**Hook Question (Before Reading Use the Hook Question to Generate Opening Discussion) :**

**H**

**O**

**O**

**K**

How did you learn how to communcicate with your friends?

**A.**

**B.**

**C.**

**W**

**R**

**I**

**T**

**I**

**N**

**G**

**Essential Question (Predictive Writing):**

What role does theatre play in helping student’s communcate?

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**Vocabulary Instruction:**

**V**

**O**

**C**

**A**

**B**

**U**

**L**

**A**

**R**

**Y**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Subtle |  |
| ***Transformative*** |  |
| ***Pleasentries*** |  |
| ***Degernative*** |  |
| ***Maraginalized*** |  |
| ***Reciperical*** |  |

WORD WORD PARTS / CONTEXT

**T**

**E**

**X**

**T**

**C**

**O**

**D**

**I**

**N**

**G**

**Text Coding Question: What role do scales play in the organization of music?**

**F- Fact**

**O – Opinion**

**R- result/ evidence**

Directed Note Taking

Directions:

Read the text again independently, in pairs, or in your group, as directed. Record notes containing the most important information relent to the guiding question or instructions as given by your teacher. Reference the page number in the text and check if it applies  to a specific category in your coding.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Page # | Notes | Code |
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**Question Generation**

Directions:

Brainstorm questions you still have about the text. Scan your notes and

reread portions of the text again as needed. Collaborate with your partner or group

and write all your unanswered questions in the space below.  Reference the page

number in the text and check if it applies to a specific category in your coding.

Place  an asterisk next the question that you and your group feel is the most important.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Page # | Questions | Text Coding |
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Extended Writing: Create a series of improvisation starters that could be used in an included theatre class.

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**Boosting Social Skills in Autistic Kids With Drama**

Schools are exploring new ways to teach children the rules of informal interactions.

http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/06/boosting-social-skills-in-autistic-kids-with-drama/485027/

How do you join a conversation at a middle-school lunch table? What do you say when someone says hi to you in the hallway and you don’t know her name? How do you delicately correct a member of your lab group in science without calling him stupid? Is it appropriate to tell your English teacher all about your deep and abiding interest in Pokémon characters?

1

A set of subtle and complicated social skills is embedded into the entire school experience, from the lunchroom to the classroom. While most children naturally learn how to take turns talking with their friends and stay on topic during classroom discussions, these skills do not come easily to kids on the autism spectrum. Social and communication deficits are one of the hallmarks of this condition.

2

Schools are exploring new ways to teach kids with high-functioning autism the rules of social interactions, especially since so many of those kids are [now integrated](http://educationnext.org/autismandtheinclusionmandate/) in traditional school settings. Some schools, nonprofit organizations, private speech therapists, and parents provide direct instruction on social interaction using[Michelle Garcia Winner’s Social Thinking](https://www.socialthinking.com/) curriculum or create a “lunch-bunch” social group in the cafeteria. Another strategy is teaching those skills through the arts.

3

New [research](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26419766) from Vanderbilt University suggests that drama classes are particularly useful for improving those skills.  Blythe Corbett, an associate professor of psychiatry at Vanderbilt, in 2009 began teaching kids ages 7 through 18 with high-functioning autism about drama at her[SENSE Theatre](http://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/vkc/services/sense_theatre/)program. As a former professional writer and actor, she was already convinced that “acting is transformative.” At her 10-session, 40-hour program, kids learn traditional drama exercises, like role-playing and improvisation. Paired with [peer models](http://sense.vueinnovations.com/)—typically developing kids who are slightly older, exceptionally mature, and trained—these children sing, learn the lines to a play, and give a final performances for parents and the public.

5

4

"Improvisation exercises are useful because so many autistic kids rely on 'scripts' to navigate social situations."

“When you talk with a person with autism about something that is interesting to them, they can do it,” Corbett said, explaining that kids with autism have difficulty with flexible and reciprocal conversations. “Their challenge is when you switch topics.” They also have trouble recognizing faces and managing stress. All these problems can undermine their relationships with teachers, friends, and family, and, later, their ability to land a job. Corbett’s camp is aimed at helping autistic children improve in these areas.

6

6a

In a [recent study,](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26419766) she compared kids in her program with those in a control group and found that participants in the drama class were better able to recognize faces, understand different perspectives, and regulate anxiety. Using brain-imaging technology, she found that the kids who completed the program had brain-frequency levels that were more similar to children without autism. The improved face memory may be explained in part because the students are directly engaging with peers. Because gathering social information is an integral part of acting, they are forced to focus on those cues and stimuli. They have to learn to be more flexible in their thinking and behavior, especially when asked to improvise. It challenges their concrete thinking style and stretches them.

7

Other experts have found similar benefits of drama therapy for children with autism. Researchers at the University of Kent found that[children with autism could recognize more facial expressions](https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn25419-drama-helps-kids-with-autism-communicate-better/) after they participated in a drama program. Children who participated in the [Social Competence Intervention Program](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0197455612001281), another [drama-based intervention](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257053742_Social_Competence_Intervention_Program_SCIP_A_pilot_study_of_a_creative_drama_program_for_youth_with_social_difficulties), improved their ability to play cooperatively, share, speak with respect, communicate while smiling, and say appropriate pleasantries, like please and thank you. There’s even a program at Ohio State University in Columbus that utilizes Shakespeare’s [rhythm of iambic pentameter](http://www.cleveland.com/healthfit/index.ssf/2013/04/autism_and_shakespeare_ohio_st.html) to help children feel safer when communicating, the outcomes of which aren’t yet clear.

8

Interviews with leaders of two dramatic-arts therapy groups in my area in New Jersey also touted the benefits of these exercises. Anna Villa-Bager said her daughter with high-functioning autism was not permitted to participate in her public elementary school’s after-school arts program. “I was devastated ... My background is in the professional world of singing and acting. For my daughter to not have that experience with peers was crazy.” To help kids like her daughter, in 2007 she began [MarbleJam Kids](https://marblejamkids.sharepoint.com/Pages/default.aspx), an after-school group based in River Edge, New Jersey, that provides art, music, and movement therapy to about 120 kids on the autistic spectrum. (My son is currently enrolled in its dramatic-arts program and may participate in their film camp this summer.)

9

According to Villa-Bager, drama classes are a particularly effective method to teach social skills because they force autistic kids to face another person and respond to others’ feelings in a fun and exciting way. Using role-playing exercises, the class—which is led by trained dramatic-arts therapists and often utilizes peer models—provides kids with a safe place to figure out the right responses to tricky situations that may have happened at school. Kids act out real-world situations in a stress- and judgment-free environment. Improvisation exercises are also useful because so many autistic kids otherwise rely on “scripts” to navigate social situations.

10

Like Villa-Bager, Karen Sheehy began a theater and dance program—[Sharing the Arts](http://www.sharingthearts.com/) in Ridgewood, New Jersey—when she couldn’t find an appropriate program for her disabled daughter. Her daughter, Kaitlin, wanted to wear tutus and learn ballet moves like her sisters, but the dance programs for typical children were too challenging. Sharing the Arts, which Sheehy founded with another parent, welcomes kids with a variety of disabilities, including autism.

11

In addition to improving social skills, Sheehy said that programs like hers provide a place for marginalized and excluded kids—including children with all forms of disabilities—to shine and to make friends in the community. “Kaitlin always felt like she was in the audience,” she said. “She was always looking at everyone else. Now she wants to be on Broadway. She loves being part of something.” One of their students, a non-verbal boy in a wheelchair with a degenerative neurological disability, was able to participate in a play by feeding his lines into his adaptive-speaking device. His mom said that practicing for the play was the best part of his week.

12

Corbett, of Vanderbilt University, plans to expand her research to study a larger sample of students and to compare the benefits of drama therapy with other forms of therapy. Still, her initial findings, as well as the feedback of other parents and practitioners, point to its potential. Its simplicity means that it can be easily replicated in public schools.

13

Schools are adding social skills to their core curriculum for students for very practical reasons—if kids with high-functioning autism have the tools to be successful in the public-school system, districts save themselves the expense of placing those children in private schools. But the benefits of keeping kids in public schools and having them interact more productively with their classmates goes beyond dollars and cents. It also increases the neurological diversity in the school, which increases sensitivity and patience in all children.

14

As Shakespeare said, “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players.” If kids with high-functioning autism take his words to heart, maybe

15