**Unit: Intro to Tech Theatre**

Written by: Laura Taylor

**Unit Objective**: Students will be able to perform tasks in a variety of tech theatre areas by learning about what is required to be a lighting/sound designer/technician, stage manager, and resident publicist. After learning about these fields they will then complete tasks that these technicians would be required to perform for a production.

**2014 National Core Arts Theatre Standards**:

**TH:Cr1.1.HSI**

a. Apply basic research to construct ideas about the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.  
b. Explore the impact of technology on design choices in a drama/theatre work.

**TH:Re7.1.HSII**

a. Demonstrate an understanding of multiple interpretations of artistic criteria and how each might be used to influence future artistic choices of a drama/theatre work.

**1994 National Standards:**

Content Standard #3: Designing and producing by conceptualizing and realizing artistic interpretations for informal or formal productions

Content Standard #7: Analyzing, critiquing, and constructing meanings from informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

**Enduring Understandings**: Technical theatre artists play an integral and vital role in making a production successful. Technical theatre artists gain invaluable, lifelong skills by the work that they are required to do.

**Essential Questions**: What lifelong skills do we need, and which can we build from a career in technical theatre? How can we use the skills we gain from working in technical theatre in our everyday lives?

**Students will know…**

How electricity works, how a microphone works, how to run a mic through a sound board, what a mixer does, how to design the light for a scene, how to publicize a production, and what is required to be a successful stage manager.

**Students will be able to…**

Create a mic plot, create an ad and a newspaper article for the production, create a lighting design, and understand how lighting affects mood.

**Assessments:** There will be daily assessments, as well a tech Olympics that will combine and test what students have learned over the entire unit.

**Prior Experience:** This is a beginners unit, so students should not have extensive prior experience in these areas.

**Grade Level: 10-12**

\*This unit uses *Fiddler on the Roof* for practical application of the concepts being taught\*

**Lesson Plan 1: Breaking Down a Script**

**Materials Needed:** Script and scratch paper

**Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate their ability to complete the necessary preparatory work to designing a production by completing a script breakdown that accounts for all of the necessary design/visual requirements of the show.

**Hook (3-5 minutes):** Hand back participation quizzes over *Fiddler on the Roof*. Think of those quizzes as an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the script. Do you understand its plot and themes? It’s important to be *very* familiar with a script, including having read it several times before you begin your design work. All of you have read the script once (there may be one or two students who have read it more times than that). Can you tell me the necessary design elements for the show? Likely the students will call out a few vague requirements that the show needs. This will not cut it in the actual design world!

**Activity 1 (60-65 minutes):** The way to remedy this problem is to read through the script several times with each different design element in mind. We’re going to participate in an adapted version of this here in class for the first five scenes. If you can find a video clip that’s less than 10 minutes long that gives a nice overview of theatre design in general and what focus and attention to detail that takes here would be a great place to play it. I’ve struggled to find a clip like this that isn’t quite long.

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This exercise asks you to make a breakdown for the script of all the visual and technical elements. Start with the first word of the script and stop every time to get to any visual/technical element. In *The Fiddler on the Roof* your first stop has to be when it mentions a fiddler on the roof. I would number my entry (1), say what page it’s on (1), give the location (Act 1, Prologue), and a quote (“A fiddler on the roof. Sounds crazy, no?) that would help you quickly know which entry is associated with which part of the script. The letters across the top stand for costumes, set, lighting, props, sound, makeup, sound effects, questions, and notes. I would then put an X or some type of notation under C, S, L, P, and Sd. Under questions I might write: does the Fiddler need a special costume? Are they actually playing a live fiddle? Do we need a prop? Will we use a spotlight or some other type of special on the fiddler?

**Wrap-up (3-5 minutes):** If students haven’t finished this in class they can come in before or after school, or some other time that they schedule. You can allow them to check out scripts to take them home, as well, if that’s something you’re comfortable with. Ask students what they’ve learned so far about design from this process. Is it a lot more expansive and detailed than you originally thought? What skills do you think are required in design/technical work? Do you think there are similar skills necessary across all aspects of design?

**Lesson Plan 2: Stage Management**

**Materials Needed:** SMs from your school, notecards, worksheet, stage management binder (if you have one), YouTube clips, page from a script (preferably with stage directions), whiteboard or butcher paper (something you can write on)

**Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of basic stage management skills and responsibilities by participating in small group/whole class discussions (including a Q&A), and completing a stage management worksheet.

**Hook (10 minutes):** Hand students the SM worksheet- they should work on completing it throughout the class period. Ask what they already know about stage management- what does a stage manager do? Write these things on a piece of butcher paper or a whiteboard that can be added to throughout the class. This will be a visual reminder of how much a SM is responsible for throughout class.

Next, talk about necessary stage management skills. Take a minute and talk to a partner or in small groups about what you think it means to be a great stage manager. What skills does that require? After students have discussed for a minute or two ask them to come back together and start sharing some answers as a class. Ask a student to volunteer to be the scribe as they take down some of these stage management skills.

After you’ve compiled a list and discussed some of the qualities the students have shared make sure to reiterate that in large part these are life-long skills. They’re skills learned and perfected over time, and not all at once. Often it’s hard to train someone to actually be a SM if they don’t have the right personality type for it- it won’t be a symbiotic relationship. Throughout the rest of our focus on **collaboration, organization, communication, and skill/attention to detail** as these do a nice job at summarizing those life-long skills requisite for stage management. So be thinking about both how you can foster these skills in your own lives, and how you’re already practicing these principles in other areas of technical theatre and design. This is especially important if you think you’d like to stage manage in the future.

**Activity 1 (20-25 minutes):** Tell the students that now that we have a starter list of some things we think a stage manager is responsible for we’re going to watch a clip of a professional stage manager. Think about what skills and tasks she mentions that are necessary for stage managers. Are these similar to or different from our list? **Play Introduction to Stage Management clip from “OCLPhase2” on YouTube**. After the clip finishes ask students about what they noticed. What else do we need to add to our list regarding SM roles and responsibilities? What SM skills did she mention that were similar to our list? Are there any we need to add?

Let’s get one more perspective from another professional production. What similarities and differences do you notice between the clips? Is stage management always exactly the same? How might it change from each production? **Play “Wicked Stage Management” clip from “OfficialWICKED” on YouTube.** After the clip finishes ask students to get together with a partner or in small groups to discuss what they noticed in this clip, as well as the questions just posed. Restate them in order to remind students what they should be discussing. After they’ve been discussing for a few minutes (monitor their discussions to make sure they’re staying on task and staying engaged) ask them to come back together as a class and share. Are there any other roles/responsibilities we should add?

**Activity 2 (20-25 minutes):** Pass out a notecard to each student. Please welcome the guest speakers for today’s class- you should pick between 1-3 students from the school who have stage managed in the past if possible. Have each student introduce themselves and say what they have stage managed before- they could also be in the process of stage managing. Ask each student to come up with 3 questions that they have about stage managing either in general or at this particular school. It’s a great opportunity for students to learn from their peers and to see what they can do in order to become stage managers themselves.

After you’ve given the students around 3 minutes to write down their questions turn the time over to the SMs. Ask them to give a little bit of an overview to their stage management experience. What was it like? What are some of the responsibilities? What are the difficult parts of the job, as well as the rewarding parts? What does it take to be an SM at this school? After each SM has spoken allow the students a few minutes to ask some of their questions. Many students may feel shy or hesitant to ask the questions written on their cards. If this isn’t an issue then questioning can proceed like normal. If it is then gather all the notecards up and begin asking some of the questions the students have written down. You can either say who asked the question or not- the important thing is that the great questions the students have written down are getting asked. \*Reminder: students should be filling out their worksheets through this entire process. Add to the list of responsibilities if necessary, and thank the guests for coming.

**Activity 3 (20 minutes):** Pass around the Stage Management binder if you have one- it should be complete with examples of all the different necessary forms stage managers need for a show. This gives students a great idea of the type of work/documents necessary, as well as all the many ways to complete them.

**Play short portion of “Stage manager calls ‘cues’ for ‘HAIRSPRAY.’” clip from SanDiegoREP on YouTube.** Ask students what their reactions are to this. Calling a show is very fast paced and stressful at times. What SM skills are necessary to do this? Reinforce that this is just one part of being an SM, and that there isn’t one right way to do this.

Next, talk about how to take down blocking. Note that you can either draw a diagram that includes the stage you’re performing with, or just write the movements in the script. Draw an example of each of these. With a diagram you’d draw the stage, make markers for characters/set pieces and track their movement with arrows throughout the page. (Briefly discuss the changing technology/apps becoming available for this process.) If you just write blocking in the script you’d simply write things like “move DL” next to the corresponding cue line. This will be determined by your preference and/or the preference of your director.

Hand students a copy from a page in any script- this will be easiest if there are already stage directions printed in the script. Give students page 4 from the One Act we’re currently working on: *Wiley and the Hairy Man.* There are several stage directions throughout this page that indicate actor movement throughout the stage. Students should draw a diagram of the stage as well as how they might take down the blocking. (This will be done on the worksheet.)

Last, briefly introduce the importance of an SM kit. What types of things might be in your SM kit.

**Wrap up/Assessment (1 minute):** If students haven’t finished the worksheet they may take it home and finish completing it. Let’s take one last second to review our list and see all than an SM does.

Next time you see a show remember to think about and appreciate all that the SM and crew do to make a show run seamlessly. The show couldn’t happen without them.

**At the end of class your SM list may look something like this**:

Collaborate with all department heads

Be an organizational machine as you make the following documents:

* + Contact sheet
  + Rehearsal schedule
  + Email lists
  + Conflict calendar
  + Production calendar
  + Daily Reports
  + Properties List (keep updated)
  + Set Design communicated to all staff (keep updated)
  + Furniture and Set Decoration list (keep updated)
  + Costume plot (keep updated)
  + Set dates for production meetings.

Prepare your Stage Manager kit which might include:

* + Band-aids
  + Batteries
  + Chalk
  + Erasers
  + Paper clips
  + Pens
  + Ruler
  + Safety pins
  + Scissors
  + Small sewing kit
  + Stopwatch
  + Tampons

Prepare your prompt book.

Know the script like the back of your hand.

Track everything.

Be the timekeeper.

Know that you may be on book.

Pull props or rehearsal props.

Spike the stage.

Let the team know when something isn't possible or correct.

Delegate humbly- don’t be afraid of doing the hard stuff or grunt work.

Send out the rehearsal report.

Keep the production meetings running.

Make sure everything and everyone's safe and ready.

Alert Call times.

Deal with late actors/crew members.

Go through headset protocol.

Work with the house manager.

Call the show.

Mediate between all departments.

Mediate between actors.

Keep integrity of the show in tact.

Type up a show report.

Be a likable leader.

Have the director's best interests at heart.

Stay calm.

Know your crew well enough to anticipate problems.

Be a drill sergeant and a cheerleader.

Apologize when you make a mistake and keep going.

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

All About Stage Management

What do you already know about stage management? What does a stage manager do?

What are some important skills you need as a stage manager? Explain.

**Compare and Contrast**: What did you learn about stage management from the clips? What roles and responsibilities did they mention? What are some things you saw them doing?

How might stage management change from each production?

What did you learn from our real, live stage managers? How is the stage manager’s role in the professional world similar/different to the role here at school?

What do you think seems most exciting about stage managing? Most scary?

How might you take down blocking notation?

Try to take down the blocking for the following scene with a diagram

What things might you put in your SM kit?

**Lesson Plan 3: Introduction to Sound**

**Materials Needed:** Sound booth, microphones for demonstration, sound worksheet and key

**Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate their beginning understanding of theatrical sound by taking notes over a sound demonstration and preparing to take a written and practical sound test.

**Hook (3-5 minutes):** Tell students to grab a pencil or pen and then lead them to the sound booth. Ask them if they know what it is. What can they tell you, if anything, about the sound board? What do you know about sound?

**Activity 1 (30-40 minutes):** Hand out the sound worksheet and work your way down the sheet to help students learn the introductory principles of sound. Discuss the mixer and mixer parts, the source, amp, output, how mics work, feedback, balanced lines, xlr cables, and the different types of mics. Always first ask the students what they know about these things before you begin to tell them. Use the sound board as an aid so the students can actually see these items in real life right before their eyes. This is a much better alternative than explaining all these aspects without them having any real reference for how they might actually look/work.

**Activity 2 (15-20 minutes):** Show students how to work a wireless handheld, handheld, and lav microphone. For the handheld and the lav this will include showing them how to hook up the xlr/microphone into the mic/body pack. They should know how to check the batteries, and when they might need to change them. Often for a rehearsal 2 out of 3 bars is fine, but for an actual show all batteries should be full. Give students a chance to handle the mics and the soundboard for themselves. They will be tested on how to hook up a microphone and run it through the mixer during the next class period.

**Wrap-up** **(10 minutes):** Answer any questions the students may have about how to run a mic, or about any of the items we’ve discussed from the worksheet. Make sure students understand that next class period they will be tested over the information they’ve learned so it’s important that they understand and remember all they’ve learned. Students should spend the rest of the period studying for the upcoming test, and asking about anything they are unsure of.

Name:

Intro to Sound

Mixer/Mixer Parts

Source

Amp

Output

How Mics Work

Feedback

Balanced Line

XLR Cable

Why would you want to use an XLR cable?

Types of Mics:

Intro To Sound (Key)

Mixer/Mixer Parts

-Input, EQ, output

-A mixer just takes in sound, reorganizes it, and sends it out somewhere else. It controls and crafts the sound. Sound has to be sent to the proper place at the proper volume, and this is done by the mixer.

-Input is where the sound comes in, or enters the system. This should be done through XLR cables.

-EQ control the sound quality, like the treble and bass of the sound. This shapes the “color” of the sound.

-Gain, or input trim allows you to boost a mic signal up to where the mixer can use it.

Source:

-The sound must enter the system in some way. Through the source. Life sound is captured through a microphone and converted through a mixer. The source for live sound is a mic. The source for pre-recorded sound is whatever device you use to play the sound- the CD player, mp3 player, computer, whatever.

Amp

-The signal coming from the source (microphone or whatever) isn’t powerful enough to drive the speakers. For the signal to be loud enough you need amplification. In most theatre sound systems there is a separate unit that takes the output from the mixer and pumps it up to a strong enough level for the speakers.

Output

There has to be a way for sound to get out of the system so people can hear it. This is the speakers.

How Mics Work

When sounds arrive from the outside world, they move a sensitive membrane called a diaphragm. the diaphragm is connected to a magnet. as the diaphragm moves, the magnet turns these vibrations into electrical impulses and sends them to the rest of the sound system. The microphone converts sound waves into electrical impulses. The mixer and the amp amplify sounds, in turn, and pump them out to a set of speakers. Microphones pick up all sound (good and bad) so picking up bad sound causes feedback.

Feedback

The audio version of a short circuit. it happens when a sound comes out of a speaker and immediately re-enters the sound system through a microphone. Feedback is bad for equipment, can fry electronics, and blow speakers. Turn mic away from speakers, turn down volume, and don’t cover the mic!!

Balanced Line

A balanced line is a microphone cable that sends the signal out on two wires at once, one running from the mixer to the mic and one running from the mic to the mixer. any noise that the cable picks up gets sent in both directions at once, effectively canceling it out. an unbalanced line sends all the noise in a single direction: to the mixer. Balanced lines need what is called a low-impedance mic, which use XLR plugs.

XLR Cable

Run low impedance mics for balanced lines. 3 plugs: one plug for the line running in each direction, and one as a ground wire.

Why would you want to use an XLR cable?

Less feedback

Types of Mics:

**Lav:** Used for interviews and hooks onto the shirt

**Corded mic**: Most reliable but also lame looking. Not good for performing.

**Wireless mic:** These run on batteries, which must be checked all the time. They also use radio frequencies to pick up and transmit sound, and they can pick up interference. On Broadway there are specific frequencies assigned to each show. new show openings can be delayed until another show closes and frees up enough radio channels.

**Body mics**: They have a pencil eraser sized microphone and a cigarette pack sized belt pack. the two pieces are connected by a cord that runs underneath the costume. The belt pack contains the batteries and the transceiver, the part that actually sends out the radio signal. In a perfect work the mic is clipped in the hair , the cord runs down the back of the neck, and the belt pack sits in a pocket in the costume in the small of the actors back. The way to kill a mic is with sweat. If sweat falls on the microphone it will kill it.

**Floor (PZM mics)**: Specifically designed to sit on the floor, where it picks up not only the sound coming directly from the source, but also the sound the bounces off the floor right in front of it, making the microphone more sensitive.

**Shotgun mic**: Picks up the sound of what’s right in front of it, and can be used at long distances. Rejects the sounds to either side of the mic, even if the target sound is far away.

**Hanging mic**

**Lesson Plan 4: Testing Your Sound Skills**

**Materials Needed:** Soundboard, written sound test, microphones

**Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate their mastery of the introductions of how sound works and how to connect a microphone by taking both a written and practical test over theatrical sound.

**Hook (5 minutes):** Give students about five minutes to get in partners or small groups to review for the sound test.

**Activity 1 (20-30 minutes):** Ask students to turn in their notes. Administer the sound test. You can simply give them the note sheet where they must fill it out from memory, or you can come up with something totally different. I find that giving them the note sheet is effective because if they didn’t understand what they wrote down, or if they didn’t write down anything at all then they won’t do well when it’s offered as a test. They were offered many opportunities to ask questions over anything that was unclear or that confused them, so there’s no excuse for them not to do well.

**Activity 2 (40-45 minutes):**  Spend the rest of the class period administering the practical sound test one by one with the soundboard in the sound booth. Students need to show that they know how to work a wireless handheld, handheld, and lav microphone. For the handheld they need to run the xlr from the input to the mic, and for the lav they’ll need to run the the microphone to the body pack. For the lav and the wireless they should know how to check the batteries, and when they might need to change them. Often for a rehearsal 2 out of 3 bars is fine, but for an actual show all batteries should be full. Students should be able to turn all microphones on and run them through the sound board. This includes being able to unmute the mic and adjusting volume levels. This will show that the students could run the microphones for a show, and that they were paying attention the class period before. Again, these tests should take place individually.

**Wrap-up:** Nice job, today! Get ready to put these skills into real practice!

**Lesson Plan 5: Making a Mic Plot and Cueing the Script**

**Materials Needed:** Script and scratch paper

**Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate their practical ability to operate the mics for a production by first completing an actor scene breakdown, and then cueing the mics for the first act of *Fiddler on the Roof* in a script.

**Hook (3-5 minutes):** Finish the practical sound test for all those who have yet to complete it. This test should ensure that all the students know how to operate a mic from the mixer. More specifically, they know how to connect it (in the case of a lav/body pack), turn it on, check to see if the batteries need replacing, how to unmute it, and how to control the volume slider. After this exercise they’ll be totally ready to operate the mics for a production. Ask the students to reiterate how to operate a mic. This could happen in several ways: you could ask a different student to tell the class about each step, students could create an infographic or some other drawing in groups, the class could say together out loud what the different steps are, or students could draw the process on the board, etc. Anything will work- it’s just important to briefly review so all students are clear on the process before they move onto the next necessary step to running sound for a production!

**Activity 1 (55-65 minutes):** First students should complete an actor scene breakdown- this will make the process of of cueing the script much easier. Hand out copies of the first act of the script that students can write on. On a separate piece of paper make a table where all the character names are on a list on the left, and the numbers of the scenes are listed in a row across the top. For each scene mark with an X or some other notation which characters are present (more specifically which ones speak) in each scene. This will make it much easier when deciding which characters will need to share a mic.

After the actor scene breakdown is completed for the first act assign each actor that has speaking parts to a microphone. Number of available channels/microphones will vary, but for this exercise assuming ten (or whatever your system has available) is great. Leads should have their own mic, but there are probably several actors that may need to share mics. On the back of the actor scene breakdown designate each actor to a mic, and detail who will be sharing a mic. Actors who are in the same scene together cannot share a mic. Sharing mics works best when the actors have many scenes in between when they speak, for example one has all their lines during the first act, and the second has all their lines during the 2nd. This gives them plenty of time to switch microphones. For this exercise looking at your actor/scene breakdown will help you easily see which actors are in which scenes together, and where they appear in the act. Again, this will help you tell which actors are best suited to share mics with each other.

Your script should be comprised of standby cues, go cues, and off/mute cues. A standby cue should be written in around 3-5 lines before a mic would need to be turned on/unmuted. This will help you know what to expect during the middle of the show when there are several mics to turn on and off seemingly all at once. Write in a cue to turn the mic on right before the line starts, and off right after the line ends. If you turn the mic on too early then you may catch backstage conversations, and if you start it too late then you’ll cut off some of the actor’s line. If you turn it off too early, again, you could cut off a line, but if you turn it off too late you’ll again possibly encounter backstage conversations. In the professional world you’ll get fired if these things happen, and here at school you’ll likely get in trouble. It’s important to pay close attention to detail, but to keep going if you make a mistake. You can demonstrate how some of these cues might look in the script.

Give the students the rest of the class period to finish this work. If they don’t finish during class, which they likely won’t, they can take it home and finish it for homework. They may also work by themselves or with one partner. It’s likely that some of these cues might change once you start rehearsals and see which characters may not need a mic (if they only have a line or two), or if something within the show calls for a mic to be turned on/off earlier/later than expected.

**Wrap-up (3-5 minutes):** Have a brief discussion about what type of stage management skills the students think, or that they can tell are necessary to work in sound. We can gain these vital skills through hard work in every aspect of technical theatre. Have you made any realizations about what it takes to work in this field?

**Lesson Plan 6: Getting Into Sound**

**Materials Needed:** Note cards, completed script, YouTube clips, mic cue rubrics

**Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate both the ability to practically apply the knowledge they’ve gained thus far, and to also think critically by calling their mic cues during a mock performance, and by participating in small group and class discussions.

**Hook (5-7 minutes):** We’ve talked about SM skills throughout this unit and what lifelong skills it takes to be an effective stage manager. Based on what we’ve learned technically about how to run sound (we’ve yet to talk specifically about sound design)what SM skills do you think it takes to be a great sound designer? The skills that we’ve talked about that great stage manager’s might need may not necessarily apply to sound. That’s ok. It is important, however, to understand that by being well rounded and working in a variety of technical areas we gain skills (life-long skills) that can be applied to important roles such as stage management, and in our personal lives, as well! Students can either write these out on notecards, or share in partners before they share as a class. The discussion can also be expanded into how these skills can **specifically** be applied to their lives outside of class/tech theatre.

**Activity 1 (20-30 minutes):** Please welcome our two special guests from advanced tech- both of whom were once here in your shoes! Allow advanced tech students to give a tutorial on the school’s portable sound board. (If your school doesn’t have any equipment like this that can be easily moved around or demonstrated pick some other aspect of sound that the advanced students can model for the stagecraft students. This is a great opportunity for the older kids to model their skills and abilities, and for the younger kids to see exactly where they could be should they stay in tech.) These advanced students can fill in any blanks about sound and how to connect a system/mic that aren’t already clear. They should also get some hands on opportunities to play with levels, and to hook up microphones into a portable system. This is mainly a chance for students to get yet another experience of working directly with sound, and seeing other ways that it can be applied and used in their schools. Hopefully this experience paired with our past experiences will get them more comfortable with and excited about sound.

After the demonstration is over take a few minutes to ask and have students respond about the experience. What happened? Did you learn anything about sound? What did you like about the experience? What skills do you think you need to operate a board like that?

**Activity 2 (15-20 minutes):** Have a brief class discussion regarding what we have learned so far about what it takes to run sound or to be a sound designer. Draw off of what we’ve discussed (think of our written/practical sound test, mic plotting, and even the script breakdown), and what you already know or have experienced. What SM skills have you noticed that this job requires? Give students a minute or two to think on their own before asking for responses.

Let’s take a minute to watch a clip from an actual professional sound designer to see what other insights we might gain. Play “Meet a Sound Designer” clip from Arts Centre Melbourne.

After clip ask students: What else can you tell about what it takes/what you have to do to be a sound designer, or to work in sound? What did you learn from the video? What skills do you need? SM skills? Have them share in partners and small groups before asking them to share with the class.

Let’s get another perspective from one more sound designer and see what similarities or differences we can find from their experience. Play Introduction to Theatre: Sound Design clip from OCLPhase2.

What similarities or differences did you see between their experiences? What skills can you tell that you need to be a sound designer? What skills did they say you need? Did you learn anything new about what it takes to work for a theatre and design sound?

**Activity 3/Assessment (20-30 minutes):** Now let’s put these mic cues to some practical use. Think about what we’ve learned about the job of a sound designer and the skills necessary to efficiently complete the job as you go through this activity. Get together with your mic plot and 2 other groups. Even if you did the mic plot individually you count as a group.

Assign each group either 1, 2, or 3. (Allow students a moment to decide who is 1, who is 2, and who is 3.) Group one will act out (or read through) 10 pages of the script. (You can cut down on the amount of pages if you have less time. The goal is for the students to get a good variety of action through the pages so that they get experience calling cues for multiple characters and scenarios.) Group 2 (you can designate one person to do this) should call out the mic cues as the “actors” perform. Group 3 will evaluate them with these guidelines:

* Do they have their cues in the right place?
* Were they early or late on a cue?
* Did any of the actor’s words get cut off?
* Do you think they turned the mic off too late?
* Did they forget to turn off a mic?

The group of evaluators should also have the mic list that details which actor is assigned to which mic. They should try to look over this before the “actors” start reading. It’s ok that there will be more parts than there are “actors.” Just take turns reading.

After the reading of the 10 pages is over and group 2 has finished calling cues group 3 will record their scores. Groups should switch roles until each group has fulfilled all 3 roles. Each time a group calls their cues it should be for a different 10 pages- no reading from the script should be repeated. Turn in your evaluations when finished. Have the class come back together.

**Wrap up (5 minutes):** What skills do you need to fulfill this task? Was actually participating in this exercise different than what you thought it would be? What “stage management skills” does this job fulfill? Sound tech/design is one of the most difficult jobs in the industry- it takes so much skill, patience, organization, and attention to detail. I believe it’s a job you could all excel at if you focus and put your mind to it.

Before you go complete an exit card:

(Pass out note cards)

Exit card:

1. What does it take to work sound and to be a sound designer? What abilities do you need? What does the job call for?

2. What did you learn about sound design today that you didn’t know before?

3. What skills does a sound designer need that would also make an efficient/effective stage manager?

Mic Cue Rubric

\_\_/10 All cues in the right place

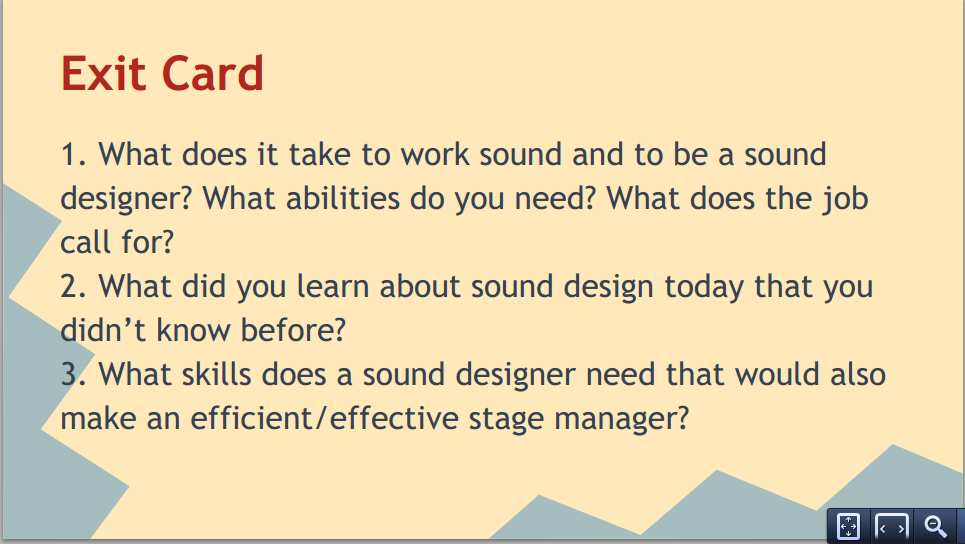
\_\_/10 Never early or late on a cue

\_\_/10 None of actor’s words were ever cut off by turning on a mic too late

\_\_/10 Mic was turned off/muted promptly leaving no opportunity to hear the actor talk backstage

\_\_/10 Mic was never accidentally left on

\_\_\_\_/50



**Lesson Plan 7: Intro to Lighting and Lighting Design**

**Materials Needed:** Lighting worksheet, note cards, lighting powerpoint, lighting YouTube clips

**Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate their basic comprehension and understanding of lighting/lighting design by taking notes and participating in a discussion.

**Hook (3-5 minutes):** Ask students what they know about lighting. Can you think of any shows where the lighting was memorable? Why was it effective? Students may also talk about different types of lights, its effect on mood- it will just depend on what they know.

**Activity 1 (30 minutes):** Hand out lighting worksheets. The worksheet contains basic information of much that students would need to know about the technical aspects of lighting. Journey into the auditorium and to the light booth. Give students a chance to look at all the different types of lights that the theater has- most theaters will have most or all of the types of light shown on the worksheet. With this worksheet students will be able to see the diagrams listed and match them to the actual lights. Students should both look at how the lights hang in the theater as well as up close. Show students any lights that may be in storage or sitting around the space. The worksheet (and the key) detail ellipsoidals/source 4 lights, par cans, scoops, fresnels, and strip lights. Show them the barn doors and how they function, as well as the purpose of both gels and gobos. Explain that most are used for soft lights and that the ellipsoidals are used for hard lighting. What are the benefits and drawbacks of hard light/soft lighting instruments? What does the light look like? What about cost differences?

It is a good idea to give students a brief explanation of the voltage, wattage, and amperage associated with lighting and electricity, as well. If you’re going to be a lighting technician you have to understand these things so you don’t bust circuits and lights. It’s important for students to take notes over these things and commit them to memory so that students can be prepared for the upcoming tech olympics which will take place on the final day of the unit. Also, like we’ve discussed across the unit, it’s so important to be well-rounded artists. Not every aspect of design/tech theatre has to be your favorite, but it’s important to know a little bit about everything. Learn as much as you can! You never know what you’ll end up doing or where certain skills will be called upon. It may become necessary some day for some reason that you help with lighting, sound, or any other area of tech theatre. You may not be an expert, but the more you know the better. You never know where else these skills could be useful or come into play in your life!

Go up into the light booth and take a look at how the board works. Students should be aware of the different lighting areas of the stage- briefly show them how they might light these different areas instead of having a general wash the whole show. They should also see how lighting the cyc works. Why might you want to light the cyc? What does that add to the mood or feeling of a show? Bring down one of the electrics so that students can see how the lights hang. Show them how to hang and focus a light. You may also choose to have the students choose to do this, as well, but we typically leave this for advanced tech students.

**Activity 2 (30 minutes):** Next move back into the classroom to discuss the heart and soul of lighting. The most important thing to understand about lighting is that it can tell us everything about mood, characters, and relationships. I use a lighting powerpoint made based off of lighting in film, but I think you will find that the principles still apply directly to theatre.

What can you tell about these pictures. Two are of Frodo from *The Lord of the Rings* in the spider’s cave (featuring the light of Earendil) where everything is dark except for the bright light given to him from Galadriel. The other is a warm picture of the council at Rivendell. (Knowledge of the LOTR franchise helps, but is not requisite in any way for this discussion.) What can you tell about the difference between these two places? Which seems safe? Rivendell features warm light and is beautiful- it seems comfortable and peaceful. And, in fact, in the film Rivendell is a sort of safe haven within the world. In the dark photos Frodo is in terrible danger which is totally indicative by the lighting. It makes us feel uncomfortable. It is only when he remembers the light of Earendil that he is saved. Again, it is the light that pierces through the darkness and saves him. It acts as a symbol of safety, as well as the division between good and evil. Questioning and discussion will help them see the symbolism and analysis that goes behind lighting.

The next slide shows two people in black silhouette against the bright, harsh light of a window. (The image comes from *Catch Me if You Can*.) What can you tell about what’s happening? What can you tell about the relationship between these people, or the mood. Students will be able to tell that the mood is tense, and that there seems to be some sort of emotional strain between the characters. We can tell this because of the harsh lighting and shadows in the shot. If it was warm, soft light instead of the harsh light in the photo the mood would be different. What type of stage light would we use for harsh lighting?

In the next few pictures featured ask students what they can tell about the character, mood, and setting based on the lighting. How does it make us feel as an audience? Why? What effect does it have.

Briefly talk about 3 point lighting, which functions differently on a stage than in film, but still definitely exists. There has to be a main light source, a fill light for shadows (unless you want shadows for some sort of thematic/mood reason), and a backlight to add dimension and at times an intentional glow.

The next few slides of the powerpoint emphasize the difference in look and feel of soft and hard lighting. What can we tell about the characters/setting/mood/etc. because of the lighting? When would we use hard lighting or soft lighting? What lighting instruments use soft light, and which use hard? (Continue to reiterate these questions as students solidify the different types of light and lighting instruments in their mind. This repetitive process will also help them think like a lighting designer as they analyze what types of light will create different effects/moods on stage. See how soft lighting is so warm, beautiful, and calming? It makes us feel a certain way and comes with certain assumptions, meaning that when everything is lit with soft lighting we often assume the best instead of the worst in characters/settings/moods, etc.

What effects do side, top, back, and bottom lighting have? What do they tell us about character, atmosphere, and mood? How do they do this? If someone is lit light this what assumptions do we make about them? What power does lighting have? How important is it to design lighting that fits the mood of the story, as well as the atmosphere of the world, and the relationship between the characters? Throughout this discussion feel free to have students first discuss in pairs or small groups before they share with the class, especially if they are showing difficulty forming responses.

**Activity 3/Assessment (10 minutes): Play “Behind the scenes- Lighting Design by Don Holder” clip by Spider-Man Turn Off the Dark on YouTube.** How does the lighting in this musical match the mood/feeling of the comic book? How is it true to the world? What does it tell us about the show and about the characters? Share your thoughts with a partner. Call on a few students to share with the class.

**Play Steven Cleburg Lighting Process video from OCLPhase2 on YouTube.** This video talks about both aspects of lighting design and more technical aspects like light plots.

As an informal assessment pass out notecards and have students complete an exit card that will ask them to critically analyze what they’ve learned today. They should complete the following questions:

1. Name 2-3 things you learned about lighting from the video that you didn’t know, or that we haven’t discussed.

2. How does lighting affect mood? When might you use soft lighting, and when would you use hard lighting?

3. What SM skills do you think it takes to be a lighting technician/designer?

**Lesson Plan 8: Intro to Lighting and Lighting Design**

**Materials Needed:** Scripts, gels, computers

**Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate their ability to think like a lighting designer as they create a lighting design complete with analysis for a scene in *The Fiddler on the Roof.*

**Hook (5-7 minutes):** Pass out a script to each student. Today we’re putting what we discussed about how lighting affects mood into action. You will create a lighting design for one of the scenes from *The Fiddler on the Roof.* Pick a scene from the script that you’d like to design the lighting for. You’ll be designing the light for the entire scene, not just a part of it

**Activity 1 (35-45 minutes):** Move to the computer lab. Find three different mood pictures that show how you’d like the lighting to look for the scene. Give 5-7 sentences of analysis for each picture. Why did you choose it? What mood does it set for the scene? What pages does this photo fit? Does the mood photo represent the lighting for the entire scene or just part of it? What does the lighting in the picture tell us about the lighting in the scene?

Next, pick out 3-5 different gels you’d like to use for the scene. Students may look through sample Rosco gels and must pick specific gels they’d like to use. Each gel selection must be followed by 3-5 sentences explaining why they chose the gel, and detailing where they’d use the gel in the scene.

**Activity 2 (20 minutes):** Have students print out their lighting design handouts in the lab and then move to the classroom. Each student should present their lighting design to the class. They should show their mood pictures and gel choices along with their explanation of their choices.

**Wrap-up (5 minutes):** What have you learned about being a lighting designer today? What SM skills does it take to be a lighting designer? What did you learn from your peers?

**Lesson Plan 9: How-To’s of Publicity**

**Materials Needed:** Computer lab

**Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding and ability of how to publicize a show by participating in a discussion, brainstorming, and creating their own publicity for *The Fiddler on the Roof.*

**Hook (3-5 minutes): Play “Packed to the Rafters- A Guide to amateur and fringe theatre publicity.” by AmateurStage on YouTube.** Can you tell what we’ll be talking about this class period? Publicity! Publicity is so important to the tech theatre process, but is often left out or forgotten. We have so much power and so many opportunities to advertise within our school and within the community for our shows.

**Activity 1 (15-20 minutes):** Brainstorm as a class ways that you can publicize a show. Some possible answers and ways to publicize might include creating a facebook event, making facebook statuses, sending tweets, making instagram posts, holding fundraisers like carwashes etc., flyers, use of photoshop, newspaper posts, the school newspaper, school tv, local radio broadcasts, etc.

Students can also share ways that they’ve seen their program advertise in these ways. What do our posters usually look like? Who do they appeal to? Have we advertised through the school tv station or newspaper? What was the outcome?

As new ideas are offered, either by the instructor or student, discuss ways to implement them and how they’d be effective publicity endeavors. For example, while promoting the production students can make Facebook events and posts, as well as daily tweets and Instagram posts promoting the show. Posts can include interesting things about the show like jokes, pictures of the set, and pictures of the costumes/set- things that get people interested and engaged in the production. Additionally, this is a great way to spread the word about the production to people outside of the school or who wouldn’t normally get a chance to hear about it.

Carwashes and other fundraisers (where you ask for donations for a service instead of a set price) in a busy part of town helps advertise to the community about the upcoming production. It also helps them meet the people actually involved in the production. Brief newspaper ads appeal to older demographics and, again, spread the word about the show to people who might not normally hear about it. These brief discussions about each publicity type help students understand the benefits of each option, and ways they might go about doing it.

**Activity 2 (50-55 minutes):** It’s time to get your hands dirty in the world of publicity. You may work alone or with a partner but you must create a 100 word newspaper advertisement for an actual newspaper in the area. This short ad must give a teaser for the production that will make people want to attend. You should also include location, show dates, times, and prices. You’ll also want to include some details that are specific to your particular show/program. This may include anecdotes, quotes, and names of people in your company. This ad will appeal to older demographics, or those who read the newspaper regularly. This ad should be for the show we’re currently working on in this school- *Fiddler on the Roof*.

You must also create a flyer to appear throughout the school that is an advertisement for the production. It should appeal to **students**, and more specifically students that wouldn’t normally be inside of your demographic. These are not people that would normally attend your shows. This means you shouldn’t put inside jokes into the flyer that would require someone to be familiar with the show to understand it. (A person like this is already inside of your demographic.) A great way to think about this is creating a meme. You should have some type of image, a funny caption, and information for the show. When you’re picking the image you should consider a few things- including images of actors/characters that are actually in the show, and pop culture references. The picture has to be engaging and inviting. It should make someone stop as they’re walking down the hall. Now for this particular assignment you won’t be able to get actual pictures of actors from your production in costume, etc. but it’s something to think about as you’re making actual publicity flyers. You will create this flyer for one of the productions we’ve produced this year (or for the one we’re working on right now).

Ex: For the musical *Grease* you could have a picture of the actresses who play the pink ladies (or a picture of the actresses from the movie if you were working on it for this assignment) with a caption that reads “The original Mean Girls.” This is a pop culture reference that will engage students, and that applies to the production. Clearly it doesn’t need to tell the story of the entire show, but it gets students interested in an aspect of it. Ideally you’d have at least 3 different designs of flyers for the show around the school so there’s room for lots of ideas.

Spend the rest of the class period in the computer lab for students to complete these flyers/newspaper ads.

**Wrap up-** What you don’t finish in class will have to be finished at home for homework. The best flyers will actually be featured around the school, and we will try to publish the most polished, engaging newspaper ad in an actual local newspaper.

**Lesson Plan 10: Tech Olympics**

**Materials Needed:** Pack of crayons, gels, script library for students to pull from, stage makeup practice sheets, blank paper

**Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate their competence and mastery of the tech skills they’ve learned throughout this unit (as well as skills they may have gained throughout the year) by competing in groups in a tech Olympics.

**Hook (3-5 minutes):** It’s time for the tech Olympics! The winning team gets extra credit- so pick your best team right now! Your teams can be between 4 and 6 people.

**Activity 1 (60-65 minutes)** Teams will take an Olympic scoresheet. There will be 7 different categories that students can compete in. Under each category will be a variety of tasks each worth a different amount of possible points. The team with the most points at the end of the Olympics wins. After each item is complete groups will need to take it to a TA or instructor in order to get their work scored- so just completing a task will not assure them full points. The categories and tasks are as follows:

**Lighting**

Design the light for a scene. You must select 3 gels (complete with name and number) and describe why you want to use them. You must also draw a mood picture to the best of your abilities with the crayons available and describe how it fits the lighting in the scene. (20 points)

**Sound**

Sound Q&A where teams send one member of their group to the instructor to answer various sound questions.

What is a balanced line? (5 points)

How do mics work? (10 points each)

Describe what feedback is and how it works. (5 points each)

List and describe the different type of mics. (5 points each)

What does a mixer do? (10 points)

What are gain and EQ? (10 points)

What are the benefits of using a wired mic over a wireless? Why might you prefer a wireless? (10 points)

**Makeup**

Design the makeup for a character in a scene using crayons on a stage makeup practice sheet. (20 points)

**Set**

Design the set for a script. Draft a full design on paper with pen/pencil. (75 points)

**Publicity**

Design a publicity flyer based off of a play (not *Fiddler on the Roof*), or a scene. Students will have paper available and crayons. (50 points)

**Stage management**

Take down the blocking for a scene (50 points)

Stage management Q&A where teams send one member of their group to the instructor to answer various stage management questions. (25 points each)

* What do you do about an actor who’s always late?
* How might you handle a situation where the actor keeps paraphrasing a line?
* What do you do if an actor starts to change blocking/direction during a show for laughs or some other effect?
* What type of paperwork would you need to complete as a stage manager? How would you handle so much paperwork and scheduling?
* In what ways will you always be prepared as a stage manager? (Always have your SM kit)
* How familiar do you need to be with a script as a SM?
* What would you do if the director came to you upset telling you that you were missing a prop? What would you do if he or she was upset about a prop being made incorrectly/looking wrong?
* How would you mediate an argument between crew members or actors?
* How would you handle a rehearsal where the actors won’t stop talking?
* How would you handle time during a meeting or rehearsal?
* What will you do if you miss a cue during a show?
* How will you anticipate problems within your crew, the actors, and the design team? How can you always be proactive?
* What can you do to make tech week run as smoothly as possible?
* What will you do if you can tell a director has lost track of time? What if it seems they will run late? Who should be the one to stop rehearsal for breaks/lunch?

**Miscellaneous**

Complete an actor scene breakdown for an entire script (100 points)

Design a prop for one of the shows using scrap wood from the tech shop (100 points)

Complete a design breakdown for all of the visual elements in a scene (100 points)

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**Wrap up (3-5 minutes):** Ask students to total up all their scores to determine the winner. Everyone congratulate this team and award them extra credit. They truly are the masters of technical theatre in the class! If there’s time briefly discuss what students learned/their experience in the tech olympics.

**TEAM NAME:**

Team members:

**Tech Olympics**

The winners of this competition will receive both bragging rights, and extra credit! In teams of 4-6 you will work together to complete various tasks on this list. You may only ask the questions once, but you can complete as many tasks as you wish in the time provided for different scenes. Once you’ve completed a task or if you’d like to ask a question you must go to an instructor/TA for scoring!

**Lighting**

Design the light for a scene. You must select 3 gels (complete with name and number) and describe why you want to use them. You must also draw a mood picture to the best of your abilities with the crayons available and describe how it fits the lighting in the scene. (20 points)

Total points awarded:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Sound**

Sound Q&A where teams send one member of their group to the instructor to answer various sound questions. (Between 5 and 10 points each)

Total points awarded:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Makeup**

Design the makeup for a character in a scene using crayons on a stage makeup practice sheet. (20 points)

Total points awarded:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Set**

Design the set for a script. Draft a full design on paper with pen/pencil. (75 points)

Total points awarded:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Publicity**

* Design a publicity flyer based off of a play (not *Fiddler on the Roof*), or a scene. You will have paper available, and crayons. It should appeal to students, and those who wouldn’t normally be interested in seeing plays. (50 points)
* Create a 100 word newspaper ad for a show that would appeal to an older demographic. (20 points)

Total points awarded:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Stage management**

* Take down the blocking for a scene (50 points)
* Stage management Q&A where teams send one member of their group to the instructor to answer various stage management questions. (25 points each)

Total points awarded:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Miscellaneous**

* Complete an actor scene breakdown for an entire script (100 points)
* Design a prop for one of the shows using scrap wood from the tech shop (100 points)
* Complete a design breakdown for all of the visual elements in a scene (100 points)

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Total points awarded:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Grand total:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ points**