

Theatre Curriculum Framework

Center For Educator Development In Fine Arts (CEDFA)
<http://www.cedfa.org>

To hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature.
W. Shakespeare

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FOREWORD

The Texas Legislature, in authorizing the development of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), has as its goal for “all students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to read, write, compute, problem solve, think critically, apply technology, and communicate across all subject areas. The essential knowledge and skills shall also prepare and enable all students to continue to learn in post-secondary educational, training, or employment settings.”

This framework is provided to help local district and campus educators develop theatre curricula that are aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Adoption of the TEKS provides an opportunity for Texas schools to examine and modify their existing curricula. Neither the TEKS nor this curriculum framework should be taken as curriculum. The TEKS are the basis of state-level textbook adoption and assessment development. For students to gain the most benefit from these tools, each district develops its own curriculum aligned with the TEKS.

The process of educating children could be compared to building a house. The TEKS provide a solid foundation, and this curriculum framework serves as the frame of the house. Each district completes the house in a manner that meets the particular needs of its students. Districts are encouraged to exceed the minimum requirements of law and State Board of Education rules and supplement curricula with rich activities, resources, and instructional materials.

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PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATIONAL THEATRE

Students who participate in a strong theatre program build a broad base of theatre content knowledge and skills. When theatre curricula are implemented with a variety of appropriate instructional methods, all learners have an opportunity to develop to their highest potential despite differences in learning rates and prior knowledge and skills. Additionally, theatre students develop capabilities in all of the following areas:

- Critical and creative thinking
- Problem solving
- Communication
- Individual and collaborative planning and implementation
- Historical and cultural understanding
- Self- and social-awareness
- Research skills.

A theatre curriculum that facilitates comprehensive, in-depth learning for all students is well-planned, scaffolded and comprised of diverse and challenging educational experiences in theatre. Students refine their communication skills and gain a deeper understanding of the history and practice of theatre as an art form. The following activities reflect the mission of educational theatre:

- Children and adolescents develop concepts about themselves, human relationships, and the environment by participating in role-playing.
- Students of dramatic literature sharpen critical thinking skills by exploring the motivations of characters' actions, analyzing emotional responses to situations, and interpreting playwrights' intents.
- Students who design and construct scenery, props, lighting, and makeup learn to interpret the ideas of others and to apply their interpretations to new works.
- Students explore and communicate how a dramatic presentation relates to a particular time, place, and culture.
- Students become critical consumers of media through careful evaluation of performances in a variety of media.

Our objective should be a child's deep understanding of the world and a habitual readiness to act effectively on that understanding.

Theodore R.Sizer

Scaffolded learning is carefully structured from one developmental level to the next.

THE STATE CONTEXT FOR THEATRE EDUCATION

Senate Bill 1, passed by the 74th Texas Legislature, charges the State Board of Education with clarifying essential knowledge and skills in each area of the foundation and enrichment curricula. The Texas Administrative Code requires districts to ensure that sufficient time is provided for K–5 and middle school teachers to teach and for students to learn the fine arts and many other disciplines. At the high school level, each district must offer courses from at least two of the four fine arts disciplines: theatre, art, music, and dance. Both the Recommended High School Program and the Distinguished Achievement Program require one credit from any of the courses listed in Chapter 117 of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Additionally, students can gain recognition for outstanding achievement in the fields of art, music, theatre, and dance in the Distinguished Achievement Program.

All great art is the work of the whole living creature, body and soul, and chiefly of the soul.

John Ruskin

With this role for the fine arts in Texas public schools, the writing committee for the Fine Arts TEKS was established and included representatives of a broad range of expertise in arts education. The thousands of Texans who gave input to the Fine Arts TEKS included:

- Parents
- Business representatives
- Teachers
- State and community leaders
- State and national experts.

Together they reviewed multiple drafts of the Fine Arts TEKS to help ensure that fine arts education in Texas public schools would have relevance and rigor.

The State Board of Education unanimously adopted the Fine Arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. The TEKS, a framework of knowledge and skills, articulate high expectations for all student achievement. The TEKS are considered content standards that identify what all students should know and be able to do. However, the TEKS do not constitute curricula and do not prescribe methodologies or strategies for achieving the standards. Rather, they form the basis of local curricula, which are designed individually to meet the particular needs of each district's students.

Organization of the TEKS

Chapter 117 of the Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, contains the Fine Arts TEKS, which are organized by the following four strands:

- Perception
- Creative expression/performance
- Historical and cultural heritage
- Response/evaluation.

Education is a social process. . . . Education is growth. . . . Education is not a preparation for life; education is life itself.

John Dewey

In kindergarten through grade 8, the TEKS are organized by content area and grade level. For example, "Theatre, Kindergarten" begins the theatre section. At the high school level, course levels are indicated by course title followed by I–IV. The high school levels I–IV represent student achievement levels and do not represent grade level classifications. Theatre Arts I is a general theatre survey course on which all other high school theatre courses are built.

After a brief introduction to the overall goals of theatre, the knowledge and skills are listed. Knowledge and skills are stated for each strand at each grade/course level. For each broad category of knowledge and skills, several student expectations are listed, describing how students will demonstrate the specified knowledge and skills. These statements of student expectations provide a framework for instruction and assessment of student achievement. For example:

§117.16 Theatre Grade 4

(b) Knowledge and skills.

(4.4) **Historical/cultural heritage.** The student relates theatre to history, society, and culture.

The student is expected to:

- (A) explain theatre as a reflection of life in particular times, places, and cultures; and
- (B) identify the role of live theatre, film, television, and electronic media in American society.

The design of the Theatre TEKS scaffolds learning, creating both horizontal and vertical alignment of knowledge and skills. With each advancement in grade or course level, student achievement increases and is demonstrated by the:

- Degree of sophistication of knowledge and skills
- Scope of skills and knowledge to be taught
- Depth of understanding required in students' evaluation and response.

Additionally, in each grade level and course, the four strands function interdependently, minimizing the need for equal amounts of time to be allocated to each strand. Strand interdependency is an essential concept for districts to consider in developing and preparing curricula. In each class or course, all strands should be addressed, but not necessarily in parity. Some courses may focus in great depth and complexity on specific strands and only touch on others to demonstrate relevance and relationships. However, all courses should ensure that students know and can do what is specified by the TEKS to ensure the achievement of each student.

The Fine Arts TEKS consider the typical stages of child and adolescent cognitive, social/emotional and physical development to ensure that expectations for student achievement are developmentally appropriate. Achievement expectations focus on student capabilities and age-appropriate ways to help learners move to higher plateaus of knowledge and skills. When course instruction is aligned with the Theatre TEKS, learning in all four strands is scaffolded from one grade to the next, and students become self-directed learners, applying foundational knowledge and skills to a wide range of theatre content.

Age-appropriate instruction is based on characteristics that permit general predictions within an age range about what activities, materials, interactions, or experiences will be safe, healthy, interesting, achievable, and challenging to children and adolescents.

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THEATRE INSTRUCTION

Many concepts and principles function interdependently in the Theatre TEKS. Although some basic concepts and skills are taught and learned in isolation, they are integrated in the format of dramatic play, creative dramatics, and theatrical performance. If one production component is weak, the quality of the whole performance is affected. The four strands of Fine Arts TEKS work in concert with one another.

The way the strands function in theatre can be demonstrated by analyzing *CATS*, Andrew Lloyd Webber's record-setting musical. Initial sensory and spatial **perceptions** are formalized and standardized as elements, principles, and vocabulary. Andrew Lloyd Webber first conceptualized *CATS* when reading T. S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* that he picked up in an airport bookstore. Webber used the book to write the script and music that casts, technical designers, and production staff have shared with many thousands of audience members. The common perceptual foundation shared by all in the various professional acting troupes performing *CATS* enables them to communicate Webber's intent through their various specialized roles in the production. This communication is vital to the unity of the production.

Actors draw on their personal experiences and feelings when interpreting scripts and developing their **creative expression and performance**. This is developed in every aspect of a production from casting, through rehearsals, to its many performances. The specialists who are involved in a major production, such as actors, directors, lighting crews, stage managers, costume and makeup artists, musicians, and choreographers, have finely honed skills that contribute to the overall impact of the performance. A unique feature of *CATS* is its junkyard scenery in which everything is four times its natural size, so that the cats appear in perspective to their environment.

Every production's integrity and ability to interpret playwright's intent relies on consideration of **historical and cultural heritage**. *CATS* is built on a strong tradition of musical theatre and cannot be fully appreciated or enjoyed without knowledge of the theatrical productions that preceded it.

Only through continuous, open **response and evaluation** has *CATS* maintained its long run on Broadway, in England, and as a traveling performance. The casts and crews, individually and in groups, engage in constant reflection on their technical performances and artistic choices to achieve a recognized standard of excellence.

Meaningful connections in theatre are essential for students to advance from novices to lifelong theatre appreciators and participants. Though we will continue to look at the four strands individually, curriculum developers and teachers should bear in mind the interrelated nature of the four strands, which is apparent in many of the following course descriptions.

Without
wonder and
insight, acting
is just a trade.
With it, it
becomes
creation.
Bette Davis

When you perform . . .
you are out of
yourself—larger and
more potent, more
beautiful. You are for
minutes heroic. This is
power. This is glory on
earth. And it is yours,
nightly.
Agnes de Mille

Genuine
poetry can
communicate
before it is
understood.
T.S. Eliot

A comprehensive school theatre program, grounded in the sequential content standards of the Theatre TEKS, provides a solid foundation of content to influence and enrich students' lives today and into adulthood. Because of the interconnected nature of the strands, an equal amount of time does not need to be allotted to each. Courses may focus in great depth and complexity on specific areas and simply touch on others. With this approach, all students learn a process for self-expression, develop higher-order thinking skills, understand meaningful course content, and reflect with increased insight on issues in their communities.

NEW THEATRE PROGRAMS FOR TEXAS

Implementing the Theatre TEKS is an impetus to rethink course offerings, instructional strategies, assessment, and professional development. This may involve a shift from thinking of educational theatre as strictly a performance- or production-oriented curricular area for talented students to a process-centered discipline that teaches thinking and problem solving to all students.

Another issue to rethink with the implementation of the Theatre TEKS is the role of competition in the high school program. While there are many reasons to participate in theatre competition, teachers and administrators should note that the University Interscholastic League (UIL) One-Act Play Competition is an extracurricular activity and represents only one of many possible ways to teach and learn the TEKS. (See the Instruction section for more detail.)

An in-depth look at the scaffolding of theatre knowledge and skills reveals the many benefits for students who participate in a strong theatre program. Creativity, self-expression, collaboration, thinking skills, theatre knowledge and skills, and appreciation of theatre as an art form are just a few of the benefits for learners who participate in an instructional program based on the Theatre TEKS.

Theatre in Kindergarten through Grade 5

Young children learn to walk and speak primarily through imitation. They learn about their personal histories and group identities through stories their families tell. They integrate this information with data from other sources in their environments, forming their own self-identities through activities such as dramatic play. Imagine a four-year-old who doesn't play "Let's Pretend." These natural processes of child development form the basis of theatre education in the early grades.

The focus of elementary theatre is creative drama, a form of theatre in which teachers guide learners through processes of imagination, enactment, and reflection. A form of play-acting based on improvised dramatization, creative drama uses stories drawn from literature, history, and current events to inspire children's original thought. The success of creative drama depends on the choice of relevant, appropriate resource materials. In kindergarten through grade 5, teachers and students use these printed materials solely as a resource to stimulate their imaginations.

The skills and knowledge of creative drama are carefully structured throughout the elementary curriculum. Young children build perceptual skills by participating in experiences in which they:

- Imitate and re-create the world around them
- Develop body awareness and sensory and emotional perception
- Explore the environment
- Play with sound.

As they get older, children engage in warm-ups and theatre games to help them move from dramatizations with simple plots to ones with more complex plots, characters, and ideas. Pantomime (non-verbal movement) develops from early stages of spontaneity and imitation to structured movement that communicates specific emotions and ideas.

Education is not the
filling of a pail, but
the lighting of a fire.
W.B. Yeats

Theater is a
verb before it
is a noun, an
act before it is
a place.
**Martha
Graham**

Go confidently
in the
direction of
your dreams.
Live the life
you have
imagined.
**Henry David
Thoreau**

Instruction in beginning theatre techniques builds a foundation for creative expression in the middle childhood years. Unison play, side coaching, and pair playing are described below.

- In unison play, the teacher provides a stimulus as each child plays the same role simultaneously, yet independently, of the other children.
- Side coaching, a skill used throughout the process of developing and refining acting skills, begins with the teacher suggesting actions and ideas from the sidelines.
- In pair playing, the basis for dramatic plot, students work in small groups, deciding among themselves how a scene will be staged.

Following the Theatre TEKS continuum, students advance from teacher-directed activities to projects in which they demonstrate independent thought and action within a larger group structure.

Alternating as players and observers in creative drama lessons, students begin to learn appropriate audience conduct. Participating in classroom conversations and critiquing drama experiences build the foundation for independent reflection about dramatic events experienced in school and at home, in live or filmed formats. Scaffolded, or sequenced, theatre instruction helps children develop the concepts, techniques, and skills that serve as the basis for understanding formal productions in which they observe others perform.

Theatre education provides excellent opportunities for children and young adults to explore and experience connections to other historical periods and cultures. The Theatre TEKS are closely aligned with social studies curriculum in the elementary school, providing teachers with opportunities to teach theatre processes and knowledge while enhancing students' understandings of the world around them.

Facilities

While the standard classroom is suitable for many creative drama activities, an alternative facility, such as a clear space, is needed to accommodate large group activities and minimize distraction to neighboring classes. A formal theatre is not necessary since students engaged in creative drama activities do not generally perform for an audience.

Course Descriptions

The following course descriptions include some of the content that students learn in theatre and a vignette illustrating how the strands can be integrated in instruction. While curriculum developers may want to use some of these illustrations in their curriculum, the examples are not all-inclusive. They are included to stimulate and expand thought processes as districts, schools, and teachers develop their own plans, curricula, and activities that meet the individual needs and interests of their students.

Clear space:
A large carpeted classroom without desks that provides flexible space for unrestricted student movement and for the use and storage of modular scenic units, lighting equipment, sound and video equipment, costume pieces, and props.

Theatre, Kindergarten		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Overview	Students begin with what they know from their environment and personal experiences, and, through imitation and re-creation, progress from dramatic play to creative drama.	Kindergartners in Mr. Evans' class gather on the rug as he sits in a rocking chair and reads the book, <i>Wild, Wild, Sunflower Child, Anna</i> by Nancy White Carlstrom. While he reads the verse that communicates Anna's joy at discovering the beauty of the outdoors, he shows the students Jerry Pinkney's illustrations in sepia-colored pencil on paper with watercolor wash. As he reads, students listen quietly, raising their hands, when he pauses, to ask questions.
Perception	Teachers nurture listening and observation skills through guided practice in activities, such as arranging illustrations from a story in the correct sequence. In spontaneous play, kindergartners use movement to imitate objects and actions from their environment. Imitating sounds, such as leaves falling from trees, a dripping faucet, and wind on a stormy evening, enables children to identify and describe critical attributes that differentiate individual sounds.	
Creative Expression/ Performance	When young children, stimulated by personal experience, imagine situations or fictional short stories and add sounds and movement to a story sequence, creative drama is born. Children rearrange play space and use simple materials to create a "set" and simple costumes out of materials at hand.	After the story is over, students take turns acting out events from the story, such as picking raspberries, wandering through wildflowers, hopping across a froggy stream, and drifting off to sleep in the grass. When students have trouble guessing the action being portrayed, Mr. Evans encourages the actor to add sounds to the portrayal. Mr. Evans leads students in discussions about student actions and sounds that helped them guess correctly.
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Listening to and re-creating tales derived from other cultures, students become more aware of other group identities as well as their own.	
Response/ Evaluation	Watching and performing creative dramas, children learn the responsibilities of being an audience member.	

Theatre, Grade 1		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Perception	First graders use spontaneous movement and sound in response to stories, poems, and songs in limited-action dramatic play. First graders incorporate rhythmic movements into dramatic play.	<p>Ms. Ramirez and her first graders have been studying families and their traditions and customs. They have listened to folktales that explain where many of their families' traditions originated. A storyteller from the community visited the classroom and shared customs and traditions from his childhood. Students have recreated some family customs and traditions in the classroom.</p> <p>Each center in the classroom contains materials to stimulate the students' independent dramatic play. For example, the reading center contains <i>The Legend of the Poinsettia</i> by Tomie dePaola and <i>Hello, Amigos</i> by Tricia Brown. The dramatic play center contains a piñata, brightly colored clothing, special cooking implements, and musical instruments, such as maracas. During center time, Ms. Ramirez works with small groups of students to enact their story after writing on chart paper a story sequence and creating a simple setting.</p>
Creative Expression/Performance	Using simple materials, children begin to replicate authentic settings when enacting stories individually and with peers.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Students re-create tales and stories that represent diverse cultures and historical periods and identify characteristics unique to the culture or time period.	
Response/Evaluation	In first grade, children become aware of the use of music, creative movement, and visual effects in live and recorded theatrical presentations. Children discuss informal and formal theatre experiences. By listening and responding to others' ideas, thoughts, and feelings, first graders begin to develop skills in response and evaluation.	

Theatre, Grade 2		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Perception	Second graders are introduced to role-play in which at least two characters create spontaneous dialogue from events in an action sequence. In order to participate in the role-play, children must listen, process the intent of the first speaker, respond with coherent thoughts, and maintain the pre-determined story line. Other students in the class may use the same scenario and present the creative drama in a totally different way with very different dialogue. Then students may compare and contrast the different presentations.	At various times, Ms. Thompson's second-grade students, working in small groups, re-create a selected story, poem, or song by creating dialogue, action, and movement. Students share their creations with classmates. Students describe and discuss ways dramatic problems in the story line are resolved through the action and dialogue. At other times, students follow the same process for pantomime or improvise movements suggested to them by music or art.
Creative Expression/Performance	Puppetry is a new medium for second graders. Students begin performing in this medium after making a simple puppet, such as a paper sack or sock puppet. Students apply their knowledge and skills in puppetry as they initiate dialogue and the action of a story line using the puppets. Second graders can design simple sets for puppet stages as puppet productions become more elaborate.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Puppet presentations may represent various cultures or use puppets from various cultural origins.	
Response/Evaluation	By discussing ways to solve theatrical problems, students develop critical and creative thinking skills, form judgments, and provide rationales for their opinions.	

Theatre, Grade 3		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Perception	Based on personal experiences and resources in their environments, third graders add new dimensions to written, aural, and visual prompts. Children create expressive movements and dialogue while adding external elements, such as music and other sounds, to communicate mood in a creative drama.	<p>As part of a unit on legends, Ms. Thorne and her class read multiple renditions of <i>The Legend of Pecos Bill</i>. They chart the similarities and differences in each retelling, noting elements such as plot, characterization, use of language, and illustrations. After several versions have been read and discussed, small groups select one of the versions to re-create for the rest of the class. Each group must select the most appropriate dramatic medium for presenting their version. Some options include puppetry, shadow play, and role-play. As a large group, students discuss the criteria for a successful presentation and derive a list similar to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Everyone in the group must be involved. Groups should make sure everyone has a job and help each person carry out their job. ▪ The presentation may consist of puppets, shadow play, or role-play. ▪ The presentation should include at least one prop, two characters in costume, and a musical introduction. ▪ The dialogue should sound like the dialogue in the version being re-created. <p>Each group member writes a self-evaluation on each of these four points. After each re-creation, the class compares the performance to their original chart to determine how true the re-creation was to the original version.</p>
Creative Expression/Performance	Third graders use many story clues to re-create stories in rich detail, using music, movement, props, and costumes. Students express and portray characters in multiple ways, demonstrating problem solving and critical and creative thinking. Shadow play and shadow puppetry are new media for creative thought and action. Shadow play consists of projected shadow images which are often made with the hands in front of a screen. Shadow puppets are flat and two-dimensional and cast a shadow or form a silhouette against a white screen. Third graders begin to recognize elements of technical theatre.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Learners increase historical and cultural awareness as they view live and recorded theatrical performances and compare dramatizations based on historical events to the actual event.	
Response/Evaluation	Third graders discuss the people and jobs necessary to produce a stage play, identifying some theatrical jobs.	

Theatre, Grade 4		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Perception	Continuing to work with creative drama processes rather than theatre performance and production, fourth graders use examples of dramas derived from real-life experiences.	<p>Each student in the class chooses a well-known figure in Texas to research. Students use at least four primary and secondary sources to get information on the subject of their research and the time in which he or she lived. For their presentation, students tell a story from the person's life as the notable figure would tell it. Students have at least one prop or wardrobe element that visually represents the subject of their research.</p> <p>After students have selected their characters and are conducting their research, the class constructs a time line showing when each of their subjects lived. Their teacher then poses the problem of how to present their characters. Students suggest picking numbers, building a time machine, or inviting characters who lived in different times to eat a meal at McDonald's together.</p> <p>The class decides on a time machine in which students pick a year in which the character lived, go into the time machine out of character, and come out as the characters telling their story. Afterwards, characters re-enter the time machine and emerge as their contemporary selves.</p>
Creative Expression/Performance	Fourth graders assume specific roles, analyze story lines, and study characters' relationships to one another and to their environments. Plot, setting, and character are brought together in the fourth grade as learners now determine how to portray a specific character by choosing characteristic actions and creating dialogue. Using simple props, costumes, and visual elements, students consistently demonstrate safe practices that have been taught and modeled.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Students begin to understand the relationships between theatre and life in a particular time, place, and culture.	
Response/Evaluation	Students discuss aspects of American society influenced by theatrical productions, films, and television.	

Theatre, Grade 5		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Perception	Fifth graders continue to create dramatizations with more than two characters and show relationships between main and supporting characters. Students' analyses of connections between characters, plot, and environment provide them with important clues to use as they develop roles in class dramatizations.	Twice a week the fifth graders in Mr. Jones' class tutor the second graders in Ms. Ramirez's class in mathematics. The second graders have been working on learning the addition facts with sums through 18. After a tutoring session in March, the fifth graders express a great deal of frustration because many of the second graders are still having trouble with the facts. Mr. Jones asks them about the strategies they are using and what some alternatives might be. The students come to the conclusion that they should try something new.
Creative Expression/Performance	Fifth graders analyze story and plot prior to creating costumes and props. Working in small groups, learners apply their complex understandings of theatre to a specific medium. Groups of students use simple sets and costumes improvised from boxes, blocks, and swatches of fabric to depict characters, plot, and setting.	In their theatre class, they have been creating simple improvisations showing the relationships between characters and the development of a logical plot. One student, James, suggests that they form groups of three with students representing two addends and a sum and create a short rap and scene that will help the second graders learn that fact. They decide that at their next tutoring session, they will each chart the facts that the second graders are having difficulty with to be sure that the most difficult facts are included in the rap scenes. Then at the following tutoring session, they perform their raps, teaching the words to the second graders to help them with their addition facts.
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Fifth graders compare and contrast different presentations from the same time period or cultural context.	
Response/Evaluation	Fifth graders develop criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of their costuming and set design in relation to the intent of the drama. As learners view live and recorded performances, they also begin to evaluate movement, plot, playwright intent, and the credibility of the characters. Students offer and validate critical statements with informed rationales.	

Theatre in Grades 6–8

In middle school, students begin moving from creative drama to formal theatre. Though the sixth-grade emphasis remains on creative drama, curriculum in seventh and eighth grades begins to focus on interpretation and performance as students gain more in-depth understanding of theatrical elements, principles, and conventions and develop their acting skills. Activities that utilize dramatic subtext begin to develop more complex characterizations. Nurturing the seeds that were planted in elementary school creative drama, improvisation skills are applied to unscripted prompts.

Seventh and eighth graders begin to examine scripts, learn basic acting techniques, and explore aspects of technical theatre. Reading scripted materials, students analyze characters, study dialogue, and design stage movements to solve theatrical problems. Through research, creative thinking, problem solving, and improvisation, middle schoolers acquire not only the knowledge and skills to be successful in theatre, but also begin to develop the self-discipline required to accomplish long- and short-term goals.

Facilities

A theatre program requires a variety of facilities, equipment, and materials for classroom instruction, technical construction, storage, rehearsals, and performance. The following are needed for effective instruction in middle school:

- **Standard classroom.** A classroom with moveable desks or tables that can be used for instruction and rehearsals
- **Clear space.** A large carpeted classroom without desks that provides flexible space for unrestricted student movement; use and storage of modular scenic units; lighting, sound and video equipment; costumes; and properties
- **Flexible theatre space** (i.e., a theatre room or a black box theatre). A large room with a high ceiling that can be used for rehearsals, laboratory scenes, and small-scale productions. This setting provides intimacy between performers and the audience, a limited need for scenery, and flexibility to arrange platforms and lighting instruments in various stage configurations.

Because the Grade 6 theatre program consists of creative drama, sixth graders require an alternative facility, or the clear space. In grades 7 and 8, a classroom may be used for instructional purposes, but a performance facility is also necessary. A flexible theatre space is preferable to a traditional proscenium theatre that seats a large number of people and has acoustical challenges.

Students who are just beginning to explore aspects of performance are usually more at ease performing for smaller groups, and an intimate space makes less strenuous vocal demands on the adolescent's developing voice. Because the TEKS for seventh and eighth graders focus on developing self-confidence, perceptual awareness, and basic principles of acting and script interpretations rather than focusing on stagecraft, a large proscenium theatre is not necessary. Modular scenic units can be creatively used in a small flexible theatre.

Course Descriptions

The following course descriptions include examples of how and what students learn in middle school theatre, and vignettes illustrate how the strands can be integrated in a classroom environment. Curriculum developers may want to use some of these ideas in their curricula though the examples are not all-inclusive. The vignettes are included to expand and stimulate thought processes as districts, schools, and teachers develop plans and curricula that meet the individual needs and interests of their students.

I suppose I think that the highest gift that man has is art and I am audacious enough to think of myself as an artist—that there is . . . joy and beauty and illumination and communion between people to be achieved through the dissection of personality.

Lorraine Hansberry

Proscenium
The most common stage, having audience seating on only one side

We are not in a position in which we have nothing to work with. We already have capacities, talents, direction, missions, callings.

Abraham Maslow

Theatre, Grade 6		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Perception	Creative drama is still the focus for sixth graders who use pantomime to expand body awareness and sensory perceptions. Students incorporate their life experiences into dramatic play by creating environments, analyzing characters, and inventing actions to depict chosen life experiences.	Mr. Markson's sixth grade theatre classes participate in a variety of activities to build their understanding of theatre content and processes. Responding to a cacophony of sound, music, visual images, abstract ideas, or written words, small groups of students create a short pantomime using rhythmic and expressive movements. Students viewing the pantomime, and the performers themselves, justify the appropriateness of the pantomime to its prompt.
Creative Expression/ Performance	Sixth graders work collaboratively to plan a dramatization, take part in its production, and discuss the results. They use basic sets, visual elements, simple costumes, and props. They project movement and improvise dialogue in creative dramas.	At other times, students create short dramatizations that reflect real-life experiences. Students describe ways in which the dramatization differs from the real-life experience through:
Historical/Cultural Heritage	In addition to personal experiences, sixth graders draw from culture, literature, and history to create drama and improvisations and assume roles within dramatizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alteration of plot • Differences concerning characters and characterizations • Differences in setting and environment.
Response/Evaluation	Viewing both live and recorded theatrical production increases personal experiences in creative dramatics and provides opportunities to compare and contrast ideas and feelings depicted in dramatic productions. These experiences then become resources for enhancing classroom dramatizations. Additionally, in sixth grade, learners study vocations in theatre, comparing job requirements and responsibilities of selected theatre-based occupations.	Periodically, Mr. Markson's students view live and recorded presentations, identifying dramatic elements such as plot, dialogue, movement, set, costume, and props. Students demonstrate, describe, and illustrate, with examples from the performance(s), a variety of ways a specific character communicates with the audience. Finally, students analyze the personnel needed to stage or produce a selected theatre performance, identifying and comparing the variety of jobs required to bring the event to an audience.

Theatre, Grade 7		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Perception	Building on their knowledge of spatial and sensory awareness, movement, and other techniques, seventh-grade teachers establish theatre preparation and warm-up techniques, including strategies for safe and correct use of the voice.	<p>Using selected articles from the daily newspaper, small groups of students in Mrs. Moody's seventh grade theatre class are creating dramatizations. Prior to developing their dramatizations, the class generates the following criteria for successful performance and writes them on a chart as a reminder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an exposition, climax, and resolution. • Make it interesting. • Use 2–3 characters. • It should be 3–5 minutes long. • Use two of these: lights, scenery, sound, properties, costume, and/or makeup. • Afterwards, be able to explain how the drama was different from the newspaper article and why.
Creative Expression/Performance	The study of characterization expands the definition of characters. Seventh graders become aware of increasingly intricate plots by following complex story lines and advance to creating original story lines. Students learn that theatre plots have a specific structure. Students individually and collaboratively improvise dramatizations that include plot, characterization, and setting. The role of student director is introduced and is defined and practiced in student dramatizations. Seventh graders also become familiar with aspects of technical theatre, such as lighting and makeup.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	As learners study selected theatrical material, they identify historical/ cultural heritages and theatrical conventions.	
Response/Evaluation	In viewing both live and recorded performances, seventh graders practice theatre etiquette and reflect on the performances of others. Students also compare theatrical careers to theatrical avocational opportunities available in their communities.	

Theatre, Grade 8		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Perception	Eighth graders design warm-up techniques for specific purposes, teach them to other students, and develop criteria to assess the effectiveness of the warm-up in relation to its purpose. These techniques, other expressive movements, and pantomime help eighth graders refine definitions of both space and character. Also, eighth graders advance their development of proper diction and effective, safe vocal delivery.	Mr. Thomas selects a scene from <i>Baseball in April</i> by Gary Soto to perform as a one-man show. Without telling students what they will be evaluating, he asks each of them to write criteria they could use to evaluate an actor in a live dramatization. After the five minutes is up, he asks students to share some of their criteria in order to derive a class set.
Creative Expression/ Performance	Students identify elements that create tensions and suspense and add them to original creations. Characterization results from careful analysis of roles and incorporates appropriate vocal delivery, movement, costuming, and makeup. Dramatizations are recorded and can be replicated by the same group or other groups. The director has responsibility for unifying a production, solving theatrical problems, and interpreting intent.	When the class is satisfied with its criteria, Mr. Thomas tells them what they will be evaluating. After his performance, Mr. Thomas and the class write evaluations using the criteria and examples from his performance. Students then share with their teacher aspects of the performance that were especially well done and recommend ways his performance could be improved. Mr. Thomas shares his own evaluation and identifies some specific strategies he can use to achieve his own theatre goals.
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Directors ensure that historical and cultural components, theatrical traditions and conventions, and technical aspects of production are consistent with the intent of the playwright.	After this modeling session, the class begins to use this procedure for each of its performances.
Response/Evaluation	Based on critical and creative thinking, eighth graders develop and apply criteria for evaluating works in progress and completed works. As eighth graders participate in and view theatrical events, they participate in formal evaluations, assessing such aspects of the production as intent, structure, total effect, and quality.	

Theatre in High School

As in the earlier grades, the four strands provide structure for the TEKS. High school theatre courses provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to continue studies at the college level, pursue theatre as an avocation, and/or become educated audience members. High school theatre curricula focus on:

- Enhancing perception, interpretation, and performance
- Understanding heritage and tradition
- Understanding influences of theatre, film, television, and technology
- Reflecting and evaluating personal work and the work of others.

The theatre courses listed in the TEKS include:

- Theatre Arts I-IV
- Technical Theatre II-IV
- Theatre Production I-IV.

Beginning with Theatre Arts I, each theatre class builds on the foundation of the preceding level.

Theatre Arts I is a survey course that establishes the base for all subsequent theatre courses. As a prerequisite for other courses, Theatre Arts I encompasses:

- Theatrical vocabulary, elements, conventions, and basic concepts
- Historical and cultural backgrounds
- Experiences that develop a broad-based body of knowledge and technical skills
- Strategies for evaluating theatre experiences.

Theatre Arts II, Technical Theatre I, Theatre Production I, and subsequent courses focus and expand the knowledge base and continually refine techniques and skills in their specific domains. Due to the rigor of each course, the scope of the four strands, and increased expectations for student achievement, all theatre courses, except Theatre Production, should be given one credit, upon completion of two semesters. Theatre Production can receive either .5 or 1 credit.

Facilities

The high school theatre program requires a variety of facilities, equipment, and materials for classroom instruction, technical construction, storage, rehearsals, and performance. The following are needed for quality instruction in high school:

- **Standard classroom.** Used for basic instruction and rehearsals
- **Flexible theatre space** (i.e., a theatre room or a black box theatre). A large room with a high ceiling that can be used for rehearsals, laboratory scenes, and small-scale productions. This setting provides intimacy between performers and the audience, limited scenery needs, and flexibility in arranging platforms and lighting instruments to create various stage configurations.
- **Complete theatre facility.** Theatre seating for 500 is preferable to a multipurpose auditorium that seats 1,000 or more. The most common configuration is the proscenium stage, though other configurations include the thrust, arena, and open stages. Flexible theatrical lighting and sound equipment, a box office and lobby, scenery and properties shop, a costume shop, makeup and dressing rooms, and storage areas are essential parts of the theatre facility.

These three types of facilities and an instructor's office with a telephone accommodate classroom instruction, experimental laboratory work, and full-scale theatrical productions.

I started as a classical actor at the Old Globe when I was seventeen. I feel an artist must create as he must breathe: without one or the other, he has neither life nor soul.

Rick Najera

Thrust stage:

A stage that has audience seating on two or three sides.

Arena stage:

Also called **in-the-round** because it has audience seating on all sides.

Open stage:

A stage that allows the audience to see more of actors' fronts than backs.

In the production of a good play with a good cast and a knowing director there is formed a fraternity whose members share a mutual sense of destiny.
Arthur Miller

The traditional proscenium theatre is used for most productions since it provides space for large-cast shows and correspondingly large audiences. Complex scenic and lighting equipment allow for instruction of the TEKS in technical theatre and provide safe theatre conditions. In the absence of appropriate equipment, teachers and students should avoid using dangerous makeshift rigging.

An alternative flexible theatre space helps teachers provide problem-solving experiences that enable students to build, in effect, different theatres by restructuring the room into various configurations. An intimate performance space can also challenge and enrich students' experiences by allowing the staging of little known and diverse types of plays that usually attract smaller audiences. Students can generally use the same support facilities, such as a scene shop, costume shop, storage, and makeup and dressing rooms, for both the traditional theatre and the flexible space.

Numerous large storage areas are critical for protecting the theatre's stock of scenery, properties, costumes, makeup, lighting and sound equipment, tools, and raw supplies. Without storage space, such items can be lost, stolen, or tampered with.

Graduation Requirements

One Fine Arts credit is required in both the Recommended High School Program and the Distinguished Achievement Program. These requirements may be satisfied by any of the following courses from 19 TAC Chapter 17.

Course Descriptions

The following course descriptions elaborate on the Theatre TEKS and distinguish one course from another, carefully showing how learning in each course serves as the foundation for the next level. Following the course descriptions are some vignettes that illustrate teaching the course content. The examples given are not all-inclusive. They are included to stimulate and expand thought processes as districts, schools, and teachers develop their own plans and curricula that will enable their students to demonstrate theatre knowledge and skills.

Course Title: Theatre Arts I Course Sequence: General Survey Credit: 1		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Perception	Learners study principles of acting and begin to understand theatrical conventions dealing with time and setting. Through informal class presentations, students begin to see the interdependence of all theatrical elements. Theatre Arts I students learn essential skills, techniques, and a process of script analysis to create believable characters. Then they add techniques in diction and body movements to develop characterizations further.	Given a prompt, a small group of students in the Central High School Theatre Arts I class improvise a scene to be staged within a designated time period. After the improvisation, students discuss ways to better communicate the group's interpretation. Students then transform the improvisation into a written script that includes stage movements, sound and visual effects, and other details. Students select a director, actors, and technicians; rehearse; and present the scene. After viewing videotape of their scene, students re-evaluate their effectiveness in achieving their intent, make revisions, and present their scene before the class, which then participates in the evaluative response.
Creative Expression/Performance	In introductory play writing, the student improvises, writes, and rewrites monologues, scenes, and vignettes to convey predetermined intent and meaning. Student directors are accountable for small group presentations of a scene or vignette. The director is responsible for incorporating all aspects of a production into a unified whole.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Students explore dramatizations and scenes from a variety of historical periods and cultures. Specific examples of theatrical productions stimulate understanding of the impact of society on theatre, and theatre's impact on society.	
Response/Evaluation	Viewing live and recorded performances and short classroom presentations, students analyze the impact of technical theatre in communicating meaning to an audience. By articulating and applying predetermined criteria and using theatrical terminology, students reflect on and make judgments about the effectiveness of personal work and the work of others. Further, students develop research techniques as they discover career opportunities in theatre and determine the training, skills, self-discipline, and artistic expertise necessary to achieve success.	

Course Title: Theatre Arts II Course Sequence: Follows Theatre Arts I Credit: 1		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Perception	Students use warm-up exercises to develop automatic responses and stage movements.	<p>Given a selected scene from <i>Our Town</i> by Thornton Wilder, a small group consisting of Theresa, Elena, Robert, and Tony are assigned to present the scene to the class. Each of them takes the script home to read to determine the time of the setting, the genre of the play from which the scene is selected, and pertinent influences from theatrical conventions of the 20th century.</p> <p>The next day the group assigns roles. Elena takes the leading female role, and Robert takes the leading male role. Theresa will be the director, and Tony will be in charge of the scenery, props, and technical effects essential to convey the intent of the author. All of the students focus on analyzing the characters, using text and subtext from the script to determine Wilder's intent. They try to describe the characters' motivations and physical, emotional, intellectual, and social characteristics. Once they have a good understanding of the characters, Tony contributes his technical ideas and gets busy locating props and modifying a set that the theatre department had on hand. The actors rehearse repeatedly with Theresa's help sustaining their characterizations. When the group feels satisfied that all elements of their production have come together, they perform their scene for the class.</p> <p>They critique themselves individually and as a group, and the audience critiques their performance. Each comment and recommendation is accompanied by a rationale. Once they turn in their self-critiques and theatre journals, their assignment is complete.</p>
Creative Expression/Performance	Using prompts from poetry, abstract ideas, and other sources, students individually and in small groups develop their abilities to use interpretive and expressive movements to create coherent sequences in compositions. Analyzing all text and subtext in a script, students reveal physical, emotional, intellectual, and social dimensions of characters from various genres to sustain believable characters in dramatizations. Analyzing the relationships between characters yields another powerful dramatic tool—motivation. In small groups, students select scripts, make casting decisions, present short selections to the class, and direct.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Using live and recorded resources from diverse periods in different genres, students identify theatrical conventions, compare and contrast treatments, and analyze the effectiveness of each in the designated time period.	
Response/Evaluation	Students research vocational and avocational opportunities using a variety of resources, such as personal interviews.	

Course Title: Theatre Arts III Course Sequence: Follows Theatre Arts II Credit: 1		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Perception	In addition to developing control of movement, voice, and timing acuity, Theatre Arts III students create believable characters, maintaining the uniqueness of the individual characters while demonstrating the effects of circumstances and relationships with other characters and the environment.	Lisa Jones uses a variety of strategies with her Theatre Arts III class. She highly values individual projects in which students pursue an in-depth study on a topic of personal interest and present results to the class in a format mutually agreed upon by the student and teacher. Students demonstrate justifications for their preferences and reflect on both the content and process.
Creative Expression/Performance	Theatre Arts III students create scenes, vignettes, and other works that contain dialogues that reveal motivation, plot, and theme. Characterization skills help actors interpret intent to a third party, such as the audience or another cast member. The actor must learn to think and communicate to the third party only that which has been revealed at a specific point in the play. The remainder of the play, although known to the actor, remains unknown to the audience.	At other times, each student writes an analysis describing the expressive body movements and the vocal techniques needed to convey a complex characterization found in a script studied in class. Selecting either the body movement or the vocal techniques, the student creates a short series of warm-up techniques to teach other class members. Students are evaluated on their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Give specific directions that enable the class to perform the exercise ▪ Apply the exercise in a specific portion of the script ▪ Determine the effectiveness in obtaining the desired results by the other students ▪ Make constructive recommendations for designing similar warm-ups.
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Level III focuses on American theatre—its impact on society and society’s impact on theatre. Using live and recorded performances of theatrical presentations, students compare theatre to other media, looking for the range of possibilities within a given medium to communicate intent to an audience.	Additionally, students select a specific theatrical problem and analyze a variety of theatrical media used by American playwrights and film writers and identify how each of the media solves the problem. Students make evaluative judgments on the strengths and shortcomings of each approach, citing specific examples and providing rationales for their positions.
Response/Evaluation	Continuous evaluations tie original intent to the final product, assess the quality and effectiveness of communicating to a third person, and encourage rewrites that establish foundations for future theatrical endeavors.	

Course Title: Theatre Arts IV Course Sequence: Follows Theatre Arts III Credit: 1		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Perception	Students continue to use warm-up techniques and refine their use of stage movement, pantomime, voice, and diction.	<p>As in Theatre Arts III, a challenging independent project gives students the opportunity to explore an area of theatrical interest. Level IV projects could elaborate on an undeveloped aspect of a Theatre Arts III project or explore a totally new area.</p> <p>Justin Davis decided to continue a study of Elizabethan characterization that he began in Theatre Arts III. Last year, he focused on Shakespeare's character-building techniques. This year he decides to read other Elizabethan playwrights, such as Ben Jonson and Christopher Marlowe, to see how their methods of characterization compare to Shakespeare's and to examine their impact on contemporary American theatre. Justin's research includes theatre criticism on Elizabethan characterizations.</p> <p>For his final presentation, Justin performs two monologues, one from Shakespeare and one from Marlowe, which illustrate the differences in the two playwrights' styles. He completes a self-analysis on aspects of his project such as research process, conclusions and rationales, performance, and recommendations for future study.</p>
Creative Expression/Performance	Students learn advanced acting techniques that address the subtleties of characterization. Using costume, makeup, and research, actors strive to make their characters "ring true" for the audience. The audience must see the character grow over the course of the play, so each part is portrayed with expressive creativity within the plot structure. Research continues to be a major part of each new play undertaken and provides direction for creating characterizations and guidance for solving technical challenges.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Students continue to experience a diverse theatre repertoire. Learners examine parallels in the related fields of musical theatre, film, and television to advance their technical expertise.	
Response/Evaluation	Reflection and attention to critique help actors continue to grow.	

Course Title: Technical Theatre I Course Sequence: Follows Theatre Arts I Credit: 1		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Perception	Students are exposed to basic principles of theatrical design, such as unity, balance, proportion, and color. Students explore their understanding by building 3-dimensional models of sets and scenery; drafting floor plans; and drawing set elevations.	<p>As part of a unit on set design, Julia Jimenez prepares an activity on working with scale for her Technical Theatre I students. Ms. Jimenez draws a picture for a set on a grid of 1" squares. The squares are numbered on the back of the picture. She makes a copy of the drawing for review following the activity and then cuts the picture into 1" squares along the grid lines. Each student is provided one of the numbered 1" squares and copies the contents of their square onto a 12"x12" sheet of paper. Finally, the class combines the 12" squares to make a version of the original drawing enlarged to a scale of 1"=1'.</p> <p>Many of the student expectations of the Theatre TEKS are demonstrated in this activity. For example, students learn and practice terminology to describe line quality, texture, and color in the drawing. They discuss the purpose and outcome of the project and give articulate commentary on the set design. They practice safety measures and organization skills when working with tools and when organizing the many pieces of the drawing.</p> <p>During evaluation of the enlarged design, students demonstrate proper classroom behavior. They discuss various applications of the activity's design techniques and examine the skills and processes required to be a successful theatre designer.</p>
Creative Expression/Performance	Students are involved with production/performance tasks such as basic crew assignments and front of house responsibilities—i.e. ushering, passing out programs, and taking tickets for school productions.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Students explore the historical and aesthetic evolution of scenic design and technical theatre by studying the works of significant artists.	
Response/Evaluation	Student work—i.e. all projects and crew assignments/responsibilities, are evaluated in terms of consistency and level of mastery.	

Elevation an eye-level-view drawing showing the flats arranged in a continuous row to be used in a set, or any front or rear head-on two-dimensional drawing.

Floor plan A drawing of the overhead view of the set showing the exact location of all entrances, walls, and furniture.

Course Title: Technical Theatre II Course Sequence: Follows Technical Theatre I Credit: 1		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Overview	Students in Technical Theatre II focus on the construction and design of sets and scenery.	<p>After analyzing a script for a scene in <i>Macbeth</i>, Terry Johnson reviews the set design, director specifications, and original script to interpret the playwright's intent and define the atmosphere and environment to be created. Terry follows the blocking charts and inserts lighting cues for the scene into the script. Several other students in Terry's class take the roles of characters in the scene. Terry makes evaluative judgements, adjusting cues and using special lighting for effect.</p> <p>After the rehearsal, the director, teacher, and Terry discuss reasons for the changes he made and arrive at consensus on the actual light cues that will be executed by the lighting technician. The final evaluation includes Terry's thought processes, the culminating discussion, and the original criteria as outlined in the director's specifications. The effectiveness of Terry's changes is also included.</p>
Perception	Students apply principles of theatrical design, such as unity, balance, proportion, and color with "hands-on" applications in both class and production work. They implement light and sound specifications for a set or scenery, taking into consideration factors such as safety, expense, mobility, and versatility.	
Creative Expression/Performance	Students participate in introductory units in costume design, makeup, and period hair styling after intensive study of scripts to determine the playwright's intent. Students are responsible for set changes, maintaining visual lines for the audience, blocking, and meeting the director's specifications.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Theatrical conventions of specific periods, styles, and genres of theatrical literature inform student decisions.	
Response/Evaluation	Students learn the job responsibilities of traditional crews and support staff; demonstrate accountability for their assignments; and practice continual self-evaluation in addition to receiving evaluations from crew leaders, peers, and their teacher.	

Course Title: Technical Theatre III Course Sequence: Follows Technical Theatre II Credit: 1		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Overview	Students concentrate on integrating all facets of theatrical productions to ensure the successful production of a theatrical event and begin to change their focus from operation and construction to design.	<p>Theresa Miller's students select a specific project within their area of specialization to occupy a major portion of the course. Each student makes a proposal, establishes time lines, completes the project, and evaluates the project in progress and upon completion. The evaluation process facilitates redirection, redesign, and re-creation.</p> <p>Additionally, students assume leadership roles in one aspect of technical theatre in a school production—such as costume design, makeup, lighting, or sound. Technical Theatre III students manage and supervise working crews, prioritize tasks, create work schedules, and assign duties to ensure the completion of tasks within the director's schedule. Each student completes final reports containing a self-assessment, recommendations for future study, and alternative strategies that could be used to alleviate some problems or enable future production crews to be more effective and efficient. Students are then evaluated by the director and teacher on the effectiveness and quality of work produced.</p>
Perception	Surveying and reviewing live and recorded performances in a variety of theatrical media illustrates the possibilities available for technical theatre now and in the future.	
Creative Expression/ Performance	Students develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills and use creative initiative in projecting and evaluating unique approaches to a specific task. Students know the stress and strain capabilities of materials used in sets, safety factors in using stage equipment, and the safe use of light and soundboards. Students focus on an area of special interest within technical theatre, such as costume design or makeup.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Students in each specialty area apply knowledge of historical and cultural influences on their work. They study the theatrical conventions used in original productions.	
Response/Evaluation	Students describe and research vocational careers in technical theatre, locating training and apprenticeships. Experts from the professional world of technical theatre are excellent resources for developing practical knowledge and applications.	

Course Title: Technical Theatre III Course Sequence: Follows Theatre Arts II Credit: 1		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Overview	Students concentrate on integrating all facets of theatrical productions to ensure the successful production of a theatrical event and begin to change their focus from operation and construction to design.	<p>Theresa Miller's students select a specific project within their area of specialization to occupy a major portion of the course. Each student makes a proposal, establishes time lines, completes the project, and evaluates the project in progress and upon completion. The evaluation process facilitates redirection, redesign, and re-creation.</p> <p>Additionally, students assume leadership roles in one aspect of technical theatre in a school production—such as costume design, makeup, lighting, or sound. Technical Theatre III students manage and supervise working crews, prioritize tasks, create work schedules, and assign duties to ensure the completion of tasks within the director's schedule. Each student completes final reports containing a self-assessment, recommendations for future study, and alternative strategies that could be used to alleviate some problems or enable future production crews to be more effective and efficient. Students are then evaluated by the director and teacher on the effectiveness and quality of work produced.</p>
Perception	Surveying and reviewing live and recorded performances in a variety of theatrical media illustrates the possibilities available for technical theatre now and in the future.	
Creative Expression/Performance	Students develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills and use creative initiative in projecting and evaluating unique approaches to a specific task. Students know the stress and strain capabilities of materials used in sets, safety factors in using stage equipment, and the safe use of light and soundboards. Students focus on an area of special interest within technical theatre, such as costume design or makeup.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Students in each specialty area apply knowledge of historical and cultural influences on their work. They study the theatrical conventions used in original productions.	
Response/Evaluation	Students describe and research vocational careers in technical theatre, locating training and apprenticeships. Experts from the professional world of technical theatre are excellent resources for developing practical knowledge and applications.	

Course Title: Technical Theatre IV Course Sequence: Follows Technical Theatre III Credit: 1		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Overview	Students are involved in all aspects of production. Throughout the year, each student assumes a variety of leadership positions in such areas as costume design, wardrobe, makeup, sound, lighting, set design, or stage management.	Erica Johnson has been selected to be stage manager of the school's production of <i>The Fantasticks</i> . Erica creates a project proposal, including long- and short-term goals, that correlates her research and preparatory study with production time lines. She begins reading the script to ascertain the play's essential technical components and theatrical conventions and to establish the playwright's intent. Erica reads the director's specifications. In accordance with her plans, she prioritizes tasks, assigns and schedules crews, evaluates work in progress and work completed, makes constructive suggestions when improvements are necessary, and revises when the work in progress is off target.
Perception	Students establish the conventions of time, history, style, and genre in a designated production and apply their understanding of previous technical interpretations to their own work.	
Creative Expression/Performance	Students interpret the intent of the playwright that is to be communicated to the audience, read the director's specifications, and correlate research and study to present a theatrical production.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	The details, specifications, and effectiveness of student work within the context of production and assignments demonstrate comprehension of historical and cultural influences and knowledge of theatrical traditions.	When <i>The Fantasticks</i> finishes its run, Erica steps back to reflect on her role as stage manager. She evaluates her performance against pre-determined criteria. Erica conferences with her teacher and the director on the process and quality of the final production and makes suggestions for future productions.
Response/Evaluation	Students develop self-discipline in learning all aspects of technical theatre.	

Course Title: Theatre Production I Course Sequence: Follows Theatre Arts I Credit: .5-1		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Perception	Students participate in critique, listening and commenting to others, and keeping journals or production notebooks.	After studying the historical, cultural, and societal influences pertinent to their production, students describe how these factors are at work in different aspects of the play. Students discuss specific examples from the play and provide rationales for their opinions and actions.
Creative Expression/ Performance	Students are involved with a specific aspect of the production, such as cast, technical crew, stage manager, stage crew, costume designer, wardrobe mistress, props, set designer, publicity, or support staff. Each student completes assigned tasks, demonstrating individual accountability and necessary skills and techniques. Determining the intent of the playwright and communicating intent to an audience is considered in every production decision that is made. Students learn that all facets of a theatrical production work together to achieve a common goal. Participants demonstrate personal commitment by preparing for each rehearsal. Students learn the importance of stage production etiquette.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Students establish historical, cultural, and societal influences in each production.	
Response/Evaluation	Students analyze personal growth in their techniques and skills and begin to establish a profile of their theatrical accomplishments.	

Course Title: Theatre Production II Course Sequence: Follows Theatre Production I Credit: .5–1		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Perception	Students know and understand the type, style, and genre of selections slated for production.	Mr. Cisneros' Theatre Production II class devotes approximately one day per week to small group discussions. Prior to the conversations, students record observations, comments, evaluations, and recommendations pertaining to personal and group efforts over the course of the week. Small groups discuss the observations. Mr. Cisneros moves among the groups, helping each group compile collective evaluations and recommendations. Modeling the evaluation process and eliciting student verbalizations, Mr. Cisneros helps students develop insight into the interdependence of every aspect of theatre production.
Creative Expression/Performance	Students complete assigned tasks, demonstrating individual responsibility and accountability in relation to the assignment and provide support for others in the same production area.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Students understand the historical, cultural, and societal influences on selections designated for production.	
Response/Evaluation	Each student keeps a journal or production book, compiles a portfolio that represents all high school theatrical experiences, and begins to gather materials that can be used in a resumé. Students meet with teachers to discuss their observations and reflections.	

Course Title: Theatre Production III Course Sequence: Follows Theatre Production II Credit: .5-1		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Overview	Level III students assume leadership roles and serve as role models for other students.	Jennifer Lu has selected costuming as her particular area of study in her Theatre Production III class. The class has chosen <i>Bye-Bye Birdie</i> as their production. Part of her research includes viewing a movie production and locating pictures on the Internet from other productions. After completing her research, Jennifer develops a Power Point presentation illustrating her original costume designs and examples of actual fashions from the '50s that inspired her designs. Jennifer also characterizes the '50s as a relatively carefree, peaceful decade in the United States and draws parallels between the styles and the politics of the decade. For her presentation, Jennifer wears a costume she designed and sewed. After her presentation, Jennifer completes a self-evaluation on what she learned from the process, the quality of the research, and areas for improvement. She also receives critiques from each of her classmates and her teacher.
Perception	Students describe the interrelationships of at least two areas of production and use personal experiences, script study, and previous theatrical experiences to contribute to a final production.	
Creative Expression/ Performance	Within the context of student assignments, each individual analyzes the impact of physical, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions of a production, and illustrates their points with specific examples and rationales.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Students use historical and cultural information, such as the time period, genre, cultural and sociological implications, theatrical conventions, and characterizations, to inform productions.	
Response/Evaluation	Students make written observations about effective strategies and support recommendations and constructive comments with rationales and citations from the script. Students record and use commentaries, critiques, suggestions, and insights in journals or production books. Students continue to accumulate data for a resumé of high school theatre, and teachers provide guidance in preparing resúmes and portfolios.	

Course Title: Theatre Production IV Course Sequence: Follows Theatre Production III Credit: .5–1		
Strand	Content/Processes	Vignette
Overview	Theatre Production IV students take leadership roles in aspects of play production that extend beyond the realm of assigned responsibility.	<p>As one of his many tasks as director, Elijah Stevenson develops, teaches, and leads warm-ups before rehearsals. Since some cast members are frustrated by the difficult timing of their lines, Elijah develops a warm-up designed to improve timing.</p>
Perception	Students demonstrate collaboration skills by participating in mixed production teams. They understand the role that each technical aspect (e.g., wardrobe, costume, set design) contributes to the production as a whole.	
Creative Expression/Performance	Each student's technical work contributes to the authenticity of productions. Students use scripts, production notes, and research findings to support their technical production decisions.	
Historical/Cultural Heritage	Students examine historical, cultural, and social influences on theatre; theatrical conventions of each genre; and the importance of these factors in understanding and communicating playwrights' intents.	
Response/Evaluation	Production books and journals record observations, personal reflections, critiques, and other information pertinent to a production. The personal resource files begun in Theatre Production I contribute to student resumés and portfolios. Students develop personal criteria for evaluating each of their production assignments.	

I will be an
artist or
nothing!
**Eugene
O'Neill**

The heart to
conceive, the
understanding
to direct, and
the hands to
execute.
Junius

Advanced Courses

Advanced courses consist of:

- College Board advanced placement and International Baccalaureate courses in theatre
- High school/college concurrent enrollment classes that are included in the *Community College General Academic Course Guide Manual (Part I)*
- Theatre Arts IV, Technical Theatre IV, and Theatre Production IV.

Credit by Examination

A school district provides six days per year when examinations for acceleration will be administered. A school district may not charge for these examinations. If a student scores 90% on a criterion-referenced test for the applicable course in which he or she has no prior instruction, the student must be given credit. If a student earns credit in a subject based on the examination, the school district enters the examination score on the student's transcript.

Distinguished Achievement Program—Advanced Measures

A student wishing to complete an advanced high school program (Distinguished Achievement Program) must take the courses outlined in the Texas Administrative Code, §74.13, and also satisfy the requirements of four of the following advanced measures, in any combination. Original research/projects may not be used for more than two of the four measures. The measures specify demonstrated student performance at the college or professional level, and student performance must be assessed through an external review process. The advanced measures and their requirements are as follows:

Original research/project:

- Judged by a panel of professionals in the field of the project's focus, or
- Conducted under the direction of a mentor(s) and reported to an appropriate audience, or
- Related to the required curriculum set forth in 19 TAC §74.1 (relating to Essential Knowledge and Skills).

Test data:

- A score of three or above on a College Board Advanced Placement examination
- A score of four or above on an International Baccalaureate examination
- A score on the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT) that qualifies a student for recognition as a Commended Scholar or higher by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation; as part of the National Hispanic Scholar Program of The College Board; or as part of the National Achievement Scholarship Program for Outstanding Negro Students of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The PSAT may count as only one advanced measure regardless of the number of honors received by the student.

College courses:

- A grade of 3.0 or higher on courses that count for one college credit, including tech prep programs.

Within the Distinguished Achievement Program, a student may gain recognition for outstanding accomplishment in theatre. Conducted as an independent study or under the guidance of a mentor, a student may design a proposal; conduct in-depth research; prepare products, performances, or findings of professional quality; and

present the work to a pre-designated audience. Learners who complete a theatre project are expected to:

- Analyze pertinent facts and historical and cultural heritages
- Research recognized artists from the field, both past and present, to investigate and develop technical skill in various media unique to the discipline
- Synthesize all facets of the designated project in a formal presentation and a project, performance, or production that exhibits creativity and originality
- Communicate individually within the structures of the history and culture of theatre
- Reflect on the process and the knowledge and skills gained to make recommendations for one's future work and the work of other DAP participants
- Evaluate the project, using pre-determined criteria, and the process; and be evaluated by a panel of experts in the field
- Work independently with a mentor and teacher to design the project, outline goals to be achieved, and establish project time lines that will enable successful project completion
- Produce college or professional quality work.

Mentors must have recognized expertise in the area of study, be named in the original proposal for the project, and be approved by the teacher and review committee. The student should submit a biographical sketch of the mentor with the proposal.

The following model is an example of a project with a concentration in acting. Other possible areas of concentration include directing, technical design, playwriting, and dramatic criticism.

Description of the project

Study of a major character in a selected play with presentation of excerpts with notes to substantiate the interpretation. Research components include:

- A study of the play, its historical setting, and stylistic and theatrical conventions
- A review of selected interpretations by professional actors, studied through film, video, live production, and interviews.
- Set and costume design
- Lighting and sound design.

The student's journal reflects character development, showing:

- Playwright's intent
- Historical setting
- Stylistic conventions
- Theatrical conventions
- Interpretations of professional actors
- The student's original interpretation.

The response/evaluation portion of the project gives the participant an opportunity to interact with professionals and to discuss what was learned over the course of the project. Self-reflection enables the student to recognize growth in content knowledge and skills, observation, and interpersonal dynamics.

A tremendous amount of preparatory work and continuous training is necessary in order to turn your vague wish into professional excellence, so that in the end you are not a talented dilettante but a true actor.

Aleksandr Tairov

Improvisation is essential if the actor is to develop the spontaneity necessary to create in each performance "the illusion of the first time."

Lee Strasberg

INSTRUCTION

The diverse learning activities in theatre curricula that are aligned with the TEKS provide unique opportunities to involve all students in meaningful, active learning. Process-centered theatre necessitates “doing” classes, involving students, mentally, emotionally, socially, and physically. Classes alternate between teacher instruction and direction, student instruction and leadership, and independent study. The curriculum allows students to grow and develop at their own individual rates. For some, progress is rapid; for others, progress is more deliberate. In an atmosphere that encourages experimentation and discovery, individual student needs may be met.

Motivation

One goal of public education, in every discipline, is to make students lifelong learners motivated by internal drives to know, do, and accomplish. School motivation techniques greatly influence students’ desire to be self-directed learners in school and out. Two types of motivational strategies are common in school:

- **Extrinsic motivation**, such as grades and rewards, which are often successful in the short run but may have negative effects on long-term student self-direction
- **Intrinsic motivation**, cultivated by the use of choice, collaboration, and meaningful content, which fosters long-term self-direction and achievement.

Too often, motivation is based solely on extrinsic rewards and/or gimmicks that only temporarily boost student achievement. Unless learning is made relevant to students’ lives through the use of intrinsic motivation techniques, formal education will not foster long-term knowledge retention or continued creative and intellectual growth.

The right motivation stimulates student response to and desire for expression and lays the groundwork for learning. One of the best motivators for any student is the feeling of success that comes from meeting a challenging goal. There is no euphoria greater than a student’s, or teacher’s, at the realization that a difficult goal has been reached through commitment and effort. Once a student feels this exhilaration, the experience will be sought time and time again. This reward, an intrinsic motivator, is more deeply satisfying than stickers or free time could ever be. It builds a solid foundation for future educational pursuits.

The Theatre TEKS provide scaffolding for theatre teachers to build intrinsic motivation. Some suggestions to captivate learners’ attention in a naturally active learning environment include:

- Making learning relevant by helping students recall personal experiences, relate their work to important personal or social issues, and relate elements and principles of theatre to their own environments
- Connecting the study of theatre to other areas of learning
- Beginning with activities that allow students to be successful and building toward more demanding assignments as trust and confidence grow
- Maximizing the value of the assignment by giving the reasons for an assignment and helping students see connections between the current assignment and topic of study and past ones
- Challenging students by asking questions with more than one plausible answer, introducing new and challenging materials, and encouraging experimentation
- Eliciting students’ curiosity by bringing up sequences of events or telling stories whose outcomes they can’t guess or whose outcomes, once known, are unexpected
- Setting an example by talking about theatre experiences that are important to the teacher and illustrative of engagement in meaningful theatre activities

What we want is to see the child in pursuit of knowledge, and not knowledge in pursuit of the child.

George Bernard Shaw

Acting on the stage,
you have the
opportunity to go out
there night after night
and wrestle with the
same problem. Even a
writer doesn't have that
kind of freedom.
Geraldine Page

- Recognizing student achievement through classroom exhibits; documenting growth in portfolios, notebooks, and journals; and providing feedback, or specific information, that helps students see why they are “on the right track” or “the wrong one”
- Welcoming mistakes, knowing that mistakes don't necessarily reflect poor teaching or poor learning, but that they provide the teacher with valuable information for planning future instruction.

The Theatre TEKS also set the stage for a learning environment that enhances learners' intrinsic motivation. Theatre teachers create a positive learning climate by:

- Establishing an atmosphere that encourages students and supports their academic risk-taking, critical thinking, creative experimentation, and problem-solving
- Organizing units of study based on purposeful learning objectives and student interests
- Structuring learning experiences to facilitate collaboration and caring among students
- Providing opportunities for students to make choices within a meaningful structure
- Providing an environment that supports multiple learning styles.

Additionally, theatre teachers provide resources and enrichment by:

- Using a variety of media to reinforce theatre learning
- Incorporating current technology, including computer software, interactive media, Internet-based instruction, and satellite conferences
- Introducing and reinforcing theatre knowledge and skills during study trips
- Making students aware of community arts events
- Bringing in outside resources to stimulate thought, expression, and response.

Strategies for teaching the Theatre TEKS

Theatre teachers have a repertoire of instructional strategies to help students attain the knowledge and skills outlined in the Theatre TEKS.

Connecting

Students best retain new learning when they connect it to what they already know about a content area and when new learning is important to them in terms of their background or culture. When teachers help learners connect new theatre knowledge and skills to their prior knowledge, these teachers build on the innate curiosity and purposefulness of children and adolescents. Theatre teachers can use strategies such as class discussions and graphic organizers as entry points for lessons that build on what students already know. This gives teachers opportunities to correct misunderstandings, determine beginning points for instruction, and identify adaptations needed by individual students.

Prior knowledge includes students' experiential, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. A challenge to teachers is to identify the commonalities between school-based knowledge and practices and those of family and community life.

Theatre teachers have many opportunities to help students make connections. In addition to making connections among the four strands of theatre, theatre content is linked to the other arts—music, art, and dance. Learners discover parallels in content, processes, and products among the fine arts and other subject areas.

Students have opportunities to discover the many ways that theatre supports and reinforces language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and other subjects. When making links between the Theatre TEKS and other content areas, teachers

So long as materials
are taught and
assessed in only one
way, we will only reach
a certain kind of child.
Howard Gardner

must ensure that the learning in both content areas is of the quality described in the TEKS. Teachers may connect theatre with other subjects in following ways:

- Using tools such as rulers and compasses to measure and divide space, reinforcing concepts of measurement, fractions, and proportion as a preliminary to building sets
- Engaging in creative, descriptive, and analytical writing about theatre experiences and the processes used to create them
- Studying the theatre of a particular culture or historical period to determine the socioeconomic status of the population, political attitudes, and lifestyles.

One of the strains of going to the theater each night is bearing your responsibility to the author and the other actors.

Paul Newman

Though curriculum content connections reinforce student learning and increase motivation, theatre does more than merely enrich other content areas. Theatre provides its own unique and essential contributions to student learning.

Critical Thinking

As learners become involved in theatre, they extend their abilities to communicate, and they acquire new symbolic literacy. Theatre content becomes a stimulus for cognitive development through problem-solving and creative thinking. As students perceive, comprehend, imagine, and evaluate, they develop interpretive, analytical, and critical thinking skills. Integrating theatre knowledge and skills also helps learners develop and enhance their critical thinking abilities.

In theatre, students have opportunities to make choices within structure and to develop individual and group solutions to complex problems. Theatre students articulate complex problems and practice divergent and nonlinear thinking to generate multiple solutions. Learners provide rationales for the decisions they make when creating and evaluating their own dramatic performances and, as a result, better understand the choices made by others.

The following instructional strategies support the development of critical thinking in the context of learning the Theatre TEKS:

- Ask “why,” “how,” and “what if” questions rather than “who,” “where,” and “how” questions.
- Discuss different types of questions with students.
- Ask probing questions.
- Continue to elicit student response even after a “right” response has been given.
- Use student-generated “why” questions on quizzes.
- Compare opposing critiques of a play and discuss the differences of opinion.
- Use writing to help students generate thoughts before class discussions.

The most important thing is to never stop questioning.

Albert Einstein

Teachers, administrators, and parents should be aware that some commonly used practices that fall under the guise of theatre education might impede rather than facilitate learners’ development of critical thinking. Extensive use of line memorization inhibits critical and creative thinking. Extensive memorization of vocabulary, names, and dates from theatre history is not consistent with the TEKS, which encourage students to develop conceptual understanding of theatre from other periods and cultures.

Creativity

One of the roles of theatre teachers is to help students bring forth their creative ideas. The study of theatre provides a structure for the development of creative thinking. Several aspects of theatre lend themselves to creative thinking:

- Theatre provides many opportunities for students of all ages to develop higher-order, or critical, thinking.

Far away in the
sunshine are my
highest aspirations.
I may not reach
them, but I can look
up and see their
beauty, believe in
them and try to
follow where they
lead.

Louisa May Alcott

- Theatre provides many media through which students can express their ideas, learn others' perspectives, and revisit and revise their own work.
- Learning is enhanced through integrated, connected learning, and theatre provides many opportunities to connect with prior learning, life outside of school, other areas of the arts, and other content areas.
- Children and adolescents benefit from long-term, open-ended projects that require them to work with others in order to develop an idea fully.

What else can theatre teachers do to support students' creativity? The following aspects of class structure support students' emerging creativity:

- Time to explore, research, and complete products
- Space that has natural light, harmonious colors, and comfortable workspaces
- Materials that are inexpensive, found, or recycled that can be used for creating costumes, properties, and sets
- Climate that encourages risk-taking and freedom within structure
- Occasions that serve as concrete sources of inspiration.

Though there is no one right way for helping students achieve their creative potential, teachers who are in touch with their own creativity and who work to enhance their creativity will infuse their classes with enthusiasm and wonder.

Cooperative Learning

Though cooperative learning has emerged as an instructional strategy in all content areas, it has been used in theatre classes for a long time. Research shows students who complete cooperative group tasks tend to have higher academic test scores, higher self-esteem, stronger social skills and greater content knowledge and skills. In their enthusiasm for cooperative learning, teachers should be cautious to ensure that tasks completed in small groups truly result in learning for all group members. The following guidelines can result in effective cooperative learning:

- Specify student learning outcomes.
- Give students opportunities to "buy into" the targeted outcome.
- State instructions clearly before they begin their group efforts.
- Use heterogeneous groups.
- Make sure that each group has an equal opportunity for success.
- Structure tasks so students must rely on one another to complete the task and learn new content and skills.
- Seat students face-to-face so they can use "12 inch voices."
- Expect positive social interactions.
- Provide access to resource materials.
- Provide sufficient time for working in groups.
- Make each student accountable for individual learning.
- Provide time in process and after project completion for reflection and/or debriefing.

Problem Solving

By exploring character relationships, interacting with peers, and solving dilemmas in production, students develop skills in problem solving. Though many problem-solving models exist, most include the following steps:

1. Identify the problem
2. Analyze the cause and scope of the problem
3. Brainstorm a variety of solutions
4. Assess the proposed solutions
5. Come to consensus on the most viable approach
6. Implement the solution
7. Evaluate its effects.

The empires of the future
are the empires of the
mind.

Winston Churchill

If students sometimes seem to be at a loss for dealing with a problem, this framework can help them find a solution.

Competition

When used appropriately, competition can help learners improve their knowledge and skills and increase their interest in theatre. Two kinds of competition are common in educational theatre:

- Striving for a “personal best,” in which a student competes with him- or herself and previous work
- Competing with other students for external awards and recognition.

Competition with oneself to continually improve promotes goal setting and individual growth. Students work at their own levels of development with their work evaluated accordingly. Student performances with no reward other than the satisfaction gained from participation or the benefit of educational critique by sensitive and experienced theatre educators, peers, or local professionals can have a positive effect on student learning and achievement.

External competitions can stimulate some students to exert intense effort; however, the thoughtfulness and quality of their work may suffer. Because of this tendency, teachers may want to use the following questions to examine each competitive opportunity:

- Is the primary goal of the competition to enhance student learning?
- Are the rules and judging criteria aligned with the theatre curriculum and the TEKS?
- Will the competition force students to attempt work that is beyond their range of development, causing them to sacrifice opportunities for discovery and creative development?
- Will performances be driven by contest guidelines, restrictions, or themes rather than the student’s personal experiences, thoughts, and ideas?
- Will the judges be knowledgeable and sensitive to learners’ theatre development?

Competitions that promote student learning and encourage creativity and originality may be extremely valuable for some learners, especially advanced high school students who plan to continue their studies in theatre. Some competitions may award scholarships that will enable serious theatre students to further their education. Ultimately, the value of a competition lies in the approach taken by teachers to ensure that the competition enhances, not detracts from, students’ developing knowledge and skills.

Study Trips

Study trips enable students to see live performances that supplement the sequenced class curriculum. However, off-campus trips and performances at the school cannot replace conceptually-based TEKS course content. Though students may enjoy a theatre experience, without connecting it to a planned sequence of study, the performance is isolated, and the goal for increased student achievement in theatre is not advanced.

Throughout the school year, teachers plan study trips that coincide, as much as possible, with regularly scheduled class time. Flexible scheduling allows for extended study trips that may combine learning in other areas around a common theme. Teachers sponsoring study trips should note that, although State Board of Education rules permit study trips at all grade levels, when high school students

The best advice I can give a young actor is this: Learn your lines.

Spencer Tracy

There is no better indication of what the people of any period are like than the plays they go see.

Edith Hamilton

participate in study trips that cause them to miss another class, the ten-day rule applies.

Older students attending professional performances can utilize the knowledge learned in theatre courses to better understand the production. They can also research the play and create their own study guides. Criteria based on course content enables students to form opinions and make judgements that are supported by specific production details.

Safety

Each area of a school's instructional program has potential hazards to students and employees. Therefore, teachers must develop student attitudes that support safe practices in the classroom and on stage. Teachers model and discuss safety procedures and regulations in theatre classes. Teachers also give tests on theatre safety and keep them on file.

Safe theatre practices help ensure the welfare of students and teachers and prevent damage to expensive equipment and facilities. Consistently enforcing safe theatre practices within the framework of school and district policies facilitates teaching and learning of course content in large and small group activities. The following recommendations suggest ways to keep a theatre environment free from accident and injury.

The school administration:

- Schedules regular inspection and maintenance of equipment and facilities. They give special attention to stage rigging, electrical wiring, and lighting apparatus.
- Provides teachers with current, accurate information on accident liability and insurance
- Ensures that students receive safety guides and are tested on their content
- Provides eye goggles, face shields, ear muffs, gloves, aprons, and safety belts for technical theatre shops
- Provides a telephone with a direct outside line in the theatre facility
- Ensures that exits and aisles are unobstructed at all times.

The theatre teacher:

- Makes safety a part of the everyday theatre program
- Establishes safety procedures and make sure that students understand and observe them consistently
- Uses emergency procedures established by the school, such as for the evacuation of the stage and auditorium, and teaches students to use them
- Inspects facilities regularly, becoming aware of possible hazards and alerting students to them
- Teaches and assesses proper use of tools and equipment so that students respect them for their potential hazards
- Inspects all tools and equipment, immediately discontinuing use of defective or unsafe equipment
- Supervises students when they are using potentially hazardous equipment
- Sets safety examples by conducting demonstrations
- Maintains a fully-stocked first-aid kit in each shop and stage work area
- Takes extra precautions to ensure safety during the period following the closing of a show.

Safety in the theatre extends to crews, casts, and audience members. Avoiding risks, guarding against recklessness, being aware, and using common sense will result in a safe theatre environment.

There are only two or three human stories, and they go on repeating themselves as fiercely as if they had never happened before.
Willa Cather

Special Considerations

Texas public schools are responsible for helping all students develop to their full potential. The content and structure of theatre curricula provide opportunities to involve all students in the learning process, regardless of their language, cultural background, disabilities, or familiarity with course content. Theatre classes can be designed to recognize and utilize students' abilities, rather than their disabilities. Teachers can modify instructional methods, pacing, and materials to meet the individual needs of their students.

Special Education

Teachers of students receiving special education services should participate in the development of each student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) and take part in students' Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee meetings. By getting involved in IEP and ARD consultations, theatre teachers can share students' progress and achievements with parents and other educators. The following considerations and classroom strategies are provided to help teachers unaccustomed to modifying their instruction for special education students:

- Students who receive special education services are not a homogeneous group. Each individual has unique strengths, needs, and interests.
- Despite the presence of a disability, every student can learn skills in theatre classes that enable him or her to participate more fully in school, recreation, and career preparation.
- Students with severe disabilities require the greatest support and individual attention. Special education teachers, sign language interpreters, orientation and mobility instructors, or instructional aides may provide support in the context of the class.
- Students with moderate disabilities may need to have materials and activities adapted to meet their individual strengths and needs.
- Some students may have disabilities that require only slight modifications in the classroom—such as special seating or assistance with reading.

Educators may be daunted by the challenge of teaching a classroom of students with diverse, individual needs. The following suggestions should help teachers establish the full participation of every learner:

- Align the content with the developmental level of the learner.
- Give instructions through several modalities (e.g., visual and aural).
- Summarize key content points before moving to new topics.
- Ask leading questions to encourage self-assessment as work progresses.
- Establish a peer tutoring system to assist students with disabilities and to allow them to help others.
- Assign appropriate roles for cooperative learning activities.
- Use adaptive devices and technology.
- Adjust pacing and time requirements for work completion.
- Allow students to demonstrate proficiency using their best means of expression.

Multicultural Perspectives

Theatre education offers an ideal means of enriching multicultural understanding. Activities that focus on personal experience and interests provide students from different ethnic and racial groups with opportunities to share cultural forms of expression, personal ethics, and social goals. Students explore their own ideas and interests and those of their peers, building an understanding of the abilities and efforts of students from many backgrounds.

History, despite its
wrenching pain/
Cannot be un-lived, and if
faced/
With courage, need not
be lived again.
Maya Angelou

As students learn about the theatre practices of the world's societies, they gain new cultural awareness. The rich heritage of theatre tradition is a result of the contributions of all ethnic groups. Studying great literature and the history of the theatre helps students see the connections between cultures. Multicultural education in theatre includes instructional strategies for enabling students to:

- Understand the importance of theatre in communicating values, beliefs, rituals, mores, desires, and hopes of past and contemporary societies
- Develop a broad vocabulary to describe theatrical contributions of various cultures
- Apply evaluative judgment to contemporary and historic theatrical productions
- Discover that theatre serves as an enduring historical and cultural record, preserving the progression of thought and emotion of people through the centuries
- Examine an idea from multiple diverse viewpoints.

Assessment

Learning in theatre may be demonstrated in a variety of ways, including paper/pen format, presentation/performance, scenery construction, costume design, script writing, and a video or audio log of works in progress. Though educators often think the primary purpose of assessment is grading, assessment also can facilitate learning by:

- Aiding in planning by indicating when to reteach and when to move ahead
- Developing a base of evidence documenting student performance
- Providing tools for student self-assessment
- Evaluating overall teaching performance.

It is a fault to wish to be understood before we have made ourselves clear to ourselves.
Simone Weil

The following table shows assessment tools appropriate for theatre. The first column is appropriate for grades K–6 while the tools in both columns are appropriate for grades 7–12.

Assessments for K–6	Additional Assessments for 7–12
Observation Inquiry Class discussion/group critique Interview Portfolio Demonstration Self-assessment Role-play Checklist Audio/video recording Projects Oral critique Written critique	Oral test Written test Oral research report Written research report Physical skills test (acting, stagecraft) Auditions Theatre productions Rehearsal notes Audience response Outside observation

Whatever assessment tools are selected, theatre teachers should align their assessment practices with the following principles:

- Teachers continually monitor student performance, so that instruction and assessment are intertwined.
- Students are not assessed on content or skills that they have not had an opportunity to learn.
- Multiple sources of evidence on student performance are preferable to any single source.
- Students are aware of criteria for satisfactory performance before beginning a task.
- Students learn strategies for self-assessment and explain their thinking processes.
- The teacher communicates student performance clearly to students, parents, and other professionals.
- Targeted feedback is much more helpful in improving performance than non-specific praise.

I change myself, I change the world.
Gloria Anzaldua

Rubrics

One way of implementing effective assessment is by using rubrics that clearly communicate acceptable levels of student performance and aid students in assessing their own progress. Though rubrics can take many forms, they are often represented in tables. To develop a rubric, first determine the critical dimensions of the performance to be assessed. Place these dimensions in the left-hand column of a table. Next, decide on the number of performance levels to be described. This number determines the number of additional columns.

Now describe the differences in performance levels along a continuum. This is easiest if a sample of performances is already available. The sample can be separated into groups by common characteristics and by level of performance. Without a sample, teachers have to make their best prediction of levels. Involving students in this process really encourages them to “buy into” the structure of their education and assessment.

Once a rubric has been set up, it can be revised for further use. Keep performance samples that illustrate desirable achievement levels on hand for future classes. Having many examples of strong performances shows learners that there are multiple creative ways to demonstrate knowledge and skills.

Effective scoring rubrics might include the following characteristics:

- A scale of assessment criteria that accurately reflects the learning outcomes demonstrated by the task
- Specific information about learning that helps the teacher make instructional decisions and communicates to students what they have learned and what they still need to learn
- Descriptors that are clear and easy to understand
- Ease and efficiency of use
- Examples of student performances
- Reliable scores (i.e., ratings of various scorers are fairly consistent).

Beyond talent lie all the usual words: discipline, love, luck . . . but, most of all, endurance.
James Baldwin

Educators learning to use rubrics may get frustrated. Consider these cautions when integrating rubrics for the first time:

- Don't expect to get the rubric exactly right the first time. Like all assessment tools, a rubric must be field tested and revised based on actual use.
- A rubric is not a checklist. The descriptors for each level are taken as a whole.

- A performance may not fall neatly into one level. It may have characteristics of more than one level of performance. In this model of scoring, the score assigned should be the one that most closely resembles the overall performance.

The sample rubric on the next page illustrates a tool for assessing fifth graders on a small group dramatization of an historical event.

Dimensions	Excellent Performance	Acceptable Performance	Needs Improvement
Characters	The dramatization shows at least 3 credible characters and the relationship between the main character(s) and supporting characters.	The dramatization has at least 3 characters, who are generally believable, although the relationship between the main character(s) and supporting characters is not always clear.	The dramatization has fewer than 3 characters, or characters do not seem believable. Relationships are barely perceptible.
Plot	The dramatization reflects coherence between the plot, character, and setting.	The dramatization has a clear plot, but the connections between characters, or the setting may not be clear.	Plot, character, and setting seem to function independently of one another.
Historical accuracy	The presentation accurately reflects historic influences.	The presentation is largely accurate in its historic references, but may contain some minor errors.	Little attention is given to the historic context, or the presentation contains major errors.
Costumes and props	Costumes and props, though minimal, project characterizations to other students in the class.	Costumes and props are used, but offer only minimal contributions to the characterizations.	The presentation does not use either costumes or props.
Stage setting	The set is improvised from available materials and helps communicate the group's intent.	The set is improvised from available materials but appears to be loosely connected to the group's intent.	The presentation does not use a set.
Use of safe practices	All participants move purposefully on and around the set.	Most participants move carefully on and around the set.	Some participants act carelessly on and around the set.
Quality of self-assessment	Each student analyzes individual and group performances, citing examples from the performance and providing rationales for their conclusions.	Students analyze their own performance and the group's, sometimes citing examples and providing rationales for their observations.	Students talk about the performance but give no qualitative conclusions and little or no rationale for their observations.

CAMPUS/DISTRICT-LEVEL CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to skilled teachers, campus and district-level administrative support are essential for an effective theatre program that enables all students to attain the knowledge and skills of the Theatre TEKS.

Scheduling

Students achieve their highest potential in theatre course content when there is adequate “time for teachers to teach and for students to learn.” Scheduling theatre instruction in an already-crowded elementary schedule may seem frivolous; however, as part of the enrichment curriculum, school districts are obligated to provide instruction in the fine arts, including creative drama. Chapter 74 gives districts the option of flexible arrangements and class setting, including mixed-age programs, as long as instruction is appropriate for all student populations. Students learn and develop in theatre, as in other areas, with regular daily instruction. Giving careful consideration to the most effective ways to promote student achievement will guide thoughtful decision-making processes.

In grade six, the TEKS continue to emphasize creative drama, but seventh and eighth graders could be combined in a mixed-age class. Beginning and intermediate theatre students can be taught in one class as long as the teacher carefully attends to the appropriateness of assignments for the various stages of skill development.

High school courses addressing the upper levels of theatre (Levels III and IV) often enable a student to work independently within a group on specific projects and individual goals. If enrollment is limited, mixed level classes may be offered with the approval of the theatre teacher. For example, a teacher may teach Technical Theatre III and IV at the same time, paying careful attention to provide individualized assignments.

Another consideration for high school scheduling is the overall class size of these performance classes. The rigor of the TEKS and the need for intense individual and small group instruction may necessitate a lower pupil-teacher ratio to facilitate student progress. Schedulers should also bear in mind that, though classes such as Theatre Production meet during a regularly-scheduled class period, assignments will likely require a great deal of out-of-class time. Consequently, this course may meet for a lengthened class period or outside of regular school hours. The block scheduling of many high schools with longer class periods is highly conducive to successful theatre production classes.

Other considerations for scheduling and class size include:

- Space limitations
- Safety implications
- Age and maturity of students
- Range of instructional activities included in the curriculum
- Student-to-student interactions through discussion, peer evaluations, and group projects.

Management and Administration

In addition to managing students, teaching course content, and supervising extracurricular activities, many theatre teachers, especially those in high school, spend many hours on organizational and managerial tasks. Accomplishing these tasks responsibly and credibly can nurture a school or district theatre program.

I pray you . . . your
play needs no
excuse. Never
excuse.

**William
Shakespeare**

I'm committed to the
idea that one of the
few things human
beings have to offer
is the richness of
unconscious and
conscious emotional
responses to being
alive.

Ntozake Shange

You see things as
they are and ask,
“Why?” I dream
things as they never
were and ask, “Why
not?”

**George Bernard
Shaw**

Though the theatre teacher is ultimately responsible for the following tasks, high school students can help with many of them, providing learners with opportunities to take responsibility and practice leadership:

- Selecting and obtaining materials for sets, props, costumes, makeup, supplies, tools, and equipment
- Planning details about calendar and field trips
- Reviewing, selecting, and procuring instructional materials (e.g., scripts)
- Budgeting
- Coordinating schoolwide theatrical endeavors
- Cooperating with other theatre and fine arts teachers in the school district
- Collaborating with community leaders to support cultural activities.

The support of campus and district administrators is essential to the development and maintenance of a quality theatre program. Without continued vision and foresight, efforts to advance student achievement in theatre, as a participant or an appreciative consumer, will not be possible. In larger districts, central office staff may have responsibilities for working with theatre programs throughout the district. Such a designated person may have the following responsibilities:

- Maintaining a quality theatre program for the district
- Developing criteria for K–12 program evaluation
- Connecting theatre programs with the relevant goals and plans of the district
- Staffing schools with qualified teachers
- Supporting teachers with quality professional development opportunities relevant to theatre
- Coordinating theatrical events that go beyond the boundaries of the campus
- Gathering data to support existing programs and substantiate additional requests for future development
- Mentoring new staff and those who are experiencing problems in developing students who can demonstrate student achievement outlined in the TEKS and district curriculum.

Professional Development

Theatre teachers, specialists and generalists, need to be knowledgeable of drama techniques, including creative drama, and apply them when teaching theatre content. Theatre teachers should participate in ongoing professional development relevant to course content.

Where once professional development consisted primarily of in-service workshops, professional development now encompasses a variety of activities that enhance the learning of a teacher’s students:

- Teachers may take on new leadership responsibilities, such as writing curriculum, serving on textbook adoption committees, or facilitating workshops for other theatre teachers.
- Mentoring student teachers and beginning teachers can also be a worthwhile professional development activity.
- Professional development for theatre teachers may also include participation in community theatre activities.
- Conducting action research can provide new insights into effective student learning processes.
- Teachers can engage in dialogue with peers about specific examples of teacher and student work.

The future belongs to
those who believe in
the beauty of their
dreams.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Program Evaluation

What are the characteristics of a quality fine arts theatre program, enabling all learners to demonstrate the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Theatre? Theatre instructors, supervisors, coordinators, principals, and other campus and district administrators can explore answers to this and many other questions to initiate an ongoing, thorough process of evaluating fine arts theatre programs.

- Are theatre classes offered and available to every high school student?
- How can current offerings be expanded to meet the needs and interests of more students?
- What are the demographics of enrollment in theatre classes? Are minority student populations (e.g., English as a second language learners, special education) represented in at least the same proportion as in the school as a whole?
- How does theatre enhance student learning in other subjects and skill areas?
- How does assessment in theatre complement student assessment in other content areas?
- How can the school(s) capitalize on the use of new technologies in theatre?
- What do the physical facilities of the school(s) say about its commitment to theatre education?
- How does the school interact with other theatre efforts in the community?

Mirrors should reflect a little before throwing back images.
Jean Cocteau

APPENDIX

Checklist for Quality Professional Development

CHECKLIST FOR QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Curriculum/Content

- Will the teacher's new learning directly impact student learning, providing teachers with multiple models and approaches for teaching the TEKS?
- Are professional growth activities carefully structured to reflect the scaffolded theatre curricula with specific theatre content for each grade or course level?
- Will participants have opportunities to experience new ideas and curricula that extend beyond the requirements of the TEKS?
- Will multiple examples of student work be exhibited and discussed?
- How will connections be made between teachers' current knowledge and new learning?
- Will connections be made to other subject areas? If so, how?
- Will the instruction be experiential?
- How will follow-up be provided to participants as they apply new skills or strategies?

Assessment

- Will a variety of assessment models be shared?
- Will models for oral and written critiques be given? Practiced?
- How will the new methods or strategies help students reflect on their own creative process?
- Will methods of maintaining journals, sketchbooks, and portfolios be provided?

Thinking Process

- How will creative thinking processes be encouraged in participants? In their students?
- How will these strategies/methods facilitate critical thinking in participants? In their students?
- How will these strategies/methods encourage participants to think divergently? Their students?

Presenters

- How does the presenter model exemplary teaching practices?
- Will a facilitator and a resource person be available to assist the presenter?
- How will the facility and equipment enhance the quality of the session?
- How can younger teachers be encouraged to present professional development sessions early in their careers?

Audiences

- Is the content tailored to teachers of specific developmental levels (e.g., primary, middle school)?
- Are the needs of diverse populations of theatre educators, including high school theatre teachers, middle school theatre teachers, elementary theatre teachers, addressed in separate sessions?
- How will the special needs of classroom teachers who teach creative drama or theatre among many other subjects be addressed?

Alternative Formats

- Are beginning teachers and teachers new to the district paired with experienced mentor teachers in the same discipline?
- Are teachers provided opportunities to observe or team teach with master teachers on other campuses or in other districts?
- Are theatre teachers funded to attend and present at state and national professional conferences?
- Do theatre teachers have access to the Internet?
- Do theatre teachers have opportunities to participate in satellite conferences with teachers on other campuses and with professionals in the theatre community?
- Are satellite conferences provided for theatre teachers who share common interests, such as advanced studies?