After | CIRCUS OZ

Performance Reflection
Classroom Workshop Extension: Constructing Ensemble
Classroom Connections: What Goes Up...
Creativity Page: My Critic’s Notebook

What is “After” CIRCUS OZ?

After provides teachers engaging, ready-to-implement classroom activities that offer the opportunity to reflect on and extend the experience of attending the performance. Actively reflect on the performance, make connections to your curriculum, and follow up on the New Victory classroom workshop, using this tool to increase the impact of the theater-going experience. This section also includes Creativity Pages that provide students the opportunity to individually reflect on and develop an aesthetic response to the show content.

Making Connections to Learning Standards

New Victory School Tool Resource Guides align with the Common Core State Standards, New York State Learning Standards and New York City Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts. We believe that these standards support both the high quality instruction and deep engagement that The New Victory Theater strives to achieve in its arts education practice.

COMMON CORE
Speaking and Listening: Standard 1

NEW YORK STATE STANDARDS
The Arts: Standard 1; Standard 4
English Language Arts:
Standard 1; Standard 4
Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education: Standard 1; Standard 4

BLUEPRINT FOR THE ARTS
Theater: Theater Making; Making Connections
Following your trip to The New Victory, you may find that your students want to discuss the performance and their own opinions. Reflecting on the show and voicing an aesthetic response is an important part of the theater-going experience. Allowing your students the opportunity to articulate their own thoughts and hear the ideas of their classmates will increase the impact of the theater experience.

1. Provide students (either as one large group or in small groups) with a large piece of paper. Draw an image of the New Victory stage on it (i.e. curtains and an empty stage).

2. On the stage, ask students to write or draw words/images they remember from the performance they saw. On the curtains, ask the students to write feelings/opinions they had about seeing the performance.

3. Once the students have offered their reflections on the paper, display the various pages around the room, and ask the students to take a “gallery walk” to look at all of the responses.

4. As a full class, reflect on their responses.

### Performance Reflection

**TEACHER TIP**

Engaging in dialogue, asking questions and recalling observations are skills that we believe should be fostered and encouraged. When leading a performance reflection discussion, try the following model of critical response:

1. **Describe** (I saw...)
2. **Analyze** (I wonder...)
3. **Interpret** (I think/feel...)
4. **Evaluate** (I believe...)

### My Critic’s Notebook

Have your students become theater experts and critics while understanding what kind of impact the show had on them. Use the template provided after each live performance you see at the New Vic as a class to provide students with an alternative means of reflecting on a show. Allow each student to create a scrapbook documenting their experience going to the theater. Include the New Vic Bill they received after the show and any pictures you took at the theater or on the way! Encourage them to decorate their scrapbook and incorporate any of the New Victory School Tool Creativity Pages you completed as part of the experience. At the end of the year, compile all of these reflections to create individual Critic’s Notebooks.
If I was writing a newspaper article about this show, the headline would read:

A question I have about this show is:

The part of the show that grabbed my attention the most was:

The show made me think about:

Before seeing the show, I didn’t know that:

Overall, the show made me feel:

While watching the show, the strongest feeling I had was:

One thing I saw on The New Victory stage during this show that I’ve never seen before was:

After seeing the show, my friends and I talked about:

If I was the director, one change I would make to the show would be:
The following activity will allow you to build on the physical skills and ensemble work explored in the New Victory Pre-Show Workshop* for CIRCUS OZ, and create a Circus “Mob” (CIRCUS OZ’s term for their ensemble) in your own classroom.

In the CIRCUS OZ Pre-Show Workshop, your students worked together on some of the skills that go into creating a successful ensemble. Use the following activities to continue building ensemble-based skills while having fun!

**ENSEMBLE ACTIVITY #1: GROUP COUNTING**

Have your students stand in a circle. Begin by having them breathe together (in for four counts and out for four counts) several times. Then, explain that as a group, students will attempt to count as high as possible starting with the number one, following these rules:

- Students will have their eyes closed.
- Only one person can say a number at a time.
- If there is overlap, the group must start again at “1.”
- Remind students that they must work as an ensemble and feel the energy of the group to know when and who will be saying the next number.

Try this a few times and count as high as possible. If the same students continue to call out numbers, only allow each student to count once per round.

**ENSEMBLE ACTIVITY #2: BACK-TO-BACK**

This game is a weight sharing exercise, and it requires the skills of two people. Ask students to pair up and sit back-to-back on the floor with their knees tucked into their chests and their feet flat on the ground. Without using their arms, have them try to use the resistance between them to stand up at the same time and then sit back down again.

**ENSEMBLE ACTIVITY #3: LAP GAME**

Form a circle with your students, having each face the back of the student in front of him/her (the circle should be very tight). On the count of three, students will sit down slowly as if they were about to sit on a chair. Students should end up sitting on the lap of the student behind them. If they have done this successfully, have them hold it for a few seconds and then slowly stand up. The goal is to get through this activity as an ensemble, without falling. Wonder why it’s so difficult to hold this position for a long time? It’s gravity pushing you down towards the earth.

*Did you book an in-classroom workshop led by New Victory Teaching Artists? This is a FREE and highly recommended component of your partnership with the New Victory. For more information, please contact the Education Department at Education@NewVictory.org.)*

**REFLECTION**

How did you work together in these activities?

What was the biggest challenge in achieving the goal of each activity?

What strategies did you use to be successful?

How do you think the skills explored in these activities relate to CIRCUS OZ?
In CIRCUS OZ, the brave performers defy gravity and fly through the air above the crowd below. Use this activity to experiment with the science of gravity and think about how CIRCUS OZ uses the basic principles of gravity in their high-flying tricks!

Explain to your class that gravity is the reason objects that go up must come down. The effects of gravity are particularly present when a performer is flying through the air or juggling objects.

For this particular activity you will need the following materials for one group of 3 students:

- 2 Books (of equal weight)
- 1 Eraser
- 1 Feather
- 1 Chair
- Newspaper

1. Introduce Sir Isaac Newton’s simple formula: \( F = m \cdot g \), where
   - \( F \) is the force of gravity on an object
   - \( m \) is the mass of the falling object
   - \( g \) is the acceleration due to gravity on earth. This is a constant of 32 ft/s² (feet per second squared). Since \( g \) is a constant, it means that all objects fall to the earth at the same rate of acceleration, no matter how much they weigh.

2. Separate your students into groups of 2 or 3. Have them place newspapers on the floor around the chair. One student stands on the chair while the partner(s) sit on the floor closely watching the newspaper. The student on the chair must hold the two books, one in each hand, directly in front of him/her so that they are the same height. The books are to be released at the same time.

3. Ask your students: Did the books touch the newspaper at the same time? If you were to drop two items of different weights at the same time, what would happen?

4. Try this activity again, but replace one of the books with an eraser. Hold these in the same manner and drop them at the same time.

5. Try this experiment now with the feather and the book.

6. Ask your students: What happened with the book and the eraser? What about with the feather and the eraser? Why?

**REFLECTION**

What does this experiment tell you about the acts in CIRCUS OZ?

How do you think gravity plays a role in the tricks performed in CIRCUS OZ?

**EXTENSION ACTIVITY**

**TRUST FALL**

Now that you have experimented with gravity and small objects, try this fun exercise that allows students to explore gravity in their bodies through trust falls.

Have students choose a different partner and decide on a Person A and a Person B. Person A will be the catcher and Person B will be the faller. Person A should stand about 6 inches behind Person B with one foot forward and one foot back, knees bent, chest forward, arms slightly bent up and palms forward facing Person B’s back. Person B should cross his/her arms across his/her chest (vampire style) and keep his/her body straight and locked. Person B should say, “Hup!”, so that Person A can communicate readiness by saying “I’ve got your back! Hup!” On a one, two, three count, Person B should fall back into Person A’s arms. To challenge your students, Person A can move further away from Person B (while still keeping safety in mind!). Have pairs switch places after they’ve successfully fallen and been caught. You may also consider adding a third person (to create trios) who can act as a spotter, keeping the faller safe.