



THE ACTOR IN TRANSITION: FROM PRESENTATIONAL TO THREE DIMENSIONAL

By JOHN MINIGAN

The objective of this unit by John Minigan is to move students from a traditional presentational model of performance to a three-dimensional model. You're going to achieve this by having students

- Develop tactics to achieve character goals, despite obstacles
- Connect physical choices to scene structure and relationships
- Clarify tactics and story rather than forcing emotion
- And focus on the scene partner rather than the self

This unit was created to use with grade nine students as a transition from middle school to high school acting approaches. It would also be appropriate for a beginning-of-the-year unit for a program that includes Drama 1. But any class that is at the beginning of their acting process will find value.

Each lesson comes with an engagement Rubric to assess how students participated in the activities and discussions.

1 - An Organic Approach to Objective, Obstacle, Action/Tactic

This lesson introduces the idea of "Objective/Goal, Obstacle, and Action/Tactic" as a powerful building block for actors and to introduce the concept of working with verbs as tactics.

2 - Scores and Beats

This lesson introduces the idea of "Objective/Goal, Obstacle, and Action/Tactic" to simple scenes by scoring those scenes and playing the scored text.

3 - Power Plays in Three Statues

This lesson incorporates physicality into stage relationships and learn to use stage position as an element of blocking that can show the dynamics of and changes in power in a scene.

4 - Eight-Line Power Plays

This lesson combines the work done in Lesson 2 (scoring scenes by beats) with the physical work done in Lesson 3 (creating dynamically staged scenes by connecting choices in blocking/staging to the underlying structural elements in a scene).

5 - Acting the Other and Intensifying the Tactics

This lesson includes a series of improv games to focus students on "the other" rather than "the self," on listening, on sharing their energy with scene partners, and on collaboration in acting.

6 - The Beats in Every Scene

Students will work in pairs to create and perform two-minute scenes focused on clear objectives, clear obstacles, multiple tactics – and they will learn to give focused feedback.

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.

TH:Cr1.1.6.c - Explore a scripted or improvised character by imagining the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

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 7

TH:Cr1.1.7.c - Envision and describe a scripted or improvised character's inner thoughts and objectives 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.

TH:Pr4.1.7.b - Use various character objectives 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.

TH:Cr1.1.8.c - Develop a scripted or improvised character by articulating the character's inner thoughts, objectives, and motivations in a drama/theatre work.

Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation - Grade 8

TH:Pr4.1.8.b - Use various character objectives and tactics in a drama/theatre work to overcome an obstacle.

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - High School Proficient

TH:Cr1.1.HS1.c - Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.

Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Pr4.1.HS1.b - Shape character choices using given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

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

TH:Pr5.1.6.a - Recognize how acting exercises and techniques can be applied to a 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.

Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation - Grade 8

TH:Pr5.1.8.a - Use a variety of acting techniques to increase skills in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.

Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Pr5.1.HS1.a - Practice various acting techniques to expand skills in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade

HS Accomplished

TH:Cr2.1.HS11.b - Cooperate as a creative team to make interpretive choices for a drama/theatre work.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade HS Advanced

TH:Cr2.1.HS11.b - Collaborate as a creative team to discover artistic solutions and make interpretive choices in a devised or scripted 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.

Common Core

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.

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.

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.

6.TH:Cr1.b - Explore a scripted or improvised character by imagining the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

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.

7.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

7.TH:Cr1.b - Envision and describe a scripted or improvised character's inner thoughts and objectives 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.

7.TH:Pr4.b - Use various character objectives 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.

8.TH:Cr1.b - Develop a scripted or improvised character by articulating the character's inner thoughts, objectives, and motivations in a drama/theatre work.

8.TH:Pr4 Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

8.TH:Pr4.b - Use various character objectives and tactics in a drama/theatre work to overcome an obstacle.

Prof.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

Prof.TH:Cr1.b - Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.

Prof.TH:Pr4 Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

Prof.TH:Pr4.b - Shape character choices using given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

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

6.TH:Pr5.a - Recognize how acting exercises and techniques can be applied to a 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.

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

8.TH:Pr5.a - Use a variety of acting techniques to increase skills in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.

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

Prof.TH:Pr5.a - Practice various acting techniques to expand skills in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.

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.

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

Adv.TH:Cr2.b - Collaborate as a creative team to discover artistic solutions and make interpretive choices in a devised or scripted 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.

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.1.5 - Make and defend conscious choices in the creation of a character that will fulfill anticipated audience response.

Innovation, Technology & the Future

TH.912.F.1.1 - Synthesize research, analysis, and imagination to create believable characters and settings.

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

Skills, Techniques & Processes

TH.912.S.1.6 - Respond appropriately to directorial choices for improvised and scripted scenes.

TH.912.S.2.4 - Sustain a character or follow technical cues

in a production piece to show focus.

TH.912.S.2.8 - Strengthen acting skills by engaging in theatre games and improvisations.

TH.912.S.3.3 - Develop acting skills and techniques in the rehearsal process.

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.

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.1 - Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments., a. Demonstrate effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills (e.g. rate, pitch, volume, inflection, posture, facial expression, physical movement)., b. Execute character creation in a performance., c. Demonstrate a variety of types of theatre performances.

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.

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.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.

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

TAHSA.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Use script analysis in the development and presentation of formal and informal theatre performances., b. Examine various theories of dramatic structure., c. Engage in and apply meaningful cultural, literary, and historical research to create acting choices or directorial concepts.

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 - 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 - FUNDAMENTALS OF THEATRE LEVELS I-IV - Performing

TAHSFT.PR.1 - Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments., a. Observe and demonstrate aspects of verbal and non-verbal techniques in common human activity for performance (e.g. voice, breathing, posture, facial expression, physical movement)., b. Construct and interpret artistic choices in performance including the objectives, decisions, and actions of characters., c. Explore various acting methods and techniques (e.g. Stanislavski, Uta Hagen, sense memory, emotional recall) for the purpose of character development., d. Perform acting choices for an audience based on critiques.

North Carolina Essential Standards

Beginning High School Standards - Communication

B.C.1.2 - Apply vocal elements of volume, pitch, rate, tone, articulation, and vocal expression.

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

Intermediate High School Standards - Communication

I.C.1.2 - Apply vocal elements of volume, pitch, rate, tone, articulation, and vocal expression appropriately to theatrical texts, such as monologues and scenes.

I.C.2.1 - Use improvisation and acting skills, such as observation, concentration, and characterization, to demonstrate given situations.

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

Proficient High School Standards - Communication

P.C.1.2 - Apply vocal elements of volume, pitch, rate, tone, articulation, and vocal expression to develop characters.

P.C.1.3 - Create original works, such as monologues, scenes, or performance pieces.

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

Tennessee Theatre Curriculum Standards

GRADES 6-8

1.0 Script Writing - Students will write scripts through improvising, drafting, and refining scripts based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history.

2.0 Character Acting - Students will develop basic acting skills by portraying characters in improvised and scripted scenes.

4.0 Directing - Students will direct by organizing rehearsals for improvised and scripted scenes.

GRADES 9-12

1.0 Script Writing - Students will write scripts through improvising, drafting, and refining scripts based on personal

experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history.

2.0 Character Acting - Students will act by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisations and in informal or formal productions.

4.0 Directing - Students will direct by interpreting dramatic texts and organizing and conducting rehearsals for informal or formal productions.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Theatre Arts

MS 117.211 LI - Creative Expression: performance

C.2.B - imagine and clearly describe characters, their relationships, and their surroundings.

C.2.F - create environments, characters, and actions.

MS 117.212 LII - Creative Expression: performance

B.2.C - select movements and dialogue to portray a character appropriately.

B.2.D - create stories collaboratively and individually that have dramatic structure.

B.2.E - apply knowledge of effective voice and diction techniques to express thoughts and feelings.

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 - Creative Expression: performance

B.2.B - portray characters through familiar movements and dialogue.

B.2.C - create characters, dialogue, and actions that reflect dramatic structure in improvised and scripted scenes, individually and collaboratively.

B.2.D - express thoughts and feelings using effective voice and diction.

HS 117.315 LI - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

C.1.E - analyze characters by describing attributes such as physical, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions through reading scripts of published plays.

HS 117.315 LI - Creative Expression: performance

C.2.D - use physical, intellectual, emotional, and social awareness to portray believable characters and convey a story when applying acting concepts, skills, and techniques.

HS 117.316 LII - Creative Expression: performance

C.2.D - apply physical, intellectual, emotional, and social interactions to portray believable characters and convey a story when applying acting concepts, skills, and techniques.

HS 117.317 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

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

C.1.B - experiment with stage movement.

Alberta, Canada

Improvisation Drama 10

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

Acting Drama 20

1 - analyze a script for explicit character clues

Movement Drama 10

4 - perform a physical warmup

Improvisation/Acting Level III - Advanced

29 - use improvisational skills and concepts in exploration of text

30 - analyze text for meaning and character development

32 - rehearse, polish and present text

Junior Goal II Objectives

develop the ability to give form or expression to feelings, ideas and images

Junior Orientation

listen effectively

share ideas confidently with others

Improvisation/Acting Level I - Beginning

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

11 - create a dramatic situation in response to varied stimuli: objects, pictures, music

6 - understand and apply the essential elements of a story: character, setting, conflict, climax and plot

Improvisation/Acting Level II - Intermediate

13 - recognize the techniques of offering, accepting, advancing and blocking

15 - use the body and body language to enhance characterization

21 - sustain a character throughout an exercise or scene

Junior Goal I Objectives

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

extend the ability to think imaginatively and creatively

Theatre Studies Level III - Advanced (The script)

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

Senior Goal I Objectives

demonstrate a sense of inquiry and commitment, individually and to the group

demonstrate the ability to contribute effectively and constructively to the group process

Senior Goal II Objectives

be capable of creating and expressing a believable character from scripted and non-scripted material

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

Orientation Drama 10

listen to self and others

British Columbia (2018)

GRADE 6 - 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 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 - 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 - Communicating and documenting

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

GRADE 8 - 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 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

Collaborate through reciprocal relationships during creative processes

Demonstrate respect for themselves, others, and the audience

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Develop performance skills in a variety of contexts
Experiment with a range of props, processes, and technologies
Improvise and take creative risks to express meaning

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Apply feedback to develop and refine ideas
Describe, analyze, and respond using drama-specific language

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate respect for self, others, and the audience

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Develop a repertoire of dramatic skills and techniques through presentation or performance
Develop and refine performance skills in a variety of contexts
Improvise and take creative risks using imagination, exploration, and inquiry

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 awareness of self, others, and audience

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Develop and refine performance skills in a variety of contexts
Improvise and take creative risks using imagination, exploration, and inquiry

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Receive, provide, and apply constructive feedback to refine dramatic works
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.3.2 - 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)

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

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)