

Virtual #VIRAL: Write Yourself Into The Play

by Maria McConville

I wrote #VIRAL when my first daughter was very small. At the time, Cyber-bullying was “trending” and I was wondering what my child’s experience would be like growing up. I wondered about who she would grow to be and what I hoped she would do in a situation like the one discussed in #VIRAL. While writing the play, my intention was for those that performed the piece, designed the production and sat in the audience, that they would ask themselves what kind of person they would be in a moment of crisis.

As the playwright, I am always very curious about what discoveries are made while working on this play and what kinds of discussions the director has with their actors. In trying to find the bright side of performing this play through a virtual platform, I thought it would be interesting for students to write a monologue for themselves. What if they wrote themselves into the situation? How do they think they would respond? Then I got excited! What if the audience got to hear their pieces, as a sort of epilogue?

Here is an exercise that you can use while working on this play for class or rehearsing this play for production, in-person or virtually. If you are performing the piece, please include these student written monologues at the end. My wish is that it inspires students to always do something and end the disease of doing nothing.

This is very much a monologue-writing lesson. Depending on your class and how you meet (virtually or at a social distance), use these exercises as group work, homework, or classroom activities. You can do one activity a day, if you would like. Teachers choice!



WARM-UP

Personal Survey questions: You can have students simply reflect on these questions, journal their answers, or if your group is open enough, there can be a group discussion. Adjust these questions for your group as you see fit.

1. Have you ever seen a bully in action?
2. Did you stop the bully? Did you stay out of the way? How did the situation inform your decision?
3. How do you feel about the victim?
4. Does how you feel about the victim effect how you respond?
5. What do you think about your response and, upon reflection, would you change it?

ACTIVITY 1

Establish your relationships: Answer these quick questions to help develop the monologue for you in the given circumstances of #VIRAL. One to two sentences for each answer.

1. Did you help plan the event in the locker room or did you see it happen?
2. What is your relationship to the girls involved? Friend? Boyfriend? Sit next to them in algebra? Neighbor? Cousin?
3. Do you have a history with the victim?
4. What was school like after the event?

ACTIVITY 2

Writing Prompt: Students should keep their answers simple at first and should only be 3-5 sentences long.

1. What would you do in the locker room if you saw the event that happened with characters in #VIRAL?
2. How would you feel if you saw the events that went down in the locker room?

ACTIVITY 3

Building the monologue: Now that you have answered these questions, start to sew them all together into one piece. Feel free to change the outcome of the play with what you choose to do in this event!

Intro- Take a stance on the event and establish your relationship to it.

Body – Give your take on what you saw and what you did or didn't do about it. Explain why.

Conclusion – How do you feel about it and what happens now?

CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Perform these monologues as an epilogue in your production of #VIRAL!

This is also gradable material, if the students are using the play in class.

Have fun! If you would like to share your monologues or streaming info with us, email Maria@yourstagepartners.com

Maria McConville has been a NYC Public School teaching artist since 2005. In the past she has worked with the Theatre Development Fund, LeAP! Onstage, and Periwinkle Theater for Youth, and as a Shakespeare and Playwriting teaching artist with Theatre For A New Audience. Her students have performed and adapted the work of Shakespeare, written their own plays, devised ensemble performance pieces, sang and danced in musical productions, and performed their peers work on a Broadway stage. Growing up in New York, Maria attended LaGuardia High School of Performing Arts for Drama, and recently adjudicated the auditions for incoming students. In addition to being Stage Partners' Education Director, Maria is also a playwright; her published plays include "#Censored" and "#Viral" (Stage Partners) and "To Date or Not to Date" (Playscripts).



www.yourstagepartners.com

Stage Partners

P.O. Box 7874

New York, NY 10116

Copyright © 2020 by Stage Partners, All Rights Reserved. You may freely use this lesson plan, as long as the document is distributed in its entirety, including the author's bio and this notice.