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TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF THEATRE IN EDUCATION AND LEARNING IN THE
21st CENTURY

A MASTER'S THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF BETHEL UNIVERSITY

BY
NIKKI M. ABRAMSON

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

December 2017

BETHEL UNIVERSITY

TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF THEATRE IN EDUCATION AND LEARNING IN THE
21st CENTURY

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December 2017

APPROVED

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Acknowledgements

Louise Wilson, my advisor whom I am grateful to have had as both my undergrad and graduate advisor and mentor. Thank you for encouraging, supporting, and mentoring me through this journey.

My parents, Alan Abramson and Barb Wilson, for their support and edits

Connie Anderson-for her helpful editing

Dr. Angie Thompson-Busch-for her motivation and encouragement

The MA Professors at Bethel University who made their classes accommodating, engaging, and believed in me.

My cohort for insightful conversations, friendship, and engaging dialogue that challenged, and inspired me as an educator.

Special thanks to those who offered their expertise, insight, and time in sharing their stories for this research:

Interviews:

Jennifer Kern Collins

Jeannine Coulombe

Aaron Fiskradatz

Marcelline Gangl

Sue Gerver

Matt Guidry

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Stephanie, metro mobility driver

Abstract

Education is the key to success in life. To have that success, 21st century skills are needed to be successful in most careers. Some of these skills consist of: team work, collaboration, communication, creativity, problem solving skills, and improvisation. How does a student learn these skills needed for life? Theatre arts. How does theatre arts impact student learning in the 21st century? This thesis bridges the understanding of how theatre arts plays a role into both how students learn academic core subject areas such as literacy and reading and how theatre arts helps students learn 21st century skills needed for life. The research focuses on how theatre arts impacts literacy and reading, 21st century skills, storytelling, and results from professional interviews. Articles as well as interviews document how beneficial theatre arts is for students and how teachers can make a difference in a student's life by incorporating theatre into the classroom. The application piece provides activities that teachers of all grades, ages, and ability levels can do in their classrooms to foster this learning. The purpose of the study is to understand what skills students learn from theatre, how it can be used in the classroom and ultimately beyond.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

A pivotal moment in my understanding of education was the set of courses I took as an undergrad called Block Two. This block consisted of nine specialty areas that focused on how students learn (Educational Psychology) and how to teach the following areas to elementary students: literacy, math, science, social studies, music, physical education, art, and health. As a learner, I valued these courses immensely as they have shaped my thought process, equipped me to teach the whole student, and influenced how I teach. However, there was a major gap in these courses and that was theatre arts.

Theatre arts is a discipline of immense significance to my own development in my education. I was a shy student who was hesitant to talk or volunteer in class. In high school, my friends strongly encouraged me to audition for a show. Reluctantly I auditioned, got a role, and fell in love with performing. I became more vocal in the classroom and more willing to take on leadership roles and responsibilities. Participating in the cast created a sense of belonging, confidence, empathy, as well as a deeper sense of understanding of myself and others. This experience made me realize the importance of theatre in a student's development. It made me realize that if we as educators are truly to teach the whole student, not just teaching them a class, we need to teach them the skills to be successful in life and these skills come directly from theatre arts.

As a teaching artist and educator, I seek to better understand the value that theatre arts bring to a student's life. If universally the school systems incorporated theatre into our classrooms, I believe it would instill values that will transcend into lifelong learning skills that will help students in whatever career path they may choose in the future. My graduate courses at Bethel University opened my eyes to see learning these skills as a great need in our schools

today. Students would benefit from this learning. However, techniques for utilizing theatre in the classroom and its value are not well researched, thus finding research for this topic was a challenge.

Randy Moberg's class on Teachers as Leaders showed me not only how we as teachers can apply the *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, but also how students can become leaders too. One habit says seek first to understand, then to be understood. This is a habit that theatre can teach students. Actors seek to understand our character, ourselves, how we can portray them to an audience, and how are they perceived by others. Moberg also explored the idea of teaching with our strengths using the Strengths Finder as a guide. One of my strengths is communication. In the book, *Teach with Your Strengths*, Liesveld and Miller say that teachers with the communication strength correlate education with entertainment, using storytelling and drama to help material come alive for students.

The class, Improving Instruction, showed me various models and types of schools that have a certain emphasis. The project we did in constructing a model of school reform opened my eyes to see that schools could have a specific focus such as: technology, leadership, etc. There are performing arts schools, but not schools that regularly integrate the value of theatre into their classrooms daily. The performing arts schools focus on how to perform, yet don't place emphasis on incorporating these skills into the classroom and how they impact student learning. I also believe that this learning helps students learn 21st century skills needed to succeed in life.

Jay Rasmussen's class Measurement and Assessment taught me how to assess and measure theatre arts. While performance and arts in general are very subjective, there are ways to measure the impact. In a few other of my graduate courses, I learned how ELL students learn as well as those that come from other racial backgrounds, both opened my eyes to other people's

viewpoints. They showed the importance of theatre as a universal language. People can communicate and express themselves through nonverbal communication. It can help people to understand an idea by acting it out, even if there is no common language. Finally, Lisa Silmsler's class gave me a better understanding of how to differentiate learning for all types of learners. Since not all students learn the same way, educators can provide an alternative method for students to engage in learning.

I have chosen the path of being a teacher because I want to make a difference in the lives of students. I have always believed that education is the key to success in life. After researching scholarly journals, articles, websites, schools, interviewing teachers/leaders, and professionals, it saddened me to see that theatre is not being used as a teaching tool in schools. It is only available for people who want to perform or as an extracurricular activity and is not regularly integrated into the classroom. It was apparent that the importance and value of theatre as well as what skills it brings to students is not well addressed in education.

Educators claim they aren't performers, so they can't teach it. If a teacher is up in front of a classroom all day, he or she is indeed a performer; maybe in a different way perhaps, but a performer none the less. From interviewing people who have been impacted by their experiences with theatre I was amazed to see how not only being a part of theatre has changed them, but also how they are using the skills they learned in theatre in their daily lives. It has taught them a 21st century skill that they are taking into their careers and applying daily even though they aren't performers. This gives me hope that if we as educators instill the skills of theatre arts, show our students and draw out from them the value that they are gaining from it and skill set they are learning, that they, too, will transfer this skill into their lives in school through college and beyond.

The research showed me that theatre arts can be applied to so many areas of a student's learning whether it is having a student act out a scene from a book, learn new vocabulary words in language arts, or develop creative problem-solving skills. Theatre arts is also tangible, hands on learning, and kinesthetic. It gets students out from behind their desks and allows them to move. When a student acts out a concept with his or her own body, he or she is more likely to transfer that skill into memory.

As an elementary teacher focus, we as educators are not just teaching students the basics of math, reading, science, social studies, etc. We are teaching life skills. We are teaching students how to interact with others, how to work as a team, how to communicate and express ideas, how to take on leadership roles, express what is needed, etc. Too many times theatre arts are considered a side activity that is used as an extracurricular activity, rather than something that is impactful for students. These skills are skills that teachers want to instill in students. There are many ways to do this.

These skills are called 21st century skills. Theatre arts is one way to create life-long learners and thinkers, well rounded individuals who are ready to make a difference in the world because of the skills they understand. The arts allow students to express themselves in ways that traditional classrooms can't. It allows them to understand in a deeper sense of self and gives them a deep foundation that they will take into any job they have in the future. My research is seeking to understand how theatre impacts student learning (specifically 21st century skills based learning) that is needed in life. Hopefully throughout the research provided here, one will understand how students will gain greater social skills, communication skills, problem solving skills, and team working abilities through theatre.

I work for a company called Upstream Arts where we teach and foster social and communication skills to those with disabilities through the arts. We are teaching skills such as eye contact, expressing oneself, advocating for your needs, working together as a group, etc. through acting, singing, dancing, painting, and poetry. It is a beautiful concept that students of all ages from birth to retirement learn to act out their needs and express how to interact with other people or empower students to create a song, dance, or poem to express their feelings about something. We are giving students tools they need to be successful. As I have watched students learn these skills, I have learned that these skills aren't solely for those with disabilities, they are for all learners, for everyone. These skills are what we ultimately as teachers are trying to teach and foster in our students daily.

Throughout what I have personally and professionally witnessed, I have seen the benefit of theatre arts skills in my own life and know that this is something that can impact students' learning. Ultimately, it has been a yearning to better understand how we can enhance student learning, so that they aren't just learning math and reading, but learning something that will carry them into their lives. So often I get students who ask me, "how will I use factoring polynomials or interpreting a piece of literature in my daily life?" and I tell them that theatre arts skills are transferable to all areas of life.

The questions that are guiding my research are:

- A. How does theatre arts education impact student learning in the 21st century? What skills do students learn from theatre arts?
- B. Which theatre arts skills are most relevant for teaching 21st century skills?
- C. How does incorporating theatre arts activities into a classroom help students develop these skills to become lifelong learners?

There are so many 21st century skills that are being taught and needed in a child's life. Theatre arts skills teaches areas of team work, collaboration, problem solving, communication, social and interpersonal skills, and presentational skills. In this research, it is important to understand how theatre techniques impact learning and what skills they bring out of student learning. Ultimately, I am seeking to understand how we can incorporate these skills into the classroom. What value do these skills bring to students and how can we get teachers to buy into this idea of creating space for theatre arts learning? Also in this research, I am looking at ways teachers can incorporate theatre arts into their subject materials as well and how having these skills will help student learn these core curricula that they need to understand.

When I student taught and saw teachers facilitate morning meetings, I realized that they are already teaching some of these games and activities, yet they don't realize it. I wonder if they understand the connection that it brings and the impact that it has on a child's learning. If we can make morning meetings more intentional, this would make a difference, rather than just playing games. If we can help teachers understand that it won't take a whole lot of 'extra time' that they don't have, but time that will help ultimately bring their class and students together to center them and give them focus. When teachers are more intentional with these activities, students will be successful and be able to carry these skills out in daily life.

Teaching and incorporating theatre arts activities into a classroom will benefit students learning and ultimately change and impact the world. Therefore, I have set out to be a teacher--- to change the world, one student at a time.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

How does theatre arts education impact student learning in the 21st century? Does it truly make a difference in a student's motivation to learn and in their ability to make choices?

Educators are constantly trying to create new and innovative ways for students to learn. As educators, we have a huge opportunity to provide students with life skills that will mold and shape them to be problem solvers, creative thinkers, effective communicators, and collaborators. One-way students learn is through drama, theatre arts, and performing skills. The research provided here shows that incorporating theatre arts activities into the classroom helps students in the areas of team work, collaboration, problem solving skills, communication, and finding ways to express themselves. These are all necessary 21st century skills.

Throughout every article it is evident students gain valuable life skills when teachers incorporate the arts, including theater arts, into their teaching. Researchers have done studies showing that students succeed in school, gain confidence, social communication skills, as well as team work skills when they participate in theater. It was interesting to see that not only do students benefit from the social life skills developed through a theatre arts education, but also with improved reading and literacy skills. When teachers use theatre games and activities, students have shown a great ability to learn. When students' voices are heard, they learn to interact and communicate with one another. As a result, they are more likely be ready to learn their academic core for the day. This research shows that not only is theatre arts education important, it is vital in helping students make connections and benefiting a students' overall schooling experience.

The research below is taken from scholarly articles and studies performed in classrooms that have implemented proven effective teaching models that have help students learn through theatre arts. This work is also supplemented with interviews with professionals working in the educational or theatre worlds or who have been affected by their own theatre arts experience. Two sets of sources are used here: research articles as well as interviews with experts in the theatre world. Both resources will be referenced in the following review. The question of how theatre arts impact student learning will be discussed in four sub-topic sections: literacy, life skills, storytelling, and results from interviewing theatre professionals.

Literacy and Language Arts Skills

Anderson of American University (2012) taught fourth grade students. In her teaching, she developed an understanding that students who are taught to use literate language, are characterized as those who talk like books or those who read a lot and are reported to perform better on academic tasks (Anderson, 2012). She defines drama integrated classrooms as those working with and through drama to reach academic, social, and personal goals. At the elementary level, teachers are instructing students not only in academic subjects, but also to be lifelong learners and well-rounded individuals. This can be done through theatre activities. Her research has shown that students increased verbal skills through this application of theatre (Anderson, 2012). Students were also able to make connections between thinking involved in different parts of the drama and their real-life contexts. Throughout the variables and findings that this teacher studied, it was evident that verbal skills increased, and students were better able to make connections between text and the world around them.

Anderson (2012) conducted the study with sixteen fourth graders that included twelve male and four female students in an urban charter school. The teacher conducting the class was a

special education qualified teacher with a masters degree in special education and fifteen plus years in education. The study ran for eight weeks, one hour twice a week in which there was a drama orientation medium. The last four weeks of this time was spent acting out an adaptation of *Little Red Riding Hood*. During this process, students were given writing prompts to understand how drama affects their writing. Teachers evaluated students by observation and discussion. At the end of the eight-week time, students reported an improved attitude towards literacy activities as well as higher literacy ratings. At the end, students were able to identify a setting, the characters involved, and write from that character's perspective. The evidence generated from the study shows that drama addresses specificity, motivation, and engagement among students with diverse learning needs. This is particularly interesting because motivation was also mentioned in several of the interviews that were conducted. Several people interviewed said that theatre gave them motivation to do their homework and study. It motivated them and gave them a sense of purpose (Collins, 2016; Guidry, 2016; Mic, 2016; Steen, 2017; Tran, 2017; Truesdale, 2016).

Ping-Yung Sun (2003) wrote an article about drama and theatre to promote literacy skills. Sun suggests that since teachers are often unfamiliar with facilitating drama activities, they don't teach these activities. Teachers are easily overwhelmed by various terms in drama and theatre, therefore don't use them. Also, teachers are afraid that children won't take learning involving theatre seriously because drama activities are so playful. Although often teachers are interested in theatre, they feel intimidated leading these activities. Sun recommends that the focus should shift from learning drama to emphasizing the process of learning through drama. Students learn many skills through drama such as literacy and that using drama can be one tool and form of learning.

Sun (2003) states that teachers don't need to know drama to teach the skills. What is needed though are the concepts of flexibility, plasticity, and continuity. Students can act out or use puppets to perform stories they recreate. Teachers can use repeated readings, use predictable stories, and response activities or scenarios that students will be able to relate to. She suggests having a quiet place in the room where students can re-create stories spontaneously.

This research article (Sun, 2003) suggests that students gain better vocabulary development and writing ability when drama is incorporated. When students are introduced to new vocabulary words and new learning activities with dramatic techniques they are creating memorable events. Interviewee Sjolander (2016) described how his Spanish teacher helped his class learn new Spanish vocabulary words by having them act out the words. Acting out the words put the words into their bodies and ultimately created a memorable event like this author describes. It is similar to, when teaching writing, children are asked to draw, write, and act out a story. These activities help explore the boundaries between the reader/writer and character/actor and create text and image relationships in developing writers. Both through drawing pictures to describe their writing or acting out the story the child is writing, children develop a deeper understanding of the role and relevance of writing in their own lives.

This author (Sun, 2003) also suggests that drawing and writing about the journey and experience will help in this process of connecting writing to drama. Theatre helps students to learn and to discover every aspect of literacy development. It teaches children to become more free and flexible in the space in which they grow and learn. Drama games allow students a place to become free and whole.

The American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE) website (<http://www.aate.com>) states that students who have drama classes have better reading

comprehension and ultimately bridge the achievement gap. Drama improves reading skills better than other activities including discussion as it allows students to get the concepts into their body, build empathy, and understand the character. They also state that performing Shakespeare text even helped students to understand complex texts such as science and math material.

21st Century Life Skills

The “Partnership for 21st Century Learning” presents a framework which describes skills and knowledge students need to be successful in work, life, and citizenship (Partnership for 21st Century Learning; <http://www.p21.org/about-us/p21-framework>). Some of the main 21st century skills discussed are: teamwork, collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, and improvisation. As students learn these skills in theatre arts, he or she is better equipped to handle issues that arise in and out of the classroom and beyond.

Students involved in drama performance in coursework or experience often outscore students on their SAT (<http://www.aate.com>). Drama can help students improve their reading comprehension as well as verbal and non-verbal communication. It can improve school attendance and high school dropout rates. Drama also helps students with learning disabilities (<http://www.aate.com>). According to various studies referenced on the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE) website, theatre has had a positive impact on students learning. The AATE states that drama improves academic performance. In several studies cited on the web site, students have improved reading comprehension, maintain better attendance and are more engaged in school. This organization states that students who are involved in drama and arts classes are more motivated to stay in school.

According to the professional interviews conducted, six people specifically expressed how theatre motivated them to stay in school. It kept them engaged. Several people expressed how theatre motivated them to do their homework, taught them time management skills, and empowered them to take charge of their studies. Several others said that theatre gave them a community and a place to belong and it motivated them to connect with others and express themselves. (See Appendix A for the complete interview narratives). This is a huge testament to how theatre arts can impact a student's learning. One study suggested that students involved in any type of drama performance or class gain reading proficiency, self-concept, motivation, and empathy and tolerance towards others (<http://www.aate.com>).

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, empathy is defined *as the ability to understand and share the feelings of another*. Several interviewees discussed how the greatest skill they learned from theatre was developing empathy. While empathy isn't officially designated a 21st century skill, it is a much-needed skill to be able to listen to and understand one another. More and more researchers today are discussing how empathy is a needed skill and suggesting ways to teach empathy in the classroom. (Gardner, 2011). Truesdale (2016) says that she uses empathy in her work and that her ability to empathize comes from her experience in theatre which developed her ability to relate, understand, listen, and react to one another.

Another common life skill developed through drama according to the AATE is building self-esteem. The act of performing can help students recognize their potential and improve their confidence. Nearly every interviewee said they were shy growing up or needed to give a presentation and that theatre experiences helped them improve their confidence. When asked the question "what did theater teach you about yourself?", many interviewees immediately mentioned that it helped build their confidence. In almost every question, interviewees turned

back to the how theatre arts built their confidence allowing them to do what they are doing now personally and/or professionally.

Students who are involved in theatre gain various life skills. Salmon and Rickaby (2014) created a group called City of One in which 35 students participated. During this time students worked on participating in teams to write a quality play and make a quality performance. At the end of their six-week period, they had a performance. The first four weeks of the six weeks were researching and understanding how to create a play, work together, and develop the skills needed in theatre, while the last two weeks were rehearsals. The final show had 1,642 people in attendance. Ten of the students agreed to be interviewed about their experience. Of these students, seven were female and three male. These students were either in care living or foster homes. Each student was given a small gift of appreciation for their time after the interview. As a result of the interviews, Salmon and Rickaby found that students, who participated in the six-week theatre experience, gained social skills, confidence, and had better peer relationships, including team working and cooperation. Friendships and social skills were the key skills developed. Several interviewees said that, when they were part of theatre, they felt connected to one another and therefore, developed friendships with people they may not have if they weren't involved in a theatrical endeavor (Gerver, 2017; Kane, 2016; Mic, 2016).

There is so much bullying in this world. Having activities that support peer relationships perhaps might help to combat bullying and violence in schools. Positive encouragement, relationships, and social connectedness were key points that students got out of this integration. In Salmon and Rickaby's research (2014) students gave testimonials that this theatre experience helped them to gain perspective in life, gain confidence, develop relationships with others, and validate and share care experiences with one another. It was interesting to see that, when students

had a shared experience, they were able to validate each other's experience and care for one another. This idea of validating and caring for one another is another word for empathy. While empathy is not 'officially' a 21st century skill, it is a much-needed skill. Many of the interviewees discussed empathy as an important skill they developed in theatre. Many of these professionals use this skill of empathy, listening, and caring for one another in their current lives.

Students stated participating in theatre expanded their ideas of what they could do, gave them a good experience for a possible future career, and helped gain confidence. Students gained experience that helped them better understand themselves, one another, and the world that all teachers seek.

In a study by Omasta and Chapell (2015), researchers studied how collaboration, creativity, and self-discipline are key aspects students gain from theatre arts education. They describe theatre as the study of performing arts and education as the study of teaching and learning. Theatre education includes both the art form integrating drama into other subjects and engagement into extracurricular activities. In their study 99% of theatre education teachers and administrators believe that theatre plays a role in teaching collaboration and 98% state that their programs teach both creativity and self-discipline. Collaboration, creativity, and self-discipline are considered skills needed for work in the 21st century. In this article the researchers dispel myths of teaching theatre arts in the classroom. Although teachers often teach theatre arts in the high school or middle school level, many believe elementary students are not ready to learn these skills. This, according to Omasta and Chapell (2015) is not true.

Teaching theatre arts skills is something that all teachers can learn to teach. Fennessey (2006) teaches fifth grade. Her research demonstrates the idea of concentration, confidence, and cooperation, all 21st century skills, come from teaching theatre arts. Fennessey taught her fifth

grade students the concept of drama being a time for students to enrich their language arts skills in an exciting way. She believes drama enhances three specific areas of what she defines as the three C's: concentration, cooperation, and confidence. She also states that drama activities help students with oral language and fluency of language in both verbal and nonverbal communication skills. Each of the games she teaches incorporates the body, voice, and intellect. She develops skills in concentration, problem solving, and group interaction (Fennessey 2006).

Fennessey's research also states that listening and oral language provide motivation for reading and writing activities. Fennessey (2006) expresses that it is important for her to develop a safe place for students to learn. Students are encouraged to use their imagination and sensory skills using their sense of touch. With activities such as "identify the object", students can then describe the object and write about the object. In this activity, students choose an object, act out how they could use that object, describe the object, and then write about the object. This uses all types of learning, engages the body, and helps with writing skills. This not only serves as a drama game, but also as a writing project. Students can identify objects by using their imaginations, asking questions, and using their writing skills. Students can gain cooperation to work together as a group as well as concentrate on a skill.

Fennessey (2006) discusses the idea of role playing characters to be another avenue to help with 21st century skills and increase language skills. Role playing characters is where students act out various characters in a story. They role play or take on each other's characters. This can be done through voice, gesture, and facial expression to help express character traits for the audience. Students brainstorm, plan, reflect, revise, and replay the story to create the role. There are other games that Fennessey uses to teach the idea of characters, plot, and setting. She also side coaches her students where she instructs them without coming out of character and they

then discuss what will work and go back to making it work. Side coaching is a great way for students to get one on one feedback from the instructor and for the instructor to point out what she sees as valuable. Side coaching is so important as it helps students to debrief and discuss. This helps students to understand how to communicate, reflect, and discuss their own personal development.

Another activity to explore the use of imagination is called one-line improvisation. Fennessey demonstrates in this activity in which the leader uses an object that can be anything (a pencil, a ball, a hat, etc.) and explains that the object can be anything that the students want it to be. When each person gets the object, they must take the object and turn it into something else. This activity develops both verbal and non-verbal skills. In Zauner's class at Bethel University (2016) she also taught using this same activity. She explained how the activity used the students' imagination as well as increased confidence in speaking and working together as a team. The main idea behind this theatre activity is to balance seatwork with creative drama, so that students can be heard, valued, and allow for opportunities of self-expression. Fennessey (2006) believes that drama is a way that children's voices are heard and valued, another goal for us all.

Kelin (2015) in his article *Beating Heart of Art* describes how people search for mirrored journeys and shared experiences. As children play they discover their capacity for creative expression. The program Beating Heart of Art focuses on building art from contributions of both individuals and ensembles. The group collects stories, brainstorms associations, collects images, selects ideas, and writes in responses to prompts, furthering young artists' exploration of themes. Students learn to write, stage, rehearse, collaborate, and create a performance that reflects their own experiences. This gives students comfort in communicating ideas both physically and vocally. Each student focuses on the whole story and how they each influence one another. The

process develops as sense of accomplishment and comfort in making creative choices. Kelin (2015) states that students may not become professionals in the field, but they will develop into insightful artists, which is a trait that can be applied to any experience they face. One of the students in the program states theatre will remain a part of their life experience. Norton (2017), one of the interviewees, states that theatre gave him a way to express himself and his ideas. It helped him to communicate his thoughts physically and vocally and empowered him to do so. Norton is a prime example of what this program accomplishes.

Theatre Arts as Storytelling

Storytelling is another aspect that research discusses as a vital part of helping to build community among students. It is an opportunity to build community within the context of a classroom. Students are more engaged with material and ultimately draw a deeper understanding of the material when they use storytelling and drama to help understand a topic.

In one study Wright, Diener, Kemper (2013) discuss that storytelling dramas are activities in which children act out their own dictated stories and shared experiences as a group. This study showed that there was an increased peer interaction and collaboration, which fostered a healthy social and emotional development in children. Children were encouraged to use drama and storytelling to solve problems, deal with conflicts, conquer their fears, adopt new perspectives, regulate their emotions, and practice self-regulation. Many of these concepts are related to 21st century skills and skills that interviewees discussed as helping in their own personal and professional lives.

One of the major themes in the research is that storytelling promotes community building. It also helps students to express their ideas, feelings, to resolve conflict, and to be able

to relate to one another's stories. These authors suggest that drama helps students develop learning to negotiate, to problem solve, to become active participants, to respect one another, and to have a sense of responsibility to the group (Wright, Diener, Kemp 2013). Story dramas or acting out stories help allow children to represent their ideas, feelings, and resolve conflict as how it relate to other's stories. This is also a vehicle to allow students to express themselves. Many interviewees discussed how theatre gave them an outlet for them to express their feelings and ideas and be okay with that.

In this study (Wright, Diener & Kemp, 2013), 20 videotapes were made of 100 storytelling dramas composed between 2007-2008 and represented 140 students ages two to six years old. Parents were told of this study via letter. There were 22 children represented in one video that included a varied range of abilities. In the storytelling process itself, only writing instruments and paper were needed. During the note taking process, there was a systematic approach which involved: written documents, interviews, journal, and memo writing. The teacher wrote down every word the child said and then read it aloud to the child. Later in the day students had the opportunity to act out the stories during group time. In this process, a child's story was read aloud, the author chose what role he/she would like to play, and then chose classmates to play other roles. Each drama session lasted 20-30 minutes per day.

Upon completion of this research study there were four major themes that emerged: individual roles, group membership, inclusion, and relationship building. In this study, 20 out of 22 children participated in storytelling. Teachers gained the data by interviewing the students and reporting what they observed. They concluded that the process fostered positive and healthy relationships with others.

There were several roles for the children including: storyteller, audience, and actor. All provided children opportunities to contribute. Each of these roles was vital and students learned more about themselves and others in every role. The storyteller had a leadership role since he or she was telling the story. Audience members actively watched and listened to classmates' stories. As audience members children learned to interact at their own pace and in a meaningful way with others. They learned to digest what they saw. Actors received positive feedback and constructive criticism. Children also learned to observe ideas, to be accountable to a group, and value other's ideas. As actors, students learned to collaborate, and problem solve with classmates who they might not interact with otherwise. Acting also allowed students to experiment in new roles and try on new ideas.

Storytelling dramas are interactive and engaging which helps students to self-regulate and focus their attention. Focus is a key 21st century skill that numerous interviewees from the interviews conducted for this paper also mentioned. Interviewees talked about how theatre helped them have better focus. This focus enhances their learning (Gerver, 2017; Truesdale, 2016). Students also learn from one another, by understanding each other's strengths. This ultimately leads to creating a community. Drama allows students to have a sense of a shared experience. Having this shared experience ultimately builds trust and a strong community. To build community, researchers discussed it is important to incorporate play including ideas, participation, and cooperation of the class. When students build relationships, participate, collaborate, cooperate, and value each other's ideas, community develops.

The article (Wright, Diener & Kemp, 2013) mentioned two interesting observations. First is that students felt they had leadership and were valued as leaders despite their original social skills or status. Second is that the more children became familiar with each other, the more they

became secure and accepted, and ultimately led by cooperating with the group rather than individuals. Students learn to contribute to positive and constructive peer interactions through drama storytelling.

Storytelling allows children of all abilities, ages, and genders to observe other's play strategies and experience other's play topics. Students need time to create ideas, problem solve, and negotiate roles. These skills are developed during dramatic play. It is important to learn to listen, negotiate, problem solve, self-regulate, and lead others.

Another study by Wright, Bacigalupa, Black, and Burton (2008) discusses in depth the importance of telling stories, and dramatizing stories. Storytelling gives us insight into the way our students think about the world, meet social and emotional needs, as well as resolve conflicts. Dramatizing stories is highly motivating for students since it also mimics the function of play. Students are often more motivated to participate in discussion when they can tell a story. Play is a basic skill in life that theatre teaches, yet students don't often get to do. The study documents the benefits of storytelling including: introducing students to the process and purposes of writing, allowing for creative expression of ideas and feelings, providing opportunities to build social skills, and allowing students to work through ideas and experiences.

The authors of this study state that all that is needed for the best practices in storytelling is a tape recorder and carbon paper (or some form of printing or duplicating the student's story). Students dictate a story and teachers transcribe every word the child says. The child's name and date are always the first part of the piece and then the transcriber asks questions to prompt the child. The transcriber should ask questions that don't challenge or twist the child's story, but rather help prompt and spur on the story. Transcribers need to write down verbatim the child's words including grammatical errors. If a child repeats himself/ herself, it is generally to

emphasize a point or because of a lack of idea generation. It is important to set up a quiet area to have this storytelling, using room dividers or even a hallway, to allow children to think creatively without distractions. Upon completion of the story, transcribers thank the child and the dramatization begins.

In creating the dramatization of the story, the authors suggest creating a stage using masking tape to block off an area. The transcriber reads the story to the class with the author next to him or her. Children are then selected to participate in the drama by acting out the story. The author may choose who they want to be in the story. Children are encouraged, but never forced, to participate. It is encouraged to only have four-six actors on stage at a time to avoid confusion even if there are more characters in the story. At the end of the drama, the transcriber prompts the actors to bow and audience claps. If students have difficulty with the drama good prompts include: “Show me how you would do (action). Show me how you would be a (character).”

Practice retelling these stories can help children practice important literacy skills including language development and story structure. It can help them to connect with their peers and provide them with common interests and intimate conversations and play. Allowing children to choose characters and events in their stories empowers the students.

In the process, it is important that there is open communication in which people are carefully listened to for their concerns and provided rationale for the stories. Transcribers use carbon paper (or takes a photo copy or prints two copies from the computer) so that a copy can be sent home with the storyteller at the end of the day. It is important to gain involvement from families, so that families can recreate school curriculum at home, reinforce and repeat cognitive and oral language skills, and finally build feelings of self-efficacy and self-esteem.

Wright, Bacigalupa, Black, and Burton (2008) give reasons for why children develop literacy skills, social skills, and creativity through story dramatization. These are also 21st century skills that we ultimately desire. Connections are made to home life, and teachers gain better understanding of their students. Curriculum is play-based and child-centered. When teachers take the time to incorporate drama in this way, students benefit in both learning to tell stories, but also in their literary skills.

The storytelling dramas in this research were interactive and engaging allowing children to focus attention on an activity. During the activities, relationships were built, and children could share in meaningful experiences and show appreciation for elements of theatrical experiences. Storytelling provides students both leadership experience and opportunities to work together. Children shared meaningful experiences and were able to show appreciation for one another. It was also interesting that after the research was conducted the following skills were learned: learning to listen to others, negotiate, problem solve, regulate emotions, lead others, and contribute ideas to a group (Wright, et al., 2008). Storytelling drama has proved to enhance a student's cognitive skills, language, and literacy skills that ultimately help enhance the student's overall wellbeing.

Results from Interviewing Theatre Professionals

Throughout the 2016-2017 years interviews were conducted by this author with seventeen professionals about the impact of theatre in their lives. The professionals included students, teachers, teaching artists, actors, and other professionals who have been significantly impacted through theatre education. Each person answered the following questions:

A. What did you learn about yourself?

- B. What are some of the greatest 21st century skills you developed through theatre?*
- C. How does theatre impact student motivation?*
- D. What skills can students learn from theatre?*
- E. How would theatre education change our society if more teachers incorporated theatre into their daily teaching?*
- F. How do the skills you learned from theatre translate into your current work?*

The results from the questioning were fascinating as many of the questions correlated directly with the research articles discussed above. The interviewees agreed that theatre truly helps students with literacy, storytelling, and 21st century life skills.

What did you learn about yourself?

Many of the interviewees had to stop and really think about this question as often our education system isn't set up to reflect upon our learning. Rice (2017) discussed that she felt that theatre helped to better understand herself and deal with her own brokenness. It brought a sense of healing and comfort. Others like Fiskradatz (2016), Gangl (2017), Gerver (2017), Roberts (2016), Sjolander (2016), Steen (2017), and Tran (2017) discussed that for them they developed confidence, and the ability to take risks. It helped them become who they are. Empathy was another area of discovery for Coulombe (2016), Gangl (2017), Roberts (2016). Another interesting self-discovery was the idea of learning to play and of having a safe place to play where others can share their input. Collins (2016), Coulombe (2016), Gangl (2017), Gerver (2017), Guidry (2016), and Norton (2017) all commented on this topic in which they had similar experiencing of learning to 'play' and create.

What are some of the greatest 21st century skills you developed through theatre?

There were five main themes that came out of this question including: team work, empathy, problem solving, listening, and awareness of others. These skills are all skills that are needed for life. These professionals felt all were developed through theatre. Teamwork and collaboration, or the idea of being able to work together as a group, was a skill that many discussed as a 21st century skill developed in theatre Collins (2016), Coulombe (2016), Fiskradatz (2016), Gerver (2017), Guidry (2016), Mic (2016), Roberts (2016), Steen (2017), Tran (2017), Zauner (2016). The ability to relate to others and develop empathy was talked about with both Steen and Truesdale (2016). Several people discussed the concept of being able to have a flexible thinking, or problem-solving mindset when things don't go right. (Coulombe 2016, Gangl 2017, Tran 2017, Truesdale 2016, Zauner 2016). Listening to others, reacting to others, and awareness of yourself and others around you were other key skills that Fiskradatz (2016), Gerver (2017), Guidry (2016), Kane (2016), Rice (2017), and Truesdale (2016) all discussed as important. Several other key 21st century skills noted that were interesting were improvisational skills and the ability to think on your feet (Collins 2016, Coulombe 2016). Both Norton (2017) and Coulombe (2016) discuss the importance of creativity and creative expression. Roberts (2016) discusses an ability to take risks and Steen (2017) states communication is developed through theatre.

How does theatre impact student motivation?

Several people said that theatre motivated them to do their work. It kept them engaged and stimulated to participate in class as well as to get their work done. Theatre taught them time

management skills and organizational skills. For many, theatre was a motivator in school. Collins (2016), Mic (2016), Steen (2017), Tran (2017). Theatre motivated students by the idea of giving and receiving feedback according to Gangl (2017). Guidry (2016) says that students are motivated through creative play and are better able to focus. Rice (2017) believes that when students are motivated, they can deal with uncertainty and are able to think on their feet. Truesdale (2016) says that students strive to learn, and theatre allows them to express themselves and connect with one another.

What skills can students learn from theatre?

When asked the question what skills students can learn from theatre, many people discussed similar answers to what they learned or the 21st century skills discussed in previous questions. However, there were two additional answers that were different. Gerver (2017) stated that students can learn to focus and relax. Students can learn relaxation techniques. When students are focused and relaxed they are better able to concentrate on academic tasks on hand. Sjolander (2016) also discussed this concept as well. Steen (2017) shared that students can learn public speaking skills. Many students need to give presentations at some point and this allows them to practice this skill. She also described that students can learn to speak their feelings. Often students don't share their feelings and theatre is a perfect place to allow for this creative expression.

How would theatre education change our society if more teachers incorporated theatre into their daily teaching?

Answers varied greatly for this question, however, a common theme among the responses was the idea of play. Gangl (2017), Gerver (2017), and Collins (2016) all discussed this. Ideas ranged from interaction with others, taking turns, critical thinking, focusing, communication, valuing others, improvisation, creativity, and being present. Rice (2017), Steen (2017), and Guidry (2016) all discussed that students will have a connection with others, develop a common ground with a shared experience and thus material becomes more relevant to them.

How do the skills you learned from theatre translate into your current work?

The answers to this question were quite interesting in terms of learning where professionals who aren't actors or teachers are currently using the skills they learned in theatre in their work today. For Collins (2016), she learned to read a room, respond, and adjust to a situation. Gangl (2017) discussed that she puts theatre into her practice working with youth by not putting people into boxes, using her body, and multi-tasking. Kane (2016) describes how she uses the idea of grounding herself as well as reflection with the clients she coaches. Norton, (2017) a business person, uses theatre skills to listen, negotiate, and creatively problem solve for solutions. Rice, (2017) as a church secretary, uses the idea of multi-tasking, communication, and being able to react and being in the moment with others daily in her job. Roberts (2016) as a shy person growing up learned to have confidence, collaborate, and communicate clearly and creatively in her research as well as when she teaches in the collegiate level. Sjolander (2016) who is in sales learned to be present with his customers, work as team, and problem solve. Steen (2017), an engineer, discussed that at times she needs to present her research, and this includes

putting stories together, understanding her audience, and having the confidence to present in front of others. Truesdale (2016), working in a company talking with others about their financial needs, uses listening skills and empathy for the customers she works with daily. Each person had an answer right away of how they use these skills daily on their job. This is empowering to see that these skills taught at a young age translate into the daily careers of these folks, whether they are performing or not.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research studied so far suggests that theatre arts/drama activities and games are highly valuable for a student's social, communication, and life skills such as problem solving and building confidence. The studies show that students gain a deeper sense of self-confidence when taught drama games. The research shows that there isn't one best practice out there as to how best to incorporate theatre arts activities into the classroom, yet significant skills are in fact gained when doing so. Finally, studies also show that theatre arts skills also help improve a student's literacy skills both in reading, writing, and speaking, all necessary skills in the language arts. The complexity of the integration of these forms of arts is not quite clear as to what the best practice is, but it seems clear from the research and the persons interviewed that integrating theatre into traditional school instruction can have a significantly positive impact on the students who participate.

CHAPTER III: APPLICATION

Drama Curriculum for Educators

The following are games, warm up, and activities that teachers of all ages can do in their classrooms based upon the research done in the literature review, interviews, and my own theatre arts practice and teaching. These activities can be done with any age, with not much time needed as well as little to no preparation. Many of the activities do not require much physical space and many of these activities would be accessible for an average skill level. These activities all demonstrate 21st century skill learning as well as being directly based on the MN state academic standards. Discussion, debriefing, and reflection are some of the most valuable skills to be gained through these activities. The activities are structured with the following that would be helpful for teachers:

- A. Title
- B. Directions
- C. Purpose and/or Quotes from interviews
- D. Grades or Ages Appropriate
- E. Time Needed
- F. Materials Needed
- G. Adaptations or Variations
- H. 21st Century Skills Learned

After each activity, discuss what students learned from the activity and how they will use those skills in the classroom and in daily life. The intention behind each activity is for teachers to be able to quickly implement the activity into his/her classroom. The activities are also structured from the most basic that teachers should start with in their classrooms to more advanced games. Each activity teachers can scaffold, so there are varying levels of difficulty pending on the classroom, students, and their needs.

Warm Ups: Physical, Mental, and Vocal

Purpose: to warm up the body and brain, focusing, stretching the brain, develop breath control, slowing down, taking time, and improving ability to speak

Grades: All Ages (Preschool-Adult)

Time Needed: 5 minutes minimum

Materials or Space Needed: None, suggestion would be playing some music in the background for mood

21st Century Skills: focus, control, relaxation

Directions:

Physical Warm Ups-These warm ups are similar to what physical education teachers may do, however, these are important for actors as well as to allow for students to gain control over their bodies. Teachers can choose to do a few of each of these. The main purpose of this is to get students to focus, be in tune with their bodies, and control their bodies.

1. Head-roll your head to look right, left, up, and down
2. Shoulder Rolls-forward and back, front, up, back, down
3. Run in place-knees up high
4. Jumping Jacks-10 times
5. Push Ups-10 times
6. Sit Ups-10 times
7. Quad balancing-bend one leg and stand with the other leg
8. Arms-reaching high to the sky and down to the floor
9. Bend from your waist-forward, to the right, back, left

Stretching:

1. Straddle-reach to the floor to the middle, to your right leg, to your left leg
2. Butterfly-sit with your legs inward together and try to touch your nose to your toes
3. Runners Stretch-step forward with right foot and then with left foot
4. Rag Doll-feet apart, stand tall. bend over by collapsing and loosely from the waist with arms and hands relaxed, dangling to the floor. arms, head, hands are to be relaxed. slowly rise, staying relaxed. (3 times)

Vocal Warm Up: These are similar warm up as seen in music classes, but also helpful for speaking and communication skills.

Have students repeat these phrases.

1. ta, ta, ta, ta
2. da, da, da, da
3. bah, bah, bah, bah
4. ma, ma, ma, ma

Songs: Sing the following songs in rounds.

Mary had a little lamb.

Twinkle Twinkle little star

Repeat Phrase: Have student greet each other in the class with these phrases. You can change the phrase to Good Morning to say: G-O-O-D, M-O-R-N-I-N-G, Good Morning, hey hey, good morning

G-O-O-D

D-A-Y

I say Good day

Good day

hey

hey

good day

what?

What?

What?

Mental Warm Up:

1. Shake out your hands, your head, shoulders, legs, feet. Shake out your whole body to a count of 8.
2. Make a wide face and narrow face to warm up your facial muscles.
3. Massage-Everyone in a circle or a line. Have everyone put their hands on their right neighbor's shoulders and give them a shoulder massage. Turn directions after a minute.
4. Breathing-stand quietly with your arms at your sides. Breathe in to the count of 1, 2, 3, 4. Breathe out to the count of 4.
5. Imagery-Close your eyes and "see" who you are as your character. Where are you? What did you just do? What are you going to do?

Reference: Gerver, S., personal communication, August 2017

Tran, N., personal communication, August 2017

Passing the Energy

Grades: All (K-Adult)

Time Needed: 5-10 minutes minimum to allow time for discussion

Materials Needed: None, enough space to create a circle

21st Century Skills: focus, attention, working together, creative expression, negotiation

Students will stand in a circle. Teacher will explain that there is an energy ball in his/her pocket or behind his/her ear. Ask the students if they can see the 'ball.' This allows for discussion.

Ask questions of:

1. How big is it?
2. How do you know how big it is?
3. How heavy is it?
4. What does it look like?
5. What does it feel like?
6. What shape is the ball?

Hold the ball up and throw the ball to a student in the room to catch the imaginary ball. Have students change the size, shape, and weight the ball. What happened to the ball? Did it get heavier or lighter? What did it morph into? After playing catch with the ball for a while, rip off part of the ball for students to keep of their own. This allows for students to express themselves and keep something of what they have created.

Variation: Get a second ball going at one time and pass ball around with the current ball. Have two students throw the balls at the same time and see what happens.

Discuss:

Was it hard or easy?

What did you learn from this activity?

What did you learn from passing the ball?

How can I use this in class?

Reference: Fiskradatz, A., personal communication, September 2016

One Clap and Connection Game

Grades: K-Adult

Time Needed: 10 minutes

Materials: none, an open space to create a circle

21st Century Skills: awareness, being in the moment, noticing what is happening outside of themselves, focus, attention, working together, being in the moment

Version 1:

Students sit in a circle with their eyes closed. Students need to all clap at the same time without talking. They need to focus and work together to clap together.

Version 2:

Students stand in a circle with their eyes closed relatively far apart. While having their eyes closed they need to focus on the center and sensing each other's energy to clap and stomp at the same time as everyone else in the circle. Students should be in the moment. This activity takes time, but once students are connected with one another, it becomes easier. This is a great way to end a class.

Discuss:

1. What was difficult about trying to clap at the same time without talking?
2. What can you do differently to better communicate with one another?

Reference: Fiskradatz, A., personal communication, September 2016

Rice, A., personal communication, August 2017

Creating a Circle

Purpose: An immediate activity, allows students to collaborate and be present

Grades: All (PS-Adult)

Time Needed: 5-10 minutes

Materials: none, an open space

21st Century Skills: team work, awareness of self and others, being present, collaboration, communication

Teacher describes to students that students need to create a perfect circle in the space they are given. This circle must be made without direction from anyone and must be done in silence. Students need to figure out how to communicate with one another without talking. When time allows challenge students by creating squares, triangles, and hearts with their bodies in the space they are given without talking.

Discuss:

1. What was challenging about that activity?
2. What did you learn about yourself and/or others in that activity?

Reference: Coulombe, J., personal communication, October 2016

Storytelling

Purpose: Allows people to find a human connection and shared experiences which ultimately students are able to relate to one another

Grades: K-Adult

Time Needed: 10 minutes

Materials: none

21st Century Skills: improvisation, creativity, relating to others, shared experience/human connection

Teacher chooses a word. From that word a student must come up with a true story based upon that word. A student can share that story. Students often find that their story sparks a story within others. This exercise can be turned into a writing exercise to have students write out their story and apply it to their writing content/curriculum.

Discuss:

1. What did you learn about your classmates from this activity?
2. Was it hard to think on your feet and not allow time for you to think about a story?

Reference: Roberts, R., personal communication, October 2016

Human Machine

C. Kane, October 2016. “Without one person, the machine won’t work properly. We aren’t meant to do everything ourselves. We need everyone. Our society tells us to be independent, and this game shows us that we need each other and how to work together.”

Grades: All (K-Adult)

Time Needed: 10 minutes

Materials: none, space

21st Century Skills: working together, teamwork, collaboration, body awareness, ensemble

Students are creating movement to build and add to create a machine with their bodies. Each student finds an action to add on to create a whole piece. One student comes up and does an action with a movement with his/her body with a vocal sound. They keep this action and vocal sound going. Once another student has an idea they will add to the machine when they see something that they think is vital and can add to that. It should complement the parts that are there, but also be different. There must be a sound and movement to go with each person.

Discuss:

1. What worked?
2. What didn’t work?
3. How can you fix what didn’t work?

Try it again and do it over based upon discussion.

Reference: Kane, C., personal communication, October 2016

Zip, Zap, Zop

Grades: All (3rd-Adult), although this game can be done in primary grades best done for upper elementary and above

Time Needed: 10 minutes

Materials: none, space

21st Century Skills: attention, focus, timing, diction, listening, communication, eye contact

Students stand in a circle. Practice saying the words: “Zip, Zap, Zop.” One person starts with clapping and pointing to someone and looking at them while saying “zip”. When they receive that that person points and claps to someone and says “zap”. Next person says “zop” etc. It then starts over and the game continues. It is usually played quickly, and the game will continue until someone gets out. In order to be ‘out’ that person will say an incorrect word, hesitate on a word, or take too long. When this happens, that person can be out, or the game can start over.

Discuss:

1. What did you learn from this game?
2. How was it to have so much to take in at once?

Reference: Sjolander, C., personal communication, September 2016

Partner and Group Mirroring

M. Guidry (personal communication), October 2016. This activity can be a bonding experience where students are mimicking one another and provide a universal connection between one another. It lets our guards down in a safe way

Grades: All (PS-Adult)

Time Needed: 10 minutes

Materials: physical space, music if possible and chairs

21st Century Skills: connection with others, communication, teamwork, eye contact

Music will be helpful for this activity to help with setting a tone or mood, however, isn't necessary. If using music, find something both upbeat and slower to change the variables and moods. Students are in partners. One person leads, and the other person follows. Take turns who is leading and who is following. Allow students to use their whole body and take up space in the room. Remind students to make movements slow, so that his/her partner can follow him/her.

Discuss:

1. What did you take away from this activity?
2. If using music, how did the music change the way you move your body?
3. Was it easier to be the leader or the follower? Why?

Reference: Guidry, M., personal communication, October 2016

Improvisation Games

Improv games help students to learn to think on their feet, be creative, and to be in the moment.

J. Collins (personal communication), October 2016, says improv allows people to:

- A. Be in the moment
- B. Think on their feet
- C. React to people
- D. Trust
- E. Learn to go with what is given to you, rather than to think

Clerk and Returner

Grades: 3rd-Adult

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Materials: none needed, an open area would be nice to represent a stage

21st Century Skills: reacting and responding to others, gathering data, responding, creative expression, thinking on your feet, taking information and responding.

This activity involves the whole class, however, only a few students are a part of the activity at a time. One student is the clerk and one student is the returner in a store. The person who is the clerk leaves the room. The class discusses what the returner will be returning. Try to make the item somewhat complex. For example, instead of returning a stove perhaps returning a red stove that has a Mickey Mouse magnet on it. The clerk returns to the room. The returner must give clues to the clerk as to what they are returning without giving away the item. The clerk must guess what they are returning.

Discuss:

1. Was it harder to be the clerk or the returner? Why?
2. What did you learn from this activity?

Reference: Steen, L., personal communication, August 2017

Freeze Tag

Grades: 3rd-Adult

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Materials: none needed, an open area would be nice to represent a stage

21st Century Skills: reacting and responding to others, gathering data, responding, creative expression, thinking on your feet, taking information and responding, making up stories, using imagination, creative release, go with the flow, 'yes and' technique of being able to continue and expand on an idea

This activity involves the whole class, however, only a few students are a part of the activity at a time. Two students are usually up participating at a time. The two students begin to improvise a scene together while the class observes. When an observer sees them in a position that triggers an idea for a new scene, that person calls out freeze. The actors onstage freeze in whatever position they were in when the word 'freeze' was called out. That actor taps one person on the shoulder and assumes their physical position, but starts a whole new scene. Both actors must justify their position in the new scene.

Discuss:

1. What did you learn from this activity?
2. What skill did you learn that you will take into the classroom? How will that translate into what your doing?
3. What was challenging about this exercise?

Reference: Norton, N., personal communication, August 2017

Yes or Go

This game has multiple possible titles and can be played as either ‘yes’ or ‘go.’

Grades: 3rd-Adult

Time Needed: 10-15 minutes

Materials: none needed, an open area to create a circle

21st Century Skills: eye contact, focus, attention, thinking on feet, team work, affirming one another, being in the moment, listening, reacting to people

- For this purpose, I will use the word ‘yes’, however, the word ‘go’ can also be used as well.
- This game can be played in multiple ways. There are generally 3-4 stages that can be played to introduce complexity.

Stage 1: Students stand in a circle. One person looks at another person in the circle and that person says ‘yes’ and they walk to where that person is currently standing. While they are walking that person looks at another person in the circle saying ‘yes’ and walking towards another person to exchange places. The first stage is using a verbal cue of saying ‘yes’.

Stage 2: All the rules continue to apply, except, instead of a verbal cue, students give a nod of the head. This allows for non-verbal communication.

Stage 3: All the rules continue to apply, except, instead of a verbal cue or non-verbal cue, it is all done through eye contact. Once someone looks at that person, then they can go.

Stage 4: This game can also be played where students are naming out facts in school or their birthdays, etc. This can make the game complicated, but helps students really in focusing.

Variation: Instead of everyone saying ‘yes’, people can say ‘no’. If someone says no, they need to find someone else.

This activity helps with verbal, visual, and instinctual cues.

Discuss:

1. What did you learn from this activity?
2. Was it difficult to focus and do two activities at the same time?
3. How did it feel when someone said 'yes' or 'no'?

Reference: Gangl, M., personal communication, August 2017

Mic, M., personal communication, October 2016

Rice, A., personal communication, August 2017

Character Walk/Character Development/Character Improv

This game has many titles and variations to the activity that can layer on complexity.

Grades: 1st-Adult

Time Needed: 15-20 minutes

Materials: none needed, an open area to create a circle

21st Century Skills: notice others, observe, awareness of others, going with the flow, be mindful of others, creativity, improvisational skills, exploration of self, empathy, imagination, understanding characters

Students walk around the room in various characters. The teacher calls out a part of the body to lead with that certain part of the body. For example, to walk around the room lead with your waist or your head. The way you would walk leading from your head would be different than walking normally or leading from your waist. When people observe and notice others, if he/she likes a certain character he/she can copy that person's character and walk from them. It is important for students to learn to walk with various parts of their body. They need to think about who they are, where they are, what their name would be, and how their character behaves. What is the storyline of this character? Teachers can layer on this activity by having students use their imagination to have the students guess how a person might be feeling, how might they feel as a servant of a king, how might they feel as a bus driver. Teachers can also ask students to talk like a grumpy old man or a squeaky mouse voice and after having students use their voices having students walk around the room with that character in mind.

Discuss:

1. What was your character? Describe them. Have the students write about their character.
2. What was it like to take on other characters?
3. How was _____ 's character different from _____ 's character?

Reference: Gangl, M., personal communication, August 2017

Saatzer, L., personal communication, September 2016

Tran, N., personal communication, August 2017

Truesdale, S., personal communication, October 2016

Frozen Pictures

Grades: 1st-Adult

Time Needed: 15-20 minutes

Materials: none needed, an open area to create a circle

21st Century Skills: observation, reacting to situations, teamwork, collaboration, imagination, creative expression

Students are split into two groups. Each group is to create a frozen picture. This picture would eventually be implemented into a larger play. Each group decides what their picture will be, how each person will be in the picture, and how they want to be represented. The other students watching the group performing will describe what they saw, observed, and noticed. They will talk about multiple ways to observe a situation, perhaps we don't know exactly what is going on in the picture, however, we can learn to react, work together, and observe one another.

Discuss:

1. What did you learn from this activity?
2. How could you use this picture in a theatrical production?
3. What did you notice about yourself and others?

Reference: Truesdale, S., personal communication, October 2016

Status Game

Grades: 3rd-Adult

Time Needed: 15-20 minutes

Materials: none needed, an open area to create a circle

21st Century Skills: develop and convey characters, read and interpret other's by using their bodies and imaginations, imaginations, creative expression

Students are assigned a social status from 1-10. 1 represents lowest status and 10 represents highest status. Each person must convey the status by their actions, however, not talking. The others need to guess their status. For example, 10, would be the most confident, rich celebrity and 1 would be a homeless person. After each person acts out their status, students guess what their number is and why.

Discuss:

1. What was challenging about this activity?
2. How would a person of a 4 be different versus a 6 since they are relatively close in number?
3. Was it hard to guess people's social status?
4. What did you learn from this activity?

Reference: Tran, N., personal communication, August 2017

Zauner also has great activities listed in the appendix A with the interviews.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

Summary

How does theatre arts education impact student learning in the 21st century? What do students learn from theatre arts? How do theatre arts help students learn various other subjects? What skills do students learn from theatre? These are the questions this paper set out to research. As an educator, teaching artist, actor, and someone who has been impacted through theatre, I believe that students gain significant skills that will transfer into life. We as educators are after all seeking to change and impact lives besides teaching a subject matter. Theatre arts is a wonderful way to do this.

The literature review is composed of articles and professional interviews conducted through the 2016-2017 year. The articles and interviews give good examples of how students can learn 21st century skills through theatre games. The research discusses how students learn valuable skills, but specifically also how engaging in theatre can help students learn key concepts such as literacy, reading comprehension, and storytelling. Both interviewees and some articles provided theatre games that are helpful for educators and demonstrate how students benefit from these games which is expanded upon in the application section.

Professional Application-

Educators are constantly seeking ways to improve instruction, change lives, and provide resources and skills for all learners. It is believed that many educators want to impact lives by helping students become lifelong learners, critical thinkers, and creative problem solvers. These 21st century skills can be taught through theatre. It is evident throughout much of the research that theatre impacts students' lives. Research shows that students learn valuable skills through

theatre arts education. It is also shown that students can learn literacy and reading through theatre arts, gain life skills better known as 21st century skills, and storytelling.

What if teachers incorporated theatre arts into their classrooms? What would the impact be on student learning? There is research which has shown that students will be more motivated, more ready and focused to learn, and more able to take in information by making the concepts more relevant to them. Theatre also puts what students are learning into a student's body and therefore, can reach the kinesthetic learners, those learners that need to experience something to understand a concept.

The impact of theatre arts in a student's life can be huge. While many educators may think they don't have the skills to teach theatre or have the resources to do so, it is important for a student's overall understanding of and application of concepts as well as understanding of the world. There are many theatre games that have real application to the classroom. Some of these games are listed in the application section or listed in the appendix that summarizes the interviews. These games are simple and structured specifically for educators of all grade levels to instruct and use in a classroom. Each one has a specific skill that it teaches. It is believed that if one plays a game for example on focus and attention before a test, perhaps students will feel more calm and relaxed feeling and be able to concentrate on a task.

This research, while it is a challenging concept for some educators, applies directly to all educators from K-12 and even beyond from preschool-adult because ultimately teachers are yearning to teach concepts and teach the students as a whole. The research provided does exactly this.

Limitations of Research-

In researching this topic, key words were used such as: theatre arts, theater, drama, dramatization, education, impact student learning, as well as a variety of subject areas. However, there did not appear to be a great deal of formal research on this topic and apparent lack of resources. This is the reason for interviewing professionals that have been impacted through theatre arts to help get a better picture and understanding of how this subject area applied to their own lives professionally and personally.

Russell-Bowie (2013) studied five countries Australia, USA, Namibia, South Africa, and Ireland about the readiness of these countries for arts education. He specifically studied pre-service teachers that were studying to become teachers. If a pre-service teacher had exposure to a topic as a child, he found he/she was more confident in teaching that skill. In four of the five countries, pre-service teachers had confidence in teaching theatre arts skills to students. What is surprising is the fact that the country that lacked the most confidence in teaching these skills was USA. All the other four countries provide pre-service teachers with four strands of creative arts that include: music, dance, drama, and visual arts. Most of what is taught in schools in the USA is music and visual arts which is why teachers can obtain licenses in K-12 music and K-12 visual arts, but often not dance or drama. Many of the USA education doesn't provide theatre arts education and Bowie concluded that more teachers need theatre arts education which would therefore help boost their confidence to teach those skills in the primary schools.

In researching this topic there were a few articles that were talking specifically about theatre in a general sense that didn't have much to do with education or that were more focused on education and didn't apply the theatre aspect. These were the articles that were excluded from the paper. Going into this topic, I didn't anticipate the lack of scholarly articles because it is a topic that was hugely impactful in my career and there are quite a few books that are written for

teaching artists that provide theatre games. While the lack of research on this topic was limiting for this thesis, that fact also kept me motivated to dig deeper. I knew that because of how theatre arts have impacted my life, there must be research in this topic. I expected to find more research that discussed the impact of theatre on student learning and how it affects 21st century skills. I have seen students in my classroom gain valuable skills through theatre that have helped them navigate life and complete their school work, so I thought there would be more studies that showed this. This was the most challenging, yet, rewarding part of researching this topic because the lack of research, made the topic feel innovative, relevant, and ultimately life-changing for educators.

Implications of Future Research-

The impact of theatre education on transforming a student's life is not well researched, nor is the intersection of theatre arts and education in general. This is a growth area for education in general. As a teaching artist, it is frustrating to see that there isn't much research being done on such a valuable topic. Theatre arts was transformative in my own life and I have seen the growth of so many students in their academic and personal lives that it concerns me that further research isn't being done on this topic.

The main area of implications for further research is for educators and theatre artists to collaborate more. How can we as a society get more 'buy in' from educators to see the value in theatre arts? It is believed that theatre arts are extra-curricular activities and teachers don't have the time in their day to add in extra activities. These activities, however, could be life changing both to the students and to student learning.

There are many areas that can be focused on for further research. One is simply more studies. It is important to have more studies on theatre arts education and the impact of this on a student's life and academia. Second is getting teachers to try new ideas. Many don't believe they have the skill set, knowledge, or expertise in this area, therefore, lack confidence in teaching it. How could a math teacher incorporate drama into his/her classroom? This could lead to a research study done by helping students learn math facts by having students act out math problems. Thirdly we need to teach more teachers how to incorporate theatre arts into the classroom. I believe that many teachers believe that theatre arts can be valuable, but don't have the time or the knowledge to do so. This needs to start in college classes such as education methods courses and all the way through educating current teachers as continuing education credits. The studies provide evidence that theatre arts are impactful. It is a matter of applying these skills.

The main question started with how theatre arts impacts student learning in 21st century skills. Based upon the research, more questions ring through my head that could be developed more into further study. It is my hope that one day there will be more research in this topic.

- A. Why isn't there more research out there about theatre and education?
- B. How can we get more research in this area?
- C. Much of the research stated how theatre helps with skills of literacy and reading.

However, how does theatre arts help with other skills and subject areas such as: science, history, math, etc.?

- D. What are some ways teachers can apply this research into their teaching?

- E. Much of the research provided is specific to a population of people such as those with disabilities or those living in an urban area, how does it relate to those in a suburban area, public, or even private school?
- F. If more teachers had the training, education, knowledge, and resources would they incorporate theatre into their classroom?
- G. This topic is specifically perhaps geared towards elementary teachers, how would this look different for high school teachers?
- H. What would schools and classrooms look like incorporating theatre arts into a school that is not specifically an arts school?

Conclusion-

It has become my personal mission to help teachers understand this valuable skill of theatre as an important tool for teaching and learning. I have gained this understanding throughout this research and I have learned that, through the integration of theatre arts into K-12 education, students truly learn 21st century skills. It is my desire to do what I can to provide resources, research, knowledge, and exercises that will help teachers to apply the research found in this thesis. How does theatre arts education impact student learning in the 21st century? Students ultimately learn how to work as a team, communicate, develop empathy, creative thinking and problem-solving skills, and improvisation skills. Ultimately when students go off to find a job after high school or college, employers are going to look for if a student can do these skills (work as team, communicate, react and respond to others, etc). Employers aren't looking for people who know all the facts in the world about the civil war, applying the Pythagorean theorem, or even how a cell works in the body. For specific careers these are important skills, yet as an educator, I am seeking to develop a student as a whole. Throughout this research I have

come to learn that theatre does impact student motivation, and helps students learn concepts. Students ultimately learn to become people who are able to work with others. This is a beautiful concept. If teachers use theatre arts skills in their classrooms to teach literacy skills, perhaps students will become better readers, develop a love for reading, and gain higher comprehension skills. These ideas could be revolutionary if they are well researched and implemented. With the right tools and mindset teachers could have another valuable tool in their toolkit to instruct students to help them with both academic core areas, but also impacting them for 21st century skills needed for life.

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APPENDIX A

Interviews

One of the aspects about being a part of theatre and drama is that there are so many benefits that carry through adulthood. These benefits affect people differently. Each person who participates in theatre has gained new and different skills that he/she has carried with him/her into his/her profession and beyond. These skills are all 21st century skills. Each one of these people would have gained more from participating in theatre games in the classroom, yet they have gained significant insight from their dedication to being on the stage, especially at a young age, which carried them into adulthood.

Following are my interviews with several people of varying backgrounds, ages, genders, and locations, all of whom have had a significant experience with theatre that has shaped them in their learning today. Between August 2016 and September 2017, the interviewees and I spent 30-90 minutes on the phone or in person to better understand the impact of theatre and learning for them. One aspect that rings true for these interviewees is that theatre helped them in some way, shape or form, and although this topic is not well addressed in schools, yet it should be.

Each of the interviews addressed the following questions:

- A. Tell me about your experience with theatre.
- B. What experience do you have of being in theatre both in shows and/or taking classes? What specifically was taught in those classes?
- C. What did you learn about yourself in participating in theatre?
- D. How do these skills translate into your work or what you currently do professionally?
- E. 21st century skills are skills that are needed for life. What is one skill that you gained from theatre—and talk more about that skill and how you have benefited from learning it from theatre at a young age.
- F. If a teacher is going to incorporate theatre games or concepts in their classroom, how would this change society? What are your thoughts about this concept?
- G. What skills can kids learn from theatre?
- H. How does learning these skills impact a student's learning or student motivation or work?

- I. Are there specific activities or games that you teach or were taught that were most helpful in this area?

Jennifer Kern Collins

Jennifer Kern Collins started her theatre endeavors singing in a choir at the age of four. She remembers her first play in kindergarten, *The Three Little Bears*. Collins performed throughout elementary and middle school, playing a lead role in the musical “Snow White” in Rochester Civic Theatre. She felt that being involved in theatre encouraged her to get out of her comfort zone. Collins was never afraid of being on the stage, and she enjoyed making up plays at home; however, she stopped being in theatre due to family issues. Collins majored in international business and psychology. She is currently a public speaker, coach, career counselor, and author.

She feels that her theatre skills have greatly benefited her, helping her to be more animated when telling a story. Collins learned many skills from drama. Some of the main concepts were team spirit, collaboration, and being aware of what is going on around her. She learned through theatre that everyone plays an integral part. You need to be aware of what is needed, and what is around you. Collins feels that theatre helped her to do just that. As a speaker, she can read the room and adapt as needed. She can respond by adjusting her body movement, vocal tone, or story, and this is all based upon her theatre training and experience.

One key skill that Collins takes away from theatre is stage presence. She has learned to “not be small,” but to take up the whole space, and not be afraid of the whole space. She has gleaned more awareness of her body language, and better understand how her body language relates to how others perceive her. Theatre helped her to feel more self-aware of herself and others.

Collins believes that being in theatre helped her continue to be motivated in school by the teamwork, collaboration, and realizing that everyone has their part. She understood that you can't do it alone, and you need everyone to put on a production. It takes a larger collaboration to make theatre work a larger collaboration in life. Theatre kept Collins engaged, motivated, and stimulated. It inspired her to keep going in her work.

Much of schoolwork is memorized-based learning, which didn't suit Collins, saying, "Improv freed me." Improv allows for creative movements to trust oneself. Collins describes how improv is based on being in the moment and thinking on your feet—type of skills that would greatly help students learn. Not all students learn best by memorization. Having theatre games in the classroom would shape student learning. Collins says that improv was the greatest tool for her learning 21st century skills because you need to be able to react to someone on the spot. It teaches a person to trust, to let your body respond, and be in the moment, rather than thinking about something that is so memorized. Having more improv activities will greatly help students learning and grow their 21st century skills.

Jeannine Coulombe

Jeannine Coulombe considers herself an educator, and a theatre artist who specializes in playwriting and directing. She earned her bachelor of arts in theatre and history, and after trying several pathways, ended up with a Masters in Fine Arts (MFA) in playwriting. Coulombe auditioned for a few years, but realized acting wasn't her passion—her real passion was teaching kids. She has written four children's plays, taught at the college level, created acting programs, and has worked in many school districts as a teaching artist. She loves seeing stories come alive,

as well as allowing people to express their stories. Currently, Coulombe is a full-time employee at Stages Theatre in Hopkins, Minnesota in the conservatory department.

Coulombe grew up in a small town in northern Minnesota that had few programs outside of coursework. She started her acting at the age of nine. She feels acting saved her, becoming a way for her to escape from reality. A group at her community college called College for Kids offered summer programs for kids. Theatre was an option. In her first show, she was a bookworm that turned into Little Red Riding Hood. From there she fell in love with theatre and did as much as she could in middle school, high school, community theatre, drama club, speech club, church plays, and dance.

Coulombe sees many benefits in performing both for herself and the students she teaches. She learned to work with people, to collaborate with others, and to validate her and other people's feelings. She says most people bury their feelings, but this gives people an outlet. Empathy is inherent in storytelling, and is something she sees often as people learning. Theatre helps to improve literacy. She explains how kinesthetic learners need to put it in their bodies. She helped students starting at the first-grade level with learning vocabulary words by putting it in their bodies and acting it out.

21st century skills are those needed for life. Coulombe believes that theatre has prepared her for life. It teaches people to be hands on, collaborate, work as team, and problem solve. When working in theatre, often there is limited budget with deadlines. Theatre teaches someone to think outside the box, to be creative, and to work within goals and deadlines. Those who are involved in performing arts are the best project managers. Personally, she reflects upon how theatre helped give her self-esteem, confidence, and courage. She says she would have never left home if she didn't have theatre.

Theatre also teaches communication. Our bodies are our tools in the way we communicate. We need to be able to communicate with one another. It teaches us to tackle a project from different perspectives. Middle schoolers often struggle being comfortable in their own skin. Through drama, they can learn it is okay to be who they are, express themselves, have good self-worth, self-esteem, and ultimately prepare for job interviews.

Coulombe always starts her classes with “actor’s neutral,” where the students learn to connect with their own breath. When students understand how to do this, nerves go away, and students learn to relax, thus being able to speak in front of people. Theatre often connects to both the physical and the mental. Often teachers are afraid if they have more movement in their classroom, they will lose control of the class. This is a fear. However, when we can teach teachers that they will gain more control of their students when they have more control of their body because the students are able to think outside the box, think creatively, and be problem solvers.

Students also learn to play and to try new things. Too much of the classroom is all about worksheets. We have lost sight of the idea of play, but theatre does just that and allows us to play. When students learn to interpret ideas, this helps them to learn. Theatre teaches students to be present and fully engaged. When students are involved in theatre, there are often fewer absences. Theatre also teaches people the idea of observation. We need to observe a situation, think about how we will respond to it, and then react to it. This all plays into real-life situations.

Coulombe always has her students do several activities at the start of her classes, which all serve as 21st century skills.

1. Isolation Shake Down – This is all about focus. This is a silent activity in which students learn to be still in hectic situations where our culture is so fast-paced. Students learn to connect to their breathe, to follow directions, to be present, to feel, to be relax, to be aware, and have control over their bodies.
2. Creating Circle – Students are directed to create a perfect circle in the space they are given. They are to create a circle at different spaces at different times. This allows them to be present with one another, to collaborate in silence, with no direction given. It allows them to learn to fit in within the circle. It is immediate. They then shuffle and shift to different positions. To challenge students, she has students create a square, triangle, or a heart without talking. This allows students to be aware of one another and be present.
3. Perform – Students perform for each other. Students learn to pay attention to one another. They learn to give and take with situations.
4. Vocabulary Poses – When teaching students new vocabulary words, students act them out, so that they can put them into their bodies.
5. Learn how to Clap and Bow for another – Clapping shows respect for what someone does.

Coulombe represents the cognitive intellectual domain of theatre arts. She has mastered the organization and presentation of theatrical skills and techniques, and she understands their application in the lives of her students.

Aaron Fiskradatz

Aaron Fiskradatz is a teaching artist and educator with many roles, including administrative roles as education director with Lakeshore Players in White Bear Lake,

Minnesota, Upstream Arts, SteppingStone Theatre, Neighborhood Bridges Program with Children's Theatre, and circus camps. He has experience working with all ages, preschool through twelfth grade, with a passion for elementary ages. Fiskradatz enjoys creating art through acting, directing, and puppetry. He most enjoys hearing a student's voice and bringing student voices to the forefront.

Theatre allows for creativity and focusing on student stories and perspectives, which is why Fiskradatz has been attracted to theatre. For him, he wants to make sure all students have a fingerprint in what they create, bringing their voice to the table. Another aspect he enjoys is collaborating with classroom teachers and curriculum to build theatre curriculum into their academic subjects. This allows them to see the process of what they are creating. It is about incorporating student voices to involving students into the process.

Fiskradatz earned his bachelor's degree in theatre arts from the University of Minnesota in 2005. Through the program he specialized in puppetry, physical theatre, and video production. In his program, he learned and loved his work, yet he quickly realized that he didn't want to perform as a typical actor would. He performs as a core actor with Mad Munchkin theatre company, other than that he focuses on education. He fell in love with teaching and working with children.

Fiskradatz didn't consider teaching, or that it would be something he would enjoy. A friend asked him to come put on a puppetry show for a classroom of elementary students who have autism. When he performed for them, he became mesmerized by how engaged the students were. Because students with autism struggle with eye contact and social skills, they could use puppets to make conversation. It was a way for them to engage with conversation. Fiskradatz also has a sister who has autism, and understands what it is like to assist with her through therapy

and school. Quickly he found himself becoming a full-time paraprofessional for students with autism at Highwood Hills Elementary School in St. Paul. This was where he truly developed his passion for students and teaching, especially working with elementary-aged.

After a few years of being a para, another teacher at the school encouraged him to teach an after-school drama program. He created this program and thus began his teaching career. In 2011, he received a teaching artist apprentice program position, an eight-month paid program through SteppingStone Theatre in St. Paul, Minnesota. Because of this program, he learned through great mentors like Maggie Smith who taught him to observe, build lesson plans, teach, and do administrative work.

In his childhood, he was forced to do a play. Fortunately, he got the lead role and loved it. He and his dad did much role-playing together; his dad is a pastor and a theatre artist. His dad taught him how to make videos and act, and he ended up doing plays ever since seventh grade. From his theatre experiences he learned to be in the moment. It gave Fiskradatz a hands-on experience to have creative expression where he learned how to build sets, paint, hang lights, and learn the process. It was holistic approach. From there, he also participated in one-acts plays, speech, and mock trial.

Fiskradatz describes many aspects he learned from theatre. The biggest one is confidence. He expressed himself as an introverted person who enjoys solitude. This new confidence empowered him to be in bigger crowds, to have public speaking skills, use creativity, think on his feet, and be a creative problem solver. Students are often motivated through their learning of theatre. He has learned that how he positions himself with students impacts their learning, and what his body is telling students is how to read a room, and how to be aware of space. Body language is a huge asset for performers. One way that he develops rapport with his students is by

listening to them and understanding them by their body language. Listening is key, and a vital skill learned through theatre.

Another aspect Fiskradatz described that he fosters in 21st century skills are collaboration. Collaboration drives what we do. Theatre pushes us to collaborate, work together, to challenge our students to have a voice, and to share their voice. Theatre also helps students with focus and attention. All students need to move. This engages learners to understand what they are doing, become active listeners, and ask deeper questions for learning. Ultimately, we are providing them with tools to help them with themselves and the world around them. These tools encourage students to seek a better understanding of self and team. All these skills are needed for life.

Fiskradatz adds three activities to every classroom that teaches 21st century skills:

1. Passing an energy ball – Uses 100 percent of the students creates focus, attention, and working together. Fiskradatz begins this exercise by asking students to imagine there is an energy ball behind his ear. He asks if you can see it. This creates disagreement with some students, which is okay. This also creates discussion. Ask questions of: How big is it? How do you know how big it is? How heavy is it? Hold it up. Throw the ball. Have another student catch the ball. Have students change the size, shape, and weight of the ball. What happened to the ball? This all creates working together, focus, collaboration, and creative thinking. He then rips off part of the energy ball for the students to keep as their own. This encourages the students to chew on it, stretch it, and it drives them to express it for themselves. There are other variations of it where students can change the balls, or mesh the balls together. This is where negotiation happens. At the end, students keep some of the ball, and are challenged to bring the ball back every time.

2. One Clap – This activity serves as an end-of-the-class activity and as a punctuation mark to the class. Everyone must clap once at the same time without talking. This causes focus, attention, and working together.
3. Morph – This activity is where a student does an action with his body. The next person does that same action. It keeps going around in the circle. Each person is going to have a different variation of that movement, based upon how they interpret that action. This allows for interpretation and creative expression.

Fiskradatz illustrates the use of imagination as a key element in creating the theatrical experience. Like other teachers, he stresses building skills in confidence, collaboration, energy transfer, and expression. His contribution is equipping his students with concrete examples of creative imagination as one key tool in an actor's toolbox.

Marcelline Gangl

Marcelline Gangl began her theatre arts journey in the seventh grade on a whim. She was in a production in the chorus at school, and from there decided it was the best experience in which she was involved. She started living performing in show after show. She describes it as a place for her to belong and it gave her a voice. Gangl says she was shy growing up and that performing gave her confidence. It also provided her with a community where she felt accepted and had a sense of belonging. Performing helped her to see through the eyes of a child that anyone could do things if they take a risk and try.

Gangl majored in psychology; however, she took many theatre classes in college. In grad school many people wanted her to research, analyze, and perform surveys as an educator, collaborator, and mental health practitioner, but she wanted to use her love for acting, and felt

that it was a needed and valued skill in the mental health community. In grad school, she designed curriculum that allowed her to try new activities that made it possible for her to combine theatre and mental health for those that are struggling with medical issues, specifically traumatic brain injury.

Theatre taught Gangl to have a deeper sense of empathy. She learned through theatre one can ultimately have a voice, speak up for what you believe in, and ultimately give you confidence. Gangl also states that theatre taught her to collaborate and to work together with others. As humans, we crave human connection with one another. We are drawn to language, and what draws us together. Drama allows people to have differing perspectives in life, and be able to live in their own space.

As an elementary school mental health therapist, Gangl believes that at the core root of what she does is not only to listen to students and help with what they are going through, but it is really theatre. She says that theatre helped her to be creative in her job. Not every student fits in a certain box. It helped her to not put people in boxes or label people for who they are. In the mental health world, one must be able to think on your feet and respond to situations how they come at you. Theatre taught her to do this. It has helped her to incorporate the whole body when working with others. People, especially kids, often need to “do” and not just sit and talk. Theatre also has helped her to listen to her students and have empathy for them. Listening skills take much skill. Finally, her job requires much multi-tasking, and theatre helped her to learn how to multi-task when, so much was going on.

There were many 21st century skills that were gained by Gangl when reflecting upon the question: however, she believes that the greatest one is flexible thinking. Often in theatre you don't know how one might react to a situation. Flexible thinking allows a person to understand

the idea of “yes and” to be able to react to a situation regardless of the situation. Life is not a textbook way of thinking and theatre taught her to be flexible in the ways she thinks, reacts, and responds in situations.

If theatre was more incorporated in classrooms it would allow for more play. It would allow more room to make concepts more relevant to students. Gangl believes that it allows for people to ask what do they need from me, and how can I best be used in this situation. What can one take and receive from one another? Theatre allows for a give-and-take exchange of ideas that in turn allows for an exchange of thoughts, rather than an information dump that many schools are often giving.

Theatre games will also help students, especially in today’s culture because of extensive use of technology. So much of what plagues students is the use of cell phones. Technology is at their fingertips. Theatre makes it possible for people to interact with one another, and to ultimately play. It allows people to be mindful of one another, to reset the brain, and allow for a different part of the brain to be active. It allows for people to see one another. This ultimately permits for better focus and attention. Theatre games validates ideas for students, initiates the whole body, listening skills, collaboration, and taking turns

Theatre does impact student learning as it permits the brain to be more stimulated. Students are more able to practice giving and receiving feedback. Gangl explained that she was a part of a production that talked about homelessness where they interviewed people who were homeless and created a play using their stories. Because of using their real-life issues, it motivated her to want to learn more about the situation, ultimately doing her best work both on and off stage.

Gangl described two theatre games that were helpful in her processing how theatre has benefited her.

1. “Yes” – Everyone stands in a circle. One person starts and looks across the circle at one person and makes eye contact. That person says “yes.” They walk to their spot. If they say “no,” the starting person needs to find someone else. After this game is over, they discuss what it is like if someone says yes, and what is it like when someone says no. There are various ways of playing the game fast and slow. This game allows for conversations to be built, team building, and affirming one another in saying “yes” to them.
2. Character Development – Students walk around the room as various characters. Teacher calls out a body part, telling the person to lead with that certain part of the body. If someone likes a certain character, people will copy that person’s character and walk like him/her. This game teaches students to notice other people in the room, to go with the flow, and to be mindful of yourself and others.

For Gangl theatre has equipped her to give and receive information. It has taught her to have empathy for one another, work together, gain confidence, and ultimately be able to have a flexible way of thinking. She explains how the brain is wired to communicate with others, and to be challenged in various ways. We strive for communication—and theatre is a great way to do so. Gangl’s experience with theatre changed her belief in herself, and she believes it will also change students’ thinking in turn.

Sue Gerver

Sue Gerver started in theatre at a young age since her mom was a drama and English teacher. She started performing in community theatre in first grade, and in parks and recreation productions in the fourth grade. From fourth grade to high school she performed in choirs and classes where she learned ear training, sight singing, and discipline. She was in a children's choir in her church where she learned team-building skills. She also took violin and dance classes. Although she loved theatre and performing from a young age, she majored in nursing, but has also continued in singing in choirs. After being a nurse for several years, she realized that nursing was not her real calling, and went back to school to major in acting. Now Gerver is a professional actor and a real estate assistant.

Theatre classes helped Gerver to better understand plays and postmodern literature. Theatre helped her to go through a self-discovery process and helped her to turn inward to create a sense of mindfulness. It also helped her to understand her passions in life, and to better understand who she is. Theatre gave her an opportunity to work on stage nerves, and to feel more confident in her own skin.

Gerver learned that theatre can be a safe place in which to explore yourself. Life isn't always linear, and she learned to take what she has learned to apply that to various situations. Gerver was always shy. Theatre helped her gain confidence by allowing her to be in someone else's shoes. Her biggest take away was to make connections and connect what she is doing to history. She says that theatre allows people to have put messages out into the world in a safe way. Theatre also allowed her to develop the needed skill of play. As a mom, this helped her to create costumes for her kids, instruments for them to play, and allow them to explore and create.

Gerver talked about two 21st century skills she learned in theatre. The first was the idea of team effort. It takes a team, a group of people to put on a story. Interaction is needed. This allows for people to express themselves within a group and explore and discover who they are. The second aspect Gerver discovered in theatre is communication and developing a sense of community. It helped her to build community. She didn't have many friends growing up, and this gave her many connections and ultimately a group of friends who shared a common goal.

Having more theatre in the classroom would allow students the opportunity to play and create, both are skills needed to develop the whole person. She recalls that teachers have allowed her son to use film to express himself by making a tape of what he learned from *Hamlet*. This allows for creative expression. Gerver says that motivation is a huge factor in theatre. It allows for people to take on different possibilities. It allows people to explore creativity and think outside the box.

Gerver says that what students can learn from theatre that teachers can instruct is focus and relaxation. Often students are uptight with the stress and pressure of the day-to-day life. These activities will help people when getting people in front of others to focus and be at a sense of peace and calmness. A few of these include:

- A. The Alexander Technique – which teaches people how to manage their habits, relax, and be aware of their body posture
- B. Tongue Twisters – to help students to stretch their brains and vocal chords
- C. Tai Chi – stretching and warm ups to get the blood flowing and brain turned on

For Gerver, creative expression and being comfortable and confident is important. She found herself through theatre. When students can understand themselves, and feel empowered, they will be more equipped for life.

Matt Guidry

Matt Guidry is the artistic director of Upstream Arts. In this position, he gets to create, play, and construct curriculum that teaches social and communication skills for people with disabilities. His passion for theatre started in the fifth grade where he auditioned for “Rip Van Winkle.” It was a role he really wanted, but doesn’t really know why it was so important to him. Little did he know how this would lead to where he is today. Guidry continued to perform in speech classes, tournaments, monologues, and he auditioned for every play and musical he could in junior high and high school. As someone who doesn’t have an outgoing personality, theatre helped him become more confident.

In college, Guidry auditioned for and received a scholarship for theatre at Texas Christian University in Texas where he majored in acting. Later he moved to the Twin Cities for graduate school where he got a MFA in acting. Throughout his career, he did many performances, both on stage and camera work, started his own theatre company, and became a teaching artist. In 2000, he taught a movement-based acting class a few years at the University of Minnesota.

In 2006 Upstream Arts was formed. Upstream Arts was formed out of Caleb’s story. Caleb is Matt’s son who has a disability. He is unable to communicate with others through speech. One-day Guidry decided to experiment with Caleb, and started to volunteer at his school. He worked with dance in the classrooms and tried out ideas with Caleb. Guidry wanted to see if

there were ways to use the arts to communicate—and he found that Caleb and so many others benefited from this with a greater understanding of self-expression, focus, confidence. Guidry and his wife Julie have started Upstream Arts out of a personal story, and now have touched so many lives of those living with disabilities, helping them to learn to communicate.

Guidry loves to use yoga, movement, and *qigong* therapy (also spelled Ch'i Kung) with this teaching. He has learned that through his work he enjoys being a part of a community, to work creatively with people, and to be able to express himself through movement and dance. With Upstream Arts, he is creating from scratch, something he enjoys.

Theatre is often a personal experience. For Guidry he learned that he works best when he is a part of a team. He found himself moving towards having strong opinions of what is on stage, and he learned to collaborate with others. He also learned to play. We often forget to teach the concept of play, and in life to simply play. As an administrator, Guidry realizes that it is so much like this role in theatre, he collaborates with others, he doesn't work alone, and runs it as a team.

Upstream Arts (UA) teaches people to be more engaged in a more management way in the process. It encourages him to be more vocal about ideas, and to have an equal voice. In many situations, Guidry is generally quieter in meetings, yet when he does he is empowered to speak, to have a voice. Upstream Arts' main goal is to teach and foster social and communication skills. These skills are really exploring how to connect at the base level with another human being. It helps someone to temper their behavior and engage, based upon others. UA teaches people to listen to one another both with your ears and your eyes. The company teaches people to have focus, to learn how to receive, to give back to someone, what to do when you want to express

yourself, and to not hold back. It teaches and allows a person to be comfortable and in the moment.

Upstream Arts's original focus came out of a personal story, a story of Caleb and thus helping others. Originally Upstream's mission was to help individuals with social and communication skills. Now over ten years old, Upstream Arts has grown into a community. Upstream has affected classrooms, departments, and now to districts of Minneapolis, Minnesota, as well as several adult programs. The scope has widened. The mission now is to help communities connect with one another through a shared community experience.

The greatest 21st century skill Guidry describes in his work is being hyper aware of what other people are giving you—and being in the moment. It means to be so in the moment that you know what other actors are around you, so you are in the moment and taking that in and reacting to what others are saying. This is so valuable to social interaction, accepting of others, and being authentic.

Guidry says that learning these 21st century skills helps students' motivation and student work by helping them find their own successes. He explains that people with disabilities often are talked about with regards to their deficiencies of what they can't do. These skills help students to practice being successful, relishing in their successes, knowing what it feels like to be successful. It is a place to find that success. This skill of a feeling of "I can do this" bleeds over into all areas of a students' life.

Upstream Arts brings people together, to have a moment and space together. Generally, students with disabilities don't get to all be together in a moment like this. It teaches students to learn to accept other people, to have a shared creative focus, and to play, which bonds a group

together. This translates to a classroom. If more teachers could play drama games, it would be impactful for students to have this shared experience, to know one another, and to form a common ground.

The one activity Guidry most enjoys teaching in 21st century skills is the concept of mirroring. Mirroring forms a bonding experience. It is a universal skill that goes back to where we are babies, when we try to mimic each other. It provides a universal connection between one another where we connect. In mirroring you need to let your guard down, and do it in a safe way.

The striking element from Guidry's experience is his exploration of non-verbal channels of communication and his success in using these as a tool. Mirroring, movement, and dance become a key, not only for self-expression, but for lasting interaction as well.

Christy Kane

Christy Kane is a performer and mother of two, one in high school; other in college. She has been in a total of 45 productions since the age of two where she played an angel in a Nativity scene at church. She participated in theatre from elementary through her adult years, taking a six-year break in her adult years. During her school years, she auditioned for every show, getting into many of them, both plays and musicals. She quickly found that musicals were her passion as she discovered her ability and love for singing. Kane grew up around theatre as her mom was a director. Sometimes her parents regretted getting her involved with theatre as she became so hooked on the thrill of being on stage—she loved being on the stage and didn't want to stop.

Today Kane is a personal coach who is working on her master's degree in counseling. She coaches women who are dealing with challenges in their marriage and relationships. One

aspect she teaches her clients is the concept of grounding, which is so important and often is not taught. She teaches this so that people don't dissociate with life, but rather are centered. This technique helps her clients, and is also a theatre and acting technique that she has learned. During her coaching sessions, she often asks her client's questions like: Where am I going? Why am I going to do this? Who will I interact with? These are all grounding techniques. What is the real me? In theatre, we often need to ask ourselves this question as well as who am I? In life, we need to reflect upon who we are, as well as how we mold and shape ourselves with society.

Kane also participated in many acting and drama classes both in high school and college that were related to acting, directing, set design, lighting, stage managing, set construction, and dance. Unfortunately, there were no classes like these for her at the elementary or middle school level. She feels that if these had been available earlier in her educational experiences she, would have found her own grounding sooner.

In reflecting upon her experiences, Kane says that she learned how to be in and stay in the moment, as well as how to be engaged with a topic. She has learned to be in the moment with people so that she is able to attend to their needs and hear what they have to say. This experience has given her skills to truly listen to someone and then respond—and not just wait until someone talks. As a teacher, listening is also a key 21st century skill, and it is important we teach people to listen to one another. As a coach, Kane says that theatre has helped her to be engaged with her clients, to care for them, and to be present with them.

Kane says, "Drama allows a person to zero in on his or her own unique skills and strengths, and for them to ask critical questions of themselves and others." Such questions like: "What do I need to do? Who am I? What are the skills I have to offer this world? Theatre addresses these issues. Theatre teaches students creativity in a context different from a traditional

academic setting. It gives them a hands-on, constructive way of engaging with material, and allowing creativity to emerge through action.

Because of the importance of theatre and drama in Kane's own life, she wanted to help her children also develop this passion. Both her kids went to Anoka Hennepin's (MN) magnet arts middle school. All subject areas are taught in the school, yet they are taught in a hands-on and interactive approach. They are taught in a way that helps non-traditional students thrive. Her youngest son, who has mild autism, was told in a traditional public school as a fifth grader that he won't make it in middle school. In this magnet school students are taught to take charge through using creative arts. Her son, who was told as a fifth grader that he won't succeed, now is on the A honor roll. He struggled socially in traditional classroom, and this hands-on approach to learning helped him thrive and be successful in life.

The greatest 21st century skill Kane learned was social interaction skills. As a shy and introverted person who struggles with anxiety, she felt it was always difficult for her to be comfortable around people. Being involved in and learning about drama and self-expression has allowed her to be more comfortable. It allowed her to not hide in the corner, but instead to create a character, to learn what it means to be part of a team, and build together an ensemble as a team.

In all the drama games, Kane has played, she recalls the "Human Machines" as the most impactful. In the Human Machine, students are to create movement and build/add on the movement to create a machine with their bodies. It allows for students to work together as a team. Each person must do an action to add on to create a whole piece. Without one person, the machine won't work properly. The lesson in the activity is that we aren't meant to do everything ourselves. We need everyone. Our society tells us that we need to be independent, yet this game shows us that we need each other and need to work together.

In Christy Kane, we see growth, self-awareness, and the development of social interaction skills through theatre arts. But the more powerful story is how she has gone on to share these learnings with others, and to guide them in their own development of these skills.

Maya Mic

Maya Mic is a senior at Jefferson High School in Bloomington, Minnesota. She plans to major in theatre and is looking for opportunities to help her grow and stretch as a performer. Mic started to perform in third grade in her school's play, *Wizard of Oz*, as a munchkin. She describes herself as outgoing, energetic, and playful, so obviously for her to join drama club was a given. She enjoys being a character. Mic auditioned again in fourth grade and was a lead munchkin in *Wizard of Oz* for her second year at Hillcrest Elementary in Bloomington. In fifth grade, she did a play on values. Since then, she fell in love with acting and has done both plays and musicals ever since.

Theatre gave Mic an outlet. It allowed her to express herself, become different characters, create new characters, and respond to other people. Outside of school shows, she has done two shows through Stages Theatre in Hopkins, Minnesota, *Silent Night in Peef* and a *Spider* as a leading role.

Mic learned to step into character, and when her troubles are great, she can escape with theatre. Theatre challenges and pushes a person to go beyond herself, as it did for Mic. There is the stereotypical loud, crazy, silly theatre kid—and this was her. She learned it was okay to step into and become who she is.

When discussing 21st century skills, Mic says theatre helped her interact to have a relationship with and react to other people. Another skill theatre gives is eye contact. Mic says that when she was younger, she was shy when talking to adults and people she didn't know. Theatre gave her confidence to talk with people with clarity and conviction. She also describes having a laser-focus attention as a skill she learned. Theatre gave her confidence in herself, as well as an inner view of "self" in what she can truly do.

Theatre can be impactful for student learning, growth, and motivation. Mic was always a happy person excited about life. However, with theatre she was motivated to get her homework done. Theatre engages the whole body. It is active, and she feels motivated and empowered to do her work. With other events she felt too tired, while theatre left her engaged and motivated.

Having more theatre in elementary school would be a great asset, says Mic. She wishes she had more theatre experiences in elementary school. She believes that theatre would teach these students communication skills and eye contact, which go hand in hand.

Mic recalls a fun engaging activity called "Go!" This drama game focuses on reacting to people, focusing, and listening skills. In "Go," students are in a circle. One-person points to a person and says go, and she take his place in the circle, while that person is finding a new place. During this time, everyone is calling out other facts, such as birthdays, in a certain order to layer on complexity. This game is two games in one that evokes total attention and focus.

Mic is an example of someone who embraces the benefits of learning dramatic art skills at an early age. For her, these skills help her to go beyond her core personality, to extend herself and explore other dimensions of behavior. Though young, she is already aware of how this helps her understand and appreciate diversity of all types.

Nathaniel Norton

Nathaniel Norton grew up in the theatre world. His experience is wide and varied. He began in first grade in a church musical his mom directed. He learned all the words to every part in the show. He was first cast in a major role in fourth grade—a community theatre production of *The Lion, Witch, and Wardrobe*. Since that summer, he participated in a summer show throughout middle, high school, and into college. Norton graduated with a theatre degree from Bethel University. He had an internship with Theatre for the Thirsty, which at the time was looking for a third person in their new musical, *My Name is Daniel*. He now performs with them on a gig-by-gig basis. Currently Norton writes, directs, and produces his own work on a small scale, bringing shows to church venues in the cities with his theatre company called New Seed Theatre.

Theatre has transformed Norton's life, and he continues to learn much about himself in theatre. It has challenged his view of himself, his view of others, his view of the universe, and his view of God. It has challenged him to interact with others artistically, to empower people, and to set them up for success. Theatre teaches people how to work together as peers. He believes theatre teaches people to tell a story and ultimately, to interpret a story. After growing up in a conservative Christian home, theatre allowed him to interpret stories, and this changed the way he viewed God and how the universe works.

Professionally, besides being an artist, Norton works with a business that assembles computer parts, and works on the logistics of receiving and distribution of these products. In his job, it is important for him to listen carefully to what people are saying, to negotiate solutions, to clarify what the issues are, and to be able to troubleshoot. He also needs to work creatively to find solutions to the problem. He learned that these skills, such as negotiating with artists to

make a project happen, apply to businesses as well. He identifies a framework that he uses to get everyone on the same page in terms of what is needed, wanted, and expected. This skill is like producing a show in which actors need to be able to interpret lines, work together to accomplish a common goal, and create boundaries to make creative choices.

The 21st century skill that Nathaniel has learned through theatre is to have a go-getter attitude, a sense of boldness, an ability to stand up for himself, and to take action or act. He feels that he is better when he can be bolder in situations and express himself. He is a constantly learning more and honing these skills.

Norton says that having teachers incorporate theatre games into the classroom would be invaluable to a student since these skills are essential to learning. Training in theatre can cover so many skills. It helps with interpersonal skills, critical thinking, and creative problem solving. Theatre's impact can even carry over to costuming which teaches students how to dress for interviews, a skill many don't have.

An activity that Norton describes is helpful is the game "Freeze Tag." It is an improv game in which two students are in a scene. Someone can say "freeze," then that person comes and taps out one of those people and starts a new scene from whatever position that person is currently in. This game allows for people to make up stories with others, use their imagination, and have creative release. It also teaches people to join in, even if an idea is already started, and keep it going with the flow. This activity teaches a concept of improv of the idea of "yes and," which means that people continue and expand on an idea.

Norton has experienced theatre in multiple ways. Theatre for him has translated into his daily life in business, allowing him to make bold choices and develop the interpersonal skills he

needs to work with others. Theatre has changed the way he views others, and has given him the ability to see the world differently.

Ashley Stevens Rice

Ashley Stevens Rice started in theatre on whim in sixth grade. She fell in love with performing, however, she was shy and didn't perform again until freshmen year. She then performed in her junior and senior years in high school. Rice even was empowered by her drama teacher to major in theatre in college. She took classes her freshmen year at University of Minnesota Duluth, then, transferred to Bethel University. She graduated from Bethel with a degree in acting/musical theatre and sacred music. Rice also has been involved in film, choir, and puppetry. She performed in a variety of shows at Bethel, as well as several Fringe and community theatres.

Theatre gave her an opportunity to explore and better understand herself and her own story and struggles. Theatre taught her to work through her brokenness. Rice's parents are divorced. She recalls growing up in a broken family, needing to sell her childhood home, and dealing with not having much money. Theatre allowed her to confront these issues. It allowed for her own healing to take place through the characters she has played.

Professionally, Rice works as an administrative assistant in a church where she answers the phone, performs administrative tasks, and makes sure people have what they need. She states that theatre allowed her to have a voice to answer the phone, and to be able to multitask as often in theatre people need to multitask. Rice also works on the communication sides of the church where she works on social media and promotional pieces. She believes that theatre has helped

give her various words and phrases that she can use to draw attention to church activities.

Finally, Rice learned to care for people, to react to where people are, and to be in the moment.

These skills are needed both for her job and as an actor.

The greatest 21st century skill Rice gained from theatre was how to listen. She recalls that you need to learn to listen to react to others. This helps people to be in the moment and to do what is needed. When people know how to listen, it allows them to understand the subtext and what people are really trying to say. Theatre teaches people to listen before speaking. This allows us to take a step back, so we can really understand a person.

If teachers incorporate theatre into their curriculum, it will allow students to learn to focus. Focusing is so difficult in today's environment. Students are constantly thinking, texting, on their phones, using social media, and playing online games. Theatre allows them to calm their brains, to focus on the task at hand, and to ultimately learn. Rice also states that theatre will help create a connection with others. This will hopefully lessen bullying as students will get to know each other personally—and allow others to be themselves. It will also allow them to find their own emotion, empathy, and build connection with one another.

Theatre allows for students to have a place to have fun. Theatre will motivate students to think on their feet and have a sense of curiosity. In theatre, you never know what will happen. Every performance is different. The challenge of this uncertainty keeps students motivated to do their best.

Rice feels two games helped her discover and work through her brokenness.

1. Connection Game – Students stand in a circle but relatively far away from one another.

While having their eyes closed, they need to focus on the center and to sense each other's

energy in order to stomp and clap at the same time as everyone else in the circle. They need to pay attention, to not create a rhythm, but to be in the moment. This allows students to focus on what's happening outside of themselves.

2. Yes or Go Game – The game has three stages. Students stand in a circle. One person looks at another person in the circle and that person says “yes,” and they walk towards that person. While they are walking that person looks at another person in the circle and says “yes,” and walks towards another person, and it keeps going.

Stage 1: Verbal cue of saying “yes”

Stage 2: Nodding the head

Stage 3: Eye contact

Once students master this stage, they move onto another stage. This allows students to practice verbal cues, visual cues, and instinctual cues. The game helps students to pay attention and be in the moment.

Rice learned many powerful skills in theatre. Specifically, she learned to listen to others, to react, and to be in the moment. She also felt the healing power theatre in her personal life. Theatre has given her many skills that transfer not only to what is she doing today, but also to her passion that theatre can truly aid students with life issues.

Rachel Roberts

Rachel Roberts is a statistics researcher a university in Japan. Her theatre experience was limited, yet it has been a life-changing experience. Roberts stated that her parents gave her opportunities to learn more about herself. She started participating in theatre in fourth grade. It was something she enjoyed, but didn't have a passion for it. She participated in a weeklong

summer camp at Chanhassen Dinner Theatre. At the camp, students played theatre games, memorized scripts, performed skits, and put on a show. After participating in the camp, Roberts felt more confident. Roberts was relatively shy, and this helped her become less. In fifth grade, Roberts performed in a Snoopy play. She continued exploring theatre through show choir. In high school, she auditioned for *Bye Bye Birdie*, and landed a role.

Roberts says that theatre helped her to step out and try new things—to take new risks. It gave her confidence to step out by putting on a character. She didn't have to be afraid. She expresses that she didn't feel confident in acting, but she enjoyed it and decided to audition for more roles in Minneapolis area. Even though she didn't land the roles, she wasn't discouraged, but was encouraged to try to keep going, no matter how much work it takes. She learned how to deal with failure, and that even professional actors get rejected. This experience showed her how to be more empathic.

As an adult, Roberts reflects upon how theatre affects her life. Theatre has empowered her to find her own voice. It has challenged her to be okay in her own skin. Since graduating from college, she has participated in improv, workshops, and poetry slams. She can do this with ease because of her theatre experiences as it connects to other areas in her life. The skills she learned from these classes were quick-thinking, creativity, thinking outside the box, and feeling comfortable. Roberts says she learned how her body language plays a huge role into what she does, how her voice changes, and how she moves her arms in certain situations, which all translates into her work.

In reflecting upon her theatre experiences, she now realizes the greatest skill theatre has given her is confidence. She learned not to be critical of herself. She recalls the importance of taking safe risks as well as self-efficacy. "Self-efficacy," Roberts defines as a belief in oneself

that you can do something even if it is scary and there are unknowns. She has comfort to try something new.

Roberts believes that kids can learn body awareness, how to hold their bodies, how to speak, and how to get across an emotion or point. She also states students can learn interpersonal communication skills such as how to read and make facial expressions. These skills are important whenever one needs to appear authoritative or influential.

Currently, Roberts is a researcher for a university in Tokyo, Japan. She consults with doctors and researchers for medicines, performs tests on the medicines and writes up results, and is a teaching assistant. Her drama experience has given her the confidence to take leadership roles. Roberts is pursuing a new career in art therapy, which is very different from her current one, yet she doesn't feel scared because she is comfortable with the skills she has learned from her acting. She used collaboration, communication, and creativity in her career. Human beings strive for creative endeavors, and this will allow her to express more of her emotions and help others to do the same.

What we learn from Roberts' story is that theatre arts skills can be a bridge into entirely new career opportunities. While it may be frightening to be vulnerable in front of an audience, you have a team of cast and crew who will help you to take safe risks.

Roberts feels strongly about storytelling, and leads storytelling workshops. One of the activities she has people do is pick a word, and from that word, they need to come up with a true story from that word. Students at all levels can do this activity. This allows people to create and think on their feet. Stories are often therapeutic for people. When people have similar experiences, they can relate to others and find human connection.

Laura Saatzer

In understanding how schools work, it is important to also understand school ideas about how they best operate for integrating theatre. Laura Saatzer is an elementary principal preschool-fourth grade for an Aerospace STEM school in St. Paul, Minnesota. This school has an interest in STEM, and parents choose to send their child to this school for this interest in the work of science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and aerospace. There isn't a focus of the arts within the school as it is STEM school, however, the arts are Saatzer's passion, and she enjoys seeing the many benefits for the arts for her students.

Saatzer and her school have a special connection with First Covenant Church. The church puts on musicals involving many of her students. The musicals typically are held in the spring, and practices occur in the evenings. The church oversees the musical, however, the schools help funnel the about 25 students who participate in the musicals. Saatzer mentions that she sees a tremendous difference in those kids who participate in the musicals—compared to those that don't. She does see a direct correlation between student motivation and learning within doing a musical.

Students who participate in the theatre often show much pride in their work. They have a deep self-confidence that they can do something. Often students don't know what they are there for; however, when they see the whole production being put together, they understand the magnitude of what they have created as a team. They see the high-quality production they created, and what they can accomplish together as a team, which is a huge. It helps settle down those who are often rambunctious, and to work together as a team. Each student gets a t-shirt for being in the production—showing them they are part of something special.

Saatazer also participated in drama as a student as her mom strongly encouraged her to be in theatre. It helped her to develop a presence on the stage, and lessen her fears. She developed confidence, which she also sees in her students. She developed a stronger and more confident self-worth.

Theatre is a way to express yourself, get to know yourself, and push yourself. Saatazar expresses that these are three ways that theatre has helped her. It has given her motivation and lifelong skills that translate into academic growth to stay at it when it is hard. She sees students who participate in theatre having a growth mindset, and reaching out to others, because theatre helps develop you.

One activity that she enjoys teaching her students is to act out their feelings. For example, talk like a grumpy old man or a squeaky mouse voice. She encourages her students to explore and move in various ways. She encourages students to move as though they are sore, or they are a gymnast up in the air. These activities are ways that help students to put on a character and feel a certain way. Saatzer also believes that students can learn academics through theatre, such as dancing the time to learn how to read the clock or move through the parts of a flower. When students play games and use different voices, they can reflect upon their inner voices and explore where they are at.

Finally, Saatazer encouraged thoughts that theatre helps students learn to speak and have public speaking skills. It helps put you out there. If we can continue to create more culturally relevant teaching, then we are better able to incorporate more theatre. We can put on music. We can engage our learners to explore the idea of “self,” which gives free license to explore who we are.

Theatre can touch lives, to get to know one's "self," and to express yourself. Saatzer's key idea of confidence building is evident in her students that they can express themselves in however they desire to be.

Chris Sjolander

Another excellent example of someone whose theatre experiences have shaped and formed who he has become is Chris Sjolander. He started theatre in 2000 at his church Christ Presbyterian Church in Edina, Minnesota. At the time, he was nine years old in fourth grade when he played David in "David in Goliath." After this experience, theatre and music became his passion, and he wanted to perform whenever he could. From there he got involved in drama acting classes, singing lessons, and dance classes. For Sjolander it was his outlet to shine.

Sjolander states that he tried sports. Sports were important to his dad, and while he tried soccer and basketball, it wasn't his passion or a skill he was good at. However, his parents were supportive of whatever he did. This passion started at church musicals. He also took classes that focused mostly on character study through Stage Coach Performing Arts, as well as in school. He started actively performing in sixth grade through Edina Public Schools as an extracurricular activity, and performed in "Into the Woods Jr. At first, he didn't get the role he wanted, and was so disappointed he even cried. Yet when someone dropped out, he was given a bigger role. From there, he earned more and more roles and was cast in almost every play and musical in middle and high school. Most of the musical roles he was featured as a lead. At the end, he performed in eight shows in middle school and six shows in high school.

As he rounded out his high school career, he continued to want to perform and ended up performing in three shows in his college career at Bethel University including: *Curtains*, *Urinetown*, and *Jane Eyre*. Unfortunately, in his adult life, Sjolander doesn't perform anymore because of his work schedule—and the existing stigma for being a male performing in the adult theatre world. However, whenever Sjolander sees shows, he always sees himself in various roles and wants to be that person. That is a deep value that won't go away, Sjolander explained.

As with many aspects of theatre, Sjolander learned many skills. Most importantly he learned to challenge himself. He learned to become another character that is different from him. He learned to put himself out there and be in front of an audience. His confidence grew, and he learned how to speak in front of people.

“Zip, Zap, Zop” is a game Sjolander recalls as being helpful with attention and focus. He learned to express himself on and off stage. He says, “I learned what it is like to be outside of yourself and be comfortable in my own skin, to walk on the stage to become a new character, to putting myself out there. I also learned to be present. I use these skills when I make presentations at work.

The greatest 21st century skill that Sjolander took in through these experiences was teamwork. When you are part of a production, you learn everything including: sound, tech, lights, marketing, public relations, orchestra, directors, etc. Everyone is needed to make the production happen. It is important to have everyone be a part of it, and pull his or her own weight or the project won't work.

Sjolander works in sales at General Mills. Often there are many logistics that they don't always agree upon, but he has learned to come together, to partner, and to team up as a group just

like he did in his theatre experiences. He also explains that in theatre you learn to prepare for a character. You learn to dig deep and add personality and background to that character. This translates to his job in problem solving skills because that is how one can respond to another's ideas.

All students need to have an outlet to grow and express themselves in different ways. Sjolander believes that everyone can find value in theatre when you put yourself out there. You learn about judgment. Performing is personal and subjective. It is a supportive environment where students can learn more about themselves and each other.

Theatre connects to many subjects. When you can customize a subject and find a way to act it out, students are more able to memorize it—and to connect it to memory. Sjolander states that in English classes, he had a teacher who had students act out the vocabulary words. This helped him to commit the words to memory and understand the words.

One of the games that Sjolander discussed as being helpful is “Zip, Zap, Zop” in which students send the words “Zip, Zap, Zop” around in a circle. It takes focus, attention, and concentration. Today, people have only about nine seconds of concentration at a time, especially in the age of cell phones. This is a great game to help aid with focus in the area of cell phones and technology. He believes that theatre games would be a great asset to the classroom, and wishes he had more exposure to this.

Sjolander's story illustrates two key ways in which theatre skills prepare a person for the new 21st century workforce. First, today's worker must be a team player and a partner. To do this, a person must learn how to communicate clearly. His story shows how he developed these skills, first in individual roles, and later in performing groups. Second, a lot has been said

about the positive affect that participation in team sports has on skill development needed for business, and in theatre, so much depends on teamwork. His story demonstrates an alternate path to the same result.

Laura Steen

For Laura Steen, theatre presented itself as an opportunity later in her adult life. When she was in middle school, Laura sang in the school choir. Her middle school choir director empowered her by saying she was a good singer, and should audition for the plays/musicals in the school. Steen took this advice to heart, and not only auditioned for the theatre department, but performed in most shows of her middle school and high school shows, including eight musicals. Steen continued with her passion for singing throughout middle, high school, college, as well as in grad school. She continues to sing in worship teams at her church. She sings with a band that performs for weddings and other events, and occasionally performs skits with her church. However, her greatest passion that resulted from her theatre experience is in forensics. She explains that forensics is a speech and debate competition in which students memorize a five-to-ten-minute script that is then acted out and performed. These are scored and competed all over the area.

As an engineer, Steen doesn't get an opportunity to perform much, but says that she learned through her theatre experience that she really does enjoy being on the stage—taking something raw and turning it into something creative, and being able to express that creativity.

One quality Steen believes she gained from theatre is confidence. In high school, she was asked to give the commencement speech. Most students are extremely nervous to give their

speech; however, because she had experience in forensics and being on the stage, she felt comfortable and confident to give a speech in front of others. This confidence has translated into what she does today where she is confident and comfortable speaking and giving presentations.

Presently Steen works as a wind-tunnel engineer. She presents data about water droplets, discussing the findings and presenting them to teams. Theatre experience helped her to put the whole story together. She tries to understand where her audience is coming from, and builds that understanding into her speech so her audience can understand her research.

Steen found 21st century skills that theatre helped her in life: communication, empathy, and teamwork. Everyone has a unique role to play in a performance. Everyone is needed—and it is important to recognize that everyone is needed. If someone isn't there, it truly makes a difference. Steen points out that it is important to talk to people where they are at, and where they are coming from. This develops from a deeper sense of empathy and understanding of how to communicate.

Considering today's trying times, empathy, communication, and listening are needed more and more. Steen says that having theatre in more classes would help bring people together to talk with one another and have open communication. She recalls a time in school when she was reading "Hamlet." Her teacher assigned students to read different characters and roles. This gave her empathy towards the characters and helped her better understand the character. In our society, because we have a difficult time seeing other people's point of view, this will help us see each other's perspective and to work together as a team more effectively.

Theatre gave Steen a deep sense of enjoyment, a sense of purpose, and allowed her to express herself, but it also challenged her. It allowed her to get to know people she wouldn't get to know

otherwise. It also allowed her to take something often quite messy and refine it into something polished. This motivated her to do the same in her other schoolwork.

One of the theatre games Steen recalls that she benefited from was “Clerk and Returner.” This improv game helps people think on their feet, give clues and respond to those clues, and take in information and respond to it. In this activity one person is the clerk and one is the returner in a store. The clerk doesn’t know what the person is returning. The returner must give clues to what he/she is returning without saying what it is, while allowing the clerk to guess what he/she is returning. This incorporates gathering data, and creates an environment that allows you to respond to situations in the moment.

For Steen, confidence, empathy, communication, and teamwork were the important skills she gained through her experience in theatre. She is now able to give presentations without fear, and has a greater empathy towards others. She can communicate and work together with others because of her theatrical experiences that have shaped approach to life.

Natalie Tran

Natalie Tran is in seventh grade; however, she has more experience in theatre than many people much older. She started participating in theatre at the age of five when her mom asked her if she wanted to be in a show with her sister. She auditioned for *The King and I*, got a role as a royal child, and has been in shows ever since. Theatre has given Tran much joy and is something she truly loves. She has been involved with productions with the Guthrie, Ordway, and Children’s Theatre. She also has acted in films, commercials, sang in choirs, and played violin in her school orchestra. She has also been a spokesperson for various companies. Tran hopes to major in theatre, and possibly direct shows.

Tran takes theatre classes through Children's Theatre in Minneapolis. Her classes include improv and specialty classes such as stage combat, where she learns how to fall without hurting or pushing others without hurting them. She also takes voice lessons and dance classes, specifically tap, to better hone her skills.

When asked what she has learned about herself in theatre, she said she is comfortable speaking in front an audience. She says she learned that the more people she speaks in front of, the less nervous she becomes. Theatre challenges her, and it gives her something to think about. Theatre has helped Tran gain more confidence in herself, make friends, learn to find common ground with others, and has develop creative problem-solving skills.

The best 21st century skill Tran has gained is problem-solving. For example, even when blocking on stage doesn't work the way it was planned, she has learned to work around the situation. She also learned that it is important to work together as a team to create and produce something beautiful. Everyone is needed to make something happen.

Tran believes that if these skills were incorporated into the classroom, students would learn improv skills, how to think on their feet, how to work together as a team, and learn creativity. All these skills are needed for life, and she believes that they will truly help individuals to better themselves.

Motivation is an important skill, and when asked if theatre helped motivate her, Tran's answer is yes. Theatre helped her with organization skills, specifically time management skills which she used to get homework done, memorize her lines, and manage her time between rehearsals. It is all about balance for Tran.

Tran described three games as helpful in her understanding of self and theatre:

- A. Tongue Twisters – helps her to take her time, develop breath control, and improve her speaking ability
- B. Character Improv Game – Students walk around a room. They pick a body part to lead with, and walk with that part of their body. They then need to think about who they are, where they are, what their name is, and how they need to behave as their character. What is their backstory? Each student describes her character. Students learn creativity, improv, and find something new in their exploration of self.
- C. Status Game – Students are assigned a social status from 1-10 (1=lowest status and 10=highest status). Each person must convey the status by their actions, and without speaking. The others need to guess their status. For example, 10 would be the most confident person, like maybe a rich celebrity, and 1 would be a homeless person, and others would be in the middle. In this activity, people learn how to develop and convey characters to an audience. The person guessing is learning to read and interpret the characters.

Even though Tran is young, she has gleaned much from theatre. It has given her a perspective that will train her to be a more well-rounded person. Her discipline, ability to convey a message and interact with others, as well as her increased confidence, will help her in life.

Sara Truesdale

Sara Truesdale is a teaching artist for multiple companies. She enjoys storytelling and helping stories to come alive for kids. She has worked with numerous settings and in various capacities and has viewed each of them a new and exciting challenge and opportunity. Truesdale

received her bachelors from St. Olaf in Northfield, Minnesota in theatre arts. For her theatre started in fourth grade when she became involved in a youth community theatre play. Her mom saw that she had an aptitude for aspects related to theatre, and wanted to see if there were opportunities she could get involved in. Ever since this play, she has been involved with theatre in elementary, middle, high school, and college productions and classes.

During her college years, Truesdale took on college internships for theatre companies, businesses, and in educational settings. In getting a camp counselor position, she knew she wanted to be a role model for students. She became working with youth in collaboration and imagination. She had a positive intersection of theatre arts and education through her own teachers, and wanted to pass this down to other generations. Today Truesdale has taught ages three through college: acting, scripted work, improv, devised work, puppetry, and educational theatrical classes. She is most interested in teaching students who want to explore and try something in a new and safe way. Theatre gives them this place to explore using their body, voice, and imagination to try, experience, and explore.

Throughout Truesdale's experiences in theatre, she learned that there are many choices in ways to behave. We all have choices we must make; there is not just one way to being. There are vast opportunities to use your body, voice, and imagination, and it is up to you to choose these ways.

A huge emphasis on 21st century skills that Truesdale commented on is the word empathy. Actors study empathy and how to put yourself in someone else's shoes. We learn empathy, and how important it is as a life skill. It challenges assumptions, especially when you're in a situation where you can step back and observe what is going on and who are the various people around. We can learn that we can interpret the same situation multiple ways.

Two theatre games Truesdale discusses that are helpful for 21st century skills are in observation and empathy.

1. Frozen Pictures – Students are in two groups. Each group is to create frozen pictures. These frozen pictures eventually become a larger play, but the frozen pictures are part of an exercise to work together as a group. Each group will go up and do their frozen picture. The other students will describe what they saw, observed, and noticed. They will talk about the multiple ways to observe a situation, and that we don't know exactly what is going on just by looking at the picture. It takes observation, reacting to a situation, and team work/collaboration.
2. Character Work – This exercise helps students to understand empathy. Students will act out different characters. It is important to clarify that we may not know what it is like to experience that person, but we will put on that character. We are using our imagination to guess what that person might be feeling, how they might feel to help a king, how they might feel to be a king, how they might feel to be a servant of the king. We don't know how they feel, but we can use our imaginations. We can also use this in our real life in different situations.

Student motivation and learning is directly correlated to theatre. If a student does something he enjoys, it often will help him to learn. This is a good example with theatre. As humans we strive to learn. Theatre helps to create a positive space of connecting and understanding, and a place where all people can work together to have multiple ways of expressing themselves. This creates ultimately healthier students and more positive people.

Currently Truesdale works in customer service. In this industry, she uses her theatre experiences through her developed increase in empathy, where she is best able to listen to her

customer. She can put herself in her customer's shoes, and listen to them, and then apply the same skills she learned in acting. Having theatre as a part of someone's life helps a person become more fully human as it is a way to express oneself—and this is what it has done for Truesdale.

Truesdale's story shows us that when we give people opportunity to explore who they are, they can learn to react to others. She shares that theatre can be a place to learn to listen to others, to observe people's actions, and ultimately have empathy. Humans basically want people to see them, listen, and care. Empathy is a skill needed to put you in another's shoes.

Meg Zauner

Meg Zauner, Bethel University theatre arts professor, is a huge advocate for the integration of theatre arts and education, especially within the impact of 21st century skills. Some of these skills include: creativity, self-expression, collaboration, evaluation, problem solving skills, teamwork.

Theatre arts allows students to see something within themselves and to reflect upon their own learning. They can reach students who are more difficult to motivate, helping them learn by movement. Zauner says theatre helps students who are shy—and those off-the-wall that have too much energy. Often when students have too much energy and are misbehaving, when giving them a certain task to do, they listen. Theatre also allows students to move, to get away from their desks, and to try something different from what they are normally doing.

Zauner has seen students make deep meaningful connections, which humans crave. It allows students to gain confidence skills within themselves. Students also learn how to make eye contact with one another. It helps students with storytelling skills, and challenges students to take

a risk. She enjoys teaching skills that are movement, group, pairs, and individuals, which allows students to take healthy risks within a safe environment. Students who participate in theatre and theatre games are often more well-rounded, it allows them to play, and teaches them to focus. She also explained how drama encourages students to think outside the box. Drama is a non-linear activity. There is not a right or wrong way of doing something because it is all about how to express oneself. When you express yourself, you are allowing ability to think outside the box for creative expression. Theatre is a universal tool for communication.

Stephanie – the Metro Mobility driver

Another example of how theatre has impacted someone is Stephanie. Stephanie is now a bus driver for metro mobility, a transportation service in the Twin Cities for people with disabilities. Her mother encouraged her to join the church choir when she was young, and she went on to perform in musicals, plays, and vocal performances. These experiences have inspired her to the point of writing plays for her church.

When asked how the arts impacted her job as a bus driver, I was shocked by her response, as typically the 21st century skills won't necessarily carry over to a job that is transporting people. Stephanie explained that people with all types disabilities ride the bus. Some of these people have developmental disabilities, and often get agitated quickly and easily. One day a rider was going from Prior Lake to Woodbury, quite a far drive. She could tell he was getting agitated and she wanted to keep him entertained. He was softly humming to himself, so she decided to sing to him. They started singing Broadway hits, and soon his fears and anxiety melted away. He had a smile, and she was able to use music to communicate with him. Music

was a healing place, a common ground as a way for her to help her clients, and a pathway of communication. Communication is a 21st century skill that needs to be addressed, and this is a beautiful story of her skill-based learning.

For Stephanie, the 21st century skill she learned was confidence. She learned to speak in public and in front of her church without forgetting what she had to say, and said it in a passionate way. Drama gave her a reason to continue to go to school. She didn't like or understand many of the other subjects, but when she found her passion of choir and drama, it got her up in the morning. Drama and choir was the only place she truly felt she fit in. So many of the other places, she felt as though she didn't belong. Theatre gave her a sense of community, a sense of belonging, and a sense of being. All students and people need and want to feel they are connected to something, and this gave Stephanie something to connect to, so that she would stay more engaged and motivated in school.

Classroom Experience

Zauner is leading the way for 21st century skills using theatre techniques. The following observation of her teaching style in action. As part of learning more about drama, movement, and theatre arts, I sought out ways to fully understand drama. Drama is a way to express oneself using non-verbal and verbal communication. September 2016, I observed one of Zauner's Theatre for Youth classes where she taught ten students sophomore-seniors drama and education majors and minors the use of theatre in an elementary classroom or elementary level. It was insight and eye opening to see the many cross overs and gave me very ideas for my continued work. All the activities presented were for anyone, but specifically for elementary aged focused. These activities challenged students to be something, to do something, or to take a risk. It is important in these activities to ask follow up questions. By asking questions you incorporate everyone.

Animals-Meg called out an animal. Everyone moved about the room in that animal form. Everyone took on that animal in their body what they thought that animal, would look, sound, feel, and act like. Each animal was different as every person had a different interpretation of that animal. She asked questions about what animal are they? How do you know what animal they are? What color is the animal? What is the animals' motivation? What is the animal doing? What kind of bear is it?

What's in a Box? -This was an imagination game that taught focus and attention. Students sat in a circle. The first person would open the imaginary box and use it however he/she would like to and pass it on to the next person who would use it in a different way. This is both a group and individual activity that should be done middle or towards the end of a time as even

though everyone is in a group, it is often difficult when people are shy to do something they aren't used to doing. Then asking questions such as: What did you see?

Do Wop Movement-This activity had the group split into two groups to do two different movement sequences. This taught both rhythms, beats, rests, and patterns. Students had to keep their own rhythm in sync with each other. It focuses on attention and focus as well.

Poems-Zauner read poems aloud to the students and as the students listened to the poems she had each of them create an interpretive dance to the poem. This allows for creative expression and movement within their bodies. It is important to choose poems with alliteration, imagery, and lots of colorful language. Read the poem slowly, enunciate and pause for emphasis. What did you do to be successful? This was an interesting question she asked students to reflect upon. How did someone interpret the poem differently than others? What were you aware of other people doing in the space that was different or similar to how you moved your body? This awareness is huge for students to better understand themselves and others.

Activities that are rhythm orientated-Have students create rhythms with patterns using beats and rests with their bodies and objects around the room. Students should create levels (high, low, small, big) when creating rhythms. Ask for different and varying ways they can make these rhythms. Encourage students to ask them what worked. What would they do differently? How did they collaborate and work together?

Zauner emphasized that with every activity it is important to process, reflect, and ask questions. We need to reflect upon what went well and what to improve on. This is a needed skill in acting, in the educational system, and beyond. We need to reflect upon the process and allow students time to reflect what they learned about themselves, others, and life skills.

APPENDIX B

Themes from the Interviews

Themes: what develops as a result of theater for students	Sub-themes	Number	21st C.
Becoming more animated			
Team spirit		2	
Being present; in the moment; aware of what's going on; learn comfort in the moment	Being fully engaged	6	
Learn how to 'read a room'; be aware of space	Stage presence	2	
Aware of body language			
Being stimulated; not bored			
Innovation; creativity; ability to 'play'; learning to express oneself in new / creative ways		7	*
Learning to trust your instincts			
Listening; being an active listener		2	*
Social interaction skills		2	*
Learn eye contact; focus and attention			
Communication skills; self-expression		7	*
Learning to function as a team			
Active and interactive learning			
Be able to step into a character; go beyond oneself		2	
Confidence to talk to people		4	*
Motivation to grow and change			
Opportunity to take risks; try new things		3	*
Learned empathy; part of story telling		3	
Self-efficacy; belief in oneself; self-confidence;	Self-worth; esteem	11	
Body awareness- ability to get across a point			
Collaboration; teamwork; ability to work with people		10	*
Creativity; ability to think outside the box; creative problem solving	Think on one's feet	6	
Attention and focus		3	
Making judgments			
Music as a path to communication			
Sense of community			
Escape from reality			
Theater improves literacy: "kinesthetic learning"			
Develop confidence with oneself; learn to relax			
Power of observation			
Students can tell their own stories – from their perspectives			
Use of puppets for story telling; can also be used to have a conversation – eliminating the need for eye contact	Especially for autistic students		
Learn the power of voice and listening with eyes as well as ears			
Learn via movement			

Learn how to connect with other human beings			
Mirroring; mimicry			
Theater is a means to express oneself; to act out and reflect on feelings			
Students learn to speak publicly			