



Getting Near to Baby

by Y York

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR TEACHERS
AND STUDENTS

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Scan the code for a digital copy of this resource guide.

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Teacher's Corner



Using this Guide

Hi there! Welcome to Utah State University's resource guide for teachers and parents for our production of *Getting Near to Baby*. Our "Theater for Young Audiences" class worked hard to put this guide together and we hope that you find it

helpful in preparing your students for an enjoyable and educational theatrical experience. Included you'll find things to talk about before and after seeing the performance, classroom activities that deal with curriculum connections and education standards, and resource materials. We thank you for supporting USU's theater department and we hope you appreciate all the hard work that has gone into making this production happen! Enjoy the show!

Content Advisory

Getting Near to Baby explores sibling and parental grief caused by a baby's death. The story may be powerful for students who have experienced death in their own families. It examines the different responses to the loss of a loved one and how individuals eventually come to accept this event. The story may be powerful for students who have experienced a parent or guardian that has deserted them at any moment in their life. It examines the way one may cope with the loss of a parent when needed most. This play gives a well-rounded description of the ways in which this issue is dealt with by adults, adolescents, and young children.



Dear Students!

WE CAN'T WAIT TO MEET YOU!

Howdy, everyone!

My name is Liz Fingers. I can't wait for you to see the show! You'll get to meet my little brother Isaac and my best friend Willa Jo. We have a lot of fun playing in our cave, and we even get to play with Miss Patty's gnomes! You'll get to see it all when you come. This book has a lot of fun things for you and your teachers. In it, you can find answers to your questions and information about the play. Can't wait to see ya'll soon!

Liz Fingers

Psssst!...

CHECK OUT THESE PAGES FOR MATERIAL
DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR STUDENTS!

Page 5

Have you ever wondered how much work goes into putting on a play? Check out this page for all the details!

Page 6

On this page, you'll learn important vocabulary words and facts about the 1960's, when the play takes place.

Page 7

This play is based on a book! If you like the play, you'll love the book, and on this page you'll find more books like it.



Photo: Dramatic Publishing

About the Playwright

GET TO KNOW Y YORK

THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

- Y York writes plays that are intended for young people and their families! She has received many awards for her plays.

In *Getting Near to Baby*, Y York focuses on the younger people in the story. The adults are in the background.

ANIMALS IN THE STORY

- Y York loves to include animals in her stories. She has a dog named Lily.

Although there aren't animals in the play *Getting Near to Baby*, Y York does include garden gnomes. See if you can spot them!

Getting Near to Baby

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PLAY

WHO

The focus of the play is on two sisters, Willa Jo, and Little Sister. Willa Jo and Little Sister have recently started living with their Aunt Patty due to the recent loss of their youngest sister, who they call Baby. Little Sister will not talk as she is dealing with her grief, and Willa Jo translates for her so she can communicate with other people. Willa Jo and Little Sister meet new people in the town as they learn to make friends, fit in, and strengthen family relationships.

WHEN

The play takes place in the summer of 1967. (Head to page 6 to learn more about what life was like back then!)

WHERE

The play takes place in North Carolina in a backyard, a cave, and on a roof in a small town.

WHY

Through Willa Jo and Little Sister, we learn what it is to grieve, connect, heal, and love.

WHAT

Getting Near to Baby is a story that explores family relationships and friendships.



Costume designs for the show! See more on page 5.

Backstage Exclusive

WHAT GOES IN TO PRODUCING A PLAY?

COSTUMES

From head to toe, (even socks!) costumes are designed specifically for every single character.

Fun Fact: All of the costumes for this production of *Getting Near to Baby* were either made in the costume shop at USU or pulled from a huge closet right underneath the Morgan Theater.

SET DESIGN

You may not know it, but designers can work for months in preparation for building the set for a play!

Fun Fact: Almost every theatre student in the Caine College of the Arts at USU has worked on the set--designing, building, or even painting!

LIGHTING AND SOUND

The lights and sound set the tone for the play: they bring the space to life and let us know how the characters are feeling.

Fun Fact: There are so many hot lights that shine on the Morgan Theatre stage that the actors might get a little sweaty, even just sitting on a bench!



Teachers! Scan the code for a PowerPoint presentation about the making of our play.

Questions and Answers

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE 1960'S

"SOCK SOMEONE"

This is how people referred to punching someone in the face in the 1960s and earlier.

WHAT IS A CHARM SCHOOL?

A finishing school is a school for young women that focuses on teaching social graces and upper-class cultural rites as a preparation for entry into society.



WHAT IS A DANCE CARD?

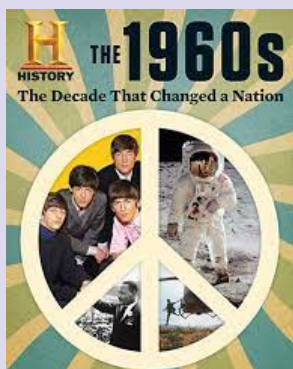
Dance cards were typically small, decorated booklets worn on a woman's wrist or attached to her dress with a cord. Men carried pencils and wrote their names on lines next to the name of dances in the booklet. Dance cards remained in fashion until the late 1960s, when dances became less formal affairs.

RIGHTS FOR WOMEN

In the 1960s women were fighting for the right to vote, for equal pay, for equal responsibility in the household, and equality on all fronts.

WHAT WAS THE VIETNAM WAR?

The Vietnam War was a long conflict in Southeast Asia. It began in 1954, after the country of Vietnam was split into two parts, North Vietnam and South Vietnam. North Vietnam wanted to reunite the country under Communism, its political and economic system. South Vietnam fought to keep this from happening.



WHAT IS "BAD WATER"?

During the late 1960s, an "environmental crisis" took shape as the fight against pollution of irreplaceable water resources. Water was polluted with ash from fires and other horrible material that could result in someone getting very sick and possibly dying if drunk.

LADIE'S SOCIAL LEAGUE

Women's clubs were for women who wanted to get involved in the public sphere. They helped women attain both social and political power.

Books of Interest

GETTING NEAR TO BABY IS ADAPTED FROM A NOVEL. HERE ARE SOME MORE BOOKS WITH SIMILAR THEMES AND READING LEVELS AS THE ORIGINAL BOOK.

Getting Near to Baby by Audrey Couloubis

Just like the play you just watched, *Getting Near to Baby* follows 12-year-old Willa Jo and Little Sister. In the book, there is a lot more information about the characters that you don't always get to see in a play adaptation!

Other Words For Home by Jasmine Warga

This book is written in free-verse poetry. It follows Jude and her family as they are forced to leave Syria and move in with her uncle and his family in America. As Jude faces middle school in America, she learns the importance of bravery and friends, especially in a place with so many unknowns.

The Unsung Hero of Birdsong, USA by Brenda Woods

This novel follows the new friendship between 12-year-old Gabriel and army veteran of the 761st all-black Tank Battalion, Meriwether Hunter, in a town that is enacting Jim Crow laws. While this story has some difficult content, it is a wonderful example of how our perceptions of people may not be their reality.

Sisters by Raina Telgemeier

Sisters is an autobiographical graphic novel by Raina Telgemeier. It follows two sisters as they navigate their changing family dynamic, personal struggles, and their own relationship as they try to survive a road trip from San Francisco to Colorado.

Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus by Dusti Bowling

Aven Green may have been born without arms, but that doesn't mean that she feels any differently about moving 1,000 miles from her home and her friends. It also definitely doesn't stop her from uncovering a mystery at the mysterious amusement park that her parents work at. This book shows us that the things that we think are so different from others may not be so different after all.



What to Expect

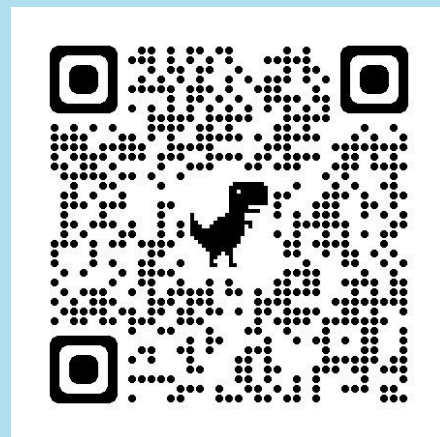
WHEN YOU VISIT UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

DIRECTIONS

*to the Morgan Theatre
and restrooms*

1. From the Roundabout, walk towards the Nora Eccles Museum of Art.
2. Turn left and walk into the courtyard.
3. Turn Right and walk through the big glass doors.
4. Walk up the stairs
5. The bathrooms are located on either side of the top of the staircase, Girls on the left, Boys on the Right.
6. Turn Left towards the Tippetts Gallery
7. Continue forward, passing the ramps (on your left), until you reach the Morgan Theatre.

THEATRE ETIQUETTE



Teachers! Scan this code for a four-minute video about theatre etiquette, brought to you by students in the theatre education program. (We think it's quite hilarious, and we hope your students will, too!)

Lesson Plans and Ideas

This lesson is intended for grades 5 & 6, though it may be adapted for grades 7 & 8. It is intended to be conducted after viewing *Getting Near to Baby*. The entire lesson should take approximately 30 minutes.

TOPIC: FAMILIES OF ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Drama Standard 6.T.R.2: Justify responses based on personal experiences when participating in or observing a drama/theatre work.

Reading 5: Literature Standard 2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What does a family look like?
- How can family help in times of need?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING:

Students will understand that families have different dynamics and don't always have to consist of those who are blood-related.

KEY KNOWLEDGE:

Students will know that there are many different types of families.

SKILLS:

Students will be able to identify the different groups of people that make up their various families.

ASSESSMENT:

- Students will create tableaux of different family units they see in their lives in order to show that they can identify the different groups of people that make up their various families.
- Students will get into various groups based on prompts given to them in order to identify that there can be many different types of families based on interest, hobbies, experience, and situational location.
- Students will justify responses based on personal experiences when participating in or observing a drama/theatre work by reviewing USU's production of *Getting Near to Baby* in order to understand that families have different dynamics and don't always have to consist of those who are blood-related.
- Students will determine a theme of a drama from details in the text, including how characters in the drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text by engaging in a discussion about USU's production of *Getting Near to Baby* in order to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of family and what a family can look like.

MATERIALS: Writing utensil and paper for each student.

PROCESS:

Setup:

1. Ensure the class has watched USU's production of Y York's *Getting Near to Baby*.
2. Students will gather in a circle, remind them that the point of the activity isn't to stay with your friends, but to find people with similar interests to you.

Framing/Hook:

1. Grouping Activity (5 mins)
 - a. Facilitator will explain that students will have five seconds to find others who have similar traits or likes as them. They will group together when they have found each other. Facilitator will say:
 - i. Get into groups with people who:
 1. Born in-state vs out-of-state
 2. Same favorite color
 3. Same favorite season
 4. The same first letter of your first name
 5. Same favorite hobby
 - b. Facilitator will have students get back into a circle and ask them questions about the activity, such as:
 - Did you learn something you didn't know before?
 - How does knowing what things you have in common with your classmates change about this class?
 - Does having these similarities help you know how to comfort a classmate if they are having a hard time?

Process:

1. Discussion of the play (5 mins)
 - a. Discuss USU's production of *Getting Near to Baby* using the below questions.
 - What kind of families did you see on stage?
 - Willa Jo and Little Sister's family: Mother grieving death of Baby, absent father.
 - Aunt Patty and Uncle Hob: Took the girls in to give their mother some time, wanting them to heal, but in their ways; not always patient with Willa Jo and Little Sister.
 - The Fingers Family: neighbors to Aunt Patty, have a lot of children, very accepting of Willa Jo and Little Sister.
 - The Wainwrights: Mother is the head of the Ladies' Social League, daughter goes to etiquette classes, not very accepting of Willa Jo and Little Sister.
 - b. How did Willa Jo and Little Sister's family change throughout the play?
 - c. Thumbs up or thumbs down: Have you ever had experiences where you felt like your family was changing based on what you needed or who you were with?

PROCESS CONTINUED:

4. Family Portraits (10 minutes)

- a. Facilitator will explain: Each group is going to create a tableau or a frozen picture of what a family looks like to them. In these frozen pictures, there is no movement or talking, so everyone should pick a position that they can hold for a while. While they are performing, the facilitator will tap each of them and they will say who they are (e.g. father, mother, grandfather, sister, dog, etc.)
- b. Facilitator will split the class into even groups, 5-6 in each. The class will have 3 minutes to create their tableau.
 - i. While the students are creating their tableaux. the facilitator can walk around asking questions such as:
 1. Where is this family at?
 2. Who is your character?
 3. How are you related to the others in the picture?
- c. When the five minutes are up, the facilitator will choose which group will show their tableaux first, everyone else will move so that they can see the picture. The facilitator will then tap each of them on the head and they will say what their role is in the family. When they have each spoken, they will refreeze, the class will applaud them, then the next group will go.
- d. Once all of the groups have gone, the facilitator can ask the following questions:
 - What is similar in most of the tableaux?
 - What was different?
 - Thumbs up or thumbs down: Were these tableaux a good representation of what your family looks like? If you're willing to share, what would you add to make it a better representation of your family?

Reflection

1. Letters to someone who you miss (10 minutes)
 - a. Facilitator will ask the students to get out a paper and a writing utensil. Each student will pick someone who is part of their 'family' that they miss.
 - i. This could be a friend who moved, a person or pet who passed away, or anyone who the student doesn't get to see often.
 - b. Give the student about 10 minutes to write this letter, then have them sign it and do with it whatever they want.



Teachers! Scan the code for a digital version of this lesson plan.

Lesson Plans and Ideas

This lesson is intended for grades 7 & 8, though it may be adapted for grades 5 & 6. It is intended to be conducted after viewing *Getting Near to Baby*. The entire lesson should take approximately 50-60 minutes.

TOPIC: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Respond Standard 7–8.T.R.4: Demonstrate the ability to receive and act upon coaching, feedback, and constructive criticism.

Perform Standard 7–8.T.P.4: Communicate meaning using the body through space, shape, energy, and gesture.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What does it mean to be self-aware?
- How do emotions impact coping strategies?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING:

Students will understand that there are many emotions that influence our actions and coping methods.

KEY KNOWLEDGE:

Students will know the five categories of social and emotional learning.

SKILLS:

Students will be able to identify and describe at least three coping strategies.

ASSESSMENT:

- Students will complete an observation form while watching their peers' scenes that identify the emotions and coping strategies of those scenes to demonstrate their understanding that there are many emotions that influence our actions and coping methods and to identify and describe at least three coping strategies.
- Students will complete a reading and matching activity to demonstrate their knowledge of the five categories of social and emotional learning.
- Students will develop scenes that display coping strategies in order to communicate meaning using the body through space, shape, energy, and gesture and to demonstrate the ability to receive and act upon coaching, feedback, and constructive criticism.

KEY CRITERIA:

- Social and Emotional Learning Matching Worksheet (see appendix)
- Observation Worksheet (see appendix)
- Rubric for Scenes (see appendix)

MATERIALS:

- Social and Emotional Learning Matching Worksheet (see appendix). One per student.
- Observation Worksheet (see appendix). One per student.
- Rubric for Scenes (see appendix). One per student (optional).
- Social/Emotional Learning Introduction slide show (see digital lesson plan for link).
- Article: "Social and Emotional Learning in the Drama Classroom: What is it?" (see appendix)

PROCESS:

Pre-Lesson

1. Before beginning the lesson, students will view a performance of Y York's *Getting Near to Baby*.

Framing/Hook:

1. Social/Emotional learning introduction (show slide show, see digital lesson plan for the link)
 - a. Describe what social and emotional learning is and the five categories (listed below). Explain how they affect how we act and our personal relationships.
 - i. Self Awareness
 1. Self Management
 2. Social Awareness
 3. Relationship Skills
 4. Responsible Decision Making

Lesson:

1. Social emotional learning reading and matching activity (see digital lesson plan for article link)
 - a. Have students read the article about social and emotional learning.
 - b. Instruct them to complete the matching activity that connects each of the 5 categories (below) to their description. (See digital lesson plan for the link).
 - i. Self-Awareness (self-knowledge, identity, self-observation, growth mindset)
 - ii. Self-Management (emotional intelligence, self-regulation, personal responsibility, personal empowerment, coping strategies)
 - iii. Social Awareness (empathy and diversity, interpersonal skills, awareness of others, compassion, respect)
 - iv. Relationship Skills (communication, collaboration, connection, negotiation and resolution, community mindset)
 - v. Responsible Decision Making (making ethical choices, critical thinking, leadership, analyzing and deciding, analysis mindset)
2. Discuss coping strategies with students
 - a. Define "coping strategy": the behaviors, thoughts, and emotions, that you use to adjust to the changes that occur in your life.
 - b. Review some examples of coping strategies. Some examples might include: lowering expectations, ask for others to help you, engage in problem solving, maintain and rely on emotionally supportive relationships, directly attempt to change the source of your problem, get enough good quality sleep, eat a well-balanced diet, take brief rest periods throughout the day, practice relaxation exercises.
 - c. Ask students for examples of some instances where you might need to use a coping strategy.
 - i. *Note, if time does not allow for this lesson to be completed all at once, you may consider stopping here and continuing the lesson at a later time.

PROCESS CONTINUED:

3. Connect to the show

- a. Break the students into groups of 3-4
- b. Instruct each group to choose a 1-2 minute scene or moment from *Getting Near to Baby* where the characters used a coping strategy.
 - i. Groups should also have the option to create a 1-2 minute scene or a moment that did not appear in the play, but could have believably been a part of the story, using the characters from the play.
- c. Instruct each group to develop scenes that display the use (or potential use) of a coping strategy by portraying characters from the play.
- d. Once each group has had sufficient planning time, pair them with 1-2 other groups. Have each group take turns performing their scenes for their partner group(s), then providing and receiving feedback and constructive criticism.
- e. Provide time for the groups to incorporate the feedback into their performances.

4. Perform the Scenes

- a. Before groups perform, assign each group one other group to watch closely and complete an observation form (see digital lesson plan) about the group that performed, which identifies the emotions and coping strategies displayed in their performance.
- b. Have each group take turns performing their scenes for the whole class.

Wrap Up

1. Instruct students to complete a reflective journal entry. Some journal prompts may include:
 - a. What have you learned about social-emotional learning? Coping strategies?
 - b. Describe one time where you used or could have used a coping strategy. If you did use one, how did that strategy affect the situation? If you did not use one, what is one strategy that you could have used? What effect do you think it would have had?
2. One-tap reflection
 - a. Either sitting in a circle or at their desks, instruct students to think of one word that sums up what they learned or felt throughout the lesson. Have them put their thumbs up when they have a word in mind.
 - b. Once everyone has a word, go around the circle or the room and have everyone take turns saying their word out loud without further explanation of why they chose that word.
 - c. Once everyone has said their word, count to 3 and have everyone tap the ground or desk at the same time.



Teachers! Scan the code for a digital version of this lesson plan.

Pre-Show Discussion

QUESTIONS TO ASK STUDENTS BEFORE THEY SEE THE SHOW

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

- *Everyone goes through hard times. How can you help and support your friends when they are going through a hard time?*
- *How do body language, facial expressions and voice affect the way you view a person? How do they affect the way that you act?*
- *If you were a playwright, would you rather write an adaptation of an existing book or write an original play? Why?*
- *Do you like seeing movies/plays based on books you've read? Why or why not?*
- *How are plays different from TV shows or movies? What are the limitations of a play (things that can't be done on stage)?*





ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

- *Have you ever been to a play before? What are some things that you noticed about the way that people act at a play? How do you think you should act when watching a play?*
- *Have you ever dressed up for Halloween? Did you act differently while you were in costume? How do you think actors use costumes to help them be their characters?*
- *What is a theme? (Define theme for students) What kind of themes do you think could happen in this show?*




Post-Show Discussion

QUESTIONS TO ASK STUDENTS AFTER THEY SEE THE SHOW

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

-  *What emotions were you feeling during the show? What parts made you feel sad? Why? What parts made you feel happy? Why?*
-  *What did the actors change about their physical movement and voice to portray the characters that they played?*
-  *Which characters and events did the playwright focus on? Were these good choices?*
-  *How did the playwright and director deal with the parts of the book that might have been difficult to stage? Would you have made the same choices? Why or why not?*

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

-  *After watching the show, what did you notice about how you should behave in a live theatre as opposed to seeing a movie in the movie theatre with your friends?*
-  *How do you think the actors used their costumes to transform themselves into characters throughout the scenes?*
-  *(Reminder about what a theme is) What themes did you notice in the play? Which ones did you predict correctly? How did they make you feel?*

Social and Emotional Learning in the Drama Classroom: What is it?

BY KERRY HISHON

The concept of SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) was defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) more than two decades ago to promote equity and excellence in education through social and emotional learning. SEL is defined as:

“The process through which students gain and effectively apply the **knowledge**, **attitudes**, and **skills** necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and express empathy for others, develop and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.”

CASEL identifies the five categories of Social and Emotional Learning as follows:

- **Self-Awareness** (self-knowledge, identity, self-observation, growth mindset)
- **Self-Management** (emotional intelligence, self-regulation, personal responsibility, personal empowerment, coping strategies)
- **Social Awareness** (empathy and diversity, interpersonal skills, awareness of others, compassion, respect)
- **Relationship Skills** (communication, collaboration, connection, negotiation and resolution, community mindset)
- **Responsible Decision Making** (making ethical choices, critical thinking, leadership, analyzing and deciding, analysis mindset)

In our upcoming blog posts, we'll dive into the details of each of the five categories of SEL to help you incorporate these concepts into the drama classroom, as well as apply them to your daily life as a teacher to help you with classroom management, relationship building, and reducing stress.

As a drama teacher, you likely already incorporate SEL into your daily lessons without realizing it, through things like critical thinking exercises, character analysis projects, collaboration games, problem-solving challenges, and self-reflections. Actively incorporating SEL concepts into your lessons can help students develop these skills and apply them to their lessons in drama class and their everyday lives.

Name:

Date:

Social and Emotional Learning

Draw a line from the question in Column A to the correct answer in Column B.

1. Making ethical choices, critical thinking, leadership, analyzing and deciding, analysis mindset
2. Communication, collaboration, connection, negotiation and resolution, community mindset
3. Emotional intelligence, self-regulation, personal responsibility, personal empowerment, coping strategies
4. Self-knowledge, identity, self-observation, growth mindset
5. Empathy and diversity, interpersonal skills, awareness of others, compassion, respect

- A. Self-Awareness
- B. Self-Management
- C. Social Awareness
- D. Relationship Skills
- E. Responsible Decision Making

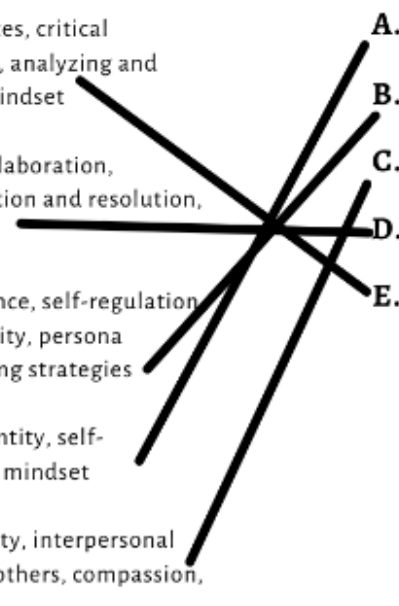


Name:

Date:

Social and Emotional Learning

Draw a line from the question in Column A to the correct answer in Column B.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Making ethical choices, critical thinking, leadership, analyzing and deciding, analysis mindset | A. Self-Awareness |
| 2. Communication, collaboration, connection, negotiation and resolution, community mindset | B. Self-Management |
| 3. Emotional intelligence, self-regulation, personal responsibility, personal empowerment, coping strategies | C. Social Awareness |
| 4. Self-knowledge, identity, self-observation, growth mindset | D. Relationship Skills |
| 5. Empathy and diversity, interpersonal skills, awareness of others, compassion, respect | E. Responsible Decision Making |
- 



Name _____

Date _____

Obersvation

Group # _____

Scene Observations

**What happened in
the scene?**



**What emotions were
in the scene?**



**What coping
mechanisms were
used in the scene?**



**How did the coping
mechanisms affect
the scene?**



Scene Creation Rubric

Name: _____

| Criteria | Excellent (3) | Good (2) | Needs Work (1) |
|--|--|---|---|
| Connection to Play | Chosen scene appeared in the play and showed a strong connection to the world of the show and characters. If created by the students, scene could have believably been a part of the play and characters. | Chosen scene connects to some parts of the play, but does not obviously connect to one specific moment. If created by the students, scene shows some understanding of the play and characters. | Chosen scene does not relate in any degree to the play or to the characters. If created by the students, scene does not show understanding of the play and characters. |
| Coping Strategies | Clear, strong use of at least one coping strategy discussed in class. | At least one coping strategy was used, though it was not used effectively. | No coping strategy was used. |
| Artistic Choices (Use of Space, Shape, Energy, and Gesture) | Displayed strong, well thought out use of artistic choices to support the scene as their character. | Used conscious artistic choices to somewhat support the scene as their character. | Minimal to no use of conscious artistic choices/Artistic choices did not support the scene in any way. |

Comments: