

# DRAMA AND HISTORY

## USEFUL WEB SITES

(in no particular order)

<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1993/3/93.03.10.x.html>

This is from the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute titled: *Remember the Time: An Exploration of History Through Drama* by Nicolette W. Perrault.

It has

- Narrative
- Unit Objectives
- Time Schedule
- Much Ado About Nothing
- Arms and the Man
- Questions for Discussion
- Notes
- Student Bibliography
- Teacher Bibliography

<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1998/4/98.04.10.x.html>

Another excellent Yale-New Haven web page titled: *Lessons in Drama: Learning About American Political Thought*. This encourages collaboration between teachers in different disciplines to create drama.

[http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/whspress/oss/history\\_on\\_stage.asp](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/whspress/oss/history_on_stage.asp)

This site has a PDF file you can download that provides examples of scripts from the book *Wisconsin History on Stage, Scripts for Grades 4 through 8*. While this does not deal with any of the topic areas for our TAH project, the tools are quite applicable for middle school teachers.

[http://edsitement.neh.gov/printable\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=440](http://edsitement.neh.gov/printable_lesson_plan.asp?id=440)

The NEH web page is titled “Dramatizing History in Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible*.” This is a very helpful and useful site that not only deals with *The Crucible*, the Salem Witch trials and the McCarthy era, but also addresses how historiography and playwriting go together. Bonus!

<http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/exemplars/exemp9-12/thetfordimprov/thetimprov.html>

“Improvisational Drama for Social Justice: A Methodology for High Schools” by Darri Colton and Barbara Sorenson, Thetford Academy, Thetford, Vermont. This addresses language arts, drama and social justice issues together.

<http://www.educationatlas.com/k-12-lesson-plans-history.html>

K-12 history lesson plans – several contain drama elements.

<http://www.geocities.com/mrsgamhist/>

This just looked like a helpful site, so I include it here. It does not specifically address drama, however.

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/history/using?view=get>

This is a UK site and quite wonderful.

<http://www.teach-it-through-drama.com/drama-workshops.htm>

This is part of a teach-it-through-drama series from the UK. History: Take on a role from history. Activities allow pupils to recognize why people did things, why events happened and what happened as a result, and identify differences between ways of life at different times. Older pupils are given the opportunity to recreate ideas, beliefs, attitudes and experiences of men, women and children in the past.

<http://www.teachers.tv/video/4884>

This provides a 15-minutes video of history teachers using drama in the classroom.

[http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson\\_plans/history/us\\_history/](http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson_plans/history/us_history/)

U.S. history lesson plans that include an interactive drama component (A Study of the Portola Expedition, 1760). While it does not deal with one of the topic areas from this year, the methodology is transferable.

[http://www.dps.k12.oh.us/academic/secsoc/americanhistory/teaching\\_01.htm](http://www.dps.k12.oh.us/academic/secsoc/americanhistory/teaching_01.htm)

This is a good site: Dayton Teaching American History. One article in particular has relevance for our TAH program: *Using Drama to Interpret Primary Sources and Investigate History* by Jennifer Howard. It lists objectives, benchmarks, etc. The only thing it doesn't show is how to create the drama pieces.

<http://adamseefeldt.blogspot.com/2008/06/drama-in-history-classroom.html>

Speer, D. Diane, *Developing Effective Use of Presentational Drama as a Tool for Teaching the History/social Science Curriculum in Public Schools*, San Luis Obispo, CA: California Polytechnic State University. This is a very helpful article that provides a global view of the use of drama in teaching history. From the Overview: *A review of literature pertaining to the use of drama as a tool for teaching the history/social science curriculum in public schools reveals that, as a method, drama is being found successful in a variety of settings.*

## **ARTICLES OF INTEREST FOR FURTHER THOUGHT**

“Confronting History’s Interpretive Paradox While Teaching Fifth Graders to Investigate the Past,” Bruce vanSledright. From: *American Educational Research Journal*, Winter 2002, Vol. 39, No. 4, pp. 1089-1115.

*This article reports on one facet of a researcher-practitioner project undertaken with [a] class of 23 diverse fifth graders...the author engaged the students in historical investigations to help them learn to think historically and better understand the past. He operated from a theoretical framework based on how he believed historical thinking and understanding occur for such novice learners.*

“Learning in ‘as-if’ worlds: cognition in drama in education,” Christopher Anderson. From: *Theory into Practice*, Autumn 2004, Vol. 43, No. 4. Special Issue: Developmental Psychology: Implications for Teaching. Guest Editor: Christopher Anderson.

*Abstract: The field of drama in education has been developing a rich tradition of practice separate from the literature of educational and cognitive psychology. This article draws links between the practice of drama in education and cognitive theory, focusing specifically on the area of situated learning. Rather than confine learning to the context of the classroom setting, the pedagogy of drama in education seeks to frame learners within an “as-if” world. Within this context, the teacher creates frames containing scaffolding that allow legitimate peripheral participation of learners in roles that are developmentally appropriate. The author describes a comparative study in which students working within an “as-if” dramatic world achieved greater cognitive gains than students in a traditional classroom environment.*

“Dramatic History of Historical Drama?” Ray E. Scrubber. *Academic Exchange Quarterly*, Summer 2001, Vol. 5, Issue 2. This short article posits that while historical fiction (including novels, films and plays) are very popular, the discipline of history is not. He compares what we remember and what really happened and calls for an authentic drama. He advocated to use drama to elicit the response: “Did it really happen that way?” From this further discussion and learning will follow.

## **SOURCE IDEA BOOKS**

*And Justice for Some: Exploring American Justice through Drama and Theatre.* Wendy Lement and Bethany Dunakin. Heinemann, 2005.

*Games for Actors and Non-Actors.* Augusto Baol. Routledge, 1992. A terrific source for theater games that can lead your students into learning about status and power relationships in the historical material they are studying.

*History in the Spotlight.* Sharon M. Fennessey. Heinemann, 2000. Most appropriate for middle school.

*Improvisation for the Theater.* Viola Spolin. Northwestern University Press, 1999. There are many editions of this text. It is in the Ur-text for theater games. All of these can be adapted for any age group and specific need.

*Playwriting, a Practical Guide.* Noel Greig. Routledge, 2005. There is a plethora of playwriting texts in the world but this one is specifically geared toward non-theater teachers and students and is a terrific source for exercises to use from breaking down in-class fears to creating characters and stories. Excellent material to glean from for all ages.

*Theatre for Community, Conflict & Dialogue, The Hope is Vital Training Manual.* Michael Rohd. Heinemann, 1998. Michael is a local artist and the founding Artistic Director of Sojourn Theatre. His work engages the community and he develops scripts based in community issues. A great deal of his work is in the schools. He is currently teaching at Northwestern in Chicago.

## **ORAL HISTORY**

*The One Minute Guide to Oral Histories:*

<http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/resources/1minute.html>

*Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide.* Donald A. Ritchie. Oxford University Press, 2003.

*Recording Oral History, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.* Valerie Raleigh Yow. AltaMira Press, 2005.

*The Oral History Manual.* Barbary Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan. AltaMira Press, 2003.

*The Oral History Reader.* Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. Routledge, 1998.

*To Feel as Our Ancestors Did: Collecting and Performing Oral Histories.* Daniel A. Kelin II. Heinemann, 2005. This is an excellent book geared to practical teacher needs in the classroom, especially regarding oral histories. As the back cover says: “You don’t have to be an expert historian or a theatre impresario for Kelin’s ideas to work in your classroom.” Many of his warm-up games come from Spolin (see above).