

CAST Model District Unit Template

<p>Unit Title: A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words: Telling Stories through Powerful Staging</p>	<p>Subject: Theatre</p>	<p>Grade Level/Course: Grade 8</p>
<p>Brief Description of Unit:</p> <p>In this unit, students will learn basic elements of staging and the necessary academic vocabulary to support appropriate discipline-specific communication in the rehearsal room. Ample time for experimentation will provide students with opportunities to develop an aesthetic sensibility for effective staging. Throughout the process, students refine and evaluate their work using established aesthetic criteria and appropriate theatre language. Ultimately, students will demonstrate their expertise in creating effective staging through an authentic performance task that requires them to apply staging concepts to tell the story of a short narrative text.</p>		
<p>Assessed Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TH:Cr1.1.8a. Imagine and explore multiple perspectives and solutions to a staging problem in a theatre work. • TH:Cr3.1.8a. Use repetition and analysis in order to revise devised or scripted drama work. • TH:Re9.1.8a. Respond to a theatre work using supporting evidence, personal aesthetics, and artistic criteria. 		
<p>Enduring Understanding(s):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The interaction of bodies with space is a powerful tool for storytelling in theatre. 2. Every staging challenge has multiple solutions though some are more effective than others. 3. Revision based on criteria is essential to the success of any theatre process. 	<p>Essential Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does the use of body throughout space impact storytelling? 2. What habits of mind do theater artists need to persevere through a creative process? 3. How are is the theatre artist's process impacted by analysis and synthesis? 	
<p>Knowledge:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Types of performance spaces 2. Areas of the stage and body positions 3. Staging and composition concepts 4. Staging problems 5. Criteria for effective staging 	<p>Skills:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to verbal cues about movement on stage (Cross downstage stage right and sit in chair in a ¼ right position) 2. Effectively express dynamic and meaningful stage pictures using bodies and facial expressions. 3. Effectively stage scenes for a proscenium configuration. 4. Effectively stage transitions between scenes 5. Analyze and evaluate staging choices in excerpts of staging according to established criteria 	

CAST Model District Unit Template

Learning Objectives:

- Students can recognize, define, and apply elements and concepts of staging: areas of stage, body positions and composition.
- Students can clearly communicate a story through staging.
- Students can evaluate their own work and the work of others using established criteria.

Learning Plan/Instructional Strategies:

- Participate in ensemble-building activities, and reflect on how to make them effective.
- Explore tableaux and create an anchor chart for 'effective tableaux'.
- Demonstrate three types of stages (proscenium, thrust, arena), body positions, shared positions, and upstaging.
- Mini-lesson to demonstrate three types of emphases and how to manipulate staging elements to create each: direct, duo, and diversified. Release students to experiment with manipulating staging elements to create each type of emphasis.
- Mini-lesson to explore how the placement of furniture communicates meaning about setting, etc. Release students to experiment with this concept.
- Mini-lesson to anticipate and correct misconception: *It is never effective for an actor to turn his or her back to an audience.* Release students to explore when the decision to use a full-back position can be purposeful and powerful.
- Use visual thinking strategies to engage students in critically viewing visual text: photograph of Little Rock Nine.
- Review performance task and rubric.
- Each group reads and analyzes an assigned short passage from *Memoirs Don't Cry*. Transforms passage into 5 tableau ideas. (*Support students with reading strategies as appropriate; could include masterful read of text.*)
- Mini-lesson on effective transitions. Release students to stage effective transitions in their performance task.
- View short excerpt of professional theatre production and evaluate staging based on established criteria.
- Goal-setting, followed by small-group rehearsals and peer feedback based on established aesthetic criteria.
- Performances.
- Whole-group discussion after watching videotaped performances about what was effective and would could be more effective.
- Throughout process, students write brief journal entries explaining/justifying their artistic choices using appropriate theatre terminology.

Resources:

Title	Warriors Don't Cry
Author	Melba Beals
Edition	abridged, illustrated, reissue
Publisher	Simon and Schuster, 2007
ISBN	1416948821, 9781416948827
Length	240 pages
Subjects	Juvenile Nonfiction › People & Places › United States › General

Repertoire/Media & Materials

- Adequate space for small theatre ensembles to rehearse.
- Lightweight, neutral chairs to be used for student-seating and staging. (Wenger makes such chairs for theatre classroom.)
- Stage cubes (if possible)
- Projector to project Little Rock Nine photograph and/or copies of photograph.
- Copies of key passages from *Warriors Don't Cry*.

Academic Vocabulary:

1. Types of performance spaces: proscenium, thrust, arena.
2. Areas of the stage (Upstage Right, Downstage Center, etc) and corresponding notation (UR, DC, etc.)
3. Body positions on the stage (full front, ¼ right, profile right, etc.)
4. Basic staging concepts: upstaging, shared position, tableau, stillness
5. Composition concepts: levels, planes, diagonals, composition, types of emphasis (direct, duo, diversified)
6. Purpose and qualities of effective transitions

Differentiation/Modification:

- Anchor charts (effective theatre ensembles, effective tableaux, effective transitions)
- Word walls for unit vocabulary
- Modeling
- Hands-on practice
- Gradual release
- Group roles (stage manager, director, actor)
- Establishing/applying aesthetic criteria
- Goal-setting
- Reflection on progress
- Masterful read of text
- Close-reading strategies
- Visual thinking strategies (see-wonder-think)
- Peer Critique Protocol

Assessments: Must link to unit standards and objectives. What evidence will be used to demonstrate students have met the standards and achieved the learning objectives?
Summative Assessment** (use Attached template)

**Small performance ensembles receive “a thousand words” from the memoir *Warriors Don’t Cry*, the true story of an African-American high school teenager, who with eight black friends went to all-white Central High in an effort to desegregate schools in Arkansas during the 1950s. The job of each ensemble is to transform the text into five powerful stage tableaux, each of which will be worth a thousand words! Each group member is the ‘director’ for at least one tableau and one transition.
(Rubric attached)**

Formative Assessment Description:

-Active quiz assessing students’ knowledge of areas of stage/body positions and ability to correctly respond to verbal cues about where to move on stage. Each student individually enters the playing area. The teacher provides five cues to which the performer responds. (For example: Cross upstage right and stand in a profile left position.) Each cue is worth two points, one for area and other for position, a total of 10 points. As the student responds, the teacher tracks whether students accurately demonstrate the knowledge/skill as a performer. To further challenge students, provide each person a grading sheet to track their peers’ responses; this will assess each students’ knowledge from the perspective of a director/stage manager.

-Small group rehearsals.

CAST Model District Unit Template

-'Dress rehearsals' during which students share portions of works-in-progress and provide/receive feedback based on criteria.

-Journal entries in which students justify artistic choices using details and criteria for effective performance.
(response rubric attached)

-Written theatre review of staging choices made in a professional production (either videotaped or live).
(response rubric attached)

Notes:

Theatre Response Rubric

PROCESS COMPONENT	1	2	3	4
JUSTIFY ARTISTIC CHOICES	In speaking and writing, describes artistic choices in simple terms.	In speaking and writing, <i>uses domain-specific vocabulary and some details</i> to describe and explain artistic choices.	In speaking and writing, uses <i>ample</i> domain-specific vocabulary and details, to describe, explain, and <i>clearly connect artistic choices to purpose and desired effect on audience.</i>	In speaking and writing, uses ample domain-specific vocabulary and details, to describe, explain, and clearly connect artistic choices to purpose and desired impact on audience. Also, <i>evaluates the effectiveness of those choices.</i>
EVALUATE PERFORMANCES/PRODUCTS	In speaking and writing, demonstrates appreciation or dislike of work of art, but without details or explanation. (Ex. "I liked it. It was good.")	In speaking and writing, <i>observes and describes some details in a performance and/or product to draw a conclusion about the quality of the work and demonstrate one's preferences.</i>	In speaking and writing, <i>uses accurately discipline-specific vocabulary</i> to observe and describe details in a performance and/or product, and <i>evaluates the quality of the work according to a set of agreed upon guidelines.</i>	In speaking and writing, <i>fluently integrates</i> discipline-specific vocabulary to observe the <i>nuances</i> of a performance and/or work product, and evaluates the quality of the work according to a set of agreed upon guidelines <i>as well as preferences based on prior knowledge</i> of artistic work and experiences.

EXAMPLES OF JUSTIFICATION AT FOUR LEVELS OF SUCCESS	Example: I told him to turn around.	Example: I directed the actor to turn upstage when he heard his cue.	Example: I directed the actor to turn upstage when he heard his cue because the sudden movement would communicate to the audience that his character was sad.	Example: I directed the actor to turn upstage when he heard his cue because the sudden movement would communicate to the audience that his character was sad. Now I think the timing of this movement is ineffective because at the same moment another character is dancing and the audience will look there. In my next rehearsal, I am going to adjust the timing.
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A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words: Telling Stories through Powerful Staging

INDICATORS	Exceeds	Accomplished	Progressing
<u>Effective Tableaux</u>	Five tableaux that are still for seven seconds, and demonstrate sophisticated use of levels, dynamic body shapes/facial expressions, focused eyes, and shared positions to clearly communicate a story.	Either four tableaux that are still for seven seconds or five tableaux that are still for a few seconds. They also demonstrate some use of levels, dynamic body shapes/facial expressions, focused eyes, and shared positions to somewhat clearly communicate a story.	Either three tableaux that are still for seven seconds or more than three tableaux that do not come to stillness, and demonstrate minimal use of levels, dynamic body shapes/facial expressions, focused eyes, and shared positions to communicate a story that is unclear.
<u>Emphasis</u>	Highly effective use of stage areas, body positions, and levels to create an even mix of direct, duo, and diversified emphasis throughout the performance.	Somewhat effective use of stage areas, body positions, and levels to create at least one example of direct, duo, and diversified emphasis in performance.	Use of stage areas, body positions, and levels does not create a clear distinction between types of emphasis throughout performance.
<u>Furniture</u>	In your tableau, the placement of furniture clearly establishes the setting (story).	In your tableau, the placement of furniture clearly establishes the setting (story).	The placement of furniture lacks purpose and does not help clearly establish the setting (story).
<u>Transitions</u>	The staging of transitions smoothly and creatively not only moves the performance from scene to scene, but also adds to the story and impact of the overall performance.	The staging of transitions smoothly moves the performance from scene to scene.	The staging of transitions is clunky, random, and disorganized.
<u>Stage presence & participation</u>	The performer has intense energy and maintains his fourth wall.	The performer mostly maintains her fourth wall and has good energy.	Performer breaks his fourth wall and/or performance lacks energy.
<u>Full back position</u>	The staging has two tableaux that make effective use of a full back position. All actors are in five tableaux.	The performance has at least one tableau that makes effective use of a full back position. All actors are in at least four tableaux.	The use of full back position is either ineffective or missing. All actors are in at three tableaux.

INDICATORS	Awesome	Acceptable	Attempted
<u>Effective Tableaux</u>	Five tableaux that are still for seven seconds, and demonstrate sophisticated use of levels, dynamic body shapes/facial expressions, focused eyes, and shared positions to clearly communicate a story.	Either four tableaux that are still for seven seconds or five tableaux that are still for a few seconds. They also demonstrate some use of levels, dynamic body shapes/facial expressions, focused eyes, and shared positions to somewhat clearly communicate a story.	Either three tableaux that are still for seven seconds or more than three tableaux that do not come to stillness, and demonstrate minimal use of levels, dynamic body shapes/facial expressions, focused eyes, and shared positions to communicate a story that is unclear.
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