

DETOURIST LESSON PLAN

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OVERVIEW:

Balancing school, work and play can be a breeding ground for stress – a turning point in our lives where we're independent, perhaps for the first time. Doors become open to us that we never even knew existed. We realize we have the power to make choices, which can be equal parts empowering and frightening.

The journey to adulthood is filled with detours. A detour doesn't have to be a life-altering event. It can be as simple as an idea going in a different direction than you anticipated. Living life as “Detourists” enables students to become empowered by surprises, and excited for unexpected events, allowing them to thrive in any sort of uncertainty. Through viewing any curve in the road as a detour, students are empowered to make decisions and navigate where there might not be a clear map.

A detour is many things – unexpected, a nuisance, difficult, frustrating, – but it can be beautiful. By sharing our stories through theatre, we rewrite our own narratives, rediscover our true identities, foster compassionate communities, and become travel partners on these journeys. Through this, we gain adaptability and create a positive, empowered attitude toward obstacles, physical or mental struggles, hardships, and trauma.

DESCRIPTION:

This in-school workshop uses theatre, art and movement where students learn how to navigate their own detours in life by transforming obstacles into opportunities through creative expression. Students will become empowered by their story with the transformative power of the arts. Utilizing theatre games, students will explore the structure and elements of storytelling. Through singing, dancing, and acting students learn about the theatre, the world and themselves, as a means of personal expression and connection to the world around them.

At a critical and transitional time in life, using the metaphor of a detour, students work together to cultivate resilience, they will learn artistic flow, become empowered to use art to navigate through life's detours, to tell a story that is uniquely them. In this creative flow, students will express their internal lives, while engaging with others. Improvisation is an essential resiliency tool fueling children with the confidence to make choices and take risks. Workshops will embrace mistakes and detours that all people come across in their work and in life, exposing them to a range of techniques, and learning innovative strategies for conquering them.

Students will use expressive writing to reflect on their values, construct a compelling narrative, and reframe events in their lives as enticing prose to empower individuals and create empathy and understanding with their peers. After creating their own detour maps, students will learn how to write their narratives to make sense of various pathways in their lives and gain authorship over their journeys thus far. Students will be introduced to Joseph Campbell's archetypal hero's journey in literary works and stories, participate in expressive writing exercises, create skits and dialogue as a group to express their detours and drive an entire classroom ethos toward inclusion and compassion.

Through these exercises, students will learn to identify the steps they are taking in their own heroic journey. These expressive exercises utilizing creativity, writing, and theatre games allows them to frame events in their own lives as detours, and these pathways in their lives.

By the end of the session(s), students will have created a narrative piece, participated in improvisational acting exercises and created a group theatre piece, learning how to make important decision-making skills in the process.

Outline:

Opening:

- What is a detour?
- Students discuss first thing that comes to mind
- Guided discussion (travel detours & life detours) when did life not go as planned?
- What feelings did that evoke?

Writing Exercise: Find the detour, find the flower

Detour Art Brainstorming

- Cut out images from magazines and other source materials that remind them of detours in their own lives
- Art Map Exercise: Draw your Detour (15 min)
- Create the Flower from your detour

Theatre Games:

- Walk the detour (one volunteer) with group following (creates empathy)
- Group Exercise: Act out detour skits in groups of 5

Create Group Theatre Devised Piece Based on Detour

Strategy:

- Discuss what are different ways to navigate a literal detour? (Driving, traveling etc.)
- What are different ways to navigate a “Detourist” detour? (problem solving)

Closure exercise, Connect, Respond

- What have your detours taught you about who you are today?
- How have the unexpected events in your life made you who you are?
- What strengths helped you to get through your difficult times?

Learning Targets:

#10 - I CAN connect an event in my own life to the metaphor of a “detour”

#1 - I can integrate the idea of “detours” and life events into a dramatic piece

#8 - I can use a theatrical device of a “detour” to convey an idea and problem solve in a situation

#7 – I can identify the theatrical devices and narrative techniques used to express a “detour”

#6 – I can identify character objectives in a theatrical piece I have created.

Arts Standards:

Grade 7: Theatre: Connecting: Anchor Standard #10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.: a. Incorporate multiple perspectives and diverse community ideas in a drama/theatre work. **Grade 7: Theatre: Creating: Anchor Standard 1: Generate and**

conceptualize artistic ideas and work: a. Investigate multiple perspectives and solutions to staging challenges in a drama/theatre work.

Grade 7: Theatre: Responding: Anchor Standard #8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work: a. Identify the artistic choices made based on personal experience in a drama/theatre work.

Grade 7: Theatre: Presenting: Anchor Standard #6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work: b. Use various character objectives in a drama/theatre work.

Curriculum Standards (English, Math, Science, Social Studies):

English

Grade 7: Writing Standards: Text Types and Purposes #3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Social Studies

Grade 7: Geography: Geographic Representations: Spatial View of the World: 6–7.3 Explain how cultural patterns and economic decisions influence environments and the daily lives of people.