

**Project Title:** Theatre of the Oppressed Performance for Distinguished Majors Thesis

The main purpose of my mini grant application was to request funding to support my distinguished majors thesis. That thesis project has evolved significantly since the time I submitted my proposal. My initial intent was to create a performance in the style of Theatre of the Oppressed with a group of High School Students in the Charlottesville area. After reaching out to many different high schools, only Monticello High School was interested and had a schedule that aligned with mine. My goal then became to conduct a series of workshops that would enable the students at Monticello to create short scenes within their classes that could be combined to create a larger performance. After conducting an initial workshop to introduce the students to the methodology of Theatre of the Oppressed, I was informed that the school no longer had the time for me to return. This was an extremely frustrating setback that I have taken as a learning experience. I now view my work at Monticello as additional practice honing my workshop facilitation skills. The workshop sessions at Monticello involved both a shorter time frame than I had been used to working with, as well as a larger number of students. I believe the skills I gained through working with Monticello benefitted me when I was forced to reconceive of my project.

I now am investigating the ways in which Theatre of the Oppressed can benefit student leaders at UVA by hosting a workshop entitled Creative Tools for Community Conversations. The workshop will take place on March 3<sup>rd</sup> from 10am-2pm in the Culbreth Drama Building room 115C. Students interested in social justice issues on grounds are invited to investigate the ways in which community organizing requires creativity, especially when conflict arises. We will engage in a series of Theatre of the Oppressed games created by Brazilian Theatre practitioner, Augusto Boal, and debrief how aspects of each exercise relate to the challenges and

possibilities of advocacy work on grounds. Workshop participants will come away with a repertoire of exercises for discussing issues of social justice and oppression. The goal of the workshop is both to give student advocacy group leaders new tools to utilize in their work, as well as to provide a space for students engaged in activism at UVA to network and create together. I will use the discussions that take place at the workshop as the foundation for my written thesis, to be completed by April 15<sup>th</sup>.

Miller Arts Scholars funding has been used to support the publicity efforts for this new workshop. I have found the Paperless Post platform an effective means of sending out more personalized invitations. Additionally, funding will be used to feed workshop participants as well as to provide them with written materials necessary for the workshop. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen setbacks and delays in the completion of this project a completed expense report cannot be submitted at this time. However, following the completion of the workshop this outcome report will be updated and an expense report will be provided. Attached is a sample lesson plan including the types of exercises that will be utilized for the Creative Tools for Community Conversations Workshop.

### **Sample Lesson Plan**

#### **Opposite of Jackson (de-mechanization)**

Students move freely around the space. The leader gives commands such as “stop”, and “walk” and the students move on “walk” and stop on “stop.” Then the meanings switch and “stop” means “walk” and “walk” means “stop.” The same goes for the next set of commands (jump/clap) and (arms/knees) where knees initially means students put their hands on their knees and arms means they put their arms in the air.

**Hand to Hand** (trust exercise and movement de-mechanization)

Students walk freely around the space. The leader calls out certain body parts ie: hand to hand, foot to knee, elbow to shin, etc. and everyone must find a partner with whom to connect body parts.

**Two by Three by Bradford** (listen to what we hear)

Students get together in pairs and pick who is “A” and who is “B”. Together the pairs will count to three “A” starting with one, “B” following with two, “A” finishing with three, and “B” starting over with one. Do this for a while so the pairs get used to counting. Then “A” comes up with a sound and movement to replace the number one and the pair counts to count together using the new sound and movement to replace the number one. Repeat with the other numbers until the pairs are having a “conversation” with the sounds and movements.

**Hand of Power or Columbian Hypnosis** (responsive leadership, movement de-mechanization)

Again students are in pairs and chose who will be “A” and who will be “B.” “A” starts by placing their hand about a foot from “B”’s nose. “B” must follow “A”’s hand with their nose always maintaining the same distance. Then the pairs switch and “A” follows “B.”

**Handshake Forum**

The facilitator asks for a volunteer who is given the instruction that they must get the facilitator to shake their hand (the facilitator is not compliant). This provides the opportunity for other group members to pose suggestions and try out ideas to get the facilitator to shake their hand.