

SAME-SAME

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This Learning Resource has been developed by No Strings Attached - Theatre of Disability for the Adelaide Festival Centre centrED schools' program. We value your expertise as teachers who work with your students every day. Please feel free to use and adapt these resources to suit your educational context.



Show Overview

SAME-SAME is an online creative dance theatre project between performers living with disability in Singapore and Adelaide, Australia. Over three and half months, the two co-directors (Jeffrey Tan and Emma Beech), two creatives (Subastian Tan, Choreographer from Singapore and Michaela Cantwell, Collaborator Performer from Adelaide) work with three dancers from Singapore (through Diverse Abilities Dance Collective) and three actors from Australia (No Strings Attached Theatre of Disability) to explore the similarities between the creatives living with disability in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The performers appear on screen and on stage, in a physical outworking of the *SAME-SAME* principles investigating the ways in which we are the same, and yet at the same time different - but perhaps not as different as you might first expect!

This project is an experimentation in online engagement and expression, celebrating ability alongside excellence and innovation. Truly a bi-lateral creative collaboration that gives voice to the marginalised, breaking down barriers, and showing the world what people with disability are capable of achieving.

Themes

SAME-SAME work explores several different themes. One of the main themes that emerged from the work has been friendship and what does it mean to different people in different places.

Including:

- How the pandemic impacts getting to know each other
- How friendship crosses cultural and geographical boundaries
- What impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on individual lives
- How difference is experienced

Diverse Abilities Dance Collective (DADC)

DADC is a division of Maya Dance Theatre (MDT). It is a community initiative by MDT to create a co-existing space for persons with disabilities and art-makers. The team learns dance techniques drawn from MDT's training and engages in learning skills related to employment in the arts such as costume management, administration, teaching at schools etc. <http://www.mayadancetheatre.org/news/diverse-abilities-dance-collective-dadc>

No Strings Attached

No Strings creates original theatre through the unique perspectives of artists and performers who live with disability. They produce locally, tour nationally and discover new talent in weekly workshops tailored to the individual needs of participants. Members' develop their skills in all areas of theatre production, and produce work which raises awareness for and about people with disabilities. <https://www.nostringsattached.org.au/>

Curriculum links & activities

This education resource has been developed with links to the Australian Curriculum. Activities have been created to reflect achievement standards for Year 7 – Year 10, including content descriptions within each learning area and the general capabilities. The resource aims to provide information to help prepare students before attending the performance, as well as structured learning activities for the classroom after viewing the performance.

Health and Physical Education

Years 7 and 8 – Personal, Social and Community Health

- Investigate the impact of transition and change on identifies ACPPS070
- Evaluate strategies to manage personal, physical and social changes that occur as they grow older ACPPS071

Years 9 and 10 – Personal, Social and Community Health

- Evaluate factors that shape identities and critically analyse how individuals impact the identities of others ACPPS089
- Evaluate the impact of changes and transitions on relationships ACPPS090

The Arts – Dance

Year 7 and 8 – Content description

- Combine elements of dance and improvise by making literal movements into abstract movements ACADAM013

Year 9 and 10 – Content description

- improvise to find new movement possibilities and explore personal style by combining elements of dance ACADAM020

The Arts – Drama

Year 7 and 8 – Content description

- Combine the elements of drama in devised and scripted drama to explore and develop issues, ideas and themes ACADRM040
- Plan, structure and rehearse drama, exploring ways to communicate and refine dramatic meaning for theatrical effect ACADRM042

Year 9 and 10 – Content description

- Improvise with the elements of drama and narrative structure to develop ideas, and explore subtext to shape devised and scripted drama ACADRM047
- Structure drama to engage an audience through manipulation of dramatic action, forms and performance styles and by using design elements ACADRM050

Before the performance

SAME-SAME uses the COVID-19 restrictions as a provocation to explore similar/different experiences of creativity, layered with disability, and utilises the practical limitations and possibilities of working internationally in the online space.

To COVID-19 and beyond

Our personalities and relationships are shaped by our experiences and interactions. Lockdown, isolation, physical distancing and the whole idea of the pandemic put a halt to 'normal' life. While some of those experiences might seem like a blur it has left a mark on everyone.

Whether it's lockdown, shutdown, isolation, circuit breaker – everyone has their own personal experience of this pandemic. Every story is different.

As a whole class

Watch 2 or more of the 55 digital artworks from the National Theatre Scotland collection OR other stories, like the report from Nas Campanella.

NOTE: The first time students watch the video they should watch without taking notes.

Watch the story for a second time. and record your ideas in response to the following questions:

- What do you see in the clip?
- What does it make you think?
- What does it make you wonder?

Individually:

- As you are watching the video record your ideas in response to the following questions:
 - What were the key moments for you?
 - What impact did the piece have on you?
 - What did it make you think?
 - What did it make you wonder?
 - What connections did you have with the piece and COVID-19 and why?

UN Launch of policy brief on persons with disabilities and COVID-19

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/covid-19.html>

Circuit breaker, abbreviated as **CB**, Government of Singapore stay-at-home order and *cordon sanitaire* – preventative measure in response to COVID-19.

Lockdown/ shutdown – the preventative measures implemented by the Australian Government

Scenes for Survival

A new season of 55 digital artworks created in response to the current COVID-19 outbreak. From the National Theatre Scotland.

Here are a couple to get you started.

Call to adventure

<https://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/latest/call-to-adventure>

Will today be the day Mark finally has the guts to say how he really feels.

The Theatre Makers Credo

<https://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/latest/credo>

An uplifting manifesto on the art of theatre-making. It's all about the story.

Disability Affairs reporter at the ABC, Nas Campanella looks at how COVID-19 has affected the autistic.
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-08-17/disability-affairs-reporter-nas-campanella-autism-coronavirus/12564802?nw=0>

Looking after students

Self-Disclosure

Discussing personal experiences in relation to COVID-19 may raise content that could be personal and upsetting. It could include dealing with topics such as violence, racism, family dynamics, mental health. Some students may bring valuable real life experiences to the discussions. However, appropriate boundaries need to be set for sharing information.

It is important students think about the experiences they are sharing and consider:

- Will talking about these experience produce emotions they are not ready to experience?
- Is it a problem if this information is shared outside of the classroom?

All students need to be directed to be respectful of each other and their experiences in regards to this topic.

Working with a partner:

- Share your notes - What similarities and differences did you have?
- Students join with another pair and share their observations of similarities and difference.

Individually:

- Students write a paragraph about their experience of COVID-19.
 - Students review what they have written and Jot down notes about how they could tell their story.
- Discuss with students the many ways they could present their stories. Could it be through:
 - dance
 - monologue
 - poetry
 - group performance
 - visual art piece
 - sculpture
- Students add to the paragraphs they have written the ideas they have about how they could present their COVID-19 story.

Explore, Research & Apply

Thinking about friendships

As a whole class introduce the idea of friendships from a historical, scientific and evolutionary perspective.

The history of friendship

Friendship is not just something that humans do. You can see by looking at other animals that friendship occurs across different species.

The science of friendship

Research has shown friendship is good for you:

- General health
- brain
- improves your sleep
- reduce daily stress and anxiety.

Friendship can even help you to live longer.

The evolution of friendship

Think early modern humans - we used to need friendship for physical survival. Fast forward from early modern humans to the 21st century. Where we used to rely on our friends to stay alive we now rely on them for navigating the psychological parts of our life. It has become about supporting each other. Research indicates that being social and tribal creatures by nature requires us to develop those important skills like communication and commitment.

However, research has also shown that being let down by a friend can sometimes makes matters worse than having no friend at all. What do you think?

Working in small groups:

On a large piece of paper students list down the characteristics of friendships, good and not so good.

Thinking questions

- What do you think makes someone a good friend
- Have you ever had to make new friends?
- What did you do to make new friends?

As a whole class:

Compare and contrast

- Display the sheets the groups have completed around the room .
- Students walk around and view what each group has completed.

Aristotle

More than 2,000 years after his death, Aristotle remains one of the most widely read and quoted thinkers in history.

Aristotle on friendship:

"...it is a help also to those in their prime in performing noble actions, for 'two going together' are better able to think and to act."

Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art, like the universe itself.... It has no survival value; rather it is one of those things that give value to survival.'

C S Lewis

Chinese proverb

海内存知己，天涯若比邻。

(hǎi nèi cún zhījǐ, tiānyá ruò bǐ lín.)

A bosom friend afar brings distant lands near.

If you have a friend who lives far away but who knows your heart, distance cannot break your friendship. True friends, no matter how far they are, are able to fill your spirit.

Chinese proverb

My best friend is the one who brings out the best in me.

Discuss

- What was the same or different?
- Why do you think there might be differences?

Explore

- Working in small groups explore with movement only (no words). Develop a sequence of movements that the group can repeat and perform.
 - How you show people you want to be friends
 - The gestures you would use.
 - The body language.

As a whole class:

- Each group rehearses and performs their sequence of movements.
- After viewing each of the groups discuss what was the same or different.
- Provides feedback about intention and what they could have been changed to more clearly convey the message.

Extension Activity

Select a song that represents friendship to go with your sequence of movements.
What is it? What does it sound like?
How do others react to your song choice?

In the original small groups explore:

- How would you like to say hello
- How to say hello in in other languages
- Questions you would like to ask someone when you first meet them.

After developing the dialogue students now pair the words with the movements and perform their movement sequence and dialogue to the class.

Working in the small groups

- Students share the paragraph they have written about their experience of COVID-19.

Groups discuss

- How the piece the group has devised in relation to friendship might be influenced or changed by the work they have done in relation to the impact of COVID-19 on their lives.
- How would only being able to become friends online change what they have done?

Groups can then

- Work on any changes
- Rehearse and prepare to perform.

NOTE

Remind students about:

- Respect of other people's ideas.
- Staying safe – only share what you feel comfortable sharing.

After the performance

Big Questions

Individually - What did you think?

- Write down your initial thoughts after seeing *SAME-SAME*
- What questions and thoughts were you left with at the end of the performance?
- What did you think the creatives of *SAME-SAME* were asking us to imagine and think about?
- What questions do you have for the performers?

Pair and share

Share your responses with a partner your responses, questions and thoughts.

- What were your similarities and differences?
- What questions did/do you have?

Analyse and Apply

Drawing on the discussions and work students have completed 'Before the show'.

Working in their original small groups students discuss what changes they might make to the piece they choreographed with their group before seeing *SAME-SAME*.

- What would they change – in regards to their movements and dialogue?
- Students further develop their performances piece. with their group.

The development of the group performance piece should include exploration of:

- Each group members perceived strength
- Pretending they didn't have that strength
- Expressing their strength in another way.

As a whole class:

- Consider how you could curate and share the work that each of the groups have devised with other students from other schools.
- Invite groups to discuss ideas and then share with the whole class.

Questions to get you thinking

- Consider the movement style, music, set and lighting
- How did the performance make you feel?
- Can you identify where in the performance you had that feeling?
- Were there any culturally symbolic movements you could identify?

Listen to me as one listens to the rain,
Not attentive, not distracted,
Light footsteps, then drizzle
Water that is air, air that is time,
The day is still leaving,
The night has yet to arrive,
Figurations of mist
At the turn of the corner, figurations of
time
At the bend in this pause,
Listen to me as one listens to the rain,
without listening, hear what I say

Octavio Paz

Awarded the Nobel prize in Literature
1981

Meet the company

Jeffrey Tan, Co-Director, Producer

An experienced theatre director, drama educator, creative producer Jeffrey has worked full time as Resident Director with The Theatre Practice (1997), Drama Lecturer and Acting Head of Drama with LASALLE SIA (1999) and as Associate Artistic Director with TheatreWorks (S) Ltd (From 2002 - 2006). Jeffrey spearheaded the Kids Advisory Panel to present the Kids Arts Village, Teachers Symposium and World of Stories – A Community arts Project with the National Library Board and schools.

Emma Beech, Co-Director

Emma finds the seemingly banal and everyday endlessly fascinating. Her own work is often direct address, and she has coined the term 'stand-up documentarian' to describe her performance process & style. Her work intertwines stories, gestures & physical narratives that are collected from interviews, conversations, confessions and observations with imaginings of everything in between. She loves to find the stories of the 'invisible' people in our communities and share them with others in performance.

Subastian Tan, Choreographer

Subastian started out as a hip-hop dancer and joined Maya Dance Theatre (MDT) in 2016. He has performed with the company in Portugal, Busan, South Korea and recently in Germany for the inter-disciplinary dance-theatre work, "Puffing Bodies". Subastian also is the programme leader of Diverse Abilities Dance Collective (DADC), a community initiative of MDT formed by artistic director Kavitha Krishnan in 2018. The collective is made up of persons with mixed abilities; they come together to co-exist in a space to share their passion for dance.

Michaela Cantwell, Performer, Collaborator, Voice Coach

Since completing a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Drama at the Flinders University Drama Centre, Michaela has been actively involved in film, television, radio and theatre. Some of her film and television credits include *Innocence*, directed by Paul Cox, *Driven* directed by Susan Miller, *McLeod's Daughters* and *Rain Shadow* as well as various television commercials, radio voice overs and two series as the presenter for *Off the Vine*.

Performers

Kobi Taylor

Kobi is the queen of “one liners” and always brings irrepresible joy when performing with No Strings: *Re-Connect* (2016 - 2019); *Ignition Point* (Adelaide Fringe 2019); and more.

June Lin Yi Zhen

June is a dancer and performer at DADC who regularly co-facilitates dance classes for children. She is also an avid bowler who represented Singapore in the Special Olympics 2015.

Jaspreet Kaur Sekhon

Jaspreet is a founding member of DADC - an experienced performer, a teacher and a self-advocate who was a speaker for the UN Conference on World Down Syndrome Day 2014.

Jack Sadler

Jack’s humour and focus are hallmarks of his performances with No Strings since 2009: *Godzilla vs No Strings* and *Ignition Point* (Adelaide Fringe); *Not All Who Wander are Lost* (DreamBIG); and more.

Chen Wanyi

Wanyi is a dancer at DADC and an arts administrator with Apsara Asia. She also has a strong interest in fashion and looks to design costumes for dance performances.

Arassi Maria Rajikumar

As a member of DADC, Arassi performs, co-facilitates dance classes for children and is the team’s costume manager. She also has an avid interest for Speech and Drama and drums.

Zoe Walker

Zoe expresses herself through dance and movement. Over the last year with No Strings her performance skills have broadened and she loves being on stage: *25 Years of No Strings* (2019).

Additional Resources

friendship (n.)

Old English *freondscipe* "friendship, mutual liking and regard,"

friend (n.)

Old English *freond* "one attached to another by feelings of personal regard and preference,"

-ship

word-forming element meaning "quality, condition; act, power, skill; office, position; relation between," Middle English – *schipe*-

The friendship continuum

Evaluating different friendships. Friendships vary in their degree of commitment

- best friend/intimate friend
 - share personal feelings and disclose things about ourselves
 - involves deep emotional bond and high level of trust. Does not necessarily imply 'sexual closeness'. Sexual involvement doesn't always involve intimacy. We can be intimate with family or very close friends.
- Friend
 - Proximity friends - we live, work, or play in the same area
 - Selected friends - due to common interests, backgrounds, enjoy their company etc, developed from proximity friends
 - Significant friends – more than selected friends
- acquaintance
 - we acknowledge them
- stranger – don't know them yet.
- Your own personal diagram of friendship

