TEACHER’S RESOURCE GUIDE

JAN 17 - FEB 17, 2020
There are numerous possibilities for using both the book and musical stage adaptation of Peter H. Reynold’s *The Dot* as a jumping off point for cross-curriculum and interdisciplinary study in your classroom. From vocabulary enrichment incorporating acting and drawing to growth mindset lessons this charming picture book offers a platform for reaching any number of educational goals.

Below are resources and suggestions to incorporate both the book and stage musical of *THE DOT* into your classroom studies.
THE STORY

PLAY SYNOPSIS

Vashti knows one thing. She “just can’t draw.” But when her teacher tells her to “just make a mark and see where it takes you.” Vashti is set on a journey of discovery and imagination that proves that not only can she draw, everyone can. It’s just a matter of starting.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE ADAPTATION

_The Dot_ was adapted for the stage by playwright Jennifer Kirkeby (Stages adaptation of _The Snow Queen, The Velveteen Rabbit, Owl Moon, The Nightingale, Twelve Dancing Princesses_) and composer James Lekatz (Stages adaptations of _Velveteen Rabbit The Snow Queen_) and is based on the book, _The Dot_ written and illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds. Stages Theatre Company commissioned the adaptation in the winter of 2019. We are excited to bring this delightful and charming world premiere dance-inspired adaptation to our stage this January. The adaptation is a collaboration between Stages Theatre Company and Escalate Dance. It incorporates music, dance and dialogue to create a story about embracing your inner artist and trusting that your imagination will take you wherever you want to go.
BEFORE THE PLAY

READ THE BOOK
Before attending the stage adaptation at Stages Theatre Company, read the picture book the play is based on, *The Dot* by Peter H. Reynolds.

DISCUSS THE BOOK

*Page to Self Connections:*

1) Have you ever sat in front of blank piece of paper and not known what to write or draw? Have you ever felt like you “just can’t do it” or that you “are not any good at it”? What did you do to get started? How did you overcome your feelings of “not being good enough?” How did it make you feel to finish the project?

2) Why do you think the teacher in the book said, “Make a mark and see where it takes you?” What does the teacher mean by saying this? Why is getting started sometimes the most difficult part of a project? Why is it important to start even if we don’t know what the outcome might be?

3) We sometimes say that creativity is a process and sometimes overthinking it can stop our creative flow. In the book, once Vashti gets started and gains confidence, she draws and paints many, many things even though she started out thinking she couldn’t do it. Have you ever felt like you just didn’t know where to start but then it grew into a big, successful project? What was it? What was your creative process? How did one thing build into something else?

WATCH VIDEOS BASED ON THE BOOK

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5mGeR4AQdM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5mGeR4AQdM)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zS5YU66s5tc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zS5YU66s5tc)
- [https://vimeo.com/315352814](https://vimeo.com/315352814)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKCsqbiCxE8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKCsqbiCxE8)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGTIO6JMJhY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGTIO6JMJhY) (Book trailer, includes The Dot song & interview with the author)

**THE DOT SONG, inspired by the book:**

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZQMhdyJhsA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZQMhdyJhsA)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r143cxDQ-o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r143cxDQ-o) (includes hand motions)
THEATRE ARTS
Predictions and Expectations
(Grades K-4)

BEFORE THE PLAY: Read the book *The Dot* by Peter H. Reynolds with your class. With student input, establish the expectations for the upcoming play. What actions or events might be seen on stage? What characters might the play include from the book? What set or sound or costume elements might they see on stage? It is a good time to cover some of these stage elements with your students to enhance their enjoyment and understanding of live theatre. Students may draw or write about what they anticipate seeing.

AFTER THE PLAY: Revisit the expectations to see how many were realized. Discuss the similarities and differences from the book to the play, in terms of plot, characters, and action. Were the characters as portrayed on the stage faithful to the characters in the book? How or why? How would you describe the main “message” of the play? How was it similar or different from the book? Did they see what they expected? What were some of the stage elements that they remember seeing? Set? Costumes? Props? Lights? Sound? Music? How did these elements support the story of the play?
CIRCLE ACT THE STORY
Re-telling & Re-en-ACT-ing
(Grades K-2)

In this exercise, students will act out the story of *The Dot* as a group. All students will play all the roles simultaneously. You, as the teacher, will play the narrator to keep the story moving and to give directions.

1) Read the story of *The Dot* to your students.

2) Discuss what happens in the story. Who are the characters? Where is it set? What are the events?

3) Stand with your students in a circle and let them know they are going to act out the story of *The Dot*. Instruct them that they will all be playing all the parts while standing in the circle. They will switch from role to role as the story progresses. This switching will be prompted by you as the narrator. Remind them that they will always stay in their place in the circle. (i.e. if the character walks or runs, it is done in place.)

4) Start by setting the scene. Where are we? Time of year? Inside/Outside? Who is there? What are the characters doing?

5) Start telling the story. Have the students become the main characters, Vashti and her teacher. Vashi is sitting in her classroom right after art. How is she feeling? What is she doing? Then the students become the teacher and ask Vashti what she is doing? Continue through the story. It is easiest to do the story using call and response.

6) Then, continue the story and see how much the students remember and if they know what comes next.

This can be effective in exploring—beginning, middle and end; story setting; comprehension; story sequencing and character as well as in re-telling a story.
DANCE-INSPIRED STORYTELLING
(Grades K-4)

Stages Theatre Company's production of The Dot is a dance-inspired adaptation of Peter H. Reynold's book. Each dot painting from the book comes to life on stage through music and dance—Red Dot, Blue Dot, Yellow Dot, Purple Dot, Big Dot, Little Dots, Negative Space Dot. Before attending the production introduce your students to elements of dance that may assist them in further comprehending the storytelling through movement that is explored in the production.

BEFORE THE SHOW
Discuss the different purposes of dance—from ceremonial or traditional and cultural to recreational and artistic. Then, explore the three basic dance elements with your students.

1) SPACE - Explore LEVELS (high, medium, low); DIRECTION (left, right, center); BODY SHAPE (curved, straight, round, square, big, little); PATHWAYS (Movement from one point to another-straight, curved, diagonal)

2) TIME - Explore PULSE, TEMPO, RHYTHM

3) FORCE - Explore the ENERGY or INTENSITY of the movement – sharp, strong, light, heavy, restricted, free-flow

After this discussion and exploration create a DANCE MAP (as a class, in small groups or individually.)

CREATING A DANCE MAP

MATERIALS: Blank Paper, pencil/crayon & space for movement

LESSON PLAN

1) Place three points anywhere on the paper.
2) Connect the three points with a pathway that is not a straight line.
3) Label the three points “beginning,” “middle,” and “end.”
4) Mark five other places on your pathway using hash marks (||).
DANCE-INSPIRED STORYTELLING

(continued)

CREATING A DANCE MAP (Continued)

5) Underneath each set of hash marks, write a level, a type of shape, and a number between 1 and 8.

6) In an open space, walk the pathway as it is shown on your paper. Repeat the walk until it is memorized. Pay attention to the beginning, middle and end points. Walk it again for memory. Make sure you are beginning and ending in the correct places.

7) Add the hash mark points to the movement on the pathway and add the shapes in each position. Freeze the shape for the right number of seconds (1-8.) Move through the dance a few times to memorize it.

8) Pick a theme for the dance that fits the pathway and movement.

9) Add movement qualities that match the theme. These can be listed on the back of the paper. Try experimenting with different types of movement between the points (skipping, hopping, jumping, leaping, etc.)

10) Experiment with different kinds of musical accompaniment as well – fast, slow, soft, loud, percussive, lyrical. Does the music effect the movement?

DURING THE SHOW

While watching Stages Theatre Company’s production of The Dot encourage students observe whether they can identify the elements of dance that they explored in class.

AFTER THE SHOW

After seeing the production, discuss how each dance number in the show used the elements in different ways – Red Dot, Blue Dot, Purple Dot, etc. Why would the composer and choreographer decide to tell the story this way? How was the Red Dot dance different than the Blue Dot and so forth? How was the interpretation of the dance inspired by the paintings in the book? How did the dance show the different qualities of the paintings and colors? Was this an effective way to interpret the book for the stage? How did the music effect the dance?
After reading the book, The Dot and before or after seeing the show, use the book and production as inspiration for writing activities in your classroom.

1) DOT CHARACTERS: Make a dot, and then make the dot into a character. Then, write a story using the created character.

• “MAKE A MARK” JOURNAL: Provide students with blank-page journals for them to “make a mark” in every day (a word, a picture, something funny that happened that day, how they may be feeling, something they accomplished, a doodle, a squiggle, a dot!)

• RESEARCH & BIOGRAPHY: Research and write about a favorite/famous artist.

Links to start your art research:
• https://www.whatdowedoallday.com/picture-book-biographies-women-artists/ (list of short biographies of female artists)
• https://www.ducksters.com/history/art/ (includes mostly European and mostly male artists)

• DIARY WRITING: Write Vashti’s diary entry for this day and/or the day of the art show.

• IMAGERY: Vashti ‘sat glued to her chair’. Was she really glued to it? What kind of literary technique is this? Are there other ways to express, “glued to her chair?” Are there other expressions that commonly use imagery to explain meaning?

• ARTICLE WRITING: Write an article for the school newspaper about the art show. Try to include an interview with Vashti.

• PREQUEL & SEQUEL WRITING: Write a prequel to this story that explains what happened before art class or the last time Vashti was in art class. And/Or, write a sequel to the story. What happens to the boy after he has signed his own picture?
EXTENDED LEARNING

ART PROJECTS

AMAZING ART PROJECTS INSPIRED BY THE DOT

_The Dot_ is an amazing book for many, many amazing art projects. After reading the book and seeing the play, bring one or more of these inspiring art projects into your classroom.

- Use the words ‘Just make a mark and see where it takes you,’ as inspiration for creating artwork. What type of mark will you make? Where will it take you? What materials will you use?
- Make a list of different types of art materials. Choose one of the different materials and make a dot picture. Try several different materials to make different dots. Compare and contrast the pictures. How are they similar? How are they different? Which material was your favorite? Which was the easiest to use? Which was more difficult?
- Just like Vashti did in the book, try making a dot by NOT painting a dot.
- Have students choose another shape or object and just like Vashti does in the book with a dot, have them explore creating with this shape. Have them make as many different versions of this same shape/object. They can explore varying the size, color, or texture, or using negative space, etc.

LINK TO LESSON PLANS FOR AMAZING ART PROJECTS:

- [https://www.weareteachers.com/the-dot-activities/](https://www.weareteachers.com/the-dot-activities/) - Contains links to TEN comprehensive lesson plans for DOT inspired art projects. Plans include curriculum on outlining; shading; quick math lessons on angles and circles; positive/negative space; community collaging; and color schemes/palettes. (Grades K-4)
Pointillism is a style of painting that developed by using tiny dots of pure color, side by side to build a painting’s form. These tiny dots of paint, when side by side, give the viewer’s eye a chance to blend the color optically, rather than having the colors readily blended on the canvas. The Dot is an inspiring tale to explore this type of painting. Below are several links to lesson plans on Pointillism for Elementary students (K-5):

- [https://www.easypeasyandfun.com/georges-seurat-pointillism-art-lesson-for-kids/](https://www.easypeasyandfun.com/georges-seurat-pointillism-art-lesson-for-kids/)
- [http://theartclassroom.blogspot.com/2008/02/primary-pointillism.html](http://theartclassroom.blogspot.com/2008/02/primary-pointillism.html)

THE COLOR WHEEL

Vashti experiments with different colors. Using the color wheel exercise below, experiment with making different colors with only the primary colors in your paint box. Make a chart that shows what happens when you mix different groups of colors together.

- [https://www.mensaforkids.org/MFK2/assets/File/Teach/LessonPlans/Lesson_Color.pdf](https://www.mensaforkids.org/MFK2/assets/File/Teach/LessonPlans/Lesson_Color.pdf)
GROWTH MINDSET
The Dot celebrates creativity and self-expression through stories that show children working through struggle. It addresses the idea of risk-taking while learning to do new things. After reading the book and seeing the play, talk with students about how they could “make their mark”?

DRAWING EMOTIONS
1) Discuss emotions with the class. What emotions are there?
2) Ask the class what these emotions feel like? Do they feel nice or horrible? What is their favorite emotion?
3) Ask the class to choose one emotion and draw or paint what they think that emotion looks like. Get them to think about what kind of color that emotion might be.
4) When the children have made their pictures, compare those pictures which portray the same emotion. Do the children's pictures have similarities?
5) Discuss the kinds of colors we associate with emotion (red = anger, green = jealousy, white = peace etc.). Do any of these colors appear in the children's pictures?

LINKS TO GROWTH MINDSET LESSON PLANS:
• https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/julie-ballew/2017/The-Power-of-Words/ Lesson plan on
• https://www.nhsd.k12.wi.us/faculty/toeftger/Grades%20K-1%20Mindset%20Lesson.doc
• https://mariadismondy.com/2016/11/05/growthmindset-the-dot/

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
• https://www.peterhreynolds.com/ (author's official website)
• https://www.fablevisionlearning.com/ - Author’s website dedicated to teacher resources.
• https://www.thedotcentral.com/ - Website dedicated to The Dot.
• https://www.smore.com/zp9nz-dot-day - Resources for International Dot Day
BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

FURTHER READING

MORE BOOKS WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED BY PETER H. REYNOLDS

The North Star (1997)
Sydney’s Star (2001)
Ish (2004)
So Few of Me (2006)
The Best Kid in the World (2006)
Rose’s Garden (2009)
I’m Here (2011)
Sky Color (2012)
My Very Big Little World (2012)
Playing from the Heart (2016)
Happy Dreamer (2017)
The Word Collector (2018)
Say Something (2019)
Be You (March, 2020)

MORE ABOUT PETER REYNOLDS & HIS PROJECTS HERE:
http://peterhreynolds.com
FURTHER READING (Continued)

OTHER GROWTH MINDSET BOOKS

- *The Girl who Never Made Mistakes* by Mark Pett & Gary Rubinstein
- *Rosie Revere, Engineer* by Andrea Beaty, Illustrated by David Roberts
- *Iggy Peck, Architect* by Andrea Beaty, Illustrated by David Roberts
- *Ada Twist, Scientist* by Andrea Beaty, Illustrated by David Roberts
- *What to Do with an Idea?* by Kobi Yamada, Illustrated by Mae Besom
- *What to Do with a Problem?* by Kobi Yamada, Illustrated by Mae Besom
- *What to Do with a Chance?* by Kobi Yamada, Illustrated by Mae Besom
- *Beautiful Oops!* by Barney Saltzberg
- *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires