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# TEACHING THEATRE WITH DIVERGENT STUDENTS AND CLASS SIZES IN MIND

## **Instructor**

STEVEN STACK

## **Materials**

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

## **Course length**

5 modules  
1 hours, 41 minutes of video  
3 credit hours

## Course Description

Have you ever wondered how in the world you can have a successful theatre classroom with so many variables that you have absolutely no control over? The two biggest ones being the size of your class and the students that you're in charge of turning into some truly talented theatre geeks. This course by Steven Stack explores that wonderful and often ridiculous world of theatre classrooms while giving you the tools for you and your students to not only succeed but to flourish as well.

Lessons will include how to make any size class the Goldilocks class as in "just right", defining and working with all types of students you may encounter in your classroom, the seven must-haves of any theatre class, and the importance of structure in the theatre classroom by providing a guideline for setting up your day-to-day class time.

The course also provides tons of ideas, games and activities that you can use instantly in your classroom. So, if you're a first-time theatre teacher or one just looking for new ideas, this is the course for you.

## About the Instructor

Steven Stack has been teaching students ranging from age 7 to adults for almost 20 years, both within and outside the public education system, and covering topics including math, science, social studies, and health - but his true love is teaching theatre. He's been involved with theatre for more than 20 years as an instructor, director, playwright, and actor.

Steven has taught for twelve consecutive summers at the Wisconsin Center for Academically Talented Youth (WCATY), working with gifted and talented students in an academically challenging environment where they learn the principles of acting, directing, and playwriting. Working with WCATY and the University of Wisconsin, he also teaches online writing courses to students all over the state of Wisconsin.

He is also a published playwright, having written and directed several full-length plays, countless one-acts and many scenes for various theatres, performing arts schools and professional organizations. His plays have been performed all over the United States, as well as internationally.

Steven is currently the lead acting instructor at Forte Studios in Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, where he has the pleasure of working with amazingly talented actors of all ages.

He thoroughly enjoys teaching, directing, and writing for middle-school students, and that's been a major focus of his career. His goal in working with that age group is to help students grow into themselves by giving them stories that resonate beyond the stage. Steven believes that the key to helping students become better actors is working with them to understand who they are and helping them bring that experience to the world of the play. He stresses each individual's contribution to the play, while emphasizing that it's about everyone, not just any single person. His students are expected to come through for their fellow actors.

## Course Curriculum

### Lesson 1: Introduction 7:17

This lesson introduces the course, the instructor, and discusses the power that a theatre class possesses and also provides what to expect, look at upcoming class topics.

### Lesson 2: Seven Must-Haves for the Classroom 25:24

This lesson discusses the seven must-haves for the theatre classroom.

### Lesson 3: Class Size 36:26

This lesson explores how to make whatever class size you have, "just right".

### Lesson 4: Types of Students 23:25

This lesson looks at the most important and complex aspect of the classroom - the students themselves.

### Lesson 5: Day-to-Day Theatre Class 8:44

This lesson looks at what a day-to-day theatre class could look like, including items to include that will improve your students not only in class, on stage, but also in life.

# Standards Connections

## National Core Arts Standards

### 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.

### 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 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.

### Refine new work through play, drama processes and theatre experiences using critical analysis and experimentation - Grade 7

TH:Cr3.1.7.a - Demonstrate focus and concentration in the rehearsal process to analyze and refine choices in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

### Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work - Grade 7

TH:Pr6.1.7.a - Participate in rehearsals for a drama/theatre work that will be shared with an audience.

### Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work - Grade 8

TH:Pr6.1.8.a - Perform a rehearsed drama/theatre work for an audience.

## 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.

TH.912.C.2.5 - Analyze the effect of rehearsal sessions and/or strategies on refining skills and techniques by keeping a performance or rehearsal journal/log.

TH.912.C.2.7 - Accept feedback from others, analyze it for validity, and apply suggestions appropriately to future performances or designs.

### Skills, Techniques & Processes

TH.912.S.1.1 - Describe the interactive effect of audience members and actors on performances.

TH.912.S.1.3 - Develop criteria that may be applied to the selection and performance of theatrical work.

TH.912.S.1.5 - Write monologues, scenes, and/or short plays using principles and elements of writing found in dramatic literature.

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.

## California VAPA Standards (2019)

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 7.TH:Cr3 Refine and complete artistic work.

7.TH:Cr3.a - Demonstrate focus and concentration in the rehearsal process to analyze and refine choices in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

### 7.TH:Pr6 Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

67TH:Pr6 - Create through improvisation a drama/theatre work that will be shared with an audience.

### 8.TH:Pr6 Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

8.TH:Pr6 - Perform a rehearsed, scripted scene from a drama/theatre work for an audience.

## 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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2 - Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

### 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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3 - Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

### 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.

## 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.

### Grade 6 - Responding

TA6.RE.1 - Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member., a. Identify the role of the audience in different environments., b. Analyze the relationship between an audience and a performer., c. Create guidelines for behaviors appropriate to a theatre experience., d. Model appropriate audience behaviors.

### 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.

### 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.

### Grade 7 - Responding

TA7.RE.1 - Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member., a. Assess the role and responsibility of the audience as an integral part of theatre performances., b. Summarize the relationship between the audience and performers., c. Predict how audience relationships will differ with venue and performance type., d. Demonstrate appropriate audience behaviors.

### 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.

### Grade 8 - Responding

TA8.RE.1 - Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member., a. Evaluate the role and responsibility of the audience as an integral part of media productions., b. Articulate why the relationships between the audience and performers is critical to the success of theatre productions., c. Examine the differing audience relationships (e.g. various venues, performance styles), d. Demonstrate appropriate audience behaviors.

### Grades 9-12 - ACTING LEVELS I-IV - Creating

TAHSA.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Examine theatre practices regarding the development, structure, layout, and format of scripts., b. Use improvisation, personal experiences, heritage, imagination, literature, and history to develop scripts., c. Perform formal and informal monologues and scenes based on published and original scripts.

### 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 - ACTING LEVELS I-IV - Responding

TAHSA.RE.1 - Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member., a. Examine and reflect on the relationship between actor and live audience in historical and contemporary performances.

## North Carolina Essential Standards 2024

### Beginning High School Create

B.CR.1.1 - Devise a variety of scenarios and scenes through improvised and scripted activities.

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

### Intermediate High School Present

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

### Accomplished High School Create

AC.CR.1.1 - Improvise a variety of extended scenes or performance pieces reflecting specific situations, styles, or genres.

### **Accomplished High School Respond**

AC.RE.1.1 - Analyze the impact of historical and cultural context on written and presented theatrical works.

### **Advanced High School Create**

AD.CR.1.2 - Create a variety of extended scenes or plays inspired by various time periods or cultures.

### **Advanced High School Present**

AD.PR.2.1 - Develop contrasting theatrical works for diverse genres, audiences, auditions, or productions.

AD.PR.2.4 - Adapt staging and direction for various stage configurations.

## **North Carolina Essential Standards 2010**

### **Beginning High School Standards - Communication**

B.C.2.1 - Use improvisation and acting skills, such as observation, concentration, and characterization in a variety of theatre exercises.

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

### **Intermediate High School Standards - Communication**

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

### **Proficient High School Standards - Communication**

P.C.2.1 - Use improvisation and acting skills, such as observation, concentration, and characterization, to create extended scenes.

### **Proficient High School Standards - Analysis**

P.A.1.2 - Distinguish the evolution of written texts to theatrical performances.

### **Advanced High School Standards - Communication**

A.C.2.2 - Interpret scripts through formal and informal presentations.

### **Advanced High School Standards - Culture**

A.CU.2.2 - Integrate conventions and structures of theatre when creating formal or informal theatre productions.

## **Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Theatre Arts**

### **MS 117.211 LI - Critical evaluation and response**

C.5.A - identify and apply audience etiquette at all performances.

### **MS 117.213 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding**

B.1.B - explore preparation and warm-up techniques.

B.1.E - apply knowledge of theatrical vocabulary and terminology.

### **MS 117.213 LIII - Critical evaluation and response**

B.5.A - understand and demonstrate appropriate audience etiquette at various types of live performances.

### **HS 117.315 LI - Critical evaluation and response**

C.5.A - analyze and apply appropriate behavior at various types of live performances.

C.5.C - offer and receive constructive criticism of peer performances.

### **HS 117.316 LII - Creative Expression: performance**

C.2.B - explore creativity as it relates to self and ensemble.

### **HS 117.317 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding**

C.1.A - apply theatre preparation and warm-up techniques effectively.

### **HS 117.318 LIV - Creative Expression: performance**

C.2.B - demonstrate creativity as it relates to self and ensemble and its effect on audience.

C.2.D - interpret scripted scenes of various styles to portray believable characters.

## **Alberta, Canada**

### **Improvisation Drama 10**

1 - use warmup techniques for preparation of body, voice and mind

10 - demonstrate appropriate rehearsal methods

32 - sustain a character throughout a scene or exercise

9 - use appropriate stage directions

### **Acting Drama 20**

1 - analyze a script for explicit character clues

### **Improvisation/Acting Level III - Advanced**

30 - analyze text for meaning and character development

32 - rehearse, polish and present text

### **Junior Goal II Objectives**

become familiar with dramatic terminology and script format

### **Junior Goal III Objectives**

develop awareness of drama and theatre presentations as possible

develop awareness of various conventions of theatre

develop recognition of and respect for excellence in drama and theatre

develop the ability to analyze and assess the process and the art

### **Junior Orientation**

demonstrate a willingness to take calculated and reasonable risks

focus concentration on one task at a time

generate imaginative and creative solutions to problems

listen effectively

meet deadlines and follow through on individual and group commitments

offer and accept constructive criticism, given specific guidelines, with a desire to improve

recognize the purposes of and participate in warmup activities

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

### **Improvisation/Acting Level I - Beginning**

1 - use warm-up techniques for preparation of body, voice and mind

7 - use stage vocabulary: stage areas, body positions and crosses

8 - demonstrate appropriate rehearsal behaviours and routines

### **Improvisation/Acting Level II - Intermediate**

21 - sustain a character throughout an exercise or scene



### **Junior Goal I Objectives**

- develop a positive self-image
- develop a sense of responsibility and commitment
- develop self-confidence
- develop self-discipline
- develop the ability to initiate, organize and present a project within a given set of guidelines
- develop the ability to interact effectively and constructively in a group process
- develop the ability to offer and accept constructive criticism
- extend the ability to understand, accept and respect others-their rights, ideas, abilities and differences
- strengthen powers of concentration

### **Theatre Studies Level III - Advanced (The script)**

- 7 - define the elements of script, dialogue, directions, characters and settings
- 8 - demonstrate understanding of directions used in a script

### **Senior Goal I Objectives**

- demonstrate the ability to contribute effectively and constructively to the group process
- develop a positive and realistic self-image
- extend the ability to concentrate
- increase self-confidence
- increase self-discipline

### **Senior Goal III Objectives**

- explore various conventions and traditions of theatre

### **Orientation Drama 10**

- concentrate on the task at hand
- cope with success and failure in positive ways
- demonstrate effective use and management of time
- demonstrate willingness to challenge and extend oneself: physically, emotionally, intellectually and artistically
- display consideration and respect for self and others
- listen to self and others
- positively support the work of others
- share ideas confidently
- solve problems imaginatively and creatively

## **British Columbia (2018)**

### **GRADE 6 - ARTS - Exploring and creating**

Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play

### **GRADE 6 - ARTS - Reasoning and reflecting**

Develop and refine ideas, processes, and technical skills in a variety of art forms to improve the quality of artistic creations

### **GRADE 6 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting**

Express, feelings, ideas, and experiences through the arts  
Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas, and experiences

### **GRADE 7 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting**

Express, feelings, ideas, and experiences through the arts  
Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas, and experiences

### **GRADE 8 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting**

- Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas, and

experiences

### **GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Exploring and creating**

Take creative risks to experience and express thoughts, emotions, and meaning

### **GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Reasoning and reflecting**

Receive, offer, and apply constructive feedback

### **GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Connecting and expanding**

Reflect on creative processes to make connections to personal learning and experiences

### **GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Explore and Create**

Create dramatic works with an intended audience in mind  
Experiment with a range of props, processes, and technologies

### **GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect**

Apply feedback to develop and refine ideas

### **GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Connect and expand**

Demonstrate respect for self, others, and the audience

### **GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Explore and Create**

Create dramatic works for an intended audience

### **GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect**

Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience  
Receive and apply constructive feedback to develop and refine ideas

### **GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Connect and expand**

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

### **GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Explore and Create**

Develop dramatic works for an intended audience

### **GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect**

Describe, analyze, and evaluate ways in which props, technologies, and environments are used in drama, using discipline-specific language

Use self-reflection and awareness of audience to refine ideas

### **GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Connect and expand**

Demonstrate respect for self, others, and audience

## **Ontario, Canada**

### **Grades 9 & 10 - Foundations - Responsible Practices**

C.3.1 - identify and follow safe and ethical practices in drama activities (e.g., exhibit safe use of sound and lighting boards; follow procedures for the environmentally responsible use of materials and energy; prepare an individual or group seminar report on the nature and purpose of one or more of the following: copyright protection, royalties, public domain, intellectual property rights)

C.3.2 - identify and apply the skills and attitudes needed to perform various tasks and responsibilities in producing drama works (e.g., use active listening and cooperative problem-solving skills; practise punctuality; use tact in suggesting changes and improvements; demonstrate willingness to accept criticism and build consensus)

C.3.3 - demonstrate an understanding of theatre and audience etiquette, in both classroom and formal performance contexts (e.g., as a performer: show willingness to take direction and behave appropriately towards other actors; as a viewer: demonstrate respect for performers and other audience members by paying attention, not interrupting)

or talking, and applauding when appropriate)

### **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)

### **Grades 9 & 10 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing - Connections Beyond the Classroom**

B.3.1 - identify and describe skills, attitudes, and strategies they used in collaborative drama activities (e.g., brainstorming, active listening, and cooperative problem-solving skills; strategies for sharing responsibility through collaborative team roles)