

**REAL MEN (AND WOMEN) TEACH**  
**MIDDLE SCHOOL THEATRE AND / OR**  
**DIRECT MIDDLE SCHOOL OAP**

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# Attention All Attendees:

Thank you for registering your  
attendance for **EACH**  
**SESSION:**

[http://www.uiltexas.org/academics/  
capital-conference/online](http://www.uiltexas.org/academics/capital-conference/online)



**Electronic handouts** are available  
there too.

# Why Theater?

- Movies, TV, YouTube (FFC Quote)
- Something out of nothing
- Human Experience (Hamilton / Miss Saigon)
- Requires an audience to function
- Good theater does what other art forms can't
- Connection to our past

# Why Teach Theater?

- Discipline
- Expression
- Speaking Skills
- Memorization (short-term)
- One Act Play Contest
- What isn't taught, dies
- It's fun

# Who is this guy?

- Have a BA & MA in Communications and a Masters in Educational Leadership.
- Taught Middle School Theater at Brownsboro Junior High, Splendora Middle School, Grand Saline Middle School as well as High School Theater at Brownsboro High School, Graham High School, Grand Saline High School
- Student, Director, Contest Manager, Clinician, Adjudicator for UIL OAP at the Zone, District, Bi-District, Area and Region.
- Over 150 productions of theater experience, including acting, directing, designing and writing - from elementary, middle school, high school, junior college, university, community and professional

# Middle School Theater Goals

- Learn about theater
- Build an appreciation for theater
- Stoke the flames of young theater artist
- Pressure valve for increased academic vigor
- Reach students others cannot
- Self-Expression
- Appreciation of others expression

# Recruitment

- Expressive
- Dramatic / Funny
- Good readers
- Good workers (Band / Dancers)
- Parents / Sibling who have performed in public

# Auditions For Class

- Cold Readings
- Prepared Readings
- Favorite Movie
- Tell me a true story
- Tell me a better than true story



# What are you looking for?

- Smoothness (Voice Quality)
- Vocabulary
- Paralanguage (Rate / Pitch / Tone / Stress)
- Openness
- Eyes / Guts

# 1st Day is Everything

- 1st day always important, but 1st in MS Theater is critical
- You have to establish routines, procedures, expectation and consequences
- 1st day is mostly about you, every other day is about them
- Shyness vs. Unworkable Fear
- Knuckleheads vs. Unworkable Individuals

# 1st Day Procedures

- Circle Time
- Lesson Mode / Rehearsal Mode / Performance Mode
- Safe Area (Protect and Defend, don't attack)
- 1 Voice
- Hands to yourself

# Lesson Mode

- Students face the instructor
- Pen and paper ready
- Take notes
- 10% - 20% in this mode
- Traditional teachers find this most comfortable
- Flipped teachers find this restrictive

# Rehearsal Mode

- Students are working on their own (individually or in groups)
- You must visit each person / group 3 times every rehearsal mode
- Help settle problems and keep them focused / motivated. Try to keep the time equal and don't do the work for them
- This looks like mass chaos, you must make it controlled chaos
- 50%-70% of time in this mode (this is what you are being paid to do)

# Rehearsal Mode Transition Assist

- Verbal / Non-Verbal clue that you need their attention
- Attention on 1 (they repeat) Attention on 2 (they repeat) Attention on 3 (they repeat) and STOP (all together)
- Explain instructions and it starts with GO

# Performance Mode

- Audience facing performer(s)
- Audience behavior (20% of grade)
- Applaud to take the stage
- Applaud to leave the stage
- Performer waits on feedback
- Performer says “Thank You” if they agree with feedback of not
- Administrators want to see some of this
- 20%-30% of time in this mode

# Performance Mode Assistance

- Ask for volunteers
- Ready, Set, Go Chairs
- Who would you like to see next?



# Scope and Sequence

- Plan out the year in Six Week or Nine Week blocks
- Let each block be self-enclosed unit
- Try to build and transition from each unit
- Do what you like to do and it will come across to the students
- Keep them active, over plan

# Units

- Intro / Storytelling / Pantomime
- Puppets
- Characterization
- Stage Combat / Improv
- Theater History / Technical
- Monologues / Duos

# Intro / Storytelling / Pantomime

- Week 1 - Intro - Trust - Bio Project
- Week 2 - Storytelling (Ug / Og / Bob)
- Week 3 - Intro to Pantomime
- Week 4 - Solo / Duo Pantomime
- Week 5 - Song Pantomime
- Week 6 - Song Pantomime

# Puppets

- Week 1 - Intro to Puppets
- Week 2 - Scriptwriting
- Week 3 - Puppet Construction
- Week 4 - Puppet Construction
- Week 5 - Puppet Rehearsals
- Week 6 - Puppet Rehearsals

# Characterization

- Week 1 - Intro to Characterization
- Week 2 - Storytelling Characterization
- Week 3 - Developing Characterization
- Week 4 - Writing Characterization
- Week 5 - Rehearse Characterization
- Week 6 - Rehearse Characterization

# Stage Combat / Improv

- Week 1 - Intro to Stage Combat
- Week 2 - Rehearse Stage Combat
- Week 3 - Rehearse Stage Combat
- Week 4 - Intro to Improv
- Week 5 - Scene Improv
- Week 6 - Group Improv

# Theater History / Technical Elements

- Week 1 - Greece / Poetics
- Week 2 - Costumes / Make-up
- Week 3 - China / Japan
- Week 4 - Set / Props
- Week 5 - France / Italian Comedy
- Week 6 - Light / Sound
- Week 7 - Germany / American Theater

# Theater History / Technical Elements

- Character
- Plot
- Thought
- Language
- Sound / Music
- Spectacle



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- Week 6 - Light / Sound
- Week 7 - Germany / American Theater

# Monologues / Duos

- Week 1 - Monologue Selection
- Week 2 - Monologue Rehearsal
- Week 3 - Monologue Rehearsal
- Week 4 - Duo Selection
- Week 5 - Duo Rehearsal
- Week 6 - Duo Rehearsal
- Week 7 - Duo Rehearsal

# SHOW SELECTION

- Age-Appropriate
- Community Standards
- Large Cast
- More Females than Males
- Enjoyable for both students and you

# Preliminary Planning

- Casting (What do you need? Who do you have? Who should be featured?)
- Set (UIL Set Pieces / Additions to the Set)
- Costumes (Time Periods / Quality / Colors)
- Lights (Standard / Specials)
- Sound (Music / Sound Effects)

# PRE-AUDITIONS

- Improvisation Games / Jump Scenes / Describe Favorite Book / Movie
- Pretend to be favorite character / historical figure
- Figure out who you have and what they can do
- Start discussion of rehearsal schedule and potential conflicts
- Have several days of this at different times to see who you can get

# AUDITIONS

- Monologues / 2-Person Scenes / 3-Person Scenes
- Mixture of Female-Female, Male-Male, Male-Female
- Look for chemistry, cooperation, coachable and improvement
- Let them read for what they want at the end

# CASTING

- Look for best cast, not best person for each role
- Look for conflicts with schedule
- Casting priorities: Availability, Reliability, Chemistry, Right for Role, Talent
- Share cast list with Principal, UIL Coordinator, person you trust who knows students
- Directing is fixing issues with casting

# Cast / Crew / Alternates

- Cast 15 if possible (double-cast)
- Crew of 5 (Stage Manager, Asst. Stage Manager, Lights, Sound, Backstage Tech)
- 4 Alternates (Asst. to Director, Public Relations / Historian, Designers, traditional alternates)



# POSTING

- Post the list somewhere public and leave.
- Don't answer phone and don't go on Facebook
- Stand by your casting decisions and put on the vision of the show you intend

# Rehearsal Process

- 1 hour of rehearsal for every minute of the show
- For middle school, add 10-15 more hours
- Plan for 10 weeks of rehearsal from Pre-Audition to Performance

# Rehearsal Process

- 2 Weeks of Auditions
- 2 Weeks of Blocking
- 3 Weeks of Working
- 1 Week of Polish
- 1 Week of Tech / Run-Throughs
- 1 Week Dress Rehearsal / Performances / Competition

# Read-Through

- Sit in a circle and read through the script
- Explain settings, costumes, lights, sound as you go
- Try not to direct the students, just let them discover the play
- Have a discussion / Q&A after the reading

# Blocking

- Divide script into scenes based on how many actors you need (2,3,4,5 person scenes)
- Develop a rehearsal schedule where you use call the bare minimum of actors that you can.
- Day 1 (1, 2, 5, 7) A, B, C, D
- Day 2 (3, 6, 8, 10) A, B, E, F
- Day 3 (4, 9, 11, 12) A, C, G, H, I
- A - 3 Days, B/C -2 Days, D/E/F/G/H/I - 1 Day

# Blocking

- 10 photos of show, create those
- Entrances, large movements, storytelling elements
- Tell the story of the script, have the actors write down everything in pencil
- Levels / Spacing
- Let them know how the piece will tie together with the next scene

# Blocking

- Triangles, not lines
- No backs and no profiles (unless showing conflict or love)
- Block, Review, Block, Review
- Once whole show is blocked, put all the scenes together and see what you have

# Working

- Motivate the movements (Why are you going over there? Find out why.)
- Add moments - push for characters to make decisions and actors to make choices (Make another choice)
- Actor's Director - brings you to the answer, don't give the answer
- Don't memorize, learn the lines



# Polish

- Fine movements, stage business, nuances
- Demand new and more interesting choices
- Make them think about conflicts and relationships
- Why does the character feel? What should the audience feel?

# Tech / Run-Throughs

- Just tech rehearsal - have stand-ins for actors. Teach and run the cues over and over.
- Go cue by cue with the actors. Have the stage manager call these cues. Have asst. stage manager discuss scenery shifts, costume locations / changes, prop handling / locations

# Tech / Run-Throughs

- Do not skip getting the tech rehearsals right
- Do run-throughs with and without tech
- Dress rehearsal is not a time to get the bugs out, do it now

# Dress Rehearsals

- Unless the wheels pop all the way off, do not stop them
- The more times they get the show finished, the more confident they will feel
- Positive - Correction - Positive

# Public Performances

- Perform for the public once before competition and after the competition
- This instills that the competition performance is just a part of the experience
- Curtains call for public performances

# Competition

- Get lights and sound in the booth to start practicing, working on cues
- Get set in place. Don't worry about how long it takes to get it up, get it right
- Work entrances and exits

# Performance

- When lights and sound are ready, go cue to cue. Actors are a tool for the crew.
- If you have large blocking movements or full stage crosses, be sure to work them
- YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DO A RUN-THROUGH

# Performance

- Make sure that lights, sound, stage manager and assistant stage manager are satisfied.
- If so, work scenes that will help the show have energy, depth and spectacle



# Performance

- Make sure you have time to get set pieces re-stacked, costumes and props properly stored
- Thank the theater staff and be upbeat about how rehearsal went
- Find dressing room and get settled

# Performance

- Depending on show order, allow the company to watch at least two of the other shows
- Do not allow them to criticize others
- Good theater has nothing to do with competition

# Competition

- Be sure to give them plenty of time in the dressing room for warm-ups, costume and prop implementation, and just time together
- When you are called to the stage, do some confidently and quietly

# Competition

- Have fun with the performance
- No curtain call
- Be positive about the performance
- Get cleaned up and dressed up for awards

# Competition

- Accept the results
- Listen to the critique closely
- Be positive no matter what
- In 20 years, they won't remember winning or losing - they will remember the experience

# Rehearsal Ideas

- Double-Fast
- Without gestures
- Page by page backwards
- Own words
- Overdo emotions
- Different settings

# Language

- Voice Quality
- Pitch
- Volume
- Tone
- Stress
- Speed

# Emotional Recall

- Truth comes from Truth
- Pretending to feel something is only going 1/3 of the way
- Easier to pull someone back, than push them forward
- Help them find life experiences to use for emotional performance



# 8 Basic Emotions

- Joy
- Disgust
- Acceptance
- Anger
- Fear
- Hope
- Surprise
- Sadness

# Accents

- Natural
- Learned
- Practiced
- Accents are stereotypical, yet they should not be racist
- Listening is the key to success

# Down Beats

- Find words that you can act
- Break down the piece into beats
- Good performances, like good songs, have variety
- Think of orchestration

# Acting Motivations

- Russian Theater
- I want...
- I need...
- I must have...

# Gestures

- Classifying Gestures
- Emphasis Gestures
- Involuntary Gestures
- Eliminate Master Gesture
- Develop and control the character gestures

# Performance Days

- Be optimistic
- Best Effort, Have Fun, Do Your Best
- The best is much different than being successful
- Positive experience is the most important thing
- Model good audience behavior

# Recruit and Retain

- If they had a positive experience, they will come back
- Have them find recruits
- Accept everyone, reject those that endanger safety and education
- Never re-build, just re-load

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- Questions
- Comments
- Suggestions
- Ideas



# Contact Info

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