**Musical Theatre Performance** by Gayle Hansen

**Objective**: Students will demonstrate their understanding of musical theatre by performing a musical theatre act with a song and body movement.

**Class Level:** Beginning

**Main Concepts**: Voice, Dance

**1994 National Standards:**

CONTENT STANDARD 2: Acting by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisations and informal or formal productions.

CONTENT STANDARD 6: Comparing and integrating art forms by analyzing traditional theatre, dance, music, and visual arts, and new art forms.

**Lesson Plans**

Lesson 1: Introduction to Musical Theatre

Students will demonstrate their knowledge of musical theatre by filling out a KWL form which will include what they know, what they want to know, and what they learn.

Lesson 2: Typing the Voice

Students will demonstrate a knowledge of their voice type and vocal range by singing few bars of music in their range.

Lesson 3: Vocal Warm Ups and Style of Singing

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of vocal warm ups and technique by learning and performing them that day.

Lesson 4: Final Choice of Musical Scene, Solo, Duet, Ensemble, etc.

Students will choose their final choice of their musical performance (and know if they are doing a solo, duet, trio, or ensemble) by turning in the Musical Theatre Performance Checklist.

Lesson 5: Body Movements and Dance

Students will demonstrate and understanding of body movements and dance steps for musical theatre by performing a simple choreographed dance that will give them ideas for their final performance.

Lesson 6: Practice Makes Perfect

Students will demonstrate and understanding of the importance of "perfect" practice by giving a perfect dress rehearsal preview of their performance.

Lesson 7: Musical Theatre Performance

Students will demonstrate an understanding of doing a musical theatre performance by performing their musical act in class.

Lesson 8: INTRODUCTION or REVIEW of Musical Theatre

Students will demonstrate an understanding of terms and singing styles of musical theatre by watching a musical show and writing down the musical terms and singing styles in the show. (They also will hand in their musical report if this is the last lesson of the unit.)

**Lesson 1: Introduction to Musical Theatre**

**Objective**

Students will demonstrate their knowledge of musical theatre by filling out a KWL form which will include what they know, what they want to know, and what they learn.

**Materials Needed**

Copies of the audition handout with KWL sections, copies of other handouts such as the Musical Theatre Unit Assignment Sheet, Musical Theatre Grade Sheet, Musical Video Report,  clipboard, glasses, video and DVD player with television, and movie musicals to show examples.  The following theatre musicals can be used:  *The Sound of Music, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, Phantom of the Opera, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat,Pippen, The Pirates of Penzance, Camelot,*and *Porgy and Bess.*

**Related Documents**

* Musical Theatre Audition Form (KWL)
* Musical Theatre Unit Assignment Sheet
* Musical Theatre Grade Sheet
* Musical Video Report

**Lesson Directions**

**Anticipatory Set/Hook**

As students enter the teacher has a clipboard and glasses acting as a director desperate to hire singers and actors for a musical review.  Each student is given an audition form that is actually a KWL form to assess their musical theatre knowledge.  For the audition the students can share something they know about musical theatre or even sing a few measures from a song in a musical.  Of course after each student does their audition they are hired on the spot to be in the musical review at the end of this unit.

**Instruction**

Transition:  The director character states that she has hired a teacher to help the students learn all about musical theatre so please now pay attention to the teacher.  The teacher breaks character and begins to talk about musical theatre history and leads into showing the students different genres of musical theatre from prepared clips of musical theatre movies.  It is also possible to do a Teacher-in-Role where the students may interview the teacher as the “director” about musical theatre.

Directions:  The students are instructed to fill in the portion on their audition sheet of the new things they learn today on theatre musicals as they watch each sample.

Modeling:  The teacher will show an audition KWL form all filled out and state it will be turned in at the end of class.

Instruction:  The teacher will show selected clips from the following musical theatre movies to point out certain aspects of musical theatre:  *Porgy and Bess, The Pirates of Penzance* are opera or operetta, *Phantom of the Opera* is a modern musical, *Seven Brides* *for Seven Brothers* is the classic American musical, *Pippin* show a solo, *Camelot* show a duet, *Sound of Music* show an ensemble, and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor* *Dreamcoat*show a dance scene with the character Jacob sing talking his words.

DISCUSSION AND CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANING:

Throughout the viewing of the musical theatre excerpts, asking questions of the students is helpful at this time along with the student’s comments.

Independent Practice:  The students are instructed to write down everything they learned new today and then pass in their audition KWL forms to the teacher.

CLOSURE:

At this time the teacher passes out the musical theatre syllabus and requirements for this class to remind the students that what they watched today they will have a chance to do in class.  Please reassure those students who may not feel confident in singing that there are pieces they can do that are more talk-singing then regular singing.

**Assessment**

The KWL part of the audition sheet is for the teacher to assess what the students already know and what can be adapted to this unit for what they want to know.  The informal assessment is when the students either sing of share something from their KWL with the class.

**Lesson 2: Typing the Voice**

**Objective**

Students will demonstrate a knowledge of their voice type and vocal range by singing few bars of music in their range.

**Materials Needed**

Piano or keyboard, many various musical theatre sheets of music, if the teacher is unable to type the students voices then have a vocal coach come into the class, copies of the voice ranges and types of voices.

**Related Documents**

* Voice Ranges and Types

**Lesson Directions**

**Anticipatory Set/Hook**

Broadway music songs are playing as the students walk into class.

**Instruction**

Transition:  The teacher discusses how anyone can sing or talk sings a musical song.  Refer to the excerpts you showed the students from last class where some of the songs had the character talk singing.  Reassure the students if they know their singing range and type of voice then they can choose the perfect musical song for them to perform.

Modeling:  Have a volunteer or the teacher model singing scales up and down to find their singing range.  Once they know their range then they can be typed as a bass, baritone, tenor, alto, second soprano, or soprano and so forth.

Directions:  Explain to the students they will all warm up together and then in groups of two or three will be singing scales so the teacher or vocal coach can determine their range.  While others are having their voices checked they can start looking at the provided sheets of music to choose from or choose one of their own.  A teacher’s assistant, or a responsible student, can be in charge of the materials students can look through while others are getting their voices typed.

Instruction:  The teacher or vocal coach has each student sing scales and then lets them know their vocal range and their type of voice such as bass, soprano, etc.  It really would be good to have a vocal coach do this so the teacher can then help the students to pick out some possible music pieces in their range.

Independent Practice:  When students choose some possible songs they can go back to the vocal coach or have the teacher play the tune on the piano and they sing along to be sure it is in their range.  The teacher also gives the student participation points when they have completed this aspect of voice typing.

CLOSURE:

Have students gather together and explain to them that they will have more class time to choose a musical piece to perform.  Let them know if they did not see anything they are interested in from class then they can certainly get their own music to work on and bring to class.

**Assessment**

The students are assessed on their participation if they were willing to get their voice typed and they actively searched for music and sang some bars of their choice for the teacher that day.  This activity is also worth points and will be part of their grade for this unit.

**Lesson 3: Vocal Warm Ups and Style of Singing**

**Objective**

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of vocal warm ups and technique by learning and performing them that day.

**Materials Needed**

Copies of the handout Warm Up Exercises, and large area for the students to do these exercises.  A CD player and the following Broadway musical songs that show styles of singing Think of Me from *Phantom of the Opera*-classical style, Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better from *Annie Get Your Gun*-classic belt and speak singing style and Good Morning Baltimore from *Hairspray*-pop belt style.

**Related Documents**

* Warm Up Exercises

**Lesson Directions**

**Anticipatory Set/Hook**

Students walk into the classroom and written on the white board is the message please do not use your voice at all for now.  The teacher will probably need to stand in the front of the class to be sure the students see the message and follow through.

**Instruction**

Transition:  Tell the students that it is time to break the silence and discuss how valuable the voice is.  Explain to the students that in a theatre performance whether it is a musical or not, the voice is an important tool to use and needs to be exercised just as the body is exercised.  Go into the vocal warm ups (see attached handout).  The students will be lying down at one point so the room needs to have a large amount of open space, or take the students to another room or the stage.

DIRECTIONS, MODELING, GUIDED PRACTICE AND GROUP PRACTICE:

These will all happen throughout this teaching experience.  The teacher will explain the warm up, model the warm up, let the group practice the warm up, and give guided practice where needed.  This will be done for each exercise.  Students will probably be giving other comments and ways to warm up that they may have learned from choir, being in musicals, and such.  Please allow this pooled knowledge to be discussed and even practiced where practical.  The teacher can also let students teach and demonstrate what they know in this field.  Tongue twisters are also fun and some students usually have some of their favorites to share.  When it comes time to do voice styles explain the different styles and play examples of them from musical shows.  Encourage the students to try these different styles and perform them in class.  This can be done by them singing a common song such as “America” or “Jingle Bells.” The teacher along with each student can help the student decide which style of singing best fits their abilities at this time.  Those who sing classical songs need the ability to support from the diaphragm and open and relax the throat.  Others may be more comfortable singing in a pop fashion style, while still others who have a hard time carrying a tune can do better at speak singing.

CLOSURE:

At this time explain to the students that they now they have their voice range, type, and style which should help them narrow down their musical songs to perform.  Remind them how the voice is an extremely valuable tool in theatre and they need to always exercise it just as they do their bodies.  Let the students know that next class they will have time to pick their final musical performance, and if they do not want what is available at school then they must bring in their own musical choice for their next class.

**Assessment**

Students will be assessed throughout the class period on their participation and effort in doing the warm ups and trying different styles of voices.

**Lesson 4: Final Choice of Musical Scene, Solo, Duet, Ensemble, etc.**

**Objective**

Students will choose their final choice of their musical performance (and know if they are doing a solo, duet, trio, or ensemble) by turning in the Musical Theatre Performance Checklist.

**Materials Needed**

Various musical theatre scripts and music for the students to choose from, copies of the handout Musical Theatre Performance Checklist, a prepared musical performance by live people or from a DVD with the necessary things such as a piano, or CD player, or DVD player and television.

**Related Documents**

* Musical Theatre Performance Checklist

**Lesson Directions**

**Anticipatory Set/Hook**

This can be done by actual people or a clip from a DVD.  Show a musical performance that has all the required aspects from the Musical Theatre Grading Sheet.  This means a leadinta, song, body movements, etc.

**Instruction**

Transition:  Explain to the students that they just saw a model of what their final performance needs to include.  Point out the leadinta, song, body movements, and so forth.  Tell the students it is time for them to make their final choice today and the teacher will roam the room to assist them in any way.  Remind them that they should pick a musical performance that fits their voice type.

Directions:  The teacher will pass out the Musical Theatre Checklist handout and instruct the students that they must have the teacher approve their performance choice and check off that they completed their Musical Theatre Checklist handout.  It should also be recommended that props and costumes can help the students get into character but it is not required.

Modeling:  Show the students a form filled out and explain the points it is worth for that day.

Guided, Group, and Independent Practice:  This will depend if students choose to work alone or in groups, and the teacher will rove around the students to assist them in any way to make their final choice of their musical performance.

CLOSURE:

Have the students gather together after the teacher has approved their musical performance piece and Musical Theatre Checklist handout.  Have the students share what they choose and why if there is time.  Reassure the students that they will have time to work on their scenes in class, but they are responsible to bring their music and such to work with.

**Assessment**

The student’s assessment will be their filled out handout and they will receive points for completing this task in class.

**Lesson 5: Body Movements and Dance**

**Objective**

Students will demonstrate and understanding of body movements and dance steps for musical theatre by performing a simple choreographed dance that will give them ideas for their final performance.

**Materials Needed**

DVD or video player and television, camera to record students dancing, DVD or video of *Cats*, and *Singing in the Rain*, CD player, CD with the song “One Singular Sensation” from *Chorus Line*,

Video or DVD of non-professionals doing a poor job of body movements in a musical if available from past performances, and top hats.

**Lesson Directions**

**Anticipatory Set/Hook**

If possible show a video or DVD of some kids performing a musical number poorly, if this is not possible then act out poor body movements and such.  Point out because of the bad body movements and dance this did not come across well.  Now show professionals dancing in *Cats* and *Singing in the Rain*.

**Instruction**

Transition:  Discuss how body movement and dance is so important in musical theatre.  Talk about movements needing to be complete, crisp, and sharp.  Discuss that just as we learned that the voice is a tool in theatre, so is the body.

Modeling:  The teacher can now show the students simple dance steps to the song “One Singular Sensation” from *Chorus Line*.

Directions:  The teacher now instructs the students that they will be learning these simple steps and other body movements and performing them at the end of the class.

Instruction:  The teacher (or have a dance teacher come in) instructs the students in body warm ups and then into choreographed dance steps. The steps taught will include body movements with a hat, dance steps such as the jazz square, kicks, pivots, and so forth.  The students will only learn seven sets of eight beats to keep it simple.

Checking for Understanding:  The teacher must take time to check the students if they are grasping the steps and movements.  If other students catch on quicker they can help the other students.

Group Practice:  The students will continue to practice as a group with the teacher checking on their progress.

 CLOSURE:

If possible tape the students dancing and play it back for them to see themselves.  If this is not possible then have half the students dance while others watch and then switch groups.  Point out again the good body movements and those that need to be improved on with the reminder how important the body and the voice are in musical theatre. Remind the students that next time they meet they will be practicing their performances in class, so they need to bring their music, and their own accompaniment.  This means they will need to record the piano music to practice with since there is only one piano.  It also means they need to bring their own CD players since there is only one CD player.

**Assessment**

Students will receive participation points for this exercise and how well they did their body movements.  The dance steps are only if they tried to do them since some students are not inclined to dancing.

**Lesson 6: Practice Makes Perfect**

**Objective**

Students will demonstrate and understanding of the importance of "perfect" practice by giving a perfect dress rehearsal preview of their performance.

**Materials Needed**

 Piano, CD player, glasses, and clipboard, copies of Musical Theatre Grade Sheet.

**Related Documents**

* Musical Grade Sheet Handout

**Lesson Directions**

**Anticipatory Set/Hook**

The teacher role plays the New York director again and calls the students to attention to explain their dress rehearsal.  The director is excited at their progress and reassures them she is only here to help them polish their acts by perfect practice.  She explains perfect practice is the actor focusing on the task at all times, doing their best, and following directions so they look their best on stage.  She gives any other tips but lets the teacher come back to help.

**Instruction**

Transition:  The teacher goes back into the teaching mode and explains to the students that they will go to the stage to practice.  The teacher explains that everyone will have a turn to perform on stage, but while they are waiting they should practice in other areas of the auditorium.  The teacher will also give each performance act a number and they must come when called.

Modeling and Directions:  The teacher will model what is expected of the students.   The teacher models how each act should present themselves, how to use their body and voice, and what they will be graded on.   She will call out a number and have that performer come on stage, ask them to ask her when they can start the performance, the performer must state their name, title of the play, title of the song, character names, perform, listen to direction to improve the performance, leave when dismissed, and then the teacher calls the next numbered performance, and so forth.

Guided Practice and Independent Practice:  The teacher will work with each performance to help them improve their act.  If there is time it would be nice for the students to practice what they learned from the teacher, and then do it again. While students are waiting for their turn they should be doing independent practice.

CLOSURE:

After the last act is previewed the teacher gathers all the students.  At this time the teacher explains that next class period the students will be performing and to again bring everything they will need.  They will have a CD player and piano to use, but they may not practice in class.  They are expected to perform and be a great audience next time they come in. Answer any questions if any at this time too.

**Assessment**

The teacher will use the Musical Theatre Grade Sheet to assess the students dress rehearsal, and give them tips to improve their performance.

**Author's Notes**

It should be noted that the word “perfect” in this sense means that the students will take this dress rehearsal seriously, and do it to the best of their ability as if it was an actual performance.

**Lesson 7: Musical Theatre Performance**

**Objective**

Students will demonstrate an understanding of doing a musical theatre performance by performing their musical act in class.

**Materials Needed**

Copies of the Musical Theatre Grade Sheet, piano, CD player, top hat with names of the acts in it, glasses

**Related Documents**

* Musical Theatre Grade Sheet

**Lesson Directions**

**Anticipatory Set/Hook**

New York Director comes in all dressed up to announce the show and to thank the Mountain View Students for filling in last minute to give us an amazing Broadway Musical Review.  She reaches into a top hat and pulls out the first act to perform.

**Instruction**

Transition:  The director is done and the teacher comes back to grade the students.

Directions:  The teacher reminds the students of the grading sheet she is using and that they have a copy of it too so they know how they will be graded.

Modeling:  The teacher models how each act should present themselves, how to use their body and voice, and what they will be graded on.

Discussion:  After each act the students have a chance to discuss the process and finished product of the act.

CLOSURE:

The director comes back and again thanks everyone for their tremendous job and talented acts, and invites them to perform anytime for her on Broadway.

**Assessment**

Please see the attached sheet for the grading criteria for this performance.