

Technical Theater

Grades:

7th and 8th

Class Sessions:

34 Sessions

Teacher:

Katherine Cooley

School: **MS 74**

The Nathaniel Hawthorne School

Overview

Benchmarks:

- Students experiment with transforming space in order to understand the abstract elements of design
- Students will develop communication skills and proficiency in the use of theater documents while engaged in the authentic process of theater production

Big Idea(s) of this Unit

- Students build confidence through planning and building.
- Running a show can inspire students to plan and accomplish other projects and goals.

Project Description

- Students will assess some of the technical needs of the school production, (or another play read in class) and create and execute a plan for meeting those needs.

Instructional Goal

- To provide students with real-life experience of participating in technical theater.

Indicators of Student Learning

Students will know:

- Technical terms such as fly system, prop table, run sheets.
- Names and uses of various tools used in scenic construction.
- At least four areas of technical theater and a brief explanation of each.

Students will be able to:

- Create a production needs list based on script reading.
- Use specific tools of designers and theater technicians.
- Work in collaboration with director, other designers and crew members.

Students will understand that:

- Design and technical elements convey meaning.
- The overall vision of the production is created by the director and carried out through collaboration with the other designers.
- Designs can be abstract, realistic or somewhere in between.

Unit: Theater Making

Technical Theater continued

Overview continued

Pre-Assessment/Planning

- Have I taught these students before?

The majority I have taught before.

- What do students already know and understand about this area of Theater Making?

Scenery can establish time, place and mood.

Sound and lighting help create mood.

Many aspects of a production are "behind the scenes".

- What skills related to this unit have students already developed?

Some knowledge of the vocabulary and basic equipment.

Basic understanding of scene shifts.

Searching a script for productions needs.

- What activity might I use as a pre-assessment tool?

Prior knowledge of students' experience; Q & A

- How will the students' needs be addressed?

KET online theater tour helps to give students a basic knowledge of many technical aspects of theater required as a foundation of this for this unit.

Unit Assessment Strategies: What is the evidence of student learning?

Self-Assessment

- Post-production survey questions

Peer Assessment

- Class discussion of group sound cue presentations.

Teacher Assessment

- Quiz on terms and functions of various facets of production
- Rubric for group sound cue presentation

Teacher Self-Assessment

- Observation and questioning of small groups during the process
- Read post-production surveys and evaluate according to this unit plan

Unit: Theater Making

Technical Theater continued

Overview continued

Technical Theater Self- Assessment Questions

Learning Experiences	Theater Strands				
	<i>making</i>	<i>literacy</i>	<i>connections</i>	<i>resources</i>	<i>careers</i>
Read through a script looking for set requirements, prop and costume needs.	◆	◆			
Measure stage and create a scale ground plan of our stage.	◆	◆			◆
Help construct and/or paint scenery.					
Attend professional production in the city to have a touchstone for class discussion on various production facets.	◆	◆			◆
Sew a hem and sew on a button by hand.		◆	◆	◆	◆
Create lighting effects and follow lighting cues for one scene.	◆	◆			◆
Operate school auditorium lighting.	◆	◆			◆
Create sound effects and follow sound cues for one scene.	◆	◆			◆
Plan and execute publicity for the school production.	◆	◆			◆
Help strike the set and prepare the stage area for other uses.	◆	◆			◆

Technical Theater Self-Assessment Questions

Please answer the questions using your small-group production projects and/or the after-school production as examples. Each answer should be one to two paragraphs in length.

1. Explain how your reading of the script helped you to assess the needs of the production. Give at least two specific examples from different facets of production.
2. Explain how costumes, make-up, lights, sound or set helped your scene and that of at least one other group to be effective.
3. How did the addition of costumes, make-up, lights, and/or sound effects affect the actors' performances?
4. If you had to complete these projects again what would you do differently and why?
5. How will the knowledge you have gained of technical theater affect you as a member of the audience in the future?

Katherine Cooley, Theater Teacher Observations

The focus of this unit is the technical aspect of the process of creating authentic theater.

I time the unit to coincide with the production of the main show of the school year. Some of the students are involved in the production (which is an after-school activity) and some are not. I wanted to cover the same instructional goal with all my 7th and 8th grade students – those in the show and those not in the show, those students I see four days a week as well as those I see two days.

I begin the unit by giving the students a general working vocabulary for technical theater based on the website <http://www.ket.org/artstoolkit/drama/tour/>. Next we make a list of the facets of production and establish a general understanding of each. With the list in front of them we read through a short script *The Devil and Daniel Webster*. Students jot down information that is valuable to designers in each of the facets. With that information they can start to design lights, sound costumes etc. One activity that all the classes did was to create a sound cue sheet and perform a scene executing the sound effects at the proper time. Some groups learned how to operate auditorium lighting performing a simple cross-fade. Others were involved in creating the actual sound cue sheet, lighting cue sheet, prop list and run sheets for this year's show *High School Musical*.

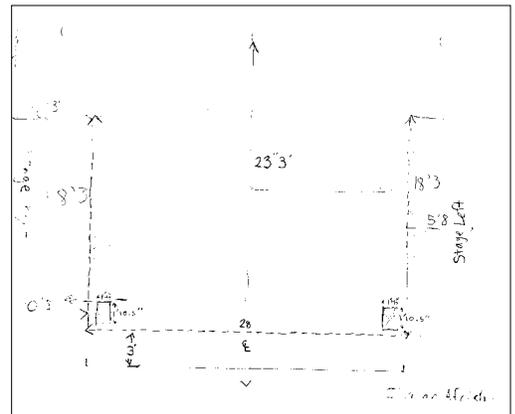
This unit provided me with flexibility to allow some students to work on the production and share the process with the class while others did simpler but similar activities based on *The Devil and Daniel Webster*. The indicators of student learning framed the work in such a way that I was able to stay focused on and plan assessment for the important learning that takes place while working on the technical aspects of a show.

Students gained a broader understanding of and appreciation for what goes into staging a production. When one of the groups in the class performed a scene with sound effects coming on time they all recognized how it helped to create an illusion of time and place. "It felt so real," students commented.

I was able to take several classes to see professional productions this year, but the best for the purpose of this unit was *The Mikado* at City Center. To see an opera or operetta during or just prior to this unit provides many examples of how the elements of design convey meaning.

I will add some activities when I do this unit next year. I would like the students to have some practice arranging props on a prop table, assigning a specific place for everything. I will also adjust the unit based on the show we will do that year. Because we will probably do *Fiddler on the Roof* next year, I would like to spend more time addressing costume and make-up needs based on historical research.

SOUND	TRACK	CUE
Crying	95 Horror	"You OK Remmy?"
Knocking	Julian knock on wood table from wing	"Give or take a few"
Slam Door	Julian drop textbook on table	"You got any pickled pig toes?"
Booing	58 COMICAL	"It was a joke!"
Crickets	58 NATURE	"Who will entertain us first?"
Applauds	59 Cheering	"Maestro Ready? a one two a..."
Screaming	11 HORROR	"How was it"
Knocking	Julian knock on wood table from wing	"And pretty soon you will be under the table"



Aleya Tom	
Ashley Julian	24
Amanda Robert	30
3-5 sfx	5
sfx on time	2
sfx added to scene	3
backing+ scene prep	4
cue sheet	5
done on time	5
bits of tapping on mic	
sfx not clear	