STORY THEATRE

Instructor

MATT WEBSTER

Materials

Video modules, Handouts, Transcripts, MP3 Files, PDF of Powerpoint Slides, Completion Certificate

Course length

10 modules
1 hours, 23 minutes of video
2 credit hours

Course Description

Instructor Matt Webster believes that Story Theatre is one of the most creative, most imaginative, most unique forms of theatre ever to make its way to the stage. His course introduces the style of theatre called story theatre, explores the steps needed to choose the best stories to perform, explains how to adapt a story into a script, and demonstrates a variety of story theatre styles from simple and contained to complex and crazy and everything in between.

When you are finished with this course, you'll be able to bring nearly any story to any stage and present it to any audience. That is the power and promise of story theatre. Learn how to bring the page to the stage.

About the Instructor

Matt Webster is a Theatre Educator who has been teaching theatre students AND theatre teachers for almost 30 years. A former tenured professor of Theatre Education, Matt holds both an MA in Theatre Education and an MFA in Theatre for Youth and has taught at universities, public schools and professional theatre companies around the country. Currently Matt is the Education Consultant for the Drama Teacher Academy, and an adjunct professor at Winthrop University.

In addition, Matt is a director, actor and educator who has worked with both children and adults for professional and community theatre companies from coast to coast, including Honolulu Theatre for Youth, Seattle Children's Theatre, the Silver Bear Theatre in Albuquerque, Actors Theatre of Charlotte, Theatre Charlotte, Davidson Community Players, Mooresville Community Children's Theatre, Matthews Playhouse and Children's Theatre of Charlotte.

Matt is also the author of the book Methods of Teaching Theatre - A Teacher Toolkit, and is an award-winning, published playwright.

Course Curriculum

Lesson 0: Introduction *3:55*
This module introduces the course material and lays out the plan for the subsequent lessons.

Lesson 1: Choosing Stories *12:46*
This lesson explores what stories are best suited for adaptation into story theatre. Teachers will learn how to look for the kinds of stories that lend themselves to successful adaptation and performance.

Lesson 2: Adapting and Dramatizing Scripts *5:49*
This lesson explores the process of adapting a story into a scripted form, and discusses the rules that maintain the integrity of the original story as it transforms into a performance piece.

Lesson 3: Narrators *11:54*
This module dives deep into the power and perplexity of narrators and learn how to unleash that power as part of a unique performance style.

Lesson 4: Stories on Stools *8:23*
This lesson explores bringing stories to their feet, or at least to their seat, discussing the building blocks of story theatre in a style of storytelling called stories on stools.

Lesson 5: Dialogue Strategies *11:56*
In this module teachers learn that the voice of the story can come from onstage or off, from narrators or characters, or a combination of both.

Lesson 6: People as Props *15:13*
In this module teachers learn a style of story theatre the instructor calls 'people as props', and it challenges performers to be both creative and complex. This module breaks the rules of proper theatre and pushes the boundaries of the audience's imagination.

Lesson 7: Props *3:57*
This lesson looks at alternative ways to dress your play through the use of imaginative props and scenery.

Lesson 8: Touring *6:01*
This lesson will walk teachers through the process of taking your show on the road. Story theatre is designed to be portable, adaptable and flexible.

Lesson 9: In the Classroom *3:32*
This lesson takes story theatre into the classroom and discusses all the ways it connects across the curriculum.

Standards Connections

National Core Arts Standards

Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation - Grade 6
TH:Pr4.1.6.a - Identify the essential events in a story or script that make up the dramatic structure in a drama/theatre work.

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - Grade 6
TH:Cr1.1.6.a - Identify possible solutions to staging challenges in a drama/theatre work.

Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation - Grade 7
TH:Pr4.1.7.a - Consider various staging choices to enhance the story in a drama/theatre work.

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - Grade 7
TH:Cr1.1.7.a - Investigate multiple perspectives and solutions to staging challenges in a drama/theatre work.

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - Grade 8
TH:Cr1.1.8.a - Imagine and explore multiple perspectives and solutions to staging problems in a drama/ theatre work.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade 6
TH:Cr2.1.6.b - Contribute ideas and accept and incorporate the ideas of others in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation - Grade 7
TH:Pr5.1.7.a - Participate in a variety of acting exercises and techniques that can be applied in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade 7
TH:Cr2.1.7.b - Demonstrate mutual respect for self and others and their roles in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade 8
TH:Cr2.1.8.b - Share leadership and responsibilities to develop collaborative goals when preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade HS Accomplished
TH:Cr2.1.HSII.b - Cooperate as a creative team to make interpretive choices for a drama/theatre work.

California VAPA Standards (2019)

6.TH:Pr4 Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.
6.TH:Pr4.a - Identify the essential events in a story or script that make up the dramatic structure in a drama/theatre work.

6.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
6.TH:Cr1.a - Identify possible solutions to staging challenges in a drama/theatre work.

7.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
7.TH:Cr1.a - Investigate multiple perspectives and solutions to staging challenges in a drama/theatre work.

7.TH:Pr4 Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.
7.TH:Pr4.a - Consider various staging choices to enhance the story in a drama/theatre work.

8.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
8.TH:Cr1.a - Imagine and explore multiple perspectives and solutions to staging problems in a drama/ theatre work.

6.TH:Cr2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
6.TH:Cr2.b - Contribute ideas and accept and incorporate the ideas of others in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

7.TH:Pr5 Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
7.TH:Pr5.a - Participate in a variety of acting exercises and techniques that can be applied in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.

7.TH:Cr2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
7.TH:Cr2.b - Demonstrate mutual respect for self and others and their roles in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

8.TH:Cr2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
8.TH:Cr2.b - Share leadership and responsibilities to develop collaborative goals when preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

Acc.TH:Cr2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
Acc.TH:Cr2.b - Cooperate as a creative team to make interpretive choices for a drama/theatre work.

Colorado Academic Standards - Drama and Theatre Arts

Sixth Grade
DT.6.1.1.a - Students Can: Identify possible solutions to staging challenges in a drama/theatre work.

DT.6.1.2.b - Students Can: Contribute ideas and accept and incorporate the ideas of others in preparing or devising a drama/theatre work.

DT.6.2.1.a - Students Can: Identify the essential events in a story or script that make up the dramatic structure in a drama/theatre work.

DT.6.2.2.a - Students Can: Participate in a variety of acting exercises and techniques that can be applied in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.

Seventh Grade
DT.7.1.1.a - Students Can: Integrate multiple perspectives and solutions to staging challenges in a drama/theater work.

DT.7.1.2.b - Students Can: Demonstrate mutual respect for self and others and their roles in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

DT.7.2.1.a - Students Can: Experiment various staging choices to enhance the story in a drama/theatre work.

DT.7.2.2.a - Students Can: Recognize how acting exercises and techniques can be applied to a drama/theatre work.

Eighth Grade
DT.8.1.1.a - Students Can: Imagine and explore multiple perspectives and solutions to staging problems in a drama/theatre work.

DT.8.1.2.b - Students Can: Share leadership and responsibilities to develop collaborative goals when preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

High School - Advanced Pathway
DT.H2.1.3.a - Students Can: Choose and interpret a drama/theatre work to connect and question beliefs.

High School - Professional Pathway
DT.H3.1.2.b - Students Can: Collaborate as a creative team to discover artistic solutions and make interpretive choices in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

Common Core
Speaking and Listening
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.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.

Language
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Reading: Literature
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1 - Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Language
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Florida Sunshine State Standards
Critical Thinking & Reflection
TH.912.C.1.2 - Create, refine, and sustain complex and believable characters for performance through the integration and application of artistic choices based on research, rehearsal, feedback, and refinement.

Organizational Structure
TH.912.O.1.4 - Write an original script or a dramatic adaptation of a literary work to demonstrate knowledge of theatrical conventions.

Skills, Techniques & Processes
TH.912.S.1.7 - Interpret dramatic texts, organize and conduct rehearsals, and justify directorial choices for formal and informal productions.

TH.912.S.2.4 - Sustain a character or follow technical cues in a production piece to show focus.

Georgia Performance Standards - Theatre Arts
Grade 6 - Creating
TA6.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Identify artistic choices, utilize theatre vocabulary, and demonstrate non-verbal communication skills in the rehearsal process., b. Interpret a character's motivation by understanding the relationship between their background and their behavior., c. Identify the variety of relationships between characters., d. Identify, define, and classify character traits.,

e. Recognize and demonstrate the roles, responsibilities, and skills associated with collaborative performance., f. Use resources to identify and create technical elements of theatre.

TA6.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Identify the elements of a story., b. Identify the theme and structure of a play., c. Articulate creative ideas in oral and written forms., d. Use the dramatic writing process to generate a script., e. Demonstrate the conventions of dialogue and stage directions.

Grade 6 - Performing
TA6.PR.2 - Execute artistic and technical elements of theatre., a. Incorporate technical elements in performance.

Grade 7 - Creating
TA7.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Identify and rehearse effective communication skills., b. Compare and contrast character types and relationships by analyzing character motivations, objectives, and goals., c. Compare the physical, emotional, vocal, and social dimensions of a character., d. Investigate the role and responsibility of the cast and crew., e. Identify and model ensemble skills in the rehearsal process., f. Utilize staging and blocking choices to enhance the performance., g. Compare, contrast, and design elements of technical theatre., h. Utilize theatre vocabulary throughout the rehearsal process.

TA7.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Create ideas for stories., b. Analyze the theme and structure of a play., c. Use the dramatic writing process to generate a script., d. Utilize dramatic conventions in the scriptwriting process (e.g. stage directions, dialogue, scenes).

Grade 7 - Performing
TA7.PR.1 - Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments., a. Execute effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills in performance (e.g. rate, pitch, volume, inflection, posture, facial expression, physical movement)., b. Participate in a variety of acting exercises and techniques that can be applied in a rehearsal or theatre performance., c. Engage in various performance styles.

TA7.PR.2 - Execute artistic and technical elements of theatre., a. Select a variety of technical elements that can be applied to a theatrical work., b. Incorporate artistic and technical elements into a theatre performance.

Grade 8 - Creating
TA8.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Differentiate the physical, emotional, vocal, and social dimensions of a variety of characters., b. Compare the relationships and interactions between characters by analyzing character motivation (objectives, obstacles, strategy, action, stakes, outcome)., c. Incorporate dramatic elements through improvisation., d. Connect theatre vocabulary to the application of theatre performance., e. Identify and demonstrate both ensemble and leadership skills in the rehearsal process., f. Evaluate the effectiveness of artistic and technical elements used in a theatre production., g. Design and create scenery, props, costumes, lighting, and sound., h. Assume different roles and responsibilities in the rehearsal process.

TA8.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Classify different points of view in a story., b. Identify, analyze, and articulate the structure of a script., c. Utilize improvisation techniques to generate script ideas., d. Use the dramatic writing process to generate a script.

Grade 8 - Performing

TA8.PR.1 - Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments., a. Demonstrate the physical, emotional, vocal, and social dimensions of a character in different types of theatre performances (e.g. rate, pitch, volume, inflection, posture, facial expression, motivation, physical movement)., b. Demonstrate appropriate ensemble skills throughout a performance., c. Use appropriate listening and response skills during performances.

TA8.PR.2 - Execute artistic and technical elements of theatre., a. Incorporate artistic and technical elements into a theatre production., b. Resolve conflicts in technical applications.

Grades 9-12 - ACTING LEVELS I-IV - Performing

TAHSA.PR.1 - Act and direct by communicating and sustaining roles within a variety of situations and environments., a. Examine and implement the voice, body, observation, and imagination as tools of the actor in presentations of formal and informal theatre., b. Research and assess the development of acting skills for character creation and performance including historical movements, personal experience, and cultural influences., c. Act by developing, communicating, and sustaining roles within a variety of situations and environments., d. Identify and examine the responsibilities and tasks of an actor in relationship with directors, designers, and technical crew., e. Use the skills and tools of a director to conduct rehearsals for performance.

Grades 9-12 - ADVANCED DRAMA LEVELS I-IV -Performing

TAHSAD.PR.1 - Act and direct by communicating and sustaining roles within a variety of situations and environments., a. Examine and implement the skills and tasks associated with acting, incorporating voice, body, observation, and imagination to create characters for formal and informal performances., b. Implement the duties of the stage manager, including communication and safety procedures, that will assist the director in all areas of production., c. Develop a schedule and organizational plan to prepare a scene for performance, including a rehearsal schedule and a prompt script., d. Conduct rehearsals and present a full theatrical presentation to a live audience.

Grades 9-12 - FUNDAMENTALS OF THEATRE LEVELS I-IV - Creating

TAHSFT.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Recognize and/or employ realistic and conventional speech patterns within dialogue or dramatic verse., b. Incorporate dramatic elements through improvisation., c. Recognize and interpret artistic choices in performance.

TAHSFT.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Differentiate between dramatic and traditional literary writing and utilize common steps of the playwriting process., b. Assess the need for script analysis, concept development, and directorial and technical concerns of a theatrical script., c. Construct and critique elements of dramatic structure, character, and dialogue., d. Create and perform scenes for audiences.

Grades 9-12 - TECHNICAL THEATRE LEVELS I-IV - Creating

TAHSTT.CR.1 - Create technical elements of theatre (e.g. sets, props, costumes, makeup, lighting, sound)., a. Explore and utilize the elements of design and principles of composition for a theatrical context., b. Create basic to advanced technical elements by choosing appropriate materials, tools, and techniques., c. Analyze and/or develop choices in technical elements (e.g. sets, lights, costumes,

sound) of informal and formal productions and theatrical texts as a part of the design process, considering mood, tone, and symbolism., d. Create industry standard paperwork (e.g. budgets, cut lists, materials, cue sheets, lighting and costume plots, schedules, calendars) as it relates to completing design renderings and/or models., e. Conceptualize and/or generate design elements for a dramatic work (e.g. scene, one act, full-length, musical).

North Carolina Essential Standards 2024
Beginning High School Create
B.CR.1.2 - Create scenarios that communicate character, setting, plot, and conflict.

B.CR.2.1 - Adapt theatrical works using personal experiences through a collaborative process.

Intermediate High School Create
I.CR.2.1 - Adapt unique personal experiences into theatrical works.

Intermediate High School Present
I.PR.1.2 - Apply staging conventions to formal and informal theatrical productions by employing vocal and physical acting techniques.

I.PR.2.1 - Develop scenes for formal or informal presentations.

North Carolina Essential Standards 2010
Beginning High School Standards - Communication
B.C.1.3 - Understand how to read and write scripts that communicate conflict, plot, and character.

B.C.2.2 - Interpret various selections of dramatic literature through formal and informal presentations.

Intermediate High School Standards - Communication
I.C.1.3 - Produce scripts based on literature texts.

I.C.2.2 - Interpret scenes through formal and informal presentations.

Intermediate High School Standards - Culture
I.CU.2.2 - Use production conventions, such as blocking or style, as given by directors or as indicated by playwrights.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Theatre Arts
MS 117.211 LI - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding
C.1.E - identify theatrical vocabulary and terminology, including basic anatomy of theatre spaces.

C.1.F - identify the structure and form in examples of dramatic literature.

MS 117.211 LI - Creative Expression: performance
C.2.D - dramatize literary selections and imitate life experiences through dramatic play.

MS 117.211 LI - Creative Expression: production
C.3.B - create suitable environments for dramatizations.

MS 117.212 LII - Creative Expression: production
B.3.B - create theatrical elements such as scenery, properties, lighting, sound, costume, makeup, and publicity appropriate to specific performances.

MS 117.213 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding
B.1.E - apply knowledge of theatrical vocabulary and terminology.

MS 117.213 LIII - Creative Expression: production
B.3.B - create theatrical elements such as scenery, properties, lighting, sound, costume, makeup, and publicity using the principles of design.

HS 117.315 LI - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding
C.1.F - demonstrate a working knowledge of the language of theatre such as stage terminology, elements of theatre, or theatrical conventions.

C.1.H - define the roles of and appreciate the collaborative relationships between all artistic partners such as playwrights, composers, directors, actors, designers, technicians, and audience.

HS 117.315 LI - Creative Expression: production
C.3.B - apply technical knowledge and skills safely to create or operate theatrical elements such as scenery, properties, lighting, sound, costumes, makeup, current technology, or publicity.

HS 117.316 LII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding
C.1.D - analyze dramatic structure and genre.

HS 117.316 LII - Creative Expression: production
C.3.C - analyze characters, themes, duties, and elements of a script to determine artistic roles and technical assignments.

HS 117.317 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding
C.1.B - experiment with stage movement.

HS 117.317 LIII - Creative Expression: performance
C.2.E - write dialogue that reveals character motivation, advances plot, provides exposition, and reveals theme.

HS 117.318 LIV - Creative Expression: production
C.3.B - analyze and evaluate dramatic texts and direct brief scenes.

Alberta, Canada

Technical Theatre/Design 10-20-30 - Costume
1 - demonstrate understanding of the purpose of costume

Acting Drama 20
1 - analyze a script for explicit character clues

Theatre Studies Drama 30 (Early or Middle or Late drama)
4 - recognize dramatic structure of a play

Technical Theatre/Design 10-20-30 - Management - Properties
1 - demonstrate understanding of the purpose of stage properties

Playwriting - Drama 20
1 - demonstrate understanding of the basic structure of a play

3 - demonstrate understanding of script format

Directing - Drama 30
1 - demonstrate understanding of the function of the director

Junior Goal II Objectives
become familiar with dramatic terminology and script format

Junior Orientation
focus concentration on one task at a time

listen effectively

share ideas confidently with others

support positivity the work of others

work cooperatively and productively with all members of the class in pairs, small groups and large groups

Junior Goal I Objectives
develop a sense of responsibility and commitment

develop self-confidence

develop self-discipline

strengthen powers of concentration

Theatre Studies Level III - Advanced (The script)
10 - demonstrate understanding of the concept of dramatic convention

12 - analyze a script to identify character, setting and plot

8 - demonstrate understanding of directions used in a script

Senior Goal I Objectives
apply imaginative and creative thought to problem-solving situations

Senior Goal II Objectives
demonstrate understanding of integration of disciplines to enrich a theatrical presentation

explore various approaches to analyzing a script for purposes of study and/or presentation

Orientation Drama 10
concentrate on the task at hand

make effective decisions or choices

share ideas confidently

solve problems imaginatively and creatively

work cooperatively and productively

British Columbia (2018)

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Connecting and expanding
Collaborate through reciprocal relationships during creative processes

Demonstrate increasingly sophisticated application and/or engagement of curricular content

Demonstrate respect for themselves, others, and the audience

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Explore and Create
Create dramatic works with an intended audience in mind

Develop a repertoire of dramatic skills and techniques through presentation or performance

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect
Describe, analyze, and respond using drama-specific language

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Connect and expand
Demonstrate personal and social responsibility associated with creating, performing, and responding to dramatic performance

Demonstrate respect for self, others, and the audience

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Purposefully select and combine dramatic elements and conventions

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect
Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Connect and expand
Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience

Demonstrate personal and social responsibility associated with creating, performing, and responding to dramatic works

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Explore and Create
Develop a repertoire of dramatic skills, vocabulary, and techniques through presentation or performance

Develop dramatic works for an intended audience

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Communicate and document
Document, share, and collaborate on dramatic works and experiences in a variety of contexts

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Connect and expand
Demonstrate personal and social responsibility associated with creating, performing, and responding to dramatic works

Demonstrate respect for self, others, and audience

Ontario, Canada

Grades 9 & 10 - Foundations - Concepts and Terminology
C.1.2 - demonstrate an understanding of and use correct terminology to refer to the forms, elements, conventions, and techniques of drama, with a focus on ensemble drama works (e.g., chorus, protagonist, ingénue, supporting role, act, scene, climax, resolution, improvisation, mask, freeze-frame image)

C.1.3 - demonstrate an understanding of production roles, practices, and terminology when planning and presenting drama works (e.g., set design, costume design, lighting plot, light cue sheet, sound cue sheet, prompt book, set sketch, set model)

Grades 9 & 10 - Creating and Presenting - Presentation Techniques & Technologies
A.3.1 - identify and use a variety of techniques to influence the audience in specific ways (e.g., have actors enter the performance space from the audience to increase audience connection to the drama; use blocking to focus audience attention on key characters or relationships between characters)

A.3.2 - use a variety of voice and movement techniques to support the creation of character or atmosphere during rehearsal (e.g., use voice and movement to suggest an airport, circus, or factory environment)

A.3.3 - use a variety of technological tools (e.g., light, sound, set design, props, models) to enhance the impact of drama works