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# Transforming the Mindsets of Elementary Students Crosstown Theatre Troupe 2014-2015 Curriculum

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# Transforming the Mindsets of Elementary Students Crosstown Theatre Troupe 2014-2015 Curriculum

## **Abstract**

Transforming the Mindsets of Elementary Students is a curriculum designed to teach Elementary schools participating in the Bright Futures Program the art and skills of theatre while incorporating the ideas from Mindset, The New Psychology of Success by Carol S. Dweck. This curriculum was created to help students learn to have a growth mindset by taking risks, making choices, learning from mistakes, and looking to the future while learning the art and skills of Life Theatre. This Project is made up of two quarters' curriculums, the process on creating the lessons, and a reflection on constructing the curriculum and implementing it into Public Elementary Schools.

## **Degree Type**

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## **Department**

Communication, Media and Theatre Arts

## **First Advisor**

Jessica 'Decky' Alexander

## **Keywords**

Crosstown, Theatre, Challenges, Drama and Theatre for the Young, Clubs, After school Program

Transforming the Mindsets of Elementary Students

Crosstown Theatre Troupe 2014-2015 Curriculum

By

Lauren N. Zamiska

A Senior Thesis Submitted to the

Eastern Michigan University

Honors College

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation

with Honors in Communication, Media, and Theatre Arts

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## Process

With so many budget cuts and college prep courses our schools are losing athletic activities, arts, and after school programs everyday. Thankfully a program run by Eastern Michigan University and created by Dr. Lynn Malinoff was created to help children participate in athletics, arts, and many other clubs after school. This program is called Bright Futures. It was established in 2007 and has grown and developed throughout the years. Now fifteen different elementary, middle, and high schools in three different counties have a Bright Futures program. This program helps to give students an opportunity to participate in clubs and learn different arts and skills that they do not learn in everyday classes. Bright Futures runs after the school day ends and has different clubs for the students to choose from. The different clubs vary by day and by school and the students usually tend to pick a club and stay in it for the entire quarter. After the quarter ends they can choose to stay with that club or choose another one to attend. The clubs include music, dance, photography, baseball, baking, poetry, and theatre, just to name a few.

I had the privilege to lead one of these clubs for my final year at Eastern. As a Comprehensive Communication, Media, and Theatre Arts major with a minor in Drama and Theatre for the Young, I have a huge passion for theatre and working with children. I was so happy to be asked if I would like to teach a theatre class this year at an elementary school. One of the clubs Bright Futures partners with is Crosstown Theatre Troupe. This group consists of graduates and undergraduates at Eastern Michigan involved in the Drama and Theatre for the Young. We are known as theatre artists and get to teach theatre skills and share our passion with young students everyday. I had the joy of teaching at Estabrook Elementary School located in Ypsilanti, Michigan

A wonderful professor of Applied Drama and Theatre heads Crosstown Theatre Troupe for the Young, Jessica Alexander. At the beginning of the school year she asked me to work with a graduate student, Katie'B Jarvis, and create a curriculum for the Crosstown Theatre Troupe elementary schools. This would be a curriculum for all of the teaching artists working at the elementary schools to follow. The curriculum would begin in the second quarter of the school year and run for eight weeks. It would then change for the third quarter, and again for the fourth. I was happy and excited to be working on this curriculum for my Senior Thesis Project

A new idea that Bright Futures is incorporating into their clubs is the Theory of *Mindset*. *Mindset, The New Psychology of Success* is a book by Carol S. Dweck. Bright Future's goal is to incorporate themes and ideas from this book into their teaching. Crosstown Theatre also decided that these themes could be worked into our theatre lessons. The main idea of *Mindset* is showing people that there are two different types of mindsets. There is a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. When someone has a fixed mindset they may take the easy route, they don't challenge themselves, give up easily, and not look forward. We all need to strive to have a growth mindset, where it is okay to fail. Here we learn from our mistakes, take risks, make new choices, learn that we cannot win them all, and always look forward and be positive for the future. In society, and especially as children, we learn that we always have to do our best, win, and never fail. Implementing the idea of a growth mindset let children know that it is okay to fail. It is okay to fail, we can ask questions, and take risks or make choices we normally might not make. This is how we learn to grow.

Katie'B and I decided to take important thoughts and ideas from this book and create themed days for our curriculum helping our students to move forward and work on developing a growth mindset throughout the year. Our teaching artists took the first quarter of the school year

to play theatre games with their students and teach some fundamentals of acting. During this semester I taught some of the basics such as right and left stage, up and down stage, and other scenes and improv games. During this time Katie'B and I worked diligently to create the curriculum that would begin in the second quarter in the beginning of November.

Katie'B and I met every Tuesday and Thursday in September and October for about an hour and a half to create this curriculum. We began by choosing important themes from *Mindset* that we thought would be important to teach our students and also be able to relate to theatre. We decided to use themes including, Character, Friendship/Bullying/Shyness, Negotiation/Leaders, Partner vs. Enemy, Maintaining changes, Risk Taking, Taking the First step, and finally Sharing what we have learned. It was then my job to find games and theatre activities that could relate to these themes. I looked through many theatre games and activity books, websites, and wrote down many games that I had played in past classes or productions I had been involved in. Most of the activities come from Augusto Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-actors* and *More Theatre Games for Young Performers: Improvisations and Exercises for Developing Acting Skills* by Suzi Zimmerman. After I had collected many activities, Katie'B and I started to plan out each day.

We encouraged the teaching artists to lead their own warm up of their choosing every day and to end with a reflection. Katie'B and I provided about two or three games and activities for the teachers to lead in their one-hour classes. Once we had figured out the structure of the quarter and the plan for each day, we decided to include the connection to *Mindset* and discussion questions after each exercise. This was the most important key to the curriculum. We wanted our teaching artists to ask questions of how the games and activities made the students feel, how they could relate these feelings to their everyday lives, how could we make these games more chal-

lenging, and how can we work to have a growth mindset instead of a fixed mindset. The curriculum is set up for improving these skills through out the quarter and then maintaining these in their everyday lives. The last day of the quarter would serve as a day for students to share what they had learned, perform scenes, and play games.

Once we had finished the curriculum we needed to have a training day for our teaching artists before the new quarter started. We met for two hours one day in late October and Katie'B and I gave a lesson on *Mindset* and the importance of teaching it to our students. We then played examples of games that were included in the curriculum. After each game we would talk about how it related to the ideas of *Mindset* and ask the teaching artists the discussion questions. After the training day we were all ready to bring this curriculum into our schools.

Toward the end of the second quarter in January, Katie'B and I met again to start the lesson plans for the third quarter. We were very happy with the teaching artists' feedback from the previous quarter so we decided to let them plan the activities for each class period. Katie' B and I decided to create themes for every day and instructed the teaching artists to plan their activities around these themes. We included the ideas of teamwork, risk, leadership, relationships, failure, reactions, and goals. We included the connections that these themes have to *Mindset* and discussion questions that we should be asking our students. We also included a structure for each day. We encouraged the teachers to lead a warm up and reflection each day along with two or three activities relating to the day's theme. For this quarter we encouraged more writing and performance activities giving students opportunities to use their writing skills and to perform their ideas. We also thought it was important to strive to create a final performance for families and the other clubs in Bright Futures. We encouraged planning these early and rehearsing them toward the end of the quarter for the final day.



We felt that our teaching artists had a better understanding of *Mindset* and could choose their own exercises to lead their groups. For the final quarter that will start in a couple weeks we have decided to let individual teaching artists plan their own lessons for the day. This will be a nice way to end the year and to really incorporate what we have learned about the theory of *Mindset*. We will continue to teach and use these themes and ideas in our classes and help our students to do everything they can do to help develop a growth mindset. This program helps students to learn crafts that they might not normally get the chance to learn. They will learn how to grow as artists and as people, take risks, make new choices, learn from mistakes, and look to the future.

## Second Quarter Letter to Teaching Artists

The curriculum is very arts integration oriented. We are integrating the lessons and choices that are expressed in the book *Mindset: the New Psychology of Success*. This book is very popular and is designed to enlighten students and professionals as to how they can fulfill their potential.

1) There are two mindsets primarily focused upon in the book. Please share these definitions with your students and occasionally challenge them to enforce the Growth Mindset upon themselves.

**Growth Mindset:** “Leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to:

Embrace Challenges

Persist in the face of set backs

See efforts as a path to mastery

Learn from criticism

Find lessons and inspiration in the success of others.

As a result they reach ever-higher-levels of achievement.”

\*Someone with a growth mindset believes they can continue to learn and that intelligence is not strictly nature over nurture. Choosing to do more difficult activities over something they already know is a sign of a growth mindset.

**Fixed Mindset:** “Leads to a desire to look smart and therefore a tendency to:

Avoid challenges

Get defensive or give up easily

See effort as fruitless or worse

Ignore useful negative feedback

Feel threatened by the success of others

As a result they may plateau early and achieve less than their full potential.”

\*Someone with a fixed mindset believes that they are only as smart as they are and cannot grow and that intelligence is strictly nature over nurture. They do not feel up to challenges and view them as worthless. They would prefer to do the same easy activities over and over.

2) It is important to note that it is possible to have different mindsets in different situations. One person does not always have one mindset. We want to challenge our students to think about their choices and reactions and identify which of the two mindsets they are utilizing. We want to challenge them to make conscious decisions to make growth mindset choices, even when they want to stay in a fixed mindset.

3) Many of the activities may seem like simple theatrical games, but they can all be related to mindsets. If a student has a growth mindset in a difficult game and continues to play even when they are failing it is important to point out that the same can be done in life. Use the discussion questions and Connection to Mindset as guides to help your students realize how they can fulfill their potential.

- 4) There are no wrong answers. Please do not shame or make students uncomfortable if they do choose a fixed mindset. There is nothing wrong with what they are doing but challenge them to try different tactics in their mindset, and therefore their life.
- 5) There are many discussion questions, do not feel as though you need to use all of them. Use the ones that work best for your students and relate to their choices in the exercise. Also do not waste too much time on the questions.
- 6) Warm ups should not last more than five minutes. You only have an hour with these students. At the end of class please have a reflection. This should also not last more than five minutes.
- 7) If you feel an activity would be dangerous or inappropriate for your specific group of students please feel comfortable modifying or switching to a different activity.
- 8) If you have extra time at the end of your class, please feel free to use your own activities, keeping in mind the growth and fixed mindsets.
- 9) There are Daily “themes.” You do not need to share these themes with your students but be aware that the themes are directly correlated to your activities. The themes are pulled directly from the Mindset book. Bear in mind that some themes overlap (example: risk, character). They overlap because they will help create a growth mindset throughout the process through repetition and reinforcement of ideas.
- 10) There will be writing activities at the end of many of the exercises.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Please call or email Katie’B Jarvis or Lauren Zamiska if you have any questions or concerns. Stay tuned for the training day announcement.

## Second Quarter Curriculum

**Day 1 Welcome/Character**

Take a moment today after the Survey to explain the differences between growth and fixed mindsets and ask the students for examples of each from their daily lives.

**Title** Mindset Survey

**Description** Assign one of the following to a corner of a room:

1. Very much like me
2. Mostly like me
3. Not much like me
4. Not at all like me

Ask the students the following questions; have them go to the corner of the room that they identify with the most.

1. New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.
2. When I participate in sports, setbacks (delays and obstacles) do not discourage me. I bounce back from disappointments quicker than most people.
3. When I participate in music, setbacks (delays and obstacles) do not discourage me. I bounce back from disappointments quicker than most people.
4. When I participate in school setbacks (delays and obstacles) do not discourage me. I bounce back from disappointments quicker than most people.
5. I have been obsessed with certain ideas or projects for a short time, but later lose interest.
6. I only like goals that can be accomplished right away.
7. I like to try new things I never tried before.

Now assign a different answer to each corner. Briefly ask the students why they chose each corner and how it relates to themselves as individuals.

8. If you could have a super power what power would it be: flying, invisibility, shape shifting, or weather control.
9. If you were a breakfast food, what kind of breakfast food would you be: bacon, cereal, eggs, or pop tarts.

10. If you could live anywhere: The jungle, the city (New York), the desert, or the country (Montana).

**Mindset Connections**

Fixed mindset versus growth mindset students can acknowledge and learn what type of mindset they possess in relation to different activities and skills. Students will also have the opportunity to identify students with similar ideas and mindsets. Students will begin learning how to improve their mindsets for long-term growth.

**Title**

**The Mirror**

**Description**

In groups of two, students will stand facing their partners. Decide who will be A and who will be B. A slowly moves and B tries to copy the movements exactly. After about a minute they switch. Eye contact and timing are important.

The goal is to appear as though you are moving as one.

Modification: 1) Have one person lead while the entire class mirrors them. 2) Have both partners copy each other without having a leader. 3) Challenge your students, ask them how they could make the activity more difficult and then challenge them to complete it. (choosing to try a more difficult exercise is an example of a growth mindset)

**Mindset Connections**

Teamwork, trusting your partner, and responsibility. Learning to work together. There is no right or wrong, there is no reason to feel bad for the way you or your partner moves. A growth mindset moves forward even when it is hard and does not quit.

**Discussion Questions**

How does it feel when you are unable to follow your partner exactly? How do you feel when your partner has difficulty following you? When leading the entire group, do you take it more seriously? If you had to lead someone in a sport or classroom activity what would you do if you made a mistake?

Zimmerman pg 107

**Day 2 Friendship/bullying/shyness**

<b>Title</b>	Mannequins
<b>Description</b>	<p>Four volunteers. Two people become the mannequins and the two people become puppeteers. The puppeteers stand behind the mannequins and control their movements by safely moving arms, legs, and/or head (use your best judgment with your students to decide the safest way that everyone will feel comfortable). Puppeteers are not allowed to talk. Mannequins can talk.</p> <p>Assign a context/scene. Choose one mannequin to be an antagonist and one to be a protagonist. Give them a problem (A wants B's homework to copy). The puppeteers must make the physical posture match the emotions and status of the character. (A bully would appear tough with a straight posture; a scared student may cower with head down).</p> <p>A &amp; B must work together to make their voices and posture match each other. They must find a solution during the scene.</p> <p>Teaching artists can/should side coach throughout. Reminding them of the rules and challenging them. Remind them to reach a solution.</p> <p>Modification: 1) Have the mannequin play a character opposite of what the puppeteer is creating. 2) Vocal Direction, 3) Mirror physically what you want your partner to do.</p> <p>Try the same scene with no puppeteers (same mannequins).</p>
<b>Mindset Connection</b>	<p>Being controlled by others. Breaking free. The puppeteers are a fixed mindset not allowing you to grow or try new things.</p> <p>How do you feel when you are controlled versus when you are free afterwards?</p>
<b>Discussion Questions</b>	<p>What mistakes did the characters make?</p> <p>How did we as an audience perceive these characters?</p> <p>Were you frustrated by not being able to control your movement or what your mannequin was speaking?</p> <p>When in school/home/clubs do you feel trapped in this way?</p>

Are there opportunities to make your own decisions about how others perceive you?  
What do you feel you are in control of?  
What would you have done for you?  
How did it feel when you could not understand something?  
What is positive about having others control you?  
What is the positive in controlling your own life?

Zimmerman pg 154

**Title**

**Juggling Balloons**

**Description**

Balloons are needed for this activity.

Make a circle. One person stands in the center. Toss one balloon and then several into the circle. Challenge the person in the center to keep all the balloons airborne. Do not give any instruction to the other students besides standing in the circle.

It is okay if some students help hit the balloons.

After a few students have had a turn, ask how it felt to be in the middle alone hitting the balloons. If anyone helped, ask why he or she helped. Ask the student in the center how it felt to receive assistance.

Now have all the students keep the balloons afloat. Make strong rules in regard to pushing, running into each other. Spatial awareness.

Modifications: 1) Make some balloons different in size and/or shape.

**Connection to Mindset**

Character – who helps, who does not, who do you want to be?

**Discussion Questions**

Where in your life do you feel as though you are alone juggling to keep balloons afloat while others stand by not doing anything? What types of responsibilities are you juggling?

Do you want to be on the outside watching, helping, or doing it alone?

What kind of mindset helped with the balloons/stayed in the circle?

Is the person not helping doing it out of meanness, do they not know what to do?  
What can the balloons symbolize in your life?

Boal pg 71

## **Playmaking Tableaus**

(Tableaus are frozen pictures of a moment in time: take the time to teach tableaus with your own exercise if you feel it is necessary)

Divide your students into groups of 4. Give them a few minutes to create a tableau of a time in which they felt as though they were being controlled. (Example: being grounded, unable to ride a ride at an amusement park because of height)

Share the tableaus with the group, have the “audience” guess what the tableau is. Give your students a chance to redo the tableaus to make them clearer. Give positive feedback.

Make a point of explaining why/how your feedback is positive and effective. Challenge your students to learn to give positive feedback.

## **Tableau2**

Divide students into groups (2-4), Give them a few minutes to create tableaus of a time where they helped someone else.

Modification: 1) Do each tableau in a set of three. 2) A beginning of the story, the middle of the story, and the end of the story.

## **Discussion Questions**

Questions and observations from the audience members generally occur after each tableau. Make sure to keep them positive and constructive. It is great if they mention performance/critiques as well as discussing how these depicted events made them or others feel.

## **Day 3 Negotiation/Leaders**

### **Materials Needed**

Paper and Pencils

### **Title**

Orchestration



<b>Description</b>	<p>Have the group sit in a clump facing the teaching artist.</p> <p>The teaching artist will divide the group into sections, two-three depending on the group. They will assign and/or allow each group to decide upon a sound. They must be able to repeat the sound continuously, as well as change its pitch, tempo and volume.</p> <p>The “conductor”/teaching artist, will lead the group in making their noises simultaneously, the conductor will make clear hand movements signaling changes in volume and tempo. Start with a few small commands before moving on to more complicated movements.</p> <p>Give a student the chance to be the conductor.</p> <p>Modification: Give verbal commands instead of hand movements (this is meant to be frustrating and confusing).</p>
<b>Connection to Mindset</b>	<p>Did you ever feel frustrated? How did this affect your choices/performance?</p>
<b>Discussion Questions</b>	<p>Was it hard to be the conductor? What about it was hard? How would you change your commands to be more easily understood?</p> <p>What conductor choices made it easier to be a part of the orchestra?</p> <p>Did we sound cooler or lamer when we used simple commands? Did more commands make a more interesting sound?</p> <p>What did it feel like to speak commands?</p> <p>Was this more challenging?</p> <p>What is the best form of communication in this exercise and your everyday life.</p>
Boal pg 96	
<b>Title</b>	Noisy Leaders
<b>Description</b>	<p>Divide the class into groups of two. Group A chooses a noise that can be easily repeated and changed in pitch, volume, and tempo. Group B closes their eyes. Group A leads group B around the room using their noise. B’s goal is to follow A’s noise. Group B should move quicker if the noise changes tempo, slower for a slower tempo. If</p>

the noise stops, group B should stop moving. Group A should challenge them to move group B as much as possible.

Group A should be aware that B's life is in their hands. They should do everything in their power to stop group B from walking into another person or object.

A group signal for everyone to freeze, used only by the teaching artist, is a wise decision. For instance, if you say whoop whoop, everyone repeats and freezes. This will be an extra layer of safety especially if there are many objects or a stage in the room.

Modification: One group can volunteer to do it alone. The rest of the class spreads out like a forest. These students are not allowed to move. Group A uses their sound to guide B through the forest to the other side.

## Connection to Mindset

### Discussion Questions

How did it feel to trust another person with your eyes closed?

As a leader what choices did you make to be clearer?

Did you ever want to open your eyes? Why?

Do we ever have knowledge that someone else lacks?

Can we help him or her if we share?

Do you ever need help from someone because you are missing information? How does that feel?

Is it scary to ask for help? What happens when someone helps us?

### Playmaking Partner Poems

Divide class into groups of two. Provide each group with paper and pencil. Each poem will have six lines, three lines written by each student.

First two lines: When you lead

Second two lines: When you followed

Third two lines: When you compromised

Students alternate who writes which line. So it will look like this

A: When you lead

B: When you lead

A: When you followed

B: When you followed  
 A: When you compromised  
 B: When you compromised

Give more parameters depending on your group (it must rhyme, there must be one verb and one adjective, one synchronized motion, etc.)

Give the students five minutes to stage and get their poems ready to perform for the group. They can read all the lines together, one person can read them all, or they can read the lines they wrote. It is at your discretion.

**If there is extra time please utilize activities that connect to Leadership/Negotiating.**

## **Day 4 Partner VS Enemy**

<b>Title</b>	Cat and Mouse
<b>Description</b>	<p>Divide the class in groups of two. Determine if the class is holding hands or linking arms.</p> <p>Choose one group to become “cat” and “mouse.” The cat chases the mouse. The mouse can hide by holding hands/linking with one person in any of the groups of two. When they link with someone, the person on the other side must let go and become the mouse. The cat chases the new mouse. If the mouse is tagged they become the cat.</p> <p>Modification: The teams of two stand with one person in front of the other. In order to switch, the mouse must stand behind the group, then the person in front must become the mouse. This is tricky because the person in front cannot see. This is an excellent opportunity for tactics, how can the middle person let the one in front know?</p>
<b>Connection to Mindset</b>	Focus, tactics, risks, failure,
<b>Discussion Questions</b>	<p>How did it feel when the mouse linked with your partner and you were forced to become the mouse?</p> <p>Do you ever feel betrayed in this way?</p>

Has anyone ever forced you into a negative situation by saving themselves?

Did you fail in this activity? How?

What can we do to make this harder? Should we do it?

Boal pg 119

**Title**

Garbage Day

**Description**

Choose a setting. Preferably one inside a house or school in which the students are familiar with the items held within. One person leaves the room. The rest of the group finds a place in the room and strikes a pose (make sure they can hold this pose for a long time) becoming an object generally found there.

When the person returns they try and move objects out of the room (for a garage sale or to get rid of trash, a premise often helps this exercise). The objects are silent until the human tries to take them out then they say "No you can't take me!" and then must explain why. Preferably they cannot immediately say what they are. This is a good opportunity to be clear and precise. They must state their case quickly before being removed.

Objects cannot wrestle or run away they must follow the human when they are in physical contact.

Modification: Ask the students how they could make the activity more difficult. Challenge them to try it.

**Connection to Mindset**

They must be clear and concise and they must make a partner out of the garbage collector where once they were an enemy. How can our enemies become our partners?

**Discussion Questions**

How can our enemies become our partners?  
 Were we more successful with threats or with clear reasoning?  
 How did we feel when we were almost or were thrown out? Did it make your reasoning more or less clear?  
 How can we control our emotions in times of stress?

Write to dream, boal pg 169

<b>Playmaking</b>	Have the students spread out and name popular villains and heroes. Have them show those characters with only their bodies. They must be as specific as possible so it is difficult to confuse them for something else.
<b>Tableau</b>	Divide the class into groups (2-5). Give each one a fairy tale/fable with a clear villain and hero. Give them five minutes to create three tableaux with a beginning, middle and end to the story. Make sure they know to continue making the heroes and villains as clear as possible.
<b>Discussion Question</b>	How can our actions and demeanor change the way others perceive us? How can we let people know through our actions that we are trustworthy and friendly?

## Day 5 Maintaining changes

Start this day discussing what you have learned, how have you changed, how can we apply our new mindsets to today's activities? Spend no more than 5 minutes taking suggestions and discussing.

**Title:** The Wooden Sword of Paris

**Description:** Two groups face each other with a leader in front of each group. They fight a duel as if they have a sword in each hand. Each leader can do one of six strokes.

Chop off the head: Sword high from right to left, the opposing team ducks.

Chop off the legs: Sword low from right to left, the opposing team jumps.

Clearly to the left: stab to the left, opposing team jumps right.

Clearly to the right: stab to the right, opposing team jumps to the left.

Clear strike to the middle: Sword swipe from top to bottom. Actors jump to the nearest side.

Sword thrusts forward: the opposing team jumps back.

Each leader alternates swipes.  
First attempts must be clear so the opposing team can work together. This is a group teamwork exercise.

Modification: One leader, attacking their entire team.  
The class can be divided into two groups.

Throw away teamwork and fend for yourself. Each leader attempts to chop away at the other team. If you do not get out of the way, you are out of the game and become a judge. New sword moves cannot be made up.

**Connection to Mindset**

Working together, maintaining clear sword choices so the group does not die.

**Discussion Questions**

What do you need to maintain to keep from getting stabbed? (Focus, clear movements, perseverance, grit)  
How can we make this harder?

**Title:**

Middle Man

**Description**

Groups of three. One person stands in the middle. The two people on the outside talk nonstop to the person in the middle. The people on the outside are trying to get the middle person's attention. They must attempt to not stop talking at all costs! Assign each person a topic. (Topics should be different).

Discuss how it felt to lose or gain the middleman's attention. Middleman, how did it feel to be pulled in different directions?

Modification: Teams of two. Two people start talking nonstop to each other. Try to never stop talking, not even to hear the other person speak.

**Connection to mindset**

How can we maintain our relationships with each other? If we were in a real conversation, what mind set would we have right now? How would these conversations be different if we all had growth mindsets?

**Playmaking  
Tableau**

Give each group a life goal. Choose goals that they may have in their own lives (example: going to college, training for a triathlon, getting an A on an exam, etc.). Three Tableaus: a beginning,

middle and end. Do not spend too much time on these tableaux.

### Scenes

Have the students take their tableaux and create a short scene based on the frozen pictures. The scenes should have dialogue and a clear beginning, middle and end. Use this activity to teach the group basic theatre lessons (example: do not turn your butt on the audience, volume, show do not tell what you are doing).

Teachers move from group to group-offering assistance. If there is time, workshop one or two of their scenes in front of the group to demonstrate how simple changes can improve the performance.

## Day 6 Risk Taking

### Materials:

Paper and Pencil

### Title:

Garden of Statues

### Description:

One person is the pointer. The rest of the group picks a frozen pose. The pointer walks around the group watching the statues. When the pointer's back is turned the statues try and switch their poses as often as possible. If they are caught moving they are out. Decide beforehand if eye movement or smiles are allowed. Physical contact between pointer and statues is not advised.

Modification: 1) Statues can only stand with one foot fully on the ground and no more than the toes of the second foot touching. 2) Statues that are caught assist the pointer. 3) The pointer can try to make the statues laugh, either vocally or silently.

### Connection to Mindset:

Taking risks, tactics, focus, maintaining changes, creating long-term success.

### Discussion Questions:

When did you fail? How does it feel to be caught? How did it feel to wait for the game to start over after you got caught? Were you able to support your peers or did you have a fixed mindset about your failure? Were you

afraid to change your position? Did you change it too much? Did you feel a greater sense of accomplishment when risk taking versus not changing?

**Title:**

Ball Race

**Description:**

This game can turn extremely physical. If things get out of hand, stop the game and move on.

Divide the class into two teams. The teams retreat to opposite sides of the room. In the center of the room there is a ball on a chair or small bench. The teacher will call out the names of one person from each team. When the teacher says go the named team members will race to the ball. The first person to get the ball back to their teammates wins a point. However, if while in possession of the ball, they get tagged by the opposing team member, the opposing team gets two points. You cannot get tagged if you do not have the ball.

Modification: 1) Either call the names of the team members or assign each team member a number. 2) If someone gets tagged, they must drop the ball and the opposing team member has the opportunity to pick it up. 3) Call two members of each team.

**Connection to Mindset**

Risk taking, tactics, maintaining change.

**Discussion Questions**

How does working as part of a team differ from working solo? When your team is depending on you, do you make different choices? How do you feel if you let them down? Do you give up? How does it feel to win? Did you fail? How? What did you learn from your failure? How can we make this more challenging?

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**Playmaking  
Solo Poems**

Each student will be taking a risk and writing their own four-six line poems. Let them know beforehand that they will be sharing these with the group so they do not write anything that they are uncomfortable sharing.



Use the following prompt: Write a poem about a time you changed.

Give parameters (example: it must rhyme, it must include verbs and adjectives, it must have at least one physical movement).

Modification: 1) Partner the students. Have them combine their solo poems. The simplest way to do this is to alternate lines. Challenge them to find a way to tell the same story together. 2) Partner the students, challenge them to perform each other's poems separately.

## Day 7 Taking the First Step

<b>Title:</b>	Styles Tag
<b>Description:</b>	<p>One person is "it". The group begins by playing tag. The teacher will call out different styles that the students will adopt in their game. (Example: the teacher calls out old men, and the students all play tag like old men. Other examples: animals, slow motion, robot, etc.)</p> <p>Modifications: 1) If the students have a script or character that they have created earlier in the curriculum, suggest that they adopt these characters for the tag. 2) Teacher calls out that the person who is "it" is a monkey and everyone else are lions, or "it" is in slow motion and everyone else is fast. 3) Teacher can reassign a new "it" person at any time.</p>
<b>Connection to Mindset</b>	Taking the first step, character development, going with the flow, and adapting to your environment.
<b>Discussion Questions</b>	<p>Did you try to win or try to emulate the choices and character? Who has the advantage and who has the disadvantage? Which of these options was most enjoyable? How were the different styles represented? Did anyone represent one 'incorrectly'? Is there an incorrect way? (Obviously the answer is no).</p>

## **Playmaking**

Take a few minutes to go over the different stories and tableaus that the students created over the last six weeks. Ideally (check with your site coordinator) on Day eight, your students will have the opportunity to share with the rest of Bright Futures a few of the stories they have been working on. Choose a few of the student's favorites. Perhaps they will volunteer to do their favorite ones. Try to find a way to involve everyone.

If possible divide the class into groups to work on their previous projects. Perform them again for the group and take a few minutes work shopping each one. Take suggestions from the group and find a way to include everyone.

If this gets monotonous, break up the time by playing a game or activity in the middle.

Students may desire to write something new. If this is the case do so if you feel comfortable finishing it in the time allotted.

## **Day 8 Sharing**

**Performance Day. Please speak with your site coordinator to find a way for the students to share with the rest of Bright Futures. At the very least perhaps the site coordinator will be willing to come and watch the performance by his or herself.**

**If there is no time for a Bright Futures sharing, share the scenes one last time with each other.**

### Third Quarter Letter to Teaching Artist

The Mindset curriculum is different for the third quarter for a particular reason. We have many talented teaching artists with different skills and expertise paired with varying schools with different types of students and student attendance. We felt that a more open plan would allow you to select activities that can more readily connect to your students and be effective with your individual class sizes.

Please let us know if you need any script writing activities or games that can connect to the themes.

Every day

- 5 minute warm up
  - 20 minute games/activities
  - 30 minute create/write
  - 5 minute reflect
- 
- Writing activity reflects/connects to theme
  - At least one game/activity reflects theme
  - It is great to connect new themes to previous ones and vice versa
  - GRIT is something the elementary schools are using to represent the mindset ideas. Using the word grit may help build a connection to the Bright Futures curriculum.
  - Final performances can vary depending on the group. For example you could have two solo performers and a group piece.

## Third Quarter Curriculum

## Day 1

- This day is primarily for getting to know the group and the rules and how class operates for new students.
- Schedule addendum: 30 minutes games/activities
- Schedule addendum: 10 minutes short writing/poetry activity  
Explain to students that you will be working on something to perform at the end of the quarter.

## Day 2

- Theme: Teamwork
- Mindset connections: Where do we use teamwork in our every day lives? How do we use teamwork in theatre? School? Family? What can we accomplish with teamwork? How do our teamwork skills reflect on our grit?

## Day 3

- Theme: Risk
- Mindset connections: Why do we take risks? When do we take them? What mindset takes risks? When do we not take risks?
- First day of 30-minute create/write.

## Day 3

- Leadership
- Mindset connections: What makes a good leader? When have you been a leader/follower? How do leaders use teamwork? Do leaders take risks?
- Start finding scripts/poems by the students that they can continue to work on/build upon for the remainder of the quarter (they can start new work, but they need something to start building on)

## Day 4

- Relationships
- Mindset connections: What kinds of relationships do you have in your life? Do we take risks in friendships/relationships? How does teamwork play into relationships?

## Day 5

- Failure
- Mindset connections: How do we react when we fail? Do we react differently when we fail as a team vs. as a leader? Can you risk without failing? What happens when you fail? Can failure make you stronger, how?
- Have a more solid/structured idea of what the students will be performing.

## Day 6

- Reactions
- Mindset connections: How do you react to the failures and successes of other people? How does it feel when people do not react how you expect them to? How do your reactions affect other people? How do we react to our own failures and successes? How do our reactions affect who we are?

#### Day 7

- Goals
- Mindset connections: What are your goals for the future? What risks are you willing to take to achieve your goals? How can teamwork lead to you achieving your goals? Can you ask for help in attaining your goals? How do your failures affect your goals? How/why can our goals change for the better? Do we fail if we do not accomplish our goals?
- Students must know what they will be performing for the final day.

#### Day 8

- Final Day
- This day is focused on bringing together the themes and lessons learned, culminating in a final performance.
- We recommend rehearsing/cleaning up the poems/scripts the first half of class and finding someone, perhaps the site coordinator, to perform for in the second half.
- Congratulate your students! They did a great job, no matter what!
- Have a final reflection.

## Reflection

What a pleasure this year has been creating a curriculum and then getting to see it play out throughout the year. I got to see all of my hard work pay off. This was so exciting. I have done so many projects in past classes where I created mock lesson plans or theatre camps, but this was finally a real curriculum that I created. This was definitely not an easy project. This work took a very long time; there were many problems, and lessons that I learned. I really enjoyed working with Katie'B Jarvis on this project. I have been good friends with Katie'B since my sophomore year of college. I have always looked up to her and she definitely served as a mentor for me in this project. She let me take the reins and make decisions while guiding me and being a support system. I was a little nervous to work with her on this project because I tend to like working by myself when making big decisions. However, I think it was great to work with a partner on this. There were so many times when we would work off of one another's ideas. We had a lot of fun thinking of what games to play, and how they could relate to our Mindset themes.

Of course, there were challenges along the way as well. Being a theatre major I always have a busy schedule. Katie'B and I would have to find time when we were both free and get as much work done as possible. There were other times when we would not always agree on which exercise to do with our students. However, I feel that this was just part of the learning experience. This project has helped improve my time management skills and helped my communication skills. I know that I will have to work with colleagues and on teams in my future. My goal for the future is to open a theatre company for children with disabilities. I know that I cannot achieve this goal by myself. I will need to work with volunteers, designers, directors, stage man-

agers, and so many other people. This project has helped me learn how to work on a large project with a partner and achieve a goal.

Another great point to this project was that I actually got to see my work unfold. Everything that I worked on was actually taught to elementary school children all around the Washtenaw area. I saw how kids reacted to these activities and games. I listened to their stories and ideas of how they felt about the exercises and about their own lives, schools, and homes. I encouraged them to try something new, to take risks, and to step out of their comfort zone.

Of course there were times where I found that my curriculum plans did not work out exactly how I planned. My club was made up of about eight boys in third through fifth grade. There were times where we did not have enough people to play a game or had to modify an activity to get my group to really understand the ideas we were trying to implement. There were times where students would get mad at losing a game or not want to participate in the exercise. To this I would give the student a minute to calm down then ask them what kind of mindset they had when making that choice. We would talk, as a group about how having a fixed mindset is okay but no matter what we can always strive to gain a growth mindset.

There were other times when I saw my students truly understand what I was trying to teach and engage in the activities. I would ask a question and a student would tell me what went wrong and what we could do to fix it. There were times when I would ask, "What can we do to make this activity more challenging?" and a student would raise their hand and explain to me an idea that they had. We would always try it out and I could see the student's eyes light up and a smile because we were trying out their idea.

I really felt that towards the end of the first quarter we truly understood these ideas and concepts. Katie'B and I felt that it was the right choice to give the teaching artists control and let

them plan the activities for the third quarter. It was really great for Katie'B and I to read over the *Mindset* book and find other concepts we could use for the lessons of the day. I found it so much easier to think of discussion questions for this quarter because I knew what topics we could discuss as a group. Once the third quarter started, it was fun to think of activities and games to play that would relate to the theme. I also found that we could talk more as a group about the topic of the day. The students were more open to telling their stories and performing their own words.

Katie'B and I feel so proud of our project and decided in the fall semester to submit our project to American Allegiance for Theatre and Education. AATE is an annual convention for educators and those who are passionate about drama and theatre for the young. This convention contains workshops and lectures about different ideas and theories for children's theatre. I am so pleased to say that our project has been accepted. This means that many of our teaching artists will present our curriculum and lead activities in a workshop at AATE in August in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I am so excited that our hard work has paid off and that we are being recognized for this project.

I felt that this project has helped me so much as a leader, future educator and director, and as an artist myself. It has made me look at myself and learn to have more of a growth mindset and positive thinking. I have worked on becoming a better leader and helping my students. I am excited to continue the fourth quarter and keep these themes and ideas in my mind as I develop my daily lessons. I truly think that this project has helped me to become the best I can be and I look forward to the future.



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