**VIEWPOINTS UNIT by Beau Brewster**

**LESSON 1: Elements of Viewpoints**

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of the 9 elements of Viewpoints by teaching the class and creating group compositions.

**Materials:**

* 30 Sticky notes with one of the following written on each:
  + Tempo
  + Duration
  + Kinesthetic Response
  + Repetition
* Shape
* Gesture
* Architecture
* Spacial Relationship
* Topography

**Hook:** As each person comes into class give them a sticky note for them to wear which will determine what group they will be put into. After you take role take the class down to the auditorium. In the auditorium lay down a sign for each of the sticky note categories. Have everyone match their sticky note with the sign that has their same Viewpoint on it and sit down in that area.

**Group Practice:** Once everyone is in a group of 3 or 4 give them the following instructions:

* Read the description of your viewpoint as a group
* Become the expert of your viewpoint
* Teach it to the rest of the class
* Come up with an example of the viewpoint that you can perform as a group
  + Rather than talking about what you’ll do put it on its feet and do!

**Instruction:** Each group will perform their viewpoint element and teach the principle to the class. Start with Tempo and move all the way down to Topography. After each group presents lead the following short activities with the whole class on each viewpoint element:

* + Tempo—Create a gesture. Do it at a normal speed, a quick speed, and a super fast speed. Do it again at a normal speed and take it to a slow speed and a super slow speed. Have them do the gesture at each of the 5 speeds at random.
  + Duration—Play the number counting game in a circle where you count to 20 without saying a number at the same time as someone else. Once this happens both people sit down. The duration of rounds and how long a person plays will be explored. Play until there are only a couple people left.
  + Kinesthetic Response—Sit in a circle and have one person start by doing something physical to the person next to them going clockwise. They cannot touch and the other person is to react physically without planning a reaction.
  + Repetition—Walk around the stage and repeat a gesture. Once you have repeated your gesture repeat someone else’s gesture, and another’s and another’s. End the activity when you see that the class is getting internal and external repetition.
* Shape—Do 3 different shapes for each of the 3 types—curvelinear, linear, and moving
* Gesture—Explore the two different gesture types (behavioral & expressive) by heightening and subtilizing them.
* Architecture—Walk around the auditorium and interact with the architecture in different ways to create distinct meanings
* Spacial Relationship—Walk around
* Topography—Choose one of the 3 topographies: linear, curve-linear, and mixed--walk around. Have them change topographies by saying, “Switch.”

**Assessment:**

As a group walk around the stage and open-viewpoint. Call out each of the 9 viewpoints at different times—building upon each other. Assess to see how each person is doing with the viewpoints. Give them vocal feedback in the moment.

**Closure:**

Explain that at the end of this unit they will all perform a group Viewpoint composition. Instruct the students to get into groups of three or four with friends that they have never worked with in this class. Go around to the groups and make sure that each of the groups are well matched and even.

**LESSON 2: Composition**

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of composition by rehearsing a group viewpoint composition

**Materials:**

* Excerpts from The Viewpoints Book (pgs. 12-13) cut up into small handouts (8—one for each bullet point)

**Hook:**

Have everyone take out a piece of paper. Have them write down from memory the 9 Viewpoints discussed and explored last time**.** Give them time to come up with them on their own. If they need more help write the first letters of each of the viewpoints on the board:

T S KR

R G A

D T SR

If they still need help model some physical examples.

**Checking for Understanding/Instruction:**

Ask for 9 volunteers. Have them all come up and write down one of the 9 viewpoints by the first initial to each one.

T--tempo S--shape KR--kinesthetic response

R--repetition G--gesture A--architecture

D--duration T--topography SR--spacial relationships

Ask for 1-3 volunteers to give an example of each viewpoint. Challenge them by giving them feedback and coaching.

**Transition:**

Instruct everyone to look under their chairs. 8 students will have excerpts from The Viewpoints Book under their chairs. Have them read their excerpts for the class.

As a class come up with a simple definition and explanation of composition. Take key words and phrases from the excerpt to come to a strong understanding.

**Practice:**

Tell everyone to get into their groups that they chose last class. Assign those that were not in class into a group that they would work well in. Instruct each group to come up with a theme, a subject, a topic that they would like to explore. Explain that these compositions are exploratory—not product based. DO NOT FOCUS ON PLOT! Focus on improv! Have them explore and improvise 9 different times. Each time have them focus on one of the viewpoints while using other viewpoints to help them.

**Assessment:**

Go around to each group and give them individual feedback. The following principles will be difficult to achieve at first and most of the groups will need to be reminded and instructed on the following:

* React with your body not your face
* Neutral face
* Focus on theme not on plot
* Individual creation that mixes with other individuals and creates an ensemble composition.
* Do more than talk! Don’t talk about HOW to do it. Talk about WHY.
* When you are stuck focus on one or more of the 9 viewpoints.
* “Hold on Tightly, Let go Lightly”

**Closure:**

Have one of the groups that is understanding the concepts and are creating a very exploratory composition to preview for the class. Ask the class what they observed and what principles were implemented.

**LESSON 3: Responding to Stimuli and Workshops**

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of the 9 elements of viewpoints and responding to stimuli by work shopping group compositions

**Materials:**

* Large area (stage or orchestra room)

**Preparation:**

* Have a student sweep off the stage and check for any loose screws.
* Have another student turn on the sound board/CD player so that the groups previewing today can set up their music. Have this student run sound for the previews.

**Hook:** While taking role pass around a sign-up sheet for previews. Let them know that we hope to get to everyone today but we may have to do a couple groups next time. Have the last group to sign up bring the signup sheet back to you. Take the class into the auditorium (or orchestra room if the auditorium is not available). Communicate to the group to get into a circle and take off their socks and shoes. Once they are in the circle and quiet, ready to go, start with the following exercise.

**Instruction:**

* The Viewpoints Book (pg. 27)

“Form a very wide circle facing inward and begin running in place. One person can at any moment initiate a run into the center of the space (make sure that feet are not stepped on). In that split second of initiation everyone should run toward the center together in such a way that someone watching would not be able to tell who initiated. After everyone has run to the center everyone should run backward to reestablish the wide circumference of the circle.

After some repetition of this exercise, each participant will experience firsthand that anything can happen at any time and that s/he needs to be completely present in the moment ready to move in response to stimuli.

Repeat this exercise until the group is successfully communicating moment to moment.”

* + Remind them to practice the following during the exercise:
    - Vulnerability
    - Focus (no talking or laughing)
    - Unity
    - Being completely present
  + End the activity by instructing them to keep the same quietness and focus demonstrated in the exercise and to work on responding to stimuli rather than performing a set plot as they preview their compositions.

**Practice:** Instruct the class to watch each preview in order to help the group performing improve and work on specific viewpoint principles:

* + Tempo
  + Duration
  + Kinesthetic Response
  + Repetition
* Shape
* Gesture
* Architecture
* Spacial Relationship
* Topography

Inform the class that we will give feedback to each group—telling them what principles they explored very well and others that they can explore more and expound upon.

Teach them the phrases, “I wonder if…” and “What if…” for giving feedback and critique.

Workshop each group on the viewpoint element(s) decided by the class. Feel free to use exercises in The Viewpoints Book and exercises used in class.

**Assessment:** Have each group preview and assess the performers and the commentators on their knowledge and understanding of the 9 viewpoint principles as well as their ability to respond to stimuli on the spot. Jot down notes for your personal record on how to adjust your future lessons based on their level of understanding.

In the last 5 minutes of class ask them what they learned about performing Viewpoints by both previewing and observing.

Invite them to continue to practice and implement the principles mentioned by the class.

**LESSON 4: Shape and Workshops**

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of the 9 elements of viewpoints and responding to stimuli by work shopping group compositions.

**Materials:**

* Large area (stage or orchestra room)

**Preparation:**

* Have a student sweep off the stage and check for any loose screws.
* Have another student turn on the sound board/CD player so that the groups previewing today can set up their music. Have this student run sound for the previews.

**Hook:** While taking role hand the sign-up sheet for previews to a student. Let them tell the class the order in which each group is going.

Remind the class of the principles to giving feedback by picking two students to do an activity. Ask for volunteers who have never used a drill before. Give a drill to both of the students. Provide him/her with 8 screws and 4 boards and tell him/her to build something. Have them work on opposite sides. Give one person a peer who only tells them what to do and doesn’t let them discover on their own and has to have them do it their way. Have the other peer use questions and aid their peer by letting them discover on their own.

**Discussion:** Help your students discover the parallels to this example and giving feedback to Viewpoint compositions. Challenge them all to ask questions and talk to their peers as a collaborator rather than a director.

**Instruction:** Take the class into the auditorium (or orchestra room if the auditorium is not available). Instruct the group to take off their socks and shoes and set them aside. Once they are ready to warm up have them find their own separate space on the stage.

* The Viewpoints Book (pg. 47)

Use the following activity to help the class to practice and explore shape in a safe place. Go through the following elements of shape by having them come up with shapes based on the following prompts:

1. Lines
2. Curves
3. Combination
4. Fluidity and Spontaneity
5. Traveling
6. Others
7. Traveling with Others

Time will not allow you to do all 7 activities however you can do a combination of them so that you work on and review these 7 components.

**Practice:** Once the warm-up comes to an end instruct the class to watch each preview in order to help the group performing improve and work on specific viewpoint principles:

* + Tempo
  + Duration
  + Kinesthetic Response
  + Repetition
* Shape
* Gesture
* Architecture
* Spacial Relationship
* Topography

Remind the class that we will give feedback to each group—telling them what principles they explored very well and others that they can explore more and expound upon. Encourage questions that lead to self-discovery.

Workshop each group on the viewpoint element(s) decided by the class. Feel free to use exercises in The Viewpoints Book and exercises used in class.

**Assessment:** Have each group preview and assess the performers and the commentators on their knowledge and understanding of the 9 viewpoint principles as well as their ability to respond to stimuli on the spot. Jot down notes for your personal record on how to adjust your future lessons based on their level of understanding.

In the last 5 minutes of class have them talk in their groups and create a rehearsal plan of what to rehearse in class before performances.

**Homework:** Bring a scene or monologue from a play that you are very familiar with. Preferably choose one with a character that you would love to play.

**LESSON 5: Character Work**

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of character work through Viewpoints by creating and performing a character time-line.

**Materials:**

* Handouts of Page 129 in the Viewpoints Book

**Hook:** Have each person take out their scenes/monologues from a play that they are very familiar with (homework). Have them share with a friend what they chose and who their character is. If there are students that did not choose a scene or monologue have them go into the theatre office and pick out a play that they know inside and out.

Write on the board using many colors of dry erase markers the characters that you will be discovering and creating character development for. Instruct them to explore and not to narrow their character into a box.

**Instruction:** Hand out the character development handout to each student. Instruct them to keep this paper near them as we Viewpoint and write down discoveries and nuances that they come up with as we go. They need to answer each question but can write discoveries of their own below or on the back. They will turn in these Character Discovery Papers at the end of class.

Take the class on the stage and have them prepare themselves by getting barefoot and getting the wiggles out. Follow the activities on Gesture (expressive and behavioral) found on page 49 in The Viewpoints Book.

Help each student put emotion behind each of their actions and express the emotion through their body—allowing their face to be neutral.

Once this skill is mastered have them explore the gestures of their characters. Have them do the opposite of what their character would do and then have them do a mixture of what their character would do and what they wouldn’t.

Lead a brief discussion on how the above activities went.

**Group Practice:** Have each person go across the floor and pretend that there is red paint on the souls of their feet. Have them do the following:

* Create an abstract painting of themselves
* Create a time line of their life
* Create an abstract painting of their character
* Create a time line of their chracter’s life

**Individual Practice:** Lead them through the Scene work exercises found on pages 131-132. Have them use the scenes and monologues they found as the spring board to these activities.

**Assessment:** Have a couple students perform one of the three Viewpoint activities (abstract painting, time line, and scene/monologue using Viewpoints for staging and connection).

**LESSON 6: Music & Rehearsal**

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of combining music and Viewpoints by participating in an open viewpoint

**Materials:**

* CD player
* CDs

**Hook:** Play for the class an example of Viewpoints by downloading an example of musical Viewpoints from Youtube.

**Instruction:** Read and discuss as a class the principles of working with music (Chapter 8 of The Viewpionts Book.

**Practice:** Create open viewpoints as a class while viewpointing to different songs suggested in The Viewpionts Book. Focus on opposites with the following:

* + Tempo
  + Duration
  + Kinesthetic Response
  + Repetition
* Shape
* Gesture
* Architecture
* Spacial Relationship
* Topography

**Assessment:** Perform group open-viewpoints with music by choosing 5-8 random people to viewpoint to 3 different clippings of songs. Give oral feedback to help each individual in the group. State one thing they did well and an opportunity to grow.

**Composition Group Practice:** Have them practice this principle of viewpointing to music by rehearsing their group compositions with the music they brought in.

**LESSON 7: Viewpoint Performances**

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of composition and the 9 elements of Viewpoints by performing group compositions.

**Materials:**

**Hook:** Do the following activity for the second time. Challenge them to accomplish this task even better than they did a week or two ago.

The Viewpoints Book (pg. 27)

“Form a very wide circle facing inward and begin running in place. One person can at any moment initiate a run into the center of the space (make sure that feet are not stepped on). In that split second of initiation everyone should run toward the center together in such a way that someone watching would not be able to tell who initiated. After everyone has run to the center everyone should run backward to reestablish the wide circumference of the circle.

After some repetition of this exercise, each participant will experience firsthand that anything can happen at any time and that s/he needs to be completely present in the moment ready to move in response to stimuli.

Repeat this exercise until the group is successfully communicating moment to moment.”

* + Remind them to practice the following during the exercise:
    - Vulnerability
    - Focus (no talking or laughing)
    - Unity
    - Being completely present
  + End the activity by instructing them to keep the same quietness and focus demonstrated in the exercise and to work on responding to stimuli rather than performing a set plot as they preview their compositions.

**Assessment:** Have each group perform their Viewpoints and write down feedback on the following principles and hand it to the group after their performance.

* + Tempo
  + Duration
  + Kinesthetic Response
  + Repetition
* Shape
* Gesture
* Architecture
* Spacial Relationship
* Topography
* Soft Focus
* being present
* reacting to stimuli
* integrating music
* character work