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THE PROCESS OF CREATIVITY IN THE THEATRE CLASSROOM

Instructor
GAI JONES

Materials

Video modules, Handouts, Transcripts, MP3 Files, PDF of Powerpoint Slides, Completion Certificate

Course length

6 modules
2 hours, 38 minutes of video
5 credit hours

Course Description

Gai Jones leads this course in establishing an environment of creative experimentation in the theatre classroom, in order to have a group of student actors who value the creative process.

Each lesson shares experiences to foster creativity without the stress of performance by student actors. For the creative process which honors out-of-the-box thinking, there is no assessment section included. There is no product or performance. The important thing is the student actor's engagement. Their reflections and your observations are valued for positive learning.

This set of lessons includes Tips for the Theatre Educator, based on Gai's own Theatre practice. Scripts are also provided and contain text of what you can say to your students to facilitate their creative processes.

About the Instructor

Gai Jones is a freelancer, director, and teacher with experience in Ojai, California, Ojai Arts Center Theatre, Elite Theatre, and Ojai Youth Entertainers Studio. She currently teaches at Ventura Charter Schools and the Rubicon Theatre. She has directed intergenerational productions and summer youth productions for the past 10 years. She runs workshops for the Education Department of Ojai ACT and has served on the national board of Educational Theatre Association, the governing board for International Thespians. She is also an adjunct assistant professor at Cal State University, East Bay and Santa Barbara Community College Center for Lifelong Learning.

Gai writes theatre ed books and is a SAG-AFTRA commercial actress. She's the author of Raising the Curtain through perfectionlearning.com, Break a Leg, Love Letter to Theatre Teachers and Students, The Student Actor Prepares: Acting for Life, with intellectbooks.com. She has a new self-published book entitled Curtain Going Up; Truisms and Tips for Community Theatre Actors, Directors, Technicians and Other Volunteers.

Gai has taught over 5,000 students and directed over 500 productions. She believes in the power of reflection to assess at what level the student is and creating to let them give input, thus increasing engagement.

Course Curriculum

Lesson 0: Introduction 14:55

This module introduces the course and sets out objectives for each subsequent lesson.

Lesson 1: Setting the Stage 34:05

This lesson addresses establishing norms to foster creativity for the student actors' personal journeys, in working with the five senses, first responses and answering open-ended silly questions.

Lesson 2: Small and Large Group Experiences 31:11

This lesson focuses on small and large group ensemble experiences for creative development, while student actors are working with each others.

Lesson 3: Physical Choices 31:39

This lesson details how your student actors can develop creativity in their physical choices.

Lesson 4: Vocal Experiences 22:28

This lesson presents creativity experiences with vocal work.

Lesson 5: Improvisation 24:24

This lesson covers creativity in improvisation exercises.

Standards Connections

National Core Arts Standards

Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation - Grade 6

TH:Pr4.1.6.b - Experiment with various physical choices to communicate character in a drama/theatre work.

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - Grade 8

TH:Cr1.1.8.c - Develop a scripted or improvised character by articulating the character's inner thoughts, objectives, and motivations in a drama/theatre work.

Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation - Grade 6

TH:Pr5.1.6.a - Recognize how acting exercises and techniques can be applied to a drama/theatre work.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade 6

TH:Cr2.1.6.b - Contribute ideas and accept and incorporate the ideas of others in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade 7

TH:Cr2.1.7.b - Demonstrate mutual respect for self and others and their roles in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

Refine new work through play, drama processes and theatre experiences using critical analysis and experimentation - Grade 6

TH:Cr3.1.6.b - Identify effective physical and vocal traits of characters in an improvised or scripted drama/theatre work.

Refine new work through play, drama processes and theatre experiences using critical analysis and experimentation - Grade 7

TH:Cr3.1.7.b - Develop effective physical and vocal traits of characters in an improvised or scripted drama/theatre work.

Common Core

Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1 - Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Language

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Language

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

California VAPA Standards (2019)

6.TH:Pr4 Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

6.TH:Pr4.b - Experiment with various physical choices to communicate character in a drama/theatre work.

8.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

8.TH:Cr1.b - Develop a scripted or improvised character by articulating the character's inner thoughts, objectives, and motivations in a drama/theatre work.

6.TH:Cr2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

6.TH:Cr2.b - Contribute ideas and accept and incorporate the ideas of others in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

6.TH:Pr5 Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

6.TH:Pr5.a - Recognize how acting exercises and techniques can be applied to a drama/theatre work.

7.TH:Cr2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

7.TH:Cr2.b - Demonstrate mutual respect for self and others and their roles in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

6.TH:Cr3 Refine and complete artistic work.

6.TH:Cr3.b - Identify effective physical and vocal traits of characters in a drama/theatre work.

7.TH:Cr3 Refine and complete artistic work.

7.TH:Cr3.b - Develop effective physical and vocal traits of characters in an improvised or scripted drama/theatre work.

Florida Sunshine State Standards

Critical Thinking & Reflection

TH.912.C.1.5 - Make and defend conscious choices in the creation of a character that will fulfill anticipated audience response.

TH.912.C.2.8 - Improve a performance or project using various self-assessment tools, coaching, feedback, and/or constructive criticism.

Skills, Techniques & Processes

TH.912.S.2.8 - Strengthen acting skills by engaging in theatre games and improvisations.

TH.912.S.3.2 - Exercise artistic discipline and collaboration to achieve ensemble in rehearsal and performance.

TH.912.S.3.3 - Develop acting skills and techniques in the rehearsal process.

Georgia Performance Standards - Theatre Arts

Grade 6 - Creating

TA6.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Identify artistic choices, utilize theatre vocabulary, and demonstrate non-verbal communication skills in the rehearsal process., b. Interpret a character's motivation by understanding the relationship between their background and their behavior., c. Identify the variety of relationships between characters., d. Identify, define, and classify character traits., e. Recognize and demonstrate the roles, responsibilities, and skills associated with collaborative performance., f. Use resources to identify and create technical elements of theatre.

Grade 6 - Performing

TA6.PR.1 - Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments., a. Demonstrate effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills (e.g. rate, pitch, volume, inflection, posture, facial expression, physical movement)., b. Execute character creation in a performance., c. Demonstrate a variety of types of theatre performances.

Grade 7 - Creating

TA7.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Identify and rehearse effective communication skills., b. Compare and contrast character types and relationships by analyzing character motivations, objectives, and goals., c. Compare the physical, emotional, vocal, and social

dimensions of a character., d. Investigate the role and responsibility of the cast and crew., e. Identify and model ensemble skills in the rehearsal process., f. Utilize staging and blocking choices to enhance the performance., g. Compare, contrast, and design elements of technical theatre., h. Utilize theatre vocabulary throughout the rehearsal process.

Grade 7 - Performing

TA7.PR.1 - Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments., a. Execute effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills in performance (e.g. rate, pitch, volume, inflection, posture, facial expression, physical movement)., b. Participate in a variety of acting exercises and techniques that can be applied in a rehearsal or theatre performance., c. Engage in various performance styles.

Grade 8 - Creating

TA8.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Differentiate the physical, emotional, vocal, and social dimensions of a variety of characters., b. Compare the relationships and interactions between characters by analyzing character motivation (objectives, obstacles, strategy, action, stakes, outcome)., c. Incorporate dramatic elements through improvisation., d. Connect theatre vocabulary to the application of theatre performance., e. Identify and demonstrate both ensemble and leadership skills in the rehearsal process., f. Evaluate the effectiveness of artistic and technical elements used in a theatre production., g. Design and create scenery, props, costumes, lighting, and sound., h. Assume different roles and responsibilities in the rehearsal process.

Grade 8 - Performing

TA8.PR.1 - Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments., a. Demonstrate the physical, emotional, vocal, and social dimensions of a character in different types of theatre performances (e.g. rate, pitch, volume, inflection, posture, facial expression, motivation, physical movement)., b. Demonstrate appropriate ensemble skills throughout a performance., c. Use appropriate listening and response skills during performances.

Grades 9-12 - ACTING LEVELS I-IV - Performing

TAHSA.PR.1 - Act and direct by communicating and sustaining roles within a variety of situations and environments., a. Examine and implement the voice, body, observation, and imagination as tools of the actor in presentations of formal and informal theatre., b. Research and assess the development of acting skills for character creation and performance including historical movements, personal experience, and cultural influences., c. Act by developing, communicating, and sustaining roles within a variety of situations and environments., d. Identify and examine the responsibilities and tasks of an actor in relationship with directors, designers, and technical crew., e. Use the skills and tools of a director to conduct rehearsals for performance.

Grades 9-12 - ADVANCED DRAMA LEVELS I-IV -Performing

TAHSAD.PR.1 - Act and direct by communicating and sustaining roles within a variety of situations and environments., a. Examine and implement the skills and tasks associated with acting, incorporating voice, body, observation, and imagination to create characters for formal and informal performances., b. Implement the duties of the stage manager, including communication and safety procedures, that will assist the director in all areas of production., c. Develop a schedule and organizational plan to

prepare a scene for performance, including a rehearsal schedule and a prompt script., d. Conduct rehearsals and present a full theatrical presentation to a live audience.

Grades 9-12 - FUNDAMENTALS OF THEATRE LEVELS I-IV - Creating

TAHSFT.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Recognize and/or employ realistic and conventional speech patterns within dialogue or dramatic verse., b. Incorporate dramatic elements through improvisation., c. Recognize and interpret artistic choices in performance.

Grades 9-12 - FUNDAMENTALS OF THEATRE LEVELS I-IV - Performing

TAHSFT.PR.1 - Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments., a. Observe and demonstrate aspects of verbal and non-verbal techniques in common human activity for performance (e.g. voice, breathing, posture, facial expression, physical movement)., b. Construct and interpret artistic choices in performance including the objectives, decisions, and actions of characters., c. Explore various acting methods and techniques (e.g. Stanislavski, Uta Hagen, sense memory, emotional recall) for the purpose of character development., d. Perform acting choices for an audience based on critiques.

North Carolina Essential Standards

Beginning High School Standards - Communication

B.C.1.2 - Apply vocal elements of volume, pitch, rate, tone, articulation, and vocal expression.

B.C.2.1 - Use improvisation and acting skills, such as observation, concentration, and characterization in a variety of theatre exercises.

Beginning High School Standards - Culture

B.CU.2.1 - Illustrate appropriate theatre etiquette as a member of an audience, as a performer, and as a technician.

Proficient High School Standards - Communication

P.C.1.2 - Apply vocal elements of volume, pitch, rate, tone, articulation, and vocal expression to develop characters.

P.C.2.1 - Use improvisation and acting skills, such as observation, concentration, and characterization, to create extended scenes.

Advanced High School Standards - Communication

A.C.1.2 - Use voice to create character dialects.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Theatre Arts

MS 117.211 LI - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

C.1.D - develop an understanding of the mechanisms of vocal production.

C.1.E - identify theatrical vocabulary and terminology, including basic anatomy of theatre spaces.

MS 117.212 LII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

B.1.E - demonstrate knowledge of theatrical vocabulary and terminology.

MS 117.212 LII - Creative Expression: performance

B.2.D - create stories collaboratively and individually that have dramatic structure.

MS 117.213 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and

Understanding

- B.1.B - explore preparation and warm-up techniques.
- B.1.E - apply knowledge of theatrical vocabulary and terminology.

HS 117.315 LI - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

- C.1.B - develop and practice theatre preparation and warm-up techniques.
- C.1.D - develop and practice effective voice and diction to express thoughts and feelings.
- C.1.F - demonstrate a working knowledge of the language of theatre such as stage terminology, elements of theatre, or theatrical conventions.
- C.1.J - identify the principles of improvisation.

HS 117.315 LI - Creative Expression: performance

- C.2.C - employ effective voice and diction to express thoughts and feelings.

HS 117.316 LII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

- C.1.C - demonstrate effective voice and diction.

HS 117.316 LII - Creative Expression: performance

- C.2.C - demonstrate effective voice and diction to express thoughts and feelings.

Alberta, Canada

Speech Drama 10

- 1 - demonstrate vocal relaxation and warmup techniques

Speech Drama 30

- 23 - use vocal variety in character development

Improvisation Drama 10

- 1 - use warmup techniques for preparation of body, voice and mind
- 11 - apply the essential elements of a story: character, setting, conflict, climax and plot in planned and unplanned scenes

Improvisation Drama 20

- 34 - demonstrate the techniques of sharing, giving and taking focus

Acting Drama 30

- 18 - use various vocal skills to enhance characterization

Movement Drama 10

- 3 - recognize the necessity for physical warmups

Junior Goal II Objectives

- develop the body and voice as tools of communication

Junior Orientation

- communicate through use of voice and body
- listen effectively
- move in a variety of ways
- recognize the purposes of and participate in warmup activities
- support positivity the work of others
- work cooperatively and productively with all members of the class in pairs, small groups and large groups

Movement Level I - Beginning

- 4 - recognize the need for and demonstrate warmup activities

Movement Level II - Intermediate

- 21 - display clarity of movement and gesture

Speech Level I - Beginning

- 2 - use vocal relaxation and warm-up techniques

Speech Level III - Advanced

- 16 - use movement and gesture to clarify and enhance speech and character

Improvisation/Acting Level I - Beginning

- 1 - use warm-up techniques for preparation of body, voice and mind

Improvisation/Acting Level II - Intermediate

- 15 - use the body and body language to enhance characterization
- 18 - use voice variety to enhance a character

Junior Goal I Objectives

- develop a positive self-image
- develop self-confidence
- develop self-discipline
- develop the ability to interact effectively and constructively in a group process
- explore and develop physical and vocal capabilities
- strengthen powers of concentration

Senior Goal I Objectives

- demonstrate respect for others-their rights, ideas, abilities and differences
- demonstrate the ability to contribute effectively and constructively to the group process
- extend physical and vocal capabilities
- extend the ability to concentrate
- increase self-confidence
- increase self-discipline

Orientation Drama 10

- listen to self and others
- share ideas confidently

British Columbia (2018)

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Exploring and creating

Create dramatic works both collaboratively and as an individual, using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, and purposeful play

Select and combine dramatic elements and principles to intentionally create a particular mood, effect, and meaning

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Reasoning and reflecting

Develop and refine ideas and technical skills to improve the quality of performance pieces

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Communicating and documenting

Adapt and apply learned skills, understandings, and processes for use in new contexts and for different purposes and audiences

Compose, interpret, and expand ideas using symbolism, imagery, and elements

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Connecting and expanding

Demonstrate increasingly sophisticated application and/or engagement of curricular content

Demonstrate respect for themselves, others, and the audience

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Develop a repertoire of dramatic skills and techniques through presentation or performance

Explore and create dramatic works to express ideas and emotions

Explore dramatic works through presentation or performance

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Describe, analyze, and respond using drama-specific language

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Communicate and document

Compose, interpret, and expand ideas using symbolism and imagery

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate personal and social responsibility associated with creating, performing, and responding to dramatic performance

Demonstrate respect for self, others, and the audience

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Purposefully select and combine dramatic elements and conventions

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Communicate and document

Express personal voice, cultural identity, and perspectives using dramatic techniques

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Develop and refine performance skills in a variety of contexts

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Describe, analyze, and evaluate ways in which props, technologies, and environments are used in drama, using discipline-specific language

Receive, provide, and apply constructive feedback to refine dramatic works

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Communicate and document

Document, share, and collaborate on dramatic works and experiences in a variety of contexts

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate respect for self, others, and audience

Grades 9 & 10 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing - Connections Beyond the Classroom

B.3.1 - identify and describe skills, attitudes, and strategies they used in collaborative drama activities (e.g., brainstorming, active listening, and cooperative problem-solving skills; strategies for sharing responsibility through collaborative team roles)

Grades 9 & 10 - Creating and Presenting - Presentation Techniques & Technologies

A.3.2 - use a variety of voice and movement techniques to support the creation of character or atmosphere during rehearsal (e.g., use voice and movement to suggest an airport, circus, or factory environment)

Ontario, Canada

Grades 9 & 10 - Foundations - Responsible Practices

C.3.3 - demonstrate an understanding of theatre and audience etiquette, in both classroom and formal performance contexts (e.g., as a performer: show willingness to take direction and behave appropriately towards other actors; as a viewer: demonstrate respect for performers and other audience members by paying attention, not interrupting or talking, and applauding when appropriate)

Grades 9 & 10 - Foundations - Concepts and Terminology

C.1.2 - demonstrate an understanding of and use correct terminology to refer to the forms, elements, conventions, and techniques of drama, with a focus on ensemble drama works (e.g., chorus, protagonist, ingénue, supporting role, act, scene, climax, resolution, improvisation, mask, freeze-frame image)