



Theatre Lesson Plan

Lesson 4

Unit Title: Meisner Technique

This is the 4th lesson in an 8 lesson unit

Lesson Title: Meisner Independent Activities

Focus Standard(s): TH: Pr5.1a.I

Additional Standard(s): TH: Re7.1a.I

Estimated Time: 1 90-minute class block

Resources and Materials:

Handout 4.1 – Independent activities list

Lesson Target(s)/Objectives:

- Students will focus intention on an independent activity with a specific objective
- Students will react to circumstances of the scene through impulse
- Students will discover truth in interactions

Essential Questions:

1. How does specificity affect the quality of acting?
2. What does it mean to raise the stakes?

Vocabulary

1. Impulse
2. Imaginary circumstances

Materials and Supplies

1. Items for independent activities
2. Students' theatre journals
3. Writing utensils

Differentiation

Students performing below grade level may... complete a less complex independent activity



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Lesson 4 Instructional Plan

Warm-up/Motivation:

Bell Ringer: **"To Behave Truthfully under Imaginary Circumstances"**

In your journal respond to this quote. What do you think it means. How can we be truthful when we are pretending a situation?

Activity 1: Build on the Repetition Exercise

"Today we will build on the repetition and preparation exercises that we explored in previous classes. Today we will add an independent activity."

"Actor 1, You will choose an activity and a reason for completing said activity. The motivation must be reasonable and with some urgency. For instance, if you are completing a math homework assignment, there must be a time frame in which the assignment must be completed and a consequence for not completing the assignment. You must have a specific reason that this must be done right this minute. While completing your activity, you must give it your attention.

Actor 2, You will enter the scene by knocking and entering. It is your choice whether to wait for a response from your partner, or if you choose to initiate the conversation. Before entering, you must engage in your own preparation so that you know where you have come from, what activity you were engaged in previously, and your state of mind upon entering. For instance, If you have come from the grocery store and received terrible customer service, you could enter with the intent of sending the manager an email. Keep in mind that you need not discuss your preparation in your scene.

Upon Actor 2 entering the scene, both actors should observe the situation. One of the actors must make a verbal observation. This can be any type of observation of the other person. *Remember the repetition exercise, you should not ask a question. Instead, make an observation. Actor 1, you must continue to participate in your activity, fully.

If Actor 2 begins the sequence, Actor 1 you must respond with a repetition of what was said to you (in the first person if necessary). As the sequence continues, use your impulses to make a new observation based on what is currently being said."

Once the actors participate in the sequence for a few minutes stop and ask:

"What changed when the activity was introduced? Did that make the exercise more difficult?"

"Audience, what did you observe about the exchange? How did the activity change it?"

"We will try this again" side coaching for that particular sequence. Encouraging students to resist the urge to "act" the emotion. Instead, respond to the stimuli being presented.

"We will repeat this exercise with each pair. One actor will choose an activity and each will do their preparation before the repetition sequence begins.

Choose and independent activity:

- Trying to find the burned out bulb in a string of Christmas lights
- Scattering many pages of a report all over the room and putting the pages back in order
- Threading tiny beads for a necklace
- Putting together a difficult puzzle
- Writing a letter
- Carefully cutting out pictures of people from magazines
- Opening a letter so that you can't tell it's been opened
- Sorting tiny beads by color
- Building a Popsicle stick bridge or house
- Opening a coconut without the proper tools
- Folding an origami swan
- Gluing a vase back together
- Working on a crossword puzzle
- Reassembling a letter that has been ripped to shreds
- Forging a signature that has to be perfect
- Sorting game pieces that have all been mixed together (two or more games dumped into one box)
- Cutting out shapes perfectly
- Making something out of pipe cleaners
- Putting a list of numbers into a phone manually
- Solving an anagram
- Removing paint from a frame/object using sandpaper
- Making something out of clay or molding putty
- Untying knotted rope