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Contact: The Magic of Communication

Five examples of connections to the MA Curriculum Frameworks

Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework, Core Concept

"As they learn to communicate through the arts, students understand why people need more than words alone for eloquent communication."

The opening act of this program features routines exploring music's ability to tell stories, and to affect movement and emotion. Later, to demonstrate how body language and facial expressions can be powerful tools for communication, a student is invited onstage and in a matter of minutes is taught a difficult juggling stunt, all without the use of words.

MA Foreign Languages Curriculum Framework, Learning Standard 1

"Interpersonal Communication: Students of modern languages will converse in a language other than English to provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions."

A student is invited onstage to participate in an interactive illusion presented almost entirely in Spanish. This routine demonstrates the importance of learning foreign languages, and also explores techniques for overcoming language barriers (e.g., repetition, non-verbal cues, rephrasing, visual associations...).

MA English Language Arts Curriculum Framework, Anchor Standards

Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration

"Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally."

During a routine on the US Postal Service, randomly selected students are asked trivia questions relating to an envelope they are holding in their hand. They must carefully examine the envelope to locate the answers, and then relate those answers back to the audience.

MA Science and Technology Curriculum Framework, Physical Sciences

"Recognize that sound is produced by vibrating objects and requires a medium through which to travel." & "Give examples of how energy can be transferred from one form to another."

After dealing with an unruly, and hysterically funny, telemarketer, a piece of solid matter magically travels down a thin wire connecting two tin cans. This routine visually illustrates how telephones convert sound vibrations, produced by the vocal cords, into an electrical signal, and then back into sound.

MA Science and Technology Curriculum Framework, Physical Sciences

"Identify and compare communication technologies and systems, i.e., audio, visual, printed, and mass communication."

In the final routine of the show students learn that the technology created to make the telephone possible paved the way for the invention of the radio. They also learn that the radio changed the world by delivering information faster, and to a broader spectrum of society, than previous forms of media. And then, after I search the dial to find appropriate musical accompaniment, my huge 1930's radio vanishes in mid-air.