

Why does NCS teach Drama?

By Paige Rogers – Performing Arts Program

Theater exercises the imagination in ways that are surprising and new. A table becomes a boat in the middle of the sea; a chair becomes the top of a giant redwood. Imaginative work is what leads to problem solving and creativity. Creating a piece of theater encourages experimentation, trying out new ideas and facing one's fears, all under the umbrella of "play".

Through the years I have seen some remarkable things happen as a result of the class play. I have seen a shy child play a powerful King. I have seen a class that doesn't get along very well, work together to create a fine piece of theater, feeling quite proud of their combined efforts in the process. I have seen a self-focused and somewhat selfish student openly marvel at the hardships she might have faced living in an ancient culture. I have seen many children come out of their shells. After all, it is through the act of playing that some of our deepest learning takes place. The students will cherish the memories of their work on the class plays together, re-telling the funny and arduous parts many times over.

The process, the presentation, the story, and intrinsic moral of the plays, are and will continue to be deeply felt by all students, for life.

The Learning Objectives of Class Plays

By Rachael Bishop

The class play is the ultimate venue for cooperative learning. Students engage in the creation, production, and design of every play. Starting with the story, learning their lines, character development, building props, costumes, and special effects - each student is actively involved. Every aspect of putting a play together is a collaborative process. Each student has a significant role, no matter how big or small, in its success and outcome. The final production, the performing art, is a true collaboration by the whole class which has been carefully crafted with meaning and beauty.

"Scapin" – 8th Grade Play 2010/11

By Rick Betz

The curricular stream of story telling and literature throughout the grades, allows children to live vicariously through the characters and challenges that they meet there. Much social behavior is taught therein, behaviors both to emulate and to avoid! The Drama Blocks take this one step further by having the students step into these characters, laying bare their foibles and discovering their gifts.





It is a journey of self-discovery to step upon the stage, become someone else and maintain that focus for the duration. Therein a transformation takes place, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the 8th grade play, a full theatrical event performed for the entire school community. Moliere's Scapin, became a vehicle for our class to scrutinize human foibles through the art of comedy.

Curiously, performing comedy is a very serious business, and requires careful examination of the human condition. Honing the actors' exactness of timing, posture, expression and tone is demanding and ultimately fulfilling, not only when the laughter of the audience fills the hall, but when the students retire to their homes and reflect on what they have achieved.



"The Ramayana" – 5th Grade Play 2010/11 By Tara Waterman

This fall, the fifth grade class performed a dramatic enactment of the Ramayana, a living story for the Hindu people that lives at the heart of Hinduism. This epic poem is said to have been written about 20,000 years ago. It is believed that a shower of blessings will rain down upon the listener upon the mere hearing of its verses.



The Ramayana is a complex, poetic tale that is filled with tragedy, intrigue, and beauty. In working dramatically within the context of this rich cultural tapestry, the students were brought to a more intimate and meaningful understanding of the Ancient Indian History curriculum.

Furthermore, the Ramayana is a tale of deep filial relationships and respect for elders, and calls to each individual to live out their destiny guided by a strong code of honor.

The arduous preparation for this play gave my students the opportunity to rise to their higher selves.



In the 2011-12 school year, students performed in the following plays:

Grade	Play	Connection to curriculum
1	<i>The Daffodil</i>	Nature Studies
2	<i>Francis and the Beasts</i>	Fables and notable people
3	<i>Joseph the Dream Interpreter</i>	Stories of heroes and noble people
4	<i>Iduna and the Apples of Youth</i>	Norse Mythology
5	<i>Into the Labyrinth – The Story of Theseus and the Minotaur</i>	History of Ancient Greece
6	Individual speeches during the students' Knighting Ceremony	Oral communication and Medieval History
7	Shakespeare's <i>As You Like It</i>	History of the Renaissance
8	<i>A Christmas Carol</i> by Charles Dickens	