

Community Theater

How can theater be the vehicle to help us represent our community?



Children grow into the intellectual life around them. – Vygotsky

LISA:

In Kindergarten, the theme of community guided our work and was woven into all aspects of our curriculum. Over the course of a semester, we explore the concept of community through the lens of theater. Our multi-disciplinary curricular approach to learning culminated in the creation of the South Campus Community Theater and performances on stage by our students. As Melissa shared, we draw from many different approaches when we plan our curriculum so that the children can acquire certain skills. These approaches include the Reggio Emilia approach, the work of Ron Berger in *The Ethic of Excellence*, Project Zero thinking routines in order to create a culture of thinking and Design Thinking which we will highlight today.

Birth of a Project

Essential Question:

- How can theater be the vehicle to help us represent our community?

Guiding Questions:

- How can we learn more about our community by studying theater?
- How does theater give us a voice in our community?
- How does Community Theater promote dialogue in a community?
- How does learning about the different components of the theater strengthen our community?

VAS

As Melissa and Lisa already mentioned, the theme in kindergarten is community. As teachers, we begin each year thinking about our theme and how we want it to unfold. In the second semester last year we knew that we wanted the children to learn about our school community, and, as adults, we saw the need for a space where children and adults in our school community can put on plays in both English and Hebrew. As we do with each of our projects, we meet (the three of us, Melissa, Laura and Judy) to look at our scope and sequence and decide how and where the children will learn certain skills—either in Project Work or during Foundations (which you will hear about later).

After many discussions, we thought that using Design Thinking would be a great vehicle to explore Community Theater. As we began planning we thought about both essential and guiding questions

Throughout the presentation you will hear the words step and stage in reference to the design thinking model.

It got a little confusing for us at times because we were also building a stage.

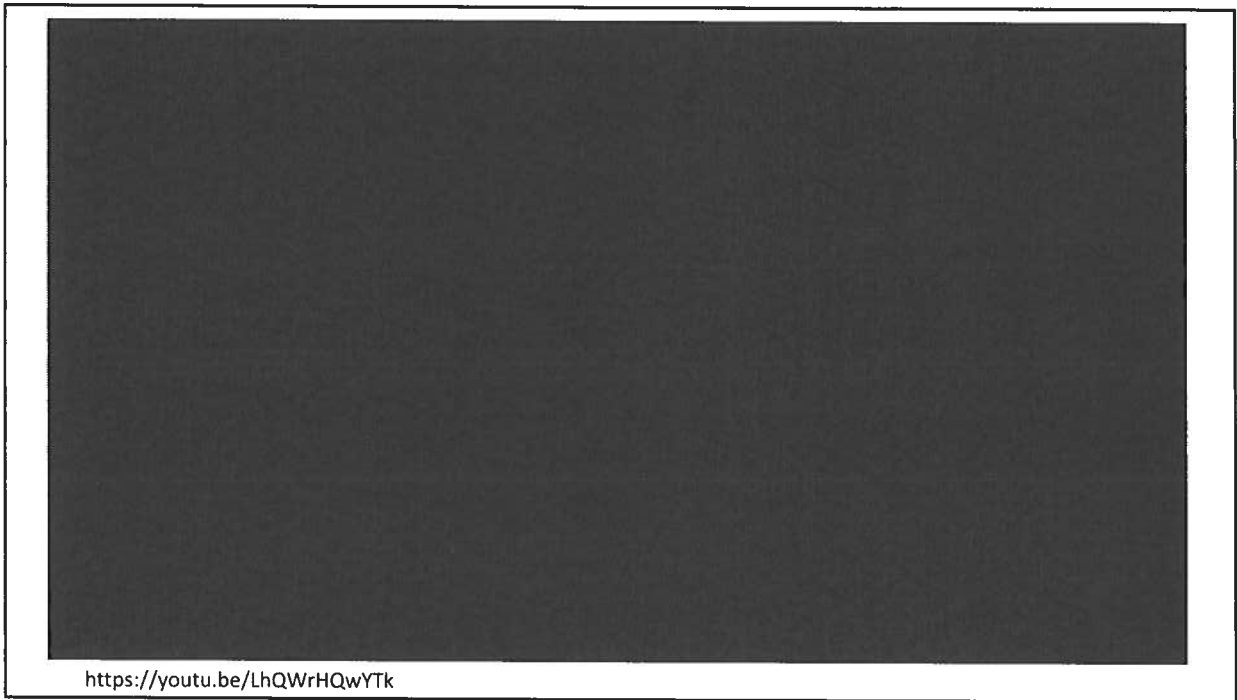
What is Design Thinking?

Design Thinking is an approach to learning that includes considering **real-world problems**, **research**, **analysis**, conceiving **original ideas**, lots of **experimentation**, and sometimes building things by hand. The projects teach students how to make a stable product, use tools, think about the needs of another, **solve challenges**, overcome setbacks and stay motivated on a long-term problem. The projects also teach students to build on the ideas of others, vet sources, generate questions, deeply **analyze topics**, and **think creatively** and **analytically**. Many of those same qualities are goals of the Common Core State Standards. "What Does 'Design Thinking' Look Like in School?"

<https://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2013/03/04/what-does-design-thinking-look-like-in-school/>

XANI

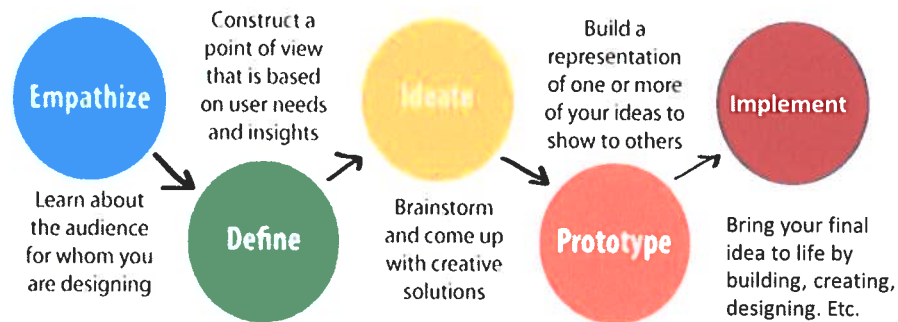
Design thinking is 1 approach we use here at MILTON. It provides an opportunity to investigate real-world problems through research, creativity, collaboration, and more. Would anyone like to volunteer to read the definition? To learn a little more about design thinking, let's check out a video called Launch Cycle.



XANI

Here is a video that describes Design Thinking a little more

What does *Design Thinking* look like in Kindergarten at MILTON?



<https://www.plycode.com/startups/design-sprint-lean-product-management-and-design-thinking/>

VAS



You just saw the video that explains design thinking in a similar way to how we use it here at MILTON, but the steps are not all named the same. Through our research, this model you see seemed to work best for our context. IT was adapted from the plycode.com model. The difference between this model and the plycode model is that we took out the test step and substituted it for the implement step. The great thing about both Design Thinking and working in our environment is that there is autonomy and flexibility with how the model can be used. Depending on the project, at times we skip a step, go from one step back to previous, go in a different order, etc. There are many different design thinking models out there, and if you google design thinking model you can find similar and different models.

Talk through the Design Thinking model on this page

We will take a deeper dive into each of the steps and show you how we used this DT model to unfold our community theater project.

EMPATHY

- it can't block the whole Kikar
- movable
- by the edge near the fire place
- shouldn't be too high

Student: Should there be a curtain?
User: It would be fabulous to have one. When the audience arrives it will be closed. Then when it opens everyone will be quiet, but excited just like in a real theater.

Student: What do you think the curtains should be like?
User: Should be at least as tall as the tallest child so they can stand behind it and no one can see them.

LISA

For the community theater, each class chose an area to design. There was the costume closet, the curtains and the stage. We went through the Design Thinking steps with each of our classes.

The first stage in Design Thinking is empathy. A Kindergarten child defined this term as, "Empathy is seeing everyone's thoughts and feelings." As a Design Thinking term, empathy means, "As a design thinker, the problems you are trying to solve are rarely your own—they are those of a particular group of people; in order to design for them, you must gain empathy for who they are and what is important to them" (<http://waag.org/>). Before we began building our theater, we needed to do research in order to learn more about the needs of the people who use the Kikar and the future stage area. The students were reminded about the importance of empathy and shared that in order to hear everyone's thoughts and feelings we learned from users of the space through a interviews.

As we do with all of our projects, we sought the help of an expert in order to learn about interviewing before we began. Michele Davis, a journalist from the Washington Post, came to explain the interview process. The children learned they had to research their interviewees, brainstorm questions ahead of time and also ask follow up questions.

Each class began by interviewing users of the *Kikar* (the space where the Community Theater lives) in order to empathize with and understand the needs of the community.

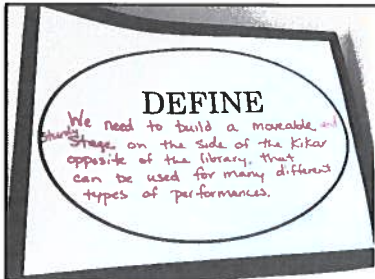
Gan Anavim interviewed Gili Bitton, a Hebrew and Judaic Studies teacher who directs many of the Hebrew plays.

An Interview with Mr. Ross



XANI

During our interviews we had both the opportunity to learn from the users and the experts. In Gan Tmarim we were creating a costume closet and we interviewed Mr. Ross, our south campus building and security manager. Understanding that Mr. Ross is a key community member that uses the Kikar when he helps set up programs, he is also an expert builder. The children asked questions about the Kikar space, but also asked questions about materials and structure.



DEFINE
 We need to build a moveable and sturdy stage on the side of the Kikar opposite of the library that can be used for many different types of performances.

Costume Closet: Our costume closet needs...

- An organized system
- At least 1 person fits inside
- Permanent

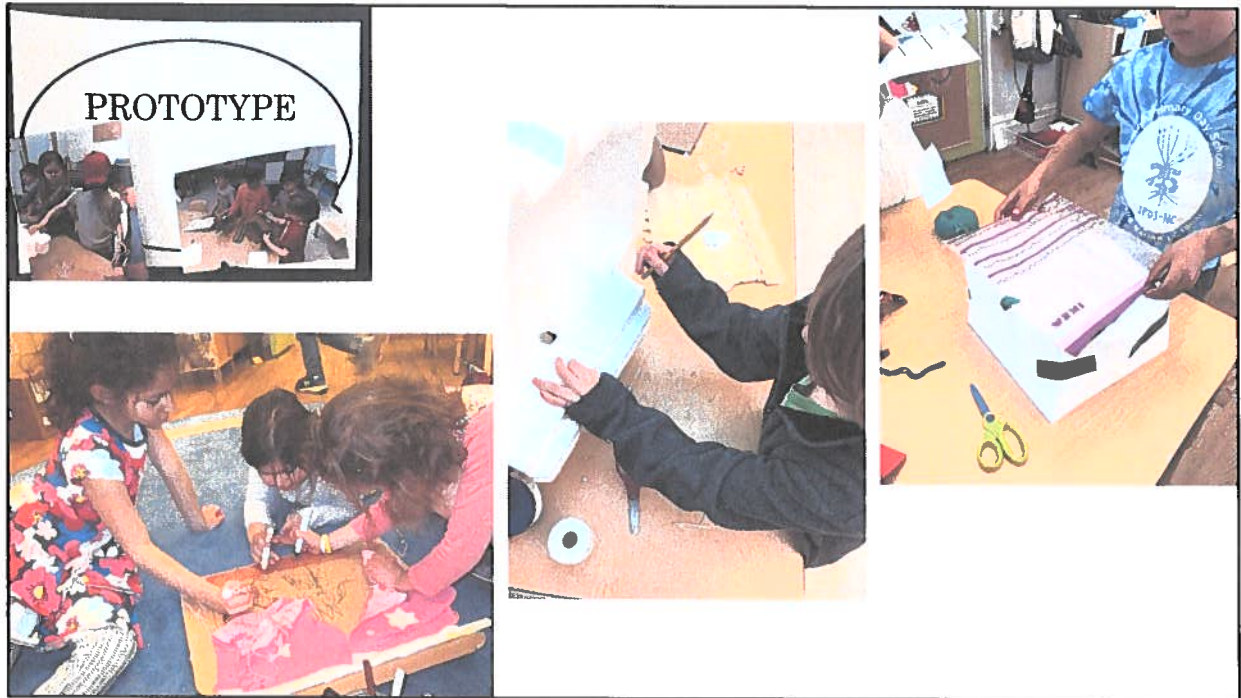
Curtain: “We need to make curtains with soft fabric that is a dark color and taller than the tallest child and it needs to be moveable and open and close.”

Stage: “We need to build a moveable and sturdy stage on the side of the Kikar opposite of the library that can be used for many different types of performances.”

VAS

In the **Define step** the focus is on “a meaningful and actionable problem statement” that “synthesize(s) your scattered findings into powerful insights” (<http://waag.org>). Essentially, we define the user’s need through their insights in order to problem solve.

Read each definition



Xani

Taking our ideate ideas, the students began to prototype as a representation of their ideas in small groups and individually. Through the experience of constructing prototypes, the children tinkered with materials to test their ideas of how to design functional curtains, costume closet, and the stage. This process helped the children understand that materials of their designs and ways they can improve their plans. Each class implemented their prototypes into final designs.

Individually and in small groups children constructed prototypes to represent their ideas.

Through the experience of constructing prototypes, the children tinkered with materials to test their ideas of how to design functional curtains, costume closet, and a stage. This process helped the children understand the intricacies of their designs and ways they can improve their plans. Each class implemented their prototypes into the final designs.

While children were prototyping, we reminded them to keep in mind their knowledge of the properties of materials we spoke about a couple of slides ago.



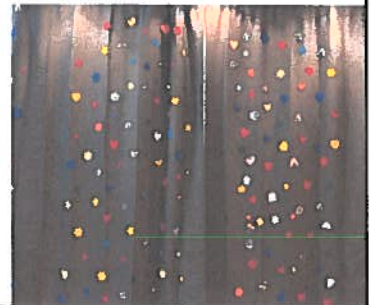
VAS

This process helped the students finalize their designs and later work together with the expert adults in our community to build the final stage, curtains, and costume closet.

The children

- Used fine and gross motor skills while sewing, hammering, screwing, using wood working tools, and in many other ways

The Implementation of Our Community Theater

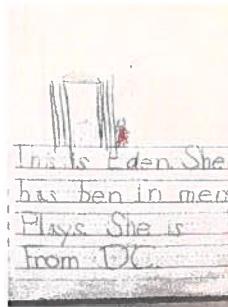


VAS

Building FOUNDATIONAL Skills



Math



Language Arts



Sadnah



Mischak



Science

VAS

You will see Foundations later today. Now we will take a deeper dive into how we used Foundations to elevate work with the Community Theater Project.

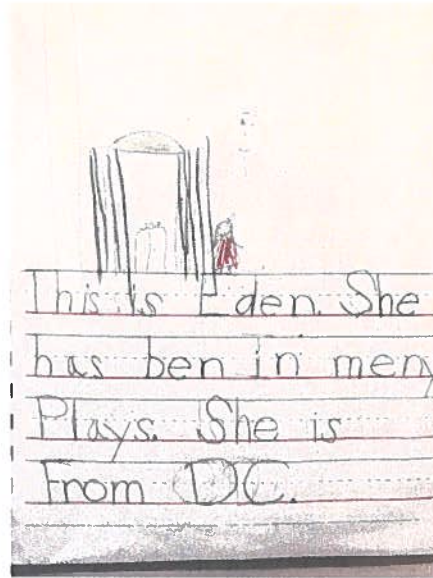
Like we mentioned earlier in the presentation, during our planning meetings we intentionally choose which skills to cover in Foundations and which to cover during Project Work.

Now you will hear some of the ways in which students worked in foundations classes to deepen our community theater project, and other ways that the skills they learned in Foundations transferred into Project Work.

During the community theater project, the work completed during Foundations did not utilized design thinking, rather many different philosophies and approaches.

Language Arts

Book Name	Book Message
Oh, the places you'll go!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life can be hard but you can still succeed The journey will be hard but you have to try The best can come if you try
Beaumont and the Outback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be happy with what you have Don't be greedy Being kind can change the world
Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be thankful for what you have Be happy with what you have Don't be greedy Being kind can change the world
Oh, the THINGS you Can Think	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think about anything you can think about Use your imagination Don't be afraid to try You can think of lots of different things
The Cat in the Hat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always clean up your mess Have fun no matter where you are Clean up as you go before you go another place
The Sneetches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be kind to everyone, even if they're different It's ok to love how you want Be thankful for what you have Don't brag Be an upstander Don't exclude other people, be respectful to everyone



Language Arts:

We connected our Dr. Seuss author study to messages he sends through his books. We used this information as we wrote scripts and thought about the messages we wanted to send through our plays.

The children learned about biographies, wrote their own biographies, and then and edited them to reflect the third person point of view for our Playbill.

Many skills learned in Language Arts this year were reinforced during script writing such as using spaces between words, adding punctuation, using lower-case letters when writing, etc.

PLAYBILL

May 11, 2017
South Campus Community Theater

TIKKUN OLAM SUPER HEROES TO THE RESCUE!

By Gan Anavim

THE POND

by Gan Rimonim

THE MYSTERY OF THE FALLEN RAINBOW

By Gan Tmarim

Language Arts

Nathan: He is Nathan. He has been in the Israeli Dance Show. He is good at opening edamame shells. He is thankful for his mommy and daddy.



Natalie: This is Natalie. She is good at swimming. She was in an Israeli Dance Show.

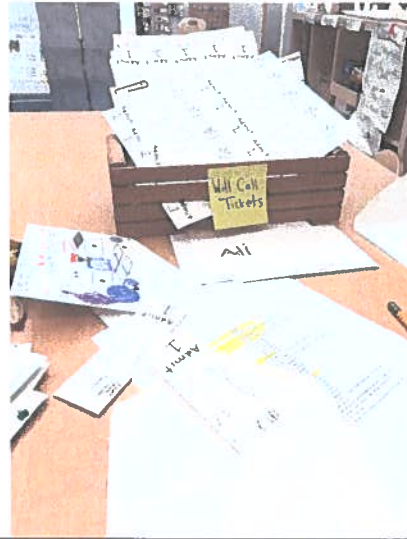


Yael: This is Yael. She has been in the Lion King. She is learning how to play the Ukulele. She lives in Washington, DC. She would like to thank her mom and her dad. She is good at swimming.



Caleb: This is Caleb. He likes to do many things. He's been in many plays. Jojo Siwa, Meghan Trainor, Taylor Swift, Katy Perry, and Grace Vanderwaal inspire him.

Language Arts



Here are two examples of LA skills that transferred into project work.

Math



We often find many connections between our math skills and our project work. During our theater project the students in math were learning about coins, measurement, and 3D shapes. Inspired by a trip to the National Theater, the student's fell in love with the idea of designing a concession stand. The students designed and created a concession area for our South Campus Community Theater by designing cash registers through their new math knowledge of coins, measurement, and 3D shapes,

Math: Students designed and created a concession area for Kindergarten South Campus Community Theater, utilizing foundational math skills of 3D shapes, coins, and measurement.

Science



Science:

Science: As part of their unit on simple machines, the children explored different types of pulleys. During the theater project, they learned that pulleys are used to open and close many curtains on a stage. After experimenting with various prototypes, my class realized that a pulley system for the curtains for this theater would not work. The children instead used their knowledge of pulleys as part of the scenery. My class's play was about superheroes saving the world. They wanted to use harnesses attached to the ceiling to launch themselves to the sky. A student had the brilliant idea to represent themselves as mini superheroes and attach themselves to a clothesline which they used with pulleys to move across the backdrop on the stage.

As part of their unit on simple machines, the children explored different kinds of pulleys. During the theater project, they learned that pulleys are used to open and close many curtains. Though after experimenting with various strategies, the Kindergarten decided to use a different kind of curtain for the theater. The children used their knowledge as pulleys as they used pulleys to fly their props across the stage.

The 100 Languages of Children

A Multi-Disciplinary Curriculum inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education

...the child has a hundred languages (and a hundred hundred hundred more)....

The *wider* the range
of *possibilities*
we offer *children*,
the more *INTENSE* will be
their *MOTIVATIONS*
RICHER the
EXPERIENCES
Loris Malaguzzi

In your folders you have a copy of The 100 Languages of Children poem written by Loris Malaguzzi the founder of the Reggio Emilia approach. The poem inspires us as we recognize that this project was more than just an example of a multidisciplinary approach. The children's thinking was made visible as they represented their learning by working with a wide variety of materials.

In Kindergarten, the theme of community guided our work and was woven into all aspects of our curriculum. This semester, we explored the concept of community through the lens of theater. Our multi-disciplinary curricular approach to learning culminated in the creation of the South Campus Community Theater and our performances on stage.

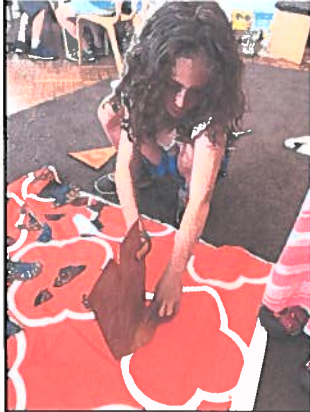
Sadnah



VAS

Sadnah: Children collaborated in mixed groups from all three classes as they drafted sketches of backdrops and transferred these images onto canvases. Additionally, children were challenged to create three dimensional representations of flats (set pieces) using various materials.

Sadnah



VAS

As I mentioned earlier, some of the skills learned in our Sadnah Foundation also transferred into Project Work. Designing and making costumes is one of many examples of how children made their thinking visible.

Mischak



LISA

Mischak: This Foundations class can be translated as Purposeful Play. It provides a way to build connections between the general studies curriculum with Hebrew and Judaics. Mischak is led by Hebrew Judaics teachers who use the time to reinforce Hebrew vocabulary through play. For instance lately we have been having weekly color days. The children practice their colors through activities such as creating obstacle courses using only one color. They also have the opportunity to reenact *chagim* (holidays) and Bible stories, enabling the children to practice taking on the perspective of many different characters.

-

Mischak: This Foundations class provided an opportunity to reenact *chagim* (holidays) and Bible stories, enabling the children to practice taking on the perspective of many different characters.

Field Research

Learning from Experts



XANI

During our theater project we provided opportunities for students to learn about the many different areas and parts of being on stage and backstage with community experts. It's amazing when we reach out to our community the wonderful skills our students learned. In these two pictures the students were at Highwood Theater, a local community theater learning about set design, lighting and special effects, costume design, and how to use our body to express our ideas on stage. A MILTON parent and a Broadway projector designer, Zac Borovay came to teach us about lighting.

In order to gain background knowledge about theaters, the children learned from a variety of experts. These included a children's theater director, a puppeteer, a Broadway projector designer, and a former theater teacher, who taught about different types of stages. The children went on field trips to the National Theater and Highwood Theater. They saw different kinds of stages and costume areas, looked at various types of curtains, lighting and sets, and learned how each theater operates in

order to put on a show.



XANI

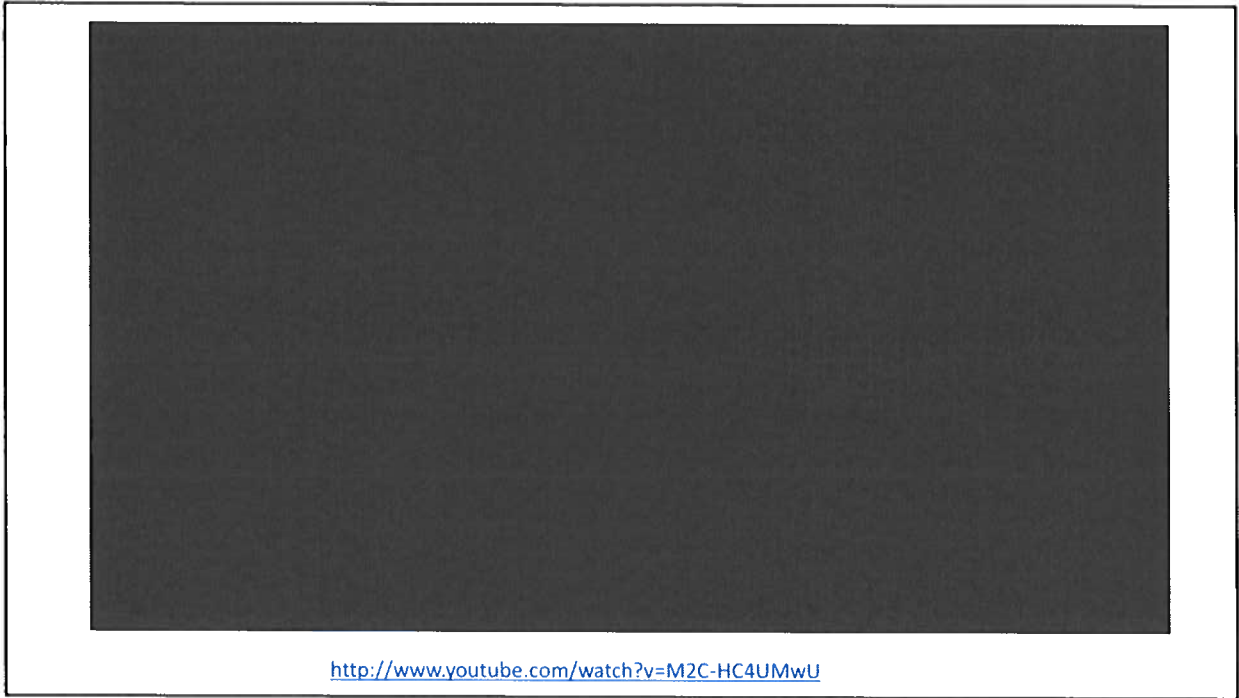
During our trip to the National Theater, the students learned about all the components of a theater and even got to see the trap door underneath the stage!

In order to gain background knowledge about theaters, the children learned from a variety of experts. These included a children's theater director, a puppeteer, a Broadway projector designer, and a former theater teacher, who taught about different types of stages. The children went on field trips to the National Theater and Highwood Theater. They saw different kinds of stages and costume areas, looked at various types of curtains, lighting and sets, and learned how each theater operates in order to put on a show.



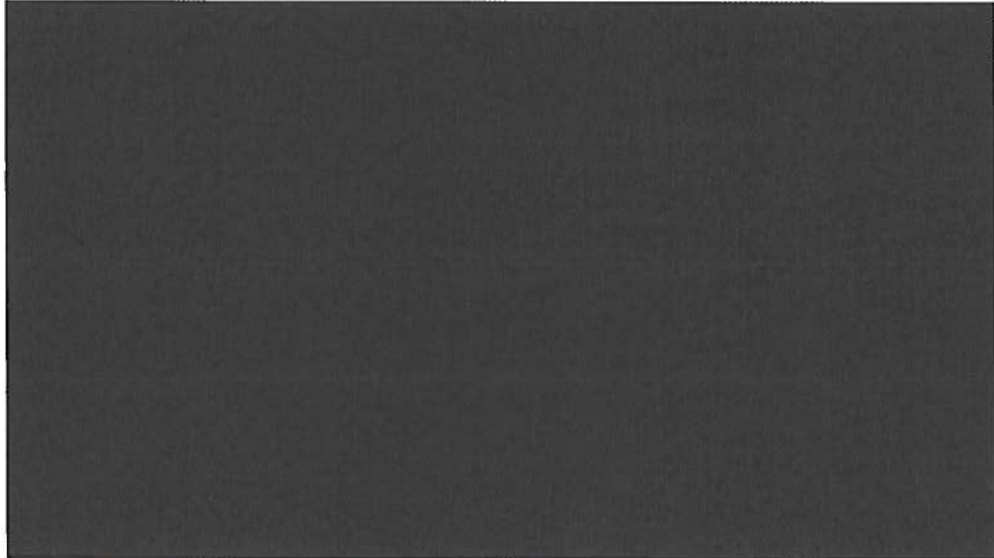
XANI

On this slide the students were learning from another MILTON parent, Sara Gersh about stage presence, and our own theater expert Melissa Davis about different kinds of stages.



Learning how to rap video

One of Our Culminating Performances



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAHbq9yuf0s>

Play on clip or clips from each play