

# National Coalition for Core Arts Standards

## Theatre Model Cornerstone Assessment: (HS Advanced)

**Discipline:** Theatre

**Artistic Processes:** Creating, Performing, Responding, Connecting

**Title:** Devising Theatre

**Central Focus:**

Students will create a collaborative devised theatre piece by engaging in an active exploration of a theme/issue/idea. Students will use *space and architecture, rhythm, movement, sound, light, text* and *tension* to craft their piece. In crafting their piece the students will understand that:

- Form informs content and content informs form
- All the elements of the stage have equal value in telling the story
- Collaboration is the primary mode of creating devised theatre.

**Grade:** High School Advanced

In this MCA you will find:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Strategies for Embedding Instruction</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Detailed Assessment Procedures</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Knowledge, Skills and Vocabulary</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Differentiation Strategies</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Strategies for Inclusion</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Suggested Scoring Devices</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Task Specific Rubrics</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Resources needed for task implementation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Assessment Focus Chart</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Benchmarked Student Work</b>

**Estimate Time for Teaching and Assessment:**

Approximately 25 - 30 hours

To be determined by the individual teacher

## **Strategies for Embedding in Instruction** *[possible sequence & strategies to embed Model Cornerstone Assessment within a classroom unit]*

### **Phases of the Unit:**

1. Introduction/Prior knowledge recap
2. Research and Dramaturgy
3. Creating and Responding – Devising theater
4. Editing and Creating Narrative Structure
5. Performance and Reflection

## **Detailed Assessment Procedures**

### ***Pre-Assessment for Learning:***

Initial brainstorm about devising: What do the students already know about devising theatre? What experience have they had devising work?  
Gallery Walk

### ***Formative Assessment (as learning) teacher created:***

Ongoing class devised activities  
Dramaturgical casebook development  
Collaboration Rubric (sample included)  
Devised Project Checklist: Development of performance and reflection (to inform their editing work)

### ***Summative Assessment (of learning):***

Dramaturgical casebook rubric (informing performance)  
5-minute performance (video)  
Devised Scene Rubric

### ***Post-Assessment for Learning:***

Teacher created student self-reflection

## Key Vocabulary

**Devised theatre:** Creation of an original performance piece by an ensemble.

**Space and architecture**

**Rhythm**

**Movement**

**Sound**

**Light**

**Text**

**Tension**

**Dramaturgy:** the dramaturg's duties are (1) to select and prepare play-texts for performance; (2) to advise directors and actors; and (3) to educate the audience. To fulfill these duties, dramaturgs serve as script readers, translators, theatre historians, play adaptors or even playwrights, directorial assistants or sometimes apprentice directors, critics of works-in-progress and talent scouts. (*Cardullo, Bert. What is Dramaturgy? New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2005. pp 3–4.*)

**Dramaturgical Casebook:** a collection of the dramaturg's research and work

## Knowledge and Skills

*The students will be able to:*

- 1. Students will identify and describe elements of the stage (including, but not limited to: space and architecture, rhythm, movement, sound, light, text and tension.)*
- 2. Research elements of the stage, and their chosen topic to create a dramaturgical casebook.*
- 3. Interpret their theme/topic through the use of the elements of the stage (including, but not limited to: space and architecture, rhythm, movement, sound, light, text and tension) and how they can be used as tools in a devised piece.*
- 4. Students will identify and describe 4 different types of narrative structure: multiple perspectives based on an event or theme, narration following one person's perspective on an event, memory: recalling events, work arranged by theme or individual stories.*
- 5. Utilizing their research and their chosen narrative structure, students will create a 5 minute devised scene based on their theme or topic.*
- 6. Present their scene to a local audience and prepare a final self-reflection.*

## Strategies for Inclusion

See the Kennedy Center's

[Students with Disabilities and the Core Arts Standards](#)

## Differentiation Strategies

See ASCD's [Leadership for Differentiating Schools & Classrooms](#)

### Instructional Materials:

- Research materials: Newspaper articles / headlines, poems, photographs, visual art, YouTube videos, music, quotes, speech & any other materials from the theme being explored.
- Flip chart / butcher paper & markers
- Light sources, material, random clothing (hats, tie, jackets etc.), sound system, other objects.
- A clear space, preferably with tables and chairs to the side of the room. Depending on the group focus, the research materials may be spread out so they can see them when they come into the room. If not, materials can be distributed in the Informing phase.

### Instructional Resources:

***Moment Work: Tectonic Theater Process of Devising Theater*** by Moises Kaufman, Barbara Pitts McAdams (ISBN: 978-1-101-97177-2)

***The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre*** by Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett (ISBN: 978-1-138-77701-9)

[Complicate: Teachers Notes on Devising](#)

***Making a Leap, Theatre of Empowerment: A practical Handbook for Creative Drama Work with Young People*** by Sara Clifford and Anna Herrmann (ISBN: 1-85302-632-8)

***Theatre for Community Conflict and Dialogue: The Hope Is Vital Training Manual*** by Michael Rohd (ISBN-13: 978-0325000022, ISBN-10: 0325000026)

"The Play Detectives" by Michael Bigelow Dixon

["Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgy"](#) by Michael Mark Chemers ISBN-10: 0809329522

ISBN-13: 9780809329526

"How to Read a Play: Thirty ways to understand a script" by Michael Bigelow Dixon

[Games for Actors and Non-Actors](#) by Augusto Boal (translated by Adrian Jackson)

***Devised and Collaborative Theatre: A Practical Guide*** by Tina Bicat and Chris Baldwin (ISBN: 9781861265241)

## Artistic Websites

### Narrative

Frantic Assembly, a UK theatre company who focus on devised physical theatre. [Stockholm](#) is one example. It is about the relationship between a man and woman.

[Beautiful Burnout](#) is another physical theatre show by Frantic Assembly. This one is about boxing.

*Laramie Project* by [Tectonic Theater Company](#) is an example of ensemble research.

[Who's Louis Theater Company](#) is in Salt Lake City. Their work is created and performed by young people

[Sojourn Theatre](#) are a contemporary theater company based in NY. They use multimedia and play with the boundaries of the performance space.

### Technology needed:

- Computers
- Smart Board or other video projection device

## Scoring Devices

Dramaturgical casebook checklist and rubric

Devised Project Checklist: Development of performance and reflection (to inform their editing work)

Collaboration Rubric

5-minute performance (video)

Devised Scene Rubric

Self-reflection

## Assessment Focus

Artistic Process/Process Components	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Anchor Standards	Key Traits	Performance Standards (Advanced)
<b>CREATING</b>					
Envision/Conceptualize	Theatre artists rely on intuition, curiosity, and critical inquiry	What happens when theatre artists use their imaginations and/or learned theatre skills while engaging in creative exploration and inquiry?	<b>Anchor Standard 1:</b> Generate and Conceptualize artistic ideas and work.	Students will identify and describe elements of the stage and how they can be used as tools in the creation of a devised piece. Students will work as an ensemble to choose a theme for their devised piece.	TH: Cr1.1.III.a Synthesize knowledge from a variety of dramatic forms, theatrical conventions, and technologies to create the visual composition of a drama/ theatre work.
Develop	Theatre artists work to discover different ways of communicating meaning.	How, when, and why do theatre artists' choices change?	<b>Anchor Standard 2:</b> Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.	Students will identify and describe 4 different types of narrative structure that could be used in a devised piece: multiple perspectives based on an event or theme, narration following one person's perspective on an event, memory: recalling events, work arranged by theme or individual stories. Utilizing their research, the elements of the stage and their chosen narrative structure, students will create a 5 minute devised scene based on their theme or topic	TH: Cr2.1.III.a Develop and synthesize original ideas in a drama/theatre work utilizing critical analysis, historical and cultural context, research, and western or non-western theatre traditions. TH: Cr2.1.III.b Collaborate as a creative team to discover artistic solutions and make interpretive choices in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.
Rehearse	Theatre artists refine their work and practice their craft through rehearsal.	How do theatre artists transform and edit their initial ideas?	<b>Anchor Standard 3:</b> Refine and complete artistic work.	Students will refine and rehearse their devised work collaboratively through a variety of devising strategies.	TH: Cr3.1.III.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.

Artistic Process/Process Components	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Anchor Standards	Key Traits	Performance Standards (Advanced)
<b>PERFORMING</b>					
Share/Present	Theatre artists share and present stories, ideas, and envisioned worlds to explore the human experience.	What happens when theatre artists and audiences share a creative experience?	<b>Anchor Standard 6:</b> Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.	Devised pieces will be presented to the class and community, followed by Q and A with the students and audience.	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.
<b>RESPONDING</b>					
Reflect	Theatre artists reflect to understand the impact of drama processes and theatre experiences.	How do theatre artists comprehend the essence of drama processes and theatre experiences?	<b>Anchor Standard 7:</b> Perceive and analyze artistic work.	Students will reflect throughout the process on their artistic choices in order to justify artist intent. Students will complete a personal self-reflection on the process and final performance piece. (How form influences content and content influences form.)	TH: Re7.1.II.a Demonstrate an understanding of multiple interpretations of artistic criteria and how each might be used to influence future artistic choices of a drama/theatre work. <i>(Accomplished Performance Standard)</i>
Interpret	Theatre artists' interpretations of drama/theatre work are influenced by personal experiences and aesthetics.	How can the same work of art communicate different messages to different people?	<b>Anchor Standard 8:</b> Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work	Interpret their theme/topic through the use of the elements of the stage (including, but not limited to: space and architecture, rhythm, movement, sound, light, text and tension) and how they can be used as tools in a devised piece	TH: Re8.1.III.c Support and explain aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs to create a context for critical research that informs artistic decisions in a drama/theatre work.
<b>CONNECTING</b>					
Research	Theatre artists critically enquire into the ways others have thought about and created drama processes and productions to inform their work.	In what ways can research into theatre histories, theories, literature, and performances alter the way a drama process or production is understood?	<b>Anchor Standard 11:</b> Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.	Research elements of the stage and their chosen topic to create a dramaturgical casebook.	TH: Cn11.2.III.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.

# Dramaturgical Casebook Assignment

**Assignment:** Students will create a Dramaturgical Casebook in Google Slides. Begin researching your topic and considering the research from a dramaturgical perspective. Your casebook must **include the following research:**

## Step 1: Research: (40 points)

- Find at least 5 photographs, images or paintings that represent your theme.
- Find evidence of 2 opposing perspectives expressed through newspaper articles, poetry, music lyrics, YouTube and/or quotes and speeches.
- Contextual Information: Where? Who? What? When? Why?

## Step 2: Dramaturgy: (60 points)

Ask students to select 3 elements of the stage to begin interpreting as a tool to be used in creating a devised piece and as a device to further their theme in the performance piece.

## Responses can be short written answers, images, drawings, etc.

**Space & architecture** (this influences blocking and stage design): What is the literal space and architecture? What is a symbolic or interpretive representation of the space and architecture? For example, are there sharp lines, circles, repeated patterns, or something else? How can space and architecture be used to enhance your devised piece?

**Movement:** What are the movements or gestures that people are making? How can movement or gesture be used symbolically to express the theme/sentiment/conflict etc.? How will you use movement or gesture to explore the theme and enhance the story?

**Light:** What colors come to mind? What are the literal light source needs? How can light be used as a symbolic, interpretive or emotional representation? How will you use light to explore the theme and enhance the story?

**Sound:** What are the literal sounds potentially needed in the scene? In what ways can the literal sounds become symbolic sounds? How will you use literal and symbolic sounds to explore the theme and enhance the story?

**Text:** Find lines/text from popular music, newspaper articles, headlines, YouTube videos, poems, quotes and speeches and personal reflections, that show at least two different perspectives on your topic or theme. Select three lines/sentences/phrases that capture the essence of the theme. How will you use text to explore the theme and enhance the story?

**Rhythm:** What patterns can be created with the visual elements/staging? How can pace and repetition be used for auditory sound (e.g. text, music, sound). How can pace and repetition be used in movement and gesture? How will you use rhythm to explore the theme and enhance the story?

**Tension:** What are the opposing ideas in the theme? Who has the power in this situation and why? How will you use tension to explore the theme and enhance the story? Choose at least one of the following tools to explore tension:

1. Collage the words of two opposing ideas/opinions and places to use repetition;
2. Find two opposing pieces of music and put them side by side
3. Contrast sound and action. For example, a fight scene to slow, classical music, or a romantic scene to heavy metal.

## Dramaturgical Casebook Rubric

<p><b>Dramaturgical Research</b></p>	<p>Extensive resources and perspectives inform and extend the theme. Chosen research items (e.g. images, quotes) are evocative and thoughtful, enhancing dramatic action</p>	<p>Relevant resources and opposing perspectives in the casebook inform the theme. Chosen research items (e.g. images, quotes) support dramatic action.</p>	<p>Resources and opposing perspectives in the casebook relate to the theme. Chosen research items (e.g. images, quotes) suggest dramatic action.</p>	<p>Resources and/or opposing perspectives in the casebook are minimally aligned to the theme. Chosen research items (e.g. images, quotes) are minimally relevant to dramatic action.</p>
<p><b>Connections</b></p>	<p>Project objectives are highly-detailed and advance a research-driven, thoughtful and insightful story narrative. Chosen elements of devising reveal detailed analysis and higher-order thinking</p>	<p>Project objectives are defined and propose a research-driven story narrative. Chosen elements of devising are justified.</p>	<p>Project objectives are partially defined and suggest a research-related story narrative. Chosen elements of devising are explained.</p>	<p>Project objectives are unclear and disconnected from the research and/or story narrative. Chosen elements of devising are listed.</p>

### Drama Casebook Checklist

#### Research:

Did you include at least 5 photographs, images or paintings that represent your theme? (10 pts)

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you include evidence of 2 opposing perspectives expressed through newspaper articles, poetry, music lyrics, YouTube and/or quotes and speeches? (10 pts)

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you define the: Where? Who? What? When? Why? (20 pts)

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Dramaturgy:

Each element chosen will be graded based on the criteria explained in the assignment.

Element 1: \_\_\_\_\_ (20 pts)

\_\_\_\_\_

Element 2: \_\_\_\_\_ (20 pts)

\_\_\_\_\_

Element 3: \_\_\_\_\_ (20 pts)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Total Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

## Devising Project Checklist

**What is your theme?**

**What is the guiding question you are trying to answer in your piece?**

**Space and Architecture:** *We used the following elements of space and architecture in our devising piece:*

- Scale
- Positive and negative space
- Time period and place
- Set pieces
- Levels, patterns and lines
- Audience in relation to the performers?
- Space between performers

**Rhythm:** *We used the following elements of rhythm in our devising piece:*

- Repetition
- Breaking rhythm
- Pace of the scene, being on cue
- Pace of speaking, pace of the characters, opposing rhythms
- Backwards or forward in time

**Movement:** *We used the following elements of movement in our devising piece:*

- Abstract movement (i.e. dance)
- Gesture (recognizable, daily movement)
- Choreographed movement or gesture
- Learning someone else's gestures (then add to others) to create a longer sequence
- Repeating one gesture/movement
- Stillness, slow motion, rewind a section
- How are the actors entering the space (i.e. using tableaux)?
- Choreographed ensemble movement versus individual choreographed

**Sound:** *We used the following elements of sound in our devising piece:*

- Literal sound
- Symbolic / abstract
- Human made
- Vocal sound such as whispering, speaking soft or loud
- Silence
- Rhythm
- Vocal signatures
- Ensemble speaking
- Is the sound on stage or off stage?
- Different qualities of different sound sources (such as a phone or radio)

**Light:** *We used the following elements of light in our devising piece:*

- Colors to set mood
- Different qualities of different light sources, such as a phone or torch
- Who controls the light? Does an actor on stage?
- Darkness versus light
- Changes the scene/time/place

**Text:** *We used the following elements of text in our devising piece:*

- What lines can be repeated?
- Ensemble speaking
- Narrator?
- What characters use what type of text? Is text spoken naturally, rapped, spoken as poetry (it can change scene to scene!)
- Text doesn't necessarily need to be spoken. It can also be choreographed gesture or movement
- Somebody speaks while another person or group is doing a movement or gesture score.

**Tension:** *We used the following elements of tension in our devising piece:*

- Contrast ideas / people / sound / movement
- Leave things unfinished (people not saying what they needed to say)
- Repetition
- Buildup of short and quick actions and then silence
- Choral speaking / singing and dramatic action

**Select and describe your narrative choice:**

- Following multiple perspectives/characters about an event or idea
- Narration: A person viewing a set of events from the third person OR “I”- centered narration (telling one’s own story.)
- Memory: recalling events
- Arranged by theme or individual stories.

**Describe how you are using this narrative choice in your devised piece**

*NOTE: As a measure of collaboration, in addition to scoring students with a collaboration rubric, the teacher may wish to include the following question:*  
**How have you integrated each group member’s individual research and perspective into your performance?**

## Formative Assessment: Collaboration Rubric

	Above Standard	At Standard	Near Standard	Below Standard
<p><b>Brainstorming:</b> Individual opinions are respected and all ideas are welcomed.</p>	Student respects and encourages individual opinions and enthusiastically welcomes the ideas of every group member.	Student respects individual opinions and welcomes ideas.	Student usually respects individual opinions and usually welcomes the ideas.	Student rarely respects individual opinions and rarely welcomes the ideas.
<p><b>Guiding the Work:</b> There is shared leadership based on strengths and weaknesses; students remain on task and focused on a common goal.</p>	Student enthusiastically takes responsibility for tasks and assumes leadership roles as needed to ensure an even distribution of the work and clear focus on the overall group goals.	Student takes responsibility for assigned tasks, remains focused on the goals of the group.	Student sometimes takes responsibility for tasks; Sometimes stays focused; Sometimes contributes to the goals of the group.	Student rarely takes responsibility for tasks; Rarely stays focused; Rarely contributes to the overall goal.
<p><b>Editing and Finalizing:</b> Students use each other's ideas to refine and transform the work.</p>	Student works enthusiastically and proactively to refine, transform and reimagine the work making connections between research and class activities.	Student contributes to the rehearsal process with a focus on refining, the work.	Student sometimes work to refine, transform and re- imagine work.	Student rarely works collaboratively to refine, transform and re- imagine work.

## Evidence of Learning: Devised Scene Performance

Criteria	Above Standard	At Standard	Near Standard	Below Standard
<b>Structure</b>	Narrative choice is complex and driven by an incisive guiding question.	Narrative choice is logical and motivated by a guiding question.	Narrative choice is not fully developed and tentatively connected to a guiding question.	Narrative choice is obscure and presents a vague guiding question.
<b>Performance</b>	Nuanced use of <i>space and architecture, rhythm, movement, sound, light, text</i> and/or <i>tension</i> to enhance and extend the theme.	Effective use of <i>space and architecture, rhythm, movement, sound, light, text</i> and/or <i>tension</i> to present the theme.	Unclear use of <i>space and architecture, rhythm, movement, sound, light, text</i> and/or <i>tension</i> to present the theme.	Inconsistent use of <i>space and architecture, rhythm, movement, sound, light, text</i> and/or <i>tension</i> vaguely connected to a theme.
<b>Reflection (critical eye)</b>	The reflection provides an insightful and detailed analysis of the final work focusing on the use of space and architecture, rhythm, movement, sound, light, text and/or tension, the guiding question and the artist's intent to enhance the theme.	The reflection provides an accurate analysis of the final work focusing on the use of space and architecture, rhythm, movement, sound, light, text and/or tension, the guiding question and the artist's intent to enhance the theme.	The reflection provides an unclear analysis of the final work focusing on the use of space and architecture, rhythm, movement, sound, light, text and/or tension, the guiding question and the artist's intent to enhance the theme.	The reflection provides an inaccurate analysis of the final work focusing on the use of space and architecture, rhythm, movement, sound, light, text and/or tension, the guiding question and the artist's intent to enhance the theme.

## Final Self Reflection

What was the theme your group selected?

What was the guiding question you were trying to answer in your piece?

Which of the following did you use in your final performance? (Check and circle)

- Space and Architecture:** scale, positive and negative space, time period and place, set pieces, levels, patterns and lines, audience in relation to the performers, space between performers
- Rhythm:** repetition, breaking rhythm, pace of the scene, being on cue, pace of speaking, pace of the characters, opposing rhythms, backwards or forward in time
- Movement:** abstract movement (i.e. dance), gesture (recognizable, daily movement), choreographed movement or gesture, learning someone else's gestures (then add to others) to create a longer sequence, repeating one gesture/movement, stillness, slow motion, rewind a section, how are the actors entering the space (i.e. using tableaux), choreographed ensemble movement versus individual choreographed
- Sound:** literal sound, symbolic / abstract, human made, vocal sound such as whispering, speaking soft or loud, silence, rhythm, vocal signatures, ensemble speaking, is the sound on stage or offstage, different qualities of different sound sources (such as a phone or radio)
- Light:** colors to set mood, different qualities of different light sources, such as a phone or torch, who controls the light? Does an actor on stage? darkness versus light, changes the scene/time/place
- Text:** What lines can be repeated? Ensemble speaking, Narrator? What characters use what type of text? Is text spoken naturally, rapped, spoken as poetry (it can change scene to scene!) Text doesn't necessarily need to be spoken. It can also be choreographed gesture or movement, somebody speaks while another person or group is doing a movement or gesture score.
- Tension:** contrast ideas / people / sound / movement, leave things unfinished (people not saying what they needed to say), repetition, buildup of short and quick actions and then silence, choral speaking / singing and dramatic action

How did your group use the above elements to enhance your theme?

What do you think was the most successful and why?

What do you think was the most challenging aspect about your above choices and why?

**What was the narrative your group chose?**

- Following multiple perspectives/characters about an event or idea
- Narration: A person viewing a set of events from the third person OR "I"- centered narration (telling one's own story.)
- Memory: recalling events
- Arranged by theme or individual stories.

How did you apply this narrative choice to your devised piece?

What do you think was the most successful about your narrative choice and why?

What do you think was the most challenging aspect about your narrative choice and why?

In what ways do you feel you were successful in answering your guiding question through your piece?

What would you do differently if you had a chance to create another devised piece?

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