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Contact: The Magic of Communication

Five examples of curriculum connections to the NY State Learning Standards and CCLS

NY Learning Standards for the Arts, Standard 4, Music Strand

“Students will recognize the cultural features of a variety of musical compositions and performances and understand the functions of music within the culture.”

As the show starts I demonstrate how an Australian Didgeridoo (wind instrument) is used in Aboriginal ceremonies as a storytelling device. Later, students listen to two pieces of music, one from Senegal, the other from Acadia. The students are asked to watch the influence this music has on the choreography and emotional quality of two distinctly different juggling routines.

NYS Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in English Language Arts Speaking and Listening Standards: Comprehension and Collaboration #1:

“Seek to understand and communicate with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.”

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...).

NYS Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in English Language Arts Speaking and Listening Standards: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas #6:

“Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.”

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 examine the envelope carefully to locate the answers, and then relate those answers back to the audience.

NY Learning Standards for Science, Physical Setting Standards, Key Idea 4

“Students observe the way one form of energy can be transformed into another form of energy present in common situations (e.g., mechanical to electrical energy).”

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.

NY Learning Standards for Technology, History and Evolution of Technology Strand

“Technology has been the driving force in the evolution of society from an agricultural to an industrial to an information base. Students describe how new technologies have evolved as a result of combining existing technologies.”

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.