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Lesson Title: Assessing Activism

Focus Question: What considerations go into creating effective arts as activism works?

Lesson Objectives	Formative Assessment Strategies
<p>Drama-Based Objective: Students will be able to outline a production proposal for an arts as activism work.</p>	<p>Performance Tasks: Production Proposal Presentation</p> <p>Criteria: Proposal creatively defines clear aesthetic choices, Aesthetic choices justified using the Aesthetic Perspectives Framework, Provides evidence as to how aesthetic choices support social justice cause of work, Proposal is 1-2 minutes long</p> <p>Documentation: Facilitator feedback in planning sessions and facilitator and peer feedback on proposal, Video recording of class</p>
<p>Drama-Based Objective: Students will be able to sustain the performance of a character.</p>	<p>Performance Tasks: Process Drama</p> <p>Criteria: Makes strong physical and vocal choices, Has clear point of view, Commits to performance, Stays in “role” throughout exercise</p> <p>Documentation: Facilitator observation and feedback, Video recording of class</p>
<p>Language-Based Objective: Students will be able to assess the efficacy of an arts as activism work.</p>	<p>Performance Tasks: Jam Board and Group Discussion</p> <p>Criteria: Clearly defines activism and arts as activism, Uses Aesthetic Perspectives Framework as critical lens for examining example work, Articulates ways in which example work is effective or falls short of intended goal, Provides evidence for conclusions</p> <p>Documentation: Facilitator and peer feedback in discussion, Video recording of class, Jam board with notes</p>

A. Related Standards:

Relevant New York State Standards for the Arts:

HS Advanced TH: Re 8.1.HSIII

- b. Gather evidence and explain aesthetics to create a context for critical research that informs artistic decisions.

HS Advanced TH: Cn 10.1.HSIII

- a. Collaborate on a drama or theater work that examines a global issue, using personal, community, and cultural perspectives.

Relevant Common Core ELA Learning Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

B. Context for Learning:

Audience: This lesson is designed for an 11th grade high school drama class in New York City.

Known Learning Needs: Lesson will take place remotely during a global pandemic. As such, students will be engaging with the lesson from home and may require extra prompting, time, or care. Facilitators will pay extra attention to engaging students on their territory and meeting their needs at this time.

Modifications:

Learning Disability—Multi-step instructions will be broken down as needed.

Speech and Language Learning Disability—Written agenda, scaffolding, redirection, prompting.

English-Language Learners—Pre-teach key words and phrases through examples; use visual illustrations.

Technology Access—Links will be provided to videos and Jamboard that allow students to call in or work asynchronously at a later time using the video recording of class.

- [Paul Rudd Video](#)
- [Jamboard](#)

Previous Knowledge: Students have had specific experience in improvisation and character creation, as well as general involvement in theater both on and off stage. Students have also had experience defining aesthetic choices for productions.

Spatial Organization: Students should have access to working webcams, stable internet connections, and the ability to have Zoom running concurrently with an internet browser window. A quiet, secluded location will be helpful, though another kind of space will not interfere with participation. Facilitators will walk participants through using Zoom video settings to turn off non-video participants, switch between gallery and speaker view, navigate into breakout rooms, and view shared screens and spotlighted participants.

Materials Needed: Computer, Stable internet connection, Zoom, Virtual backgrounds, Jamboard, “Paul Rudd” Example Video, Student props/costumes

Procedures

1. Process Drama Introduction (3 minutes)

- a. The facilitators explain they will be leading students through a process drama. The facilitators explain that they will be playing CDC representatives and that students will take on the role of professional NYC theater artists who have been invited to the CDC to help them create a new theatrical work to be performed digitally for a community struggling with containing the coronavirus.
- b. Facilitators explain that students may choose what type of theater artist they would like to portray--actor, director, designer, writer, etc. Then they ask students to turn off their cameras and think of a name, where in NYC their character is from, and a theatrical specialty for the character they will play in the drama. They welcome students to make a quick costume change or to grab a simple prop, maybe add a virtual background, and to most importantly change their Zoom name to reflect their character and their character's specialty as a theater artist. Finally facilitators encourage students to take on their character as much as they would like--bold choices definitely allowed.
- c. Facilitators explain how all participants will come in and out of "role" by changing their names and turning their cameras on and off.

2. Defining Arts as Activism (15 Minutes)

- a. The facilitators turn their cameras off, add in their virtual backgrounds, change their Zoom names, and turn their cameras back on to go into "role" as CDC representatives.
- b. They welcome students to the CDC meeting, and ask students to go into "role" as their theater artists by turning on their cameras.
- c. The facilitators explain that they have gathered the theater artists together because they have noticed that the virus is spreading most prevalently in NYC with young people under 30 mainly due to this group's lack of proper mask wearing and social distancing. They state that they commissioned actor Paul Rudd to make a video to promote mask wearing but it didn't work out quite as they had intended.
- d. The facilitators share their screen and show the students the "*Paul Rudd*" *Example video*. After the video concludes, the facilitators share some of the disappointing community reactions to the "*Paul Rudd*" *Example video*. They explain that they know the artists come in with a deep understanding of arts as activism and the critical lens of the Aesthetic Perspectives Framework that they might be able to use to offer more useful feedback on the work and to structure the creation of new work.
- e. They explain that they are commissioning the teams to create a digital theater production to achieve a buy-in of mask wearing and distancing in the aforementioned population and to help them rectify their earlier mistake. The

facilitators explain that they think it would be helpful for all the artists to work from a common understanding of how art could be used to achieve this goal, so the facilitators share their screen allowing students to view the Jamboard with definitions of “Activism” and “Art as Activism”. The facilitators encourage students, in “role”, to offer edits, amendments, deletions, additions to the two definitions.

i. A facilitator records student contributions on the Jamboard.

- f. The facilitators lead a brief discussion about the student contributions to the definition and explain how they think this will be a stronger foundation for the work that will be created. The facilitators then ask a few students to offer critical assessment of the example video using this framework.

3. Planning the Productions (15 Minutes)

- a. The facilitators explain the criteria for the production proposal that students will need to create and highlight using the critical lens of the Aesthetic Perspectives Framework to inform their thinking.
- b. The facilitators split the class up into three groups and send them into breakout rooms to create their arts as activism production proposals, encouraging students to remain in “role” in the breakout rooms and create with their chosen specialty in mind.
- c. Facilitators, in “role” as CDC representatives go into the breakout rooms to provide prompting as needed.

4. Production Proposal Presentations (7 minutes)

- a. Students and facilitators return to the main Zoom room. Each group presents their production proposal to the rest of the class, while students from the other groups and facilitators turn their cameras off to “give them the stage.”

5. Peer Feedback (10 Minutes)

- a. Still in “role” the facilitators lead a discussion with students who are also still in “role” about the presentations. They ask students to use their definition of “arts as activism” and the Aesthetic Perspectives Framework to offer feedback to each other, pose questions, and assess the proposals that were made.

6. Reflection (10 Minutes)

- a. Facilitators go out of “role” by shutting off their cameras, removing their virtual backgrounds, restoring their names, and turning their cameras back on. They explain the drama has concluded and instruct students to go out of “role” through the same process.
- b. Facilitators lead a group discussion with students about the drama. They ask students to reflect on the process of creating a production proposal and the considerations that went into that process.