Exercise on Point of View and Dramatic Irony

This exercise is effective as a bridge between learning the plot of *Twelfth Night* and issuing the scripts to the students. It addresses directly the 8th Grade Reading standard on point of view and dramatic irony. A follow-up summative assessment like a writing prompt may be used to assess student achievement of this standard.

What's on for today and why:
Students will play parts in a brief scene from *Twelfth Night* in order to learn key drama terms and explore

- embedded stage directions,
- character point of view,
- dramatic irony,
- asides.

Students are preparing for being assigned parts in the "mini-play" version of *Twelfth Night*. Point of view and dramatic irony are terms included in the National Common Core Reading Standards for Grade 8. Students are practicing reading and interpreting a scene in a play for clues to the way in which the scene is to be performed.

What to do:
Print the script on one side of the paper, and the character names on the other side. Make as many sets as needed so that every student has a script and is in a scene cast. (There are 5 parts in each mini-scene; if your class does not divide evenly by 5, you may cast 6 and have two Andrews, or 4 and double up one actor from the first part to play Sebastian in the second – make sure that each actor uses the script with the character's name on it, though.)

Scripts can be printed on card stock, or placed in plastic sleeves, for hardiness in use for repeated classes.

Put the students in their scene casts and have them practice for 5-8 minutes. Circulate and reinforce the meanings of the terms. Ask questions, and answer questions with questions as often as possible, having students make decisions about interactions, props, tone, blocking, etc.

Once students have had time to prepare, have them make a large circle, and introduce the center of the circle as the "stage." Instruct them that entering the circle means entering the stage, and returning to the circle means leaving the stage. Have each cast present the scene.

Once all groups have presented the scene, engage students in a class discussion on the choices that each cast made in presenting the scene.

- What stage directions did they find in the text? How did they interpret those stage directions?
- How do the characters' points of view differ? How do those differences inform the plot of the scene?
- Who knows what at which point in the scene? Discuss each character's point of view separately, and in each case ask, what does the audience know? How do these differences in point of view and knowledge affect the plot? How do they produce suspense? How do they produce humor?
- Who speaks in an "aside"? What is the purpose of the aside? How does an aside affect the audience?

Differentiation: For this exercise, because parts are very small, there should be no need for differentiation. The exercise is a team-building exercise, and students with different talents will take on different roles in working together to produce the scene. Be sure that every student has a part.

How did it go?
First and foremost, did the students enjoy the scene or find it funny?
Did students understand from which part of the play as a whole this scene comes?
Did students find the embedded stage directions?
Did they recognize that different characters in the scene have different levels of understanding, or different knowledge?
Did they recognize the difference between what the audience knows and what the characters know?

VIOLA, ANDREW AGUECHEEK, ANTONIO, OFFICER

Viola as Cesario and Andre Aguecheek draw and attempt to fight
Enter ANTONIO, with sword drawn

ANTONIO
Put up your sword. If this young gentleman
Have done offence, I take the fault on me.
VIOLA as CESARIO
Pray, sir, put your sword up, if you please.
SIR ANDREW
Marry, will I, sir; and, for that I promised you, I'll be as good as my word.
Enter Officer
OFFICER
This is the man.
Antonio, I arrest thee on the order of Count Orsino.
ANTONIO
You do mistake me, sir.
OFFICER
No, sir, no jot; I know your favor well,
Though now you have no sea-cap on your head.
Take him away: he knows I know him well.
ANTONIO
I must obey. [*To VIOLA]*
This comes with seeking you:
But there's no remedy;
I must entreat of you some of that money.
VIOLA as CESARIO
What money, sir?
ANTONIO *[furious]*
Will you deny me now? This youth that you see here
I snatch'd one half out of the jaws of death,
And he methought did promise
Most venerable worth, did I commit myself to him in service.
Thou hast, Sebastian, done good feature shame.
OFFICER *[to Antonio]*
Come, come, sir.
Exit Antonio with Officer
VIOLA *[aside, to audience, in her own voice]*
He named Sebastian: O, if it prove,
Tempests are kind and salt waves fresh in love.

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ANDREW AGUECHEEK, SEBASTIAN

Andrew and Sebastian enter separately

SIR ANDREW
Now, sir, have I met you again? there's for you. *[hits Sebastian]*
SEBASTIAN *[draws sword]*
Why, there's for thee, and there, and there. *[hits Andrew with the hilt of the sword at least three times]*
Are all these people mad?

Viola/ Cesario

Andrew Aguecheek

Antonio

Officer

Sebastian