

K-6 Residency Models:

Ties to Curriculum

Overview: A “**Ties to Curriculum**” residency takes an unit of study, learning goal, or theme, and brings it to life through the kinesthetic process of theatre-learning. Getting students out of their seats and actively engaged in learning is absolutely necessary in today’s climate of high stakes testing and rigorous achievement goals.

“**Ties to Curriculum**” residencies bring dynamic learning processes to mandated curriculum and standards, giving teachers and students an opportunity to fully engage with content. Through the use of unscripted drama, improvisation, role drama, narrated creative play, and re-enactments, students can explore content from any subject.

Teachers often use this residency to deepen and differentiate learning across the content areas.

“Because imaginative play is a key factor in brain and body development in children, drama education is a valuable avenue for facilitating children’s growth... Drama offers a great potential for learning for it engages students’ interest and curiosity, holds their attention, and serves as a powerful motivator for children to ask questions and explore new terrain.”

- Pamela Gerke and Helen Landalf,
Hooves and Horns, Fins and Feathers,
Smith and Kraus, Lyme, NH, 1999.

Blended learning activities include:

- Re-enactments of events and issues from curriculum, followed by critical response and reflection
- Synthesis of character and setting through creative dramatics to develop critical thinking skills and deepen understandings of time, place, motive, and causal relationships
- Teaching artists activate learning for kinesthetic, linguistic and interpersonal learners through improvisation and collaborative story telling
- Experiential learning explorations using improvisation, role drama, tableau, and narrated pantomime to explore learning goals in math, science, language arts, or social studies.

Linking to the Standards: Ties to Curriculum

Example

Content Area, Strand and Benchmark:

Math, Grade 2

Strand: Number and Operations and Algebra

Benchmarks:

- 2.1.2.4. Use mental strategies and algorithms based on knowledge of place value and equality to add and subtract two-digit numbers. Strategies may include decomposition, expanded notation, and partial sums and differences.
- 2.1.2.5. Solve real-world and mathematical addition and subtraction problems involving whole numbers with up to 2 digits.
- 2.2.1.1 Identify, create and describe simple number patterns involving repeated addition or subtraction, skip counting and arrays of objects such as counters or tiles. Use patterns to solve problems in various contexts.
- 2.2.2.1 Understand how to interpret number sentences involving addition, subtraction and unknowns represented by letters. Use objects and number lines and create real-world situations to represent number sentences.

Scenario:

A second grade teacher is engaged in a unit on number stories from the Everyday Math curriculum. The unit activates Algebra and Number-sense skills, and asks students to use mental math strategies to solve number stories. Furthermore, the unit also includes content on creating number stories.

She finds that the majority of her students are able to solve certain number stories, especially if they are allowed to use manipulatives. However, creating number stories, even with the use of Everyday Math's graphic organizers, is proving more difficult. She wants to give students a more hands-on experience of both solving and creating number stories.

Ties to Curriculum Connection:

The teaching artist collaborates with the classroom teacher to create a creative dramatics scenario in which students will encounter numerous real-world number story situations: First, the teaching artist creates a new environment by engaging students in a creative play exercise; she asks them to imagine they are no longer in

their classroom, but rather in Charlie's Chocolate Factory (or other setting from a book the whole class is familiar with). She guides students through a pantomime and improvisation process, helping them to both physicalize and visualize the creative setting. Students then create characters and choose small costume pieces, such as hats and scarves, to help them take on the characters.

After this ground work is established, the teaching artist narrates students through a creative dramatics scenario; students encounter number story puzzles along their journey through the chocolate factory. A small group of students must figure out how many caramels need to be added to a half empty dozen-pack.

The teaching artist, who is also "in character" as Willy Wonka, guides the students to solve the problem. Others freeze momentarily and watch the mini-drama play out. Students continue to encounter and solve number stories in this dramatic play scenario, and then create math journals to write number sentences for the problems they encountered. All the number stories inserted into the dramatic play come directly from the Everyday Math curriculum, but are framed in a different context.

The teaching artist moves on to guide students through a process of creating their own number stories through narrated dramas first, then through improvisation, and finally by breaking into small groups to create tableaux and short performances. Occasionally, simple props serve as manipulatives to help structure the created number story dramas.

Link to Standards:

MN Standards Math: Grade 2

1. Demonstrate mastery of addition and subtraction basic facts; add and subtract one- and two-digit numbers in real-world and mathematical problems.
2. Recognize, create, describe, and use patterns and rules to solve real-world and mathematical problems.
3. Use number sentences involving addition, subtraction and unknowns to represent and solve real-world and mathematical problems; create real-world situations corresponding to number sentences.