

TRANSFORM

Shakespeare Initiative at Stanford



A Program Guide

TRANSFORM

**Teaching and Representing
A New
Shakespeare FORM**

**Performing Arts workshops
and opportunities for
school classrooms**



Our Organization

Our mission is to increase engagement in learning experiences; to heighten appreciation for dramatic art and expression; and to find a clear voice through an interactive theatrical experience

We are a diverse, multi-faceted group of Stanford students interested in bringing the excitement we feel for learning and theater into the community. Our members come from all different backgrounds, but are united in our enthusiasm for Shakespeare.

Each of us has taken a Stanford course on Shakespeare theory and academics, as well as a preparation course specifically designed to equip us in our workshops. This preparation course is designed to channel our individual talents and knowledge - for example, experience in theater, acting, English, or teaching - into one cohesive workshop. Our training included a community awareness component, a presentation component, a teaching component, and a theatrical performance component as well as workshop development.

We bring our youth, talent, and enthusiasm into the classroom, and

we use the complex stories of Shakespeare to create a dialogue with other students close to our age group. We do not, however, pretend that we know everything, for we are students ourselves; our goal is to inspire in our workshop participants a thirst for more learning, as well as the lesser goal of slipping some actual knowledge into the excitement.



Nature of the Program

TRANSFORM offers an interactive, dynamic and free Shakespeare workshop for secondary school classrooms. The workshops are performance based and are designed to either supplement or accommodate your programs curriculum. The workshop is comprised of three, two-hour long sessions intended to run over three weeks during the Spring. This timeframe can be adjusted for your classrooms convenience.



A multi-faceted experience that builds on other programs

Our workshops are the result of research into many Shakespeare drama education and outreach programs, as well as the collaborative efforts of the presenters. Pooling our own knowledge as well as drawing from other programs, we have compiled a diverse but refined list of exercises and activities.

The workshop originates in the community

Based on a series of teacher interviews, the program strives to give participants what they

need - as defined by their teachers, the people who know them best. We aim to supplement and assist the schools in the most beneficial ways possible, and thus the teachers themselves dictate the shape of the workshop.

We customize our workshop to teachers

As part of our philosophy, we will work closely with you, the teacher, to custom-fit our workshop to any focus you might particularly wish to emphasize. We can allot more time to language, performance, characters - or even subjects less closely associated with Shakespeare, such as college or student relations.

We emphasize relationships and avoid competitive language and exercises

Because we focus on building bonds and finding humanity in other people, we foster a supportive environment where students applaud each other's accomplishments rather than competing with one another.

We listen to each other and to the students

In this manner, we create a place where student voices are empowered, heard, and considered, as well as challenged with the difficult questions posed by the Shakespearean texts. Furthermore, students take ownership of the stories by expressing Shakespeare's words in their own ways. Our creative curriculum and exercises in theatrical performance give students tools for shaping this experience into an event unique to themselves.



Workshop Curriculum

The TRANSFORM workshop is the product of a Stanford University Student Initiated Course. All services are free of charge to the participant schools. The workshop is comprised of three sessions, each lasting two hours. Because of the nature of the program, the TRANSFORM workshop can only take place between March 29 and June 2, with some elasticity in dates and times. Each class builds upon the preceding one, and the workshop culminates in a theatrical performance presented by the students. The progression of the workshop is as follows:



Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
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Abridged performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream by troupe members

This 45 minute performance highlights the ways in which Shakespeare's stories can translate across cultures, and also how they still reverberate in the modern world. We use elements of hip hop, spoken word, and occasional paraphrase into contemporary slang to reach this aim. In addition, this performance contains elements of traditional theater, such as sound effects and music.

Follow-up conversation between students and characters with troupe members in their fictional personas.

Shakespeare Reinvented Conversation breaking down negative preconceptions of Shakespeare; showing modern applications of his works.

Ice breakers Games to reduce anxiety and start forming connections with peers.

Physical warm-ups Introduced as a fundamental part of the theater experience.

Voice as Power The importance of voice as an effective mode of expression, with an emphasis on encouraging public speaking and empowering thought and voice.

Iambic Pentameter Looking at and listening to iambic pentameter, explained creatively and physically.

Elements of understanding Close work with Shakespearean words and language; examination of characterization and forms.

Elements of performance Students will begin to explore performance possibilities, looking at what can be done in terms of movement, sound, and all forms of expression. Specialized troupe members will demonstrate ways of incorporating various art forms in Shakespeare performance, including dance, rap, spoken word, drumming, miming, and others.

Scene translation Divided into smaller groups, students will explore a basic but high action scene of Romeo and Juliet by creating a performance of it. Students can set the scene wherever their imagination takes them, and they can repeat lines until everyone has a speaking part, but are not allowed to cut or change anything. The multitudinous possibilities for the scene forces students to analyze the words very closely, bringing them into the text in a constructive, personal manner.

Rehearsal Students will "block" their movements, practice line delivery, and work on any other forms of expression to be used in their scene performance.

Performance Students will perform their scenes in sequence, with a troupe member connecting storyline gaps. Together, the performances of the students and the assistance of the troupe storyteller create a condensed version of Romeo and Juliet.

Wrap-up discussion



Program Values & Philosophy

Contact Information

Why the arts?

Creativity: Arts learning is inseparable from the creative experience.

Personal development: Through the arts, a student questions humanity and purpose.

Success: The Youth Arts Development Project found that arts programs decrease involvement in delinquent behavior, increase academic achievement and improve youth's attitudes about themselves and their future.

Confidence: The art of performance fosters a sense of accomplishment and a feeling of pride, both of which motivate students to work hard and achieve further success.

Why Shakespeare?

Teenage relevance: Contrary to many preconceived notions, the concerns in Shakespeare's works, such as problems with parents, the nature of young love, rivalry, and gender issues, are all pertinent to today's teens.

!! *TRANSFORM is about identity; it uses the performing arts to help students display who they are to themselves and to the rest of the world.* !!

Why theater?

Academics: Lessons learned in the theater complement those learned in the classroom. The theatrical experience serves traditional academia by enhancing reading, writing, text interpretation, and critical thinking skills.

Cooperation: As students work together in groups, they practice communication and collaboration skills, important throughout life as well as in school.

Literary fluency: As one of literature's most prominent writers, Shakespeare is frequently referenced and quoted by other authors. A working knowledge of Shakespeare allows students to recognize and make sense of these references.

Empowerment: Shakespeare's plays are extremely difficult, but successful understanding brings empowerment as students see that the it is within their reach.



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