

# Teacher Tool 745: Program Guide for The Power of Story in a Play

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## The Power of Story in a Play

**Program Date: November 14, 2019**

**Program Time: 9:30 to 10:00 a.m. Central Time**

**Grade Levels: 5-10**

### **Program Description:**

What does it take to write a play? Where do ideas come from? And once those ideas get down on paper, how do they come to life in a theatre the first time the story is produced on a stage? Pursue answers to those questions and more as you interact with playwright Eric Coble and theatre director Julia Flood who this fall are bringing to life the powerful story of Mr. Coble’s newest play for young audiences, “The Girl Who Swallowed a Cactus.”

**Guest Experts:** Eric Coble—playwright; Julia Flood—Artistic Director Metro Theater Company

### **Program Objectives:**

1. The participant will interact with a playwright and theatre director.
2. The participant will explore the processes involved in writing a play, creating characters, and bringing that new play to life on a stage.
3. The participant will view excerpts from the play and engage in critical evaluation of the script and staging.
4. The participant will engage in critical thinking and creative thinking.

### **Program Format:**

The agenda below provides you the topics to be explored in the program as well as the order of that exploration. Student questions will be woven in throughout the program.

**I. Welcome and Introduction**—Student groups and experts are introduced and welcomed to the program and given information on ways to interact during the program.

**II. Being a Playwright**—Students will interact with playwright Eric Coble to learn why he became a playwright, the type of plays he writes, and his process for writing them.

**III. Creating the Play**—Students will interact with Mr. Coble and Ms. Flood to learn where the idea for the new play, “The Girl Who Swallowed a Cactus” came from, how its characters and plot was developed, and how decisions were made to determine how best to stage it in its inaugural production.

**IV. Responding to the Play**—Students will see a scene from the play; be able to ask questions about the scene, and offer their comments on the scene.

**V. Summary and Closing**—We summarize the major concepts learned and deal with a final question regarding examples of how their education helped prepare them for their careers.

**Pre-Program Activity Suggestions:**

These activities could be done prior to participation in the live program to help students develop questions for the program guest.

**1. Learn About the Play**—Use the web resources below to learn about Mr. Coble’s new play, “The Girl Who Swallowed a Cactus.”

<http://metroplays.org/performances/touring-productions/the-girl-who-swallowed-a-cactus/>  
<http://appleford.leftcoastx.com/the-girl-who-swallowed-a-cactus-childsplay-herberger-theater-center-phoenix/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z60Tmige74E>

**2. Learn More About Eric Coble**—Use the web links below to learn more about the playwright Eric Coble.

<http://ericcoble.com>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric\\_Coble](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Coble)  
<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0167906/bio>

**3. What Questions Would You Like to Ask?** Based on their learning through the activities above, have students develop questions they’d like to ask Mr. Coble and Ms. Flood during the program. Select what your class considers the most important questions to ask and send no more than five questions to us in an e-mail no later than November 7.

We’ll go through all the advance questions we receive to determine which ones can be included in the program then get back in touch with you no later than November 12 to let you know if one or more of your questions has been selected for inclusion in the program. If you are joining us via Zoom, Skype, or a similar videoconference connection, we will call on your school by name so you can ask your question. If you are watching online, we’ll ask your question for you and include the name of your school.

Please e-mail the questions to us at [info@educate.today](mailto:info@educate.today) no later than November 7. Be sure to title your e-mail “Questions for Eric Coble and Julia Flood” and be sure to include the name and location of your school along with the questions.

**Featured National Standards:****Common Core Standards for English/Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects****College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading**

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

**College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing**

6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

### **College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening**

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

### **ISTE National Technology Standards**

3a—Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.

3b—Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.

3d—Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.

### **National Coalition for Core Arts Standards**

TH:Cr1.1.: Envision/Conceptualize—Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists rely on intuition, curiosity, and critical inquiry. Essential Question(s): What happens when theatre artists use their imaginations and/or learned theatre skills while engaging in creative exploration and inquiry?

TH:Cr1.1.7.c.: Envision and describe a scripted or improvised character's inner thoughts and objectives in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr2.1.7.a.: Examine and justify original ideas and artistic choices in a drama/theatre work based on critical analysis, background knowledge, and historical and cultural context.

TH:Re7.1.7.a.: Compare recorded personal and peer reactions to artistic choices in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re9.1.7.c.: Identify how the intended purpose of a drama/theatre work appeals to a specific audience.