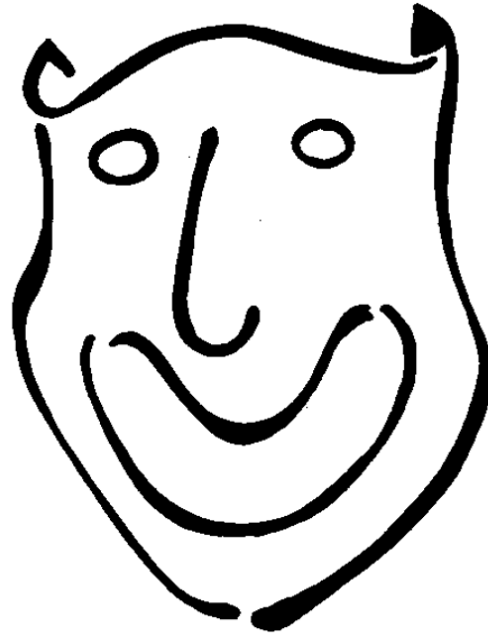


“Truth in Comedy”

Cole Olson



Grade 12

Dramatic Arts

Comedy: Acting, Movement, Speech and History

March 4 - 13

Holy Trinity Academy

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Performance Rubric	A rubric highlighting the skills of the unit that are to be incorporated and mastered in the comedic scenes.	To show students what they will be graded on, and to act as a recording tool for the teacher to see exactly which skills were learned and used in the scene.	12
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Unit Plan Rationale

I have created this unit to provide students with an engaging, entertaining, and creative medium for learning and practicing performance skills that can be applied in life outside of a theatrical perspective. Skills such as comfort with one's own body and a confidence while speaking are all essential skills that drama and performance can reinforce to help students of drama in their everyday lives. I chose to focus these skills around the art of comedy, as it is through our ability to laugh and entertain one another that we enrich every part of our lives with humor and play. As drama is the art of playing, the skills students will learn through their exploration of comedic performance will help them to build confidence and comfort in their own movement, speaking skills and creativity.

This unit is an excellent tool for helping students to gain valuable skills that can be used out of the theatre by exploring comedy by incorporating multiple units from Alberta Education's high school Drama Program of Study. Comedy performance encompasses a large variety of skills required to find honest humor that can be delivered to an audience, and students will be given the chance to explore these skills through the study of movement, speech, improvisation, character work, acting and theatre studies. This unit is designed to not only instruct students about comedy on the stage, but how numerous different elements of theatre and drama can be used and applied to create humor.

Unit Objective & Skills

Unit Objective:

Students will perform short comedic scenes from Moss Hart's and George Kaufman's three act comedy, "You Can't Take it With You", that highlights the multitude of comedic performance skills and ability to create humor through use of voice, movement, character creation, and acting ability.

Top Skills:

- *Comedic Movement*
- *Characterization*
- *Projection*
- *Pacing*
- *Comedic Devices*
- *Improvisation*
- *History of Comedy Knowledge*

Lesson Plan Skill Breakdown:

1. **"You Can't Take it With You" Introduction:**
History of Comedy Knowledge
2. **Finding Your Voice:**
Characterization, Projection, Pacing
3. **Creating A Character:**
Characterization, Comedic Movement
4. **Advancing and Conflict:**
Characterization, Pacing, Comedic Devices, Improvisation
5. **Improvisation Games:**
Characterization, Pacing, Comedic Devices, Improvisation
6. **Scene Assignment:**
History of Comedy Knowledge, Characterization
7. **Scene Rehearsal:**
Characterization, Pacing, Comedic Devices, Comedic Movement, Projection
8. **Scene Performance:**
Characterization, Pacing, Comedic Devices, Comedic Movement, Projection

Unit Overview

Lesson 1 - "You Can't Take it With You" Introduction:

- **Students will demonstrate an understanding of the characters and plot of the play "You Can't Take it With You".**
Group Skipping Rope, "Try Not to Laugh" Warm-up, Two Truths and a Lie, Discussion on the art of comedy, Brief slideshow on the history of comedic performance, introductory reading of play, Overview of the play's plot and characters
Acting (1-4), Theatre Studies (1,2, 4,5)

Lesson 2 - Finding Your Voice:

- **Students will read sections of the play's script with distinct and original character voices with precise timing, pacing and projection.**
Walking Warm up, Breathing exercises, relaxation exercise, "Dubbing voices" game, Body and Voice exploration through movement, "You Can't Take it With You" Reader's Theatre
Speech (1-3, 9-11, 17-23)

Lesson 3 - Creating a Character:

- **Students will create short movement performances that showcase a created character through the use of mime and clowning.**
Walking warm-up, Atom, Traffic Warm-up, Mime skills, Clowning skills, Entrances and Exits activity, Short Movement Scene creation
Movement (1-4, 9-24, 26-28)

Lesson 4 - Advancing and Conflict:

- **Students will demonstrate advancing and conflict creation in short improvised scenes.**
Walk and introduce, Blocking and Wimping exercise, Say Yes Exercise, Foil Exercise, 2 minute improve scenes, fight and make up improve scenes, Discussion on Improvisation
Improvisation (1-17)

Lesson 5 - Improvisation Games:

- **Students will display comfort with improvisation techniques through a number of spontaneous games and activities.**
Rock Paper Anything, What Are You Doing?, Helping Hands, The Chair Game, Party Quirks, Story From a Grandparent, Discussion on Improvisation
Improvisation (18,19, 33, 35-38)

Lesson 6 - Scene Assignment:

- **Students will decide upon roles and read through their scenes as a group.**
Class review of the play's plot, Group breakdowns, Group read-through , Group rehearsal
Acting (1-7), Theatre Studies (1,2, 4,5)

Lesson 7 - Scene Rehearsal:

- **Students will apply direction to their scenes, memorize their scripts, and begin to add technical elements to their scenes.**
Walk around, 2 minute improve warm-up, Group rehearsal, Prop and Costume selection
Movement (1-4, 9-24, 26-28), Speech (1-3, 9-11, 17-23), Acting (1-7, 18-22), Technical Theatre Costumes (1-3, 7)

Lesson 8 - Scene Performance:

- **Students will perform their scenes while incorporating ideas and skills about comedic performance taken from lessons previous in the unit.**
Walk around, Breathing exercise, Class performance, Class Discussion, Individual Reflection
Movement (1-4, 9-24, 26-28), Speech (1-3, 9-11, 17-23), Acting (1-7, 18-22), Technical Theatre Costumes (1-3, 7)

“You Can’t Take it With You” Introduction - Lesson Plan

Grade/Subject: Drama 30

Unit: Truth in Comedy

Lesson Duration: 80 min

OUTCOMES FROM ALBERTA PROGRAM OF STUDIES	LEARNING OBJECTIVES	ASSESSMENTS
Analyze text for meaning and character development.	Students will gain an understanding of the elements of humor in a script.	Formative assessment through discussion that requires each student to give their thoughts and understanding of the play.
Analyze a script to identify character, setting and plot.	Students will gain an understanding of the elements in the play that create the humor and set each scene.	Formative assessment through discussion that requires each student to give their thoughts and understanding of the play.
Main Skills		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Comedy Knowledge 		
Materials And Equipment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction Scripts for the class • History of Comedic Performance PowerPoint • Skipping Ropes 		
Introduction (10 min)		
<p><i>Hook/Attention Grabber: Group Skipping</i></p> <p>Students will begin the class by forming a line. The teacher and one student will start with a single long skipping rope, and students will individually run into the rope’s path, jump once, and exit out the other side. Every student must attempt the rope, and the objective is to form a continuous flow of students jumping in and out. If a student does not make it, the class is to all shout “Awe Shucks” and continue playing. Another rope can be added for difficulty, and the entire class can try to skip as one to develop teamwork. This exercise is to get students laughing to create an atmosphere of humor, and show that entertainment can come from mistakes.</p> <p><i>Assessment of Prior Knowledge:</i></p> <p>In a group discussion after warm-up activities, students will talk about their prior knowledge of comedy, and how the art form has moved from stage to the screen. Students will be asked about their favorite comedic actors and shows, and eventually be turned to favorite comedic plays and playwrights to see who is familiar with comedy on the stage.</p> <p><i>Expectations for Learning and Behaviour:</i></p> <p>Class rules of respect and caring for one another will be enforced as students will have to take chances and experiment with the many elements of comedy. Any student who is not respectful or makes other feel insecure about their work will be removed from the classroom setting.</p>		

<p>Advance Organizer/Agenda: “Try Not to Laugh” Warm-up, Two Truths and a Lie, Discussion on the art of comedy, Brief slideshow of comedic performance history, Select readings of play, Overview of the play’s plot and characters</p>
<p>Body (60 min)</p>
<p>Learning Activity #1: “Try Not to Laugh” Warm-up Students will lie on the floor face up. One student will begin the game by trying to make another student who is lying down laugh without touching them. If a student laughs, they must sit up and help the others try and make the rest of the students laugh. The winner is the student who is the only one to refrain from laughing. This game can be played numerous times to give everyone a chance to participate.</p> <p>Learning Activity #2: Two Truths and a Lie Students will break up into partners, and each will tell the other three facts about themselves. Two statements have to be true, and one has to be a lie. They can be told in any order, and it is up to the other student to determine which statement is false. After both partners have gone, the group can split and look for new partners to question. This game focuses on the ability to hide lies and truths, and convince an audience of your honesty.</p> <p>Learning Activity #3: Discussion on the art of comedy As a group, students will discuss their previous experience with comedy, and any examples they know from television, cinema or stage. This is designed to give the teacher an assessment of how familiar the students are with comedy and what concepts will need to be addressed to help students reach the unit goal of performing a comedic piece from a play using humorous elements.</p> <p>Learning Activity #4: Brief slideshow of comedic performance history A slide show will be played that highlights the changes comedy has gone through since its origins. It can look at comedies and comedic playwrights and plays from Greek and Roman times, Shakespeare’s works, restoration comedy, comedy of manners, and other forms that have emerged in the past 200 years. It should be addressed how “You Can’t Take it With You” fits into this timeline of comedy.</p> <p>Learning Activity #5: Select readings of play As a group, students will be selected to read parts of the play aloud to their peers. These sections will highlight important characters and events in the play, and give students a general understanding of the tone and mood of the script. This can also be a good indication for the teacher of the student’s ability to read comedic lines.</p> <p>Learning Activity #6: Overview of the play’s plot and characters In a class discussion and lecture, the teacher will go over the major characters in the play and how they relate to one another. The students will also learn about the time, setting, plot and main themes presented in the comedy.</p>
<p>Closure (10 min)</p>
<p>Consolidation/Assessment of Learning: Students will be formatively assessed through the discussion at the end of the lesson that requires each student to give their thoughts and understanding of the play.</p> <p>Transition To Next Lesson: Students will be informed that the following lesson will revisit the scripts with a look at vocal training.</p>

Finding Your Voice - Lesson Plan

Grade/Subject: Drama 30

Unit: Truth in Comedy

Lesson Duration: 80 min

OUTCOMES FROM ALBERTA PROGRAM OF STUDIES	LEARNING OBJECTIVES	ASSESSMENTS
Use volume, articulation and projection to achieve clarity.	Students will exercise their speaking voices to enhance their play reading abilities.	Formative assessment through use of a checklist to assess student’s abilities with projection, pacing, and characterization.
Use movement and gesture to clarify and enhance speech and character.	Students will use their bodies and voices to create distinct characters in their play reading.	Formative assessment through use of a checklist to assess student’s abilities with projection, pacing, and characterization.
Skills		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characterization, Projection, Pacing 		
Materials And Equipment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “You Can’t Take it With You” selected readings 		
Introduction (10 min)		
<p>Hook/Attention Grabber: Walking Warm Up Students will wander around the space, conscious of where others are moving. From there, they will begin to acknowledge other students with nods and gestures. After, the students will greet one another with vocal signals. Students can also experiment with changing to high, low, loud, quiet, and other variations of voices.</p> <p>Assessment of Prior Knowledge: Students will discuss the plot, characters and themes of the story as presented in the previous class. This will indicate to the teacher how well the students remember the details of the play they will be studying. If necessary, the teacher can review points on the story if students cannot remember details relating to the script.</p> <p>Expectations for Learning and Behaviour: In a group discussion after warm-up activities, students will talk about their prior knowledge of comedy, and how the art form has moved from stage to the screen. Students will be asked about their favorite comedic actors and shows, and eventually be turned to favorite comedic plays and playwrights to see who is familiar with comedy on the stage.</p> <p>Advance Organizer/Agenda: Walking Warm up, Breathing exercises, Relaxation exercise, “Dubbing voices” game, Body and Voice exploration through movement, “You Can’t Take it With You” Reader’s Theatre</p>		

Body (65 min)

Learning Activity #1: Breathing exercises

Student will lie on the floor face up and focus on their breathing. The students will be asked to locate their breathing and place a hand on the area. Students will then attempt to control their breathing by making the air feel like it's coming from their throats, then their chests, and then their stomachs. This is to help students become more aware of their breathing.

Learning Activity #2: Relaxation exercise

While still on the ground, students will tense their bodies to focus their attention and energy on the parts of their bodies. Students will tense each arm individually, then each leg, their face, and lastly their whole body. The tension should start small with singular parts (the fingers for the arm), then build up to the body part as a whole. Once tensed, students should have time to release and relax.

Learning Activity #3: "Dubbing voices" game

Students will be broken up into groups of 4 or 6. Half of the group will then create a scene by moving and interacting with one another, and the other half will provide the voices and dialogue for the scene. The students must feed off what the other pair is doing to create a cohesive scene with conflict, a beginning, middle, and end.

Learning Activity #4: Body and Voice exploration through movement

Students will once again travel through the space. This time, the teacher will give them character descriptions and get them to walk in a particular way. Some ideas could be a very old man, a wealthy tycoon, or a diva queen. The students will experiment with the movement, then try and create a voice for the characters they have created as they move around the space. Once characters are created, students can talk to one another and create dialogue.

Learning Activity #5: "You Can't Take it With You" Reader's Theatre

Students will be broken into groups and revisit the comedy scripts they looked at from the day prior. This time around, their focus should be on projecting their voices, finding the pacing to bring out the humor, and the creation of comedic characters through small gestures and their voices. Students will be formatively assessed on how they have improved, and how well they have incorporated the skills taught to them into their reading.

Closure (5 min)

Consolidation/Assessment of Learning:

Students will be checked with formative assessment through use of a checklist that assesses the student's abilities with projection, pacing, and characterization. The emphasis should be on how far the student has come since the first reading, and how well the elements of speech they have just learned have been incorporated.

Transition To Next Lesson:

Students will be informed that the next lesson will focus on creating comedic characters through movement, and will explore skills found in clowning and mime. Entrances and exits will also be addressed as elements of comedy.

Assessments

1. “You Can’t Take it With You” Introduction:

Students will be formatively assessed through the discussion at the end of the lesson that requires each student to give their thoughts and understanding of the play.

2. Finding Your Voice:

Students will be formatively assessed through use of a checklist that checks the student’s abilities with projection, pacing, and characterization. The emphasis should be on how far the student has come since the first reading, and how well the elements of speech they have just learned have been incorporated.

3. Creating A Character:

Students will be formatively assessed through use of a checklist that checks the student’s abilities to create a character with their bodies in their short comedic scenes. Elements of clowning and mime taught earlier should be utilized and noted by the teacher.

4. Advancing and Conflict:

Students will be formatively assessed through the discussion at the end of the lesson that requires each student to express what they have learned about improvisation, what they want to work towards and how they think they will utilize the skills they’ve learned in their scenes.

5. Improvisation Games:

Students will be formatively assessed through the discussion at the end of the lesson that requires each student to express what they have learned about improvisation, what they want to work towards and how they think they will utilize the skills they’ve learned in their scenes.

6. Scene Assignment:

Students will be formatively assessed through observation by the teacher while practicing. The observation should be a check of how far along the students are and how well the groups are working together towards creating a shared piece.

7. Scene Rehearsal:

Students will be formatively assessed through observation by the teacher while practicing their scenes. This should be a assessment as to how far along each group is, and if the performances are ready to begin the next class.

8. Scene Performance:

Students will be graded through summative assessment by use of a rubric. The rubric will assess the areas of Characterization, Pacing, Comedic Devises, Comedic Movement, and Projection, including how well each of these elements has been incorporated into each scene. The rubric will be given to students when their scenes are assigned so students know what skills to work on and showcase, and can be aware of what they will be graded on in their performance.

Summative Scene Performance Rubric

Skill	5	4	3	2	NA
Characterization	Students created vivid characters that were true to the script.	Students created interesting characters true to the script.	A glimpse of character was created inspired by the script.	The character created had no connection to the script.	No characterization occurred in the actor's portrayal.
Pacing	Humor was abundant as pacing was carefully planned out.	Pacing was clean and smooth and found the script's humor.	Some pacing was used to create humor in the scene.	Pacing was random and disjointed and lead to little humor.	Pacing was not utilized in any way to help create humor.
Comedic Devises	Comedic devises were abundant to create dynamic and comedic theatre.	Comedic devises were used to help enhance the script's humor.	Comedic devises were occasionally used in the scene.	Few comedic devises were put to use in the scene.	Comedic devises were missing from the scene.
Comedic Movement	Movement was seamless and used to create humor.	Movement was used to enhance the scene's humor.	Movement was added occasionally.	Movement was sparsely used in the scene.	No movement was used in the scene.
Projection	The actor was completely audible and their voices blended seamlessly with the scene.	The actor was audible and the voice fit the scene.	The actor was at times difficult to hear.	The actor was often hard to hear and voice did not match the scene.	The actor was inaudible.

Total: /25

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