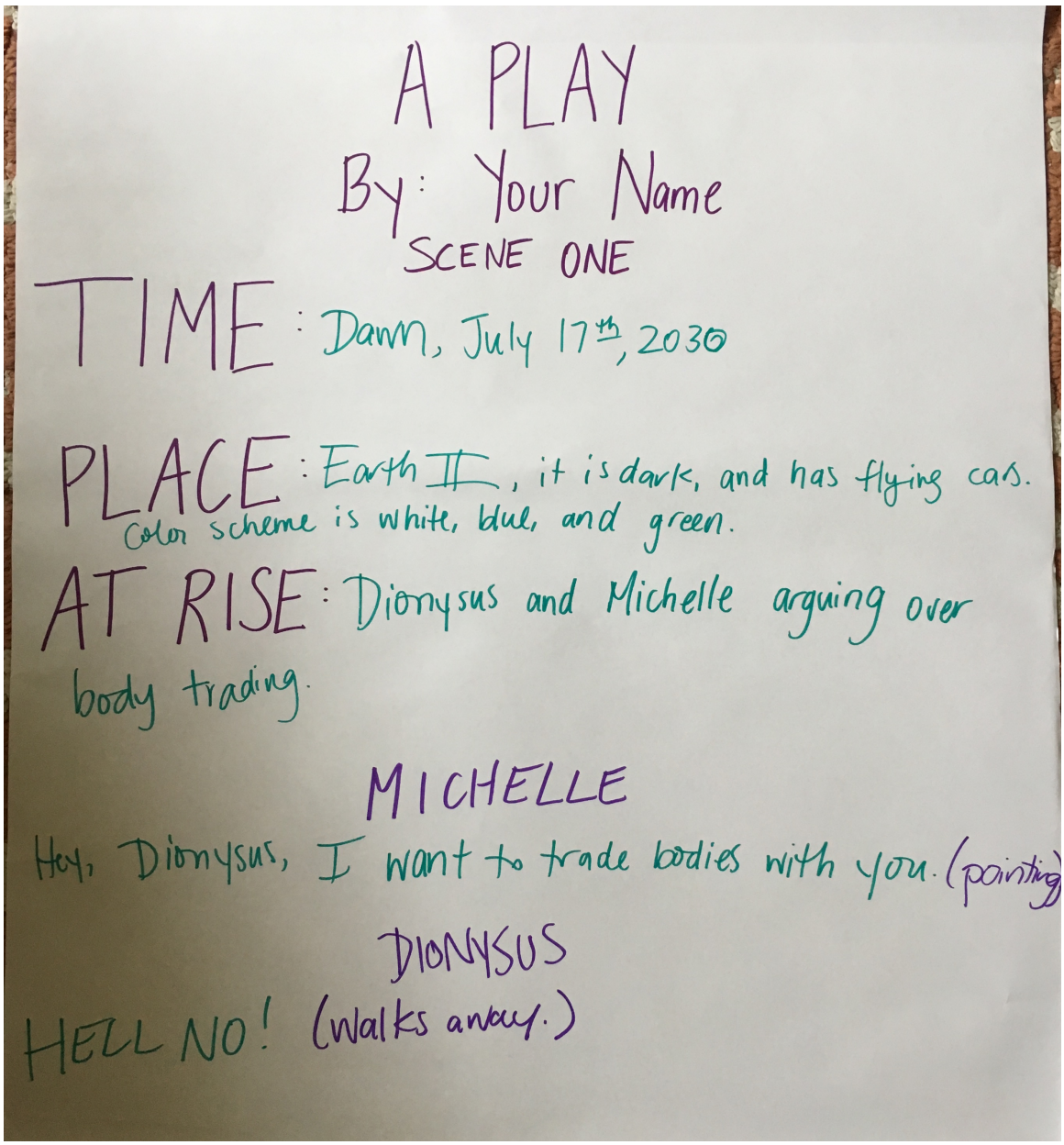

Fig. 7
Formatting anchor chart, including title, dialogue, stage directions, and time/place/at rise

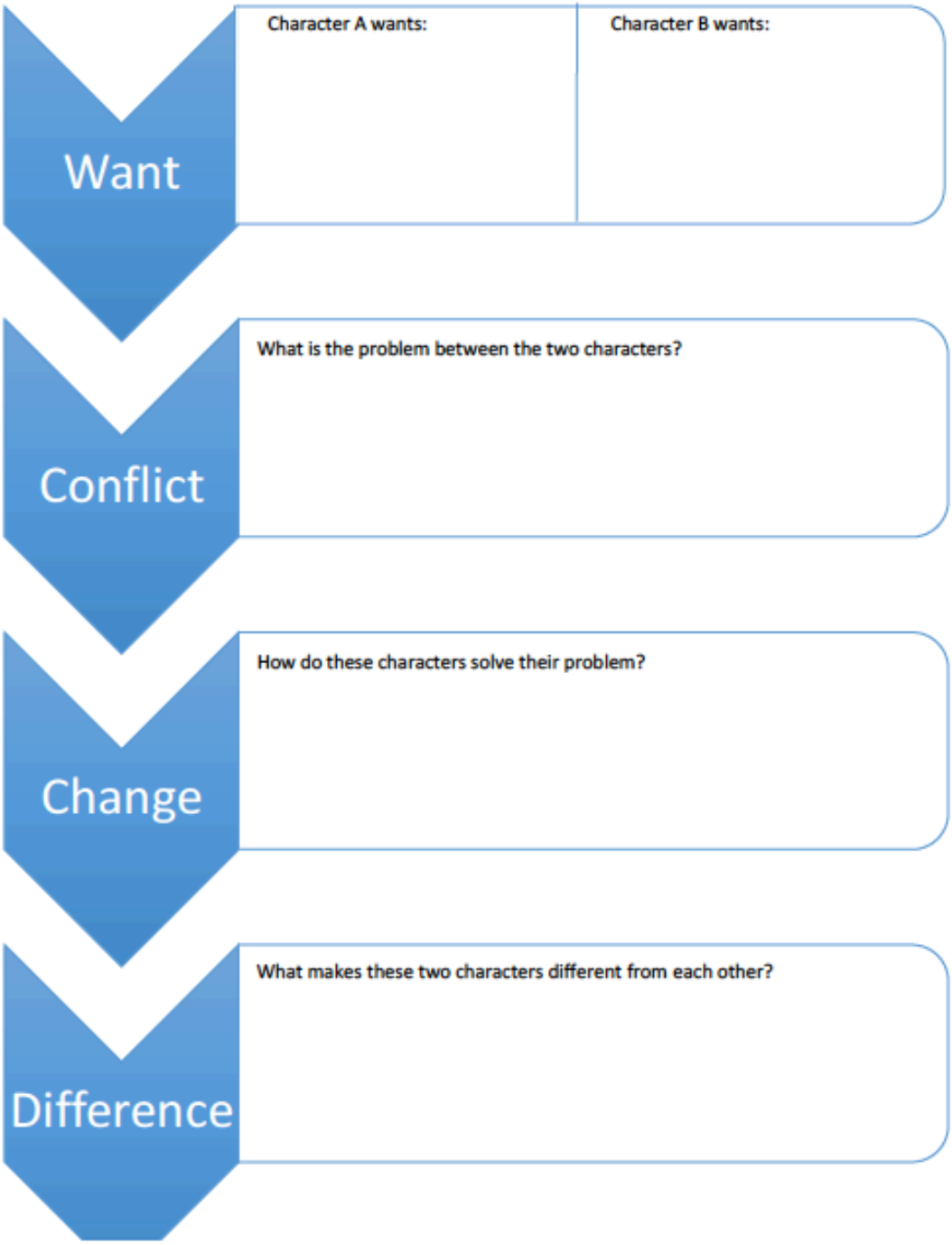

Fig. 8
Graphic organizer including want/conflict/change and difference, probing the students to ask what makes their characters different?

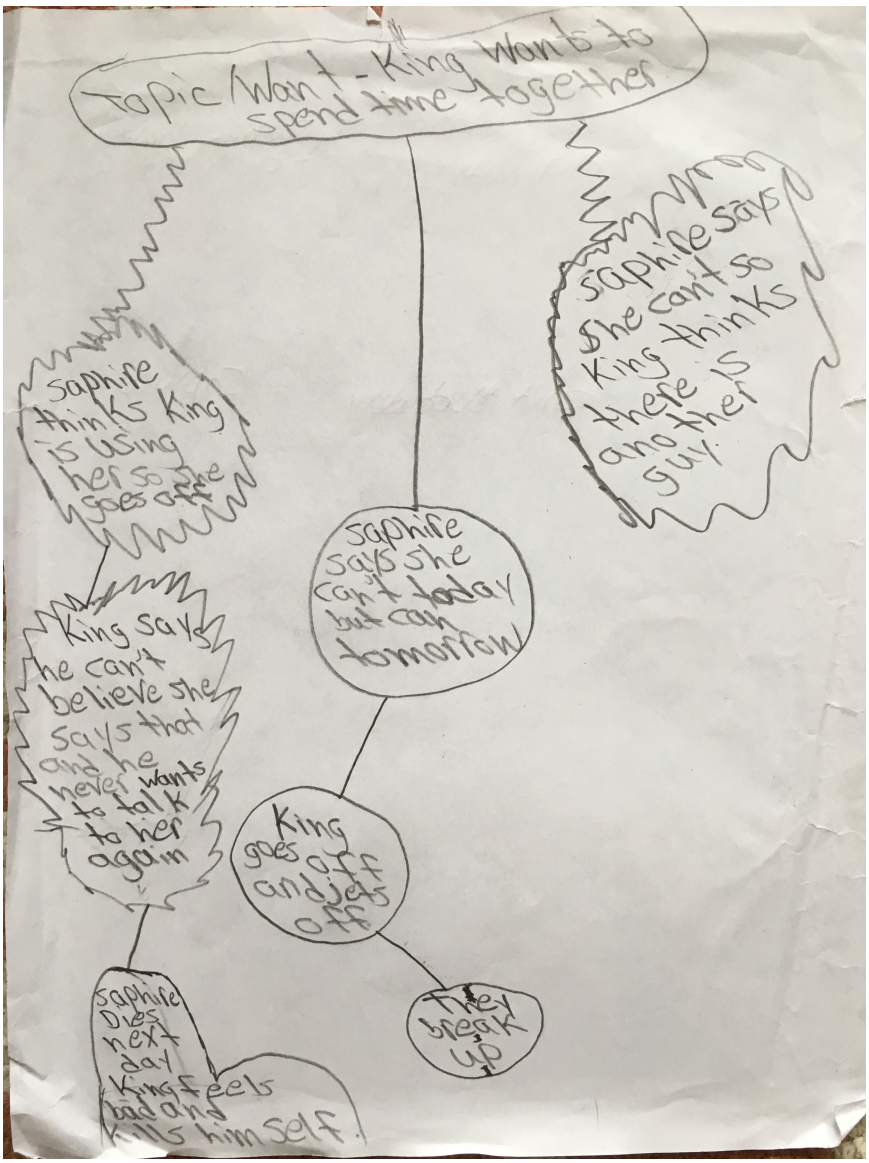

Fig. 9
An example of a student storyboard