



STAGE MANAGEMENT

By KAREN LOFTUS

A unit on stage management is a great way to link technical theatre, acting, and even directing. We spend so much of our class time on performance-related projects and, when we do address technical theatre, we often do so by talking about design.

Why not introduce your students to a skill set that not only benefits your productions by ensuring a strong backstage crew and smooth production process, but also benefits the students individually? Through exploring stage management, students learn skills such as analytical thinking, organization, teamwork, and problem solving.

1 - What is a Stage Manager

In this lesson students are introduced to the definition of a stage manager, learn what a stage management team may look like, and take on their first stage management tasks: reading the script and creating a props list.

2 - Paperwork and the Prompt Script

One goal of a stage manager is to prepare all of the necessary information to ensure a successful production. For example: character/scene breakdown, prop list, light cues, schedules. In this lesson, students practice creating a number of documents which every stage manager keeps in their prompt script.

3 - Preparing for the First Rehearsal

Along with paperwork, there are other tasks a stage manager must undertake to prepare for rehearsal. Students will perform tasks that a stage manager must carry out to prepare the rehearsal space and communicate with actors/crew.

4 - Rehearsals Part One: Responsibilities

In this lesson, students practice some of the rehearsal responsibilities of a stage manager such as keeping rehearsals running on time through proper communication, line notes, and completing a rehearsal report.

5 - Rehearsals Part Two: Tracking

In this lesson, students practice some of the tracking tasks required of the stage manager in rehearsal: blocking, scene shifts, and props/costumes.

6 - Rehearsals Part Three: Final Preparations

In this lesson, students will explore the final preparations stage managers perform before heading into performance, and they go through a scheduling exercise.

7 - Technical Rehearsals

The stage manager is the guiding force behind a technical rehearsal. In this lesson we will go through a number of different technical rehearsals and how a stage manager uses their preparation to keep a technical rehearsal moving.

8 - Calling a Show

Calling cues requires the ability to analyze, strategize, and problem solve. Calling cues becomes easier each time, but every show is different and presents new challenges. In this lesson, students practice the act of calling a show. What are the types of cues that can be used? How are they notated in a script?

9 - The Run of a Show

During the run of a show, whether it's one night or a show that runs for years, the stage manager is in charge. In this lesson, students will complete a performance problem-solving exercise, tackle performance reports, and reflect on whether or not they'd make a good stage manager.

10 - Culminating Project

In this culminating project, students are put into groups to create the stage management elements for a new "production" of *Jabberwocky*, the poem by Lewis Carroll.

Standards Connections

National Core Arts Standards

Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art - Grade HS Advanced

TH:Cn10.1.HSIII.a - Collaborate on a drama/theatre work that examines a critical global issue using multiple personal, community, and cultural perspectives.

Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation - Grade 6

TH:Pr5.1.6.b - Articulate how technical elements are integrated into 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 Proficient

TH:Cr2.1.HSI.b - Investigate the collaborative nature of the actor, director, playwright, and designers and explore their interdependent roles in a 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 HS Advanced

TH:Pr6.1.HSIII.a - Present a drama/theatre production for a specific audience that employs research and analysis grounded in the creative perspectives of the playwright, director, designer, and dramaturg.

Common Core

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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4 - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

Reading: Informational Text

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2 - Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4 - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

California VAPA Standards (2019)

Adv.TH:Cn10 Synthesize and relate knowledge and

personal experiences to make art.

Adv.TH:Cn10 - Collaborate on a drama/theatre work that examines a critical global issue using multiple personal, community, and cultural contexts.

6.TH:Pr5 Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

6.TH:Pr5.b - Articulate how technical theatre elements are integrated into 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.

Prof.TH:Cr2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Prof.TH:Cr2.b - Investigate the collaborative nature of the actor, director, playwright, and designers and their interdependent roles in a 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.

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

Adv.TH:Pr6 - Present a drama/theatre production for a specific audience that employs research and analysis grounded in creative perspectives of the playwright, director, designer, and dramaturgy.

Florida Sunshine State Standards

Critical Thinking & Reflection

TH.912.C.1.4 - Research and define the physical/visual elements necessary to create theatrical reality for a specific historical and/or geographical play.

TH.912.C.1.7 - Justify personal perceptions of a director's vision and/or playwright's intent.

TH.912.C.2.1 - Explore and describe possible solutions to production or acting challenges and select the solution most likely to produce desired results.

TH.912.C.3.3 - Critique, based on exemplary models and established criteria, the production values and effectiveness of school, community, and live or recorded professional productions.

Historical & Global Connections

TH.912.H.2.5 - Apply knowledge of dramatic genres and historical periods to shape the work of performers, directors, and designers.

TH.912.H.3.2 - Compare the applications of various art forms used in theatre production.

Innovation, Technology & the Future

TH.912.F.2.4 - Apply the skills necessary to be an effective director, designer, stage manager, and/or technician in the mounting of a theatrical performance.

TH.912.F.3.3 - Exhibit independence, discipline, and commitment to the theatre process when working on assigned projects and productions.

TH.912.F.3.7 - Use social networking or other communication technology appropriately to advertise for a production or school event.

Organizational Structure

TH.912.O.1.1 - Research and analyze a dramatic text by breaking it down into its basic, structural elements to support development of a directorial concept, characterization, and design.

TH.912.O.1.3 - Execute the responsibilities of director, designer, manager, technician, or performer by applying standard theatrical conventions.

TH.912.O.3.1 - Analyze the methods of communication among directors, designers, stage managers, technicians, and actors that establish the most effective support of the creative process.

TH.912.O.3.2 - Analyze a variety of theatre and staging configurations to understand their influence on the audience experience and response.

TH.912.O.3.3 - Analyze and demonstrate how to use various media to impact theatrical productions.

Skills, Techniques & Processes

TH.912.S.1.8 - Use research to extract clues in dramatic texts to create performances or technical elements, choosing those that are most interesting and that best convey dramatic intent.

TH.912.S.2.1 - Create one or more technical design documents for a theatrical production.

TH.912.S.2.2 - Apply technical knowledge of safety procedures and demonstrate safe operation of theatre equipment, tools, and raw materials.

TH.912.S.2.6 - Transfer acting and technical skills and techniques from one piece of dramatic text to another.

TH.912.S.3.4 - Apply scientific and technological advances to develop visual and aural design elements that complement the interpretation of the text.

Georgia Performance Standards 2017 - 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 - Performing

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

Grade 6 - Connecting

TA6.CN.1 - Explore how theatre connects to life experience, careers, and other content., a. Identify similarities between theatre and other art forms., b. Draw conclusions about the relationships between theatre and life., c. Define tasks associated with a theatre production (e.g. director, stage manager, designer, technician, playwright, actor).

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.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 7 - Connecting

TA7.CN.1 - Explore how theatre connects to life experience, careers, and other content., a. Compare and contrast theatre with other art forms., b. Articulate relationships between theatre and life., c. Utilize a multi-disciplinary approach to create original theatre., d. Describe the careers and professional responsibilities associated with theatre production (e.g. director, stage manager, designer, technician, playwright, actor).

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.

Grade 8 - Performing

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 - Connecting

TAHSA.CN.1 - Explore how theatre connects to life experience, careers, and other content., a. Examine multiple facets of the business of theatre., b. Examine the methods of pursuing various acting careers, including demonstrating audition etiquette and techniques.

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 - ADVANCED DRAMA LEVELS I-IV -Connecting

TAHSAD.CN.1 - Explore how theatre connects to life experience, careers, and other content., a. Explore the relationship between theatre and other non-arts disciplines to synthesize concepts and skills from other disciplines to create theatre., b. Explore careers through participation in various production roles and activities found in commercial, professional, amateur, and/or educational theatre.

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

TAHSFT.CN.1 - Explore how theatre connects to life experiences, careers, and other content., a. Examine how theatre reflects real life., b. Analyze how theatre employs aspects of other art forms and disciplines to effectively communicate with a live audience., c. Demonstrate awareness of the discipline, knowledge, skills, and education required for careers in theatre., d. Explore various careers in the theatre arts (e.g. performance, design, production, administrative, education, promotion).

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

Beginning High School Standards - Aesthetics

B.AE.1.1 - Understand the major technical elements, such as sound, lights, set, and costumes, and their interrelationships.

B.AE.1.2 - Explain how the major technical elements, such as sound, lights, set, and costumes, are used to enhance formal or informal productions.

Proficient High School Standards - Aesthetics

P.AE.1.1 - Analyze design concepts for aesthetic impact of technical elements.

P.AE.1.2 - Apply working knowledge to solve problems in the major technical elements, such as sound, lights, set, and costumes, for formal or informal audiences.

Advanced High School Standards - Aesthetics

A.AE.1.1 - Use technical knowledge and design skills to formulate designs for a specific audience.

A.AE.1.2 - Use the knowledge and skills associated with technical roles, such as lighting operator, prop master, or stage manager, in an appropriate and effective manner.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Theatre Arts

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.G - analyze and describe the interdependence of all theatrical elements.

C.1.K - identify and recognize the importance of safe theatre practices.

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 117.317 LIII - Creative Expression: production

C.3.B - analyze and evaluate dramatic texts as a basis for technical discussions, considering themes, settings, times, literary styles, genres, and characters.

Alberta, Canada

Technical Theatre/Design 10-20-30 - Costume

1 - demonstrate understanding of the purpose of costume

Technical Theatre/Design 10-20-30 - Lighting

1 - demonstrate understanding of the purpose of stage lighting

2 - recognize the importance of illusion in lighting design

Technical Theatre/Design 10-20-30 - Management - Stage

1 - demonstrate understanding of the purpose and duties of the stage manager

2 - recognize and use basic technical theatre/design terminology

3 - demonstrate understanding of the duties of technical crews: costumes, lighting, makeup, stage, properties, set, sound.

5 - demonstrate understanding of the need for continuous communication between the stage manager and technical crews during performance

Technical Theatre/Design 10-20-30 - Management - Properties

1 - demonstrate understanding of the purpose of stage properties

5 - recognize different types of properties: set properties, hand properties, rehearsal properties

7 - develop a properties list for a specific script

8 - recognize the need for developing and maintaining properties inventories

Technical Theatre/Design 10-20-30 - Management - Set

10 - demonstrate understanding of and use ground plans

4 - recognize and use theatre terminology related to the proscenium

Technical Theatre/Design 10-20-30 - Management - Sound

1 - demonstrate understanding of the purpose of stage sound

Junior Goal II Objectives

become familiar with disciplines that enhance dramatic process

gain awareness of how the integration of disciplines enriches dramatic communication

Junior Goal III Objectives

develop awareness of various conventions of theatre

Junior Goal I Objectives

develop a sense of responsibility and commitment

develop the ability to offer and accept constructive criticism

develop the willingness to make a decision, act upon it and accept the results

extend the ability to understand, accept and respect others-their rights, ideas, abilities and differences

Technical Theatre - Levels I, II, III - Awareness

- 1 - recognize the basic terminology associated with the component being studied
- 2 - demonstrate understanding of the basic functions of the component being studied.
- 5 - demonstrate understanding of the various conventions of the components being studied

Technical Theatre - Levels I, II, III - Readiness

- 10 - demonstrate understanding of and use appropriate methods and tools for designing the project; e.g., makeup charts, cue sheets, working drawing
- 11 - arrange and sequence time, ideas, information, materials and/or personnel for achievement of the project
- 6 - demonstrate understanding of the importance of planning and organization

Technical Theatre - Application

- 13 - determine and acquire necessary supplies or substitutes to construct the planned project
- 16 - demonstrate the integration of technical theatre with other disciplines in order to enhance dramatic communication

Senior Goal I Objectives

- demonstrate a sense of responsibility and commitment, individually and to the group
- demonstrate respect for others-their rights, ideas, abilities and differences
- demonstrate the ability to consider decisions, act upon them and accept the results
- demonstrate the ability to contribute effectively and constructively to the group process

Senior Goal II Objectives

- gain knowledge of disciplines that enhance dramatic process and product

Senior Goal III Objectives

- explore various conventions and traditions of theatre

Orientation Drama 10

- offer and accept constructive criticism with a desire to progress
- work cooperatively and productively

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

Intentionally select and apply materials, movements, technologies, environments, tools, and techniques by combining and arranging artistic elements, processes, and principles in art making

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

Research, describe, interpret and evaluate how artists (dancers, actors, musicians, and visual artists) use processes, materials, movements, technologies, tools, techniques, and environments in the arts

GRADE 6 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting

Interpret and communicate ideas using symbols and elements to express meaning through the arts

GRADE 7 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

Intentionally select and apply materials, movements, technologies, environments, tools, and techniques by

combining and arranging artistic elements, processes, and principles in art making

GRADE 7 - 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

Research, describe, interpret and evaluate how artists (dancers, actors, musicians, and visual artists) use processes, materials, movements, technologies, tools, techniques, and environments in the arts

GRADE 8 - ARTS - Reasoning and reflecting

Describe, interpret and evaluate how artists (dancers, actors, musicians, and visual artists) use processes, materials, movements, technologies, tools, techniques, and environments to create and communicate ideas

GRADE 8 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting

Interpret and communicate ideas using symbols and elements to express meaning through the arts

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Reasoning and reflecting

Receive, offer, and apply constructive feedback

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Connecting and expanding

Collaborate through reciprocal relationships during creative processes

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Experiment with a range of props, processes, and technologies

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate respect for self, others, and the audience

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Experiment with a range of materials, props, processes, and technologies to create and refine performances

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience

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

Receive and apply constructive feedback to develop and refine ideas

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Experiment with a range of props, processes, and technologies to create and refine innovative dramatic works

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 - 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 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing - Connections Beyond the Classroom

B.3.3 - identify connections between their learning in drama and possible employment opportunities in the broader educational and arts sectors (e.g., production and/or performance roles in community theatre, television/radio broadcasting, filmmaking)

Grades 9 & 10 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing - Drama and Society

B.2.2 - explain how dramatic exploration helps develop awareness of different roles and identities people have in society (e.g., explain what they learned through role playing characters from different socio-economic groups)

Grades 9 & 10 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing - The Critical Analysis Process

B.1.3 - identify aesthetic and technical aspects of drama works and explain how they help achieve specific dramatic purposes (e.g., write theatre or film reviews assessing whether the lighting, sound, set design, and costumes of a drama are used effectively to illustrate the intended message)

Grades 9 & 10 - Creating and Presenting - Presentation Techniques & Technologies

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