Creating Character: Performance, Analysis, and Social Development Using Romeo and Juliet

Curriculum Unit 10.02.06
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Introduction

The assembly was about careers, thinking about the future. African American community leaders were on stage in their business suits clicking pleasantly through overhead slides. With the exception of fidgeting, the five hundred or so students were respectful and quiet. Then, in the midst of a slide about the most lucrative careers, a young woman several rows in front of me popped up with her phone to her ear. She seemed to want to leave, except that before she did, she had to playfully squat down on top of the four friends sitting to her left. Not ten seconds later, she was up the aisle and out of the auditorium, cell phone pressed against her head.

This moment incited a question within me: Is this child rude or has she never been taught how to behave in an assembly or performance? Also: What makes that phone call so important that she would interrupt an auditorium with it? The answers have come slowly, if at all. From my experience as a teacher, I think this student probably has not been taught how to behave in an assembly, but more than that, she has not been taught how to think of the comfort and needs of others and how her actions impact others. Her social and emotional development needs attention and improvement. Thus, I began to think about a school's responsibility for character education and social and emotional development and where my classes might fit into that.

Rationale

My belief is that we will never achieve academic proficiency until we address the whole child. In this unit, students will perform a scene from Romeo and Juliet. Additionally, they will keep a journal of their goals, motivations, obstacles, and actions, finally composing a polished journal response describing a choice they made based on their goals, motivations, and obstacles. These learning activities are designed for emotional and social development, which allows people to think about their effects on others. Social and emotional development precedes and is a prerequisite for cognitive development, which will be discussed later. This unit

seeks to improve the character of our students because cognitive development cannot take place until social and emotional development do.

Urban education has lost focus on emotional and social development as a result of No Child Left Behind. Nearly ten years out, there is little evidence to suggest that the difference in test results leads to more thoughtful and intelligent citizens who are better able to participate in an American democracy. However, a curriculum built on emotional development as a pathway to cognitive development shows promise and results. By having a framework to examine the effects of one's actions on oneself and others, young adults can learn the best way to approach a situation even though a model has not yet existed for them. This rationale seeks to establish this.

Teaching emotional development and character education will come naturally to many teachers. There exists a trend in education called "affective teaching [1]." In this model, teachers address a child's emotional, social, and personal needs and see this as the primary role in his or her profession. This is opposed to the teacher who sees his or her primary role as providing content and concepts. The Essential Question for this unit, "How do my decisions and actions affect myself and others?" reflects the current trend of affective education because the question forces students to work on social skills.

The first step in assessing "How do my actions and decisions affect myself and others?" is, paradoxically, for a child to look outside him or herself. This unit enables students to look at the character traits of fictional characters from Romeo and Juliet and assess their choices first before diving into the difficult enterprise of personal introspection.

To many, a reliance on the goodness of others may seem obvious as we have always had to rely in some way on others and their opinion of us. Today's youth, however, can very concretely achieve their goals through what seem like personal actions and minimal reliance on others. Indeed, this is one of the tenets of poverty: parentalization of youth, or taking care of yourself as well as those older than you. All this leads to personal reliance at the cost of a disdain for others, including elder others, and your relationship with them. Therefore, since factors outside of school lead to extreme individuality at the expense of empathy, empathy and responsible interactions must be explicitly taught in schools.

The lack of empathy for others may not strictly be a trait of an underprivileged citizen, however. A recent study by Sara Konrath, a researcher at the University of Michigan, shows that this generation of American college students has lower empathy than previous generations. The study found that students today are 40 percent less empathetic than students 30 years ago, with the biggest turnaround beginning in 2000. The implications of low empathy are severe. "Low empathy is associated with criminal behavior, violence, sexual offenses, aggression when drunk and other antisocial behaviors [2]." Therefore, underprivileged urban students are not only the products of poor social models; they are also the products of a changing generation more impacted by antisocial products like video games, cell phones, personal computers, and social networking Internet sites. The need for explicit social education is greater now than ever before.

Explicit character education through emotional and social development may be achieved by integrating citizenship education with literature because the dynamic, classic characters of Shakespeare echo human behavior. Romeo and Juliet were very much concerned with their own well-being and yet were directly affected by the actions and reactions of others. For example, the couple's desire to be together was not enough. They needed the approval of others: their families. Without this approval, they were powerless to impact their own lives and passions. Students reading Romeo and Juliet are quick to place blame on the

families, rightfully outraged at no explanation of their feud. Critical examination of literature is not only an academic pursuit: it is a legitimate opportunity to scrutinize others and examine their goals, motivations, obstacles, and actions.

The need to teach the complexities of good intentions versus actions was underscored during a recent conversation with a freshman student. She was involved in a potential fight between herself and another young woman. It was a matter of "he said, she said," according to the student. When I asked her what was going to happen, she said, "whatever happens, happens." When asked to explain, she elaborated, saying, "If there's gonna be a fight, that's it."

> "So you don't think the fight would be anybody's fault?" I asked.
> "No, it's just gonna happen," replied my student.
> I further pushed my student to think about Romeo and Juliet, since we had recently
> finished reading the play. I asked, "Did they have to die?"
> "Maybe," she replied.
> I asked again, "So whose fault would that be?"
> "Maybe theirs."
> "So it is someone's fault," I returned.
> "Yeah, maybe."
> "Maybe your fight would be someone's fault?" I pressed on.
> The student paused, "Well, maybe. I don't know!"

This exchange highlighted in me the importance of precognition, or thinking before acting. In order to do this, a person must have a model or set of learned behaviors. Of course, when new problems arise, how does a person deal with them if they have never encountered them before? The behaviors can be modeled and rehearsed, which can be achieved through improvisation.

Also on the rise in research is the inclusion of performance and improvisation into school settings. Psychologist Lev Vigotsky's Social Development Theory was written during the Russian Revolution but is widely accepted in child psychology today. Vigotsky theorized that social interaction precedes development [3]. In other words, children must work together in order to develop. Vigotsky also theorized that children see everything twice: first when they see another person behave and then when they do it themselves. In this way, a child must interact with, not just analyze, a positive model in order to replicate it. If an individual never experiences

something or is never shown, how can he or she do it? A contemporary performance event entitled "Performing the World" seeks to use this theory to bring together people of all backgrounds in an effort to create understanding and greater cooperation between nations and peoples. The event creators seek to discuss "the subject of performance and the transformation of the individual, the community, and the world [4] ". Several participants in the 2007 "Performing the World" event used acting and improvisation to encourage cooperation, self-esteem, and self-motivation in urban youth. More than research, this is theory into action. Since both Vigotsky's theory and the most recent events in research suggest that performance and social interaction precede cognitive development, the two will go hand-in-hand in this unit.

It is important to note that the research relating emotional development to classroom behavior is incomplete. Roundtable discussions in 2005 and 2006 by leaders in the education field, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National Institute of Child Health and Development (NICHD) came to this conclusion. One study that was cited in their report compared the aspirations of parents with and without college degrees. The children of college educated parents with high aspirations were able to succeed academically and socially due to parental involvement. However, parents who were not college-educated were no less involved in setting aspirations for their children, but their children were not able to change social behavior and academic outcomes. Overall, "non-college educated parents could communicate a high level of aspiration but could not effectively change their child's behavior in ways that would prepare students to achieve their aspirations [5] ". This suggests that explicit education on good behavior is necessary to achieving the aspirations of many parents and their children. This unit seeks to do that.

Intended Audience for Unit

This unit is written for lower-level and struggling learners whose behavior and under-development hamper their learning. Their reading levels can be loosely defined as at least two grades below level according to a STARR Test, a vocabulary and reading assessment. Research from 2008 shows a correlation between poor behavior and low reading skills [6] . McIntosh of the University of the District of Columbia finds that there is a cycle of learning that hinders an individual. The teacher conducts a lesson, and then the student acts out because he believes that he is incapable of doing the work. The student is then forced to leave the classroom and escapes showing weakness. Consequently, he has not learned the material and falls further behind. McIntosh also shows that the relationship between low reading skills and poor behavior is recursive; one can lead to the other. The student with poor behavior and low social skills is the intended audience for this unit because the activities and rationale address both emotional and social needs, which are required for cognitive development.

Theory into Practice: Unit Contents

In order to build character, which is the ultimate goal of this unit, students will have the opportunity to improvise social situations. They will be put into situations where they get the opportunity to employ positive behavior and positive outcomes for others. The first of these will be real-world situations. Next, students will

assess their reactions by defining and explaining their goals, motivations, obstacles, and actions. Then, before the Romeo and Juliet performances, students will define positive behavior for an audience, and then rate their own behavior during the performances. Next, students will rehearse and perform scenes from Romeo and Juliet. They will interpret and infer character voice and motivations before their performances. Finally, students will be given a week, or another definite amount of time, to keep a journal of goals, motivations, obstacles, and actions they make on a daily basis and evaluate those actions. A written response to these actions will be the final, summative assessment for the unit.

With literature as our gateway, we are looking at our effects on others. Shakespeare's characters represent the extremes of a society. For example, Tybalt is our modern day hotheaded young man with a score to settle. He does not care to hear the details; he just knows that something is not right. Being a character in a play, and having to get across his point in less than three hours, he does not pay attention to the minutiae of a scene, simply barging ahead with his plans. He is only stopped once, by his uncle, Capulet, at the ball. In this encounter, though, an elder supersedes him. Capulet is drunk, but his superior rank is paramount and stands in the way of Tybalt achieving his goals. With the difficult decision of choosing passion or choosing to follow family, Tybalt is faced with a decision every student has to make at some point. Students may be asked if Tybalt's death is the consequence of fate or choice or both. Students will scrutinize the literature after improvising real situations.

Looking at Romeo, his primary goal is to find and foster true love. His decision is to pursue the daughter of his enemy; his action is to marry her and then commit suicide to be with her. His motivation is true love, deep emotional love, rather than the carnal love of his best friend and foil, Mercutio. Romeo's main obstacle is the feud between the two family houses, with more specific conflicts like the attempt to make peace with Tybalt, avenging Mercutio's death, returning to Juliet despite banishment, and getting through Paris into Juliet's tomb. His single-minded pursuit of his love, even though it is guided by truth and purity, leaves death and devastation in its wake. Therefore, even the most well-intended people may perform actions that can lead to ruin and an overall failure. By deeply assessing a character in the play this way, students will then be able to take these skills of critical examination into their own lives. It will work because the unit focuses on skills of examining character.

Unit Objectives

- Objective 1: Students will be able to (SWBAT) develop methods of reacting to various situations in their own lives
- Assessment 1: Role-playing and journal reflections
- Objective 2: SWBAT infer "voice" in dramatic literature
- Assessment 2: Written work and games to discuss voice
- Objective 3: SWBAT define and exhibit positive audience behavior
- Assessment 3: Self-evaluation of participation as an audience member
- Objective 4: SWBAT perform lines from a play in front of their classmates
- Assessment 4: Performance of lines from Romeo and Juliet

· Objective 5: SWBAT evaluate how their actions and decisions affect themselves and others

· Assessment 5: Polished written discussion of personal goals and actions.

Scope and Sequence

To address the need for social and emotional development, the unit incorporates performance and writing centered around character voice and the impact of decisions and actions on other characters. Then, students will look at their own goals, motivations, obstacles, and actions. Students will read Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. The final products, or summative assessments, will be the performance of a scene from this tragedy and a polished journal response to a student's own decisions and actions.

Students will have already read Romeo and Juliet. The play can be taught with an emphasis on anything before embarking on this unit. It could center on literary elements, character development, the historical aspects of the Renaissance, or anything else. It must be emphasized that this unit could follow any study of this play.

There are three major steps, which are discussed below. These are: 1) Interpreting the literal meaning of the chosen lines and the context of these lines. 2) Improvising to infer from voice and relationships (Inference is integral to the New Haven English Language Arts Curriculum.) 3) Performing and evaluating character and self.

This sequence can be easily used with a data-driven approach that assesses and tracks skills during the unit. Data-driven instruction requires frequent tests that assess specific skills, then the re-teaching of any unlearned skills. Also, these tests are given across classrooms so that best practices can be shared among teachers. With this unit as an example, students would be assessed daily and weekly on skills related to interpretation of Shakespeare. Then, if that skill is mastered, and when it is mastered, students will be able to build upon this to infer relationships between characters. If any skill is not mastered, it must be re-taught until it is. Then, when students are able to infer, they will be able to think about character decisions and their own decisions. This unit recognizes the importance of building on prior knowledge and practicing of already-learned skills. Ideally, students will have many experiences with interpretation and inference by the time they finish reading Romeo and Juliet. The interpretation and inference in this unit focus those skills thinking about decisions they make each day.

1) Interpreting the literal meaning of the chosen lines and the context of these lines

Teachers must take care to match students with lines that are appropriate for the reader both in length and content. For students with poor attendance, monologues work best because if the student is often absent, his

or her absence will not harm the whole acting company. Examples of these include Romeo's monologue in the Balcony Scene, Juliet's musings after the death of Tybalt, and Prince's closing monologue at the very end of the play. For all other students, they will work together in short scenes.

A list of appropriate scenes is below. When students are grouped around various reading and comprehension levels, they can help each other with the context and content of the lines. These include Tybalt's sighting of Romeo at the Capulet Ball, or Juliet and Capulet's falling out. Remember, this unit is geared toward challenging the struggling learner and enabling him or her to perform lines in front of classmates.

The author of this unit tried various pairings with two classes of low-level learners in an urban district. The best performances were done by mixed-ability groupings of students with two or more students in a scene. Monologues were well performed by several learners, but they clearly did not understand their lines as well, probably because they did not have to react to other characters. In this way, though they had greater memorization of lines, they had less knowledge of character motivation and voice. The following scenes are suggested.

Act, scene	Lines	Plot	Characters and their lines
I, i	28-55	Opening between Capulet and Montagues	Gregory (7), Sampson (12), Abraham (5), Balthazar (0), Benvolio (1)
I, v	40-82	Capulet Ball	Romeo (12), Servant (1), Tybalt (13), Capulet (19)
II, ii	170-192	Balcony Scene when Romeo and Juliet part	Juliet (17), Romeo (10)
III, i	12-70	Death of Mercutio	Benvolio (6), Mercutio (39), Tybalt (12), Romeo (17)
III, v	43-64	Romeo leaves for Mantua	Nurse (3), Juliet (17), Romeo (9)
III, v	137 (How now, wife?) - 175	Capulet tells Juliet that she must marry Paris	Capulet (31), Lady Capulet (3), Juliet (5), Nurse (4)
V	Modified ending	Romeo and Juliet's suicides, Paris' closing	Romeo (last 20 lines of monologue), Juliet (last 13 lines of monologue), Paris (closing 6 lines)

The literal meaning of lines may be achieved through multiple methods. This may be a focus of the initial unit for Romeo and Juliet, and there are interpretations offered side-by-side with the original text both online and in printed resources. The context of these lines must also be established. Students should be able to answer the following questions which ask about goals (1) , motivations (2) , obstacles (3) , and actions (4) : 1) What does your character want in this scene? 2) Why does he or she want this? 3) Who is getting in the way of the character achieving this? 4) What does your character do to overcome this obstacle?

2) Inferring from voice and relationships; Improvisation

Improvisation should happen before diving into the words the characters say. This is because social development precedes cognitive development, as discussed in the Rationale. There are role-playing games involving scenes from Romeo and Juliet that will get students thinking about the right thing to do. See the Resources for teachers for websites with hundreds of improvisation games. Do these before diving into the Romeo and Juliet games in order to get students more comfortable with movement. Then, without reminding students that it is part of the play, or, ideally, before you begin to study the play, have students play several roles from Lesson Plan 1.

Please see Lesson Plan 1: Improvisation with Romeo and Juliet.

Before the performance, students will be furnished with a reflection sheet to complete for each performance to be given to those performers, as well as a reflection on their own behavior. The page is included in Appendix A. It is entitled "Romeo and Juliet Performance Evaluation Page".

Next, to assess tone in writing, students will evaluate tone in contemporary publications.

Please see Lesson Plan 2: Evaluating Tone

3) Performing and evaluating character and self

The performance has four steps: I. Scene selection and Rehearsal. II. Thinking about Character and Motivation. III. Performance. IV. Written journal reflection.

I. Scene selection and Rehearsal

The scenes given above are not necessarily the most famous of the play, though they are likely to be in any stage or film production of it. The most famous parts of these scenes were not chosen because they are more likely to be studied during class and the interpretation of them will already have been done. For example, the Balcony Scene is often taught because of its imagery, symbolism, opposites, and so forth. These lines are likely to have been thoroughly examined. Also, Romeo and Juliet each have numerous lines at once in the Balcony Scene, which is prohibitively daunting to new performers. By using later lines when Romeo and Juliet are parting from each other, the actors will have to rely on each other more because the lines are shorter, and they will be able to apply their interpretation skills practiced in an earlier lesson.

To prepare and rehearse, students will set up individual Company Houses where they will come each day to work on their projects. These could be desks arranged in twos and threes or clustered together. Students working individually will be in their own Company House with the rationale that students who miss class often or are unable to cooperate in a group would be further discouraged and ostracized by being placed in complete separation. *Note: Struggling learners have a difficult time completing work when not directly addressed. However, the best method of ensuring that students are on task is to be sure that all materials are provided and organized, that there are clear models for all levels of the process, and that realistic goals are set. The Company House arrangements are meant to foster unity in a group and to lessen the amount of time used to move during class.

II. Thinking about Character and Motivation

Prior to rehearsals, each student will need to respond to the following questions provided by the model in Lesson Plan 3: Thinking About Character. Provide students with the model answers on one sheet and the questions with space for answers on another sheet. In a pilot of this lesson, students said that they would have used the model more if the pages had been next to each other and not front-and-back. Students reported that the models were helpful.

III. Performance

For the performance, have students set up the desks in "a round" as the Globe Theatre is assembled. Show students an image of the layout of the Globe and have them decide where the seats will be, directing them towards an arc.

Prior to the performance, students need to know how to behave when their peers are performing. Ideally, invite administrators and other adults into the room to help model. How will they know how to behave? Begin by asking students what they think a "good" audience looks like. They are likely to come up with all the right answers. These could include "sits quietly," "sits up," "cell phones off," "stay seated," and "follow action with eyes." Write these on a large piece of poster paper and post it in front of the room so that students know what their expectations are. Write check marks in the spaces for the class when they behave correctly. These can be typed, printed and passed out to the class. Have each student monitor the behavior of another student, knowing that their audience grade, which should be graded because it is a skill, will be partly determined by this chart. A model is provided below.

Expectation	Achieved	Almost perfect	Needs improvement
Follow action with eyes			
Silent during performance			
Clap when done			
Be ready with an intelligent question			
Treat performers how you would want to be treated. Everyone is nervous. Show them how to treat you!			

IV. Written journal reflection

After the performances, have a leader of each company compile and distribute the slips to the other groups. Have those groups discuss the reflections from their peers using the questions that follow. Have them answer questions 1 and 3 before looking at slips from their peers. 1) What did we do well as a group? 2) What did other people think we did well as a group? 3) What could we do better? 4) What do others think we could do better? 5) What message did we convey to the other groups? 6) How is this like or different from what we wanted people to know? 7) How did the audience's reactions impact how we performed? Each student must answer this question individually and on a group/Company page.

Journal Reflection Prompt for Students: (Journals are integral to the Freshman Curriculum and STEAL is an

acronym used to analyze character.) Explain your character using STEAL (Speech, Tone, Effect on other characters, Actions, Looks). Based on what you know of your character from STEAL, why did the character handle the situation the way he/she did? What speech, tone, effects on others, actions, and looks could change to make the outcome better? If your character were your friend, what would you advise him or her to do in his or her situation? First, explain the situation in your own words. Next, write the exact words you would say to your character. Finally, explain to the character why he or she should do this. Now, write about yourself using STEAL. How do your actions and tone influence the conflicts you face? What could you change to change the outcome of a particular situation? Minimum _____ words.

Strategy note: With such a stratified field of learners, I find it useful to give different students different word goals. Sometimes it is a minimum, while other times I use a grading scale, like 200 words = B, 250 words = A. When they say, "But what if I only have 199 words? I reply, "If you can say 199 quality words, you can say 200." The reasoning behind word goals for struggling learners is that it forces them to say more. Many times these learners are inhibited because they think that we teachers understand everything they are saying and therefore they do not explain themselves. Or, they write about a fact without going into why that supports their idea. Overall, their idea of "quality" is low. Furthermore, they are typically not concise, so they cannot say as much in 100 words as a more advanced student could. As you might notice with their writing, the best parts come out at the end of their pages! If you ask them to write "one page," the most insightful, original ideas come out at the very bottom, and they stop because they have written a page! By giving word goals, they constantly have to come up with more to say, and will practice expanding upon one of the ideas they have written in that original page. Finally, this allows you to tailor the assignment to different learners, asking appropriate lengths for learners. The further problem of "write one page" is that handwriting sizes vary so widely that the space is unfairly judged.

Lesson Plan 1: Improvisation with Romeo and Juliet

This lesson allows students to actively consider real-life situations. Assign students to play the different parts, being a daughter, mother, C, M, and so forth. Possibly have students write their responses first before acting out.

First, look at the opening scene between the boys of the Capulet and Montague Houses. Call them the C's and M's. C's are hanging out on their turf, chillin', when along comes one of the M's and a friend. Someone is not welcome, but the other does not want to budge. What do you do?

In another scene, there is a C party and the M's are going to crash it. One student is a C who sees the head of the M's sneaking around, eating their food, dancing with their ladies, and enjoying everything the party has to offer. What does C do? It's his party, M was not invited, what does each side do?

In another scene, your mom will not let you date someone. She tells you why, and you know she will not change her mind, even though you are right. What do you do?

In another scene, a very close friend, close like a brother, asks you for something you know you should not have. It could be a weapon, a drug, or anything. The friend is crying, threatens you, and says that he or she cannot live without this thing. What do you do?

This could be played with many other scenes. After the students determine what they would do, ask them to explain why. Then ask what the consequences of their actions will be. What would be the other consequences if they did something else? *Note: From my own experiences, in 2010, the word "consequences" has a strictly negative connotation among students. To remedy this, the terms "positive reactions" and "negative reactions" can be substituted for the desired thought process. Students should not be made to think that the "consequences" of each scene are negative, and the use of this word will lead to only negative answers. *

For struggling learners, all these questions will be answered on paper first, then discussed. Finally, students will reflect, in writing, on the discussion. Did they change any of their ideas? What reaction would do the most harm? What reaction would do the most good? Why do some situations "have to" end a certain way? What if they did not?

Lesson Plan 2: Evaluating Tone

The mark of progressive urban education is to ground student work in a relevant, rigorous, community-conscious, and engaging way. One strategy to address the skill of evaluating tone is to bring students a collection of newspapers, fliers, newsletters, church pamphlets, obituaries, horoscopes, magazines, and any other community publications. These could also be brought in by the students. "Community" could be broadly defined as the African American Community, the Latino Community, Newcomers to the U.S., the Congregational Church Community, the Future Teachers of American Community, the Service Learning Community, or any other group of which students are a part. This could also include a states-wide community as many students are transient.

From these publications, model how to choose "important words" that will be called "strands." Words in a strand will give a cohesive meaning. For example, a horoscope with "future" "beware" "rocky" and "look out for" would clearly give a tone of caution or weariness. After sufficient models for your students, allow them to dive into their own choices of publications. It will be helpful to students to be provided with a list of 100-150 "tone" words. Without a list, students are often stuck at "happy," "sad," "upset," and other broad words. With a list, they are able to pick out appropriate words that they do not commonly associate with a feeling or are unlikely to come up with on their own.

Depending on your preference, students can compile these words into strands on their own on worksheets, or you could create a student-centered board in the classroom, beginning with charts of "text evidence" words leading to "tone words." The relationship between evidence and tone will be used in the final journal response.

The first step is looking at voice by exploring tone. In the examples below, students only need to know key words to infer the tone. This tone from Tybalt may be threatening and frightful. When Capulet speaks though, the tone turns to conflicting and challenging.

•TYBALT Act I, scene v

Now, by the stock and honor of my kin,
To strike him dead, I hold it not a sin.

•CAPULET

    Content thee, gentle coz.

Other language contains punctuation to give meaning. For example, when Romeo is questioning his recollection of past experiences in his final soliloquy, he asks several questions of himself, then of Juliet, and then of fate. A series of question marks alone could show conviction or a confusing, puzzled, challenging, passionate, angry, or worried tone.

•ROMEO Act V

    Said he not so? Or did I dream it so?
    Why art thou yet so fair? ...to be his paramour?

To close the lesson, give students one more line, possibly from a scene you read already but with which you did not already assess tone. Ask students to find a strand and give two to three tone words to describe it on paper. This could easily be worked into a worksheet for the lesson.

Lesson Plan 3: Thinking About Character

This model uses the scene when Romeo murders Tybalt. This is not included in the suggested scenes for performance for reasons given there. If you choose to give students this scene for performance, do not give it as a model for this lesson. Students will have a tendency to use the answers provided.

This can be copied and pasted into a word processing program so that there are two sheets for each student: One sheet has just the questions; the other has the questions and models. It is helpful for students to be able to look at these side-by-side.

Thinking About Character

For Act III scene i lines 71-98 in which Romeo murders Tybalt:

    1.) In one to two sentences, describe what happens in your scene.

In this scene, Romeo avenges his friend Mercutio's death by killing Tybalt. Astonished at what he has done, Tybalt runs away.

2.) What does your character want in this scene? In other words, what are his or her goals?

Romeo's goal is to avenge Mercutio's death.

3.) What is the effect on the other characters in this scene?

The effects are fatal. Tybalt dies in the sword fight. Benvolio sees that he has been slain, and tells Romeo to run away. Soon, Prince and the families will see what has happened. Prince banishes Romeo for his conduct.

4.) What is the character's tone of voice? How is this shown? What words signal this to readers or an audience?

Romeo's tone is harsh, enraged, and determined, and hurt. Once he has killed Tybalt, though, he says, "Oh, I am fortune's fool!" This shows that he feels confused and tricked.

5.) How does this character's tone of voice affect the other characters in the scene?

Romeo's tone of voice enrages Tybalt, but Tybalt is a brash character from the start. Romeo threatens Tybalt saying, "Either thou, or I, or both must go with him." These words mean that Romeo will kill Tybalt if Tybalt does not kill him first. Therefore, Tybalt decides to fight.

6.) What happens to this character as a result of his or her actions in this scene?

Romeo is banished because he kills Tybalt. Ultimately, he kills himself because of a misunderstanding. If he had not killed Tybalt, he would not have been banished, and he would not have missed any information.

7.) Do we know a character by what they say or by what they do, or is it a combination? Give examples to explain your answer.

We know a character by his or her reputation and actions. For example, Romeo wants to make peace with Tybalt because they are now related by marriage. However, when Tybalt kills Mercutio by accident, Romeo goes into a vengeful rage and kills Tybalt. Furthermore, Romeo does not see this death as his own doing, he

sees it as a result of destiny, claiming, "O, I am fortune's fool!" Therefore, we know that Romeo does not believe that he can control himself, even if he tried. Moreover, he feels anger over his fate, feeling powerless to circumstances in his life. Even though Romeo said that he means to harm to Tybalt, he cannot pass the test.

8.) It is important to remember that Romeo and Juliet is a tragedy, and not real. Still, what can we learn from the goals and actions of the characters?

(No model given to allow for a range of student answers.)

Appendix A

Romeo & Juliet Performance Evaluation Page

Directions: Please answer all questions in complete sentences. Thank you for completing this thoughtfully and thoroughly.

Key to Rating: 1= not at all, 2= somewhat, 3=yes

1.) Did I follow all parts of our class's Expectations for an Excellent Audience? Explain your rating.

1 2 3

2.) Were any of the expectations difficult to follow? Explain your rating.

1 2 3

3.) Were my peers being respectful of my performance? Explain your rating.

1 2 3

4.) How did my behavior impact the performance? In other words, would the performance be better or worse if I had behaved differently?

_____

Company Name: _____

1.) What was best about their performance? (Diction, staging, acting, voice, sets, costumes, engagement with audience, funny, serious, etc.)

2.) What questions do you have for the performers?

3.) What did you see in their performance that you would add to your own?

Notes

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[1] Shechtman, Z. and Leichtentritt, J. "Affective teaching: a method to enhance classroom management." European Journal of Teacher Education 27, no. 3 (2004): 323-333. Standards Site. 6 July 2010.

[2] Paul, Pamela. "From students, less kindness for strangers?" New York Times. 25 June 2010. Web. 3 July 2010. http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/27/fashion/27StudiedEmpathy.html>.

[3] Vigotsky, L. S. Mind and society: the development of higher mental processes. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1978.

[4] Performing the world 2007. Dir. Joseph Spirito. Performing the world - home. 03 July 2010. http://www.performingtheworld.org/>.

[5] NICHD, and NCATE. Child and adolescent development research and teacher education: evidence-based pedagogy, policy, and practice. Rep. NICHD, NCATE, 2007. 2 July 2010. www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/child_adol_dev_teacher_ed.pdf>.

[6] McIntosh, Kent, and Robert H. Horner. "Reading skills and function of problem behavior in typical school settings." The Journal of Special Education 42, no. 3 (2008): 131-47. Sage Journals Online. 2 July 2010.

Resources for teachers

Regarding Teaching Shakespeare

"Folger Shakespeare Library." folger.edu. Click on "Teach and Learn" on the homepage to access lesson plans centered around the production of Shakespeare. The Folger Shakespeare Library is an internationally recognized library holding hundreds of thousands of the most important Renaissance documents in the world, including original Folios by Shakespeare. Many of these are published online and can serve as primary source documents.

Shakespeare, William. Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, and A Midsummer Night's Dream, edited by Peggy O'Brian. Washington Square Press, 1993. Three complete units centered on student interaction and engagement. Includes rationales, lesson plans, and worksheets for three plays.

Regarding Improvisation Games

ImprovEncyclopedia. 29 July 2010. ImprovEncyclopedia.org/games/index.html. This site has more than 500 improvisation games. Try 10 Fingers using facts that students create before they begin. With this game, students get to know a little about each other while learning to listen to each other.

McLeod, Hugh. Learn Improv. 29 July 2010. www.learnimprov.com. This site provides numerous improvisational games. Click on "Warm-Ups" under "Structures" on the left of the homepage. Try Clap Focus, Free Association, or Group Stop.

Regarding Social and Emotional Development

"School Development Program." Comer School Development Program. April 2010. medicine.yale.edu/childstudy/comer. This site details a social and emotional development program that was piloted in urban schools in New Haven, Connecticut in the 1960's. Since then, it has been reproduced around the world. The website provides rationales, examples, and ideas for teachers, administrators, and parents.

Robert W. Roeser, Jacquelynne S. Eccles and Arnold J. Sameroff. School as a Context of Early Adolescents' Academic and Social-Emotional Development: A Summary of Research Findings. The Elementary School Journal, Vol. 100, No. 5, Special Issue: Non-Subject-Matter Outcomes of Schooling [II] (May, 2000), pp. 443-471. This article highlights the importance of social-emotional development in young adolescents, ages 10-14.

Rothstein, Richard. Class and Schools: Using Social, Economic, and Educational Reform to Close the Achievement Gap. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 2004. This book gives a comprehensive summary of factors contributing to the achievement gap as well as proposed solutions. Educators can gain knowledge about just what they are trying to close.

"Sachs Lecturer Richard Rothstein Discusses Equality in Education 50 Years After Brown v. Board of Ed." Teachers College: Columbia University. 29 July 2010. www.tc.columbia.edu. This article has links to three lectures given by educational researcher Richard Rothstein in which he outlines causes of and solutions to the Achievement Gap.

Resources for students

Romeo and Juliet on Audio Books at iconn.org. With just a library card, students can download thousands of books, including Romeo and Juliet, and listen to them. They are loaned for two weeks and there are unlimited quantities.

Shakespeare, William. No Fear Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet. sparknotes.com. By going to sparknotes.com, students can access a free version of the play in modern language side-by-side with the original.

Shakespeare High: Your Shakespeare Classroom on the Internet. shakespearehigh.com. 29 July 2010. This site is directed at students studying Shakespeare. It includes blogs with students around the world, images of Shakespearean sites, play guides, and background information.