

High School Stage Management by Burt Machela

Stage 1: Identify Desired Results

National Theatre Standards:

TH:Cr3.1.III.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:Pr6.1.III.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.III.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.

Individual Lesson Objectives

Lesson 1: Framework

Students Will:

1. Understand the different responsibilities of a stage manager.
2. Create a framework for the organizational and administrative qualities needed in a stage manager.
3. Reflect on their own communication styles to better understand how to communicate and problem solve across a variety of dispositions.

Lesson 2: Creative Team Meetings

Students Will:

1. Develop the ability to deliver and extract concise information in a round-table meeting setting.
2. Understand how to meld creative ideas into practicalities.
3. Understand a procedural method when approaching the management of a show.

Lesson 3: Forms and Communication

Students Will:

1. Explore and develop their own forms for rehearsals and performances.
2. Analyze the effectiveness of their forms as a mode of communication and edit for consistency and concision.
3. Analyze the impact of their documenting methods to record what is happening, what needs to happen and what is not going to happen in a production.

Lesson 4: Working the Text

Students Will:

1. Understand how to read a text for technical requirements and how to relate those requirements to a creative team.
2. Understand how to follow the unique vision of a director and focus all efforts into creating “the whole” of a show.
3. Devise a labeling system to categorize different types of cues for a production.
4. Create a cue script that is clear and able to be interpreted by others.

Lesson 5: Rehearsals

Students Will:

1. Communicate with the director to create usable formats for starting, ending and running rehearsals.
2. Formulate achievable goals for each rehearsal period.
3. Learn how to effectively manage their time and the cast and crew’s time through the creation of rehearsal maps and calendars.
4. Combine the elements of the previous lessons to put together a stage management kit and necessary documentation for production.

Lesson 6: Performance

Students Will:

1. Understand the proper procedures for spiking, taping and marking performance spaces and backstage areas.
2. Gain comfort and confidence as a professional as they call cues for a production.
3. Establish check lists for pre, during and post show procedures.

<p>Enduring Understandings <i>Students will understand that...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the big ideas? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The stage manager's role is complex and deeply entwined in all processes of performance production. 2. Clear, concise communication is key in establishing and reaching goals in the production process 3. Organization is the keystone to successful rehearsal processes and work calls. 4. Trial and error are integral in finding out which practices suit them best as stage managers. 5. Stage managers must function both as creative and technical personnel because they must be able to effectively communicate with both sides of a production. 6. Preparation almost always equals success because in being prepared, they will be able to quickly resolve any conflicts or errors that may arise during a performance. 7. Stage managers must be able to read and analyze a script, not simply record and recite cues. 8. The ability to listen and be listened to are important factors to the production process. 	<p>Essential Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does a stage manager do? What is their role in the pre, during and post production process? 2. How does a stage manager effectively communicate between directors, designers, actors and crew members? 3. How can a stage manager convey all pertinent information to all parties of a production in a way that is clear and easy to follow? 4. How do stage managers find their own management styles? 5. How does a stage manager effect the creative and technical aspects of a design? What is their effect on the overall concept of a performance piece? 6. What routines does a stage manager need to develop in order to become effective, in-the-moment problem solvers? 7. How do stage managers approach a text? 8. What are the qualities of good leadership, both when serving as a stage manager and as a member of a crew?
<p>Students will know...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The responsibilities of a stage manager during pre-production meetings, rehearsals and the run of a show. 2. The following essential vocabulary: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Production meeting b. Production team c. Cue script/call script d. Spiking e. Rehearsal report f. Cue-to-cue g. Technical rehearsal h. Sitzprobe i. Calling j. Strike 3. The different types of documentation needed to organize all elements of a production. 4. How to read and analyze a text for technical support. 5. The various systems for marking cues within a text. 	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a voice of leadership in a production meeting, rehearsal and performance setting. 2. Run rehearsals, meetings and performances with little prompting from the instructor. 3. Work with designers to analyze a text and locate cues for a production. 4. Create a cue/call script. 5. Create documentation for meetings, rehearsals and productions. 6. Call a show.

Stage 2: Determine Evidence for Assessing Learning

Performance Tasks:

Summatively:

1. Students will create a cue/call script for a ten-minute dramatic presentation.
2. Students will set up for, run/call and breakdown a ten-minute dramatic presentation.
3. Students will create a portfolio in order to showcase their documentation and collaboration process.

Other Evidence:

Formatively:

1. Students will create a list of their perceived duties of a stage manager and work towards their own individual definitions of what a stage manager is.
2. Students will reflect on the role of a stage manager as (1) a part of the creative team and (2) a part of the technical team.
3. Students will create documents for casting calls, auditions, rehearsal reports, production meetings, performance reports and line notes.
4. Students will create a stage manager's kit to be kept at the booth during a performance.
5. Students will run a production meeting wherein the director is absent (or silent) and must clarify the director's concept.

Stage 3: Build Learning Plan

Learning Activities:

Lesson 1

1. Where is the unit going and what is expected/ Where are the students coming from?
 - a. Activate background knowledge-
 1. What shows have they run, what shows have they seen? What was their experience like with the stage manager of that show?
 2. Draw "stage manager" on the board and circle it, have students write descriptive words around, creating a web.
 2. Frame/Hook
 - a. Spectrum of difference activity-
 3. Students will be asked a variety of agree/disagree questions and will have to physically place themselves on a spectrum and then defend their degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement.
 3. Equip/Experience/Explore
 - a. Students will be led through pre, during and post production practices by their instructor. Students will be broken into production teams that will rotate (all students will experience all roles) and will walk each other through production meetings in role.
 4. Rethink/Revise (reflect)
 - a. Students will reflect in their production diaries about what went well during their production meetings and what could be improved. Students will be encouraged to analyze their voice in the meetings and determine what information was heard vs. not heard.

Lesson 2

1. Where is the unit going and what is expected?
 - a. Students will be given a script in their production teams to analyze and come up with a concept.
2. Frame/Hook-
 - a. Class skype with artistic director (students prepare questions before hand).

- b. Concept pitches for funding from a producer (aka the instructor).
- 3. Equip/Experience/Explore
 - a. Students will sit as a production team to decide production elements for their ten-minute production.
 - b. Students (all) will devise a system of documenting what happened in the meeting and what the next steps will be after the meeting convenes.
- 4. Rethink/Revise (reflect)
 - a. Students will compare and contrast their documentation processes and give feedback.
 - b. Students will reflect critically on their documentation process and focus on answering the following essential questions:
 - c. How does a stage manager effectively communicate between directors, designers, actors and crew members?
 - d. How can a stage manager convey all pertinent information to all parties of a production in a way that is clear and easy to follow?

Lesson 3

- 1. Where is the unit going and what is expected?
 - a. Students will reflectively analyze their communication styles both written and verbally and prepare the necessary items for moving into the first rehearsal.
- 2. Frame/Hook-
 - a. Telephone variations
- 3. Equip/Experience/Explore
 - a. Students will be presented with a variety of examples of forms and communication documents from various productions and stage managers. Students will use these documents to create their own for their ten-minute productions.
 - b. Students will role-play for a first read-through.
- 4. Rethink/Revise (reflect)
 - a. Students will compare and contrast their reports and give peer feedback.

Lesson 4

- 1. Where is the unit going and what is expected?
 - a. Students will engage with their text and develop a system for marking cues.
- 2. Frame/Hook
 - a. Terrible cue script activity.
 - b. Practice call #1 (good and awful variations)
- 3. Equip/Experience/Explore
 - a. Students will be presented with different ways to mark a text for cues and technical elements. Students will be required to complete their own version with accompanying key.
- 4. Rethink/Revise (reflect)
 - a. Students will call each other's cue scripts with no other communication other than the key and provide feedback to help clarify.
 - b. Students will respond to what worked and did not in their production journals.

Lesson 5

- 1. Where is the unit going and what is expected?
 - a. Students will be introduced to the rehearsal process and asked to narrate what their role in the rehearsal process should be. As a class, they will create a document of expectations for each rehearsal that will serve as a cover sheet for their cue scripts.
- 2. Frame/Hook

- a. Role-playing rehearsals: each student is given a slip with an actor archetype familiar to our school's productions and a "problem". Students will role-play as that archetype and the stage manager will have to conduct rehearsal and negotiate the characters and problems.
3. Equip/Experience/Explore
 - a. Students will determine what the best/worst practices were in the role-playing activity. They will problem solve the "problems" given in each scenario and create an action plan for each situation. They will then create proper rehearsal documentation forms as well as create an "If this occurs... do this" flowchart to help guide them in the in-the-moment decisions during rehearsals.
 - b. While exploring what could potentially go awry during the rehearsal process, students will work together to create a master list of items that could be placed in their stage management kits.
4. Rethink/Revise (reflect)
 - a. Students will get to do a "test-run" with an after-school rehearsal (as pre-arranged with the directors at the school) and will reflect on the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of the materials and procedures created.
 - b. Students will reflect in their production journals.

Lesson 6

1. Where is the unit going and what is expected?
 - a. Students will be introduced to performance procedures and will be able to clearly identify what their pre, during and post show responsibilities are.
2. Frame/Hook
 - a. Tech Olympics: students will compete in a small-scale competition that involves, spiking, setting, focusing, etc.
3. Equip/Experience/Explore
 - a. Students will prepare for the execution of their ten-minute productions. They will develop their pre, during and post procedures and documentation before presenting their productions for a grade (assessed by teacher-designed rubric).
4. Rethink/Revise (reflect)
 - a. Students will present their ten-minute plays for feedback and assessment.
 - b. Students will present their portfolios for feedback.
 - c. Students will revise their performances and portfolios for a second round of presentations.