

Youth's a Stuff

A Devised Theatre Project

West Linn High School Theatre Arts 2021

Project Focus

- The main aim of the project is to chronicle the experience of being a high school student in the West Linn/Wilsonville area in 2020/2021. The project strives to reflect the unique and varied array of experiences of our students during this time in history, as well as highlight those experiences that they share.
- A secondary aim is to compare and contrast our student's experiences and observations with that of the experiences and observations of students within the Portland Metropolitan area. The purpose would be to foster a meaningful connection between diverse students within various schools, often with varying backgrounds.

Topics

- COVID 19 and it's effects on personal and school life
- Black Lives Matter & White Privilege
- Distance/Virtual Learning
- Equity & Equality
- Terrorist Insurrection at the Capitol Building
- Positive Outcomes & New Perspectives

Procedure

- **Part 1: Conversations** – The project looks to create original, student-generated work derived and created from conversations between students at WLHS and WVHS. Students are able to self-select their roles in the process and may choose to be interviewers/writers, subjects, technicians, and/or actors. During these (virtual) meetings, students will be able to utilize a predetermined set of guided questions (generated by the students with the support of teachers) to act as jumping off points, but are encouraged to let the conversation proceed naturally.
- The project may utilize follow-up or “rounds” of conversations in order to: 1. build rapport and trust with subjects; 2. Without discrediting subjects experiences, narrowing the focus to specific students whose experiences they are most interested in using as source material.
- At certain stages, interviewers will check in with a teacher and other students within the project, to assess progress and receive support.

Procedure (cont'd)

- **Part 2: Writing** – Recordings and transcripts of selected conversations will be compiled and created. Writers will meet and develop monologues based on their conversations. The monologues are not meant to be exact recreations of the interviews, but a condensing/synthesizing of the most impactful and moments and “truth” that the subject(s) expressed. Referencing past works of devised theatre and ethnodrama, and with teacher guidance, style and format will be determined. The main aim being to honor the chosen subject’s experiences.
- In this process, all writing is done by the interviewing students, while the subjects provide feedback and have final approval in allowing the monologues to be included in the final project or not. Actors and technicians may offer insights into thematic material and performance.
- **STRUCTURE:** A narrative structure might be developed by tying acts to different periods/timeframes – “The Virus,” “The Awakening,” “The Summer,” “The New Distance,” “The Future.”
- Actors will begin to analyze and negotiate the process of portraying real life people, different in many respects, to themselves. This will draw on the dramatic skills of students that the department looks to develop. It may also establish a foundation for the exploration of true empathy.

Procedure (cont'd)

- **Part 2: Rehearsal & Performance** – Depending on timing and the situation with COVID, the rehearsal process may be conducted on site in the familiar fashion; Alternatively, all rehearsals and discussions will proceed virtually.
- If the project is able to take the stage, design aspects will be discussed and devised. If we must remain virtual, technicians and teachers will provide tutorials and equipment for in-home filming. Other technicians (with adult guidance) will advise on costumes, develop/discuss virtual or natural settings, design sound, and eventually edit the full piece.
- The final piece would be performed live in the auditorium, or recorded, edited, then presented through a streaming platform.