

K-6 Residency Models:

Create-a-Play:

Overview: *Create-a-Play* residencies use improvisation, shared story-telling, and other strategies from the theatre to devise an original play. Students work collaboratively with a teaching artist to synthesize knowledge and understandings of a theme, big idea, process, or other content-specific learning goal.

Educators may also choose to use a *Create-a-Play* residency to explore themes of community, leadership, cooperation, empathy, and other character-building work. *Create-a-Play* takes students through a process of skill-building and brainstorming, improvisation-based script writing, performance, and critique. All the students serve as performers, creators, collaborative directors, and content explorers.

"The creative drama process integrates mental and physical activity, engaging the whole child in improvisational and process-oriented experiences. These dramatic learning activities nurture and develop both individual and group skills and enhance the participants' abilities to communicate their ideas, images, and feelings in concert with others through dramatic action."

- Patricia Pinciotti, *Creative Drama and Young Children*, Arts Education Policy Review, Vol. 94, 1993

This dynamic, hands-on model is the ideal residency for educators who wish to give their students a chance to create an original performance experience with professional teaching artists.

Linking to the Standards: Create-a-Play Residency

Example

Content Area, Strand and Scenario:
VII, Government and History, Grades 4-8

1. Students will identify people who have dealt with challenges and made a positive difference in other people's lives and explain their contributions.

Scenario: A sixth grade social studies teacher seeks to give students an opportunity to delve more deeply into the open-ended process of analyzing adversity through figures from history.

Additionally, she would like her students to engage in a “curriculum of identity,” comparing and contrasting personal experiences with those of figures from history. She also wants her students to be exposed to a range of significant figures.

She hopes her students will deepen their understanding of individuals’ accomplishments within our nation’s history, and their interconnectedness and legacy of achievement.

Create-a-Play Connection:

A teaching artist works with students who have each identified and researched a significant figure from history to create a performance. After some initial brainstorming to compare and contrast qualities of these individuals, the artist guides students to identify a central conflict shared by many or all of the “characters” (in this case, significant figures from history).

Taking bits of timeline and biography, the artist and students weave together a play that explores the central theme of “overcoming adversity to make a positive contribution.” Students work on their feet through a process called “improvisation as creation dialogue” to form a script. Students continue to supply bits of the story from their research as they learn to embody as an actor the figure they studied.

The final performance is a play detailing multiple significant figures from history and their contributions through a unifying plot.

Link to Standards:

MN Social Study Standards; Grades 4-8

VII.A. The student will recognize the importance of individual action and character in shaping civic life.

MN Language Arts Standards; Grade 8

6.4.1.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

6.4.3.3 Describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

- 6.4.4.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
- 6.4.5.5 Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
- 6.4.7.7 Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.
- 6.5.2.2 Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- 6.5.7.7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.