



ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA DRAMA EDUCATORS



<http://www.bcdramateachers.com>

ABCDE FOCUS

Winter 2014 Newsletter

November 2014 ~ President's Message

It is truly hard to believe that Remembrance Day has just passed! I am so glad our contract was resolved, albeit not without a lot of heartache, and that we are all able to get back to doing what we love to do – teach! It will undoubtedly be a while before all the dust settles from the strike, and things truly return to normal. I am eternally hopeful that we will eventually restore class size and composition language and get back to more manageable and safe class sizes.

I'm sure your worlds are still turned a little upside down as you catch up to unfinished business from June and the summer, and as you prepare for this season's offerings in your drama departments. You may have already seen on the e-blast a request to send in your production titles and dates to Christine Knight and they will be posted on our website. Please be sure to see each other's work! It was discussed at our last executive meeting that it would be great for BC drama teachers to make comp tickets available to other BC drama teachers and we encourage everyone to make this happen in your region, if you are not already doing so. We also encourage you to see as much community, semi-professional and professional theatre as you can to inform your practice and expose your students to the kinds of work you wish to emulate.

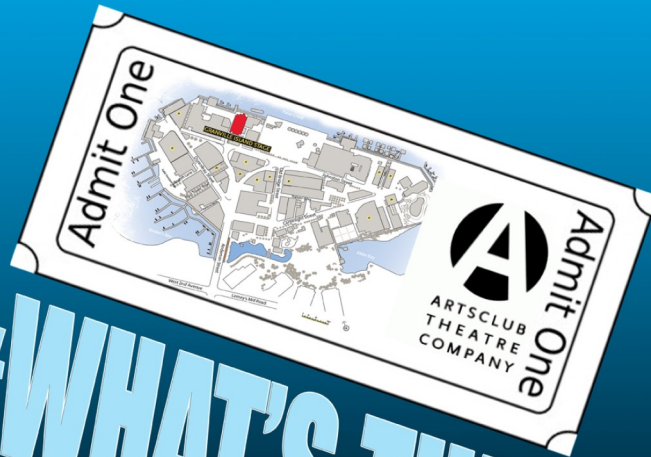
With the cancellation of this year's October conference your 2014-15 executive will stand until the AGM at the October 2015 conference, and we encourage you all to start thinking - before the next AGM - about how you can contribute your creativity, passion, and a little bit of time to helping our PSA grow even stronger than it already is! Please remember to renew your PSA membership with ABCDE before it lapses, and stay in contact through the website and list-serve. Encourage your students to apply for the ABCDE Scholarship Application and participate in the ABCDE YouthWrite competition. Nominate each other for our drama teacher awards. Participate in zone festivals, the Sears Drama festival and the Goodwill Shakespeare Festival. Start up an LSA in your region, if you don't already have one, and create positive events to get drama students and teachers together to share their passions and to advocate for your awesome and valuable programs!!

Finally, drop us a line – anytime – to let us know how we can better serve you!

~Lana O'Brien

Association of British Columbia Drama Educators
presents

Mini Drama Conference April 11, 2015



#WHAT'S THE 411?

**Workshops, Theatre Performance,
Dinner, Entertainment**

1585 Johnston St. Granville Island
Vancouver, BC



for more information please contact
Lana O'Brien or Gordon Hamilton

email: lobrien@sd22.bc.ca or gghamilton@sd35.bc.ca



REMINDER ...The ABCDE Youthwrite playwriting competition deadline is coming up! Don't forget to get those entries in on time. Go to www.bcdramateachers.com to download the application form and get info about this great contest.

Your executive is sticking around for a little while!



Due to the postponement of the Fall Conference, your executive will remain the same until next year's AGM. If you want to be part of this dynamic group, consider running for a position in the future. It's a great way to get to know colleagues from across the province, participate in some great Pro-D, and have fun too.

Here is your current executive at our last meeting, which was hosted by the great people at the Arts Club Theatre on Granville Island.

Sad news

We regret to inform you of the passing of drama teaching colleague, John Fawcett. John was a Past-President of ABCDE and a person who served both the executive and drama in BC well. Regrettably John passed away at the end of July. He had had poor health for a number of years, but he was still teaching this summer at UVic even as his health finally failed.

Many drama educators throughout BC knew John and benefited from his leadership, and he will be sorely missed.

ABCDE Executive

2014/2015

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Why have a ZONE festival?

It's been a tough year. Across the province, teachers are tired, and still recovering from a long, stressful strike. We started off the year already behind, and Drama teachers are usually pressed for time as it is. It has been tempting for many of us to cut back on our usual pile of activities, and some have already decided that shows and events will be postponed, or moved to a later date, or not get done at all.

One thing that I will never skip, regardless of what kind of stress I am under, is our Zone festival. If you have a successful Zone, you may understand why I feel this way. If there is no Zone festival in your area, this might help you decide to start one up.

I work in Campbell River, BC, and am part of Zone 10 on North Vancouver Island, which is Duncan/Ladysmith, all the way up to Port Hardy. Our Zone is BIG, and it is successful, and it is growing, and there's a good reason why it's something North island teachers are not keen on missing. It rejuvenates us!

Every February, a dedicated group of teachers and students get together to celebrate theatre. Yes, it is a competition, in which one play will be chosen to represent our Zone at the Provincial festival, but we have managed to keep the competitiveness out, in favour of a weekend of sharing theatre with each other.

Our festival is two days of workshops, and three nights of shows, and is so successful that we are having to think about adding another day, or turning away potential performances. The reason is, everyone wants to come and be part of this great weekend. The students get an opportunity to work and play with other theatre kids, they get to learn from amazing theatre professionals, they get to share their work, and they get to see the work of others in their zone. In Zone 10, it is a requirement that all students and their teachers attend all plays and workshops, and that teachers be present to supervise and learn with their students. It truly builds the feeling of teamwork we are trying to foster.

The teachers get an opportunity to see each other, talk about their year, share ideas, celebrate, and support each other. There are regulars, who attend every year without fail, and there are some who pop in every few years, and then take a break. There are veteran teachers and first timers. Whatever the mixture, it just seems to work. This is the stuff we, and our students, will remember for years to come.

Is there no Zone festival in your area? Have you often thought about getting one started? You only need 4 schools from your Zone to be eligible. If you don't know how to get started, we can help. Feel free to email if you have questions

Christine Knight—Carihi Secondary School—Christine.Knight@sd72.bc.ca

Ideas from colleagues...

Mime Unit—'Pairs on Chairs'

Time: 20 mins

Grade: 6-8

Skill Development: concentration, mime, focus, body awareness, creativity, cooperation.

Ask the students to find a partner, collect a chair and find a place in the room. Each pair needs to improvise a scene where one person would be sitting in a chair and the other is offering them a service. The only catch is that you are not allowed to speak.

E.g hairdresser, dentist...

Watch each performance quickly, and discuss which ones were effective and why.

There may be a number of groups who pretend to speak without sound. This is not mime, but pretending to speak.

Use one example and discuss how you could design a scene where you never had to speak.

E.g. person sitting on a seat, pretending to be on a moving bus. Old person struggles up the aisle, young person stands up, smiles, and motions for the older person to sit. Both continue the journey looking forward as though on a moving bus.

Ask each group to design another mime scene using the chair.

Watch each and discuss the differences.

Submitted by Martha Parker—Nanaimo District Secondary School

ABCDE SCHOLARSHIP—APPLY NOW!

Each year, the ABCDE offers one \$750.00 scholarship to a grade 12 student entering a post-secondary institution to pursue further theatre training.

Congratulations to the 2014 winner Anna Anderson from WL Seaton Secondary in Vernon.

For details on how to apply this year, go to www.bcdramateachers.com and follow the link to SCHOLARSHIPS.

Drama games...

Sometimes Drama games are just a way to let the kids blow off steam and get a little crazy. Games like ATOM and HAPPY FAMILIES come to mind. Yes, those are fun games, and they certainly allow the kids to get to know each other, but often games that eliminate students are not what the class needs.

There are many AWARENESS games that can be used to build a sense of ensemble and awareness of the whole class, in which students must work together to achieve the goal. Here are a few that allow the group to feel success TOGETHER.

ZOOM

Type: Ensemble Building, Focus.

Purpose: This activity is great for getting the students working together and focussing them on everyone in the room. It is also a fantastic way to get to know your students. Watch how students respond to this activity and you will learn a lot about how they lead, how they follow, whether they are team players, whether they have trouble focussing...the list is endless. Use this activity to focus a chatty group, get an improve team on the same page, or just for fun.

Procedure: Students stand in a circle. No one speaks. All students must be aware of everyone at all times. One person starts by clapping their hands directly at a classmate and saying ZOOM at the same time. The student who receives the ZOOM must clap and say ZOOM at the exact same time it is passed to them. That person then passes the ZOOM to another classmate, and so on. Once the students get the hang of it, a rhythm will emerge. Encourage that rhythm. It might be slow as they learn how to work together, but as trust and awareness grows, they will naturally speed up. Don't allow them to just pass the ZOOM without the other person being ready. The two MUST ZOOM and clap TOGETHER always. Encourage the students to watch the ZOOM as it is passed between classmates, as it WILL come to them eventually, and they must be ready.

Counting to 20

Type: Ensemble Building, Focus.

Purpose: I've found this is a great game to play if having teamwork, discipline or respect issues within a group. It's extremely simple, but manages to focus the entire teams' energy on one simple task. When the goal is accomplished, the ensemble automatically feels a little stronger.

Procedure:

1. Actors stand in circle and look at the floor.
2. Any actor will start by saying "one."
3. Any other actor will continue by saying "two" and so on until you reach "ten" or "twenty."
4. If any two players say a number at the same time the group must start again at "one".

Variation: Instead of counting, have students step into the circle. If two people step in at the same time, they all start again.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Highland Secondary School, Comox, B.C.

Programs and Extra-curricular:

- ~International Baccalaureate (IB) Theatre Arts Standard Level
- ~Theatre 11/12
- ~Drama 8 and 9/10
- ~Recreational Dance and Fitness for Girls 9/10 and 11/12

Plus stuff like Art, French, HCE, Planning

And then, extra-curricular, because of the awesome:

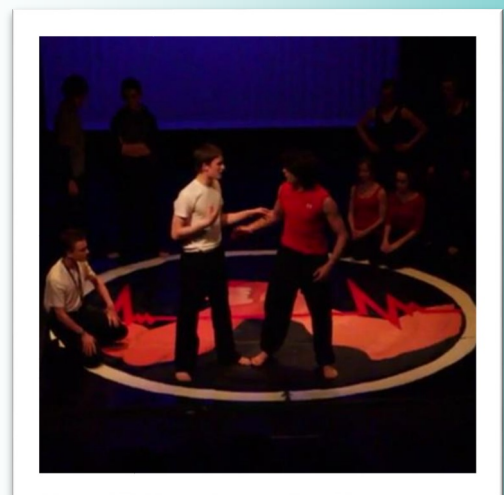
- ~Canadian Improv Games (Junior and Senior Teams)
- ~ Annual North Island Regional Drama Festival
- ~workshops on stage fighting, Shakespeare, contact improv dance, Beckett, improv, Puppetry, Wrestling, and so on...
- ~ District Drama Honors projects such as workshops with professionals, such as Scott Swann, and joint theatre projects with Vanier and Isfeld, such as High Score, a New play commissioned by the RCMP and organized by Dr. Claire in order to teach grade 8 boys about sexual consent.
- ~A Musical every second year!
- ~One Act Festival Plays

Facility: The Highland Drama Space is a well used and well loved Proscenium Arch Theatre/ Multipurpose room/Drama-nasium. When we need to share our magical world with the PE department, and we do -because we are nice that way, the stage area can be separated from the Multi by extending a sexy, blue, carpeted, "sound proof" wall. We have a functional booth with an aging light and sound system that serves us well and is usually reliable. Knock on wood. No one really knows how to control the house lights; You kinda just have to hope they work. The Multipurpose room has a mirrored wall that is great for dance and as a back drop when taking selfies during class time. The curtains were replaced in 2012 and we think they are awesome...if only we could get the grade 8s to realize they are not rope swings. We want more smoke machines and we think our disco ball is pretty sweet- so look for it in every production!

Productions:

- Coming Soon...March 2015: THE ADDAMS FAMILY
- 2014- The Wrestling Season—Drama fest (NIRD)
- 2013- Foot Fancy (NIRD)
- 2012- Avenue Q School Edition
- 2011- 4 am (NIRD)
- 2010- Little Shop of Horrors
- 2009- The Cave (NIRD)

Lisa Williams - Lisa.Williams@sd71.bc.ca





Become a member of the ABCDE... a PSA of the BCTF

#1 Do you want to join/subscribe to the ABCDE? Need to renew your membership? Online registration can be found at <https://www.bctf.ca/psa/join.aspx>

#2 Do you prefer to print off the application and mail it in? Find a link to the form at www.bcdramateachers.com

#3 Join our moderated email list-serv and connect with other Drama practitioners! Share ideas, ask for help, post info about your shows. Almost anything Drama-related goes. Anyone can read our list-serv, but only members/subscribers can post (membership has its privileges). (*sometimes we will post FREE offers for teachers on behalf of non-members)

To join our list-serv:

Use the drop-down list to select "psa-abcde" (fortunately we are the first one in the list!). To post a message to our list-serv, please send our Past-President Colin Plant an email at colinplant@shaw.ca Our list-serv is moderated to avoid getting spammed.

#3 Not sure of your membership status? Please contact the BCTF at 1-800-663-9163 and ask for the PSA Division.