

Sample High School Fundamentals / Learning Plan

Big Idea/ Topic

Using the Critical Response Method

Connecting Theme/Enduring Understanding:

Exploring the connection between the theatre arts including performances with language arts and literature.

Essential Questions:

What is the difference between dramatic and traditional literary writing?

What are the steps of the playwriting process?

Why are dramatic characters, dramatic dialogue, and dramatic plot structure necessary for a theatrical script?

How does formatting for a theatrical script differ from traditional literary writing?

How are the Aristotelian elements of theatre taken into consideration in playwriting?

What are the technical concerns of a script?

What are some methods used to develop scenes?

Standard Alignment

CREATING

TAHSFT.CR.1 Organize, design, and refine theatrical work.

- a. Recognize and/or employ realistic and conventional speech patterns within dialogue or dramatic verse.
- b. Incorporate dramatic elements through improvisation.

TAHSFT.CR.2 Develop scripts through theatrical techniques.

- a. Differentiate between dramatic and traditional literary writing and utilize common steps of the playwriting process.
- b. Assess the need for script analysis, concept development, and directorial and technical concerns of a theatrical script.
- c. Construct and critique elements of dramatic structure, character, and dialogue.
- d. Create and perform scenes for audiences.

RESPONDING

TAHSFT.RE.2 Critique various aspects of theatre and other media using appropriate supporting evidence.

- a. Generate and use the terminology for critiquing theatre presentations.

CONNECTING:

TAHSFT.CN.1 Explore how theatre connects to life experiences, careers, and other content.

- d. Explore various careers in the theatre arts (e.g. performance, design, production, administrative, education, promotion)

TAHSFT.CN.2 Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context.

- a. Identify and analyze plays and dramas from a variety of historical periods and cultures.
- b. Explore the works of milestone playwrights and plays, and the relevance of historical theatre.
- c. Recognize historical events that have influenced the role of theatre and how theatrical events have impacted cultural development.

Instructional Design

***This lesson has a flexible timeline but can be accomplished in 5-10 days.**

This lesson is intended to reach students in a virtual setting, whether plugged or unplugged. See the bottom of the lesson for a list of unplugged supplies.

FOUNDATIONAL INFORMATION:

Plot structure, dramatic dialogue, theatrical genres, dramatic characters, dramatic dialogue, and play formatting

CONCEPTS:

- The role of the playwright
- Strengthening plot structure
- Capturing unique character voice
- Dynamic Dialogue
- Writing a play
- The process of the playwright
- Establishing characters, conflict, and the path to conflict resolution.

VOCABULARY:

Relationship, character, importance, beats, objectives, tactics, conflict, moment before, plot, character, theme, lexicon, music, spectacle, plot structure, Freytag Pyramid, Exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, denouement, dramatic dialogue, dramatic characters, dramatic structure, genres, scripts.

LINKS:

[Critical Response Method Video](#)
[Critical Response PowerPoint](#)

Part 1:

Student Journal Prompt:

Part 1: Student Journal Prompt

“Value those who give you constructive criticism, because without them doing so, you will never reach the peak of what you are doing.”

— Unarine Ramaru

Journal for five minutes about the following topic before engaging in the lesson:

What makes a good Critique?

When synchronous or plugged in sharing these entries and discuss as a class.

Part 2:

Presentation

In a live or recorded session present the information from the example lesson video, and the PowerPoint, on a synchronous digital platform such as Google Meet ([How it Works: Google Meet](#)), or create an asynchronous video of your own.



Sample Video:

[Critical Response Method Video](#)

In a synchronous session, teachers can follow the initial presentation by modeling a critical response session using a submitted text from earlier lessons. This could also be modeled via a video post.

Unplugged Variation: Have the student read the information in the handout along with the slides provided in the unplugged packet.

Part 3:

Student Assignment:

Ten Minute Play Draft and Critical Response Parts I and II

Assignment 1: Ten Minute Play Draft and Critical Response

Student Instructions:

Part One:

Using the character and plot prewriting activities you have already completed, write a draft of your 10 Minute Play.

Half of the play must be used in the Critical Response Process. The final Play will be submitted for the Full Staged Reading.

Short Play Requirements

1. Everything in your play must be appropriate for a high school audience.
2. Your play must have between 5 to 8 speaking parts. These do not have to be main characters, but they must have 3 speaking lines each.
3. Remember that this is a play, not a film. Try to limit the number of different locations or scene changes to two or three. Unnecessary scene changes drag down the pace of the play.
4. Your final version of the play must be typed using proper playwriting format.
5. We will be going through a peer-review period with class members. You must have at least half of your play written to submit for peer-review.

The Script will be assessed in the following criteria:

Mechanics and Formatting – spelling, grammar, punctuation, dialogue structure, theatrical script formatting.

Dialogue – Active dialogue revealing character, traits, personalities, conflict, and mood

Creative Process, Setting, and Research - Original presentation of material, all three forms of research, consistently and harmony of setting, character, themes, and genre.

Conflict - Conflict of opposing forces rooted in the subtext

Characterization and empathy - Dynamic and multi-dimensional characters, internal and external motivations

Meaning and Style – Intent, style, or genre

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Post a copy of your draft to this forum.

Stop here and read this note: *Part Two (Critical Response Method) will be completed in a synchronous session with your instructor and classmates. If it has not already been posted, contact your instructor for date and time information for your Critical Response synchronous session. If you are unable to participate in the synchronous session, obtain permission from your instructor, and participate in the Modified Critical Response process below.*

Part Two: Modified Critical Response

The modified option may only be used if you cannot participate in the live session and with permission from your instructor.

Choose three of your classmates' posts. Read and respond to each classmate's 10 Minute Play following the guidelines below

Statements of Meaning: In several richly detailed sentences, state what was meaningful, evocative, interesting, exciting, striking in the work you have read. Avoid using phrases such as “I like...” or “I didn’t like...” Be specific in responses.

Neutral Questions: Ask 2-3 thoughtful neutral questions about the work. Questions are neutral when they do not have an opinion couched in them. For example, if you are discussing the lighting of a scene, “Why was it so dark?” is not a neutral question. “What ideas guided your choices about lighting?” is.

Statement of Opinion Time Asks permission to state an opinion from your classmate. The usual form is “I have an opinion about _____, would you like to hear it?” The artist has the option to decline opinions for any reason. If your classmate permits you, follow up by stating your opinion.

Unplugged Option: Host a critical response session and staged reading at your home with your parents or others. Submit a copy of your script, revisions, and notes from the feedback session to your instructor.

Evidence of Student Success

Diagnostic: Journal Entries

Formative: Teacher Observation and Discussion during and after the presentation.

Summative: Ten-minute Play Draft and Critical Response Rubric

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 participate in a simplified version of the response process.
- For low-tech and unplugged adaptation students can work one-on-one with teachers on the phone or can host a critical response feedback session at home with parents or others.



- For students needing an extra challenge can engage in multiple critical response processes for revision.

Unplugged Supplies: Lesson checklist, Journal, printed PowerPoint slides, and/or copy of lecture notes, assignment handout, copy of assignment rubric.

Engaging Families

Materials included to support unplugged learners: Lesson checklist, Journal, printed PowerPoint slides, copy of lecture notes, assignment handout, copy of assignment rubric

Optional materials to support learning:

[School Theatre: Acting Resources](#)

[Working Title Playwrights](#)

[Liz Lerman: Critical Response Process](#)



Lesson Checklist

Part 1:

- 1. Complete the part I Journal Prompt.

Part 2:

- 2. Read, watch, or listen to the information about the critical response process.
- 3. Watch or participate in a critical response

Part 3:



- 4. Complete a draft of your ten-minute play
- 5. Engage in Part II the Synchronous Critical Response (or follow alternative directions)
- 6. Make adjustments to your script based on feedback.
- 7. Submit the new script and notes from the feedback session to your instructor.

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Critical Response Slides:

<h3>Critical Response Method</h3>  <p>Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process is a method for giving and getting feedback on work in progress, designed to leave the maker eager and motivated to get back to work.</p> <p>Liz Lerman's critical response process: by Liz Lerman and John Bonwell ISBN-10: 0972738509</p>	<h3>Critique is Critical to Revision</h3> <p>Dramatic Writing GSE related to evaluating, critiquing, and revising work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAHSTL.RE.1 Evaluate various aspects of dramatic arts literature using appropriate supporting evidence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Develop and apply a set of comprehensive criteria for theatre text analysis. e. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise. TAHSTL.CR.3 Produce clear and concise writing that includes the conventions of standard English grammar and usage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Devise and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. 	<h3>Roles in the Process</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Artist The Responder The Facilitator 
<h3>The Artist</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers a work-in-progress for review and feels prepared to question that work in a dialogue with other people. 	<h3>The Responder</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages in dialogue with the artist, with a commitment to the artist's intent to make excellent work. 	<h3>The Facilitator</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiates each step, keeps the process on track, and works to help the artist and responders use the process to frame useful questions and responses.
<h3>Steps 1 & 2</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Statements of Meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responders state what was meaningful, evocative, interesting, exciting, striking in the work they have just witnessed. Artist as Questioner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The artist asks questions about the work. After each question, the responders answer. Responders may express opinions if they are in direct response to the question asked and do not contain suggestions for changes. 	<h3>Steps 3 & 4</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Neutral Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responders ask neutral questions about the work. The artist responds. Questions are neutral when they do not have an opinion couched in them. For example, if you are discussing the lighting of a scene, "Why was it so dark?" is not a neutral question. "What ideas guided your choices about lighting?" is. Opinion Time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responders state opinions, subject to permission from the artist. The usual form is "I have an opinion about _____ would you like to hear it?" The artist has the option to decline opinions for any reason. 	<h3>Sources and References</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://lizlerman.com/critical-response-process/ http://www.brooklynartscouncil.org/files/downloads/Critical_Response_Process.pdf https://arts.vcu.edu/dance/news/liz-lerman-dance-exchange-visit-vcu/

Presentation Handout from Critical Response Video:

Example Script for creating a presentation for The Critical Response Method

Liz Lerman's Critical Response Method Background:

"Through the supportive structure of its four core steps, the Critical Response Process combines the power of questions with the focus and challenge of informed dialogue. The Process offers makers an active role in the critique of their work. It gives makers a way to rehearse the connections they seek when art meets its audience, or a product meets its purpose. Critical Response Process instills ways of thinking, communicating, and being that enhance all kinds of human interactions, from coaching to community dialogue, from artistic collaboration to family conversations. In use for over 25 years, the Critical Response Process has been embraced by art makers, educators, scientists, and theater companies, dance departments, orchestras, laboratories, conservatories, museums, universities, corporations, and kindergartens."

Topic 1 Participants

There are three categories of participants in the formal version of the Critical Response Process.

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These include The Artist, The Responder, and the Facilitator.

- The Artist Offers a work-in-progress for review and feels prepared to question that work in a dialogue with other people.
- The Responder: Engages in dialogue with the artist, with a commitment to the artist's intent to make excellent work.
- The Facilitator: Initiates each step, keeps the process on track, and works to help the artist and responders use the process to frame useful questions and responses. It is the role of the facilitator to move from step to step and to maintain group norms for responses.

Group norms might include:

Raise your hand to speak

Snap if you agree (curbs repeated sentiments)

Be Constructive, Be courteous

Avoid the words "like" or "dislike"

Be respectful to your fellow artists

In the critical response process in the Dramatic Writing classroom, each student will take turns functioning as the artist and as a responder. The Facilitator is the teacher in most cases, however, there is merit in allowing students to facilitate response sessions after the initial demonstration. It is important that the teacher model appropriate facilitation early on in the process. The facilitator's role is to elicit supportive and useful feedback for the artist without discouraging the student.

Topic Two: Steps in the Critical Response Process

The Critical Response Process has four key steps

1. Statements of Meaning
2. Artist as Questioner
3. Neutral Questions
4. Opinion Time

1. Statements of Meaning:

- Responders state what was meaningful, evocative, interesting, exciting, striking in the work they have just witnessed. Avoid using phrases such as "I like..." or "I didn't like..." Be specific in responses.

2. Artist as Questioner:

- The artist asks questions about the work. After each question, the responders answer. Responders may express opinions if they are in direct response to the question asked and do not contain suggestions for changes.

3. Neutral Questions:

- Responders ask neutral questions about the work. The artist responds. Questions are neutral when they do not have an opinion couched in them. For example, if you are discussing the lighting of a scene, "Why was it so dark?" is not a neutral question. "What ideas guided your choices about lighting?" is.

4. Opinion Time:

- Responders state opinions, subject to permission from the artist. The usual form is "I have an opinion about _____, would you like to hear it?" The artist has the option to decline opinions for any reason.

Topic 3 Revisions

- The next stage in this process is to determine what aspects of the feedback are things that you will follow up on. Look back at each of the sections and take notes on your notes.
- Statements of Meaning:



As we are quick to ignore positive feedback and focus on the negative it is a good idea to make a list of all of the items that resonated with the responders. Ask yourself what stands out about this list. What comments took you by surprise?

- **Artist as Questioner:**
Did you get the answers you expected? Is there anything you want to change based on the responses you received?
- **Neutral Questions:**
Make sure you take a good look at the feedback that came in the forms of neutral questions. Determine if you want to be more specific in your writing to answer those questions. You may or may not depending on what you are trying to achieve.
- **Opinion Time:**
Did any of the opinions you heard concern or encourage you?
- **Thinking back over the reading:**
- **In the reading itself.** Did you hear any repeated beats or unmotivated dialogue? Did the character voices sound distinct to you? Where there any sections that actors had trouble with. Is there anything you want to change as a result of that?

After journaling about your experience of the Critical Response Process, Walk Away.

It is a good idea to let the thoughts about the process marinate before jumping back into the text. Sleep on it and come back to the section later to make revisions based not on the feedback itself, but rather on the decisions you made after pioneering and weighing the significance of the feedback.

Source:

“Critical Response Process: A Method for Giving and Getting Feedback.” *Liz Lerman*, lizlerman.com/critical-response-process/.

Lerman, Liz, et al. *Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process: a Method for Getting Useful Feedback on Anything You Make, from Dance to Dessert*. Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, 2003.

Ten Minute Play Draft and Critical Response Rubric:

Criteria	Exceeds 25 points	Masters 21 points	Progressing 19 points	Needs Improvement 16 points	No Evidence 0 points
Submitted Draft/Scene Selection Mechanics and Formatting	No errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Formatting is correct.	Few errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. An attempt was made in style. Few errors in formatting.	Several errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. An attempt made in style. Few errors in formatting.	Careless errors, no proofing evident, some formatting errors/missing elements.	Riddled with errors or cannot read because lack of formatting interferes with comprehension.
Submitted Draft/Scene Selection Dialogue, Conflict, and Characterization	The draft consistently has active dialogue revealing character, the Conflict is rooted in subtext, and the characters are dynamic and multi-dimensional with internal and external motivations throughout.	The draft often has active dialogue revealing character, the Conflict is often rooted in subtext, and the characters are often dynamic and multi-dimensional with internal and external motivations throughout.	The draft has active dialogue revealing character, or the Conflict is rooted in subtext, or the characters are dynamic and multi-dimensional with internal and external motivations throughout.	The draft rarely has active dialogue revealing character, the Conflict is rarely rooted in subtext, and the characters are rarely dynamic and multi-dimensional with internal and external motivations throughout.	The draft does not have active dialogue revealing character, traits, the Conflict is not rooted in subtext, and the characters are not dynamic and multi-dimensional.
Participation as a Respondent in the Critical Response Method Participation	The student followed all norms of engagement with the Critical Response Method and Commented at least four times on the artist's presentation.	The student followed all norms of engagement with the Critical Response Method and Commented at least three times on the artist's presentation.	The student followed all norms of engagement with the Critical Response Method and Commented at least twice on the artist's presentation.	The student followed all norms of engagement with the Critical Response Method and Commented at least once on the artist's presentation.	The student did not follow the norms of engagement with the Critical Response Method and/Did not comment as a responder on the Artist's presentation.
Critical Virtues as a Respondent	The critical peer responses posted are all observant, informed, sensitive, demanding, and articulate.	The critical peer responses posted are mostly observant, informed, sensitive, demanding, and articulate with a very few exceptions.	The critical peer responses posted are often observant, informed, sensitive, demanding, and articulate, but certain categories are lacking throughout	The critical peer responses posted are rarely observant, informed, sensitive, demanding, and articulate.	The critical peer responses posted are never observant, informed, sensitive, demanding, and articulate.

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