**Using the Fourth Wall/Speaking to an Invisible Other**

*by Christine Detweiler*

**Educational Objective:**  Students will demonstrate their ability to use the fourth wall by performing a monologue directed to an invisible other.

\*\*this lesson could be used in a monologue unit, audition unit, or any other performance piece that requires the use of the fourth wall/invisible other; it was originally created for a monologue, so all references in the lesson are to that performance piece\*\*

**Materials Needed:**

* Each student needs an individual monologue.
* A way of showing a video clip (T.V. projector etc.)
* “Nanny Cam Clip” from “Nanny Diaries” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ih2vstLiKps
* “Criteria for Using the Fourth Wall” handout (included in lesson plan attachment)

**Hook:**

Have students pair up.   Instruct one student to tell the other about their day so far.  Have the other student ask questions about their day.   The catch:  the first student does not respond to the other students' questions or acknowledge them.  Ask for the one pair of students to act out their scene for the class.  Discuss why this scene felt unnatural, and why listening is important in conversation. (10 minutes)

**STEP 1:**

Ask the students what they do when they are listening and responding in a real conversation?  How can performing a monologue be like a conversation?  (Pausing between sentences, reacting to what was said, etc.) (5 minutes)

**STEP 2:**

Ask students what they think the fourth wall is.  (The imaginary wall between an actor and the audience.  This is where your invisible partner is located during a monologue, and you respond to them just as you would respond during a normal conversation in real life.) (2 minutes)

**STEP 3:**

Play the “Nanny Cam Clip” from “Nanny Diaries” starting at 1:12 to the end.  Ask the students who is Annie talking to?  What does she want the people she’s talking to to do?  How does she try to accomplish her goal? (5 minutes)

**STEP 4:**

Ask how Annie uses the nanny cam as a fourth wall.  (She can’t see the people she is speaking to, but still acts as if they are there in the room with her and reacts as if they could hear her.)  (5 minutes)

**STEP 5:**

On their own, have the students decide whom they are talking to in their own monologues, and what they want from that person.  Then have them write out made-up lines for the other side of the conversation (i.e. what they think their partner is saying) (15 minutes)

**STEP 6:**

Have the students pair up and take turns performing their monologues for one another. Have Student B recite the lines student A came up with in step 4.  Tell the student who is performing (student A) to pay particularly close attention to how their partner reacts to their lines.  Give them time to practice this a few times. (10 minutes)

**STEP 7:**

Help the students to notice that the way they performed their monologue changed depending on their partner’s reaction and delivery of the lines.  Instruct the student to practice on their own, imagining they have a partner with them as they did in step 5.  Encourage them to think of specific details such as where their partner is standing, how tall they are, what they are doing with their hands, what they look like, etc.) (10 minutes)

**STEP 8:**

Have each student perform their monologue in small groups, utilizing principles of the fourth wall discussed in class such as eye contact, pauses, reacting to invisible partner’s lines.   Have the students give constructive feedback to one another after their performance.  (15 minutes)

**CONCLUSION:**

Give students a list of the criteria expected in the final performance under the Fourth Wall section of the Rubric.  Ask them to go home and continue practicing incorporating these into their monologue.  (5 minutes)

**ASSESSMENT:**

Students will turn in their page with their partner’s lines completed in step 4.  Students can also evaluate themselves on how well they performed the criteria for using the Fourth Wall during their performance in step 8.

**Criteria for Using the Fourth Wall Handout**

* Student engages in believable eye contact with their partner, including looking at the same place and height throughout the monologue.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1-unacceptable 2-Emerging 3- Proficient 4- Mastery

* Student places pauses in the monologue as needed.  Pauses are long enough to convey listening without being overly long.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1-unacceptable 2-Emerging 3-Proficient 4-Mastery

* Student changes their approach to their monologue based on their “partner’s” reactions or the invisible environment around them.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1-unacceptable 2-Emerging 3-Proficient 4-Mastery

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ out of 12 possible points