

**CREATING “MINDFUL ENSEMBLES”:
GUIDING EMERGING READERS THROUGH THE ENSEMBLE-
BASED PLAYWRITING AND PHYSICAL THEATRE PROCESS**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract:.....3

Chapter 1: Marriage of Three Disciplines.....4

Chapter 2: Introduction and Background.....6

Chapter 3: Literature Review.....19

Chapter 4: Waikiki School “Me ‘e” Internship.....27

Chapter 5: Critical Analysis and Philosophy.....37

Chapter 6: Integration of P4C and “H.O.M”42

Chapter 7: Supporting Fieldwork and Research.....49

Chapter 8: Analysis and Presentation of Research.....66

Chapter 9: Conclusion.....85

Works Cited:.....87

Bibliography:.....92

Appendices:.....100

Abstract:

The proposed research involves an interactive approach to the study of effective pedagogical techniques involving applying theatre games and ensemble exercises as an alternative means of increasing literacy and reading comprehension. The target age groups will be dissected into two populations at Waikiki Elementary School: Kindergarten/ 1st grade (“emerging readers”) and 2nd/ 3rd grade (self-directed “independent readers”). The past several years have seen an increase in the codification of “performing arts in education” programs, and I am investigating the connections between kinesthetic learning and group-based ensemble-building processes as effective agents in increasing literacy. This will be an experiential process in which I utilize and facilitate several renowned ensemble-building exercises in conjunction with literacy-building techniques, while still striving to maintain a sense of enjoyment and creativity during the lessons.

To accommodate Waikiki Elementary School’s P4C and “Habits of Mind” school-wide philosophical teachings, many of the short plays will be centered on Aesop’s *Fables*, as well as other famous fairy tales that reinforce the school’s approach to moral teachings and each individual child’s developmental growth. The 28-lesson curriculum will be designed to culminate in two public presentations of theatre pieces selected, written, and ensemble-created by the students themselves. I will explore the relationship between the students’ comprehension of the principles of written and performed dramatic structure at the beginning of the after-school program, and their comprehension at the end of the program, post-performance.

It is my intention to eventually integrate physical theatre and storytelling as essential components for increasing functional literacy at the “emerging readers” level. It is my long-term goal to create a one-year curriculum that mandates kinesthetic learning paradigms and their integration into “arts in education” after school programs, available for all student populations.

Chapter 1: Marriage of Three Disciplines

My entire thesis is based on the posing of three main questions that revolve around three seemingly disparate disciplines. These questions may or may not be reconcilable, but I find them to be an accurate cross-section of what I have been attempting to achieve during my “Arts Bridge” Internship at Waikiki Elementary School. My questions are:

- 1) How effective is the utilization of Aesop’s *Fables*¹ in teaching and reinforcing the principles of P4C and “Habits of Mind” to emerging readers?
- 2) How effective and realistic is it to attempt to form an “ensemble” of young actors in a time frame of merely seven weeks? And can this ensemble actually create theatre on autonomously, or is it necessary they have guiding teachers along the entire process?
- 3) Are physical theatre techniques more effective than traditional dialogic reading techniques in the literacy development of emerging and early readers?

¹ It is believed that Aesop was a slave who lived on Samos, a Greek island in the eastern Aegean Sea in the 5th century, BC, and has over 600 stories attributed to his name. The philosophy of Aesop (and those attributed to Aesop, though possibly from other origins) has spread worldwide. The fables resonate with both children and adults, and serve as humorous moral tales that are short and never heavy-handed; perfect for short, staged adaptations.

I believe in the synthesis of the arts, that is, more specifically, in the synthesis of the literary arts with the performing arts: that many forms of literature can best be deeply understood by acting them out, and our desire to “act out” stories can lead to our desire to research what those stories are. What are the histories of those stories as well as their storytellers? At the very youngest level of learners, when the kindergarteners are still practicing appropriate social mores and roles, the arts educator can hold an essential function as a “pied piper” of sorts. The arts educator is not your teacher or your mother or father, and is yet an adult who holds a position of authority and influence in your lives. They can be the other predominant influence in your life, akin to a coach or music teacher. My conviction is that, by having merely a few sessions a week to play and learn in a new way, we are giving the children a vital opportunity to express themselves and question things outside of the “right/wrong” context. Also, due to the fact that these sessions don’t happen every day, the excitement of the new can be a nice change from a possibly mundane experience of school and home calendars.

When the children came to my class they were very energized about learning something new and in a new way, and I considered it my “charge” to fulfill this expectation. The worst thing would be to take the three aforementioned questions and squeeze all possibilities of adventure and imagination out of them. To impart the passion I have for all three of them, and to impart techniques at the same time, while instilling philosophical values, class discipline, and a sense of the zany and fun, was no easy task. Nevertheless, I took this task very seriously indeed.

Chapter 2: Introduction and Background:

“Love is a better teacher than a sense of duty.”—Albert Einstein

Some parents read to their children. Some parents do not. Some parents assume it is the school’s job to educate their children. Some are too busy to spend more than a perfunctory 10-minute “story time” night session with their children. Some parents do the opposite: cue cards, quizzes, written homework reviews, and forced diagnostics that squelch all enjoyment out of the child’s fantasy/story time. The teaching approach towards emerging readers must be somewhere in-between, both regarding the process and attitude towards literacy and the love for stories. And the most effective teaching methodology for emerging *independent* readers at this stage is an encouragement and affirmation of principles/skills already learned. Since reading and comprehension of texts are vital for further learning in virtually all subject areas, a strong foundation not only in the mechanics of literacy and syntax but also love for reading as a means to acquire knowledge are imperative for future success. *How* this is achieved determines the rest of a child’s attitude towards future academics, social standing, self-esteem, and so forth.

For every parent to have an implicit understanding of Vygotsky’s “Zone of Proximal development (ZPD)”² is an assumption no teacher can make. In fact, it is even a false assumption to pretend that all teachers have adequately assessed and

² Lev Vygotsky was a Russian Developmental theorist, who developed the theory that there is a range, or zone, of tasks, which the child can only accomplish with the help of a more skilled partner. Once the child has mastered the task, he/she can move on to another task. The parent or teacher bridges those zones so the child does not become too frustrated or overwhelmed. ZPD works best when it is the child, not the adult, who decides which “work” needs to get done. (Hirsh-Pasek 146)

charted each child's developmental stage with regards to their reading levels. If the parents and teachers have not communicated with one another regarding methodologies and time spent working on literacy and story time, this may result in a gap, with the child's academic needs not being met.

The National Academy of Education Commission on Reading has declared that reading aloud to children is the "single most important activity" (Telease Introduction) for ensuring success in learning to read. But it turns out that certain kinds of book reading are far more effective than others for promoting vocabulary development and emergent literacy. Just reading to a child is not enough. Asking the child to consider alternative outcomes, relate what's on the page to his/her own experiences, and talk about the sounds and letters encountered is much more effective than merely reading out loud. This type of reading is called "dialogic reading" (Hirsh-Pasek 124).

The debate over the efficacy of dialogic reading as the sole means of language acquisition for the post pre-school aged child is what I have been focusing on. If the child is already capable of drawing conclusions in story plot and structure, then does the adult "interfere" with that cognitive process by asking too many questions? But one interesting discovery, still under investigation, is the chance that dialogic reading for older populations (students in the 1st and 2nd grades) may be equally effective for students of higher-income families whose parents have already

practiced dialogic reading on a regular basis. Could this also be the case for some of my ELL students³ and their parents?

Susan B. Neuman, in her paper *The Challenge of Teaching Vocabulary in Early Education*, draws a very bleak conclusion as to the effectiveness and even delusional perception that “Storybook Reading” is the panacea for all literacy issues:

More often than not teachers have relied on storybook reading as their prime intervention to teach vocabulary in the early years. However, there are several problems in such reliance. First, as described earlier, words selected for vocabulary instruction tend to be opportunistic, based on the particular book and not on other criteria. Second, words are likely not to be repeated sufficiently to provide the practice necessary to develop and in-depth understanding of words and their meanings in different contexts. Third, words from different storybooks rarely provide a coherent framework for children to understand words well enough to make inductive references. It is not surprising, therefore, that recent meta-analyses have shown only moderate effects of reading aloud on vocabulary development. (Neuman and Dickenson, 364-365)

The “framework” she describes and the sufficient repetition is exactly what the rehearsal of a play can provide. I have made it a point to have all students learn the words and theatre terminology ahead of time, before we dive into the small scripts. To compliment this procedure, we also read the play aloud *together* more than three times, all under the guise of a rehearsal. So when I ask them to portray the tortoise one more time and think about how slow it talks, I am also repeatedly getting them to practice reading independently. Then I assure them that everyone will get a chance to play each part, so there are no “lazy” readers. If storybook

³ ELL stands for “English Language Learners..” The percentage of Waikiki School students in my enrichment class who are ELL and second-language learners is 7 out of 19 total students. For this subset of the class, it is my experience (after asking each of them individually) that, other than their home-room teacher, I might be the only person who has ever read stories in English to them!

reading is a passive experience for the emerging reader, albeit a very pleasurable experience, then my goal is to ensure that students have both an active and equally pleasurable learning experience. The rehearsal and performing of plays does not supplant or undermine dialogic reading, it complements it.

The relatively new exploration of reading aloud in an experiential fashion with children has been debated with regard to the efficacy of its outcomes, but one component of teaching emerging readers to read that has been universally agreed upon by the children themselves is the notion of “if it’s not fun, why would you do it?” This tongue-in-cheek commentary on the young student as the one who determines the books selected and lessons to be learned seems counter-productive at first. Yet one of the essential elements in actually bringing *emerging* readers into the realm of confident, *independent* readers is to have them actively engaged in the play and to trigger their curiosity about stories, fables, and books.

A cautionary tale of the over-achieving parent or over-taxed teacher, forced to “teach to the state standards test,” is that to force children to learn at a very young developmental stage might set them up for failure at a later stage. Also, with the pressure placed upon small children in a formal academic environment (Kindergarten-12th), they could become “fearful learners.” When the child is set up for a *pass-fail* scenario, this precedent may turn the child into a learner who judges his or her self-worth based on test scores and comparative charts external to his or her own learning needs.

Therefore, if the child does not perform up to expectations, he or she could live in a vicious cycle of “catch up.” This is where the fear and apprehension come

in. At a very early age, young learners already come into awareness of their peers' progress relative to their own in the classroom, so the adults, parents and teachers of the world don't need to unnecessarily add to this pressure. A possible solution to this inevitability is to include the principles of physical theatre and ensemble creation in order to diffuse this tension.

Personal Statement

In training and performing full-time as a member of several theatre ensembles, the process of creating performances as a collective has been a part of my work ethic for 25 years. My teaching practices have been an extension of these philosophies of creating theatre as a collective. The issue with teaching younger populations is their reliance on an authority figure to manage the curriculum and classroom environment. This is directly antithetical to the ensemble practice, in which we ideally strive to have a democratic decision-making process. At its most stringent, the ensemble can serve as a platform for one definitive and dominant voice with several supporting actors and technicians. The allegory of the peaceful theatre collective has always fascinated me, and I have always wanted to attempt the systematic development of an ensemble myself.

One downside of the "teacher centered" classroom model is that the students come to rely solely on the teacher for the materials and follow-up questions of that particular lesson. In "student-centered" learning environments, the students are encouraged to generate their own questions and material. With the ensemble model being closer to the student-centered approach, I have challenged myself to

create the bridge of helping students become simultaneously critical thinkers and instigators of their own emerging literacy. The definition of a theatre ensemble is illuminated by Laurie McCants, co-founder of the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble and current director of the NET, as she explained its history in her keynote speech at the 2013 national conference of the Theatre Communications Group (TCG):

Here's NET's⁴ definition of ensemble: "An ensemble is a group of individuals dedicated to collaborative creation, committed to working together consistently over years to develop a distinctive body of work and practices." NET is deeply committed to supporting the growing movement of collaborative performance makers, uplifting the values intrinsic to ensemble process: transparency, mutual respect, equity, inclusion, and democratic structures. (McCants, 2013)

I have been using these same intrinsic values in working with children by treating them as an ensemble in different developmental stages. My personal philosophy has been contingent on the children creating a body of work structured around a series of short plays, each building in complexity and linguistic length, that coincided with their building confidence as collective readers and performers. In patching together a series of fables, so that each child might have several speaking and non-speaking roles, I have been building a sense of a larger piece of theatre where every child feels validated in having equally contributed to each theatre piece. This is all in the spirit of children collaborating without a sense of ego or "star performers."

⁴ NET, the Network of Ensemble Theatres, is an American advocacy and support group founded in 1996 with only eight companies, and "created for artists and by artists.." It now includes over 100 companies from 26 states, and organizes regional "Micro fests" annually nationwide. Dell'Arte International is one of the original eight companies of NET.

I chose McCants' definition of ensemble from many others, as a benchmark for younger people to strive to achieve. Often it has been my experience that children, just like adults, can have narcissistic tendencies where they strive to outdo one another on the stage. It is just a matter of children being more obvious and less oblique in their ego tendencies. The issue of literacy strikes a sensitive chord in many children, as it is a benchmark of "intellectual" and academic achievement. How to create a nurturing ensemble in this environment was one of the challenges and actual causes for the inception of this "Page to Stage"⁵ class.

Dell'Arte International, where I trained and performed, is one of the eight founding members of NET. We were trained in their philosophical approach towards the collaborative process: collective bargaining, contractual agreements, the artistic process as a whole, and how to establish parameters for successful performer-driven theatre. I use the "Dell 'Arte process" in all my work, and took it with me when I interned with professor Paul Mitri's 2008 production of *The Servant of Many Masters* at UHM. It was Joan Schirle, one of the founding members of Dell'Arte, who suggested that I move to Hawaii and interview with HTY (Honolulu Theatre of Youth). While an intern at HTY in the summer of 2013, my training and practices at Dell'Arte helped me to connect the artistic vocabulary of the collaborative theatre with pedagogical practices intrinsic in directing youth.

As a coincidence, HTY is now also a NET member, and the current artistic director, Eric Johnson, relies heavily on the collaborative process and Anne Bogart's "Viewpoints" as a germinating ground for new work. I was interested in similarities

⁵ "Page to Stage" is the name of the after school drama class at Waikiki Elementary School. Shelly Hecker selected the name to accommodate this particular class.

and artistic connections between Dell'Arte and HTY as the two companies have summer arts camps for elementary school-aged children. The *connection* is in emphasizing the impact these lessons might have on emerging readers, which could be used as a “selling point” in negotiations with principals, school boards, and school PTO’s. The *disconnection* is in how those camps are not always available at each elementary school facility, and therefore inaccessible to populations who might need them most.

Why Physical Theatre?

“Toute Bouge” (Everything Moves)—Jacques Lecoq⁶

I began my study of physical theatre almost thirty years ago, when I worked as a professional clown and improvisational performer. I quickly realized it was essential I receive more training in order to train the actor’s “instrument”: the voice and body. After completing “method” training, I enrolled in a full-time course with (then) one of Jacques Lecoq’s only recognized teacher-trainers of the “Lecoq method,” Dodi DiSanto. This was the beginning of what is now her full-time movement conservatory, the only one in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. It was a revelatory experience for me to discover that there was an entirely new “vocabulary” out there that did not rely on merely the printed page. So many of the

⁶ Lecoq was the founder of the International School of Mime and Theatre in Paris, France, and is attributed with changing the face of international “physical” theatre. He is credited with developing his own philosophy of integrating mask, mime, clown, movement, and gesture. His students have created physical theatre companies worldwide.

exercises and performances we created were predicated on a common physical language that every performer had learned and intuited from the other performers. The feeling of “one voice, one body” as a performance paradigm has resonated with me ever since. A few years later, I attended the Dell’Arte School of Physical Theatre in Blue Lake, California, and further solidified my training in ensemble creation, performance, and pedagogy. Their methodologies are in a direct lineage with Jacques Lecoq’s, as Dell’Arte’s founder, Carlo Mazzone-Clementi, was a colleague and fellow mask performer with Lecoq. Mazzone-Clementi is widely recognized to be in the vanguard of physical theatre, and is credited with bringing Commedia and mask theatre to the USA in the late 1960’s. Much of what is now under the umbrella of physical, devised, or ensemble theatre can be attributed to these two men and their numerous disciples.

Lecoq’s first principle of study in his two-year institute was that the actors should learn how to improvise. As he states in his book, *The Moving Body*:

Improvisation is at the heart of the educational process and is sometimes confused with expression. Yet a person expressing himself is not necessarily being creative. The ideal, of course, would be for creation and expression to go hand in hand, in perfect harmony. Unfortunately many people enjoy expressing themselves, ‘letting it all hang out’, and forgetting that they must not be the only ones to get pleasure from it: spectators must receive pleasure, too. There are many teachers who confuse the two. (Lecoq 18)

The fascinating difference between the performance of young children and that of adults performing has to do with the fact that children can perpetually “let it all hang out,” without acknowledgement of adults or care for society at large.

Because I have taught children before and experienced the opposite “problem,” I

think that physical theatre as a means and vocabulary unto itself is a nice complement to the constraints of the 6.5-hour daily class regimen with three 20-minute “recesses.” *Physical theatre* as a theatre movement has come to mean many things to many people, but children need not concern themselves with variations and definitions of “physicalizing” something/someone. They merely want to *play*. Lecoq was prescient in his profound understanding of the nature of play and pretense with regards to the argument of method (i.e., “psychological”) acting versus “the act of creation”:

I do not search for deep sources of creativity in psychological memories whose “cry of life mingles with the cry of illusion.” I prefer to see more distance between the actors own ego and the character performed. This allows the performer to play even better. Actors usually perform badly in plays whose concerns are too close to their own. They adopt a sort of blank voice because they retain part of the text for themselves without being able to hand it on to the public. Neither belief nor identification is enough—one must be genuinely able to *play*. (Lecoq 19)

The joy in teaching children, and the joy in teaching children theatre, is that, by its very nature, there must always be *play* involved. In asking past students (and of course doing it with them!) to “be a giraffe,” then “be a hungry giraffe,” then ask “show me how the hungry giraffe searches for food when there is only one more leaf and all 14 giraffes must get it!” is to ask for glorious pandemonium. This is not because there is no focus in the room, or no sense of play—it is just the opposite: every single one of those children are actively engaged in ferocious play and absolutely focused on one singular objective—TO GET THAT LEAF! In keeping the students’ minds and bodies engaged in an activity that is fanciful and not connected

directly to their egos, I am allowing them the freedom to know that this drama class is a “safe space” for emotional, intellectual, and physical play.

To date, not a single student in either class has ever said to me, “I don’t know how to play a _____!” or “I don’t want to be a _____!” There have certainly been times when two or three students wanted to be “cats” for example, at the same time, but we have worked out a system of taking turns so that all can compromise. And, if the students are confronted with the challenge to either play a cat or not doing the improvised play at all, *they always choose the play*. I have discovered several *play* elements in the confines of the 45-minute structure: mainly, that some games are for focusing the students, some for energizing them, some are for increasing their perceptions of physicality, building ensemble, and others for just “loosening up.” This leads me to my personal mission to marry these three learning disciplines...but how?

Why “Ensemble” Theatre?

“We can all feel that ‘ensemble’ suggests something highly desirable. We can all instantly feel what it isn’t. No one can say what it is... The proof of the pudding is in the eating.”—Peter Brook⁷

Similar to the reasons for creating physical theatre, my passion for ensemble theatre and the ensemble process led me to this concept of integrating these two

⁷ The world-famous director Peter Brook as quoted in an interview by John Britton, upon being asked the question “What is an ensemble?” John Britton just published a book entitled *Encountering Ensemble*, which is mostly concerned with examining ensemble work and the egalitarian nature of the process and product. His book has been reviewed in the March 2014 edition of *American Theatre* magazine, published by TCG.

entities with literacy studies. Children need to learn how to read and write, children need to learn how to work together, and children need to learn how to express themselves verbally and physically. The ensemble is a concept that coincides nicely with the mission and philosophy of Waikiki Elementary School.

I chose *ensemble* as a concept because I know children are malleable and “available” to new ideas and games. I wanted the class to feel as if they belonged to s both a part of the Waikiki Elementary School curricula and also an extracurricular learning experience. By having this course as part of the after school program, the students can continue their academic studies in a non-formal, “experiential learning” format⁸ of concrete experimentation, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Certainly we realize that students at this young developmental stage do not yet form the crucial social “emotional” bonds that occur during the teenage years. Hence, the students’ identification as “band geeks” or “jocks” as a means of their self-identification serves as both an affirmation and a label.

I could make some false assumptions that every kindergartener and 1st grader proclaim themselves a “theatre geek,” but that is missing the point. The ensemble model builds character, bonds, a common working style, discipline models, and a linguistic “short-hand” that other working models do not. The creation of a working ensemble is a huge, time-consuming endeavor that we can’t possibly make manifest in a few sessions per week, for merely seven weeks. The

⁸ *Experiential Learning* could be defined in layman’s terms as “learning by doing”, which was a concept first revolutionized by educational theorist John Dewey in 1915.

ambition must be on teaching the children what the concept and principles of ensemble are, and then allowing them to experience these beginnings. There can be no push in the building of an ensemble, though. I realized that I needed to be extremely forgiving and at ease in my approach to the boundaries small children can withstand. The best way to go about this ensemble “creation” process, from my point of view, was to play small ensemble-building games every day. In the synthesis of my rhythm and ball games, I was attempting to focus the students’ energy on one common goal: *to keep the beach ball in the air*. In this simple exercise, my pedagogical intent was to let the children focus on a goal other than their own individual interests. In playing the “name game, much time is focused on each child being able to articulate not only an alliteration of the first letter of their name but those of their fellow ensemble members as well. This integration with the students’ stating their names and a personal like (i.e., “My name is Walt, and I like wood”), was an effective way to get to a place of “common vocabulary” both gestural and physical. When I asked my teaching partner, Mrs. Patrice Scott, the importance of ensemble theatre *under the guidance of an adult*, she wholeheartedly responded:

Can an ensemble create theater or do they need guidance? Of course they can create theater independently but for what audience? Children create spontaneous theater all the time. They are constantly doing it. But guidance is very important for educational theater and audience oriented theatre. It has been my experience that when left to their own devices, elementary student theater would be about ...to the exclusion of all other topics. So while I think the importance of student centered theater cannot be emphasized enough, I do feel.

(Scott, personal interview, 2014)

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Over the summer, I compiled resources that were a cross-section of theoretical Ensemble theatre texts, literacy textbooks, and educational theatre textbooks. I have also reviewed several articles on current issues of existing strategies and programs in educational theatre. Because my emphasis is on the effects of kinesthetic approaches to learning text and creating theatre for young and impressionable learners, I have been studying several texts during my internship at Waikiki Elementary School. Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's new book, *Great Habits, Great Readers*, is a treatise on teaching reading to emerging readers in new ways while using the "common core" curriculum. This book has been inspirational as a yearlong reading curriculum, but I have needed to modify and synthesize some of its lessons for a far more compact curriculum (1.5 contact hours per week). One of the striking changes to the traditional mindset of "teaching the reader" is to ask, quite simply, *better questions* that not only "teach the reader" but also "teach the text." To "teach the text" is the process of having the students become engaged in exploring the text itself, and as opposed to the teacher "telling" the student population what is pertinent in the text. These open-ended questions that both the teacher and student arrive at through consensus are a means of empowering students by getting them engaged in reading "like a detective." Bambrick-Santoyo states, "The power of asking the right questions cannot be overstated." (Bambrick-Santoyo, 133-135)

The Handbook of Early Literacy Research (Vol. 3) is an essential tome for this study. I found each academic essay included in this volume to be invaluable as background research, but the overall depth of materials and references of this

collection beyond the scope of my research. There are a few essays that were helpful for my topic. “Developing Children’s Print Knowledge through Adult-Child Storybook Reading Interactions: Print Referencing as an Instructional Practice” (Laura M. Justice and Shayne Piasta, 200-213) includes ideas similar to some of my own pedagogical tendencies. Included in Justice and Piasta’s fieldwork is a 20-week systematic approach, with two to four storybook reading sessions per week, and this helped me to frame expectations of students’ progressions in comprehending print knowledge.

“Child Characteristics-Instruction Interactions: Implications for Students’ Literacy Skills Development in the Early Grades” by Carol McDonald Conner was very helpful in introducing me to the concepts of *teacher-child-managed instruction* versus *peer-managed instruction*. I have been debating this concept in my teaching practices, and found this research to be an affirmation of some my own assumptions:

It turns out that whether an instructional activity is teacher-child or child-peer-managed is important regardless of the content of that instruction. In general, children with weaker skills (e.g., comprehension) make greater progress when they receive teacher-child-managed instruction specifically focused on the particular skill, but do not tend to show gains when provided similar content that is child-peer managed. (Conner, Morrison and Petrella, 2004, 259).

“Tell Me a Story: Examining the Benefits of Shared Reading” by Anne E. Cunningham and Jamie Zibulsky helped me comprehend variations on what “reading aloud” is and the difference between storytelling and dialogic reading. As we have all participated in “story time” with children, it is easy to confuse this experience with

the actual pedagogical practice of the teacher-led practice of dialogic reading. On pages 398-399, the list of skills that reading aloud actually imparts helped clarifying what the instructor is attempting to do. The skills affected in a positive manner are emerging literacy skills, phonological processes and phonics, vocabulary development, reading comprehension. I had this in mind when using a “framing device” for the amount of storytelling/shared reading/student generated reading, etc. that I have employed in my classes.

Professor Schiffner highly recommended the groundbreaking work on “backwards design” entitled *Understanding by Design* by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. It has been the most influential textbook that I have used thus far. It has also helped me to frame the entire thesis, particularly with regard to the notion of = *enduring understanding*. This book served as a guideline for organizing my curriculum, particularly since I don’t have extensive training in curriculum design. However, it also served as a critical lens for framing my research questions. I have used the template on pages 177-190 as a model for my own curriculum template.

Seymour Sarason’s *Teaching as a Performing Art* was an inspiring book. It dissects John Dewey’s philosophies of teaching and gives a challenge to teachers who may not only teach traditional content but also in a “traditional” context and/or in rote fashion. This book is not overly academic in its layout, and I have appreciated its anecdotal nature. One major “takeaway” of this books’ thesis for me has been how well the teacher can relate to the students on their own level, and that the creation of this connection is part of the teacher’s performance.

John Holt's seminal work *How Children Learn*, although published all the way back in 1964, was a powerful challenge for me. It suggested to me that I might be trying too hard and might get in the students' way when it comes to teaching performing arts, or any discipline, for that matter. I found his blunt and straightforward approach into the mind of the child (and how the adult/teacher often interferes with that process) to be a perpetual reminder when I was in class. He was a strong advocate for homeschooling and "un-schooling," and if I considered myself an advocate for arts in education as an alternative to codification, rote learning, and "teaching to the test," I needed to heed his message. The curiosity of children and their eagerness to make new discoveries are described in delightful anecdotes, and really speak to the spirit of the child's mind. It has been informative in how I need to let go of my "agenda" and to be more attuned to the children's needs.

"Why Aesop's *Fables* in the Drama Class?"

My co-teacher, Mrs. Patrice Scott, and I had long discussions over the applicability of Aesop's *Fables* to the children's daily lives. We decided that these stories were the best for this particular age group and what this group would be dealing with in their daily lives. In an interview with Mrs. Scott she explained her reasoning for choosing Aesop's *Fables*:

Aesop's fables can be of great effectiveness in teaching the habits of mind. The stories are brief, they normally do not involve many characters and the story lines are simple and not frightening. Aesop shows a great economy in story telling. This makes it easier for even kindergartners to comprehend. The habits of mind could almost be based on morals from Aesop. Cooperation

and caring, persistence, empathy for others, risk taking, flexibility in thinking. These are all story morals clearly illustrated. Because of the simplicity, students can easily identify these truths and immediately implicate them through play, by acting out these stories. And because kinetically they have embodied the characterization, these messages are easy to recall and use in daily life. (Scott, personal interview, 2014)

The question for me concerning the choice of Aesop's *Fables* as one of my base materials for the majority of our theatrical pursuits is a very easy and organic one. All of the fables are extremely short, which means I can introduce, read, re-read, act out, rehearse, set, and review/discuss one entire fable in 45 minutes. This has given the students a sense of encapsulated accomplishment upon completion of each lesson. I was attracted to the simplicity of characterizations in allowing children to "misbehave" as an animal, and not as themselves, thereby freeing them up to "act out" a myriad of behaviors and studies of the human condition. If, in "acting out" the misbehavior of a fox, for example, they are allowed to experience this character in a safe environment, then this serves as a positive cathartic experience for them.

The philosophical/moral premise for selecting these fables also coincided with the teachings of the school as a whole. I did not want to use much longer stories that would have required the children to carry home texts or would have likely make them forget the beginning of the tale told only a few days before. Shorter texts also eliminated the issue of absent students—with entire roles dependent upon them—or of students who might be challenged by memorization, pronunciation, and the embarrassment of being "put on the spot" in the public recitation of new vocabulary. It is extremely difficult to re-engage students who

have been publicly humiliated over their lack of knowledge. In setting the base material in context of a fable/parable⁹, I have been allowing the students to grapple with questions about themselves and their relationships with each other. This is not to say that the only base material from the class has exclusively been Aesop's *Fables* or other parables. Some materials we initially used were the "silly scripts" (two pages- two characters) such as *25 Just Right Plays for Emergent Readers* by Pugliano-Martin, and *25 Fun Phonics Plays for Beginning Readers* by Chanko that have allowed students the opportunity to warm up with phonics, rhyming, and learning syntax clues. We have been interspersing these small scripts as a way to avoid the fables turning into a monotonous "chore." These are known as "silly scripts" since they do not have a major plot, and are more like skits.

I was going to use Louise Thistle's *Dramatizing Aesop's Fables*, Jo Ellen Moore's *Literature Pocket's Aesop's Fables*, and Dr. Albert Cullum's *Aesop's Fables: Plays for Young Children*, alternating the use of them in the lessons. I also purchased Dover Publication's version of the fables with the sublime Milo Winter illustrations as a favorite choice, but this did not have any work sheets or "follow up" materials. As I did not want to confuse the children with various interpretations of the same

⁹ The distinction and interchangeability of *Fable* and *Parable* is somewhat minute, but my rationale in selecting stories about animals and objects might run into less resistance than teach "religious allegories" which might invite repercussions with DOE administration and parents.

Fable (n): A short tale to teach a moral lesson, often with animals or inanimate objects as characters; apologue:

Parable (n): 1. A short allegorical story designed to illustrate or teach some truth, religious principle, or moral lesson.

2. A statement or comment that conveys a meaning indirectly by the use of comparison, analogy, or the like. (Dictionary.com)

fable, I unfortunately discovered a comparative analysis of various Aesop's *Fables* texts to be prohibitive. Given the extremely limited time frame of 45 minutes for each class, I opted for Detlor's *Teaching with Aesop's Fables* as my main text for the initial seven weeks. This workbook comes with a section called, "discussing the fable," that allows for questions and answers and another section that is supposed to aid with comprehension titled, "words to watch for." But the final selling point of this Scholastic textbook is how it has provocative questions that segue nicely with the philosophy of Waikiki Elementary School, to be discussed in detail in chapter 7. To use a very simple example, we were discussing "The Boy Who Cried 'Wolf!" in class after reading it one day, and I used the prompt questions from Detlors' text, page 40-42:

- 1) Discuss the concept of lying with the group
- 2) If you were the boy a townspeople, what would you have done differently?
- 3) Why is it important to tell the truth?
- 4) What can you do in situations in which it's tempting to lie?

All these questions are very appropriate for the children's social and emotional/life experience levels. I do not know if I would have come up with this actual list, if I had to depend on my own devices, sans textbook.

For future use, I am still considering Dr. Albert Cullum's *Aesop's Fables-Plays for Young Children (K-3rd)*, due to the fact that this text has all the fables in a script

format for with roles for one to six actors. This makes it extremely accessible and easy to assign, because I would not have to “write” the scripts for the students. Cullum’s workbook has the scripts already delineated, yet my rationale in not choosing this book originally was in giving the class a chance to develop more as an ensemble, with each other, so we began with Detlor’s “teacher-directed” scripts in story format first. When I put the students in several sub-groups and “peer teach” one another new vocabulary words I was giving them a chance to rehearse both the play itself and dialogic reading techniques in a semi-autonomous fashion. There are no follow-up questions or activities with this book, either. This is merely a collection of two-page plays. There is a very good chance I will use these scripts after this internship is completed as a means of allowing groups of students to go off on their own for 20 minutes and “show me what you got!,” but the class is not yet there as an ensemble.

Louise Thistle’s *Dramatizing Aesop’s Fables* is a thorough and dense examination of only nine of his fables, for it is much more in-depth than the former two texts. This is another textbook I would use if I had the luxury of more in-class time and in-class discussions of each fable. Due to the fact that each fable’s text is longer than previous versions, it presents a new problem of being able to “get through” the reading of the fable, and the explanation of words, concepts, etc. more than once per class. And this is counter-productive to the “practice makes perfect” play-rehearsal model. Thistle’s section on *Dramatizing the Story*, though, is pitch perfect for our physical theatre practices.

We are using *Theatre Games for Young Performers* by Maria Novelly and *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults* by Bob Bedore as base materials for all the improvisational games in the class. Both books consist of tablets that assist the instructor in determining beginner-versus-advanced level “improvisers” and list the games accordingly. In the *Theatre Games* book, the exercises can serve as groundwork in getting the children to work as one. I am not employing the more advanced Dell’Arte improvisational games because they require much longer and more intimate engagement of the participants. We read chapter 1 and 2 (*Terms & Goals for Performers* and *Planning Your Program*), where the advice is, “for groups that meet infrequently, try to make each lesson self-contained” (Novelly, 8).

Chapter 4: Waikiki School “Me’e” Internship

The main documentation of my thesis is centered on my work as an after-school enrichment instructor with the Waikiki School’s “Me’e”¹⁰ (Enrichment) program. This is an optional program, where the students have paid for participation. As they are all there on a volunteer basis, the initial goal of the classes are for the students to have fun and broaden their experience with arts, music, sports, foreign languages, etc., but the underlying goal of the program is to “enrich” and supplement what the students have learned during their regular classroom instruction.

¹⁰ *Me’e* is Hawaiian Language for “favorite occupation” and is part of the Waikiki School’s “Mindful, enrichment experience.” It is prudent to mention that “mindfulness” is an essential element of the curriculum in all enrichment classes, so, in being accepted as a teacher in this program means I am also agreeing to teach the “Habits of mind.”

I have been integrating the theoretical, practical, and pedagogical principles accumulated up to this point, and documenting the different learning strategies and schematics of pre-literate populations with those of literate populations. By the time the internship was completed on March 12th, I had 8.5 contact hours per class (for a total of 17 hours), with an equal division in two stages of literacy development (the “A” and “B” groups, respectively). Before beginning instruction on January 22, 2014, I completed detailed lesson plans and a master curriculum for the course, with variations to accommodate developmental and literacy stages.

All classroom activities and documentation, including workbooks, have been approved by Shelly Hecker, director of the Me’e program, and Amy Schiffner, Educational Theatre professor at University of Hawaii in Manoa. Professor Schiffner also served as my mentor in the “capstone” project”, as this internship is a requirement in fulfilling the coursework for THEA/DNCE 693: Teaching Internship: Arts Bridge America. The “capstone project” is an arts-based internship in which the graduate student arranges an arts teaching project with a school, and learns the fundamentals of being a professional arts educator. The graduate student works with their advisor/professor and that particular school to arrange an appropriate internship theme, as the overall pedagogical focus of the class is to be approved by both parties. The teaching and creation of the curriculum packet serves as the “thesis” for the graduate student. The objective of the class is to prepare graduate students for careers as teaching professionals in their chosen specialties/fields in the performing arts.

Case Studies-Literacy, K-1st Grade

Upon completion of my internship at Waikiki Elementary School from January 22nd to March 12th, 2014, I collected data and supporting materials from the Hawaii State “Common Core- in Common” standards on functional literacy. In the document, *Achieve the Core*¹¹, guidelines for writing are clearly administered for grades K-6 in three sub-categories (see Appendix B-2). Since the main purpose of this “Page to Stage” class was not to actually teach emerging readers how to read, but rather to “provide them with an environment conducive to perceiving storytelling and play-acting as an enjoyable endeavor”, I realized my first priority for the students and their families was to fulfill this promise by actually creating staged works based on the written word.

Every student received a personal journal at the beginning of the class and was given the writing rules for the course. I made it known that we would have game time, play time, talking time, and writing time as part of each class. The writing session was always a result of the “talking,” where we processed the lessons learned in each story and how we felt about them. Due to the expeditious nature of the class itself, this final process unfortunately became a bit rushed. How does one “teach” children how to write and process philosophical questions, complete with including drawing time, in just 5-10 minutes? And how could I possibly, even with the help of Mrs. Patrice Scott, actually grade and monitor the writing samples of 14 students total and return them within the allotted time. We also considered having

¹¹ The Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts, Literacy and Mathematics (CCSS), since June 2nd, 2010 have been adopted by 45 states in an effort to implement the “Common Core” into all classrooms nationwide. (“Achieve the Core” website)

the students self-correct their own journals, or trading journals for grading their classmates, but soon realized the classes were not quite ready to take on peer assessments.

Mrs. Scott and I came to the prudent conclusion that if we allowed students to take the journals home, we could very well be dealing with issues of journals forgotten or lost. So we kept them in the homeroom. This decision had one negative consequence: We were not able to readily show the journals to parents and encourage quality time in which the students can review the class events, while showing the journals to their parents. This would give a chance for the parents to help correct potential spelling and syntactical errors. Therefore, the rate of growth in actual assessment of literacy development was hindered. This is not to say that the K-1st graders did not enjoy the “reading and writing” time. On the contrary: they LOVED it!! Their experience of having *free* journal writing time, though, was not what I intended in my initial proposal.

I initially thought the students in both the “A” group and the “B” group would be able to write independently in response to the prompt questions I wrote on the white board. Mrs. Scott and I soon realized about half of the fourteen younger students and two of the five older students had difficulties in composing complete sentences. They were, however, all able to draw pictures of what they had experienced, and would do so willingly. Thus “journal time” evolved into drawing time as well. A positive yet unexpected outcome of this was Mrs. Scott and I could use the drawing as a prompt to ask them questions; they would then answer, and we could assist them with the writing of these answers.

The structure of the writing time was just as important as the writing topic itself. After session #2, every child knew it was now “journal time,” and this was the time to pick their favorite color, find a place on the floor, and answer whatever their young imaginations might like. The irony that the freedom to write and draw whatever they would like (based on Aesop’s *Fables*- inspired prompt questions), however wrong, might paradoxically give them more confidence to continue writing independently and expressively.

By connecting “critical thinking” questions relevant to the games and plays just taught, I was attempting to spark their inspiration on a topic fresh in their consciousness. I was also attempting to “bridge” the particular fable lesson with a more “extended understanding.” So I began to experiment with what that understanding was, and concluded that, at the pre-literate level, the concepts of students being able to consistently predict the outcomes of the story is a major determinate of their reading comprehension, which we would later develop in helping them put their thoughts into the written and spoken word. We worked with the idea of students being able to write about one element in the story that they identified with. This was guided study¹², but I allowed the students their individual freedom when they were actually writing and drawing. If Mrs. Scott or myself spent any time attempting to “correct” what they were writing as they were writing it, this would have squelched the flow of their enjoyment of creative writing and creative

¹² At the very lowest levels, if the student population did not have a “teacher-centered” model, with prompt questions and very specific instructions about what to write and draw about, the risk of no structure whatsoever could result in the task not being completed, (i.e., students just “running around”). As well, the teacher requires some documentation of the efficacy of their teaching methodologies. [meaning of last sentence—and the use of “as well”—unclear]

performance. As these relate to creative problem solving and creative expression/ teamwork as a whole. This makes the student's overall experience at risk of turning negative. So we observed the writing/drawing and merely attempted to keep the class "on task" during this time frame.

In relating this to my third question concerning dialogic teaching methods versus the physical theatre paradigm, I found the performing out of each story was so much more effective for the younger students (group "A"). Once we read the story two or three times, as necessary, I found the students could all answer basic context/reading comprehension questions. But the moment we put the story "on its feet" the students were all engaged in the playing and telling of the story. Some students were adamant about certain climactic elements of the storytelling, and other students would stop them and remind them of the forgotten "lines" that were crucial to the stories' overall comprehension. Naturally we would do it again, and it would become clearer and clearer.

My task was to "shape" the physicalization and the words of the little play, to make it a cohesive entity. I believe, in the constant repetition of certain words, like "breeze," for example, as they were making the physical gestures of what they perceived a "breeze" to be, actually acted as a self-taught methodology. If, at this pre-literate level we were working on the fundamentals of story structure, then I would deem this experiment a success. If my goal was to make each of the students competent readers and journal writers, able to compose complete syntactically correct sentences, within the margins and without spelling or punctuation errors, my experiment was, at best, a work in progress, at worst, a failure. So my perpetual

adjustments, according to students' attention span levels and writing abilities were always made to simplify and clarify. Mrs. Scott and I were always making sure the students could make the adjustment from "play time" to "quiet/writing time" in a *timely* fashion. This was also a case of ensuring that students comprehended and could adhere to the rule of writing on the right side of the journal, and leaving a space for their drawing, and realizing that the light blue lines on the page were guides for them to follow. Many students had not yet experienced having their own journals or their own responsibility for formatting and spacing. To teach them all of these aspects of writing was not the main thrust of this lesson, but we did our best to help them all out in the beginning of writing time.

Case Studies-Literacy, 2nd-3rd Grade

Upon completion of my internship at Waikiki Elementary School from January 22nd to March 12th, 2014, I utilized data for the purposes of teaching the theatre classes in the after-school program at Waikiki school. The emphasis of the 2nd -3rd grade classes is different from that of the earlier grades. They are already "emerged" readers, with one of the 3rd grade students being quite advanced. The challenge is to keep the stimulus of the class on the same teaching materials while still addressing the needs of each individual reading level.

All that applied to the K-1st classes also applied to the 2nd-3rd-grade level, but with a few crucial differences. The narrative structure and deeper moral questions are being asked in this second case study. If students are to read and act out *The Tortoise and the Hare*, for example, in addition to having all five students act out

each part on a rotating basis, we challenged each student to “write” his or her own version of the story, adding personal nuances and vocabulary that can be integrated into the class as a whole. The deconstructionist approach to this short fable is acknowledged and celebrated as well. This is where the integration of our ensemble and improvisation games comes into use: students are encouraged to put the Tortoise “on trial” for stealing the race, or the students tell the story from the perspective of another animal cheering on each character. These complex games are more tedious with a younger population. According to the Hawaii State Educational Standards, developmentally, by the age of age or nine, students should have already mastered the essential components of storytelling (i.e., the setting, a goal, a beginning, conflict, middle, climax, end, hero, villain, etc. ...) And be able to take fantastical leaps from there. This is where the students can then be receptive to taking more ownership over their own learning. At this point, the “Page to Stage” instructor can act as a mediator and facilitator, not as a dictator who commands every minute of the class.

One possible negative side effect I ran into with this new approach was in letting the class get away from me! Certainly these students were confident in their ability to write and draw, so I challenged them to write more coherent sentences. My rule was that they complete one page and a drawing to accompany that page. This group of five was also set to do “peer counseling,” in helping one another with the comprehension of their thoughts/writing. They all traded journals and read others journals for legibility and spelling. This provided another chance for empowerment for each student, so they were able to comprehend on a first-hand

basis the ramifications of not being able to read or make logical sense of your classmates' writing.

Since the older group realized after class session #2 they would have their work "checked" not by an authority figure as in a testing environment, but by turning each other into collaborators in an effort to raise the level of communication throughout the entire class, we began having more success. This took some adjustment, however. One of the students was uncomfortable with his writing ability, and another student's actual ability was so low that we had to work on getting the syntax and handwriting to a level of legibility! I have struggled with which actual questions to ask them for their journal entries; choosing questions that are provocative and age appropriate enough to trigger responses that adequately inspire them but not so complex as to overwhelm them. Many times I found students merely "putting something down" in the journals, as a means of *finishing the class*. I had to make clear that this was not sufficient.

For two class sessions, I experimented with eliminating the "prompt questions" from Aesop's, and allowed the students to "free write." This "freed" the students into writing and drawing what they wished to express. Upon reading their comments, I could see that the fables and the performance were still in the forefront of their consciousness. But the students' responses were much more varied in their nature. For example, in the fable *The Wind and the Sun*, my follow-up questions were, "Is it better to be like the sun or the wind? Why is that? What do you think the moral is? How can we do more with kindness than with force?" All of these questions were met with wonderfully perfunctory answers, but none of the students

took them into the realm of creative or expressive writing. I then thought to myself: “I just allowed them to express themselves however they would like in a performance context; shouldn’t I do the same in the literary context?” So I suggested to them that they could write anything at all relating to the story, and the sun and the wind and the old man in-between the two. The results were a revelation! One girl responded how she “liked the wind more than the sun because the feel of the breeze on my face is more gentle. The sun burns me and I get freckles and I don’t like freckles.” One boy responded, “I don’t want the sun or the wind bothering me. I want to be left alone. They both kept pushing on me, and I don’t like it. The sun’s a bully, too. He’s just not as hard a bully.”

In a class that is writing intensive, certainly much more time is given to this process; and in classes I have taught in the past, the writing and journal component was actually mandatory homework. Unfortunately, this cannot be the main thrust of this class. This is not to say that this particular population did not get much out of the experience. However, other than the two culminating performances in this class (which both took place *after* the writing of this thesis), my concern is what the students have to show for to their parents as a testimony to their hard work in this class? I might have to believe that, as with most performing arts endeavors, the experience itself is the tangible asset.

Chapter 5: Critical Analysis and Philosophy

“It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge”—Albert Einstein

Albert Einstein, even as a world-renowned physicist, in the later years of his life became an advocate for the importance of creativity and for fostering imagination in the children’s development. It is imperative that, in the age of emphasizing integrated STEM¹³ education guidelines as a cornerstone of statewide curriculums, the funding and concentration on functional literacy and the arts are not forsaken. One of my fundamental beliefs is in fostering the creative imagination and process for children, while utilizing a set of principles that are synchronous with SLO’s and Common Core Standards. The creative imagination of young children is inspiring to me, yet a classroom without a lynchpin structure that students can apply to their daily academic lives is a dangerous proposal. This is why it is essential to have an overall curriculum design which does not attempt to negate the importance of STEM and DIBELS¹⁴ guidelines, but enhances them through the

¹³ STEM is an educational program developed to prepare primary and secondary students for college and graduate study in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). In addition to subject-specific learning, STEM aims to foster inquiring minds, logical reasoning, and collaboration skills.

¹⁴ DIBELS stands for “Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills,” [this explanation comes much too late since you have already discussed DIBELS earlier] published and distributed by the Hawaii DOE office of Curriculum, assesses students in 5 major categories: Initial sounds, letter naming, phoneme segmentation, nonsense words, & oral reading fluency.

students' overall active engagement of role-play, experiential learning, and creative writing. For this internship, I have been using the Hawaii Department of Education DIBELS guidelines to determine the texts for the plays at Waikiki School.

The new educational theory book, *Understanding by Design*, by Wiggins and McTighe, states that scaffolding¹⁵ by way of “backwards design” leads to a clearer curriculum. As we are attempting to get the students to not just receive facts and information, but, essential “in depth” knowledge should be implemented to create *enduring understanding*, the ultimate goal of the effective teacher, the teacher asks himself the question, “what is the most important understanding these students need to take away from this lesson?” For example, in the case of our base subject matter, *Aesop's Fables*, we can reach the point of broad knowledge of each fable without much struggle. The stories are short, to the point, and have very few characters. Conversely, though, by striving towards a *deeper understanding*, this is where the discussion of the story must evolve into the discussion of the theories and philosophies (i.e., the “lesson”) of each fable. Wiggins proposes as the ultimate outcome of bringing this “text to life” not just the students' performance of the story, but also the application of their understanding of that text to their lives outside of the classroom.

As a performer, I am perpetually attempting to return to the spiritual place of “ferocious play,” where I can immediately transition into various given circumstances. The students' ability and proclivity towards creative expression is

¹⁵ *Scaffolding* refers to a variety of instructional techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process. edglossary.org/scaffolding/

not what is being contested here. Children can naturally do “ferocious play” and alternate within different teaching strategies; but the onus is on the teacher to perform normative “classroom management” duties, yet codify the arts education classroom environment, while maintaining that sense of play. If the arts educator has not dutifully studied the curriculum and environment of the given school he or she is teaching in, there is the risk of being out of touch and irrelevant to the student population and their interests.

As a teacher and practitioner of ensemble theatre, I have examined the benefits of the ensemble process in generating new theatre. And in utilizing young students and emerging readers/ writers as a “de-facto” ensemble, my hypothesis is that having them experience combinations of physical theatre games, improvisation & mental games can serve as beneficial catalysts in the creation of great art. This is why the creation of the dramatic text itself should be a natural extension of the current curriculum and reading/ writing level of the students. The enduring understanding I desired to achieve is that the students will be able to read, comprehend, dissect, act out, and ultimately write, direct, and act in their own age and reading level-appropriate plays. During this process, the philosophical goals I wished to achieve were to enable and foster students in their comprehension and application of the “habits of mind” with regards to both the micro (students’ comprehension of moral themes within texts) and macro (student’s application of these moral themes as they relate to fellow ensemble members, classmates, and society at large.)

Due to the fact that there are several varied literacy levels within each grade level, I decided it necessary to have two sections with different emphasis. Even though some students might have a higher reading level than their peers, it does not necessarily follow that they can integrate emotionally and developmentally with students three or four years older. The necessary quotients to add to the educational process are the students' reflections in the form of journal writing and feedback discussions.

The over-arching goal of my teaching philosophy is to engage the students in a controlled atmosphere of dramatic exploration. The students will be given the opportunity to rehearse and perform both original texts and small plays focusing on phonics, reader's theatre, scholastic fairy tales, and the Scholastic "Just Right Plays for Emergent Readers" series. In order to do this, students need to be able to make vital connections between Hawaii State's content & Performance "common core" reading comprehension & functional literacy concepts and how those concepts can be applied and developed to include other core concepts such as "speaking and listening." The overarching goal of connecting performing arts with age-appropriate texts (utilizing collections of plays as textbooks and worksheets with specific read-aloud exercises) has been to give each student the opportunity to repeat written texts, thereby using the rehearsal process and students' own motivations as aspiring performers, to memorize new scripts, new vocabulary, and new contexts. As a means of concept checking, the new key vocabulary words are reviewed and written on the white board each class.

Given that there is a natural disparity of reading levels and confidence levels within each class, the “stronger” students will serve as facilitators for the less confident readers. In sharing one script and trading off roles, the students will have the opportunity to practice “whole reading,” where they not only verbalize their own text, but hear and verbalize their partners’ text. My belief is that in having plays that use devices such as rhyme, repetitive language, and predictability (Pugliano-Martin, 4) this will help young children gain confidence as readers and take pleasure from the experience of reading. This repetition also allows the confidence to build in the “mentoring approach,” by coaching more confident readers to assist their partners and raise the comprehension level of the entire class.

Ultimately, the use of these Scholastic readers’ and phonics plays in the K-1 class is to serve as a warm-up for larger-themed plays to come. I realized, when I proposed this class to Shelly Hecker, that the students themselves would not know or care that this was an internship in partial fulfillment of a Masters’ degree. That disclaimer and waiver was sent out to their parents, but the returning students were naturally assuming they were taking a “drama” class. They don’t want to be overwhelmed with pedagogical experimentation at the expense of the class being “enriching.” This is the main reason I wanted to ensure the first few classes were inundated with fun games and the easier Scholastic plays to begin with in January. These are more “skits” than plays, with many of them only two pages each. I have been breaking the class into subgroups and allowing them simultaneously rehearse these plays, switch roles, and then present the plays to their classmates in a supportive, non-pressured atmosphere.

For the 2nd-3rd-grade class one text I began by using Scholastic's *12 Fabulously Funny Fairy Tale Plays*, by Justin McCory Martin. This age-appropriate collection will also serve as the warming up plays, with more characters and longer texts than the K-1st collections, allowing these advanced students to delve further into character development and more complex sentence structures. The goal at the early stages of this class was to keep the students engaged and entertained in the possibilities of play-reading, while slowly developing the ensemble dynamic and assessing varying reading levels and confidence and abilities as performers. At the initial stages of the class, the pedagogical intent was to create a fun atmosphere and receptive learning environment. After week 4 the students began to delve into the P4C and "Habits of Mind" aspects of the class, that is, after they had "settled in" to the group dynamic.

Chapter 6: Integration of P4C and "H.O.M."

I felt it integral to my life studies of how an ensemble actually can or cannot work together to integrate the students' artistic endeavors, in this case, the creation of drama and "play creation process," with the principles of the P4C (Philosophy for Children) and the "Habits of Mind."¹⁶ The integrations of these habits are

¹⁶ The Habits of Mind are an identified set of 16 problem-solving, life-related skills, necessary to effectively operate in society and promote strategic reasoning, insightfulness, perseverance, creativity and craftsmanship. The understanding and application of these 16 Habits of Mind serve to provide the individual with skills to work through real life situations that equip that person to respond using awareness (cues), thought, and intentional strategy in order to gain a positive outcome.

reinforced in every subject and aspect of the students' lives at Waikiki School. Therefore, I determined the natural progression of these lessons to also integrate the "H.O.M." principles into each play selected. As all instructors at Waikiki School are trained in Arthur L. Costa's tenets of success for developing minds, each subject is funneled through the lens of this pedagogical concept. The habits are defined by Costa and Bena Kallick as a "fluid set of habits that follow students in their social, emotional and cognitive development." (Costa, www.ccsnh.edu).

As each student is collectively taught these habits on a daily basis, I thought it would be advantageous for them to have a chance, in a non-threatening environment, to experience these habits through theatre and storytelling. For the younger class, as some of them are in their very first full year of school, it was a chance to reinforce the new concepts, not yet solidified in their daily lives. By actively engaging in role-play centered around moral issues and having "post-show" discussions, I sought to reinforce not only the vocabulary of the students' reading sessions, but the new concepts of habits of mind as well.

The impulsivity of younger learning populations might lead to a tendency to perceive the Page to Stage class as merely "run around time," but Mrs. Scott and I were actively engaged in the reinforcement of focusing the children's energy towards a common goal: creating and performing skits. In order to achieve this goal, we reiterated the precepts the Habits of Mind purport to instill in children. Especially *Persisting*, *Managing Impulsivity*, and *Listening with Understanding and Empathy*.

The older class (2nd-3rd) has been concentrating more on the other Matthew Lipman¹⁷ concepts such as “reflection” and “inquiry.” We played the “machine game” where the students, adding one by one, become a large, integrated machine that works in synchronicity and tandem. This game, a standard improvisation technique used to build ensemble and engage teamwork and creativity, can often dissolve into “one-upmanship” and/ or hesitancy. But we decided to take the questioning afterwards into a different direction. We asked more “feelings” questions, such as, “how does it feel if you are not the first student to make the machine? Is that different from being the last?” And “Can we stop the machine, start again, and NOT ‘enter’ the play space until we feel like we have a missing piece we can add to it?” And this is our insistence that our students have awareness of the other members of the ensemble, meaning *how* do they fit within the context of this ensemble in this particular game/ machine, without stopping the game, or breaking that machine? One of the main reasons I focused in on philosophy and mindful habits as essential in the ensemble process was a result of this interview I read with Lipman:

I think Philosophy for Children, compared with other educative programs, has a particular vision in relation to its international character. Educational projects are more and more aware they must help young people acknowledge other cultures, which exist in the world. This means they have to facilitate the understanding that their way of life is not the only one, that there are many people who have different values, different interests, religions, ways of behaving, artistic manifestations... and that this situation is mutually enriching. But, at the same time, so many cultural riches can surround one that perhaps a young person can think there is no connection

¹⁷ Matthew Lipman Founder of P4C- “Philosophy for Children..” He believed children were capable of abstract and logical thinking and is credited with bringing philosophy into elementary classrooms worldwide.

between them. In other words, there is multiplicity but no integrity. And, in this context, I think that what philosophy can offer is a system of inquiry which can help identify a unifying element which is common to all cultures, a thread running through all of them. But, unless an insistence upon commonality exists, this link with the cognitive traditions we all share will be lost, along with its associated richness and multiplicity. (Lipmann. Interview, 2008—see Appendix C1)

The seamless integration of cultures and languages at Waikiki School and Hawaii in general lends itself to this natural connection with Lipman’s discussion of “young people acknowledging other cultures” and all the ensuing “manifestations” brought on by these differences. This is why I am constantly trying out new theatre games, such as “trust” games, ball games where every student is working towards keeping the beach ball in the air, and our name games. The name games, besides being necessary “ice breakers” are done in such a way as to learn something personal about each child. We then do pair games, where each child is asked to tell something special about their partner. We are initiating an environment of empathy and “intellectual safety” as paramount during this time of each child’s week.

As a result of this critical thinking process, I wished to scaffold the lessons in such a way that the students are able to effectively dissect basic play structures and, in the process, develop their reading comprehension & vocabulary skills. Yet the pedagogical connection with “Habits of Mind” is best served implementing *Aesop’s fables* and fairy tales as base material for the plays to be rehearsed and performed. Every story is selected on the criteria of which habit of mind is being taught on that particular lesson.

I wanted the young learner to be encouraged as a developing artist, with no impediments along their journey. The embarrassment for me was in not fully comprehending all the “H.O.M.”s before I started, and in not comprehending the *wording* of teaching P4C. Stating questions and follow-ups in the form of leading each student to a “correct” answer versus open-ended philosophical questions concerning the larger issues that *Aesop’s* deals with. Instead of merely asking, “What did we learn from the ‘slow ‘n steady tortoise’ on his way to winning the race?” we might be asking more provocative questions like “That hare seems like a lot of fun, doesn’t he? Wouldn’t we all love to be him!!” In the agreements we, as students and teachers, put upon one another, we also lay out expectations and assumptions. My goal was to challenge a few of those assumptions that students might have, such as “The teacher will provide all the answers” or, “The teacher will be testing and evaluating us at the end.” Likewise, I was perpetually attempting to be “open” to the students guiding particular plays and games in various directions, as is deemed appropriate. The empowerment of the children in their development towards monitored self-expression is of paramount importance. The “answers” if there are any set answers to speak of, are provided by the students themselves, and reached through a collective process. There has been no testing process, but rather critical thinking assessment process also to be determined in the form of the principles of the P4C philosophical questioning and referencing the habits of mind the students already receive school-wide on a daily basis.

The P4C movement in education came into prominence in the late 1960’s, when Columbia University Philosophy professor Matthew Lipman realized many of

his college students were having difficulty expressing themselves over the social conflicts of the Vietnam War, civil rights movement, and other issues of the time. He is credited as being the first practitioner of this Philosophy created solely for children, realizing that children needed to be trained to better express themselves and develop critical thinking skills. In 1969, Professor Lipman wrote the first of several philosophy handbooks for children. This was a ground breaking P.B.L. (Project-based learning) initiative, utilizing drama to teach the laws of logic to 10 and 11-year old students.

At Waikiki Elementary, the P4C movement has evolved into a P4C Hawaii sub-set of the pedagogy. The questioning has a sequenced structure that is set in place by Dr. Thomas Jackson, professor of Philosophy at UH Manoa. Jackson has altered certain nuances of the movement, to accommodate the ubiquitous multi-cultural and multi-linguistic populations found on the islands. “Dr. J.” as the student population respectfully addresses him, teaches courses regularly at Waikiki school, and rotates his classroom sessions between the K-6th grade levels. The emphasis on Professor Jackson’s classes, as an evolution from Lipman’s, is that the lessons now accommodate more involvement and freedom from the students’ input, including cultural sensitivity and local customs accommodations (see Appendix C2).

Therefore, all the discussions of issues are those that the children select. The topics, struggles, and ideas of the children are of paramount importance, with “Dr. J.” sitting on the floor with them, and serving as a mediator and facilitator of their progress. He utilizes a series of sequences to achieve this end result of facilitating a meaningful philosophical discussion/ debate with the class, regardless of level.

Professor Jackson created a series of questions centered on the “creating and choosing questions” portion of his pedagogy. He utilizes the “Community Ball” as the mediator for small children, with three rules that accompany it:

- Rule #1: Only the person with the community ball can speak
- Rule #2: Students and teachers always have a right to pass
- Rule #3: The person with the community ball chooses who speaks next.

(Jackson: personal interview, 2014)

This eliminates the pressure from students who do not wish to speak, and this eliminates the authoritarian construct of the teacher as the sole determiner of who shall speak and when. If the child does not wish to state their ideas, they are given amnesty in an environment of intellectual safety, and may pass the community ball without repercussions. He has created an acronym for the series of questions and variations of topics that he employs to keep the discussions on topic:

(See Appendix C3)

My intention was to adapt and utilize these concepts and practices in my drama classes. Every class has concluded with a 10-minute discussion and writing session, which is prompted by me, guided by me, or the handout, but ultimately taken over by the students themselves. In the devising of theatre with young student populations, my operational model has been to allow for equal input in the creation of each production. As one of the habits of mind is “managing impulsivity” it will be a challenge and one of the points of the lesson to help the children

establish long-term life skills in processing and analyzing information while creating artistic connections and ensemble-building. The creation of theatre is a difficult enough proposition when the instructor is in a “teacher-centered” learning environment. My experiment is gradually giving the ownership at least for the older group, of the lesson to the students, culminating in week 8 when they begin working on their own show.

Chapter 7: Supporting Fieldwork and Research

My fieldwork consisted of three different internships which all aided in my general frame of mind for the final internship at Waikiki School’s “Me’e” program. All three internship was invaluable in the indirect lessons of what I wanted to accomplish with this student population. Two of these internships (HTY and Waikiki School classroom) were merely observing the lessons being taught, while the third (the Rhelm) was a hands-on job. I learned three very specific lessons in these three internships, and my goal was the application of these principles to the “Page to Stage” program. I learned the following:

At HTY, I learned how students are taught theatre in full-time learning environment devoted exclusively to the training and development of young learners as performing artists. At the Rhelm, I studied how students learn and teach themselves in a full-time experiential learning environment devoted exclusively to the exploration of their “multiple intelligences”¹⁸ At Waikiki Elementary School I

¹⁸ Howard Gardner’s *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* proposes eight distinct and independent intelligences. Each has a separate system of functioning. They are:

discovered how students acquire language and are taught reading skills in a formal learning environment devoted exclusively to literacy

The methodology in this research-based project is small scale, with only two study groups being observed and taught. The first study group consists of fourteen students, ages 5-7, currently in kindergarten or 1st grade. This group is divided based on grade level, not on reading or literacy test scores. Therefore, it is quite possible to have younger students reading at a higher level, and vice-versa. As an example, one of the kindergarten students in the class, while only 5 years old, is by far the best reader in the class. Yet, this student is extremely shy and reticent towards ever speaking out. Therefore, if she were being judged on her performing ability and the “audible” quality of her speaking, the class must struggle to hear her and judge her accordingly. But her engagement during the reading and explanation of the stories is superior to the norm of this class population, whereas some other students possess the exact opposite phenomenon. Lessons and expectations during group activities are adjusted accordingly. I have trained students in improving their reading skills as well as their “public speaking” skills.

Fieldwork location #1: Honolulu Theatre for Youth

From June 5th-July 3rd, 2013, I was an observer and intern with HTY’s “Let’s Get Dramatic!” program. I transcribed the step-by-step pedagogical process, based

Linguistic, Logical-mathematical, Spatial, Musical, Bodily-kinesthetic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Naturalistic. This complexity has propelled teachers to adjust curriculums accordingly to accommodate various modes of learning. (Sternberg and Williams, 127)

on Daniel Kelin II's pedagogical vision of creative drama in education. He has since been consumed with teaching on an international scale, and has relegated the day-to-day duties of the summer program to Lily Brennick, the assistant director of Drama Education. Therefore, the majority of the curriculum was facilitated by and directed by Brennick. Although she uses many of the precepts generated by Kelin, she has taken the day camp into her own direction, and is solely in charge of the final public presentations for the parents. The summer day camp took place from 8 AM to 12:30 PM, Monday through Friday, for a total of 80 contact hours. Within this highly structured month, students, aged 7-9, culminated their knowledge in a fully staged performance of two 20-minute folk-tales. 3 team-teachers, who rotated students into three concurrent lessons as they learned all aspects of the "process" of creating theatre together, directed the rigorous process.

The overall objective of the class sections was to expose students equally to different facets of theatre creation, allowing every student to be equally adept at each component of the theatre creation process. The class sections were broken down into three 45-minute lessons that happen simultaneously, and then the collective class gathers for a final 45-minute ensemble-creation lesson. After this rotation in the first three segments, the students were able to engage in the same games and rehearsal, utilizing a common theatre vocabulary.

Section #1 consisted of technical theatre. The students learned the processes of conceptualizing, designing, building, and utilizing props. They also designed sets and learned the fundamentals of stagecraft and safety. This was the first summer in which they integrated "tech" into the theatre-creation process, with the result being

that students were able to work as whole actors who could conceptualize the 3 – dimensional components of theatre. It helped them to better grasp how sets, props, lights, sound, and the physical constraints of the stage all contribute to the success of the entire production as a whole. And, as each child was responsible for the creation, design, construction and use of their “personal prop,” which for this project was a fan. It appeared as if they were instilled with a strong sense of ownership over what they had physically created, performed with, and could now take home as a proud souvenir.

Section #2 consisted of the dramaturgical aspects of theatre, in which the students dissected story, plot, character, theme, rising action, and so forth. The students were active participants in the “writing” of their scripts, though all creation was done as an ensemble. Each day, for the first two weeks, the students were given key words, such as “ensemble” to think about, and integrate into that day’s lessons. These concepts were used as daily focusing tools as much as larger pedagogical concepts that worked together to form a whole curriculum. Section #3 consisted of the physical manifestation of the pedagogical and storytelling concepts. The students were on their feet, physically acting out shapes, concepts, emotional relationships, and small scenarios individually and with each other. I was particularly focused on section two and three, as I knew I would be integrating these pedagogical concepts into my internship.

The overall pedagogical focus at HTY was on the integration of the students’ ability to be able to synthesize the following three components to complete their artistic development in the following ways:

1. *Consummate actor-performer*: The student will have a working knowledge of their voice, body and emotion as essential instruments in the development of theatre. The student will be able and willing to interact with other students in the formation of ensemble-generated movement and theatre.
2. *Critical Thinker-playwright and storyteller*: The student will be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of structural analysis of theatre, the essentials of the Aristotelian plot structure, and to differentiate between reader's theatre, storytelling and "4th wall" theatre.
3. *Theatre Technician-craftsman*: The student will be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of set, lighting, and sound design, and will be able to construct one prop to be used in the final production.

I found HTY's systematic creation of these two plays to be very effective for what it was: a summer camp. The luxury of having a full-time environment with extremely motivated and conscientious children (many of whom were returning for yet another season, and had worked together as an "ensemble") provided a "cocoon like" atmosphere of safety and artistic challenges. And though Brennick said they were process oriented, they did culminate in both in-school and evening performances. I could not help but think, though, that this would NOT be able to be replicated in an after-school program, only twice a week, of 45 minutes each. These students were able to have the benefit of an extensive, daily interaction of only creating theatre inside an actual theatre, complete with technical, financial, and

administrative support. Given these advantages not afforded my enrichment program, I chose to select a less ambitious approach and final SLO for our class at Waikiki School. My question was “What could I create in only 1/10th the contact time of the HTY program, while still integrating the basic tenets of their structure?” So my conclusion was I would focus the curriculum on teaching some principles of physical and ensemble theatre, use some of Aesop’s *Fables* as simple base materials, and keep the reflections condensed to a 5-10 minute session per class. The HTY “Let’s get Dramatic!” program had entire 30-minute reflection sessions, and complete shows with props, costumes, lights, sound, etc.

It appeared this process was both for the benefit of the students and the paying parents as well. As a training ground for young actors, I found it to be a very strong and efficient program. As an ensemble-building program I found it to be effective as well. But as a process-oriented program in which the children were allowed to select the base materials for the play¹⁹ and develop critical thinking skills, this was not the ideal process. It was about “a process that leads to putting on a play,” not “a process about processes that uses plays as a means to that end.” She had a product that was required to deliver at the end of the class: The School Play. And I also understood implicitly that this is the agreement between Mrs. Brennick and the paying parents—she needed to produce a finished product, complete with reception afterwards.

¹⁹ Mrs. Brennick selected the two final 20-minute plays and divided the two ensembles accordingly. There was no discussion on this process. It was done for the sake of efficiency and time management. She was masterful in her selection process, taking only 5 minutes from start to finish. But I could not help but think how these decisions and many like this, disenfranchised the students and severed ensemble bonds that had been made over the first two weeks.

Fieldwork location #2: “The Rhelm”- An interactive educational family park-

From May 30th to August 23rd, 2013, I worked as an interactive character improviser at a new experiment entitled, “The Rhelm.” The historical context of this imaginary village was that it had been attacked and pillaged by elves and dragons. It is the task of the children to help restore “order” back into the community by problem-solving via a series of tasks and games that help drive away the predators, thus making it safe for the villagers’ return. There are six themed environments²⁰, representing six forms of learning realms each individual child might be drawn to participating in. There is no judgment placed on time spent within each shop, or if the children even get to the six shops represented. In each venue, my task as an employee was to be in character, costume, and makeup as a villager, assisting the children while they played in various environments, and gently guiding their parents to play in an interactive fashion with them.

“The Rhelm” was conceived by certified teacher/professor of Education at HPU, Deirdre Harris, as an experiential education model. She also works as a teacher-trainer throughout the DOE school system, and wanted to put into practice her personal pedagogic trainings. She facilitates teachers to “teach outside the box,” and integrate games, role-play, and theatre in experiential learning techniques. I

²⁰ 1. *Scribe’s shop*: Literacy, story-telling, code-breaking, letter writing
2. *Woodsmen’s shop*: Physical dexterity, gross motor skills, model-building
3. *Wizard’s castle*: Puzzle decoding, mathematics, fine motor skills
4. *Electrician’s shop*: Electronics, technical cognition, lighting, circuitry
5. *Tinkerer’s shop*: Mechanical problem solving, physics, model-building
6. *Weaver’s shop*: Fine motor skills, pattern-making, fine arts & crafts

worked a total of 52 contact hours, acting as a “villager,” teaching the children and their parents how to work together in problem-solving puzzles throughout the six “shops.” These environments, for a brief period of time, were designed to give parents permission to play and engage with their children where they might not otherwise allow themselves to do so.

The villager helps to vary the puzzles, perpetually involving the parents, and inquiring if they are not engaged with their own children. The children are given one hour to participate in this other world, and the duty of the villager is to bring them from a place of potential shyness and insecurity over which games to play, to a point of active play, generated by the child themselves. Initially, the villager will introduce the children and parents to the six shops, as an opening diagnostic. Prompt questions are asked as to whether the children understand the task, and their role as problem-solvers. The villagers ask questions such as, “Can you help save our village?” or “Can you help to restore power back to the power station...Do you know how these circuits work?” and “Can you write a letter to the children in the next village and tell them it is safe to return here?” This puts the onus on the children as problem-solvers who are given the power to control the success or failure of our village.

As educators, it then becomes the villagers’ job to transfer the participation over to the parents as collaborators in the imaginative play of restoring balance and safety to the village, we, then step back and allow the parents and their children to play together, problem-solve together, and spend quality time in an imaginative world together. This is the opposite of supervised babysitting, as the parents are

not allowed to leave or use cell phones, read books, or any other distracting device. They are expected to play an active role in theatre, which, for some, is a daunting or tedious proposition. Upon interviewing several parents afterwards, many commented how much they learned about their own children by just allowing themselves to watch the child play for one hour. Comments were made that the parents did not know their own child was interested in a particular field, and concluded it was due to their lack of awareness of the inner spirit of each child. Several parents commented on their children's imagination, and how having a space in which there is freedom to have "ferocious play" (without an academic *teachable moment* attached to it) enhances their child's creativity.

The controlled environment of the Rhelm allows the villagers to monitor as children play in which shop, and log in the duration and level of interest in each particular discipline. For example, some children, after the initial "tour" of the village, gravitate towards one shop, and stay there for almost the whole hour. Some children are interested in ALL the shops, jumping from one to another in a very quick pace. Each child is given a passport (stamp book for collection of "good deeds") to take home with them. No prize is given if the child receives all six stamps for good deeds, for the process of receiving the stamp is the reward itself. Some children care about getting all six stamps, and are searching for a reward system, and some children don't care about that at all. At the end of the hour, children can write their name on a leaf, which represents a good deed, to be placed on the "tree of good deeds" at the entrance.

This tree, as the intrinsic reward, is the feeling the children have in helping another in their problem solving. The “reward” of being able to philanthropically help children you have not even met is to instill empathy towards others. As a mindful practice, this repetition is essential in codifying good habits of mind for children. One of the fundamental teaching philosophies behind the Rhelm is that the children have left behind *a gift for others*, as opposed to the expectation of receiving *a present for them*. This philosophy is a major teaching tenet of Waikiki School’s “mindful” program: “How do we consider with empathy other students and not just ourselves?”

Harris’ pedagogical philosophy was also that the children are internally motivated by the play and not externally motivated by the reward system (i.e., stickers, grades, compliments, food, extra recess, etc.). Her view is, in fact, the opposite: children are to leave a gift behind for the other “children of the Rhelm,” thereby achieving a sense of fulfillment in giving, not receiving.

In applying this analogy to the theatrical construct, it is the participation in the ferocious play of theatre that is the reward unto itself. The physical act of creating theatre is the “work” of children. In Harris’ words, “To apply or enforce an external stimulus upon the already stimulated child is to withdraw them from the task at hand- making sense of their surrounding environment through the act of play” (Harris: Interview, July 17th, 2013).

My exploration of how children seamlessly fluctuate from current reality to imaginative reality and back again, without the social stigmatism of peers’ judgment or authoritative approval is what appeals to me in using this age population as my

subjects for this experiment. Being both a participant in guiding children through the games/ puzzles, and observer (when they were not actively at my shop) gave me a chance to analyze and reflect on the nature of role-play in this population. One of the most egregious mistakes a teacher or parent can make is to interfere with the natural rhythms of a child's play. As noted in *How Children Learn*, the same principles can be applied to how children learn to read in company of an adult versus an older child:

One of the reasons why children learn so well from children a little older than themselves may be, not just that the older child understands the language of the younger and can speak in his terms, but that he is a more helpful competence model because he is more within reach. No doubt it is exciting and inspiring for a child interested in athletics, or music, or dancing, or art, or drama, or whatever, to see, once in a while, adults who do those things superbly well. But as day-to-day examples, these experts are probably much less useful to a child than slightly older, slightly bigger children who do things slightly better than he can. (Holt, p. 129)

Due to the fact that each class has a combination of lower and upper grades, I insisted the older students assist in teaching the younger students the script, and work with one another to find the meaning of words and phrases. I learned from my work in the Rhelm that even children who never met before could help one another in solving puzzles if it meant they could enjoy the puzzles more. The primary goal of all students is to learn at their own level, within their limits of comfort. This also serves as a means of empowerment for the older children, in a non-threatening context. My intention, in the transference of this experience into my internship, is to allow time for the children to actively create on their own, and as groups, without

perpetual intervention of the teacher. Asking the right questions at the right time is as important as the actual content to be taught.

I am applying Harris' theories of experiential and participatory education into active storytelling. In the "scribe's shop" at the Rhelm, children were given the opportunity to create their own stories, using visual prompts and coaching. We also conducted 2 hours of interviews in which I notated her teaching philosophy/pedagogies, and I am adopting her principles of "allowing the children to make the discoveries and empower themselves."

Fieldwork location #3: Waikiki Elementary School

In 2013, for the second year in a row, Waikiki Elementary School was awarded as a "Blue Ribbon School" for excellence in exceeding the national standards in the core subjects of reading and mathematics. As one of only 3 schools in the state of Hawaii to be selected for this honor, I decided it would be beneficial to assess the daily lesson-planning and annual curriculum in consistently producing such above average literacy scores on standardized state tests.

Beginning in January 2014, I attended reading and literacy classes at Waikiki Elementary School. My goal was to act as an intern, merely assisting the primary teacher, as necessary, in these classes in order to develop the "vocabulary" of language learning and literacy strategies. I referenced several texts, mostly during the informal "story time," asked the teacher's methodologies and scaffolding (based on individual needs of each child's pace of learning), and then used this data to formulate my integration into the Waikiki School performing class. Due to the fact

that my background is in ESL/EFL²¹ instruction, it was necessary for me to bridge the disparities between primary language learning and second-language learning. One of the questions I attempted to answer with my observations and application of literacy studies is “How do we determine if a child is literate (note: fluent) in a new vocabulary word and its linguistic context?”

This question was pertinent in determining the scope of what I could achieve with a class that had not been pre-tested and without having a formal interview/assessment of each student’s literacy level. As I have observed in many reading classes, it has been proven through many studies that dialogic reading is successful in increasing literacy, when applicable to students’ “daily” vocabulary, and the study of performing arts is successful in increasing children’s overall involvement in academic studies. What I was attempting to determine is if there was “alchemy” when combining the two, and how to transfer that knowledge to the next grade level? In their study, *Lessons from the Crib for the Classroom: How Children Really Learn Vocabulary*, Harris, Golinkoff and Hirsh-Pasek iterate the requirements of word learning:

Word learning requires that children learn the sounds of the word, the word’s part of speech, and the word’s meaning. However, memorization of these facts is not enough. To claim that children really know a word, we must show that they have not only acquired a minimal grasp of the word but can also transfer the word to new contexts, and retain the word and its meaning over time. (Neuman, 58)

²¹ ESL/ EFL: “English as a Second Language”- Taught in an English-speaking country, where the students’ first language is not English. “English as a Foreign Language”- Taught in a **non**-English speaking country, where the students’ first language is not English. The nuance in teaching the two disciplines is different according to the student’s accessibility to and necessity of speaking English *outside of the classroom*.

When possible logistically, my intention was to observe and participate in more than one class; for example, to observe a reading class for kindergarten, then observe the same for the first grade. In observing some actual students I am teaching in the after-school drama program, I have been able to link and scaffold relevant lesson plans and words to their daily experiences. For example, I was able to observe which stories they read, whether they answered questions during story time, and how they handled new A-B-C's learning materials. I had to keep in mind the context of each students' capacities, as the primary thrust of literacy (reading and writing) training in kindergarten is to ensure every student can identify and write the alphabet, without false substitutions, like the letter "b" for "d." By the first grade, they are already working on full words, and piecing them together to make simple sentences.

Phonics are a major component of kindergarten and first grade, so I used Pamela Chanko's *25 Fun Phonics Plays for Beginning Readers* as a successful supplement to their learning of the "long e," the "short o," and others. At first, when I handed these students little two page "playlets" they seemed very intimidated by all the words and the formatting. But after I explained the scripts within the context of Mrs. Joni Onishi's class, the students were luckily able to see some connections. Their comfort level was put to a point where they could relax, now in a place to realize this "silly script" wasn't so hard after all. Although the overarching collaboration in Waikiki school is to impart the principles of "mindful learning," I have been hoping to draw specific language arts core standards by conferencing with the student populations' current homeroom teachers. The primary educators

will be able to further direct and codify the specific lesson objectives on a week-to-week basis. As of this writing, they are following the “common core” standards set in 2011.

Mrs. Onishi, as the reading teacher and liaison for DIBELS testing, is responsible for giving individualized tests to students who test/rank below a certain means score on their state reading level assessments. She has a chart of students in each grade level and homeroom who are to be pulled out of their class for “review testing.” If they fall below a certain average after that test, Mrs. Onishi requests they be entered into the “homework club to rise to state standards. The population of Waikiki School has some ELL students, and some of my students fall under this category. I am implementing a plan to have students who are native speakers assist in helping the ELL students in their comprehension of play texts. As a practice, I have learned from Mrs. Onishi that one successful method of teaching new vocabulary and syntax in scripts is to adhere to the following step-by-step process that builds on each step (see Appendix B).

I am choosing her process in an abbreviated fashion because the main thrust of my lessons is the rehearsal and performance of the stories. The time allotted for “literacy studies” amounts to about 10 minutes per class. If the emphasis were solely on literacy, I would be stopping and starting rehearsal every single time a syntactical error is made. I knew this would disrupt the flow of the lesson in general and the students’ desire to keep playing.

Mrs. Onishi is a licensed full-time kindergarten teacher, and her passion is in preparing students for a lifetime of reading and literacy. She has made it her

responsibility and personal mission to ensure students are prepared for 1st grade in all four components of fluency: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. At the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten level, she has employed several tactics towards this preparation. In an interview with her concerning these methods, she responded:

I use all methodologies I can to get them to put the pieces together. Even at the pre-literate level, where I am having story time, I use “context clues” and prompt questions related to the story to engage the students in the structure of the story. I am asking them questions such as, “What do you think will happen next?” and “What was the story about?” “Who were the characters and what did they do?” and then re-enactments of the story they just read. I am always engaging my students in acting out the stories, drawing pictures about the stories, and other activities like that. Even though many of them are not yet reading or writing... I am preparing them for comprehension and utilizing the vocabulary from the Common Core. (Onishi, 2014 Interview)

One caveat to the fluidity of emerging readers’ transition is how prepared each student is in their home environment. Is it a nurturing reading/ exploring environment? She comments that this is in fact the number one determining factor in students’ success in the classroom (with regards to their transition from “pre-literate” to “emerging.”) Since the number of contact hours at the kindergarten level devoted exclusively to synthesizing & integrating literacy into core subjects’ average half of the school day, Mrs. Onishi is perpetually “on task” to offer various methods of instruction as a means of keeping young minds stimulated and engaged. This is why theatre, storytelling, movement, and song play such a crucial role in her curriculum. This appeared to be an obvious connection to make with lively, impressionable kindergarten populations. What I learned from her, and what surprised me was her insistence on reading as the basis for almost all academic successes. When I asked her, “What is the single most important factor is

determining a student's future academic success? And can you point to the practices that ensure this success?" she immediately responded:

Reading, reading, reading! Being read to, reading alone, being around reading, and being around books, having books around the house, and having a love for stories, and that environment. When parents read to their children and share the joy and love of reading with their children, you can just tell the difference. Children who have been read to from the earliest ages just *handle books differently*. The children who have been read to in a loving environment have a much more positive relationship to learning in general, as reading "feeds" all other disciplines. I can't emphasize its importance enough. (Onishi, 2014 Interview)

Onishi's answer to promoting a healthy learning environment to students of various reading levels is to engage them all in play and games, in which she, the leader, "walks them through" steps to comprehension of the text she just read via role-play and a series of prompt questions. For more advanced students, she provided extra questions, in the form of a handout, and encouraged them to work on independent reading during "centers" time. For students struggling to keep up with the basics of letter formation and phonics, she had independent study (both during school hours and with the Waikiki School volunteer afterschool "homework club") and provided supplementary materials for their parents to use at home. It was inspiring to be able to see Mrs. Onishi teach in the class and as a DIBELS test-giver outside the class. She administers these reading sessions while the rest of their class has journal-writing time. Even though she is not a certified "reading specialist," her developing expertise has prepared the students for academic success in the rigors of the elementary school state-mandated curriculum, where state-mandated diagnostic tests await them.

Chapter 8: Analysis and Presentation of Research

The internship, as of this printing, is an on-going process, continuing all the way until May 19, 2014. But I can already draw some analysis based on 16 contact hours. My research involved the inevitable comparison of abilities of two different student developmental stages, two different class sizes, and two different curriculums. As a simplification of the process, I divided the findings into an “A” and “B” group format; the “A” group being the K-1st grade class, which is the earlier time slot, and the “B” group being the 2nd-3rd grade class. There are many generalizations to be made regarding the overall progress the students’ and I have experienced thus far, but, due to the fact that final conclusions can’t be drawn without sufficient empirical and statistical data, I will list some general impressions with the more specific points considered to be in the form of a question. Because I have many more questions and insecurities over the future outcome of a maverick ensemble than I do answers.

Some general summations about the classes I can draw at this time are that they both have shown a tremendous advancement in reading comprehension levels and “predictor” levels. The students have advanced in their rapidity with which they can form a group and begin playing games as “one voice.” In contrast, my findings at the beginning of these class sessions was that it can take a long time to get students, from various homeroom classes, to come together as “one,” to settle down, to acknowledge a *new teacher*, and to be able to acknowledge one another. Yet, without doing this, we are not able to begin on the work proper. Every child wants to jump up and “play” all the time in this class. This class served as an

obvious antidote to the mundaneness of everyday afterschool programs. Channeling this chaotic energy is the work of the teacher, and instilling in children their taking responsibility in this chaos is their work. The students were enthusiastic about playing all the games and taking turns so every child gets a turn to be the “wolf,” for example. Logistically, this has been virtually impossible, so I have had to make agreements before the game begins as to the number of times we will play the game. The developmental stage (and therefore teaching style) between kindergarten and 3rd grade is tremendous! Parameters and SLO’s must be adjusted accordingly. The analysis and findings have come away with so many more quandaries than set answers, so I have posed my findings in this format, mid-process, as I “check in” on the internship progress for these 7 weeks:

“How does class size and gender affect the development of an ensemble?”

The K-1st (“A”) class consists of 14 students, 11 girls and 3 boys. The class is very centered around smaller “cliques” of students, naturally, depending upon the homeroom they are from and their age group. The dynamic and development of a cohesive ensemble has been a challenge, and I attribute it to a few factors. The first factor is the actual social maturity of the children. How can I expect them to practice elements of mindful problem solving and teamwork with children they do not yet know? And how can I expect them to possess this skill set, since they are learning it concurrently (in their daily classes) with these lessons? These students are from a total of 6 different homerooms, so I don’t have all the empirical evidence to deduce they are even receiving *the same H.O.M.* as the other students.

The social development of 5-7 year-old children is another issue that could interfere with a class of 14. Two of the boys want to “act out” as much as possible, to gain attention and have fun, and this disruption sets up a gender dynamic with the girls in the class. When we, the instructors, single out these boys, we are calling attention to the negative, thereby drawing focus away from the positive and the “mindful” emphasis of the lesson. There are issues with boys wanting to work with girls, and vice-versa, so we have to separate the groups and perpetually alter the combinations of ensemble numbers. This has been effective in keeping the children engaged and dissuading any set cliques that stagnate creative development.

The 2nd-3rd graders (“B”) have different challenges in that they are only a group of 5 students, with 3 boys and 2 girls. They work very well together, and are very respectful of one another. This group has tremendous possibilities as an ensemble, so we have challenged them with more advanced improvisational challenges, movement, and text. One potential downside of this group, though, is, in the event of one students’ dissention, the entire group feels the loss. It can be extremely difficult to pull the group back to the task at hand if one of the five “fingers” has been severed. There have been no issues with gender politics in this class, as Mrs. Scott and I have made it a point to give equal “voice” to all 5 students. This is a much larger challenge for group “A.” If I were to answer every question, and have all 14 students share in their desired show and tell-type scenario, no work would get done!

“How do you create an ensemble (and teamwork) in young learners?”

In the 24 contact hours thus far, this has been one of the joys of the class. I have been able to discover not only what the students want to learn, but also how they want to learn it! In the first 4 class sessions, as I was teaching some basics of working and playing together in conjunction with trying some new play texts²² and accompanying games. We discovered in the “A” group, that the students looked much more to us for guidance and leadership. They waited for the director to give them activities and games to do, and were able to work in tandem with one another upon the vigilant guidance of two teachers. Or better yet, one main teacher (myself) with Mrs. Scott as the “classroom management” supervisor. We have concluded that this learning level is more conducive to having all game rules, plans, and expectations explained as clearly and methodically as possible, so that there is no chaotic explosion of fervor so readily available in a class of young learners with no parameters. Mrs. Scott expresses it more candidly:

Teamwork, while over taught, is essential in the performing arts. It's fundamental. I have taught many enrichment classes and through other programs also and having a partner makes the task exponentially easier and more effective, especially in lower grades like K and 1. Much time is spent in the most basic of tasks. "Let's make a circle!" Team teaching keeps this at a few minutes. Alone it can take fifteen. Also. Mirroring is easier team teaching. You can explain and exemplify simultaneously. Some one can "police" while someone instructs and these roles can be changed and shared imperceptively,

²² In the first few sessions I used several short skits from the following three workbooks: Hollenbeck's *Fluency Practice Read-Aloud Plays*, McMory Martin's *12 Fabulously Funny Fairy Tale Plays*, and Pugliano-Martin's *25 Just-Right Plays for Emerging Readers*. This gave us a chance to surreptitiously observe both the inherent reading levels of students and the intrinsic and developing “power dynamics” amongst the students themselves. We stepped back and noted which students were working effectively with others; which were helping the others with reading, who didn't want to participate, who wanted to be a “director,” etc.

thereby modeling effective teamwork in action. (Scott, personal interview, 2014)

To be specific, we found with the “A” group that there was always a willingness to play the new game. The very first game of the first class I was preparing to have the students jump in and join, Mrs. Scott stopped me and asked the class, “Now class, can we do _____ in this game?” to which about half of them answered “yes” and half answered “no” and a few just stood there, with blank expressions on their faces. I was acutely aware at that moment that I had made some major assumptions on game playing and ensemble building for this age group. She helped me understand there were “steps before the steps” to take to ensure clarity and avoid a chaotic 1st grade. It can be assured they have never played any of these improvisational games before, so we had to scaffold the lesson in these steps (See Appendix D).

In contrast to this, the “B” group, with the exception of one of the five students, had all taken an enrichment drama class before, and they arrived with pre-conceived expectations of what an ensemble can do, how to make a play, what play they wanted to perform, and so forth. It can’t be overstated that this disparity in levels, ages, and abilities made for a fascinating “on the fly” adjustment to almost all lesson plans in the 15-minute interim between group A and B class sessions! I would constantly be altering the level of difficulty and the adding new elements of rehearsal techniques for group B, such as allowing them to “cast” themselves, direct themselves, and, if time permitted, change the dialogue to suit their particular proclivities.

Ironically, the older group's confidence in their teamwork and game-playing abilities sometimes lead them to NOT function well together as an ensemble. Often times, one or two of the ensemble of five would want to play one game while the others would disagree. They would assume they knew how the game was played, and begin playing their version of the game. This fractured "too many chiefs" syndrome would quickly be remedied, but not without a few long discussions about compromise and teamwork. To accommodate this, and because the main thrust of the class is to get all students reading new scripts together, we would often allow different students in this group to take turns as "leaders" and/or narrators in being able to control the material and have a sense of empowerment.

"What are some challenges and discoveries made in the teaching of literacy?"

We have made some discoveries so far on the nature of children's desire to read and write. Certainly there are many tomes on this topic, and I read several well-known books promoting reading aloud, and story time that were inspiring but often from the perspective of dialogic reading and the bonding that is imperative to increase enjoyment and heart-felt connections to the base materials. Although I agree in the fullest, where the "page to stage" class has differed is in my attempt to have children bridge the gap themselves due to their interest and play of the materials. I have been every part the cheerleader and facilitator; as I attempted to inspire children to learn the scripts themselves and with each other, I was struck by how quickly they assisted one another in their effort to find a group meaning and consensus on the play itself.

“How do we assess writing levels, skills obtained, and whether students “completed” the assignment?”

One of the biggest problems of this class has been my lack of expertise in assessing and norming the students’ beginning writing levels, and therefore, being able to accurately gauge their progress over the course of 7 weeks. Mrs. Scott and I are not so narcissistic as to assume a mere 45-minute lesson, twice a week, with several school break interspersed, is going to make a tremendous difference on each child’s daily writing skills; for we are not checking, grading, returning and asking students to re-write each journal. Mrs. Scott and I are making it a point to not correct the students writing in the class, but are guiding them as they include the dates and the class “question for the day.” Hopefully this will be able to show a progression parallel with their class studies.

“What about classroom management in the performing arts classroom?”

As always, the very aspect we love about our little performing artists (the energy, the impulsivity, the joy is the very thing that can Improvisation games and “focus” games, such as pass the impulse, ball tossing, memory (name, numbers, identification of animals, etc....) games and the like serve as nice tactics to bring the energy into the center of a room. Yet, this “centered” energy can easily dissipate if the teacher is not on task for the next game or activity.

“How and when do we adjust the curriculum according to students’ needs?”

We started each reading component of the class by reading the scripts as a

group. I always wrote the key vocabulary words on the white board, and then we worked on pronunciation of those new words. But we were sensitive to the fact that this class is supposed to be fun, and we have marketed the class as a performing arts class, not an after school “English” lesson. So we both acknowledge that we were rushing this portion of the lesson a bit, in order to get the students to get on their feet and play. The pressure to balance out the practical “on your feet” games with the quiet and reflective time has been a constant source of frustration in classroom time management. When students arrive late, the energy of the class must naturally accommodate the acceptance of that student. This can slow down the progress of the other students I have just begun to teach. Given that some students are “pre-literate” (just learning how to write their A-B-C’s) and some of my student are “independent readers” (reading chapter books on their own), the adjustments in the curriculum have been constant.

I request that peer education- using the stronger students assist the weaker students as a means of encouraging ensemble building. A challenge we had was in assigning roles according to students’ particular reading levels. Due to the fact that we did not have a diagnostic test at the beginning of the class, we would rearrange the roles *after* the first reading. During the group read-through, Mrs. Scott and I watched intently all the students’ faces to determine who was reading and who was merely pretending to be reading. We had a few hurt feelings surrounding the issues of self-esteem and peer-correction, where some of the students felt they were being corrected and “laughed at” for not being able to pronounce words correctly.

This horrible phenomenon undermines the entire function of the class: to

increase, not *decrease*, children's self-esteem and comfort with increasing their levels of literacy. So we quickly adjusted the curriculum and I made a hard and fast rule that no student would correct another student's reading, and that we would all work together to be better readers. So, in order to serve those students who need extra help with their reading and writing, Mrs. Scott and I worked individually with the groups and helped model new words and pronunciations in a private setting, so as to ensure confidence in each student. Putting each student "on the spot" academically is counter-productive to the process of performing for the first time.

"What was the students' and parents' experience of the class?"

Thus far, as a requirement for completion of the "Capstone" program, we have had six sessions in which parents have observed the class. Our class has always been "open" to parents, other teachers, Dr. Jackson, and any staff of Waikiki school to ensure an environment of openness and creativity. The parents were included in the "reflection" time, and are welcome to help their own children with the writing portion of this class. We also welcomed the parents in the question sessions, and in doing so we shared with the parents the "meta-cognitive" aspects of the class. As an example, as we taught *The Lion and the Mouse*, we asked the students:

"Is it better to be a lion or a mouse?"

"What can a mouse do that a lion can't?"

"Is there something you can do that your friend sitting next to you can't?"

"If someone does something nice for you, will you do something nice for them?"

"So we should be kind to our friends, shouldn't we?"

Then, after receiving the responses from the children, I wrote them on the board and talked about mindfulness and empathy for others. At this time, I looked at the parents and told them we were using the concept of Dr. J's "community ball," and we were eliciting responses based on philosophical precept that every child has a voice and a choice: They have a voice they may use, and a choice if they want to use it at that time. They may also use their "voice" in the form of journal writing.

I am not appropriating the journal time as a reflection time on the class itself, for I believe this is counter-productive. The students were very engaged in working on the "problem" posed to them in the class, and it has been my experience that too much reflection on the teaching process itself can engender an atmosphere of insecurity in both the instructor and the students. However, I have had several one on one interviews with students in-between classes, in which they eagerly shared with me their favorite games (as well as their disappointment in not playing those games more). In one interview with a 3rd grade student, his confession was that he desired more scripts "that are harder, and have more parts and words in them. Like, longer plays." And I will certainly accommodate this request as time and skill levels increase. Some of the parent/observers have shown appreciation for the fact that there is a "mini-presentation" at the end of every class. I have modeled the class after "the end of the day"²³ performance that is effective as an encapsulating event.

Some parents have also shown appreciation for the stories themselves, and

²³ HTY would often have an "end of the day" experience for all 3 groups of children. This allowed the three groups to commune and put into practice the theoretical principles they had learned that day. I have realized, in retrospect, that this is just as much for the parents as the children. When their parents' pick them up and ask "What did you do today?" the children might be able to readily answer them.

for the outlet this class gives them and their children. I can tell by watching the children's gleeful faces when they are having a joyous time portraying various animals, fighting as the "sun & the wind," and so forth. What I am also experiencing and asking the parents is about the transference of this experience into the home environment. I am constantly asking parents (during pick-up time) "Does your child share these stories with you at home?" and "Do you have an opportunity to have story time every night?" just to make the connection that the experience of this class does *not* stop at the final bell. I also ask the children to share their experience with their parents: "Don't forget to tell them what story you did today!!" I always bark, as they run out the door.

A representative lesson plan from February 3rd will show the slight contrast between my treatment and pedagogical emphasis of the "A" session in comparison with the "B" session. As stated before, my goal in having essentially the exact same lesson plan for both was to be able to adjust each pedagogical level accordingly. I will show two separate lesson plans in order to compare some successes and shortcomings in teaching a new lesson in the performing arts (see Appendix E1).

Integrated Content Area:

The students will be able to integrate literature, reading & writing fundamentals, theatre, math and sciences, depending on the literature selected. For this particular lesson, I felt the students' main focus should be on the integration of the literature of Aesop, the philosophy of P4C, and the reading skills as they pertain to these subjects. Since the drive to keep the content contained is of paramount

importance, I am not attempting to make assumptions as to the applicability in mathematics, sciences, and social sciences.

Assessment Focus:

We used Dan Kelin's rubric on Assessing Student Achievement for an ensemble. As we are not attempting to create a performance ensemble, per se, but rather focusing on the process and enjoyment the students' experience during this afterschool program. This particular class concentration is on: commitment, risk taking, ensemble, body, voice, and imagination. But his observation checklist asks the question, "What is the level of interaction?" and dissects the ensemble into four evaluating factors: FOCUS, TOOLS, IDEAS, and INTERACTION.

Inspired by the work of Daniel A. Kelin II.'s pedagogy from his Creative Drama course²⁴ & Lily Brennick's extensive work with Honolulu Theatre for Youth, I am very much using those teaching styles, which are now codified on Kelin's website and have served as an inspiration of Brennick. Her growth as the director for the HTY summer camp has been an extension of Kelin's pedagogical philosophy and his development of the V.I.B.E.S. chart. Kelin explains in an interview the genesis of his being able to determine what criteria we use to assess art:

I initially developed the V.I.B.E.S. chart to help classroom teachers integrate drama into their teaching practice. While many teachers could successfully facilitate simple drama strategies, they had no way to assess achievement.

²⁴ Daniel Kelin, II teaches numerous workshops locally, nationally, and internationally on this very topic of how to inspire and focus not only the students but teachers as well. His pedagogy has developed for 20 years, since graduating from UH Manoa as a specialist in where TYA and drama education intersect. He also has taught myriad lessons in using TYA and creative drama to more effectively teach English as a foreign language.

‘What should I expect or look for?’ they asked. V.I.B.E.S. defines a straightforward list of ‘Tools of Expression’: Voice, Imagination, Body, Ensemble, and Story. With each ‘tool,’ I synthesized a criteria list down to three or four points to help beginning teachers, teaching artists and participants take their first steps in developing or facilitating the development of the skills of a theatre artist. To define an accessible, tangible set of criteria for each tool, I drew from a variety of sources and synthesized them into novice-friendly vocabulary. (Kelin, personal interview: April 30th, 2013—see Appendix E2)

1. Standards /Benchmark

I have consulted the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards (HCPS) website to list and my hopes were to fulfill the Common Core requirements for elementary schools. I have made a list, determined by their particular categorical listing. This list is by no means utilized every single lesson, but my hope was that it would serve as an accurate sampling of future lesson topics. Mrs. Scott and I were working to determine just how closely we needed to adhere to each benchmark, since we did not have diagnostic testing in the beginning of the “Page to Stage” program. Had we administered a test on January 22nd, we could have ascertained without equivocation the functional literacy level of each student, and how those levels relate to their peers both in and out of our after school class. But this might have been the entire class period, with a very certain possibility that we “turn off” students to the supposed fun and enriching class (see Appendix E3).

2. Assessment Task

My students were not held to task in being assessed on their achievements in the class, but I did realize Mrs. Scott and I would need a system to determine if the students were able to adequately: One: Students use their voice, body, and imagination to tell engaging stories. Two: Students create stories using level-

appropriate vocabulary and syntax. And three: Students re-create fables physically, using ensemble and teamwork to tell engaging stories. How would or could I possibly assess these cute little kids running around, pretending to be little blizzards one moment and heat waves the next? And how could I judge each child against the other when I could see that each had “gifts” to give to the theatrical and storytelling process? This was a dilemma I could not easily reconcile. I eventually settled on each child being more or less of what they already *were*, as deemed appropriate for the specific artistic and literary task at hand.

Imagination

This was so very much connected to the assessment issue, which begs the quote by Edward Hopper, “No amount of skillful invention can replace the essential element of imagination”. The student is excited to take creative risks and effectively uses his or her imagination via inspiration and innovation to transform their bodies and voices into various animals and characters, while effectively and believably interacting with other “animals & objects.” The student is willing to take creative risks and effectively use his or her imagination via inspiration and innovation to process the lesson in journal writings and reflections, while also being able to imaginatively illustrate personal reflections based on teacher prompts.

3. Activities/Instructional Strategies: History/Demonstration

I would always engage with the students and give a brief lecture on the history and origins of the topic of the day. I used the following script to give the students a sense of who Aesop was, and to connect the crucial element of *storytelling* into the lesson. The “tie-in” of connecting storytelling to Aesop himself,

and then seguing that concept into a staging of the story was my attempt to give the students some historical context of how storytelling (pre radio, TV, internet, movies, cell phone, etc....) served as a vital proponent for passing on wisdom from elders to the younger generation. I am demonstrating through my dramatic reading, and in knowing all the students have a “story hour,” that they will anticipate the paradigm of the “teacher as storyteller” and student as “interpreter- imitator.”

Other instructional strategies I used, which I thought were particularly akin to the teachings of Aesop, were “Socratic” question and answer sessions. I would begin with some sort of thought, asking the children how the day was going for them. Certainly in the younger groups, most children were eager to give their days’ events an extended recap, and I would guide these events into the fable of the day. For example, when the children were talking about the long “fun run,” I tied that in with the fable, *“The Sun and the Wind.”* We would continue with a question about “which was more essential: the Sun or the Wind?” and that would lead to the properties of the sun versus the wind, the elements themselves, how we portray the sun, and how could we possibly ever portray the wind...a thing we can’t even see?? These complex physical relationships to the visceral world were best exemplified in many of Lecoq’s teachings, and I merely adapted those work with the theatre of gesture and dance with the moral question of “which is more effective: gentility or force?” I also was working on the concept for each class of the “big idea.” The standard learning objectives of each class needed to connect with some larger purpose than just *did they get it and can they write about it?* (See Appendix E5).

So I worked on, as we constructed the lesson-arc for the class, the idea that,

due to the fact that there are so many vastly different fables, we could select each fable to connect with a H.O.M. and a P4C concept. This seemed simple enough. We then began to consider if movement and voice and ensemble/ connectivity amongst the class could coincide with, what educational theorist Norman L. Webb calls, the larger “extended learning” (see Appendix E4). I desire for students to get to the last stage of his “depth of knowledge,” so they can extend the tales into daily life. If, by “being the animals” and “speaking in their voices,” if they had each fable and lesson in their bodies, would they then internalize the language, the moral of the story, and the physical sensations of that experience? And would this not lead to a longer, enduring understanding, and contribute to each becoming a complex thinker and effective communicator? (See Appendices E6, E7).

At the time of this writing, I just completed my seventh week experimenting with this educational model at Waikiki School. I have slowly integrated major principles of physical theatre and improvisation, while constantly reminding students of their “mindful” responsibility to themselves, the ensemble (which we call our “theatre group”) and the instructors. The students have all responded favorably in their journey through various habits of mind and ability to work and play together. The younger group dynamic is proving to be one in which we, the teachers do much more prompting of new theatre terms, games, vocabulary and keeping their focus. Therefore, we have adjusted our applying worksheets as the center of the lesson, and made the performance portion of the class as the focus. We still have the journal writing sessions, vocabulary terms, and our “mindful” discussions, that are very much driven by Mrs. Scott and myself.

The 2nd-3rd grade classes have been able to adopt a much more autonomous approach to the work. Due to the fact that three of the five students have taken drama class with Mrs. Scott before, they have quickly made vocabulary and theatre games connections without us “teaching” them. This group is also small enough and amicable enough with each other to be comfortable with creating their own games, reading the texts independently, and actually lead the class in turns. The learning curve I have experienced has been with regards to the writing level of each student; it is also a concern when students are not writing up to grade level standards, or not taking the journal portion of the lesson as seriously as they could. Part of this could be due to the fact that this is an enrichment class, and not a mandatory, or “official” class.

One conclusion I could draw would be that I have set up this class to have two simultaneously conflicting characteristics:

- An after-school “fun time” class in which we all play theatre games, create characters, and make up shows, all of us getting to play various animals, and making funny faces, etc....
- An after-school enrichment class in which students are expected to create mindful models of theatre, using various physical theatre techniques, ensemble development, and memorization of new vocabulary, concepts, and P4C philosophies. Students will also be expected to “journal” about their daily experiences in class, while answering questions the teacher has posed.

- *A combination of the two?* Is there a compatible model that can successfully integrate these two characteristics? Is there a model in which on Monday's class we have game fun time, and on Wednesday's class we have a "serious" class with reading, writing, recitation of the scripts?

Mrs. Scott, Shelly Hecker and I all determined the priority of the class was for the students to come away from each lesson with a feeling that they had a fun time and wanted to come back and play even *more* games, tell even *more* stories! So we concluded that the writing and reading would serve as a component of the games and storytelling, and not the primary emphasis of each class. We also concurred that waiting once per week to have the students practice reading and writing was not sufficient or ideal. Therefore, my decision to break each class into 4 teaching segments proved to be a model that easily accommodated the focusing, "playing and improvising," acting, and reading and writing (processing) in order to maximize the experience for each session. The overall reaction from the students has been tremendously supportive because I believe they are comfortable with having a set structure and fixed expectations.

One negative outcome of the last seven weeks has been the issue of being able to "pack in" all SLO's into each class session. With a 45 minute structure, there needs to be some flexibility in what can be accomplished while simultaneously keeping the children focused and the curriculum "moving." I have made minor adjustments during each class; such as, if a game is proving successful, we continue

to play it, and if a game is falling flat, I promptly change it and move to another game or activity.

My assessments of the student's writing and their processing of their experiences through journal questions have revealed that the students are applying all they have learned from the role-play. I will continue to ask the students questions centering on the themes of Aesop's *Fables*, and will continue to have the students work towards completing sentences and developing syntax. Our emphasis is not on correcting or comparing writing samples, so as not to create a negative dynamic of children teasing each other. The level at which the students perform in is just fine for this class. We are not in a place of judgment, I have concluded, but in a place of support and acceptance. If the student is supposed to be "enriched" through the arts, then our emphasis is on that enriching experience, and not on the grammar and syntax.

So a natural question would be, "How has it changed the students?" The students seem much more in a place of being able to express and emote themselves better. So many challenges have been thrown at them these past 7 weeks, that a small thing such as raising your hand in class and answering a question out loud seems incidental, not nerve-wrecking. Mrs. Scott reflected on her observations as a substitute teacher to several of these children at all grade levels, K-3rd. She says:

I notice an increased sense of responsibility from our students. This is their drama time; they don't want to waste it. When I see these same students in their regular classes I notice a confidence, a sense of composure. When reading the scholastic weekly reader or other standard reading materials these students have more animation in their oral reading and more

enthusiasm got the reading in general. Inevitably they will ask, "are we going to act it out?" Or "can we act this out?" This question is particularly popular in reference to history and social study assignments.

(Scott, personal interview, 2014)

Chapter 9: Conclusion

For me, in the K-1st class the desire for emerging readers to join in on the group reading has been successful. They anticipate being able to act out any story, and I have observed their engagement with the material in order to "get on the feet." I remind them that they won't be able to act out the story if they are not familiar with the characters. They all agree and focus on the reading comprehension. The same applies to the 2nd-3rd-grade class. They understand it is imperative as well; their desire to write and learn the new terminology has naturally evolved from our class. I have adjusted to allow this class to develop their critical thinking skills more by asking challenging questions of them and having them ask challenging questions of one another. One of the coveted roles to have for these children is that of a narrator. It has been another adjustment to see students instantaneously correct or criticize other students for "misreading" the scripts. We then have to

have a discussion concerning mindfulness and “empathy and understanding” of one another.

Because we have the luxury of 22 class sessions together, with two teachers offering various perspectives, we are given the gift of perspective over the beginning of the students’ journey versus the end. In the past 7 weeks we have already seen tremendous growth in the students’ ability to process the structure of stories, read aloud, and develop cohesive journal entries. We continue to strive towards having students take the initiative in their ensemble development and “mindfulness” in playing together. Another concluding observation is, given the fact that this is not during regular “school hours” that the class can and is often perceived as just “run around” time. This challenge has been met at the beginning of each class in our persistent attempts to focus and calm the class down and prepare them for a positive learning environment.

We certainly keep in mind that the “Me´e” program is not available in all schools, and, due to the fact that it costs money, is only available to a certain select number of students. This exclusivity of our selected student population somewhat negates the entire purpose of my pedagogical research, which continues to be: “How can we implement alternative educational models in instilling physical theatre games and activities as a means to teach literacy? How do we meet the children where they are, and use Seymour Sarason’s philosophies in *Teaching as a Performing Art* as a de facto inspired manual for our perspective in the class?” As Sarason states in the problematic question of the mundane day-in-day-out challenge of the homeroom teacher:

Teachers, again generally speaking, perform in a way and on a basis that turns off their audiences. In the theater the actor, despite immersion in and identification with a particular role, is acutely sensitive to audience reaction, to any sign that the audience finds his or her portrayal convincing in the intended way. And after opening night the actor waits anxiously for the next day when the newspaper critics will pass judgment on the play and its performers. Some plays close very quickly; there is no opportunity to try to learn from the failure. It is different with the classroom teacher who has the same audience each day. The teacher does not worry about whether an audience will return. The audience, by law and parental authority, *must* return. The teacher has the opportunity to change her way of interpreting her role depending on how she perceives and interprets audience reaction. But what do we mean by perceiving and interpreting? Mr. Holland had countless opportunities to change and interpret audience reaction. He did interpret them and concluded that the problem was in the minds of the audience; *they* did not understand and appreciate *him*. That it was the other way around could not occur to him, nothing in his preparation alerted him to the fact that his role obligated him to perform in a way to make it believable to students that he was sincerely interested in their thoughts, feelings, reactions, and suggestions. (Sarason 50)

This perspective can be the specialty of the performing arts teacher as Dan Kelin has exemplified throughout his career. He is an inspiration to me as one who has not compromised his singular pedagogical philosophy. This personal statement, found on his website, is “My goal in working with children, youth, and adults is to crack open the knowledge center we call a brain and flood it with imaginative explorations. I believe that even arts education gets too bogged down with technique” (Kelin, website: “Inspiring a Desire to Learn”).

When I am teaching a new game or story with my students, my constant reminder for the moment is that we, student and teacher, are exploring this together. One way to “turn on” the students’ imaginations is to be diligently listening and observing their every discovery, and not be consumed with my own pedagogical time clock. My first 7 weeks of this internship have produced self-

imposed curricular challenges, with the irony being that these challenges have taken me out of the play the students are engaged in at that time. When I am *pressing* an agenda or the teaching of a particular vocabulary term instead of just allowing the students to “discover” the terms themselves, my lessons always implode. Dr. Jackson is also a master of allowing the students to create the questions and sense of exploration in their P4C discussions.

In integrating the physical theatre teaching models of Lecoq, educational models of Kelin, and philosophical models of Dr. Jackson, I aspire to create a new curriculum style, which still includes “common core” standards, thus making it a viable option in elementary schools throughout Hawaii. I will continue to research and practice the teaching of performing arts as a “core” component of inspiring children to read and prosper.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A1:

Timeline for Completion of Thesis:

Wednesday, Oct. 23 rd :	First Proposal due to Thesis Committee
Friday, November 1 st :	First Committee Meeting & Review
Friday, November 15 th :	IRB submission of paperwork due
Monday, November 25 th :	Second Proposal due (Revision)
Monday, December 2 nd :	Third Proposal due (Final Timeline)
Thursday, December 19 th :	First draft of Thesis due (Intern Research)
Monday, January 20 th :	Second draft of Thesis due (Body)
Monday, February 3 rd :	Lesson plans for W. School internship due
Monday, February 10 th :	Waikiki School Instruction Fieldwork begins
Friday, February 21 st :	Thesis Submission for Consideration
Monday, March 10 th :	Final Deadline of Thesis to Committee
Friday, March 14 th :	Revision of Thesis due (Including Fieldwork)
Wednesday, March 19 th :	Performances for Thesis project (W. School)
Thursday, March 20 th :	Oral defense of Thesis
Tuesday, April 2 nd :	Submission of Comp. Questions due
Friday, April 4 th :	Final draft of written Thesis/ Fieldwork due
Monday, April 14 th :	Comp. Exams
Monday, April 28 th :	Comp. Defense

Appendix A2:

Timeline for Waikiki School “Me’e” After School Enrichment Program:

I will teach two classes, back to back, on Monday and Wednesday. The curriculum will be similar, but with more in-depth analysis and vocabulary utilized in the “B” group. The “A” group will have many games, and exercises where the instructor is facilitating the new vocabulary. The “B” group will be generating their own vocabulary, expanded upon me. “B” group will also have more writing intensive reflections, and more handouts to take home. The class schedule is as follows, during the “A+ program”:

Monday: (A) 2:30-3:15 PM (K-1st grade)
(B) 3:30-4:15 PM (2nd-3rd grade)

Wednesday: (A) 1:45-2:30 PM (K-1st grade)
(B) 2:45-3:30 PM (2nd-3rd grade)

January

Wednesday, 22nd: Introduction, Mindful rules, name games, playing together

Monday, 27th: Name games, “*What is story? What is your favorite one?*”

Wednesday, 29th: Energy & pace games, “*Teamwork,*” “*What is Ensemble?*”

February

Monday, 3rd: Improvisation games, “*Character,*” “*What is good vs. bad?*”

Monday, 5th: Improv. Scenes, Machine games, given circumstances

Monday, 10th: Intro. To script, Reading Games, “*Working with Empathy.*”
“25 Fabulously Funny Scripts”

Wednesday, 12th: Ensemble Games, “*What is Story? Why is it important?*”
“25 Fabulously Funny Scripts”

Monday, 17th: **PRESIDENT’S DAY: SCHOOL HOLIDAY**

Wednesday, 19th: **TEACHER PLANNING: SCHOOL HOLIDAY**

Monday, 24th: “*What makes a good story?*” Theme, Character, Plot, Unity
(Instructor: Scott) “*Animals on Trial*”

Wednesday, 26th: Selection of Story, Presentation of Story (TEACHER: Scott)
Aesop's Fables- "Lion & the Mouse"

March

Monday, 3rd: Improv of Story: Essential elements, "Win/ Lose"
Aesop's Fables- "The Crow & the Pitcher"

Wednesday, 5th: Writing Workshop #1, Separating Units of Story, Beats
Aesop's Fables- "The Belling Cat"

Monday, 10th: Writing Workshop #2, Beginning, Middle, End (Climax)
Aesop's Fables- "The Wind and the Sun"

Wednesday, 12th: Rearranging of Storyboard, Solidifying Story
Aesop's Fables- **"FIX!!"**

Monday, 17th: **SPRING BREAK (#1 SYMPOSIUM)**

Wednesday, 19th: **SPRING BREAK**

Thursday, 20th: Thesis Defense for Committee

Monday, 24th: Selection of Roles, Performance of Roles, Script

Wednesday, 26th: Final writing of Script, Vocabulary, Rehearsal w/ props

Monday, 31st: **#2 SYMPOSIUM:** Running of Stories, Final Rehearsal (Photos)
(TEACHER: Scott)

April

Wednesday, 2nd: **#1 PUBLIC PRESENTATION FOR THESIS** (Photos/Video)

Monday, 7th: Games, Reflection of Presentation, Hand-outs for Thesis

Wednesday, 9th: Ensemble generated selection of fables, fairy tales

Monday, 14th: Student selection of #1 fable, improvisation of fable

Wednesday, 16th: Student selection of #2 fairy tale, improvisation of tale

Monday, 21st: Split groups: Student-generated rehearsals of tales

Wednesday, 23rd: Split groups: Student-generated storyboard, rehearsal

Monday, 28th: Split groups: Final writing, Rehearsal (5 questions)

Wednesday, 30th: Final Running of Stories, Final Rehearsal (students)

May

Monday, 5th: **#2 PUBLIC PRESENTATION AND REFLECTION**

Wednesday, 8th: Students generate favorite tales to tell & journal review

Monday, 12th: Review and expansion of favorite theatre games, activities

Wednesday, 14th: Make-up lesson (Available due to missed lessons)

Monday, 19th: Reflection of Presentation, games, party, goodbyes!

Appendix B:

B1:

Mrs. Joni Onishi-Ishida's Methodologies for Teaching Literacy- (Kindergarten level) Waikiki School; Honolulu, HI

1. Introduce new material to class (Name of story, themes, characters, etc...)
2. Read story or script aloud while students follow along; and model the "finger guide" as we pronounce and spell out new words & concepts.
3. Have stronger readers assist ELL and weaker readers in 2nd reading of story.
4. Act out story with students with cast "A," still utilizing scripts in their hands for reference. At this point, one or two students are also chosen as narrators of the story, so that they gain confidence in repetition.
5. Act out the story with cast "B," rotating roles so that almost all students are given a choice to practice the narrator or a spoken role. As students become more familiar with the context clues of the story & script, they ask questions and "teach" the other students what will come next in the play.
6. With journals in hand, students are questioned about unknown words or terms, and I write them on the white board for them to read or copy down. The intent of this short class is not to strive for complete literacy (reading/ writing/ speaking/ listening), but at least a recognition that this new word written on the board means what they *thought* it meant.
7. Reinforcements of word usage or new vocabulary are done on an individual level. Since this is primarily *NOT* a literacy/ ELL class, the amount of time delineated for

this pursuit is in the final 5 minutes of class. This is to minimize boredom or negative attitudes toward literacy and writing.

Appendix B2: Three types of Writing for Literacy at Elementary level

1. *Argument/ Opinion writing:* In weeks 1-9, I am asking students to answer journal questions regarding their opinions over the materials read.
2. *Informative/ Explanatory writing:* Every day in class, I am explaining to students various theatre and story terms, as well as teaching new words needed to comprehend each fable/ fairy tale.
3. *Narrative writing:* In weeks 10-22, we will start integrating the students' individual creations of theatre. Students will continue to work on fables and fairy tales and we will work with them to physicalize and "flesh out" the ideas, but still give them a sense of their own creation. The students will NOT be expected to complete a script, but I will, rather, be adapting some of the tales to show samples of narrative writing.

Appendix C:

C1: Arthur L. Costa's "16 Habits of Mind" and applications at Waikiki School

- 1) **Persisting:** Sticking to task at hand; Follow through to completion; Can and do remain focused.
 - All classes begin with quiet "circle" focus time. All opening games are based on getting students to be present in the room.
- 2) **Managing Impulsivity:** Take time to consider options; Think before speaking or acting; Remain calm when stressed or challenged; Thoughtful and considerate of others; Proceed carefully.
 - Emphasis on protecting the borrowed classroom environment is stressed. Students are NOT allowed to run around or touch other students' property without being monitored.
- 3) **Listening with Understanding and Empathy:** Pay attention to and do not dismiss another person's thoughts, feeling and ideas; Seek to put myself in the other person's shoes; Tell others when I can relate to what they are expressing; Hold thoughts at a distance in order to respect another person's point of view and feelings.
 - Students raise hands and are then given the "talking stick." This is how they are acknowledged. All students switch roles as a module for putting themselves in the other person's shoes.
- 4) **Thinking Flexibly:** Able to change perspective; Consider the input of others; Generate alternatives; Weigh options.
 - Critical questions asked of how we can "problem-solve" from the stories' perspective. Then we can act it out.
- 5) **Thinking about Thinking (Metacognition):** Being aware of own thoughts, feelings, intentions and actions; Knowing what I do and say affects others; Willing to consider the impact of choices on myself and others.
 - During our reflection writings, students are posed questions that respond to their impact of their choices.
- 6) **Striving for Accuracy:** Check for errors; Measure at least twice; Nurture a desire for exactness, fidelity & craftsmanship.
 - Script reading and journal writing is checked for clarity, pronunciation, penmanship, and an environment of hard work is established.
- 7) **Questioning and Posing Problems:** Ask myself, "How do I know?"; develop a questioning attitude; Consider what information is needed, choose strategies to get that information; Consider the obstacles needed to resolve.
 - The essence of *Aesop's Fables* is a perpetual philosophical questioning of what we would and can do in certain circumstances. The students create alternative endings and solutions to the stories.
- 8) **Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations:** Use what is learned; Consider prior knowledge and experience; Apply knowledge beyond the situation in which it was learned.

- The journaling at the end of class asks for links from questions posed in the stories to the students' personal lives. They write and draw about these new situations in their schools and family lives.
- 9) **Thinking and Communicating with Clarity and Precision:** Strive to be clear when speaking and writing; Strive to be accurate when speaking and writing, Avoid generalizations, distortions, minimizations and deletions when speaking, and writing.
 - All students are commanded to speak up and loudly in this "theatre class." The emphasis is placed on respecting the written word (to develop literacy strategies), and reinforcing public reading & sight-reading skills.
- 10) **Gathering Data through All Senses:** Stop to observe what I see; Listen to what I hear; Take note of what I smell; Taste what I am eating; Feel what I am touching.
 - Games and daily activities are played involving all the senses as well as awareness of which senses are engaged. Feelings are especially emphasized as a prime indicator of involving the "acting muscles."
- 11) **Creating, Imagining, Innovating:** Think about how something might be done differently from the "norm"; Propose new ideas; Strive for originality; Consider novel suggestions others might make.
 - Students are "kept on their toes" by being perpetually challenged with new games and ideas. They are cast in varying roles on a non-stop basis, with every student being challenged to try every role possible.
- 12) **Responding with Wonderment and Awe:** Intrigued by the world's beauty, nature's power and vastness for the universe; Have regard for what is awe-inspiring and can touch my heart; Open to the little and big surprises in life I see others and myself.
 - Imaginary games are played which emphasize the exploration of our environment. Both the vastness and the minutiae
- 13) **Taking Responsible Risks:** Willing to try something new and different; Consider doing things that are safe and sane even though new to me; Face fear of making mistakes or of coming up short and don't let this stop me.
 - All students are given a loving, safe, and encouraging environment in which to prosper. Because this is an after-school program, the students are not tested or challenged for a set up for failure. It is about the fun process, not the test scores...but they are challenged to try new roles.
- 14) **Finding Humor:** Willing to laugh appropriately; look for the whimsical, absurd, ironic and unexpected in life; laugh at myself when I can.
 - This is the #1 priority of this class: For students to have fun and look for the humorous in their acting.
- 15) **Thinking Interdependently:** Willing to work with others and welcome their input and perspective; Abide by decisions the work group makes even if I disagree somewhat; willing to learn from others in reciprocal situations.
 - By the very nature of creating ensemble, the students are asked to be sensitive to the group process both within the Aesop's fables and as casting choices for the fables.

- 16) ***Remaining Open to Continuous Learning:*** Open to new experiences to learn from; Proud and humble enough to admit when don't know; Welcome new information on all subjects.
- All students are exposed to brand new games on a class-by-class basis. All students are exposed to new material via reading and/or performing daily as well. The students are not warned what the next lesson will consist of, so they are kept “open” to the next lesson.

Appendix C2:

Matthew Lipman's P4C accommodation and involvement for Children:

- Values of Community
- Intellectual Safety
- Thinking
- Reflection
- Inquiry
- Specific Content Standards to Measure Student Performance & Meet State Standards

Appendix C3:

I am integrating the P4C sequences into each class with the following step-by-step scaffolding process:

1. Preparing of Text- (Game related to Fable of the day)
2. Preparing for Progression- (Connecting game with Fable)
3. Sharing the Text- (Students & Instructor reading Fable)
4. Creating and choosing Questions- (Students performing Fable, asking questions relating to Fable)
5. Dialogue- (Students adjusting Fable and outcomes, and inquiring about meaning of Fable)
6. Follow-up- (Students answering P4C questions and journaling about Fable and related topic)

Appendix C4:

Professor Jackson's P4C "philosophy" questions for children-

- "What do you mean by that?"
(By asking students to clarify their words, I am hoping that leads to more clarity in their writing.)
- "What are the reasons?"
(Often students can "feed" off of other students' questions, and we gather lists of reasons to create a collage of suggestions to the problem or question posed.)
- "Is being assumed? Or what can I assume?"
(With younger students, we can use the question, "How do we know that?")
- "Can I infer ___ from ___? Or where are there in- references being made?"
(With younger students, we can use an example, "If the mouse does _____, what do you think will happen?")
- "Is what is being said true and what does it imply if it is true?"
(To challenge the question is to ask students to further examine if they merely blurted out answers or if they thought through the efficacy of their answers.)
- "Are there any examples to prove what is being said? Can you do so?"
(We do this quite often, using real-life examples that apply to Aesop's fables, but also in journal writing students are allowed to discuss their daily experiences as applicable to the day's lesson.)
- "Are there any counter-examples to disprove what is being said?"
(For some students who enjoy playing the counter example, such as portraying the mouse who actually *attacks the cat*, this is a particularly applicable question. It both validates and "calls out" those children who are misbehaving.)

(Jackson- class observation, 2013)

Appendix D:

Scaffolding format for Proposed Lesson Plan-

(NOTE: This scaffolding is for the purposes of meta-cognition, so the teacher does not make assumptions that the students comprehend what is even occurring at this time. The teacher must take the time *before* the game begins, so that he/she does not have to stop and restart and “re-teach” the game over and over...thereby causing possible frustration for all.)

- The telling of the game-* getting them excited about a new game!
- The rules of the game-* what we can and can NOT do in this game
- Confirming what the game IS, and how it is played-* (It is essential we make sure all students understand *the same thing*...a common mistake with younger learners who are learning how to play in a structured environment.)
- Playing of the game(s)-* often once, twice, or three times, if necessary
- Review of the game-* “How was it? What was easy? Hard? Fun? What did we learn?
What happened when_____?”
- Connection of gam-e* to larger lesson/ curriculum for the day & week
- Moving on to the story/ play of the day-* with new-found knowledge

Appendix E:

E-1: LESSON PLAN FOR K-1ST GRADE

Lesson Plan is for session one of class, with an emphasis on the fundamentals for younger learners.

DATE: Monday, 02/03/14

Teachers: Walt Gaines & Mrs. Patrice Scott

LESSON TITLE: From "Page to Stage"- *Aesop's Fables for Mindful Children*

For this particular lesson, we are using Aesop's Fable, *The Crow and the Pitcher* as the main material to draw all games and focus of the lesson.

Brief Description:

The students will take a journey from being introduced to Aesop's fables to memorizing the text, portraying the characters, switching roles, and performing one fable per class. The students will be able to reflect in writing the days' studies, and their perspectives on the questions of "habits of mind." The particular HOM being exemplified in this lesson is that of *persistence*: teaching the children that you can excel at anything if you continue to persist in the task at hand. As a counter-point, we are also working on the concept that *you can't always get everything you want right away*. This is especially important in this age of instant gratification. Mrs. Scott and I wanted to dispense the message that it is NOT possible to become a concert violinist in one week, or with practice merely once a week, so students should not give up on that instrument or sport or study merely because it is arduous.

The Crow and the Pitcher

“A Crow, half-dead with thirst, came upon a Pitcher, which had once been full of water; but when the Crow put its beak into the mouth of the Pitcher he found that only very little water was left in it, and that he could not reach far enough down to get at it. He tried, and he tried, but at last had to give up in despair. Then a thought came to him, and he took a pebble and dropped it into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped it into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher. At last, at last, he saw the water mount up near him, and after casting in a few more pebbles he was able to quench his thirst and save his life.”

Moral of the Story: *“Little by little does the trick!”*

(AesopFables.com: story #390 in Perry Index)

Materials Used for both sessions:

- Collection of Aesop’s Fables: (NOTE: For the purposes of this lesson, we are beginning with *Teaching with Aesop’s Fables*, by Theda Detlor. This book has components in the “Teaching the tale” portion that are compatible with literacy learning in the follow-up questions/ activities.
- 20 composition notebooks (Each child received their own, signed notebook for daily journal writing.)
- Colored markers and colored pencils (Provided by teacher)
- White board & markers, erasers (Provided by teacher)
- Workbooks for base materials: (other Aesop’s Fables, Improvisation Games for K-3, Creative drama texts, and collections of games from Mrs. Patrice Scott)

Duration:

Each class is divided into 4 time segments, totaling 45 minutes, with varying according to the vagaries of rehearsal. Every class includes check-in, warm-up, reading/ playing rehearsal, and written/ oral reflections. We did not have control over the duration of the class, as was determined by “Me’e” coordinator, Shelly Hecker. We also understood that students are coming from all over the school

campus and coming from or going to other enrichment classes. This affected my decision in the warm-ups and reflection period of the class. Nevertheless, we were not allowed to go over the allotted 45 minutes because students always had other commitments. This made the time management aspect of the lesson crucial to its success.

5 minutes: (Check in and “getting to know you”- name games & passing the ball)

10 minutes: (Warm up drama game- utilizing bodies, voice, and engaging with others in a creative, supportive environment.)

20 minutes: (Reading and rehearsing of scripts. Practice memorization of new words and concepts, with repetition and “presentation” for whole group.)

10 minutes: (Reflections and journal writing/ drawing of lesson-related questions and bridge questions for further exploration and study.)

Space Requirements:

We were allotted a large clear classroom for the students to move about in.

We are not allowed to touch any of the current 3rd grade classes’ materials or desks.

There is a “story time space” in the center, just in front of the whiteboard that we took advantage of for the majority of our The table is placed at the perimeter of the space and is used as a demonstration area. Posters and visual aids will be posted on the classroom wall, and we were allowed to use a section of the whiteboard for all key vocabulary terms and phrases.

E2:

Focus performing arts strategy, elements, skill, or knowledge: Students will...

Know ... how the elements of a story inform the telling of a tale.

Know ... the basic conventions of story theatre, theatre in the round, ensemble theatre, and how to interact with others onstage.

Be Able To ... effectively use voice, body, and imagination to tell an engaging story.

Be Able To ... to demonstrate creative ideas through drama.

Appreciate ... the literature of Aesop and other cultures.

Appreciate ... the dramatic art forms of other physical theatre and ensemble creation.

Big idea, understanding, and/or essential question:

What are the lessons to be learned from Aesop's Fables and traditional Fairy Tales? We took the big idea of "little by little does the trick" to "little by little WE do the trick!" since we wanted the students to internalize how essential it is they work well together in class, in the playground, and in life. How can we apply these fables and parables to the principles of "Habits of Mind" and P4C in our daily lives?

Specifically to *The Crow and the Pitcher* story, my essential question for the student's was "Have you ever problem-solved over and over until you got something right?" and "Can you tell a story or draw a picture about this?"

Enduring Understanding:

Animal stories reflect life-lessons learned as metaphors in our human relations. Children can "step into the skin" of the animal/ queen/ giant, etc...and problem solve via performing the problem. In doing so, they can learn new story concepts, vocabulary, and new syntactical relationships they had not previously experienced. Students will be able to take these philosophical concepts from Aesop's fables and apply them to continuing life lessons at home and in school.

Essential Questions:

- (a) How can we bring life to an *Aesop Fable* or fairy tale? How do we integrate the Hawaii State Standards into creating physical theatre?
- (b) How can we inspire students to reflect, through journal writing, the essential lessons of these tales?
- (c) How can students apply the life lessons (morals) of Aesop's Fables to the children's daily lives?

E3: Hawaii Content and Performance Standards, III

HCPSIII: Fine Arts

Standard 3: Drama and Theatre:

Understand and apply the skills of acting, design, and technical theatre and understand the role of drama in various cultures throughout history.

FA. 6-8. 3.3. Apply basic stage movement.

FA. 6-8. 3.8. Demonstrate various elements that contribute to the overall impact of a theatrical presentation on an audience.

FA. 6-8. 3.10. Compare theatrical styles common to certain historical and cultural periods.

FA 6-8. 3.11. Apply theatrical traditions of various cultures.

FA 9-12 3.2. Use collaboration and revision to develop and produce a play or scene.

FA 9-12 3.3. Analyze the physical, emotional, and social dimension of character in texts and performances.

FA. 9-12. 3.4. Implement artistic choices for informal and formal productions.

HCPSIII: Language Arts

LA. 8. 2.4. Make inferences based on explicit and implied information.

LA. 8. 6.4. Use appropriate attentive, responsive, and reflective listening behaviors according to the situation.

LA. 9. 6.4. Use effective rate, volume, pitch, enunciation, and tone for a given situation (e.g., formal, informal; presentational, interactive) and purpose (e.g., informative, persuasive.)

LA. 10. 6.1., LA. 11. 6.1., LA 12. 6.1. Participate in a small group (e.g., plan sessions, decide on procedures, assign responsibilities, evaluate results.)

LA 11. 6.4. Use verbal and nonverbal delivery skills to adjust speaking for various audiences and to respond to audience feedback.

E4: STANDARDS- General Learner Outcomes (GLO'S):

The over-arching goals of standards-based learning for all students in all grade levels.

These are provided by the State of Hawaii DOE and, at the elementary school level, are judged on a 1-4 scale (4= highest):

- 1) rarely demonstrates
- 2) sometimes demonstrates
- 3) usually demonstrates
- 4) consistently demonstrates

GLO 1: *Self-Directed Learner* – The ability to be responsible for one’s own learning:

- 1.1 – Sets priorities, establishes achievable goals, personal plans for learning
- 1.2 – Plans and manages time and resources to achieve goals
- 1.3 – Monitors progress and evaluates learning experiences

GLO 2: *Community Contributor*-

The understanding that it is essential for human beings to work together:

- 2.1 – Respects people’s feelings, ideas, abilities and cultural diversity
- 2.2 – Cooperates with and helps and encourages others in group situations
- 2.3 – Understands and follows rules of conduct
- 2.4 – Analyzes conflict and applies methods of cooperative resolution
- 2.5 – Demonstrates responsible and ethical behavior in decision making
- 2.6 – Reasonably implements a solution

GLO 3: *Complex Thinker* –

The ability to perform complex thinking and problem solving:

- 3.1 – Applies prior learning experiences to new situations
- 3.2 – Considers multiple perspectives in analyzing and solving a variety of problems
- 3.3 – Generates new and creative ideas and approaches to developing Solutions
- 3.4 – Evaluates the effectiveness and ethical considerations to a solution and adjustments as needed

GLO 4: *Quality Producer* –

The ability to recognize and produce quality performance and quality products:

- 4.1 – Recognizes and understands what quality performances products are
- 4.2 – Understands and sets criteria to meet or exceed Hawaii Content and Performance Standards

4.3 – Produces evidence that meets or exceeds Hawaii Content and Performance Standards

GLO 5: *Effective Communicator* – The ability to communicate effectively:

5.1 – Listens to, interprets, and uses information effectively

5.2 – Communicates effectively and clearly through speaking, using appropriate forms, conventions, and styles to convey ideas and information for a variety of audiences and purposes

5.3 – Reads with understanding various types of written materials and literature and uses information for various purposes

5.4 – Communicates effectively and clearly through writing, using appropriate forms, conventions, and styles to convey ideas and information

5.5 – Observes and makes sense of visual information

GLO 6: *Effective and Ethical User of Technology* - The ability to use a variety of technologies effectively and usefully:

6.1 – Uses a variety of technologies in producing an idea or a product

6.2 – Uses a variety of technologies to access and manage information and to generate new information

6.3 – Understands the impact of technologies on individuals, family, society, and the environment

6.4 – Uses the appropriate technologies for communication, collaboration, research, creativity, and problem solving

6.5 – Understands and respects the legal and ethical issues

(www.k12.hi.ed.us- GLO's PDF)

NOTE: This particular project does not, nor is it intended to, satisfy the requirements of GLO #6 (Technology), but I include it as a means to show that, in the larger context of a classroom setting, there are many websites dedicated to the connection of studying Aesop's Fables and the literary components of these and other tales *via technology*. That is merely beyond the scope of this internship.

E5: Student Learning Objectives- (SLO'S):

State of Hawaii- Department of Education

LEARNING GOAL:

BIG IDEA:

STANDARDS/ BENCHMARKS:

RATIONALE:

ASSESSMENTS/ SCORING/ CRITERIA:

(Template provided by Hawaii Educator Effectiveness System for Teachers website:
www.eesteacher.weebly.com)

E6: Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels:

(Based on Norman L. Webb’s 2002 model for applying knowledge in 4 levels, in contrast with Benjamin Bloom’s 1956 Taxonomy, later revised in the 1990’s).

- 1) Recall and Reproduction**
- 2) Skills and Concepts**
- 3) Strategic Thinking**
- 4) Extended Thinking**

ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR
<p>Recall elements and details of story structure, such as sequence of events, character, plot and setting.</p> <p>Conduct basic mathematical calculations.</p> <p>Label locations on a map.</p> <p>Represent in words or diagrams a scientific concept or relationship.</p> <p>Perform routine procedures like measuring length or using punctuation marks correctly.</p> <p>Describe the features of a place or people.</p>	<p>Identify and summarize the major events in a narrative.</p> <p>Use context cues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words.</p> <p>Solve routine multiple-step problems.</p> <p>Describe the cause/effect of a particular event.</p> <p>Identify patterns in events or behavior.</p> <p>Formulate a routine problem given data and conditions.</p> <p>Organize, represent and interpret data.</p>	<p>Support ideas with details and examples.</p> <p>Use voice appropriate to the purpose and audience.</p> <p>Identify research questions and design investigations for a scientific problem.</p> <p>Develop a scientific model for a complex situation.</p> <p>Determine the author’s purpose and describe how it affects the interpretation of a reading selection.</p> <p>Apply a concept in other contexts.</p>	<p>Conduct a project that requires specifying a problem, designing and conducting an experiment, analyzing its data, and reporting results/ solutions.</p> <p>Apply mathematical model to illuminate a problem or situation.</p> <p>Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources.</p> <p>Describe and illustrate how common themes are found across texts from different cultures.</p> <p>Design a mathematical model to inform and solve a practical or abstract situation.</p>

E7: Enduring Understanding: Stories teach us how to act. They teach us morals.

Essential Question: How can we bring life to this parable, to this story?

Note: “Today, we will be working on the basic performance conventions of *physical theatre & ensemble* and use the Drama V.I.B.E.S²⁵ Tools of Expression to improve our storytelling abilities and performance skills. Today, we will learn how to perform some of Aesop’s Fables.”

²⁵ V.I.B.E.S. represents the essential components students are expected to synthesize while creating ensemble theatre together: Voice, Imagination, Body, Ensemble, Story. These components are all spokes, centering the “wheel” which is the performance.

Appendix F:

F1: Main Lesson: (45 minutes)

“Snapshot” activity:

Ask the students to find an individual space in the room and create a frozen picture in response to the following prompts: A day at the beach, eating noodles with chopsticks, and a ninja. Ask the students to revise their snapshot of a ninja.

Focus: Body Traits Self Reflection: “How can you use various parts of your body to demonstrate how you imagine this character?”

Tableaux activity:

Ask the students to break up into groups of four and create a tableau in response to the following prompt: Godzilla attacking Tokyo Japan. Ask the groups to revise their tableaux.

Focus: Body Traits/Ensemble Group Reflection: “What was effective? What could be improved? How can you use size, levels, and depth to portray specific characters and their relationships to each other?”

Presentation: Ask the groups to share their tableaux and respond to each other’s work. Respond: “What was engaging about the other groups? What did they do with their bodies that captured your attention? How did they make their scene come to life?”

Journey:

Ask the students to find an individual space in the room. – “Fire and Ice” activity: Ask your students to walk neutrally about the room. Accompany their actions by clapping your hands at a steady pace. Narrate how the ground is getting hotter and hotter; note that the floor is covered with red-hot coals. Clap your hands at an increased pace. Allow the students time to physically react to the situation. Describe how the floor changes according to the temperature.

“Can you move quicker? Slower?”

Is getting colder and colder. Explain to your students that they are caught in the middle of a blizzard. Clap your hands at a decreased pace.

“How do the conditions affect your movement and eyesight? Can you see your friend across the heavy snow?”

– “Young and Old” activity:

Ask your students to walk neutrally about the room. Clap your hands at a steady pace. Explain that they are feeling bright, young, and bubbly. Note that they are four years old again. Clap your hands at an increased pace. Explain to your students that they are feeling old, worn down, and that they are a hundred years old. Clap your hands at a decreased pace. Ask your students to walk neutrally about the room. Clap your hands at a steady pace.

Focus: Body Traits/Story Traits Pair Reflection:

“What is the pace of a younger person versus an elderly person?”

“How did you effectively portray the settings and characters with your body?”

How did your body change when the setting and characters changed?”

Journey:

Ask your students to place the mats on the floor facing the demonstration area. From the demonstration platform, instruct your students how to properly “sit,”

“stand,” and “walk” as various animals in Aesop’s fables.

Prompt Questions:

Focus: Body Traits/Story Traits Pair Reflection:

“How did the intent of your character affect the way you held and moved your body?

How did your body change when your intentions changed?”

“How does (name of animal) walk, run, eat, attack, do tricks, interact with other animals?

“What qualities does this animal possess? How is this animal different from other animals in the fable?

“What is a habit of mind this animal might or might not possess? What lesson did this animal learn or teach in the fable?”

Follow up Questions (for journal entries):

(Each journal question is specific to the particular fable the students have read and performed. So each question considers various “mindful behaviors” to be reviewed and examined.)

“Write about a time when you have been challenged by someone to do something.”

“If you were an animal, which animal would you be and WHY? What quality do you have that would make you that animal?”

“Which animal would you NOT be, and why? What quality does that animal have that you don’t like?”

Vocabulary: (Core terms necessary for Enduring Understanding)

Aesop: Who was he? Why are his stories famous?

Story Theatre, Reader’s Theatre

Fables, Fairy Tales, Morals

Stage versus audience

Character versus “Character” (Extensive discussion is given here on the mindful development of one’s character in life...and how we can develop a “good” versus “bad” character.)

Remind **Enduring Understanding** Fables were written to teach life lessons.

Essential Question How can we bring life to a story?

Imaginary Objects:

Ask your students to stand in a circle. Ask the students to pass an imaginary ball around the circle. The ball can be big, small, heavy, light, slippery, or sticky.

Encourage the students to find a variety of ways to physically express the different qualities.

Focus: Imagination/Body Traits Self Reflection: “How can we use the knowledge we have gained from the previous activities to accomplish this task? How can we imaginatively shape and move our bodies to make the ball seem real?”

Magical Objects: (Teaching children the importance of the prop)

Focus: Imagination/Body Traits Respond: “Who in the circle made their object seem real? How did they use their body and face to make the object come to life? Who took creative risks and made innovative choices?”

Vocabulary:

Selected vocabulary from Aesop’s Fable, *The Crow and the Pitcher*: sweltering, parched, pitcher, thrust, level continued, risen, content

(NOTE: The students are not being required to spell or even have instant recall on all new terms. They are merely being exposed to it, several times over the next few weeks. The goal is NOT to have them feel as if they are taking a vocabulary or spelling test each session! This is their paid volunteer after-school program, after all, and the parents want to get their monies' worth while still having students enjoying it and coming back for more fun!)

Tongue Twisters: Teaching children the importance of the “theatre voice”

Inform you students that in order to be understood on stage you must project you voice and enunciate words clearly. Lead the class through a round of tongue twisters in a “repeat after me” fashion. Ask your students to hit their plosive sounds: t,d,k,g,p,b.

“A big blue bug, bit a big black bear, made the big black bear, bleed blue blood.”

“She sells seashells down by the seashore.”

“You will not need a night light, on a light night, like tonight.”

“A proper cup of coffee, in a copper coffee pot.”

Focus: Vocal Traits Self Reflection: “Other than volume, how can you use your voice to capture an audiences' attention?”

“I’m Not Who You Think I Am” activity:

Ask your students to sit in a circle. Have them discuss with a partner how they could disguise the sound of their voice. Ask you students to practice saying the line, “I’m not who you think I am,” using different voices. Choose a guesser, the guesser has to go to the opposite side of the room and close his or her eyes. Choose one student in the circle to disguise their voice and say, “I’m not who you think I am.” Inform the guesser that he or she may open their eyes. The guesser then has three chances to figure out who disguised his or her voice.

Focus: Vocal Traits Pair Reflection: “How can you change your voice to disguise it? How might the ability to change one's voice be useful in storytelling?”

Perspective:

Focus: Oral/Concentration

Recite the script again, asking the students to change the quality of their voice to depict different characters. For example, if, in the first round, student A was the Mouse and student B was the Lion, student A is now the Lion and student B is now the Mouse. If there is adequate time, students are allowed to rotate while concentrating on different vocal qualities, physical qualities, and emotional qualities. The teacher records how and what students gravitate towards which roles, and allows for each student to be afforded the opportunity to “expand” their range and move out of their comfort zone.

Focus: Vocal Traits/Story Traits/ Self Reflection:

Given the nature of the small casts for Aesop’s fables, students are allowed to rotate in various roles from one animal to another, as well as performing inanimate objects. Leftover students can also act as “audience,” and develop their critical eye in observance of varied productions. This further solidifies the bond as an ensemble and interchangeability of roles/ actors. Students are asked between each showing to reflect on what they did, what they saw, and what they might change the next “performance.”

The following questions might be asked:

“How can you use the skills we learned from previous activities to help you with this exercise?”

“How does the age and intent of the characters change the quality of your voice?”

“What does a narrator need to do vocally that an animal or object might not? What kind of focus do you need as a narrator? What kind of focus do you need to play a tree all alone or a big pitcher of water with a partner?”

“What are the main ideas of the story? What parts do we absolutely need to have in the story for it to make sense?”

Presentation:

Part three- Closure: (10 minutes) Ask your students to break up into groups of four and discuss the following prompt.

Self Reflection: “What did you do well today? What could you improve on? How did you use your voice and body to bring your work to life? What were some of the creative risks and imaginative choices you made today?”

Group Reflection: “Why might it be important to study the literature and art forms of other cultures?”