

STEPPENWOLF EDUCATION

Virtual Workshop: Educator Skill-Building Workshop: *At Home In Myself*

Thursday, April 2, 2020

Created by Teaching Artist: Wilfredo "Freddie" Ramos Jr.

(50 minute lesson)

LOI: Using the Steppenwolf for Young Adults' season theme "*How Do You Navigate Family History While Trying to Write Your Own?*" as our jumping off point, **how do we, as educators, stay creative, inspired, and connected while we're "grounded" at home?**

CAPACITIES: Noticing Deeply, Identifying Patterns, Living in Ambiguity

Commented [1]: Say/explain the capacities aloud at the start of the workshop.

MODALITY: Writing, Performance Art

MATERIALS: Paper, pencil, found objects, and spaces at home

LESSON STEPS

STEP ZERO (7-10 minutes) BUSINESS

Introduction: **(slide one)**

Welcome Educators! My name is Amanda Dunne Acevedo, I use she pronouns, and I am the Senior Manager of Education for Steppenwolf Theatre. I want to thank you all so much for joining our second educator workshop today. We are looking for the best ways to support educators during this time of transition – and today's workshop has two main purposes: 1) a creative outlet for all you educators / artists out there and, 2) this is hopefully a lesson and activities you could adapt for you students. Abhi Shrestha, Steppenwolf's Education Associate is with us running the technical aspects of the webinar, HUGE THANK YOU to Abhi!! Today, Steppenwolf Lead Teaching Artist Freddie Ramos has planned a lovely activity for us.

Land Acknowledgement: **(slide two)**

We at Steppenwolf want to open up this virtual space with a land acknowledgement. We recognize that Steppenwolf Theatre sits on Native land. The area our building resides on is the traditional homelands of the people of the Council of Three Fires, including the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa. Although for over 200 years Native Nations have been forcibly removed from this territory, we must acknowledge that this land continues to be a site of gathering and healing for more than a dozen other Tribal Nations and remains home to over 100,000 tribal members in the state of Illinois. <https://native-land.ca/>

ZOOM ZOOM ZOOM! AMANDA

As you all know we are hosting this workshop as a zoom webinar. The way this works is that currently Fatima and I are hosts and you all are attendees. Though you can hear and see us, we are not able to hear and see you, and you are not currently able to hear and see each other. All the attendee's are currently muted, but towards the end of the workshop we might ask if anyone wants to share some of their work, in which case we can unmute you so everyone can hear the awesome piece you have started to create!

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Throughout the workshop, there will be times where we ask for your participation as we do our best to make this a dialogue with you as much as possible – there are different ways we may ask for your participation so let’s test them out now really quickly:

- Look for the RAISE HAND button. When we are giving instruction, we might say, RAISE YOUR HAND if you’re confused or need the directions repeated. When you click that button – a tiny little hand shows up on our screen and we’ll clarify the directions as best we can. Let’s try it out now – go ahead and click the RAISE HAND button!
- Next, there is the CHAT box. This is a nice place to connect. On my screen it’s on the lower right-hand side. Why doesn’t everybody go ahead and write your first name and the school/org you work with in the CHAT so we know who are participants are today! Throughout the workshop our TA will ask you to sometimes jot down some thoughts in the chat function and we might read a few out loud!!
- Finally, there is the Q&A function. This is where you can ask the hosts questions that might not need an immediate answer – like “WHEN IS THE NEXT WORKSHOP???” We will make sure these get seen and answered. We might say “if you have a question while you are writing, go ahead and throw it in the Q&A section and we’ll get to it at our earliest convenience” !!
- We might doing some sharing out of our artistic work, we will ask for volunteers and then UNMUTE you so you can share your voice with the group.

TODAY’S LESSON: AMANDA

The Steppenwolf for Young Adults production at Steppenwolf, that had to close early was an adaptation of Erika L. Sanchez’s IANYPMD, adapted by Isaac Gomez. For the entire year, along with the fall production of Tarell McCraney’s THE BROTHERS SIZE, we approached the year, under the season theme: "**How Do You Navigate Family History While Trying to Write Your Own?**" Using this SYA theme as our jumping off point, - Freddie crafted a lesson that asks **how do we, as educators, stay creative, inspired, and connected while we're "grounded" at home?** Which you'll see is also connected to a passage from IANYPMD.

(50 minute lesson begins here)

STEP ONE (7 minutes) I Can't Help How I Feel Half The Time

- Introduce the AE capacity: **Noticing Deeply** (slide three)
- Invite participants to engage in deep noticing of their bodies through guided stretching and breathing exercises.
- During this activity, TA narrates the sensations they experience.
 - **Chat reflection for facilitator to read out to the full group:** *What emotions came up for you as you connected to your body?*
 - *How can deepening our awareness of our bodies help us to stay grounded in the present moment?*

Commented [2]: Slide: Noticing Deeply Capacity and Definition

Commented [3]: Return to TA leading exercise

STEP TWO (10 minutes) It's Not Like My Parents Are Happy Either

- Read page 49 of IANYPMD aloud as a collective.

Commented [4]: Slide: Display text

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- Facilitator will reach italicized stage directions and someone can be unmuted to read Julia.

Excerpt from *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* adapted by Isaac Gómez, based on the book by Erika L. Sanchez **[slide four]**

JULIA

(to the audience; in her notebook)

Between the ages of thirteen and fifteen, I've spent about forty-five percent of my life grounded. I know I'm not the daughter my parents wanted, but I can't help how I feel half the time. I don't know why I've always been like this. Why the smallest things, like three-legged dogs, or road kill, make me ache inside.

Beat. A moment.

Amá and Apá appear, getting ready for work. They live and move on the same plane, but it's as if they're walking on totally different planets. They hardly even look at each other.

JULIA (CONT'D)

(to the audience; in her notebook)

It's not like my parents are happy either. All they do is work. They never go out anywhere and even when they're home, they hardly even talk to each other.

Apá heads out the door. Amá stops and stares at Julia.

JULIA (CONT'D)

(to the audience; in her notebook)

Sometimes, Amá stares at me like I'm some sort of mutant that slithered out of her body.

And just like that, Amá is gone.

JULIA (CONT'D)

(to the audience; in her notebook)

I feel so lonely that I don't know what to do with myself. I usually wait till my parents fall asleep and then I just bawl my eyes out.

- Now, make connections between that excerpt and this video of Mayor Lori Lightfoot ordering Chicagoans to stay indoors and **explain her decision to close the lakefront and**

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city parks. <https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/city-of-chicago-shuts-down-lakefront-trail-amid-covid-19-outbreak/>

Commented [5]: Video clip (1-2 minutes): Pritzker and Lightfoot make announcement

- **Hand raise reflection, read out how many hands up:** *How many folks identify with Julia's sense of loneliness now that we're forced to stay at home?*
 - **Meta-moment:** Identify this as a text-to-world connection.

STEP THREE (10 minutes) You're Grounded

- Introduce the AE capacity: **Identifying Patterns** (slide five)
- Inform participants that they will be separated into two breakout groups. Inform participants that they will be making associations between the word "grounded" and their experiences.
- One group will interpret the word "grounded" in the sense of *stay in one place*.
- The second group will interpret the word "grounded" in the sense of *centered, focused*.
 - **Freddie** will facilitate the group that takes grounded in the sense of *centered, focused*.
 - **Guiding Questions**
 - What shapes does being "grounded" take? What does being grounded feel like? Sound like? Look like?
 - **Amanda** will facilitate the group that takes grounded in the sense of *stay in one place*. **Examples, emotions, gestures, sounds, affiliations, images**
 - **Guiding Questions**
 - What does that experience feeling like? Sound like? Look like? What shapes does that experience take?
 - Groups break out. **6 minutes, use chat or voice**
 - Groups return.
- **Freddie and Amanda** engage in a dialogue in which they uplift themes, words from each breakout group.
 - **Chat reflection to read out for the group:** *What patterns can you identify between these responses?*
 - **Individual Reflection:** Invite participants to think of at least one practice that centers them. Participants may write this practice down if they wish.
 - Example: Focusing attention on an object, taking a deep breath, saying a phrase of affirmation.

Commented [6]: Slide: Identifying Patterns Capacity + Definition

Commented [7]: Divide into breakout groups (if this can't work, we can do both brainstorms collectively)

Commented [8]: Return to TA + Amanda

STEP FOUR (15 minutes) Totally Different Planets

- Introduce the AE capacity: **Living in Ambiguity** (slide six)
- You will take the next 10 minutes to **go on an individual journey in your home**. This journey will be guided by an inspiration phrase, however, there will be few restrictions otherwise. Allow yourself to live in ambiguity as you go on your journey. Resist the urge to direct your explorations. Lean into your

Commented [9]: Slide: Living in Ambiguity and Definition

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impulse to play. Identify patterns you experience in your space and you want to break, barriers to breaking.

- ARTMAKING: (slide seven)
 - There are no restrictions on what you can or can't do, except that you must stay within the walls of your home.
 - *Identify patterns* you experience in your space and that you want to break, and what barriers may to breaking them exist.
 - Notice the possibilities in a space of, what may seem, limited possibilities.
 - If you find yourself losing your focus, engage in your centering practice.
 - Do not hold back! Follow what seems fun!
 - We will share about our experiences at the end of the ten minutes. Experiences are individualized and do not need to be documented.
- Freddie models: *What do you usually do? How could you move through your home in a new way?*
- Amanda models: *How can you take a new point of view on your space? How can you take a new point of view on your experience?*
- Freddie models: If you find yourself losing your focus, engage in your centering practice.
- We will share about our experiences at the end of the ten minutes. Experiences are individualized and will NOT be videotaped.
- Let your journey be inspired by the phrase **"At Home in Myself"**
 - Timer set for ten minutes.
 - Your screen will let you know when there is 5, 3, and 1 minute left. The music will end when we're back! (slides eight, nine, ten, eleven)
- Participants go on self-journeys.
- Participants return.

Commented [10]: Slide: Guidelines/considerations

Commented [11]: Slide: Countdown clock

STEP FIVE (8 minutes) At Home In Myself

Chat Reflection: call on those with raised hands:

- *What joy did you experience while you were grounded?*
- *Did you find a new way to be at home in yourself?*
- *What community did you find while you were alone?*
- *In what ways are we not alone when we are physically alone?*

Thanks for all your great work!