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| **Grade** | **Content Areas Being Integrated** |
| *6th* | *THEATRE/SCIENCE*  *Theatre as a Tool in Environmental Activism* |

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|  | **Arts Discipline** | **Other Content Area** |
| **Standards**  **Addressed in the Integrated Lesson/Activity** | *1.2: Identify how production values can manipulate mood to persuade and disseminate propaganda; 5.1: Use theatrical skills to communicate concepts or ideas from other curriculum areas, such as a demonstration in history/social science of how persuasion and propaganda are used in advertising.* | *5(e): Students know that the number and type of organisms an ecosystem can support depend on the resources available and on abiotic factors, such as quantities of light and water, a range of temperatures, and soil composition.* |
| **Student Objectives in Each Discipline** | *The student will understand that the elements of theatre (light, sound, blocking, acting techniques) can manipulate and opinion.* | *The student will understand that healthy habitats need to be maintained by protecting indigenous organisms.* |

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| **Integrated Student Objective** | **What is the objective of the integrated activity? Look at connections being made between the two content areas.**  *The student will understand that the elements of theatre, as well as the elements of nature, play*  *a significant role in the success of a theatrical production and the habitats required to support nature.* |
| **Essential Question** | **What is the question you want the students to be able to answer at the end of this lesson?**  *How can theatre artists communicate the concerns of environmental scientists?* |

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| **Materials/Resources** |
| *For pre-lesson background, various websites can be consulted, such as www.ballonafriends.org; www.tongva.com; recordings of the sounds of an estuarial wetlands environment; pictures of different wetlands and several of estuarial wetlands* |

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| **Lesson/Activity Description** |
| ***Opening******Gathering/Warm-up (10 minutes)***  *1. Forming a circle: Students enter to the sounds of a wetlands habitat (if available). Encourage students to physicalize any*  *responses as they enter and make a circle.*  *2. Wetlands Soundscape: Have a quick review of the elements of an estuarial wetlands habitat: ocean, river, birds of several*  *kinds, rain (in winter), etc. Assign each student a sound to make, and then, on the leader’s signal, all make their sounds*  *together to create the environment. Point out that some sounds will be continuous (e.g., the ocean) and some intermittent*  *(e.g., the birds).*  ***Reviewing/ Previewing******Vocabulary (10 minutes)***  *3. Cover the new theater vocabulary: activism, propaganda, mood, manipulation*  *4. Review important vocabulary of ecology: ecosystem, habitat, niche, interdependence*  *5. Discussion. Can theatre influence our opinions? Discuss advertising. What makes an effective advertisement? Can theater*  *techniques be applied to affect people’s opinions about more important matters, like the health of our planet?*  ***Exploring/Creating (30 minutes)***  *6. Groups of Five: Circle Maps. Each group is given a large sheet of butcher paper. In the middle of each sheet of paper is a*  *large circle with one of the political factions involved in the struggle over Ballona: 1) the real-estate developers and corporate*  *interests; 2) the activist groups “Friends of Ballona Wetlands”; 3) the ecological scientists (Groups 2 and 3 might be*  *combined); 4) the ocean and rivers; 5) the birds, fish and plants; 6) ordinary citizens who want jobs and homes; 7) Tongva*  *Native Americans (original inhabitants of Ballona); 8) the politicians. (Note: Groups may prepare ahead by doing particular*  *research on the interests of one group.) Niche Needs and Relationships: In new bubbles, students write in the needs and/or desires of their particular faction. Draw lines connecting the center bubble to the other bubbles. If two outer bubbles connect in some way, draw a line connecting them.*  ***Improvising/ Inventing (Story) (30 minutes)***  *7. Depositions. Still in the same groups of five, students confer among each other about the merits of their particular case. If needed,*  *one person in the group can play the attorney who elicits pleas and complaints from the other members of the group,who, in role,*  *articulate their objectives and motivations. Encourage students to use their actor’s tools to create and maintain a definite character.*  *8. Mock Trial or Hearing. With the leader in role as Judge, members from the different factions take the stand and plead their cases. The more actual research that the students have done that gets into their testimony, the better. For example, the Least Terne, a wetlands bird, might say, “The only place I can land to lay my eggs is estuarial wetlands. Golf courses and parks don’t have the native grasses that I need to survive.” Or, from the Pickleweed, a native Ballona Wetlands plant: “Since my roots have been cut off from the ocean, I can’t get the salt that I need to thrive and then cry out of my stalks to nurture my home. I haven’t been able to cry for the longest time, and I’m just an emotional wreck!” The Developers: “The Los Angeles area needs more homes and businesses to accommodate its growing population and compete in a global economy! Besides, this wetlands area is just a wasteland; it’s useless!” The Activists/Scientists: “Wetlands habitats support 30 percent of all organisms on our planet! Many of these organisms are links in key ecological systems that ultimately affect the health of the earth and its inhabitants. The wetlands are beautiful, natural places that must be restored, protected and passed on to our descendents.” The Tongva Native-Americans: “Our ancestors lived, worked and prayed on this land for thousands of years. It must be preserved to honor the human history of this region.”*  *The Leader/Judge maintains control of the court at all times, discouraging cross-talk between factions. However, for dramatic effect, a Developer’s testimony might be interrupted by the plaintive cry of a bird or mournful susurrus of the starving plants.*  ***Sharing/Reflecting******Playmaking******(30 minutes)***  *9. Manipulating the Elements of Theatre: Selection of Content and Choices in Form*  *• Reminding the students that their purpose now as theater artists is to create a play that will persuade opinion in the*  *Environmentalists’ favor, cull the choicest arguments and lines from the improvisation above (a digital video might be used*  *to record these).*  *• Arrange these strategically to create a kind of script. (The degree of actual documentation of this “script” would be up to*  *the classroom teacher/leader.)*  *• Manipulate the order of events, and use other plot devices to angle the conflict to favor the ecologists*  *• Include elements of sound and light, if available, to intensify mood.*  *• Rehearse*  *• Perform*  *• Videotape the play.*  ***Reflecting/Assessing (10 minutes)***  *10. View Video. Discuss. Does the play do the job of persuading viewers to side with the Environmentalists? If not, what can be*  *changed to make this happen, or what can be done to make it even more persuasive? Are the Developers’ interests*  *represented so unflatteringly as to demonize them? If so, is this in the best interests of the Environmentalists?*  *Discuss the need for mutual cooperation between corporations and ecologists to make progress in preservation.*  ***Connections:*** *Political science, social activism*  ***Extensions:*** *Field trip to Ballona Wetlands through “Friends of Ballona Wetlands” organization*  ***Differentiation:*** *(CRRE) Native American history (SP ED) (EL) Total Physical Response* |