

## A Playful Pedagogy:

### A Collaborative Model to Teach and Create Theatre for the Very Young

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#### Essential Questions:

What are models for collaboration in Theatre for the Very Young?

How do we promote Theatre for the Very Young as a viable career path to young artists?

How can Theatre for the Very Young be included in a university course as part of the TYA canon?

#### Model:

- 6-Week Unit
- Collaborations
  - JMU Theatre Classes - TYA Course & Movement Course
  - Arts on the Horizon
  - JMU Young Children's Program (3-5 year-old pre-school)
  - TVY playwright - Becca Drew Ramsey

#### Framework:

- Groups of Three (mixed students between movement and TYA class)
- Practical and Theoretical Study of TVY
- Class Worked on Development of a new TVY Play
- Guest Artists & Professionals

#### Unit Components:

- **Read "TVY" sections in Omasta & Adkin's Book**
  - Michelle Kozlak, Olivia Aston Bosworth, Lauren Jost
  - *What should a playwright consider when writing a play that is primarily intended for Very Young Audiences (0-5)? What do you look for in TVY plays when planning your season? What are your hopes and dreams for TVY?*
- **Read two Arts on the Horizon Scripts**
  - List the theatrical elements that are similar and different between each play?
  - How is convention and innovation used?
  - How do these two plays make you think and feel?
  - How does the work engage and acknowledge young people (experiences, identity, etc)?
- **Q & A with Michelle Kozlak (Producing Director of Arts on the Horizon)**
  - Student generated questions via an online discussion board before Skyping with Michelle.
- **Deepening an Understanding of TVY throughout the Unit**
  - "Why Make Theatre for the Very Young"  
<http://www.assitej-international.org/en/2018/01/wide-eyes/>
  - Arts on the Horizon featured in the *Washington Post*  
<https://tinyurl.com/y99adc66>
  - "Actions Speak Louder than Words: The Growing Place of Visual Theatre"  
<https://howlround.com/actions-speak-louder-words>

- “Making Space for Babies”  
<http://www.tyausa.org/tya-today/making-space-for-babies/>
- **Devising/Animating a Part of the Treatment – Criteria Checklist/Rubric**
  - **Performance**
    - A movement vocabulary for each character.
    - Fully explored moments and moment-to-moment details in the non-verbal storytelling.
    - Audible breath coordinated with action and movement.
  - **Storytelling/Story-making**
    - Deepening the treatment by bringing to the table new ideas, different perspectives, and exploring the moments between or within.
    - A clear beginning, middle, and end.
    - Clear conflict, action, obstacle, objective, and resolution.
  - **Parameters**
    - The performance piece should be 3 (minimum) to 5 (maximum) minutes long.
    - Make intentional decisions about design.
- **Read “Understanding Young Perspectives” in Omasta & Adkin’s Book & “Play Date” at Young Children’s Program (3-4 year olds)**
  - Poems should try to capture your physical sensations, emotions, memories, and personal associations inspired by your own play at YCP. Consider how working with this age group might inform not only what kind of TVY work you create, but how you approach your own creative process more broadly. Consider the tension between art and entertainment. Consider also how themes, ideas, or conflicts that might be particularly resonant for this age group, operate in your own life as a young adult.
- **Attend *Beep, Beep* Event at Arts on the Horizon**
  - Show, Talkback with Artistic Team, and Devising Workshop
    - <https://www.artsonthehorizon.org/beep-beep.html>
- **Reflect on Experience**
  - **Describe:** What were some compelling storytelling moments in the play/performance? What did you notice about the young audience during the play/performance? Describe what the actors were doing physically to create a specific vocabulary and performance style?
  - **Analyze:** Based on what you learned from the devising workshop, what three (artistic, TVY, and/or devising) principles did the leaders of the workshop seem to value the most?
  - **Relate:** Consider your experience of seeing a TVY show, attending the talkback, and participating in the devising workshop. How will you apply this to your work with your group?

(The following two pages outlines the university student overview that was given to the students.)

**TYA/Movement Collaboration, James Madison University**  
*New Work Development & Theatre for the Very Young (TVY)*  
 Spring 2019, Ben Lambert & Joshua Rashon Streeter

The Spring 2019 Movement class and Theatre for Young Audiences class will collaborate to explore the art form of Theatre for the Very Young (TVY). This collaboration will include learning about the art form, devising new work, seeing a TVY show and/or rehearsal, and dialogue with professional TVY artists, producers, writers, and directors.

Professor Lambert and Professor Streeter will align the unit so that all students (no matter what course you are in) are being assessed in the same way on the components of the unit, however, the point distribution will look different per course. For submissions, you will **each individually submit work for credit** (even if the task is a group task).

**Schedule at a Glance**

| Date              | What will I do?  | What is due?  |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Feb 15<br>- Mar 1 | Play/engage with Young People ages 3-5 at the Young Children's Program (next to Forbes).   | The deliverable is due on March 3rd (as a weekly practice).   |
| Sun,<br>Feb 10    |  | Weekly Practice:<br>1. Read "What is TVY?"<br>2. Read Assigned TVY Plays and Write Reflection<br>3. Submit Two Questions for Michelle Kozlak to Canvas Discussion Board (different questions than your classmates have posted). |
| Tues,<br>Feb 12   | <b>What is TVY?</b> Skype with Michelle Kozlak   |   |
| Thurs,<br>Feb 14  | <b>What is TVY?</b> What is the piece and project?   |   |
| Sun,<br>Feb 17    |  | Weekly Practice:<br>1. Read Assigned Articles and Write Reflection<br>2. Creative Meeting Schedule  |
| Tues,<br>Feb 19   | <b>Devising Laboratory:</b> wireframing; improvisation with camera; how to introduce conflict; think about staging/stories told by bodies in space; character body; neutral masks as a way to clarify storytelling |   |
| Thurs,<br>Feb 21  |  |   |
| Sun,<br>Feb 24    |  | Weekly Practice:<br>1. List Sourcing/Making   |
| Tues,<br>Feb 26   |  |   |
| Thurs,<br>Feb 28  |  |   |

|                  |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|
| Sun,<br>Mar 3    |   | Weekly Practice:<br>1. Write a Poem (based on experience at YCP).   |
| Tues,<br>Mar 12  |   | \$10 for <i>Beep, Beep</i> Ticket   |
| Thurs,<br>Mar 14 |   | Record piece by the end of class and upload to Canvas. Create questions to ask Becca Drew about further development of piece. |
| Sun,<br>Mar 17   |   | Weekly Practice: will differ by class (in preparation for individual course content).   |
| Tues,<br>Mar 19  | <b>Feedback Session:</b> Skype with Becca Drew Ramsey on March 19th   | Receive Feedback from TVY Artist and Playwright   |
| Thurs,<br>Mar 21 |   |   |
| Sat,<br>Mar 23   | Show with Talkback and Workshop After<br><br>11:30am – <i>Beep Beep</i> performance<br>12:10pm-12:30pm – Talkback/Q&A with Performers and Director/Creator<br>12:30pm-1:30pm – Lunch Break<br>1:30pm-3:30pm – Devising Workshop | Transportation to DC  |
| Sun,<br>Mar 24   |   | Weekly Practice:<br>1. Reflection on <i>Beep Beep</i> and experience (talkback and devising workshop).                        |
| Tues,<br>Mar 26  | Devising Laboratory   | Share final pieces in class. Reflect (in class) on the unit.  |

\*Subject to change at the instructors' discretion.

# Pre-Show Community Conversation

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*“Come Look at the Freaks” - A conversation about representation, embodiment, and performance through the lens of Side Show. (Facilitator Joshua Rashon Streeter)*

# Disability Representation Onstage

- *Side Show* highlights the stories of real individuals.
  - Look at the public dramaturgical displays in the lobby.
- *Side Show* uses conjoinment as a production aesthetic with *Daisy & Violet*.
  - There are no tricks to “keeping the performers together” that reinforce embodiment of disability.
- *Side Show* places bodies on stage to represent differently abled bodies.
  - Usually TABs - “Temporarily Abled Bodies”

