

Jason Robert LeClair, M.A.
Beacon Charter High School for the Arts
Woonsocket, RI

Subject/Grade: Theatre Arts
Seniors

Course: Directing/Playwriting

Unit Title: The Collaborative
Process

Stage 1 - Desired Results

Content Standards:

Content Standards: Using the National Art Common Core Standards -

TH:Cr3.1.HSIII

a. Refine, transform, and re-imagine a devised or scripted drama/theatre work using the rehearsal process to invent or re-imagine style, genre, form, and conventions.

b. Synthesize ideas from research, script analysis, and context to create a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant in a drama/theatre work.

c. Apply a high level of technical proficiencies to the rehearsal process to support the story and emotional impact of a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

TH:Pr5.1.HSIII

a. Use and justify a collection of acting exercises from reliable resources to prepare a believable and sustainable performance.

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.

TH:Re8.1.HSI

a. Analyze and compare artistic choices developed from personal experiences in multiple drama/theatre works.

b. Identify and compare cultural perspectives and contexts that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re8.1.HSIII

a. Use detailed supporting evidence and appropriate criteria to revise personal work and interpret the work of others when participating in or observing a drama/ theatre work.

b. Use new understandings of cultures and contexts to shape personal responses to drama/theatre work.

c. Support and explain aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs to create a context for critical research that informs artistic decisions in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re9.1.HSI

a. Examine a drama/ theatre work using supporting evidence and criteria, while considering art forms, history, culture, and other disciplines.

TH:Re9.1.HSIII

a. Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a drama/theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.

b. Analyze and evaluate varied aesthetic interpretations of production elements for the same drama/theatre work.

TH:Cn11.2.HSIII

a. Justify the creative choices made in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work, based on a critical interpretation of specific data from theatre research.

b. Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

Essential Questions: What is the essence of collaboration in your opinion? How can you personally better your capabilities as an artistic collaborator? What does it mean to you to be the Chief Collaborator in a production? How can you distinguish needs vs. wants when it comes to your vision as a director? What are some methods of creating a collaborative environment?

Understanding: : col·lab·o·rate

kə 'labə ,rāt/

verb

verb: **collaborate**; 3rd person present: **collaborates**; past tense: **collaborated**; past participle: **collaborated**; gerund or present participle: **collaborating**

work jointly on an activity, especially to produce or create something.

*Jointly is the key word. The collaboration equation is that there is a separation of duties, but a whole task that needs to be done. In theatre, the art form is collaborative by nature, however, not every person in the theatre truly understands the definition of collaboration beyond the one stated above. To truly collaborate and become a team of people working toward a goal, in this case a production, one must remember the position everyone has within the structure of the theatre. There is a hierarchy which you can review [here](#). Remember, though that a director should be the chief collaborator working **with** the team, but there are many styles of director. Lindsay Price of [theatrefolk.com](#) has a great quick synopsis of some directorial approaches and their affect on students. (September, 2008)*

While you discover your style, there is nothing saying it has to fit any of these molds. The best part of working in a collaborative art is that as you do more of the art, you pick up more of who you are as an artist while working with other artists. It is like an ongoing experiment with every new production.

Students will know:

- The differences in the various typical styles of theatrical directors
- Where they see themselves falling in these categories and where they would like to be.

Students will be able to:

- Determine the different typical styles of theatre direction and apply them
- Utilize prior knowledge to access how they have worked in the past under directors in order to form their own style of management

Stage 2 - Assessment Evidence

Assessments:

1. Formative assessments of class participation during the exercises and Journal entries weekly.
2. Performance assessments based on the NIEs rubric for Duet Acting.
3. Written Reflection of the process and product after final showing. (4-paragraph essay)

Stage 3 - Learning

Learning Activities: This section lists suggested ENGAGING & EFFECTIVE activities for students to demonstrate their competency in the standards identified in this unit

Note: These activities are differentiated in order to best reach all levels & types of learners:

Activities for ALL students:	Supports Provided:
<p>Activity 1. (Individual prep work ideally done over the summer or the previous term) Read and analyze at least three contemporary plays.</p> <p>Activity 2. (In groups of three) Cast a 3 minute scene from a contemporary play with two classmates. Read the play together and pitch your vision after the reading. Seek input from your partners as to how this vision can be accomplished. The following Directing Styles guide is best used as a guideline to draw ideas from. DO NOT PIGEON-HOLE YOURSELF into one category or the other. Experiment with different styles and try to find something comfortable (or a combination that works).</p> <p>Directing Styles: <i>"Directing is tyranny masquerading as democracy."</i> — Greg Doran, Chief Associate Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company <i>There are a variety of styles when it comes to taking the helm of a production. Which type of director are you? Which suits your students best?</i></p> <p><i>'Do As I Say' – The Dictator</i> <i>This type of director has a very specific (and occasionally narrow) view of how the process will unfold; they're not looking for input. Rehearsals are well-defined, blocking is well thought-out, the vision is tightly managed. The actor in the dictator-directed show does not get a lot of opportunity to offer suggestions or changes.</i></p> <p><i>Does this help or hurt students?</i></p> <p><i>Sometimes students need specific and narrow direction. And when you're working on a full length play and you're running out of time, your lead is sick and your ensemble can't remember the blocking - specific and narrow direction is a necessity. In this context, "dictator" doesn't necessarily mean mean or cruel! I have seen dictator directors succeed in a high school scenarios. Having said that, I'm never fond of the 'no input at any time from anyone' scenario.</i></p> <p><i>'Let's Make It Up Together!' - The Improviser</i> <i>This type of director comes to rehearsal with little to no blocking, few notes, but a lot of ideas. They are keen on collaborating with the cast. They improvise scenes between characters, have actors improvise blocking, and use plenty of exercises. Everything evolves and changes over the course of rehearsal. The input and involvement of the actor is key and necessary to the success of the Improviser Director.</i></p> <p><i>Does this help or hurt students?</i></p>	<p>Discussion in a modified Socratic method as introduction to the subject matter. Discussion resumes with the introduction of each new artistic principle introduced.</p> <p>Individual critique during working lab periods.</p> <p>Differentiation as needed for individual learning needs of each student artist</p> <p>Written resources available when applicable - i.e. rubrics for performance and written reflection, graphic organizers for writing reflections</p> <p>Utilization of learning support and integration staff as required.</p>

Depends on the students. If your group has a lot of practise at improv, it might work as a wonderful transition into something more structured. It can be a thrilling experience for actor and director, as everyone works together in the creative process. As an actor I've been in amazing shows using this process... and also some that were less than amazing: everyone needs to be on the same page and willing to do the same amount of work. You can run into trouble when you have an imbalanced cast. As a director, my experience has been that throwing students into an improv situation can be hit and miss. Great if they're independent, but not so great if they're not.

Issues also occur when the Improv Director can't corral the creativity and move toward a completed product. Messy process doesn't help anyone, and rehearsal can run in circles. In a high school, the Improv Director always needs a 'Plan B.'

'Let's be creative, but I'm the boss.' - The Visionary

This type of director enjoys the creative process, wants to hear from actors but ultimately is the one in control of the production. The best type of Visionary is able to effectively communicate their vision and bring everyone on board, so they don't have to 'be boss.' Everyone moves toward the director's vision on their own steam. They bring their own ideas to serve the big picture.

Does this help or hurt students?

Creativity within a structure can be amazing. Problems usually occur when the director is inconsistent. You can't ask for input from actors, then shut them off and refuse to implement their ideas. It's a fast way to lose the actors' trust. Problems can also happen when the director is wishy-washy in their communication of the vision. An actor can't create effectively within your vision if they don't fully understand it.

'Fight me!' - The Pusher

This type of director thrives on confrontation. They feel, rightly or wrongly, that the only way to get the right reaction out of a character is to push the actor. This can happen in a positive manner through question and discussion. The best Pusher doesn't mind when an actor disagrees, when an actor pushes back. But unfortunately, Pushers can stretch the emotion too far.

Does this help or hurt students?

There's nothing wrong with encouraging a student to move beyond their comfort zone. There's also nothing wrong with debate and conversation over a character, or a moment. That can be an exciting part of the process. But to push students emotionally just to get a certain type of performance? Completely hurtful and unnecessary.

What's "The Best" type?

So which is the best? Which is the worst? Depends on your students. A little bit of each type of director, depending on the play, depending on the situation may bring out the best in everyone.

<p>Activity 3. Develop blocking. Deciding how you can best use the “Silent Seven” lesson from our previous unit in the scene to emphasize your vision and the above Directing Styles. Draw or write notes on where and how you would like your players to start in the scene and end in the scene. You may also add particular looks for moments that you see as happening a certain way.</p> <p>Activity 4. In your weekly journal, keep track of your progress trying to achieve your vision. Include any and all sketches/ideas for tech in your notes (these will be needed in your final reflection). What are the benefits of working in different styles? Which styles did you use? Have you written your blocking, or planned it out visually? Are you liking the collaborative process?</p> <p>Activity 5. Present your piece in workshop. Get feedback on your work from your peers and record it in writing. Now reflect upon the process using your notes, the commentary and any new information that you wish to add in order to show your understanding of the collaborative process.</p>	
<p>Activities for MOST students:</p>	<p>Supports Provided:</p>
<p>Will do more than is expected and make an effort to be active in the groups at all times. Will deliver AND take direction in a very professional manner.</p>	<p>Discussion in a modified Socratic method as introduction to the subject matter. Discussion resumes with the introduction of each new artistic principle introduced.</p> <p>Individual critique during working lab periods.</p> <p>Differentiation as needed for individual learning needs of each student artist</p> <p>Written resources available when applicable - i.e. rubrics for performance and written reflection, graphic organizers for writing reflections</p> <p>Utilization of learning support and integration staff as required.</p>
<p>Activities for SOME students:</p>	<p>Supports Provided:</p>
<p>Will create works that they will then be able to interpret during discussion and illustrate where these skills have been used. These student artists will work at an advanced level of direction and with the utmost respect and professionalism when acting AND directing.</p>	<p>Discussion in a modified Socratic method as introduction to the subject matter. Discussion resumes with the introduction of each new artistic principle introduced.</p> <p>Individual critique during working lab</p>

	<p>periods.</p> <p>Differentiation as needed for individual learning needs of each student artist</p> <p>Written resources available when applicable - i.e. rubrics for performance and written reflection, graphic organizers for writing reflections</p> <p>Utilization of learning support and integration staff as required.</p>
Instructional Resources: http://www.arts-core.com/understanding-the-collaborative-process.html	

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