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No matter what people say, teaching is all about putting together a production. The roles of a teacher are numerous and require a number of skills in order to ‘pull off’ a great performance. I don’t believe that teaching is necessarily ‘acting’ but a teacher does need to fulfill various types of roles. These roles include those of a director, stage manager, supporting cast member and critic.

Sometimes teaching is like being the director. While I was student teaching I was required to plan and teach a unit on *The Odyssey*. The planning began by asking questions: *how long will we work on this piece of literature?*, *what overall message do I want students to get from the work?*, and *what is the desired outcome?* All of these questions are much like the questions a director must ask before staging a play, since one must be just as concerned about the end result as one is about how it’s going to be accomplished. Teachers, as well as directors, must also decide what roles fit people the best. I had to take into consideration what types of students I had so I could create my lessons according to their needs. For instance, some students are very artistic and need a creative outlet, so students in my class were given the opportunity to draw/sketch their answers to a quiz dealing with an episode of the Cyclops. Teachers also ‘direct’ by facilitating group work and encouraging students to go outside of their comfort zone in order to stretch their imaginations.

Sometimes teaching is like being the stage manager. I put in a lot of behind-the-scenes work getting ready for each lesson. I collected materials, organized resources, and made sure that students were on track and prepared for what was coming next. During my experience in the classroom I used technology on a regular basis. Teaching with

technology is a great addition to the classroom and I love using it as a supplement.

Technology, however, comes with its pitfalls. Prior to teaching the lesson I would always make sure everything was working correctly – making sure the video played properly, the website still existed, and the audio was loud enough for all to hear. Unfortunately, technology can fail, and as a teacher I had to learn how to not only troubleshoot but also how to adjust if my lesson fell apart before my eyes! Teachers and stage managers alike can be the voice in ones ear: keeping students on task, making sure they are where they are supposed to be, and reminding them to continue working up to their potential.

Sometimes teaching is like being a supporting cast member. If I learned anything from teaching it is that I wasn't always the 'star' of the classroom – I was the person who guided learning, helped students succeed, and watched out for their wellbeing. Making sure that I had lessons that encouraged students to think about topics in a new way became very important to me. For example, we had many discussions that revolved around race, class, and culture, and I wanted to make sure that I was helping them see all the sides of an issue rather than telling them how to think. Therefore, my task became one of guiding their thought processes and helping them learn to respect others' opinions. Teaching also means supporting students in their interests – whether it be attending the school play, listening to Speech practice, or cheering them on in athletics from the sidelines. Knowing what students were interested in helped me gain their trust as well as helped me find out what made them 'tick.'

Sometimes teaching is like being a critic. Just as a play critic reviews the production for the scenes that are working and the scenes that still need work, teachers must constantly re-evaluate their work in the classroom. Teachers can fall into a routine

that is comfortable to them, but it may not always be the best for the students. By looking back over my work and finding out what worked and what didn't I was able to re-vamp my lessons for use at a later date. It also became important information to keep in mind as I created subsequent lessons. In addition, looking over the 'reflection' portion of my lesson plans has helped me also reflect on how I've grown as an educator. In early entries I talked about being nervous and worried if things would go smoothly, but by the end I was concerned with student learning, how to deal with parents, and how to help my students meet their potential. By critiquing my own work I can only continue to learn, grow and evolve.

At the end of a really great performance there may be flowers, handshakes, and recognition, but the excitement can wear off or people forget. The same type of thing can happen when teaching – and keeping the excitement up and the energy flowing is one of the hardest things to do. As an educator I have to make a conscience effort to consistently 'mix it up,' not only for the benefit of myself but also for my students. While student teaching I realized how easy it is to fall into the 'read and discuss, read and discuss' mode and never try anything new. It took some extra effort and a few lessons of trial and error, but I learned that whenever I was excited about new ideas and concepts, the students were more receptive. Maybe there aren't always accolades, but teaching can be full of intrinsic rewards.

My philosophy on education is one that is unique to only me. Through my classroom experiences as a student, as a student teacher, and as soon-to-be teacher I have only begun to discover what I believe in, what I want to practice, and what I want to

achieve. Teaching is full of ups and downs, mistakes and missteps, but for the most part it's full of opportunities for students and teachers to take a leading role.