Chris EspinosaXYZ -- Theater -- Young Audiences Abilene/YANET

Guiding Question: **How might visual arts in a theater arts activity foster contributions by students who are more comfortable drawing than speaking?**

PROCEDURE

Focus Area: Student Engagement in Classroom Activities

Strategies Explored:
- Invite students to share their story ideas by drawing cartoons instead of writing or verbalizing ideas.
- Effective listening

Projected Outcomes:
- Students will demonstrate confidence in sharing their ideas.
- More students will participate in developing ideas for an improvised scene.
- Students' communication skills will improve (speaking and listening)

Performance Indicators:
- Most, if not all, students are actively participating in developing ideas for their improvised scene; more discussion and collaboration in the planning stages.
- Students who tend to be less verbose (who normally participate less) will be actively engaged in drawing.
- Students who have strong writing and vocabulary skills will want to draw and explore a new way to develop ideas.

Sources of Data/Evidence Collected:
- Video documentation of student work
- Teacher interviews
- Completed cartoon panels

Young Audiences Arts for Learning
RAISE
RESPONSIVE ARTS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

FINDINGS

Performance Indicators:
- Not all students wanted to draw. Visual learners were the only ones who wanted to draw.
- Drawing helped the visual students collaborate confidently.
- Increase in discussion and collaboration
- There was a lot more listening to each other.

Reflections:
- My strategy was somewhat successful.
- I anticipated that the majority of students would want to draw, not just the students who lacked strong verbal/ written skills. That was not the case.
- Students who were writers opted to write instead of draw.
- In my interview/debrief with the teacher, she expressed her excitement that her quieter, visual learner students were actively participating AND were speaking up! I inadvertently created space just for visual learners.

Next Steps:
(What do you plan to adapt or try in your next action research cycle moving forward?)
- Request all students begin with a drawing and reflect on how it affects the work of the non-visual learners.
- Have paper and colored pencils/markers available throughout the residency.

What learnings should other practitioners take from this work?
- Some students may have aphantasia – the inability to see images in their imagination. Drawing ideas instead of relying on imagination may help students be more confident when working in small groups. Less than 5% of the population have aphantasia.