Sample Musical Theatre Learning Plan

Big Idea/ Topic

KSU Master Class: Shakespeare vs Sondheim Analysis Tools for the Performer

Connecting Theme/Enduring Understanding:
> ENDURING UNDERSTANDING: Connecting real-life emotions and relationships to fictional characters to determine motivation, objectives, and obstacles.
> TECHNICAL FOCUS: Exploring text/score analysis tools for developing character in both Shakespeare and musical theatre.

Essential Questions:
> What are effective script analysis tools for Shakespeare?
> What are effective score analysis tools for Musical Theatre?
> How can music exercises help the performer connect to Shakespearian text?
> How can acting exercises help with performing a song?
> What do Elizabethan verse text and musical scores have in common?

Standard Alignment

CREATING
TAHSMT.CR.1 Organize, design, and refine theatrical work.
a. Analyze various theories of dramatic structure in a musical and explain how text, music, and movement can be used to advance the plot of a musical.
b. Engage in and apply meaningful cultural, literary, and historical research to support formal or informal theatrical performance.

PERFORMING
TAHSMT.PR.1 Act and direct by communicating and sustaining roles within a variety of situations and environments.
a. Examine and implement the skills and tasks associated with acting, singing, and dancing, incorporating vocal and movement technique, observation, and imagination to create characters for formal and informal performances.
d. Conduct rehearsals to present a musical theatre performance for a live audience.

RESPONDING
TAHSMT.RE.2 Critique various aspects of theatre and other media using appropriate supporting evidence.
a. Utilize constructive criticism, appropriate musical theatre terminology, and study of existing performance styles to modify and improve performance choices.

Instructional Design

*This lesson has a flexible timeline but can be accomplished in 2-5 days.
This lesson is intended to reach students in a live, virtual, synchronous, or asynchronous.

CONCEPTS:
- Scansion
- Verse text
- Beats and Objectives
- Rehearsal Techniques
- Script analysis
- Clues in the text
  - Punctuation, Spelling, Capitalization, Meter
- Clues in the music
- Dissonance, key changes, intensity

VOCABULARY:

Punctuation . , ! ? ; : - ()
Capitalization
Dynamic markings
Scansion
Rests and accents
Spelling
Meter
Rhythm

Part 1: Performer Warmups
NOTE: All student lessons should begin with a physical and vocal warm-up to get students used to the routine of rehearsals, even if no structured rehearsal will take place. This is a great way to introduce activities in a low-pressure environment. For more vocal and physical warm-ups, see links in Unit Resources.

Here are two Actor Warmup Video samples that could be used.
Sample Vocal Warm-up Video
Sample Physical Warm-up Video

Additional Basic Actor Warmup sample instructions:

Vocal Warm-Up:

Breath

- Breathe in through your nose for a count of four.
- Breathe out through your mouth for a count of four.
- Repeat. Repeat.
- Place your hand on your stomach just below your rib cage.
- Repeat The Breath twice more.
- One last step, this time, with hand on stomach, makes the "HA, HA, HA" sound. Feel for movement.
- Repeat the HA step twice more.

Resonance

- Take a deep breath in through your nose for four counts.
- Instead of breathing out, make the "Aaaah sound" for four counts.
- Repeat the first two steps two more times.
- This time, make the "Mmmmm" sound as your breath out.

Articulation:

- Rubber Baby Buggy Bumpers (Repeat x4)
- Unique New York, Unique New York, You Know You Need Unique New York
- Red Leather, Yellow Feather (Repeat x4)
- Mommy made me mash my M&Ms; I cried.

Repeat this twice.

Physical Exercises:

- Roll the head clockwise four counts
- Roll the head counterclockwise four counts

- Circle the Arms out eight counts
- Circle the Arms in eight counts

- Circle the hips clockwise eight counts
- Circle the hips counterclockwise eight counts

- Lift the right knee and rotate the leg at the hip clockwise four counts
- Lift the right knee and rotate the leg at the hip counterclockwise four counts

- Lift the left knee and rotate the leg at the hip clockwise four counts
- Lift the left knee and rotate the leg at the hip counterclockwise four counts

- Rotate the right ankle clockwise four counts
- Rotate the right ankle counterclockwise four counts

- Rotate the left ankle clockwise four counts
- Rotate the left ankle counterclockwise four counts
 Following the class actor warm-up, allow the students to respond to the five-minute journal prompt:

What are the tools you use to prepare a text or song for performance?

After the five-minute writing period, you can hold a brief discussion to gauge student knowledge before the masterclass session. This may help to guide the post-video discussion for Part 2 of the lesson.

Part 2: Masterclass Video and Discussion Questions

Watch and discuss the Masterclass Video
[Kennesaw Masterclass Shakespeare vs Sondheim](#)

(Notes and PowerPoint based on the masterclass included below the student checklist)

Discuss the video as a class. Identify the analysis of musical theatre and Shakespearean text tools that can aid in characterization.

Class discussion questions:
Why is it important to determine where the text is different?
What is the purpose of finding where the music is different?
How can we best tell the story using the tools and clues in the text and music?
What is the purpose of paraphrasing?
What are effective script analysis tools for Shakespeare?
What are effective score analysis tools for Musical Theatre?
How can music exercises help the performer connect to Shakespearian text?
How can acting exercises help with performing a song?
What do Elizabethan verse text and musical scores have in common?

Part 3: Student Activities

Student instructions:

Student activity 1

Select a Shakespearian Sonnet and set it to music. This can be done either by finding instrumental tracks on YouTube or by creating your own. If you have GarageBand or logic or any other kind of music-making application you can use Apple loops to create a track you can sing along to or rap along to. You could also select rap instrumental tracks or jazz or big band instrumental tracks as long as there are no voices attached to the music. Set the Sonnet to music by paying attention to how the syllables. Rehearse and perform your sonnet to music.

Student activity 2

Convert your song into a monologue acting performance

Write out the lyrics of your song. Make sure that the punctuation is the same as it is in your sheet music and type it up like them into a paragraph, so it just looks like a monologue as a paragraph then read through it or act through it paying attention to punctuation and trying to remove yourself from the rhythm o f the song.

Mark the text the same way you would when preparing a monologue for a performance. Try to find different acting beats based on the punctuation not on the rhythm of the song
Rehearse and perform the song as an acting monologue

Evidence of Student Success

Diagnostic: Discussion of actor tools available for preparing scripts or music for performance
Formative: Journal Entries after the masterclass video, Discussion, Rehearsals, and feedback for activities 1 and 2
Summative: Activity I Performance and Peer Critique, Activity 2 Script Marking, Performance, and Peer Critique

Distance Learning Supports

Ideas for Differentiation:

Our goal is for all students to be actively engaged using the body, the voice, speaking, reflecting, and writing. Below are changes to the lesson to help achieve that goal for students who need additional support. or increased rigor. Note: Be careful using these lessons for all students.

- Consider allowing students to record their thoughts in a variety of ways: using the talk to text/dictate feature, making an audio recording of their responses, drawing pictures, circling and/or labeling on their diagram or PowerPoint printouts, etc.

- Students requiring a simplification can select only one of the activities and take shorter texts or songs to work with. For example 5 lines vs the 14 line sonnet and 16 bars worth of lyrics rather than a full song.

- For low-tech and unplugged adaptation students can work one-on-one with teachers on the phone with focusing on one element at a time in a given performance.

- Students needing an extra technical with student activity 1: Select a portion of a Shakespearean monologue from a play. Be sure the selected text is in verse and fits neatly into the meter. This could be in an Iambic pentameter or maybe a different meter. Pay close attention to the punctuation and find music that fits the mood or conflict in the monologue. Prepare your monologue as a song and perform it.

- Students needing extra technical with student activity 2: After performing the song as a monologue and receiving acting feedback, go back to the music, find some of those dynamic markings from the sheet music, and then start to layer it into the acting performance.

Engaging Families

Optional materials to support learning:

Shakespeare vs Sondheim Handout
Elizabethan Theatre and the Globe PowerPoint
Elizabethan Theatre PowerPoint
Musical Theatre Characterization PowerPoint

Lesson Checklist

Part 1:
- o   1. Engage in Warmup

Part 2:
- o   2. Watch the Kennesaw Master Class Video
- o   3. Answer the discussion questions based on the Master Class

Part 3:

- o   4. Select a Shakespearean Sonnet
- o   5. Select music for the sonnet
- o   6. Prepare the sonnet as a song for performance
- o   7. Perform the monologue and share it with the class either live or recorded
- o   8. Provide a critical response to the performances of your peers
- o   9. Select a musical theatre song
- o   10. Write out the text as a monologue
- o   11. Use the clues in the language to prepare the lyrics for performance as a monologue
- o   12. Rehearse and perform your monologue either live or recorded.
- o   13. Provide a critical response to the performances of your peers

Notes from Shakespeare vs Sondheim
Bridging the Gap for Performers

Companion PowerPoint for Amanda Wansa Morgan's Masterclass with Kennesaw State University

- Exploring Common Tools to Inform Emotion, Point of View, or Intention Using the script and score analysis in Musical Theatre to find clues in the music:
  - Dynamics
  - Meter
  - Rhythm
  - Key changes
- Using script analysis in Shakespeare's Folios to find clues in the structure of the text:
  - Punctuation
  - Capitalization
  - Scansion

Musical Theatre Analysis

- Using the lyrics and the musical score to look for Clues!

Step One: Read the Lyrics
- Read thru the lyrics without the music. Consider them the same way you would a monologue.
- This is a great way to connect to the song by connecting to the words first.
- All musical theatre is storytelling, so it's important to know and connect with what story you are telling.

Step Two: Listen to the underscore
- Music is the third character in the two-person scene.
- Take note of how the music makes you feel.

Dissonance
- Dissonance, in music, is a mingling of sounds that strike the hear harshly. This occurs where two notes are very close together.
- For the actor, this can be a clue for unresolved conflict or lack of agreement between two characters
- Dissonance can be solved by resolving the chord or separating the notes. When dissonance or resolve happens in the music this is a clue for the actor that the character is experiencing something as well.

Basic Actor Choices Can Begin
- After listening to music and reading the text. The actor can begin to make some basic choices about the text and the actions of the character. Some starting questions might include:
- Who am I talking to?
- Where am I?
- What are the given circumstances?
- What was the moment before?
- Why am I singing this?
- What do I want from the characters I'm speaking to?

Clues in the Score

Meter
- Look at Meter
- Are there changes in the meter

What is the key
- Are there changes
- Key Changes
- Key changes and meter changes almost always indicate a significant beat change, or a change in thought, for the actor

Dynamic Markings (Volume)
- Consider the dynamic markings in the score.
- This information for the music is a key tool for the musical theatre actor's emotional journey, or urgency or intention as well. Not just volume

Rests
- This is a mechanical tool telling you where to breathe, but also to process the story being told.
- Look for the stops and determine what story is being told by where they are used.

Look for Changes!
- Identify other significant changes like a unique bridge section.
- Changes or shifts in the music should be embraced and used by the actor.
- Changes in the music indicate changes in the character's motivation, thought process, or action.
- This does not mean to play an emotion by simply mirroring the mood or tone of the music. The character's emotion must be a result of what the character is doing.
- The music and the lyrics together provide clues for the actor to determine changes that must be happening to the character that causes a shift in the tone or mood of the piece.

Use all the information available to you
- The lyrics, the music, and the dynamic markings do not exist in isolation. All the elements together often create tension between them that serve as clues to the actor to try harder or try something different to achieve the character's goal.
- These musical clues provide the actor with tools long before even addressing the mechanics of the vocal technique.

Shakespearean Tools on the Page:
 or What's in the Ink?
- Meter
- Scansion
- Punctuation
- Capitalization
- Spelling
- Word Placement

The Folios
- The original Printings of Shakespeare's work
- The folios contain original spellings, punctuation, and capitalizations that inform the script.
- To get the most accurate representation of the author's original idea it is a good practice to use the Folios to gather information about scansion, punctuation, and word use.

Verse vs Prose

Verse is metered text like Iambic Pentameter
- Prose is a text without a defined meter or structure

Iambic Pentameter
- X**X**/X**X**/X**X**/X**X**/X**X**
- Ten syllable line with a stress on the second, Fourth, Sixth, Eighth, and Tenth syllables
- Each x is a syllable and each xx is the foot with the second x being emphasized and marked with an accent mark.
- Scansion is identifying the rhythm of the words.

Prose
- Prose is unmetered text
- Often prose indicates a more relaxed form of communication, but not always.

What scansion tells us about character
- Just like in musical theatre when text fits the verse structure perfectly in meter things are usually going more smoothly for the character. Changes in the meter, or breaks in the rhythm, can be clues to the actor that the character is having some form of struggle
- A change in scansion in Shakespearean verse might be a feminine ending where there is an eleventh syllable in the iambic line.
- Diversion from the meter indicates diversion from the structure in which we exist.

Capitalization
- Capitalization is used to bring attention to words to increase emphasis.
- This does not necessarily mean volume.
- Emphasis can be brought to a word in many ways.
- Drawing it out, changing the tempo, making it louder, making it softer.
- Highlight the operative words based on Folio's capitalization.
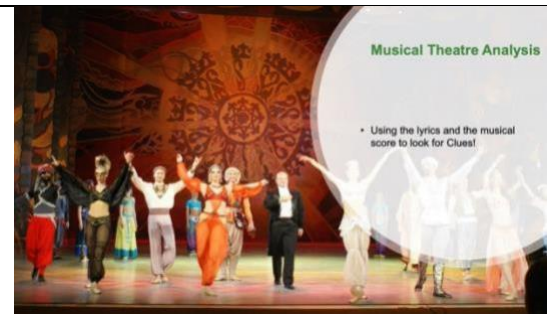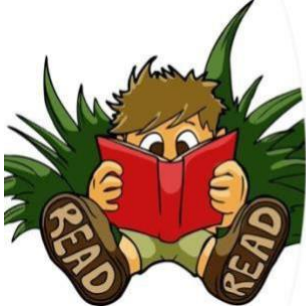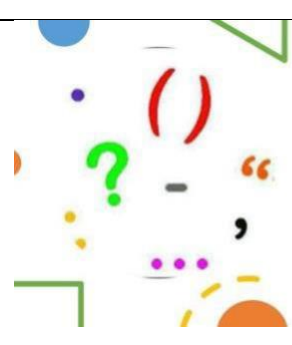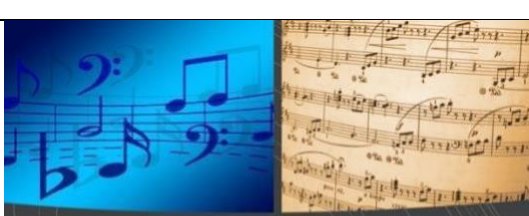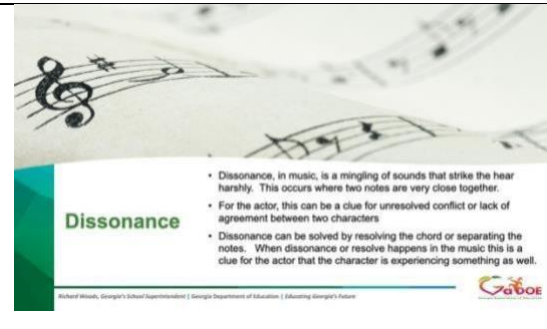
Spellings of words and the Meter
- Often words are adjusted to fit the meter. Noticing these changes can provide the actor with opportunities to make changes in the acting choices.
- The changing of the number of syllables for a word does not change the meaning of the word, but it might change the way the actor chooses to emphasize it or stress it.
- Just like the placement of the lyric on the score can change what part of the word is emphasized, the placement of the lines in the meter indicates what parts of the word should be stressed.

Paraphrasing as an actor tool
- To connect to the text on a personal level it is a good practice e for both for lyrics in musical theatre and Shakespeare's text to paraphrase the words using your own.
- Paraphrasing is a useful tool to help the actor connect to the character's journey in their own words first before taking it back into the original text.
- Connecting to the text is important for both the song and the Shakespearean text. At the end of the day, the goal is for the audience to believe the character is coming up with these words in the moment.
- Write out the paraphrase in a column next to your text for reference.

PowerPoint Slides for Shakespeare vs Sondheim: Bridging the Gap for Performers

Shakespeare vs Sondheim

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Exploring Common Tools to Inform Emotion, Point of View or Intention

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- All musical theatre is storytelling, so it's important to know and connect with what story you are telling.

Consider the punctuation of the text. The punctuation says a great deal about exactly what the character is trying to communicate. Often the punctuation can be as important as the word choice.

Step Two: Listen to the underscore

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Clues in the Score

Meter

- Look at Meter
- Are there changes in the meter
- What is the key
- Are there changes

Same note, key change

Key Changes

- Key changes and meter changes almost always indicate a significant beat change, or a change in thought, for the actor

Scale of dynamic markings[5]

Name	Letters	Level
fortississimo	fff	very very loud
fortissimo	ff	very loud
forte	f	loud
mezzo-forte	mf	average
mezzo-piano	mp	
piano	p	quiet
pianissimo	pp	very quiet
pianississimo	ppp	very very quiet

Dynamic Markings (Volume)

- Consider the dynamic markings in the score.
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Rests

- This is a mechanical tool telling you where to breathe, but also to process the story being told.
- Look for the stops and determine what story is being told by where they are used.

quarter rest

Look for Changes!

- Identify other significant changes like a unique bridge section.
- Changes or shifts in the music should be embraced and used by the actor.
- Changes in the music indicate changes in the character's motivation, thought process, or action.
- This does not mean to play an emotion by simply mirroring the mood or tone of the music. The character's emotion must be a result of what the character is doing.
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XX/XX/XX/XX/XX

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Punctuation

,	Apostrophe	•	Full Stop
( )	Brackets	-	Hyphen
:	Colon	?	Question Mark
,	Comma	;	Semi-colon
!	Exclamation Mark	"	Speech Mark

Punctuation in Shakespeare can have the same effect as rests in music. It lets you know when to breathe, but also an indication of a change in the emotional state.

Capitalization

- Capitalization is used to bring attention to words to increase emphasis.
- This does not necessarily mean volume.
- A word can be emphasized in many ways:
  - Drawing it out
  - changing the tempo
  - making it louder
  - making it softer
- Highlight the operative words based on the Folio's capitalization.

Spellings of words and the Meter

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- The changing of the number of syllables for a word does not change the meaning of the word, but it might change the way the actor chooses to emphasize it or stress it.
- Just like the placement of the lyric on the score can change what part of the word is emphasized, the placement of the lines in the meter indicates what parts of the word should be stressed.

Paraphrasing as an actor tool

- In order to connect to the text on a personal level, it is a good practice e for both for lyrics in musical theatre and in Shakespeare's text to paraphrase the words using your own.
- Paraphrasing is a useful tool to help the actor connect to the character's journey in their own words first prior to taking it back into the original text.
- Connecting to the text is important for both the song and the Shakespearean text. At the end of the day, the goal is for the audience to believe the character is coming up with these words in the moment.
- Write out the paraphrase in a column next to your text for reference.

COURSE: Musical Theatre		For use in evaluation for activity 1 and 2		
SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC				
Criteria	**Advanced/Level 4**	**Proficient/Level 3**	**Emerging/Level 2**	**Developing/Level 1**
Slating/Transitions _____/ Slating that includes the articulation of name and selection, transition into characters, and final moment, into the exit.	The slating is **clear and complete.** Transitions are **distinct, purposeful, and appropriate to the performance from the entrance to the exit of the performer.**	**Slating is clear and transitions** into and between characters, final moment and exit are evident	**Slating exists transition** into and between characters and/or final moment **are sometimes present**	**Slating is unclear or incomplete, transitions** into and between characters and/or final moment are **not evident**.
Characterization n Vocal and physical believability and commitment to the character; Discoveries and tactics towards an objective that create a relationship with real or implied partner(s).	Character-based vocal and physical choices are consistently believable; **committed distinct character choices are appropriate to the text, Honest discoveries, beats, tactics, and objectives** create **intuitive reactions** to real or implied partner(s) causing the character to make a clear journey.	Character-based vocal and physical choices are **frequently** believable; **committed character choices are evident, discoveries, and tactics** toward an objective **create identifiable reactions** to real or implied partner(s).	Character-based physical and vocal choices are rarely believable; character **choices and tactics** toward an objective **prompt some reactions** to real or implied partner(s).	Character-based physical and vocal choices are not evident or are **rarely** believable; distinctive character **choices are not evident, discoveries, tactics, objectives, and a relationship** are **not evident.**
Voice _____/ Effective Projection, Articulation, Diction, and vocal variety (pitch, rate, tone, tempo, volume, inflection)	Vocal choices are clear and effective throughout the scene and enhance the audience's understanding of the character's discoveries, tactics, objectives, and subtext.	Clearly projected, articulate voice, with vocal variety (pitch, rate, tone, tempo, volume, inflection), used throughout the scene.	Vocal choices are unclear or **inconsistent**; **Vocal variety sometimes communicates** the character's discoveries, tactics, objectives, and subtext	Vocal clarity and choices are limited or absent. Choices do not reflect an understanding of character objectives.
Movement _____/ Physical choices that communicate the characters subtext and goals	Movement consistently and appropriately communicates the characters' subtext and objectives.	Movement communicates the character's subtext and objectives throughout the performance	Movement sometimes communicates the character's subtext or objectives	Movement is limited/absent and rarely communicates the character's subtext or objectives

Execution ____/ Concentration and commitment to choices; effective physical, vocal, and character choices for the text	Concentration and commitment to moment- to-moment choices combined with the harmonious integration of physical, vocal, and character choices results in an engaging performance from Begging, middle, to end.	Concentration and commitment to moment-to moment choices are **sustained throughout most of the performance**; integration of voice, body, and emotions **create a frequently believable character/relationship** that tells a story.	Concentration and commitment moment-to-moment-moment choices are inconsistent; Vocal, physical, and character choices sometimes create an engaging story	Concentration and commitment to moment-to-moment choices are **limited or absent**; Vocal, Physical, and character choices do not work together tolerate and engaging story from begging, middle, to end.

Course: Musical Theatre
Peer Critique

1. What was attempted?

2. What was done well?

3. What specifically makes the artist's attempt to work for the audience?

4. To what end was the attempt a success? Be specific in the response.

5. What categories of strength does the artist have?

6. Cite specific examples from the presentation that demonstrate this strength.

7. What makes the audience out of the artist's attempt?

8. What areas of growth are there to help make the attempt a success? Be specific in the response.

9. What categories of growth areas do you see for the theatre artist?

10. Cite specific examples from the presentation that explains where growth is needed.