

Karen Montanara's

IMAGINATION IN ACTION



STUDY GUIDE

Karen Montanaro



ADDRESSING ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Karen's School Offerings include:

- Her solo-performance
- Workshops in mime, movement and physical storytelling
- One or two week residency in dance

The activities in this study guide address specific standards to assist classroom teachers in integrating Karen's performances, workshops and residencies to meet Arts and Academic Standards. The standards are sequential, moving from Readiness to Foundations through Essentials.

Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts:

Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.

Languages other than Verbal – Communication Skills:

Students will be able to use a language other than a verbal one for communication.



FURTHER READING AND WATCHING ON DANCE AND MIME



Mime Spoken Here
- The Performer's Portable Workshop
by Tony Montanaro
with Karen Hurl Montanaro (book)



Mime Spoken Here
by Tony Montanaro (DVD)
Volume 1: Exercises and Illusions
Volume 2: Spontaneity and Invention



Tony Montanaro
- Theatre and Inspiration (DVD)

Karen Montanaro



Points to Discuss Before the Performance

The language of these questions may be adapted to meet the developmental level of your students.

- 1) Karen "talks" with her movements rather than words. How do you communicate without words?
- 2) In addition to actual words you speak, how do you add meaning to those words? *Sample answer: inflection or pitch or tone of voice, facial expression, silence, gestures, actions, etc.*
- 3) We use body positions to communicate moods and feelings everyday. Come up with a body position to show _____. Fill in the blank with an emotion such as joy, excitement, surprise, fear, anger, boredom, sadness, etc. *For younger grade levels, this may be called the Statue Exercise.*
- 4) Sign language, mime and charades are three ways that people can "speak" without using audible sounds. How are these three modes of communication (ways of speaking) the same and how are they different?
- 5) How can gestures accentuate speech? *Give some examples: "No way!", "Who me???", "Please . . .", etc.*
- 6) How many of you have performed on stage? Did you perform alone or in a group?
- 7) How did it feel to perform alone? How did it feel to perform in a group? Are the feelings different? How?
- 8) Karen performs alone on stage for 45 minutes. If you have never performed alone in front of an audience, what do you think it feels like to do this?
- 9) If you could be instantly skilled at any art-form, which art-form would you choose?

Points to Discuss After the Performance

The language of these questions may be adapted to meet the developmental level of your students.

- 1) What skills did Karen need to learn to prepare her for this performance?
- 2) In Karen's profession, a movement pattern (or a sequence of mime and dance steps) is called "choreography." What subjects do you study in school that use patterns? *(Curricular ties in math, music, science, etc.)* Name or describe some of these patterns.
- 3) How do you use patterns outside of school?
- 4) What's another name for the illusionary walk? *Answer: the moon walk.*
- 5) What's another name for "the box"? *Answer: "The box" (as it is often called today) started as a mime illusion called "the wall." The wall-mime was invented in 1960 by Tony Montanaro.*
- 6) How many different characters did you see in Karen's performance?
- 7) How many different moods did you see in Karen's characters?
- 8) Make a list of some of the objects that you saw in your imagination during Karen's performance.
- 9) Make a list of some of the situations that you saw in your imagination during Karen's performance.
- 10) Make a list of some of the places that you saw in your imagination during Karen's performance.
- 11) Revisit question number 4 in the Before Show questions. How is mime the same and/or different from sign language? How is mime the same and/or different from charades?
- 12) How is mimedance different from other kinds of dance?
- 13) How did you feel watching Karen's performance?



Biography

Karen Montanaro is the 2008 Maine Arts Commission Fellowship Winner. Karen is a world renowned dancer and performance-mime artist, an award-winning choreographer, and the innovator of "mime-dance" (the fusion of two classical art forms). Karen studied ballet at the Cantarella School of Dance, the Ram Island Dance Center (with Andrea Stark) and on scholarship with the Joffrey Ballet School. She danced professionally with the Ohio Ballet and the Darmstadt Opera Ballet in Germany. Upon moving back to the United States, Karen also danced principal roles with the Portland Ballet Company. For more than a decade, Karen toured and taught internationally with mime master, Tony Montanaro. She currently tours the world with her one-woman show entitled "Tanzspiel." Ms. Montanaro is a teaching artist and offers residencies in movement, mime and dance in public and private schools throughout the United States.

Theatre Etiquette:

To insure everyone enjoys the performance, please review appropriate theatre behavior with your students prior to the show. *Thanks.*

Karen Montanara



ACTIVITIES

Karen combines mime and dance to create a new language, the language of movement.

These activities help students tell stories and communicate ideas and feelings without using words.

ACT OUT!!! (For all grade levels)

Create index cards with age-specific words on them. These words may be adjectives, adverbs, verbs and/or prepositions. No nouns, yet! Ask three or four students to get in front of the class and very quickly (and in perfect silence) ACT OUT the word on the index card.

Variation: You may want the observing students to guess what the ACTED OUT word was. Tell the observers what figure of speech the word is, and then let them watch the movement to decipher the particular word.

There is no "right" or "wrong" movement in this exercise and no "better" or "worse" movement. The goal here is not a particular movement, but to be understood. From these observed movements, students may see how important diction is in the language of movement. That is, movements need to be energized and controlled, clear and defined. Movers clarify their movements in the same way orators enunciate their words.

(Note: A wonderful way to defuse emotions such as self-consciousness or stage-fright is to put more focus and energy into one's movements. All of the focus and energy that formerly "fed" the fear, now feed the movement!)

Adjectives to ACT OUT!!!

BIG/SMALL
FAST/SLOW
HAPPY/SAD
LISTLESS/ENERGETIC
etc.

Prepositions to ACT OUT!!!

OVER/UNDER
ABOVE/BELOW
BEHIND/AHEAD
INSIDE/OUTSIDE
etc.

Verbs to ACT OUT!!!

MARCH

FLY ("How does a mosquito fly?" "How does an eagle fly?" "How does an airplane fly?")

JUMP ("How would someone jump on the moon?" "How would someone jump on earth?" "How would someone jump on Jupiter?")

SIT ("How would you show someone sitting on a chair, if you did not have a real chair to sit on?")

etc.

Suggestions: Use this exercise to teach vocabulary words, parts-of-speech and/or the concept of opposites. Combine descriptive words with action words, i.e., walk happily, read angrily, march joyously, etc.. Use this exercise to work on analytical skills, i.e., "When would you walk slowly while experiencing extreme happiness?" (Sample answer: The first few moments after receiving amazingly good news. For example, you're walking toward the brand new Porsche that you just won in a raffle. Disbelief + extreme happiness = slow movements.)

Karen Montanara



ACTIVITIES

TRANSLATING MUSIC TO MOVEMENT (Grade 3 and up) - This is one of the ways choreographers make dances!

Find a piece of music (without lyrics) that is particularly rich in imagery and/or emotion:

Brent Lewis: Any of his drum music

Scott Joplin: Any of his Ragtime pieces

Richard Strauss: Fanfare from 2001 A Space Odyssey, "The Dawn of Man." (Sprach Zarathustra)

Vangelis: "Chariots of Fire" or "Conquest of Paradise"

Kitaro: "Silk Road"

Vivaldi: "Four Seasons"

etc.

Without telling the students what the music or the composer is, play the music and ask the students to write down any word or phrase or image that comes to mind while listening to the music. Anything they write down is correct. They might see a place (carnival, jungle, city street, etc.) or experience a feeling (sad, contemplative, joyful, etc.). Write it all down! Some of their descriptions may require several words, such as: "Something great is about to happen." or "A looming figure is approaching." These phrases should be brief in order for them to move on to their next impression.

Turn off the music and collect some of the words and phrases that the students came up with. Ask one student to write these phrases on the board. Now translate these words and phrases into movement using the ACT OUT!!! exercise above. Try combinations of the descriptive words and phrases. Move in silence first and then add the music to these movements.

Variation: Give students only a short amount of time to write. You may encourage them to write quickly by saying, "In one minute, you should have 12 different items -- words or phrases -- written down."



Note to Teachers: This study guide is a work-in-progress. I would love to receive any feedback or suggestions that you may have for me. Thank you! KarenHM@maine.rr.com

Karen Montanaro



Name _____

Karen Montanaro

Instructions: Find and circle all the words in the word search from the word bank below.



Word Bank:

comedy	drama	acting	dance	facial expression
improvise	mime	theater	character	gesture
emotion	imagination	storytelling	communicate	

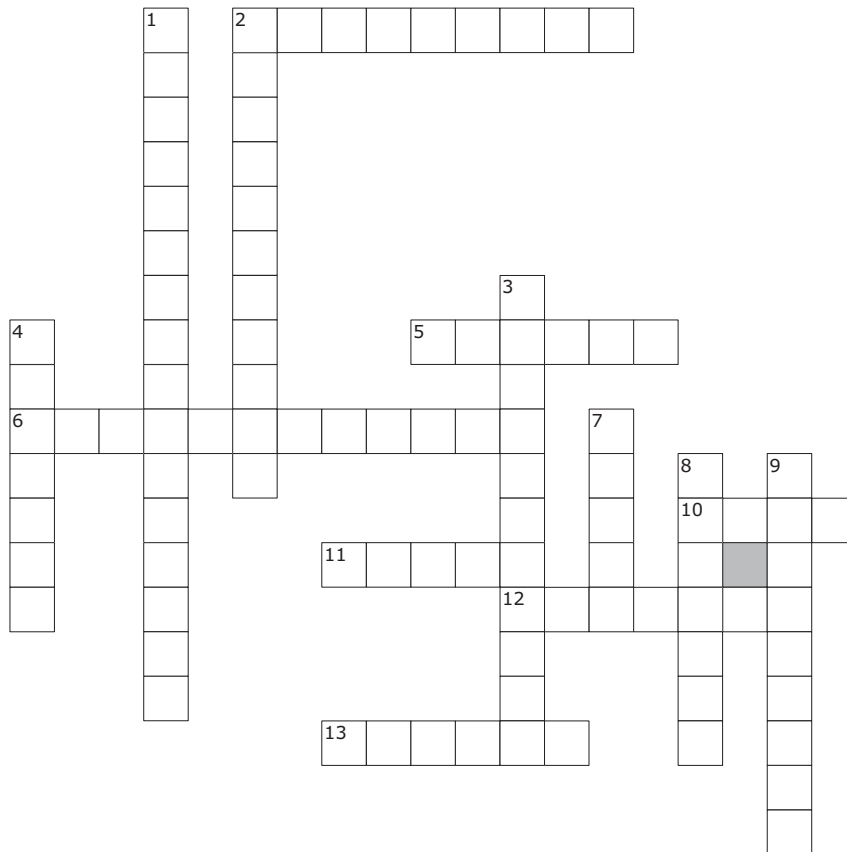
Karen Montanaro



Name: _____

Karen Montanaro

Instructions: Use the clues provided to solve the crossword puzzle.



Across:

2. A person portrayed in an artistic piece, such as a drama or novel
5. a show that is funny
6. the telling or writing of stories
10. portraying a character, mood, idea, or narration by gestures and bodily movements
11. a show that is serious with many emotions
12. A place that is the setting for dramatic events
13. pretending

Down:

1. feeling expressed through one's face
2. to give information
3. the power to create an image or concept that is not real
4. a movement or position of the hand, arm, body, head, or face that is expressive of an idea, opinion, emotion
7. to move one's feet or body, or both, rhythmically in a pattern of steps
8. any of the feelings of joy, sorrow, fear, hate, love, etc.
9. to make things up as you go

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Call sheet

dance

to move one's feet or body, or both, rhythmically in a pattern of steps

mime

portraying a character, mood, idea, or narration by gestures and bodily movements

imagination

the power to create an image or concept that is not real

comedy

a show that is funny

storytelling

the telling or writing of stories

communicate

to give information

character

A person portrayed in an artistic piece, such as a drama or novel

drama

a show that is serious with many emotions

acting

pretending

theater

A place that is the setting for dramatic events

improvise

to make things up as you go

gesture

a movement or position of the hand, arm, body, head, or face that is expressive of an idea, opinion, emotion

facial expression

feeling expressed through one's face

emotion

any of the feelings of joy, sorrow, fear, hate, love, etc.

Karen Montanaro



Name: _____

Karen Montanaro

Instructions: The teacher will call out a word definition. Find the word that matches the definition on your sheet and place a marker over it.

B	I	N	G	O
storytelling	mime	comedy	drama	theater
emotion	communicate	character	character	emotion
gesture	facial expression	FREE SPACE	storytelling	dance
improvise	theater	dance	imagination	communicate
drama	acting	imagination	improvise	gesture

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Instructions: The teacher will call out a word definition. Find the word that matches the definition on your sheet and place a marker over it.

B

I

N

G

O

mime	emotion	gesture	emotion	dance
communicate	character	storytelling	facial expression	theater
dance	acting	FREE SPACE	storytelling	comedy
facial expression	comedy	imagination	communicate	mime
drama	theater	improvise	drama	improvise

Karen Montanaro



Name: _____

Karen Montanaro

Instructions: The teacher will call out a word definition. Find the word that matches the definition on your sheet and place a marker over it.

B	I	N	G	O
improvise	acting	facial expression	improvise	imagination
imagination	mime	dance	theater	emotion
drama	gesture	FREE SPACE	comedy	mime
theater	character	storytelling	drama	acting
communicate	comedy	emotion	dance	communicate

Karen Montanara**PRIMARY EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES** *of Karen's workshops.*

1. To energize the classroom and to engage students' focus and imaginations.
2. To demonstrate and teach how energy, imagination and focus work together to produce success, not only in the arts but also in the classroom.
3. To provide opportunities for students to experience movement in ways that:
 - Energize the learner's approach to problem solving
 - Engage the learner's imagination
 - Sharpen the learner's focus
 - Create an atmosphere where the learner can attempt new things with confidence.
4. To present mime and dance as language arts and use these art forms to improve students' communication skills.
5. To demonstrate and teach movement as a vehicle for self-expression and eloquence.
6. To give students the opportunity to explore their talents and express excellence through movement.
7. To introduce students of all ages to two art forms, dance and mime.

ENERGY + IMAGINATION + FOCUS = SUCCESS!