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The Teacher Directs: The Experience of Movement in Literature

Curriculum Unit 83.05.07
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I feel that my unit title is fairly self explanatory. However I would like to briefly talk about it in terms of what it means to me. “Movement in literature” creates a very vivid and specific image for me. As a “teacher/director” or a teacher who has learned to direct, it means creating wonderful stage images and pictures for my students using them as the vehicles of my creation. This process allows students to physicalize the literature as well as visualize the Literary images so often lost to inexperience. I am talking about creative drama. The experience of observing, creating, analyzing, intellectualizing and performing.

In an article in the “Educational Theatre Journal” entitled “Teaching Dramatic Literature,” Miriam Gilbert talks about the many positive and powerful reasons for using drama and theatre production in the classroom. Ms. Gilbert writes, “Not only does the production method involve students in a total way and give them the opportunity of responding personally, rather than a response learned from a teacher, but it enables students to sophisticate their responses to the play.”¹ She also believes as I do, that the method of blocking students on a stage or performance area furthers the learning process and asks students in an enjoyable and meaningful way to reconsider what they have read by interpreting it, visualizing it, speaking it and finally moving to it. “Production continues the process past a class period into rehearsals and turns the entire thing into a life long experience.

To succeed with such a process a transformation must take place. This transformation from teacher to director is one of the objectives in this unit. For those of you reading this for the first time, don’t be discouraged. I was an actress first, a classroom teacher second, and by design, a director last. I will be the first to admit that I have a lot to learn before I can call myself a professional director. But, alas do not despair. We are all directors of one thing or another, are we not? If you have never directed a scene in your classroom but are dying to try it, you really should. I have made many discoveries over the years about myself, my students, and my methodologies. Whether or not you are technically correct is almost irrelevant to the actual exercise. You learn that the technical jargon and aspects of theatre can be learned as you work with a play and with your students. I found that in planning my lessons for class I was forced to research the technical elements I was unfamiliar with or uncomfortable with. I then incorporated this research into the lecture portion of my class which also gave me the opportunity to introduce new vocabulary terms, job descriptions, life-skills, historical data and much more. My most cherished find is a workbook which I use almost daily with my students and as a reference book for myself. This workbook like most theatre craft books maps out blocking, defines terms, offers further suggested reading materials and is invaluable to the amateur director. It is called *Basic Drama Projects* by Fran Averett Tanner.

I also discovered that the process of mutual sharing and learning is a positive approach to learning for everyone. While I continue to learn about directing plays and the creative process I am simultaneously assigning research assignments to my students. They learn by writing their papers and I from reading them.

As an English teacher I learned to incorporate drama, theatre and theatrics into my classroom. This was not an easy exercise. It took a while before I felt comfortable using real drama in my classroom and in essence merging my two personalities into one method of teaching. As an actress I knew my background could be invaluable to me as well as my students, as an English teacher I felt inhibited by what I thought was expected of me as an academician. I felt stifled and my teaching was flat and lifeless. All of this changed when I began teaching a Performing Arts class. I soon realized that my relationship with students was very different from those in my English classes. Why is this? I thought. The answer, which I suppose I knew all along was that drama was in my blood, it was home and it was what I did best. My English students were reacting to my uneasiness and stiffness in the classroom often misread as “cold”, “hard”, “strict”, etc. What better way to reach *all* my students than through the age old universal communicator, Drama. Granted, I began slowly to merge the two. I tried introducing Mime exercises, improvisations and role playing first. Some classes loved it, some tolerated it, and the rest looked at me as if to say “poor lady, both oars are definitely not in the water!”

After trying many combinations of exercises in different classes and in varying arrangements, I chose the ones that worked best and had the highest rate of success and acceptance.

What is so wonderful about using drama in the classroom is that I can clearly see growth patterns almost immediately. By “growth” I mean self-awareness, awareness of others, self-confidence, agility, versatility and a new willingness to try something different and unfamiliar. Once I observe this growth I begin to channel it into creative writing, thinking and speaking exercises, with my main goal being a unified theatrical performance of a play or scene.

In rereading the school and state objectives, I found I was achieving more goals than I was previously able to by using theatre techniques in my classroom, and I now had a tangible way to measure my students growth. In an article entitled “On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand” Jerome Bruner writes “the best way to create interest in a subject is to render it worth knowing, which means to make the knowledge gained usable in one’s thinking beyond the situation in which the learning has occurred.”³ I firmly believe this is the case when one uses theatre techniques as a teaching and learning tool.

In rethinking my goals and objectives for my English classes I began incorporating more and more of the exercises I was using with the Performing Arts class. Fortunately or unfortunately it was at this time that I left teaching English to join the Comprehensive Arts Program. The Comprehensive Arts Program does exactly this. It promotes and encourages the use of all art forms in the classroom as a teaching and learning tool for students and teachers. In the past the Summer Arts Institute sponsored by the Comprehensive Arts Program allowed teachers and administrators to participate in a week long experience with specialists in each art form. Last summer (1982) I worked with many teachers from a variety of city schools. These teachers became students of drama and learned through participation in theatre games, improvisations, and role playing that drama could be an integral part of their teaching. Many of these teachers carried the materials we developed together back to their students and became “teacher/directors”. These teachers had not become drama experts but they did possess the desire to try, and *that* is half the battle.

The Objective of this unit is to achieve “The experience of movement in Literature” specifically the physicalization of a play through blocking and Theatre Techniques.

The Goal of this unit is to work with one scene from a play and develop it into a teaching unit in terms of play production. (The director's prompt book).

Strategies: I will first identify some of the elements which students should be made aware of which fall into the cognitive and effective domain. Some of these are:

1. The ability to concentrate.
2. The identification and use of imagination.
3. The discovery and use of imagination.
4. The awareness of and mastery of the physical self.
5. The use of speech to communicate.
6. The identification and control of emotion.
7. The discovery and use of the intellect.
8. The ability to work with a group.

I will reiterate these elements and further explain them as I proceed to introduce various theatre games.

I feel it is important to explain how they will be graded. There are many elements to consider and many guidelines which I found in my research. I have settled however, on the following:

I. Characterization (for students who have roles)

- A. Believability—were actions believable?
- B. Detail—gestures, expressions, costuming, makeup.
- C. Movement—walk, gait (Did actor's movements enhance the performance?)
- D. Accuracy—based on *research* —homework.
- E. Focus—was characterization focused or hazy?
- F. Concentration—did the actor break character?
- G. Interesting—did the character have a life of its own or was it dull?
- H. Blocking—were my blocking instructions carried out or improvised?
- I. Motivation—
 1. was the dialogue motivated by the proper emotions?
 2. were the emotions truthful?
- J. Props—did the actor make use of props in a realistic, believable, and natural manner?
- K. Voice—
 1. was the actor loud enough to be heard?

2. was the actor articulate?
 3. was the actor's rate and pace of speech correct?
 4. was the actor's breathing controlled?
- L. Environment—did the student create the correct atmosphere for his/her character?
- M. Was the actor true to my overall philosophy of the production?
- N. Did the actor memorize his/her lines?
- O. Did the actor contribute to the proper dissemination of information to the audience in terms of tone, mood, atmosphere, climax, plot.

II. Technical

A. Makeup

1. Did the student follow the correct steps in developing the proper makeup for their character?
2. Did the student know the correct names for the materials used in applying their makeup?
3. Was the final makeup believable?
4. Was the final makeup neat?
5. Does the student know the difference between "straight" and "Age" makeup?

B. Costuming

1. Did the student choose the correct period?
2. Did the student's costume help reveal the character?

3. Were proper accessories chosen for the given period and play?
- C. Sets and Props (Crew members)
1. Did the students research the period of the play sufficiently?
 2. Were set pieces and furniture chosen to clearly represent the time, locale, style and mood of the play?
 3. Were the set pieces properly placed?
 4. Were props chosen that were workable and appropriate for each character?
 5. Were prop tables clearly marked and set for the actors?
 6. Were the prop and set crews reliable and prompt?
 7. Did they work well with the actors?
 8. Was there a floor plan used by the crews?
 9. Were list of props and set pieces posted?
- D. Lighting and Sound (Tech Crew)
1. Was a lighting chart created (after research on stage lighting for the scene or play?
 2. Were students able to use the correct names for each lighting instrument in their planning and charting of stage areas?
 3. Was the mood, season, locale, etc. of the play taken into consideration?
 4. Were instruments properly drawn for each stage area?

As the teacher/director I must be well prepared and have thought out all aspects of the production which will take place in my classroom. I must first choose the play and the specific scene which will be developed. I must decide on the tone, mood, atmosphere, style, climax and language of the piece. I must visualize the scene not only in my mind's eye but in the form of ground plans, set designs, lighting and sound effects, costuming, makeup and of course characterization. I must be able to communicate all of this to my actors and crews. My interpretation of scene must be clearly communicated to the cast so that their character development and performance is presented to the audience in a unified manner. My most difficult task next is creating my *director's prompt book* .

My *prompt book* will contain notes on every possible element of the production. It will be my lesson plan book, for six or eight weeks. It will contain my personal notes and thoughts on motivation for each character, technical notes, prop and set lists, lighting cues, notes on costuming, suggested improvisations and daily comments. My prompt book will also contain blocking notes, floor plans, and set designs.

I think it is important to define my role as director to my students to avoid confusion. As an English teacher I will set aside a six to eight week period of drama and theatre techniques. To switch gears, as it were, in the middle of the year requires a certain amount of planning and forethought. I found the drama unit to be most effective in the Spring as it is the most physical. However, I have used it during the first term and found that it was one way to get to know my students well in a relatively short period of time.

I like to step into the "role" of director and maintain that "role" as an actor would for a character. This helps the students remain in "the drama". I might enter the room after the students are seated with a clipboard and announced that I am Gordon Craig or the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, or David Belasco, Stanislavsky, and so forth. I don't expect them to know who these directors are, so their first assignment in preparation for the unit on plays and directing will be to research these directors and others and bring character sketches of each and their specific styles of directing to class for discussion. The director I would choose to become in "role" will reflect the style I will direct in as it relates to that director.

I feel obliged to tell them the plays they will be reading and specifically the one which we will all work on as a performance piece. I will also tell my students "in character" that as their director I will act as the unifying force behind the production. I will describe myself to them as their creative "Messiah" guiding, moving, motivating, teaching and encouraging them to achieve professional interpretations of their roles in the play.

Action Plan: to divide the eight week period into specific goals and objectives for myself and my students in terms of play production. The eight week period will be conducted not so much as an English class, but as a class of professional theatre students. This will provide the correct learning and performing atmosphere and at the same time teach professionalism, work ethic, responsibility, etc.

Lesson Plan I .

Objectives To create a calm and pleasant atmosphere within the classroom to help foster creative behavior.

Strategies I will begin the first class with a variety of loosening up exercises, improvisations, physical warmups and vocal warmups. These exercises will be expanded daily until there is an established and ongoing routine. I will also mention the play which we will be working on. I will do this "in character" as their "director" at the end of class. (Because other Drama units have been written and to reiterate every improvisation would be redundant, I will simply give an example of each type and purpose.)

A. Daily Warmups

1. Head
 - a. down and back
 - b. left and right
 - c. circles to the left and right
2. Shoulders
 - a. up by ears and down
 - b. right shoulder: forward and back—4 times forward, up and back—4 times forward, up, back and around—4 times repeat on left shoulder
 - c. together: forward, up and back; back, up and forward
 - d. right shoulder forward while left shoulder is back
3. Arms
 - a. straight up and stretch
 - aa. reach for rope while stretching
 - b. arms out to the side: small, large, larger circle
 - c. reach over with one arm over head to the side and stretch, repeat on the other side
 - d. both arms over head tilted to left and push and breath. both arms over head tilted to right and push and breath.
4. Waist
 - a. washing machine: hold hands and twist to right then left saying washing machine
5. Thighs
 - a. plie in open second position and bounce
6. Legs and Feet
 - a. Leg kicks: front, side and back (both sides)
 - b. run in place
7. Ragdoll
 - a. Feet apart, stretch up tall. Bend over collapsing quickly and loosely from the waist with relaxed arms and hands dangling to the floor. Slowly raise up from the waist.

B. Improvisations—(working together)

1. Energy Circle
 - a. stand in a circle and hold hands
 - b. close your eyes and gently sway from left to right (slowly)
 - c. begin a soft hum—gradually build and get louder, bring hands over head and yell.
2. Specific Warmups
 - a. The Machine (Science)
 - aa. One member of the group moves into a space and begins a machine-like movement. Each other member of the group joins the activity and “develops” the machine. This can be done by linking in some way. Add a noise.
 - b. Movement in Mime (Map Skills)
 - aa. In well thought out movements mime the following: lifting, pushing, pulling, rolling, hurling, carrying, stretching, chopping, bending, twisting, falling
Choose from.
rocks, boulders, stones, pebbles, logs, sticks, ropes, water

These exercises will be more than enough for the first day and each physical exercise and some improvisations will be repeated.

At the end of the first class I will speak my lines as “the director” of the soon to be produced play, “The Enchanted” by Jean Giraudoux.

“I know all of you have been through several days of preliminary auditions and I am pleased to see you here. As your director I will expect *total professionalism* at all times. By this I mean, *promptness*, *respect* and the *willingness to work*. I expect that you *come to rehearsal prepared*, lines and blocking memorized for actors, and sets, costumes, lights, props, etc. for those of you on my crews. I hope you will *accept my criticism* in good faith and know that we are working together toward one goal. That being a finished and professional production. I hope that if you feel strongly about certain things like your characterization or motivation, etc. that you will speak up. We must have open communication at all times. From now on all exercises will be conducted by the director and you will behave as professional actors. Because Giraudoux is not that familiar to our potential audience we must do our homework. It is essential that we present a clear and accurate picture for our audience. Thank you for being here, I will see you tomorrow. I would ask that each of you read

the play again so that you are prepared to *audition for the* parts which will take place in another two weeks. In the mean time we will learn more about each other, the stage and theatre and of course the play itself. It is essential that we understand the play before we go on to auditions.”

Note: I would audition my students earlier in a Performing Arts class, but as this is primarily for an English class I must maintain a certain structure which will allow the academic side of play production to take place.

The rest of the first week would be a continuance of the same physical exercises with additions.

Lesson Plan II (or supplementary exercises)

A. Vocal Warmups

1. Begin with breathing from the diaphragm (the muscle located between your abdomen and the bottom of your rib cage).

a. Place hands on diaphragm and concentrate on moving your hands out and in.

b. Lie on the floor with a book placed on your stomach. Try to raise the book up and then flat without moving anything else.

Suggestions: sounds like Ah, Eh, Ma, are good to begin with. Hay, hay, hee, hoo, hi.

2. Hold your breath

a. Count from one to ten or more on one breath.

b. Give everyone (or groups of students) a pitch and a sound to hold and control.

c. Whisper a sentence to the class, gradually repeat the same sentence getting louder each time.

d. Read two passages out loud from text books. Have students read the punctuation marks out loud.

3. Fun exercises for practice in speech and acting. Directions:

a. Read the sentence.

b. Speak the sentence dramatically.

c. Act out the sentence using arms only.

d. Act out the sentence using the entire body.

4. In pairs, face each other standing or sitting. One person begins telling a story. The other repeats “echoing the story.”

5. Over pronunciation

a. Stand in a line across the playing area shoulder to shoulder. Assign one sentence per person to be over pronounced and then pronounced with great feeling.

Improvisations for observation and imagination.

I will chose three unrelated words and assign them to groups of four or five to act out for the class. They will have five minutes to prepare.

ex: Create a drama from your three words so that we can easily determine what they are.

I might pull elements of the play out to test students creativity.

ex: Ghost, Forest, Young woman.

The rest of the week would continue in the same way. Repeating and expanding the exercises which work and are most beneficial.

Lesson Plan III

Continue warmup and vocal exercises and one or two improvisations daily.

Objective : Students will become familiar with the stage areas and be able to walk through basic stage directions.

Strategies : Introduce the stage areas and discuss Blocking techniques. Pass out handouts for homework.

BLOCKING

Body Position —The body position refers to the actor’s position on stage. Some positions are more meaningful than others. For example, the more open an actor is to the audience the more important he seems. A standing position is more dominant than a sitting position and a one quarter turn is more dominant than a three quarter turn. An upright position would be more meaningful for example than a stooping, leaning or flat position.

The following are diagrams of the stage areas which I use in planning my blocking. It enables me to see each area clearly and to determine where I want my actors. I can also move my actors’ positions and draw in various levels and patterns.

DIAGRAM A

(figure available in print form)

DIAGRAM B

(figure available in print form)

DIAGRAM A Key

UR—Up stage right

UC—Up stage center

UL—Up stage left

R—Right of center stage faces directly front.

DIAGRAM B Key

Full Front —refers to the ac-

tors body position. Ex: Full

front indicates that the actor

C—Center stage

L—Left of center stage *A Quarter Position* —45° away

DR—Down right stage from the audience.

DC—Down center stage

DL—Down left stage *Profile* —90° turn so the side

XL—Cross to left stage from of the body is toward the aud-

C, etc. ience.

All directions are based on the *Three Quarter* —a point halfway
actors position on stage. from a profile position to full

EX: The actor's right is his back.

left.

Full Back— back is directly toward the audience.

In blocking or staging levels are very important. The higher the level the more attention that particular actor receives. The audience will focus immediately on the tallest figure or highest piece which brings us to *eye focus*. *Direct focus* for example would mean that actors A, B and C, for example, are looking at D. The most effective arrangement of actors on a stage is the triangle where the other actors and audience can *focus* on the apex or main character in a given scene. For example:

(figure available in print form)

(figure available in print form)

(figure available in print form)

Actors, you should pass in front of each other on stage for emphasis unless playing a servant or minor character.

It is important to work as an ensemble. You should only cross in front of another actor/student on your own speeches or when there is a break in the action.

Lesson Plan IV

Objective To familiarize students with the technical elements of makeup application and costuming.

Strategies Students will receive handouts to study for discussion and explanation. I will continue the warmups at the beginning of each class.

MAKEUP AND COSTUMING

- A. The *role* provides the clues. (Characters age, health, occupation, personality, etc.)
- B. The play's *style* also determines makeup.
 - 1. If the play is *realistic* it should look natural.
 - 2. If the play is a *fantasy* or is *symbolic* , you may use limitless imaginative makeup for special effects. (Unusual colors, strange eyebrows, wrinkles, shadings, latex nose, etc.)
- C. The *size* of the *theatre* has a great effect of makeup.
 - 1. If the distance between actor and audience is slight, as in arena (*Long Wharf*) makeup is subtle.
 - 2. If the theatre is large (Yale University Theatre or S.C.S.U.) makeup must be stronger and bolder in order for the actor's *features* to be seen.
- D. *Colored Lights* effect makeup. Today's lighting designers use a lot of pink or lavender lamps.
 - 1. To compensate the actor must use the necessary *red* tints to the cheeks and lips.
 - 2. Colored lights (striplights) which we are familiar with in all the schools *dim similar colors on stage* .
 - Ex: *Red Lights* on stage require a heavy pink tone base and a *rouge* with a blue tint.
 - Ex: Strong amber lights require pink-base and heavy red cheeks.

Basic Principles of Makeup Application

- A. *Foundation* —(overall skin color) also called *base* .
 - 1. Apply base to the face, neck, ears, arms and hands. (Professionals use greasepaint or pancake makeup. You will most likely use makeup crayons).
- B. *Liners* —or shading colors give the face a three dimensional effect by providing shadows and highlights. Liners come in brown, maroon, white, blue and grey.
- C. *Rouge* —helps to suggest age or physical condition depending on how much is applied or how bright the color. Cheek color should be applied in a triangle on each cheek with the point closest to the mouth and smoothed out into the hair line.

- D. *Eye Brow Pencils* —help to darken or reshape eyebrows to fit the character (use black or dark brown).
- E. *Lining Brushes* —are used to apply fine lines such as wrinkles, eyelines, freckles, etc.
- F. *Nose Putty* —is a soft, natural looking putty used to form artificial noses. It is applied with spirit gum and covered with base cover.
- G. *Wool Crepe Hair* —is used to make mustaches, beards, and sideburns.
- H. *Mascara* —a black liquid applied to eyelashes for length and thickness.

Tools of the Trade

- A. Mirror, scissors, cold cream, facial tissue, towel and facecloth.
- B. When using the makeup crayons ⁴ wet the tip of the crayon and apply in the same manner as described.

We must learn to make do, to be innovative and creative. We must accept the challenge of costuming our plays with scraps, handouts and paper imitations. There is nothing wrong with that providing we attempt and achieve some degree of credibility and believability. We must under all circumstances remain committed to our script. Costumes, like actors, must be unified in style and proportion to the production as a whole. They must reflect the mood and style of your production. Jewelry should not be worn unless it is historically correct. Fabrics should be carefully selected to suggest the correct feeling and color.

Lesson Plan V

Objective To read and cast the actors for Act III in “The Enchanted”.

Strategies The entire play will be read out loud in class and discussed. Students will volunteer to read for each part. The cast list will be posted.

Homework Students will begin learning the vocabulary words on the handout sheets.

DRAMA UNIT VOCABULARY LIST

1. *Arena Stage* : Also called Theatre in the Round. The audience surrounds the stage, and the actors enter down the aisles. Either stage or audience may be raised for better viewing.
2. *Three-quarter Stage* : The audience sits on three sides of the stage, and the actors enter from the fourth side or down the aisles.
3. *Proscenium Stage* : The audience sits in front of a raised platform which is viewed through a “picture frame” opening called the Proscenium Arch. This is the most common type of stage. Yale University Theatre is an example.
4. *Thrust Stage* : A combination of proscenium and three-quarter stage which projects out through the proscenium arch into what would normally be the audience. Some of the audience sees the action from the sides, but most see it only from the front. The Long Wharf stage is an example of a modified thrust stage.
5. *Apron Forestage* : Also called the Forestage. The forward edge of the stage platform nearest the audience and in front of the main curtain. The thrust stage emphasizes and enlarges the apron. Yale Repertory Theatre has a modified apron stage.
6. *Curtains* : Drapes which conceal the stage from the audience before, during or after the performance. Curtains may either Fly (be raised or lowered), or Draw (open to the sides on tracks).
7. *Borders* : Short curtains hung at intervals above the acting area to mask lights and scenery from the audience.
8. *Flat* : A piece of scenery usually made of canvas stretched over a wooden frame. The canvas is then painted to represent a particular setting, such as the walls of a room. Flats may fly or be hand carried.
9. *Backing* : Flats used behind the scene windows and doors to mask backstage areas from audience view.
10. *Tormentors* : Also called “torms”. Flats bordering the two sides of the proscenium arch, erected to block the audience’s view of the backstage area. Scenery may be attached to the tormentors, or they may stand free. Most school stages use black curtains as tormentors.
11. *Teaser* : Also called Border. A flat or curtain hung horizontally to the stage to block the audience’s view of the lights and equipment hanging in the stage house, as well as to prevent onstage lights from shining into the first few rows of the audience.
12. *Wings* : Offstage space to the left and right.
13. *Battens* : Long pipes from which curtains, lights or flats are hung.
14. *Flies* : The entire area above the stage in back of the proscenium arch, below the grid, where Drops (curtain pieces of canvas or cloth, painted or unpainted), flats and lights are hung.
15. *Fly Gallery* : Narrow platform about half-way up the backstage side wall from which lines for flying scenery are worked. Some stage houses do not have a fly gallery, but work their fly lines from the backstage floor.
16. *Grid* : Abbreviated form of “gridiron”. Framework of wood or steel above the stage, used to support lights, drops, flats and other hanging pieces from lines and blocks.
17. *Trap* : Opening in the stage floor, permitting entrances and exits from underneath the floor.
18. *Tray Rake* : A platform placed on top of the stage floor as part of the acting area. Trays are often placed at an angle, slanted down towards the audience. This angle is known as a Rake. A

raked stage can be more dynamic and it can suggest action. It also affords better visibility for the audience.

19. *Ground Cloth* : Canvas to cover the floor of acting area.

20. *Back Wall* : Opposite the proscenium opening. If painted white and finely spattered with colors, when lighted it is a good background for exterior sets.

21. *Downstage* : The part of the acting area nearest the audience.

22. *Upstage* : The part of the acting area farthest from the audience.

23. *Stage Left and Right* : All directions on the stage are given as if a person were facing the audience. In other words, stage right is audience left and so on.

24. *Acting Areas* : The stage is divided up into six acting areas: up right, up center, up left, down right, down center, down left.

25. *Inner Stage* : In the Elizabethan Theatre, this was a small upstage area enclosed by curtains. The inner stage might have been used to represent a small room or study. After a scene was underway, the actors could move towards the audience on the outer stage.

26. *Outer Stage* : The apron of the Elizabethan Theatre, used for soliloquies and most dramatic scenes.

27. *Backdrop* : A hanging piece, usually made of canvas, painted to represent a locale. These drops most often cover the whole upstage area from left to right. When a backdrop is painted to represent the sky, it is called a Sky-drop.

28. *Cyclorama* : Often called the "cyc". A curtain of canvas or fabric usually hung in a semi-circle, covering the back and sides of the stage. The cyc may represent a blue sky, a rear wall, or any other background, depending on what lights illuminate it and what colors are used in those lights.

29. *Traveler* : A draw curtain, often at the middle or rear of the stage, serving as a formal background. The traveler is a straight curtain rather than a half circle like the cyc. The traveler is usually made of a lighter fabric than the main curtain.

30. *Catwalk* : A narrow walkway, usually located in the flies, providing access to lights and other hanging pieces. The term may refer to any narrow walkway in a theatre.

31. *Flats* : Wooden frames made from 1 x 3 white pine. They are usually 12' high and no wider than five feet nine inches. They are covered with eight ounce flameproof canvas or six ounce muslin. The canvas is glued to the flat and the surface sized and painted. The basecoat should be a neutral color. Flats are then hinged together. They are braced in an upright position with a wooden right-angle brace jack or with sandbags.

32. *Set Pieces* : Are three dimension. Ex: rocks, stairs, ramps

33. *Cutouts* : Are small flat sections of scenery cut out in a certain shape and supported at the back by a brace. (Bushes are often made from cutouts).

34. *A Groundrow* : Is a cutout placed on the floor at the back of the stage to *suggest* mountains, buildings, trees.

35. *A Drop* : is a large painted cloth, fastened to battens (pipes) at top and bottom to represent sky or scenery.

36. *A Scrim* : Is a drop of loose weave (cheesecloth) material. When lighted from the front the audience sees the painted design. When light from the back it becomes transparent (dream scenes, flashbacks, supernatural elements, etc.).

37. *Break Character* : Losing concentration and falling out of character.

38. *Concentration* : Believing in the character through constant thought or attention to what is being said or done.

39. *Observation* : Observing how various people think, walk, feel, behave, look, etc.

40. *Focus* : Keeping your attention on the necessary object.
41. *Sense Memory or Recall* : The ability to recall an experience or past sensation.
42. *Imagination* : That which brings to mind detailed pictures from your insight and your past life experiences.
43. *Warmup* : Preparing yourself physically, emotionally and vocally to perform.
44. *Enunciate* : Clear, precise speech.
45. *Pronunciate* : Accurately producing the speech sounds with proper division into syllables and accents.
46. *Inflection* : Using a variety of pitch—low, high, varied.
47. *Diaphragm* : A flat muscle separating the chest from the abdominal cavity.
48. *Motivation* : Communicating your character's desires in believable action.
49. *Internal Qualities* : A character's personal background, mental, spiritual, emotional, religious qualities.
50. *External Qualities* : Costumes, makeup, movement, voice, physical appearance.
51. *Protagonist* : Leading character or hero.
52. *Antagonist* : Opposes the hero or main figure.
53. *Climax* : The highest point of emotional intensity.
54. *Soliloquy* : Long speech given by a character alone on stage.
55. *Theme* : Encompasses an accepted truth of life and embodies the author's purpose of the play.
56. *Tragedy* : The audience watches the tragic hero struggle with a problem he is unable to solve.
57. *Unit Memorization* : Learning materials scene by scene and coordinating the lines with the assigned movement.
58. *Blocking* : Stage movement given to each actor by the director.
59. *Cue* : The last few words of the actor's speech that precedes your lines.
60. *Ad-lib* : To make up your own words and business to cover up mistakes on stage.

Lesson Plan VI

Objective To expose students to the background information on Giraudoux and the play.

Strategies Notes will be given in a class lecture.

Background Jean Giraudoux was born in Bellac, France in 1882. He is described as a writer whose style reflected his personal observations and philosophies of life. He tried to create a style not yet developed, one which gave its reader an original, exciting and romantic notion of life. He was twenty-five when he was first published by a friend. Prior to that he had spent a year teaching French at Harvard. He chose to see beyond the brutality of the world and thus created “a drama of delightful surprises, somewhere between the art of the candid Camerme and the art of fairy tale.”⁵ His characters embody his romanticisms, and political views as well. He saw life in a tragic yet comic light. His plays are described as “poetic fantasies”.⁶ Other plays he has written include; “The Madwoman of Chaillot”, “Ondine”, and “The Apollo of Bellac”. He died in 1944.

Background This summary will be included in part in my prompt book for character development and production unity.

“The Enchanted” is a story of a young female school teacher who falls in love with death. (These notes will be appropriate for the student playing Isabel). She rejects the accepted methods of teaching and turns her students into anti-establishment, flower children. This of course upsets local government officials who would like to replace Isabel. Isabel is in love with the poetry or notion of death and has to be convinced that there is poetry in life as well. Isabel is Giraudoux’s mouthpiece. She presents the conflict of the play and its tragic and comic elements. She expresses his passion for beauty and life and his hope for change. It also shows his distaste for politicians and government officials.

The overall *mood* and *atmosphere* of the play is contained in the supernatural. Isabel uses the Spring and the enchanted forest as her classroom for her students. She tries to *communicate freedom* and *humanity*.

On the *opposite* pole from Isabel we have the local officials. The Mayor and the Supervisor represent the negative aspects of the play and society. They are the uncultured bourgeoisie, incapable of anything outside their foolish laws. They *plot* to catch her with her ghost friend and show her as a witch. The only thing they catch her at is teaching her children the poetry of life. Isabel begins to fall in love with the ghost who symbolizes death. He tries to convince her that her mission to save the world can only happen in “his” world. She has however, another suitor, the Supervisor. He of course represents the real world and so the conflict is established. In Act III, which is the scene I will block for performance, we see the *conflict* between the Supervisor and the Ghost. It is in this scene that Isabel must decide and choose the world she will live in. It would appear that she has chosen the Ghost and death at the end when she faints; however, she comes back as she is surrounded by the sounds of life and “I love you” repeated by the Supervisor.

Lesson Plan VII

1. Tape the stage areas and playing areas, exits and entrances.
2. Pass out the floor plan.
3. Read and cast the parts for Act III in *Great Scenes From The World Theatre*.⁷

The Floor Plan

(The floor plan illustrates my interpretation of the stage directions). The directions indicate that it is the balcony of Isabel's room. The balcony has French doors which open out to a view of the City Square.

The stage directions in this scene call for a variety of movements and set pieces: (see floor plan)

A fireplace, a balcony with French doors, windows, an outside door.

I have determined my blocking by rereading the scene and stage directions as you would a word problem. The next step is to run the scene with the actors. The actor's job is to write the blocking in pencil in the margins of their scripts. Changes in blocking will take place if crosses or entrances are sloppy or if they are not relevant to the action in the scene.

FLOOR PLAN

In preparation of the floor plan. The scene dictates certain specific ideas and movements such as exits and entrances. The first entrance is that of the supervisor who enters as the doctor is leaving. The next movements are performed by the Supervisor who bolts the doors, locks the windows and walks to the fireplace to shut the damper. The Ghost follows by an abrupt entrance through the "bolted" doors. These actions provided by the playwright suggest certain movements.

At the beginning of the scene Isabel asks the Supervisor to sit down. This tells us that we need at least one chair but logic tells us that no room would have just one. As the director of a school play I do not have the luxury of a set designer to confer with so I must consider my space and what is asked of me by the playwright.

ON STAGE

(figure available in print form)

Class Space

(figure available in print form)

Notes:

Isabel is a young, innocent, torn between life and death. She is about to be confronted by the Ghost and the Supervisor. She must make her decision.

Supervisor is dressed in "his Sunday best. Black jacket, striped trousers, gloves. He has a bowler in his right hand, a gold-head stick in his left. Isabel gazes at him in astonishment." ⁷

The scene must build to point on page 563 where the door flies open and the Ghost appears. This is the *climax* of the scene where Isabel is faced with the forces of life and death and must choose one or the other. The falling action begins on page 567 where the Ghost tells Isabel that she is as false as the others. We see her run to the arms of her Ghost in a last desperate plea, he kisses her and pushes her away leaving her in a faint. This is the end of the scene but not the act. It is a logical place to stop, however it is important for the students to know the real ending which is that she is revived and the Inspector, Doctor, the Girls, the Mayor

enter and it is the noise that awakens her and brings her to life and the natural conclusion that she will wed the Supervisor.

In summation the remainder of the unit would consist of rehearsals which would encourage the discussion of all the literary elements, character development, performance levels, blocking and finishing rehearsal, technical rehearsals and a final performance for other classes.

Related Assignments

1. Students will develop and flesh out their character sketches into characterizations of their characters.
2. Blocking will be memorized with lines on a day to day basis.
3. Crews will work in their groups within the class while actors rehearse.
4. Spot testing will occur on a weekly basis to be sure students are learning the vocabulary words.
5. A time and audience will be selected for the performance.
6. Students will be graded based on the criteria mentioned at the beginning of the unit.

Suggested Activities

1. Arrange a tour of Long Wharf, Yale Rep, or Yale University Theatres.
2. Use "Variety", "Backstage" and "New York Times" to read about professional theatre, auditions and the business and job possibilities, etc.
3. Encourage students to see a live stage performance.

Notes

1. Miriam Gilbert, "Teaching Dramatic Literature", *Educational Theatre Journal* (March, 1973), p. 25.
2. Ibid., p. 87.
3. Jerome S. Bruner, "On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand", *The Process of Education*

(Cambridge, Mass., 1960), p. 46.

4. Caran D’Ache—Neocolor II Aquarelle-Crayon Makeup. Cobbs or Kayes—\$4.75 a class set.

5. Maurice Valency, *Jean Giraudoux* (Hill and Wang, 1958), p. XVI.

6. Ibid., p. XXI.

7. James L. Steffensen, Jr., *Great Scenes from the World Theatre* , (Avon Books, 1965), pps. 558-568.

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