



CURRICULUM *Theater*

This document is designed to support Theater educators in aligning curricula for their courses with the New York State Theater Standards and to address student needs. Students in every Theater classroom display a range of maturity, skill, and intellectual development. Students in your classes may be either more advanced or not yet ready for the Performance Indicators listed in the Standards. The Performance Indicators illustrate a progression of skills, abilities, knowledge and socio-emotional development. They can be adapted as appropriate to your students' needs and prior experiences.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

HOW CAN NEW ARTS STANDARDS TRANSFORM OLD CURRICULUM?

Students, as well as teachers, need to make, implement, and reflect on important theatrical decisions within the classroom.

- How will you give your students more opportunities to participate in the decision-making processes related to their own Creating, Performing, Responding, and Connecting?

The balance between the “depth” and “breadth” of the curriculum needs to be adjusted to meet the needs of students.

- What will guide your decision-making as you consider how to prioritize depth and breadth?

Curriculum design begins with identifying desired outcomes.

- How might you use a “backward” design process to translate the Standards into instructional designs that focus upon Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions?

What criteria do you apply as you select theatrical material for instructional purposes?

- How did you establish these criteria?
- How do/might you involve students in this process?
- What would happen to students’ understanding of their craft if they took over some important decisions regarding theatrical material?

There are differences in analysis, interpretation, and evaluation.

- There isn’t just one set of evaluation tools or one set of criteria; they are context-dependent.
- Whose set of criteria is being used, and why?
- How can you encourage students to determine the appropriate criteria for understanding and evaluating works of Theater?

Connections across disciplines, history, and cultures inform theatrical understanding.

- How can you help students investigate ways artistic work is influenced by societal, cultural, and historical context and, in turn, how artistic

ideas shape cultures past, present, and future?

- Is there equal representation of genders among selected artists, topics and themes?

Assessment data informs instructional design.

- What types of assessments might inform your instruction and student reflection?
- How do your assessments encourage students to self-evaluate and respond to feedback from you and other professionals?
- What strategies will your students use to revise their work?
- What dispositions (attitudes, values, and beliefs) and mindsets (e.g., persistence and grit) will your students need to achieve instructional goals?

The relationship of 21st Century Skills to the new Theater standards is very strong.

- How can you emphasize those connections?

THINK

PRIORITIZE

depth over breadth.

The Theater Standards are based on Big Ideas, Enduring Understandings, and Essential Questions as an approach to curriculum design. How can you help students develop and unfold more meaningful and well-developed ideas over time?

TRANSITION STEPS

REVIEW • PLAN • EXPERIMENT

- 1. Study the new Arts Anchor Standards and Theater Enduring Understandings.**
 - Which units or lessons will need little to no adaptation?
 - Which units could be expanded with a few more activities (e.g., adding a collaborative step)?
- 2. Think over the units and lessons in your curriculum.**
 - Which Anchor Standards are fairly well represented?
 - Which Anchor Standards are not well represented, or missing altogether?
- 3. Are there any lessons or units that should be discarded?**
- 4. Consider new units or lessons you may need to develop to meet all 11 Anchor Standards.**

Schools and districts vary widely in the resources that they are able to devote to Theater education. Because Theater education is not implemented sequentially in all districts at all grade levels, a SLIDING SCALE has been developed to facilitate, when necessary, the writing of curricula suitable to students' experience and training, rather than grade level.

Levels (Introductory, Developing, Adept, and Excelling) are scaffolded to take into account students' prior experience and developmental level. Based on prior knowledge and baseline assessments, Theater educators can tailor an appropriate curriculum to meet individual student needs, targeting the appropriate Performance Indicators for each student's level. For example, students with no prior Theater instruction may begin at the Introductory level and progress through the next levels at a suitable pace.

NEXT STEPS

ALIGN • APPLY • GROW • INTEGRATE

- 1. Review the Anchor Standards and Performance Indicators again,** paying close attention to the Enduring Understandings, Essential Questions, and Process Components. These are broad and inclusive statements which, when explored via local curriculum opportunities, lead to fulfillment of the Standards.
- 2. For each unit you teach, choose developmentally appropriate Big Ideas/Enduring Understandings, and Essential Questions that can connect to the works students will engage with.** These ideas and works will anchor your curriculum.
- 3. Do your units or lessons actively engage students in reflecting on Big Ideas, Enduring Understandings, Essential Questions** in the various stages of making Theater?
- 4. How can you deepen or expand opportunities for...**
 - Formative assessment and metacognition?
 - Differentiated options that meet your objectives and give students creative opportunities?
 - A balance of traditional Theater artists and works with contemporary/innovative (responsive) Theater work and artists?
 - Integration of Theater works and artists from a variety of times and cultures?
 - Recognizing student growth as well as curriculum mastery?
- 5. Explore and try out new or adapted units.**
 - Practice reflection. What worked? What didn't work? What would you change?