

## **THEATRICAL TEACHING LESSON PLAN: Stage Management Workshop**

**GRADE:** High School

**SUBJECT AREA:** Technical Theater

**UNIT:** Stage Management

**ARTISTRY:** *Stage Management*

**THEMATIC QUESTION:** *How do stage managers use written and oral communication to ensure a safe, smooth, and successful production?*

### **OBJECTIVES**

#### **PARTICIPANTS WILL...**

**KNOW** (facts, information, vocabulary): Hold, Warning/Standby, Go, Production Stage Manager, Assistant Stage Manager, blocking, shorthand, preset checklist, props list, run sheet, rehearsal/performance report, cue, cue light, headset/comm

**UNDERSTAND** (comprehension of the big ideas): The responsibilities of a stage manager, the importance of clear and accurate communication, how to create and use paperwork effectively, the importance of detail orientation, how to call cues verbally and with cue lights

**DO** (active demonstration of learning): Identify/use blocking shorthand symbols, divide up duties between stage managers and other departments, examine/explain paperwork, observe communication on headset, call a show

**MATERIALS:** Laptop with show files (*Show Files: A Preview on Headset Video*, *Production Video*); projector; Bluetooth speaker; paperwork examples; calling scripts; blocking shorthand cards; Duties cards; blank paper; pencils

**PLOT:** *compose your sequence of activities*

**INCITING INCIDENT:** (5 min) TA will greet the participants by holding up signs, each with a different blocking shorthand symbol, signaling the participants to do the action the symbol represents. This is done without speaking. TA will model the action as they hold up the sign and the participants will mimic until they realize what each symbol means. The signs will be held up more quickly until the participants are moving rapidly.

**EXPOSITION:** (15 min) TA will announce that before we dive in any further, we should make sure we're all on the same page about what a stage manager does. There will be many slips of paper on the ground with specific job duties. The participants will be asked to sort these under two headers: "Stage Manager's Job" or "Someone Else's Job". TA will then ask if they disagree with any of the placements and if so, pick up that piece of paper and hold it. Then they can share why they think it should move to the other category.

Highlighting the "Take blocking notation" card, we will return to our shorthand symbols. TA will add more into the mix, and we'll practice creating a few sentences of staging using shorthand.

**RISING ACTION 1:** (30 min) TA will then give them each a piece of paperwork. They'll have two minutes to examine it and then they'll take turns explaining their paperwork as if they created it. They will explain; What (is it?), Who (created it? uses it?), When (in the process was it created? was it used?), How (did they gather the info on it), Why (is it helpful?). We'll do a few rounds of this, looking at a variety of paperwork in the order that it would be used in the process.

**RISING ACTION 2:** (15 min) We will then play Headset Bingo. The participants will each be given a Bingo card with moments to listen for. We will listen to all channels of a headset during a preview performance of a Broadway show. They will mark their Bingo cards as they hear specific things discussed.

*Channels: Calling Channel, Deck Private, Lighting Private, Spots, SM Private.*

We'll chat briefly about communication and what they observed.

**RISING ACTION 3:** (5 min) Participants will then receive two pages of a calling script and we'll look discuss the different types of cues and how the cue lights are used. We'll watch the production video once to get a sense of the rhythm and timing.

**MOMENT OF TRUTH:** (15 min) The participants will take turns calling the show to the video! They will wear a headset and use a cue light panel. While one participant calls the show, the other will run the light board (which will subtly adjust the lighting in the studio).

**FALLING ACTION:** (5 min) TA will ask the participants "Why do we (theatre designers/technicians) do what we do?" a number of times in a row so they can continue to come up with reasons that their jobs are important, integral, and fun. Participants will then share one thing they learned or one thing that surprised them.

**DENOUEMENT:** (10 min) Participants will then be able to do a Q&A with the TA, asking about their professional experience on and off Broadway and what it is like being a theatre technician working in NYC.

**LANGUAGE:** TA will give instructions verbally and with visuals. The participants will be challenged to define and explain duties/paperwork aloud. TA will use repetition to promote thoughtful and deep answers. Theater vocabulary words will be used throughout the workshop. TA will talk to the participants as theatrical colleagues. The participant voice will be featured throughout.

**SPECTACLE:** We watch videos, listen to headset chatter, run the light board, and flip cue lights.

**CHARACTER:** TA will foster a fun, relaxed atmosphere and will ask questions that encourage curiosity and thoughtfulness. TA will use paperwork and videos from their own shows so we can connect as theater artists and use their artistry as a stage manager to maintain a productive and on-schedule workshop.

**MUSICALITY:** We will work both together and individually. Participants will answer questions on their own on the spot. We will have an opening moment of physicality, sit on the floor together, and work standing.

## **LEARNING STANDARDS ADDRESSED:**

[NYC DOE Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Theatre](#)

[Common Core Learning Standards](#)

[New York State Learning Standards for the Arts: Theatre](#)

## **A NOTE ON OUR MATERIALS**

In this scope of work, we'll be customizing materials we've developed over years (sometimes decades) to support communities and institutions. These materials are controlled and owned by Roundabout Theatre Company and may be used by s part of our work together as outlined in this scope of work. We ask that the copyright credit on those materials remains in place. If you would like to discuss using these materials in any other way beyond the scope of this work, please reach out to us anytime at [education@roundabouttheatre.org](mailto:education@roundabouttheatre.org)