

*Anne Bogart's Viewpoints:*  
Investigating the Theory and Practice

*Farmington Public Schools*  
*Grades 10-12*  
*Theatre*

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## **Unit Summary**

**Specialized Performance Studies is the third course in a sequence of three courses at Farmington High School. Each year the focus of the course changes, so that students can repeat the course year after year. Despite the different focus, each year the course aims to concentrate on a specific aspect of theatre history; the concentration could be a playwright, artistic movement, or acting/directing methodology. Last year, the focus was Theatre of the Absurd. This year, the focus will be on director Anne Bogart's theory of performance called *Viewpoints*.**

**The unit assumes basic knowledge and skills learned in Introduction to Theatre and Acting and Directing. These include elements of character, text analysis, and the roles of actors and director in rehearsal and performance.**

## **Stage One: Standards**

Stage One identifies the desired results of the unit including the broad understandings, the unit outcome statement and essential questions that focus the unit, and the necessary knowledge and skills.

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### **Essential Understandings and Content Standards**

*\*Note from curriculum writer: Since Farmington Public Schools does not have essential understandings or content standards for theatre, these standards come from the Connecticut State Department of Education's Connecticut Curriculum Framework.*

**Content Standard One: Creating** - Students will create through improvising, writing, and refining scripts.

Corresponding Performance Standard A: Students will construct imaginative scripts and collaborate with actors to refine scripts so that story and meaning are conveyed to an audience.

*(The Viewpoints shift the burden of creating from the playwright and director to the actors, who are actively involved in the constructing and composition of a theatrical production. A study of the Viewpoints gives actors wonderful opportunity to create!)*

**Content Standard Two: Acting**- Students will act by developing, communicating and sustaining characters.

Corresponding Performance Standard B: Compare and demonstrate acting techniques and methods from a variety of periods and styles.

*(The Viewpoints provide an approach to acting which varies immensely from methods in realism, which are studied in Introduction to Theatre and Acting and Directing.)*

**Content Standard Four: Directing** - Students will direct by planning or interpreting works of theatre and by organizing and conducting rehearsals.

Corresponding Performance Standard A: Develop multiple interpretations and visual and aural production choices for scripts and production ideas and choose those that are most appropriate.

Corresponding Performance Standard B: Justify selection of text, interpretation, and visual/aural choices.

**Content Standard Seven: Analysis, Criticism and Meaning** – Students will analyze, critique and construct meanings from works of theatre.

Corresponding Performance Standard C: Analyze and critique performances and constructively suggest alternative artistic choices.

Corresponding Performance Standard D: Constructively evaluate their own and others' collaborative efforts in informal and formal productions.

**Technology Standard Two: Communication** – Technology can be used to create written, visual, and multimedia products to communicate ideas, information, or conclusions to others.

**Technology Standard One: Information Accessing**-- Information skills and strategies are necessary to effectively locate and use resources for solving problems, conducting research and pursuing personal interest.

## **Unit Outcome Statement**

Consistently aligning all instruction with this statement will maintain focus in this unit.

*As a result of this unit, students will understand that acting methods in general, and specifically Anne Bogart's Viewpoints, directly influence how actors and directors rehearse a play, and that using the Viewpoints can shift the joy and burden of creating from the playwright and director more heavily to the actors. They also will understand how selecting a text and interpreting it through aural and visual choices affect the meaning that is conveyed to an audience.*

*They will understand:*

- ❖ *Anne Bogart's Viewpoints as an acting method especially how it compares to acting traditions rooted in realism*
- ❖ *The role of the Viewpoints in organizing and running rehearsals*
- ❖ *Selection, interpretation, and production of text as important steps in the creative process.*

## **Essential Questions**

These questions help to focus the unit and guide inquiry.

How do the Viewpoints help and challenge you as actors and directors?

How do different acting methods influence the final performance?

How do staging and aural/visual choices contribute to the final performance?

## **Knowledge and Skills**

The Knowledge and Skills section includes the key facts, concepts, principles, skills, and processes called for by the content standards and needed by students to reach desired understandings.

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### **Knowledge**

#### *Key Concepts:*

- ❑ Representational Theatre and Realism
- ❑ ViewPoints: Tempo, Duration, Kinesthetic Response, Repetition, Shape, Gesture, Architecture, Spatial Relationship, Topography
- ❑ Sourcework
- ❑ Composition

### **Skills/Processes**

- ❑ *Apply Viewpoints in training*
- ❑ *Choose appropriate Sourcework for theatre rooted in Viewpoints*
- ❑ *Organize and conduct rehearsals based on Viewpoints*
- ❑ *Develop multiple interpretations and make the best visual and aural choices based on those interpretations*
- ❑ *Compare productions rooted in naturalism and those rooted in the Viewpoints*
- ❑ *Demonstrate ability to synthesize information to answer a question.*
- ❑ *Use word processing software to compose, edit, and revise prop lists for clear communication and keeping rehearsals on track.*

### **Thinking Skills**

- ❑ Summarizing articles
- ❑ Interpreting texts
- ❑ Identifying pros and cons of various production choices
- ❑ Selecting and revising throughout the rehearsal process
- ❑ Collaborating on informal and formal performances
- ❑ Evaluating performances using specific criteria
- ❑ Reflecting on own work and personal development

## **Stage Two: Assessment Package**

Stage Two determines the acceptable evidence that students have acquired the understandings, knowledge and skills identified in Stage One.

The Viewpoints are a philosophy of movement translated into a technique for 1) training performers and 2) creating movement on stage. They also refer to a set of names given to certain basic principles of movement including: tempo, shape, repetition, spatial relationship, etc. They provide points of reference that performers and directors can refer to while working on a production.

### **Authentic Performance Task**

**Goal** – To broaden and expand theatergoers' ideas about acting and performance by presenting a production rooted in the Viewpoints, and for actors to experience performing in this method.

**Role** – You are a company of actors, directors, and production assistants.

**Audience** – Your audience is your family, friends, relatives, teachers, and the FHS community.

**Situation** – You must create a performance of an existing script that has evidence of use of all of the Viewpoints and that also demonstrates a professional level of performance.

**Performance** – You will rehearse and create a performance using the Viewpoints methodology and working within given parameters of time, space, and budget. You also will publicize this performance by creating fliers that communicate the mood and style of the production.

**Assessment and Self – Assessment** – Assessment will draw from the regular FHS theatre rubric by making use of three of the five established criteria and revising two of the criteria. The criteria likely will be weighted in the following way:

Preparation and Professionalism (10%)

Voice and Diction (10%)

Use of design elements: costumes, props, sound (10%)

Performance Space and Positioning (10%)

Use of the Viewpoints (60%)

Possible plays for production: Maria Irene Fornes' *Summertime*, Migdalia Cruz' *The Have-Little*, etc.

### **Tests, Quizzes, and Other Quick and Ongoing Checks for Understanding**

\*Quiz on the Viewpoints

\*Journal prompts about acting methodology, rehearsal progress, and performance

### **Projects, Reports, Etc.**

\*Research, read, and summarize five articles (from the internet) about the Viewpoints.

\*Create informal performances based on student-selected source material.

\*Create and maintain spreadsheet of props that will help organize rehearsals and communicate visual choices.

\*Create production calendars

\*Write a review of showcase production.

\*Write and revise a letter to Anne Bogart in which you comment about how the Viewpoints methodology has helped you as a student of theatre.

## **Stage Three: Learning Experiences and Instruction**

Stage Three helps teachers plan learning experiences and instruction that align with Stage One and enables students to be successful in Stage Two.

### **Learning Experiences and Instruction**

The learning experiences and instruction described in this section provide teachers with one option for meeting the standards listed in Stage One. Teachers are encouraged to design their own learning experiences and instruction, tailored to the needs of their particular students.

<b><i>Guiding Questions</i></b>	<b><i>Instructional Strategies</i></b>	<b><i>Checking for Understanding</i></b>
<b><i>2 Days: Review of Representational Theatre</i></b>		
<i>Is Representational Theatre the only way?</i>	<p>Hook – Show photos of two productions—one realistic, one not. Describe each ... compare.</p> <p>Review from Acting and Directing definition of Representational Theatre and identify earlier photo as example.</p> <p>Students create realistic scenes.</p>	<p>Diagnostic check – are students able to describe the photo of a realistic production using the appropriate term from Acting and Directing: representational theatre</p> <p>Evaluate scenes and write one-minute essay saying what makes scenes realistic.</p>
<b><i>1 Day: Introducing the Viewpoints</i></b>		
<i>What are the Viewpoints?</i>	<p>Hook – Ask students to verbally react to quote: “Actress Ellen Lauren doesn’t look at character in terms of personality traits, but as a composition of your energy informed by the physical and imaginative information the situation gives you.”</p> <p>Class generates list of elements of and processes for creating characters.</p> <p>Introduce Anne Bogart and the Viewpoints ... Tempo, Duration, Kinesthetic Response, Repetition, Shape, Gesture, Architecture, Spatial Relationship, Topography</p>	<p>Give examples of characters typical of representational theatre.</p> <p><b><u>Index Card Reaction</u></b> Side One: What are your first impressions of the Viewpoints? Side Two: What do you not understand?</p>
<b><i>10 Days: Experiencing each Viewpoint</i></b>		

<p><i>What is spontaneity?</i></p> <p><i>How might the Viewpoints help you to stretch yourself and help you to make creative discoveries?</i></p>	<p>Warm-up: Movement activity that encourages physical spontaneity.</p> <p>Students participate in a sustained, group improvisations to music during which they explore movement in terms of the Viewpoints of Time: <i>tempo, duration, kinesthetic response, and repetition.</i></p> <p>Students participate in improvisations exploring the Viewpoints: Shape, Gesture, Architecture, Spatial Relationship, and Topography.</p> <p>Reflection activities (interspersed throughout 7 &amp; 8)</p>	<p>Journal Prompts/Pair &amp; Group discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*How did you feel during the improvisation?</li> <li>*Which Viewpoint was easiest for you to work with?</li> <li>*Identify a specific moment during which something truly spontaneous happened.</li> <li>*Would this activity help you perform in Representational Theatre?</li> </ul> <p>Quiz on the Viewpoints</p>
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**3 Days: Defining Sourcework**

<p><i>Q: What is Little Red Riding Hood REALLY about?</i></p>	<p>Define Sourcework by reading pages 17-20 in <u>Viewpoints</u> including the idea that theatre, according to Anne Bogart, carries inside of it a <i>question</i>.</p> <p>Hook: Class silently creates a collage of images, words, emotions that come to mind when thinking about Little Red Riding Hood.</p> <p>Read various versions of Little Red Riding Hood. Discuss what's being emphasized in each and how they are different?</p> <p>Props/objects – Share objects that make a statement about the <i>question</i> posed by Little Red Riding Hood.</p>	<p>One minute essay in which students identify the <i>question</i> inside one version of Little Red Riding Hood.</p> <p>Students explain why their prop/object reveals the <i>question</i>.</p>
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**4 Days: Applying Viewpoints to Little Red Riding Hood**

<p><i>How might the Viewpoints</i></p>	<p>Groups create a basic</p>	
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<p><i>help us to reveal something new and interesting about Little Red Riding Hood?</i></p>	<p>movement outline for Little Red Riding Hood.</p> <p>Experiment with letting Viewpoints change/influence the movement outline.</p> <p>Choose one movement segment with the class.</p> <p>Reflect: How do you feel about this acting method so far?</p>	<p>Each group explains how the movement changed as a result of experimenting and how it reveals the <i>question</i> in the tale.</p> <p>Reflections.</p>
<p><b>1 Day: Viewing a Viewpoints Production</b></p>		
<p><i>Q: Will you even <u>like</u> a Viewpoints production?</i></p>	<p>Field trip to New York Public Library of the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center to view an Anne Bogart production on tape. Students make notes on the production.</p>	<p>Journal prompt: How do the Viewpoints help you to construct meaning from the production?</p> <p>Answer second guiding question.</p>
<p><b>2 Days: Selecting Sourcework for first Performance Task</b></p>		
<p><i>Q: What makes good Sourcework?</i></p>	<p>Brainstorm ideas for sourcework – stories, poems, etc.</p> <p>Each student shares one idea for sourcework.</p> <p>Small groups select sourcework for first performance task.</p>	<p>Student justifies selection of text as source material.</p>
<p><b>3 Days: Experimenting with Chosen Sourcework</b></p>		
<p><i>Q: What does your Sourcework mean to you?</i></p> <p><i>Q: How can the Viewpoints illuminate something meaningful in the sourcework?</i></p>	<p>Students create a collage of words, images, sounds that come to mind.</p> <p>Students experiment with application of Viewpoints to source material.</p>	<p>One minute essay: Explain how the Viewpoints illuminate the <i>question</i> posed by your source material.</p>
<p><b>4 Days: Composition</b></p>		
<p><i>Q: How do you put y our ideas together?</i></p>	<p>Hook – Simon Says game during which students respond to prompts such as: “Simon Says move upstage right.”</p> <p>Define composition – stage picture, focus, positioning.</p> <p>Exercise in composition—</p>	<p>Diagnostic Check for Areas of Stage and Positions on Stage.</p> <p>Class evaluates choices ...</p>

<p><i>Q: How does sound become part of the theatrical composition?</i></p>	<p>students test and try different ways of staging a particular scene.</p> <p>Students add sound, live and/or recorded.</p>	<p>which create the most visual interest? Which most clearly convey meaning?</p> <p>Class evaluate choices ... which are most effective aural choices and why?</p>
<p><b>12 Days: Performance Task One</b></p>		
<p><i>Q: How do you make sure you are ready for your performance?</i></p>	<p>Hook—How would you feel if you bought a ticket to a play, got dressed up for the performance, hired a baby sitter, traveled half an hour to the theatre, arrived only to learn that the actors and directors weren't ready?</p> <p>Show the students an example of a production calendar.</p> <p>Groups create a production calendar ... which includes a few requirements ... a) a share /feedback day for revision; b) a props/costume deadline; c) a dress rehearsal; and d) the performance day.</p> <p>Students rehearse in groups according to production calendar.</p> <p>Share day.</p> <p>Performance for outside class.</p> <p>Strike props, costumes, etc.</p>	<p>Journal prompts: How is your project going? What's working well? What needs improvement? How is your production calendar helping you ... are you on track and running rehearsals well?</p> <p>Groups constructively evaluate each others' performances using the rubric.</p> <p>Reflect on performances using the rubric and a written prompt.</p>
<p><b>3 Days: Thinking about the Viewpoints</b></p>		
<p><i>Q: How do you feel about the Viewpoints now?</i></p>	<p>Group discussion - compare a school play (Crucible, etc.) to the performances you created.</p> <p>Research, summarize and present five articles that reveal what other theatre artists and critics say about the Viewpoints.</p>	<p>Examine research packets.</p>

	Craft a letter to Anne Bogart in which you comment about how the Viewpoints methodology has helped you as a student of theatre.	Students share letters.
<b>6-7 Weeks: Performance Task: Showcase production of an Existing Script</b>		
<p><i>Q: How can the Viewpoints make the production of an existing script even more interesting?</i></p> <p><i>Q: How do you cast a play?</i></p> <p><i>Q: What are all of the elements that need to be included in a production calendar?</i></p> <p><i>Q: How do you create a prop list?</i></p> <p><i>Q: What purpose does a flier serve?</i></p>	<p>Read play. (*Note – depending on size of class, this could be one play, or several smaller plays.)</p> <p>Explore play ... use image, sound, improvisation, discussion etc. to discover the <i>question</i> posed by the text.</p> <p>Casting Activity – students generate a list of adjectives to describe themselves and a list of their special talents. They then generate a list of adjectives to describe characters and the kind of special skills someone playing that character should have. Class matches up actors with roles.</p> <p>Students create a production calendar.</p> <p>Lesson on the format of a prop list and how to set up a spreadsheet.</p> <p>Students create a spreadsheet for props.</p> <p>Students rehearse according to production calendar.</p> <p>At several points, students share sections of play for feedback.</p> <p>Hook: Show a poster from a professional play. Ask</p>	<p>Reflect: what discoveries have we made about the text?</p> <p>Journal prompt: How do you feel about the actors' role in rehearsal using this methodology? Is it different?</p> <p>Students bring in props / costumes by deadline and explain and justify their visual choices.</p> <p>Students evaluate performances using rubric.</p>

<p><i>Q: How has your understanding of the Viewpoints and their usefulness to you grown, changed, evolved?</i></p>	<p>students to say what they see and guess anything they can about the characters, plot, themes and mood of the production. Then they make a list of all of the information included on the poster.</p> <p>Students discuss / brainstorm what a flier for their production should convey. Also, they discuss what information needs to be included.</p> <p>Students create fliers.</p> <p>Performance of Showcase</p> <p>Read and Revise letters to Anne Bogart.</p>	<p>Students create a checklist of items that need to be included in the flier.</p> <p>Students evaluate fliers based on check list and select the one they think is best ... and make suggestions for revision.</p> <p>Students write a review of the Showcase.</p>
<p><b><i>2 Days: Marking Moment</i></b></p>		
<p><i>Q: What from the course stands out most for you?</i></p>	<p>Students select a particular moment at which they felt successful, stretched, joyful, smart, etc. and recreate it for the class through image, action and/or description. They explain why it stands out for them.</p>	

## Appendices

*Field Trip to New York Public Library of the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center*