

# Arts Assessment For Learning

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THEATER —3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE

## **ACTION PLAN: SCENE STUDY – *THE ODYSSEY***

**Who (the class or group I will focus on):**

PS 88 - Bronx, NY - Third Grade Class

**Inquiry question:**

Does a process of peer feedback using student directors help build students' performance skills in rehearsing scene work?

**Student learning goals:**

- Students will achieve the Acting and Directing Benchmarks listed below.
- Students will engage in peer and self-assessment practices as part of their collaborative work.

**Identify indicators from the *Blueprint* aligned with the student learning goals:**

*Blueprint* Benchmarks 2nd grade:

- Students activate and use their imaginations as well as the analytical and process skills associated with acting
- Students participate in group activities including creative play, storytelling, pantomime and improvisation
- Students explore the physical, vocal, and characterization and staging components of acting by developing the actor's instrument: the body, mind and voice.

*Blueprint* Benchmarks 5th grade:

Acting:

- Students participate in a variety of group and solo activities in rehearsal and performance, demonstrating self-discipline and the ability to work collaboratively.

Directing:

- Students investigate the various management and artistic roles of the director.
- Students use theater vocabulary to communicate basic directorial concepts and ideas to actors and designers.
- Students work constructively with peers engaging in guided activities as emerging directors.

**What formative assessment strategy I will put into practice:**

Checklist, Feedback protocol, self and peer assessment, rubric

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## **Why this strategy will help my students achieve or improve the above goals:**

I know that my students have met their learning goals when they are able to:

Students will be able to work productively in small groups giving, receiving and incorporating peer feedback to improve their work. The evidence will show use of protocols, useful feedback given to peers, greater percentage of rehearsal time spent “on task,” improved performance work.

## **How I plan to implement this assessment strategy in my practice and/or lessons:**

This unit is developed around a performance of a scene from *The Odyssey*, Robert Fagles translation.

*[This class met for two periods per week and completed this project in approximately 24 sessions. Each step of the following lesson sequence was about 3 lessons. This is an approximation and will vary depending on the students' abilities and their familiarity with creative drama.]*

### **Step 1: Pre-Assessment**

- We began with a pre-assessment: The students had to perform one brief phrase from a text of *The Odyssey*. The phrases were selected from different titles given to Odysseus throughout the text.
- Students were then grouped in pairs.
- Partners were asked to help each other in crafting their own performance of the phrase.
- The performances were videotaped.

### **Step 2: Rubric Development**

- The students watched selected videotapes of student performances to begin the process of rubric development.
- When viewing the tapes the children were charged with describing various levels of quality work.
- A rubric was developed based on the student observation. The rubric was shared with the class.

### **Step 3: Scene Work from *The Odyssey: Odysseus Encounters the Cyclops***

- Next students prepared longer passages from the text.
- We worked on the scene (*Odysseus Encounters the Cyclops*) in sections, beginning with simple passages of descriptive narrative and then, over the course of a few weeks, progressed to passages containing both narrative and dialogue.
- Again, the students worked with partners. This time one partner was the “director” and was charged with helping the actors meet the criteria for good performance.
- *The stronger actors were used as directors since they had the best understanding of how to meet the criteria.*
- Again the performances were videotaped.

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- The students observed the tape and set goals for themselves for future work.

## **Step 4: Introducing the Role of Director**

- We began a discussion of the role of the director and asked: *What did the director say or do that was useful to the actor?*
- We began charting what “good” directors said and reviewed it at the beginning of each rehearsal – this chart of “Things Good Directors Say” became our Director’s Feedback Guide.
- Through this process, we brainstormed what the directors needed to know in order to help the actors.
- From this list, we created the *I Like/I Wish Protocol*, which was developed to give the directors a tool for helping the actors improve their performance.

## **Step 5: Rehearsals with Feedback**

We continued to discuss the role of the director:

- We continued to work through the *Odyssey* and worked on slightly more complex scenes, building up the number of actors required for the scene and the number of tasks required of the actors. Earlier scenes had used only narrative passages (no dialogue), such as a description of the Cyclops eating the men.
- Later scenes required a mix of dialogue and narrative. These were more difficult and required different skills of the actors. Actors began to identify their character’s objective and started to explore different tactics to achieve those objectives.
- We began working in groups of three - one director working with two actors - as the work became more complex.
- After each rehearsal, the directors would give feedback to the actors using the protocol: *I like / I wish*.
- If the scene was performed for the class, once the director had given feedback, the discussion would open to the whole class to comment.
- This was especially helpful for directors who weren’t sure what was needed for improvement.

## **Step 6: Introducing a Checklist in Rehearsals**

- We began using a checklist to help directors and actors review each other’s focus and commitment in the rehearsal process.
- We modelled how to use the assessment checklist for the whole group and then I had the students use them individually as a self-assessment tool.
- Soon, it became clear that the tool was better suited for peer assessment (rather than self-assessment)

## **Step 7: Full Group Rehearsals**

- We moved to full group rehearsals.

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- The student directors took on the role of assistant directors to me, who was responsible to giving the overall direction and staging the scenes.
- We divided the scene into parts and assigned each part to a group of 4-5 students.
- These roles now were locked-in for the performance at the final share.
- The scene was staged by the teacher and rehearsed in sequence.
- The student directors took notes based on their observations of the rehearsals and also took notes given by me.

## **Step 8: Final Rehearsal Period**

- We videotaped one of the later full group rehearsals
- The students viewed this with their student director, and working with their director and me, decided on a goal for the next rehearsal.
- The students rehearsed, keeping their goal in mind, and received feedback mostly from me.

## **Step 9: Performance and Reflection on the Process**

- We performed our scenes for second grade classes
- The second grade students were told an abridged version of the story of *The Odyssey*. I showed them pictures of the section of the story they would see the 3<sup>rd</sup> grades perform. I also acquainted them with the language of the text through my telling of the story.

### *Suggestion:*

- After the performance the audience may tell the actors what they thought the story was about and may identify what they thought were the most interesting scenes.
- After the audience exits the performers discuss how the experience of performing was different from rehearsing.

## **When I plan to implement this strategy (at which point in the teaching/learning cycle or unit plan):**

I plan to implement this strategy throughout the fall and winter term.

## **Evidence of effectiveness of this assessment strategy:**

The performance task that will show my students have achieved their learning goals is:

- Rehearsal videos and self and peer assessments with the rubric