

*HEY, KIDS!
LET'S PUT ON A SHOW!*

Theater in the English Language Classroom

Danielle Capretti



AIMS

- ◉ To highlight how theater in the classroom **enhances the English learning experience**
- ◉ To provide a **roadmap** for creating an English-language performance with students



WHY SHOULD YOU USE THEATER WITH YOUR STUDENTS?

- ◉ Provides practice in language skills
- ◉ Offers “learning through doing”
- ◉ Portrays authentic language in action
- ◉ Opens doors to multi-disciplinary studies
- ◉ Creates opportunities for those with other skills
(*e.g. artists, videographers, musicians*)



PERFORMANCE PLANNING

- ◉ **Text** - selecting a script
- ◉ **Casting** - choosing student actors for roles
- ◉ **Preparation** - working with words and movement
- ◉ **Performance** - putting on the show

THE SCRIPT

Where can you find scripts for your students?

- Search for authentic play scripts
 - In print or online
- Ask students to write the script
 - Based on dialogue prompts
 - A: Did you hear about Alma? She's so lucky!
 - B: No! What happened?
 - A:
 - Based on a story (story into dialogue, prequel, or sequel)
- Write the script yourself



SCRIPTS FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

Goodnight Moon

by Margaret Wise Brown

Narrator 1: In the great **green** room

Narrator 2: There was a **telephone**

Narrator 3: And a **red** balloon

Narrator 4: And a picture of ...

Narrator 1: The **cow** jumping over the **moon**.



SCRIPTS FOR SECONDARY LEARNERS

Reader's Theater Edition #12

The Hidden One: A Native American Legend

Told by Aaron Shepard

The invisible hunter at the end of the village is sought as a husband by every village maiden—but will Little Scarface even dare to try?

GENRE: Folktales, Cinderella tales

CULTURE: Native American

THEME: Self-esteem, heroines

READERS (*Actors*): 13

READER AGES: 7 and up

LENGTH: 8 minutes



SCRIPTS FOR ADULTS

A Hysterical Her-story of the American Revolution

By D.M. Larson



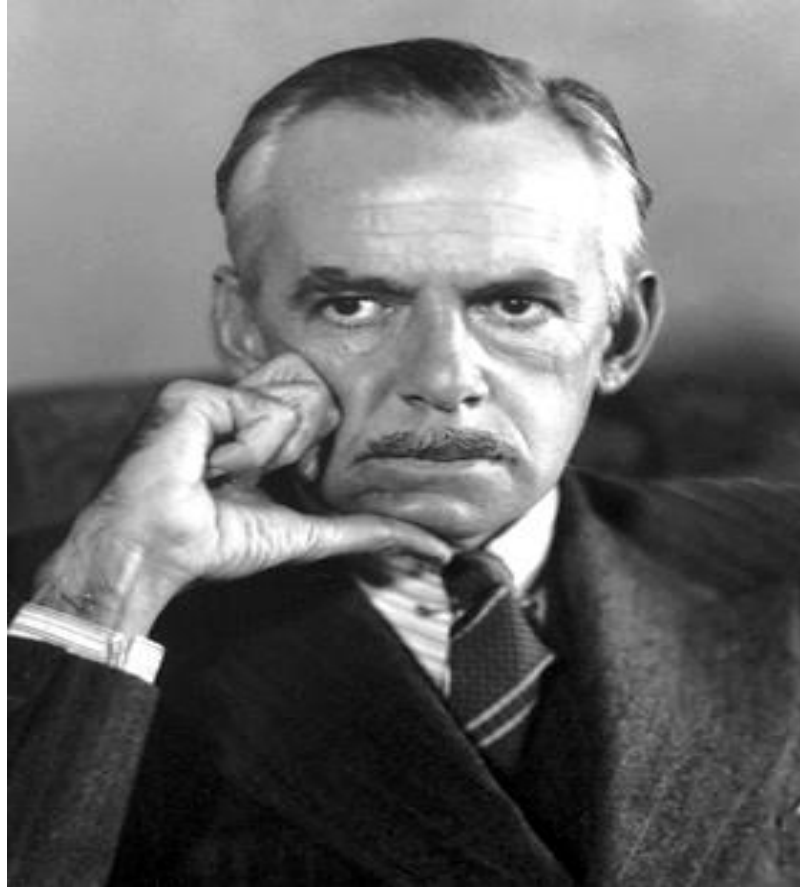
Abigail Adams: I call to order the first Women's Continental Congress...

Martha Washington: What? You told me this was going to be a sewing bee.

Abigail Adams: I find the fact that our husbands are excluding us from participating in the Continental Congress improper.

Deborah Franklin: She's a hothead like her husband.

SCRIPTS FOR PROFICIENCY STUDENTS



Eugene O'Neill

SCRIPTS FOR PROFICIENCY STUDENTS

Knapp: I know you have to put up with a lot, Mary, and I wish I could do something to make it easier for you. I don't know what's going to become of us—now.

Mrs. Knapp: Oh, we'll manage to get along as we have been doin', I expect.

Knapp: But—Mary—something terrible has happened. I'm almost afraid to tell you.

- From *Warnings* by Eugene O'Neill

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CASTING

How do you choose student actors for roles?

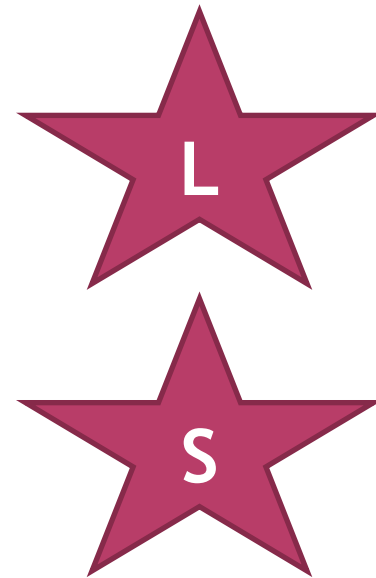


Photo: Eagle Brook School
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/eaglebrook/22310403455>

CASTING



- Choose the actors yourself
- Organize an “audition”
 - Pick an important part of the script
 - Ask students to read
 - Give a direction
 - (e.g., “Pause at the commas, please.”)
 - Ask students to re-read
 - Choose the best actors for roles
- Conduct a “read-through”: switch parts and choose the best actors



PREPARATION - “TABLE WORK”

What the script means and how to say the words

- Reading - Comprehension
- Vocabulary - Definitions
- Speaking
 - Pronunciation of words
 - Word and Sentence Stress
 - Intonation
 - Rhythm (especially pausing)



“TABLE WORK”

AMANDA: Deception! Deception! How old are you, Laura?

LAURA: Mother, you know my age.

AMANDA: I thought that you were an adult; it seems that I was mistaken.

LAURA: Has something happened, Mother? Mother, has--something happened?

AMANDA: I'll be all right in a minute; I'm just bewildered - by life...

LAURA: Mother, I wish that you would tell me what's happened!

from *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams

“TABLE WORK”

READING COMPREHENSION

AMANDA: Deception! Deception! How old are you, Laura?

LAURA: Mother, you know my age.

How old is Laura?

AMANDA: I thought that you were an adult; it seems that I was mistaken.

LAURA: Has something happened, Mother? Mother, has--something happened?

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LAURA: Mother, I wish that you would tell me what's happened!

What has happened?

from *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams

“TABLE WORK” VOCABULARY

AMANDA: Deception! Deception! How old are you, Laura?

LAURA: Mother, you know my age.

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“TABLE WORK” PRONUNCIATION

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LAURA: Mother, you know my age.

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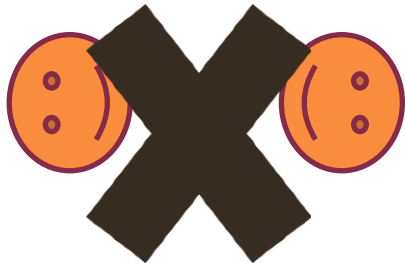
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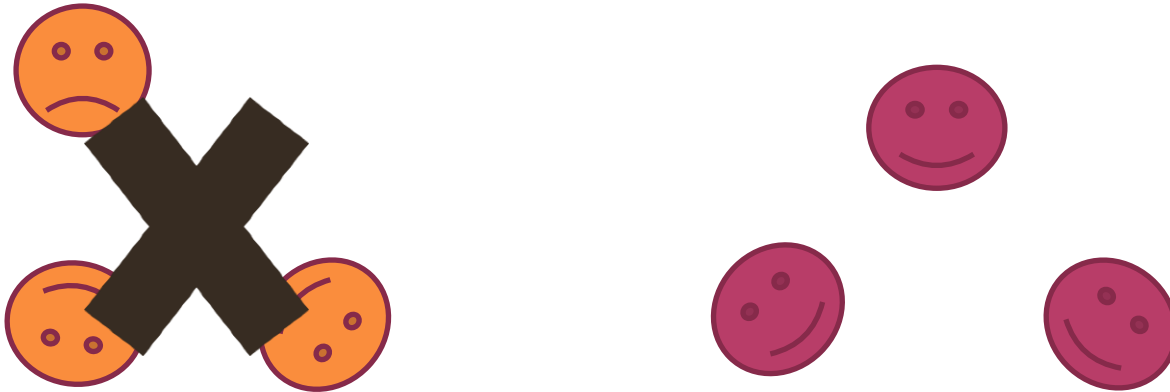
PREPARATION - BLOCKING (MOVEMENT) BASICS

Which is the better blocking?



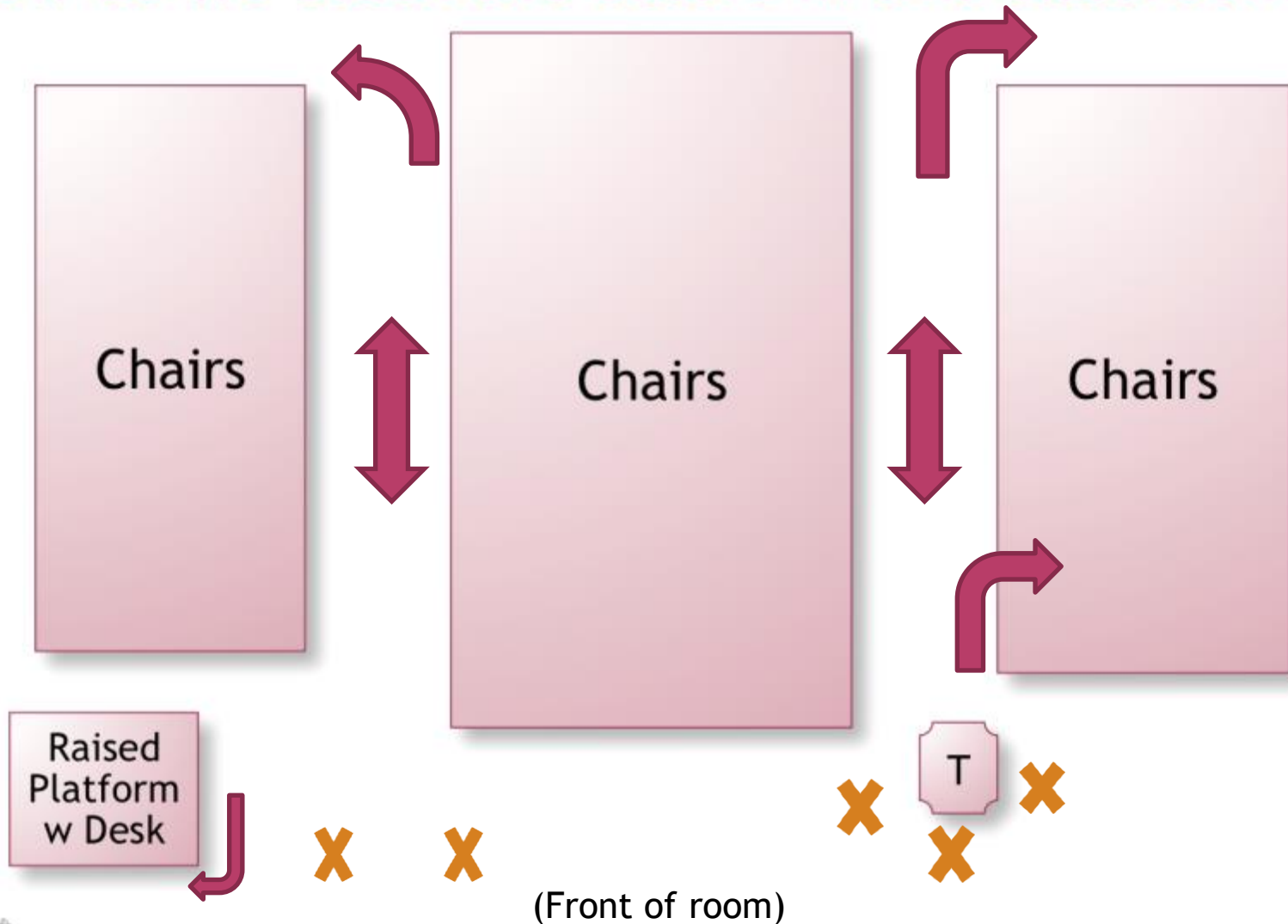
PREPARATION - BLOCKING (MOVEMENT) BASICS

Which is the better blocking?



BLOCKING CHALLENGES

How do we block the actors in this classroom?



PERFORMANCE!

How can we best prepare our actors for performance?



- Memorization or “Reader’s Theater”
- Warm-ups
 - Breathing
 - Physical Warm-up
 - Tongue-twisters
 - “The lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue.”
 - Speed Run

RECAP

- Text
- Casting
- Preparation
 - Table Work
 - Blocking
- Performance



HEY, KIDS! LET'S PUT ON A SHOW!

"BREAK A LEG!"

