

This lesson plan is the second in a series that makes up a unit on understanding and creating verbatim theatre. The unit will support you to introduce the concept of verbatim theatre, its origins, and how it links to your learners' devising knowledge. It will enable your learners to create their own piece of verbatim theatre.

Lesson 2 introduces Moisés Kaufman, The Tectonic Theater Project, and their verbatim play 'The Laramie Project'. Learners will be invited to discuss their understanding of the play, the equalities issue within it, and the social impact the play had. This lesson will last more than one school period. American spelling of 'theater' has to be used for Tectonic Theater project throughout as it is their company name.

An optional viewing of 'The Laramie Project' film by HBO is included in this lesson. This film is age-rated 15, so we recommend only using this with learners aged 15 or over. One alternative for younger learners is to use the period times to read and discuss the text of the play (included in the resource pack for this unit), and then continue following the lesson slides. Another alternative is using selected scenes from the film to highlight verbatim practice, instead of watching all of it. Scenes have been suggested in the lesson plan.

### Curriculum for Excellence Links

Experiences and Outcomes	Benchmarks
I can analyse technical aspects of drama and scripts, make informed judgments and express considered opinions on my own and others' work. <b>EXA 4-15a</b>	Analyses their own and others' performances, including the work of peers and, where possible, professionals, making detailed comments, with appropriate justification, using appropriate drama vocabulary consistently.
As I listen or watch, I can: identify and give an accurate account of the purpose and main concerns of the text, and can make inferences from key statements; identify and discuss similarities and differences between different types of text; use this information for different purposes. <b>LIT 3-04a</b>	Identifies and gives an accurate account of the purpose and main ideas of spoken texts, with appropriate justification. Uses own words to make and organise notes, selecting key information. Uses notes to create new texts that show understanding of the issue/subject.
I can explain why a group I have identified might experience inequality and can suggest ways in which this inequality might be addressed. <b>SOC 3-16a</b>	Makes two or more reasoned suggestions of ways in which this inequality might be addressed.

### LGBT Inclusive Education Learning Themes

Understanding the Equality Act (2010), UNCRC and Human Rights
Identifying prejudice, discrimination, and bullying (including homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia)
Celebrating diversity and difference
History of LGBT equality movements

### Equality Act Characteristics Covered

Sexual Orientation
--------------------

### Learning Intentions

• I am learning about Moisés Kaufman, the Tectonic Theater project and their play "The Laramie Project".
• I am learning about reasons people may choose to create verbatim theatre.
• I am learning about the impact of a hate crime.

Success Criteria
• I can express considered opinions on the work of others.
• I can identify the purpose and message of a text.
• I can identify at least one reason why a theatre practitioner chooses verbatim form.
• I can identify inequality in a situation and discuss how it has/or could be addressed.

## Resources accompanying this lesson

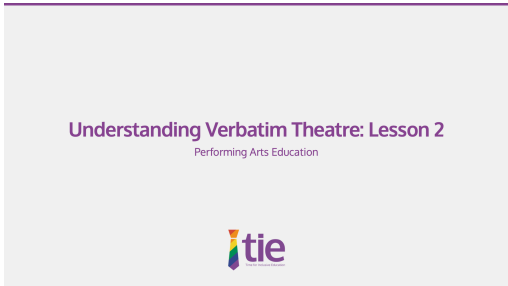
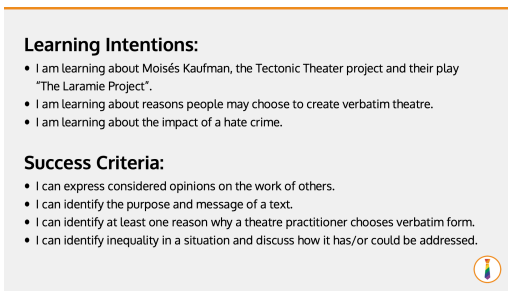
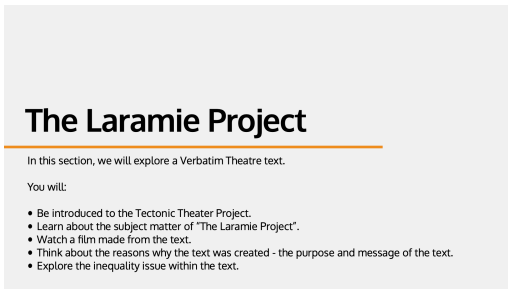
"Understanding Verbatim Theatre: Lesson 2" PowerPoint slides.





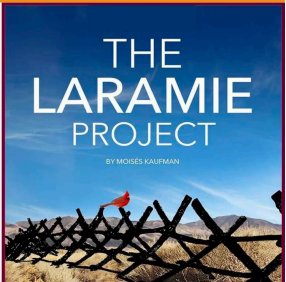
"Verbatim Theatre - Lesson 2 - MTV" PDF file.

"Verbatim Theatre - Lesson 2 - MTV - Circle of Viewpoints" PDF file.

"Verbatim Theatre - Lesson 2 - MTV - Step Inside" PDF file.

## Lesson Plan

Powerpoint Slide	Teaching Notes
<b>Prior Learning</b>	Please complete "Understanding Verbatim Theatre: Lesson 1".
	Title page - introducing the topic.
	Learning Intentions and Success Criteria for Lesson 2.
	<p>Introduce Section 2:</p> <p>Tell the learners you will be exploring a theatre company who work with verbatim text to create new plays and looking in detail at one of their plays. We will be watching a film that was produced from the text of the play.</p> <p>After that, you will be thinking about the purpose and message of the text and looking at how the inequality issue within it might be addressed.</p>

<p><b>Tectonic Theater Project</b></p> <p>The Tectonic Theater Project was founded in 1991 by Moisés Kaufman.</p> <p>It is based in New York City.</p> <p>It has created and staged over twenty plays and musicals.</p> <p>Artistic Director Moisés Kaufman and the Tectonic Theater Project develop new plays through a process of research and collaboration.</p> <p>They call this process "Moment Work".</p> 	<p>Cover the information in this slide with learners in whichever manner suits your teaching style.</p> <p>This slide introduces Moisés Kaufmann and the Tectonic Theater Project.</p> <p><b>Moment Work</b> explores the theatrical potential of all the elements of the stage in order to create strong theatrical and dramatic narratives from the ground up.</p> <p>If you want to delve deeper into what this is, for yourself or your learners, you can find more information here: <a href="https://www.momentwork.org/">https://www.momentwork.org/</a> This interview in the Theatre Journal is also very informative: <a href="#">Theatre Journal</a>.</p>
 <p>Lots of the Tectonic Theater Project's work uses verbatim techniques.</p> <p>They want their work to make their audiences think about the social issues in the world around them.</p> <p>Moisés Kaufman was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 2016 by President Obama, for "his powerful contributions to American Theater," and with appreciation for how his company "continues to move audiences with its bold portrayals of contemporary social issues."</p> <p>Kaufman: "Art is a great prism through which we can understand history and current events."</p> 	<p>Cover the information in this slide with learners in whichever manner suits your teaching style.</p> <p>This slide introduces the idea that theatre can be used to create change and highlights Kaufman and Tectonic Theater Project's good practice in that area.</p> <p>Social engagement will be covered in more detail in Lesson 3.</p> <p>This article about Kaufman's work can be shared with your learners or set as reading/research homework: <a href="#">NBC Interview</a></p>
<p><b>The Laramie Project: Introduction to the Text</b></p> <p>It is important to introduce the subject matter of The Laramie Project before we explore it. You may find the content of the text quite challenging.</p> <p>The Laramie Project is about the murder of 21 year old Matthew Shepard in October 1998.</p> <p>He was beaten and left to die on the plains outside Laramie, Wyoming, by Aaron McKinley and Russell Henderson, in a homophobic hate crime.</p> <p>The Tectonic Theater Project took 6 trips to Laramie in the year following the murder where they interviewed citizens of the town, some of whom were connected with the tragedy, some were not.</p> <p>Their aim was to understand the impact of this hate crime and the underlying prejudice and hatred that enabled it.</p> 	<p>The subject matter of this slide and 'The Laramie Project' text itself is challenging. Cover the information with your learners in whichever manner suits your teaching style and the age/stage/maturity level of your learners.</p> <p>You will be able to open up discussions in two areas using the information here: the interview process for verbatim theatre and hate crimes - what are they? Who do they impact? Are there ways we can combat them?</p> <p>The following links will provide learners with more information about hate crime in Scotland if necessary:  <a href="#">Police Scotland - Advice on Hate Crime</a>  <a href="#">Hate Crime and Public Order Bill</a></p>
<p>In 2009, President Obama invited the company to witness the signing of the 'Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act' at the White House, recognising Tectonic Theater's contribution to the national dialogue around LGBT-related hate crimes.</p> 	<p>Cover the information in this slide with learners in whichever manner suits your teaching style.</p> <p>This slide will enable you to deepen previous discussions around hate crime prevention and/or the power verbatim theatre has to evoke social change.</p> <p>Your learners may ask about James Byrd Jr. He was a victim of a racially motivated attack. His and Matthew's deaths spurred on new legislation. You can find out more about the creation of the Act <a href="#">here</a>.</p>



Note: this part of the lesson is dependent on the age of the learners. If they are aged 15 or over, they can watch the film. Otherwise, the text of the play should be read, or the suggested scenes watched and analysed instead.

This is the link to the film version of The Laramie Project (age rating 15). Some scenes are quite upsetting/challenging to watch. We recommend watching it yourself before your learners view it to ensure you are aware of any moments your particular learners may find difficult and any specific teaching moments where you would like to pause the film.

The film will take approximately two school periods to watch - but it could possibly take three periods when stopping to include your own teaching points. We recommend reiterating to learners where any required further support can be accessed within the school setting, and that they can discuss how they feel about the film with you.

Subtitles can be activated by selecting the 'Subtitles/closed captions' option on the YouTube video. You may wish to enter full screen when showing this film for the class.

### **Scenes from the film**

You may find it more engaging for your learners to watch scenes from the film to evoke discussion about verbatim theatre, character development and the theme and message of the play. Please use your professional judgement to determine what works best and is appropriate for your learners.

To develop your learners' thinking skills and make this section of the resource active, please see the "Verbatim Theatre - Lesson 2 - MTV" PDF file. These exercises were suggested by Tanya MacDonald during the resource pilot. These may be especially effective with an S3 group of learners.

The following list of scenes have been included to help you select scenes for your learners. There may be other parts of the film you would like to use, if appropriate.

3:44 - 5:57

This scene discusses the verbatim theatre process and you see someone who doesn't want to be part of the creation of the play. This would be an interesting way to explore ethics in practice.

11:09 - 12:41

This includes a good example of character description. This could give your learners the chance to try this technique with a familiar person or with an example of a real person they have read about through research.

37:35 - 39:02

Here we see a call for hate crime legislation. This is an opportunity to look at the legislation that was created because of the Matthew Shepard case and the award Moisés Kaufmann received for the part he played in helping people to understand the seriousness of the crime. This is also an opportunity to discuss theatre as a mechanism for change.

43:25 - 45:28

Here we see the impact of education about prejudice through the changing perspectives of the police officer and the gathering that happened after Matthew's death, where people talk candidly about being out and being scared about it. Discussions surrounding what it means to come out and how education can help build empathy between diverse groups of people could be facilitated from this scene.

Note: This scene has a swear word in it ("sh\*t") - please review in case that is not suitable for your learners.

46:00 - 49:00

The homecoming parade highlights the community coming together to show support for equalities/Matthew Shepard. This could be an opportunity to discuss supporting others and having positive regard for others, regardless of our differences.

51:37 - 54:00

The support offered from the Catholic priest is very powerful. He uses homophobic language but talks about it as the "seed of violence". Discussions surrounding the use of pejorative language and how that leads to greater discrimination of the affected social groups could help your learners understand how prejudice spreads.

1:01:10 - 1:03:10

The Angel Action silent protest shows the power of peaceful protesting which can be a discussion topic. You can also use the imagery and silence here to exemplify ways of presenting material to an audience; image and silence can help an audience focus on your message and/or theme.

1:08:45 - 1:10:22

This shows an example of using theatre in schools to tackle hate. This links directly to the project your learners are currently doing. After watching it, you could have discussions about the things that matter to them right now which will help them to find the topic they want to create their verbatim theatre play about. You could also discuss how effective they think theatre is in educating people.

1:19:55 - 1:25:09

What Matthew's dad says in his speech might be unexpected for your learners. He shows empathy for the young men who killed Matthew. You may find it interesting to try the circle of viewpoints exercise after watching this scene. This is a 'making thinking visible' routine. Please see the file [Verbatim Theatre - Lesson 2 - MTV.pdf](#)

1:27:24 - 1:29:29

This scene comes full circle and makes us think about the process of creating a verbatim theatre play again. It highlights the amount of files and information the theatre company have as part of their process. Discussions could include:

- How you reduce the information you have to tell a story concisely
- How to stay ethical when selecting material
- How much time and effort goes into this theatrical form

All of these topics are covered in more detail in Lessons 3 and 4, but this will give the learners an idea of the tasks they will have to complete.

#### The Laramie Project: Reflections on the Text





Take some time to reflect on 'The Laramie Project'.

Write down:

- Anything it made you think or feel.
- Any questions you have about the event.
- Any questions you have about the people in the text.
- Any questions you have about the theatre project or the verbatim process.



You can do this exercise after the full film has been watched or the full text has been read, or for 5 minutes after every session of the film or text reading in each period. This will give your learners the opportunity to express their feelings, opinions, ideas, and questions about 'The Laramie Project' text on their own terms.

<div><p><b>The Laramie Project: The Message of the Text</b></p><p>Discuss the points and ideas the text has brought up for you with your classmates.</p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Where are the similarities? / Where are the differences?</li><li>◦ What social issues or inequalities has it made you think about?</li><li>◦ What conversations will this make you have?</li></ul><p>As a group, decide what you think the message of this text is.</p><p><b>Tectonic Theater Project Message:</b> "Hate did happen there. Hate can happen anywhere. We must guard against it. When it happens, we must not deny, or forget, or revise. The people of Laramie are our teachers."</p></div>	<p>It is up to you how you want to facilitate this exercise. You may want to converse with learners individually, ask them to pair/share, offer group work, or hear the responses during whole class discussion.</p> <p>The important points to cover are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The similarities and/or differences in ideas between the learners - so that you can encourage listening skills and respectful critical discussion.</li><li>• The social issues and/or inequalities apparent to the learners and what their thoughts are about these - this can include ideas of how these could have been avoided or could be combatted.</li></ul> <p>Next, involve the learners in a discussion about the use of verbatim theatre to explore this story. Possible questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why do you think Kaufman chose this form?</li><li>• In what way does hearing the real words people said help you understand the issue? Or does it?</li><li>• How do you think Tectonic Theater Project put this piece together from the interviews?</li></ul> <p>Work together as a group or a class, whichever suits your learners and your teaching style, to decide on the message you got from the text.</p> <p>On click, Tectonic Theater Project's message will appear.</p> <p>Discuss the intended message of Tectonic Theatre Project and contrast it with the message your learners arrived at. Depending on the message you can discuss similarities or differences.</p>
<div><p><b>Learning Intentions:</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I am learning about Moisés Kaufman, the Tectonic Theater project and their play "The Laramie Project".</li><li>• I am learning about reasons people may choose to create verbatim theatre.</li><li>• I am learning about the impact of a hate crime.</li></ul><p><b>Success Criteria:</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I can express considered opinions on the work of others.</li><li>• I can identify the purpose and message of a text.</li><li>• I can identify at least one reason why a theatre practitioner chooses verbatim form.</li><li>• I can identify inequality in a situation and discuss how it has/or could be addressed.</li></ul></div>	<p>Learning Intentions and Success Criteria for Lesson 2 to check off with learners if desired.</p>