

Emotional Memory – Stanislavski Lesson Plan

Teacher: Hannah Zdroik **Date:** 9-10-2023 **Subject:** Theatre (T) **Grade Level:** 9-12 (H)

Common Core Theatre Standards: (Based on the Wisconsin State Standards for Theatre Education)

TP.Cr.16.h: Characterization

Create vivid, complex and well-rounded characters that authentically represent the text with defined action.

Common Core Content Standards: Standard 1 - CREATE: Students will generate, develop, and refine artistic work.

Materials Needed:

Instructor: Laptop, projector/SmartBoard, internet access, The Stanislavski System (Sonia Moore), Access to Google slides

Students: Laptop, internet access, access to Google Classroom, access to [Google Slides - Presentation](#), Journal, pencil

Space: Classroom space; desks for working. Theater space or stage as available for enrichment activity.

Overview: Students will examine emotional memory through the lens of Stanislavski. *The Stanislavski System*, by Sonia Moore, will act as a guide for this lesson. Specifically, a modified version of the imagination exercise on page 28, and a creation of Stanislavski’s suggestion of music-listening on page 44. This lesson is divided into two parts; Part 1 will require the students to pick a photo and will be prompted to go on an imaginary “walk” and answer questions using their five senses and emotions using imagination and reflection of personal human experience. Part 2 will require the students to listen to a piece of music (chosen by the instructor) and reflect on how the music makes them feel, using emotional memory and empathy.

Student Friendly Lesson Objective (Purpose) I can...	Teacher Activities (Teacher Strategies)	Student Activities/Differentiated Instruction	Assignments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can reflect on past experiences to influence emotional memory of my characters. I can use my five senses to create a landscape of observations to enrich emotional memory. I can use music listening as a tool to 	<p>Anticipatory Set: Aerial Views YouTube Video Bell-Ringer Activity.</p> <p><u>Enduring Understanding:</u> Theatre artists create emotional memory through their real-life experiences, and from the outside world.</p> <p><u>Essential Questions:</u> How do theatre artists enrich their “emotional</p>	<p><u>Guided Practice / Strategies:</u> Students will go through the Google slides (accessed based on their own laptop) and pick a photo to take a “emotional walk” in that space. The instructor has an example photo within the lecture slides and will verbally answer prompted questions to model the activity to the entire class.</p> <p>In addition, students will listen</p>	<p><u>Bell Ringer:</u> Students will get into table groups of four or five and answer questions on the slideshow. Answer the following questions with your group members:</p> <p>How do environments shape our emotions? How do our emotions shape our environments?</p>

<p>reflect on the emotion of life experiences and to create character depth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can use imagination and reflection as a means for emotional memory for my character. • I can use emotional memory as a way to promote empathy and relate to my character. 	<p>memory”? How can theatre artists be intentional about their performance?</p> <p><u>Input:</u> Instructor reads aloud from <i>The Stanislavski System</i> by Sonia Moore. For the start of the class, prior to Part 1, the instructor will read from the first paragraph of page 42, into the later portions of the paragraph. Then, read from the start of the second paragraph on page 42, to the middle of the paragraph. Additionally, the instructor will read from the start of the third paragraph to the middle of the paragraph.</p> <p>Before Part 2, the instructor will read the start of the bottom paragraph on page 43, to the end of the paragraph on page 43.</p> <p><i>*All sections are indicated within the attached images below the lesson plan.</i></p> <p><u>Vocabulary Review:</u></p> <p><u>Emotional Memory:</u> Emotion used by the actor, provided by a real-life experience that is required for the emotion of the character they are</p>	<p>to a piece of music provided by the instructor (details below).</p> <p>The instructor will provide instructions to each part of the activity, which is provided below.</p> <p><u>Independent Practice / Activities:</u> Part 1 will require the students to pick a photo within the lecture slides and will be prompted to go on an imaginary “walk” and answer questions using their five senses and emotions using imagination and reflection of personal human experience.</p> <p>Students will write the answers to the questions (prompted within the lecture slides) in their journal. They will then verbally share their “emotional walk” journey to their groupmates.</p> <p>On your emotional walk...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you see? • What did you hear? • What did you smell? • What did you taste? • What did you touch? • Was anyone with you? • What emotions did you feel? • Explain any other experiences. Did this 	<p>How do emotions help us relate to characters in a play/musical?</p> <p><u>Remediation:</u> One-on-one instructions will be given for those who need it and request it.</p> <p>For enrichment activity, those who have anxiety performing in front of the class can write a story about their experience with the emotion they choose from the hat.</p> <p>Those with hearing difficulties may need to use an assistive listening device (ALD). Instructor should be mindful of individual accommodations per students’ IEP or 504 plan.</p> <p><u>Enrichment:</u> (Time Permitting) <u>Physical Activity:</u> Students will pick an “emotion” from a hat. They will have to think of a real experience that made them feel that way. Reflecting on that experience, the partners will act out an improvised skit in the “mood” of the emotion they picked, without stating what</p>
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	<p>portraying.</p> <p><u>Empathy</u>: The ability to understand and feel one's thoughts, feelings, and experiences.</p> <p><u>Imagination</u>: Transformation of a story into a scenic reality.</p> <p><u>Magic "If"</u>: What would I do if...; "if" does not imply anything exists.</p> <p><u>Model</u>: <u>Part 1</u>: The instructor has an example photo within the lecture slides and will verbally answer prompted questions to model the activity to the entire class.</p> <p>If the students have additional questions after modeling, the instructor may answer them to the entire class, so all students understand the objectives.</p> <p><u>Part 2</u>: The instructor will read directions out loud to the class, shown within the slides. The instructor will answer questions verbally to the class with a hypothetical song.</p> <p><u>Check for Understanding</u>:</p>	<p>remind you of a specific time in your life?</p> <p><u>Check for Understanding</u>: What questions might someone have about the activity? Students will be asked to raise their hand if they have questions after the explanation of the activity. The instructor will circulate the room if there are individual questions during the activity.</p> <p>Part 2 will require all the students to listen to a piece of music and reflect on how the music makes them feel, using emotional memory and personal experience. The music for the in-class activity will be chosen by the instructor. In this lesson, the music segment is Rhapsody in Blue by George Gershwin in two sequences: one from 0:00 to 2:06 and the other from 4:46 to 6:03.</p> <p>Students will write the answers to the questions (prompted within the lecture slides) in their journal. They will then verbally share their music-listening journey to their groupmates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write down how the music makes you feel. 	<p>their emotion is directly. The students performing will guess their partner's emotion based on how they acted within the skit.</p> <p><u>Emotions</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy • Sad • Frustrated • Envious • Surprised • Confused • Angry • Joyful • Irritated • Grief • Shocked <p><u>Daily Writing Assignment</u>: Students will fulfill this requirement when they answer questions from Parts 1 and 2 of the in-class activity, and by answering the conclusion question.</p> <p><u>Assessment / Evaluation</u>: Rubrics attached below for self-assessments for Parts 1 and 2 of this activity.</p> <p><u>Homework</u>: Emotional Memory Through Empathy (25 pts.)</p>
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	<p>The instructor will give a chance for students to ask questions after modeling both parts.</p> <p>After the fact, if students still have questions after modeling, the instructor will circulate the room and answer questions on an individual basis.</p> <p><u>Closure:</u> How does “emotional memory” improve your performance as an actor? What are some other exercises besides an imaginary walk and music listening that can improve your emotional memory? Should all portrayals of characters be researched at this emotional level?</p> <p>The instructor will conclude by reading a final segment aloud from <i>The Stanislavski System</i> by Sonia Moore, starting at the top of the second paragraph (or first paragraph of the page) on page 42 and reading until indicated towards the middle of that paragraph.</p> <p><u>Time Duration:</u> 2 class</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where did the music “take” you? • What qualities of the music made you feel that way? • Reflect on a time in your life when you had the same emotions. • Did the first segment of music differ from the second segment of music, regarding your emotions? <p><u>Check for Understanding:</u> What questions might someone have about the activity? Students will be asked to raise their hand if they have questions after the explanation of the activity. The instructor will circulate the room if there are individual questions during the activity.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recall a positive experience in your life and describe what happened. 2. Provide three emotions that you felt during this time and explain why. 3. Provide at least three senses; sight, sound, taste, smell, or touch and explain in depth the senses that were present during this experience. 4. Pick a song or soundscape that “matches” the emotion of this moment. This song/music/sounds can be any genre. 5. Provide the title and link to this song. 6. Lastly, pick a character from a play, musical, book, TV show, movie, anime, cartoon, etc. and identify a moment they experienced that is similar to yours. Give at least two explanations as to why their experience is similar to what you felt in your positive moment.
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	<p>periods at 60 minutes. Another class period may need to be added if using enrichment activity.</p>		<p>Turn in your document using Google Classroom.</p> <p>The rubric for this assignment is located on slide #21 of the presentation and attached below this less plan.</p>
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The Stanislavski System (Moore), PRIOR TO PART 1:

ory" he used. Later, in the 1930s, he rejected this name and replaced it with "emotional memory."

[An experience of the actor on stage is different from an experience in life. The difference lies in the fact that the actor lives on stage as the character and also as the actor who creates the character. The experiences of the actor-character influence one another and acquire a specific quality. The actor's own experience, transformed into that of the character, is as sincere and deep on stage as in life. The quality of the actor's performance depends upon the sincerity of his experience. And yet the quality of the experience on stage changes, as Stanislavski said, into a "poetic reflection of life's experience."] He said, "Time is an excellent filter, an excellent purifier of memories of emotions once experienced. Moreover, time is an excellent artist. It not only purifies but is capable of poeticizing the memories."

[The actor must live true experiences, but true stage experiences. The actor on stage lives a "repeated" experience, not a "primary" one, as Stanislavski said. Every actor knows the difference between a real-life experience and an experience on stage if he ever achieves an experience on stage. Indeed, if actors lived the same experiences as in life, there would be lunatics and murders on stage after every performance in which a character loses his mind or a murder is committed. It would be impossible for an actor to survive many performances in which he went through experiences and shocks as they are in real life. On the contrary, we know that suffering on stage gives the actor who achieves it a true joy.

[It should be obvious, therefore, that a stage emotion is not the same as an emotion in life, first of all because it does not arise from an actual cause. The actor is capable of stirring a needed emotion within himself only because he has often experienced an analogous emotion in his own life.] Every experience in life leaves a trace on our central nervous system, and thus the nerves which participate in a given experience become more sensitive to such a stimulus. Every adult has experienced most emotions, though perhaps not

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The Stanislavski System (Moore), PRIOR TO PART 2:

for exactly the same reason the actor must experience them on stage. People may go through different feelings of love, for instance: love for a person, a dress, an animal, sunshine. We have also hated someone, or an insect, or war. There is something common in all these cases: that is why they are all called love and hate.

According to scientific data, emotional memory not only retains an imprint of an experience but also synthesizes feelings of a different nature. If a person has experienced, for instance, the feeling of envy because his friend has a better job, or wins a lottery, or receives a good role in a play, and if he has experienced such feelings many times, the common element in all these cases will have left a deep imprint on his memory. Stanislavski said, "From many preserved traces of what was experienced, one great condensed, magnified, and deepened memory of emotions of the same nature is formed. There is nothing superfluous in such a memory; there is only the essence. This is the synthesis of all the emotions of the same kind. It does not refer to a small, separate, private instance, but to all those of the same nature." The actor must be capable of bringing out the imprint of a past experience and of making it respond to the conditioned stimulus on stage at the moment he needs it. Through rehearsals, the actor develops a conditioned reflex in which his emotion is stirred through the stage stimulus.

A re-created emotion is different from the "primary" emotion also because it does not absorb the actor entirely. Reliving a real-life experience, the person also lives the present time, and this influences the experience. When a tragedy occurs, we are completely absorbed in the moment, but when we remember this tragedy later, other interests penetrate the experience. Though our grief is sincere, it acquires a different quality. Such is the actor's state on stage. The actor who sincerely lives the life of the character never forgets that he is the actor who performs.

* [Stanislavski believed in two sources of material for an actor's creative work: the inner life of an actor himself and his observations of the outside world—an inexhaustible

source. The material an actor finds in the life around him he must make his own. To enrich the emotional memory, the actor must observe what is happening around him; he must read, listen to music, go to museums, watch people. Well-developed emotional memory is the most important requirement for the actor's work in the theater of living experience. It is the storage of past experiences and the only source for emotions on stage.

In the early stages of the System, actors tried to bring themselves into the creative state when their emotions were stirred, with the help of its separate elements. But that state would not always come, and they were "acting" their emotions. Moreover, Stanislavski felt that forcing emotions from the emotional memory brought actors to inner hysteria. Stanislavski feared that such a tendency could ruin the ac-

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The Stanislavski System (Moore), CLOSURE:

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ASSESSMENTS:

Rubric – Part 1, Emotional Walk Journal/Writing - Self Assessment Imagine and Reflection of Emotional Memory

5 - Excellent: I used my journal to reflect on my five senses, identify emotions and surroundings on my imaginary emotional walk, and make connections to a personal experience.

4 – Above Average: I used my journal to identify emotions and five senses on my emotional walk.

3 - Average: I used my journal to reflect emotions and some senses on my emotional walk.

2 – Below Average: I used my journal to reflect on emotions or senses.

1 – Poor: I did not use my journal to reflect on my emotional walk.

Rubric – Part 2, Music Listening Journal/Writing – Self Assessment Reflection of Personal Experiences through Music

5 - Excellent: I used my journal to reflect on the music qualities, emotions that arose, identified a similar personal experience that reflect the same emotions, and identified differences or similarities between the two segments of music played.

4 – Above Average: I used my journal to identify emotions, music qualities, and identified a similar personal experience that reflects the same emotions.

3 - Average: I used my journal to reflect emotions and qualities of music or a similar personal experience.

2 – Below Average: I used my journal to reflect on emotions or a similar personal experience.

1 – Poor: I did not use my journal to reflect on the music I heard.

Homework Rubric for Emotional Memory Through Empathy Assignment (25 Points):

Description of your positive experience.	5 points
Identify three emotions you felt and explanations of each.	6 points
Identify at least three senses and explain these senses in depth.	6 points
Find a song/music/soundscape to match your emotions of your experience. Provide a link and title to the song.	4 points
Identify a character from a play, musical, movie, book, TV show, etc. that went through a similar experience as yours. Give at least two explanations as to why their experience is similar to what you felt during your positive moment.	4 points

Resources:

Moore, Sonia. *The Stanislavski System*. 2nd rev. ed., Penguin, 1984.

Stanislavski and Emotional Memory. Brian Timoney's Actors Studio Ltd, 2016,
<https://www.briantimoneyacting.co.uk/stanislavski-emotional-memory/>. Accessed 2 Sept. 2023.