

PLAY Program

[Portland Stage] performances are a wonderful model for students on reading with fluency, expression, and can, with support of the classroom teacher, increase motivation to read....ELL students can particularly benefit from Reader's Theater with fluency practice, engaging in the story through movement improves comprehension. This also gives students an authentic purpose for reading and integrates all four literacy components of Common Core: reading, speaking, listening, and writing. – Dr. Coursey, Principal, Ocean Avenue Elementary

“I watched YA go from uncomfortable making eye contact to volunteering to speak to the whole group at the end.” M. Bergeron, teacher, 4th grade evaluation

We have seen the impact of this program in our students. Teachers report that they see a new confidence in students and they are “more willing to take chances to perform in front of a group. It’s more natural to them.” The skills our students learn from these visiting artists translate to the work they do in their classrooms. One teacher noted, “I have seen a difference in my student’s fluency and inflection when reading aloud.” C. Loring, Principal, Presumpscot Elementary

Holiday Show

“It is especially gratifying to watch students, for whom English is not their first language, ‘see’ stories come to life by hearing the rich language of a really good play. When students hear their peers reading a play, and putting expression and emotion into the reading, language is not such a barrier. And then when this activity culminates with watching a professional performance of the play, the educational experience is complete!” M. Melton, teacher East End Community School

The Directors Lab

“The overall experience of seeing the play and then participating in a workshop with the actors was powerful for our students. For many, this was one of their first exposures to theater and overwhelmingly, they claimed to have loved it. From a teacher perspective, this residency supported and expanded upon the skills we have been focused on all year- collaboration, accountable talk, creativity and willingness to take risks in school. From a student perspective, the residency allowed students to step out of their comfort zone in a fun way, gave them a break from the normal day to day activities of school and creatively express themselves.” J.Shepherd, R. Houghton, J. Armstrong, teachers, Lincoln Middle School

“The impacts of this experience were both positive and far reaching for me and my students. Not only did they see an inspired, engaging, professional performance by the talented actors, but they were able to become actors and directors themselves....This work is also informing my teaching style and practice in an upcoming argument unit—we will revisit the styles of rhetoric

you introduced, as well as, use the process of “feeding lines” to one another in an upcoming debate.” -A. Briley, Lincoln Middle School

Student Testimonials:

“I really enjoyed the play because it was fun to watch. But there were parts that I didn’t understand and when the actors came to class the next day they really helped me understand it. It was also fun acting and doing all of the activities.” - Estella M.

“The actors gave us visuals to help answer the questions we had about acting. We also got to answer our own questions by doing some acting ourselves. I’ll never forget this lesson about Greek theater- it was so fun!” - River D.

“The workshop was way more interactive than school usually is. The actors were very informative about the play itself as well as the process of acting. It was an invaluable resource.”- William J.

Student Matinee

“I know that students are improving in their own performances and performance choices from their work at Portland Stage. The progress in their understanding and appreciation for the art of theatre is phenomenal. It is reflected in their discussions as well as the insight they offer in writing. A personal goal for me is to expose them to theatre because, let's face it,- living in a rural socio-economically deprived area, this experience is a first for them (distance and affordability) and for some it plants the seeds for a lifelong relationship.” P. Fox, Teacher Fryeburg Academy

Student testimonials:

“Before this show, I didn’t really see the point of Rothko’s work. I’d seen it before, my mom is a big Rothko fan. But, after watching the show, listening to the actors express Rothko in a different light than before, I think I like his work a lot more. It seems deeper, and more centered that I had realized. Wonderful production.” –Nate M. student, Portland High