Introduction to Movement: Theatre Foundations I
Session Design by Anna Marchant and Andrea Thomas

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Content Standards
- Utah Theater Foundations I: Standard 2 Objective 1A
  ○ Demonstrate comfortable movement when acting.
- Utah Theater Foundations I: Standard 2 Objective 1B
  ○ Explain the elements of physical movement; e.g., energy, locomotion, balance, relaxation
- Utah Dance 1A: Standard 2 Objective 1C
  ○ Demonstrate contrasting levels.

Enduring Understandings
- Students will understand that actors use justified movement in order to effectively portray character’s objectives, physical character traits, and inner character traits.

Key Knowledge
- Students will know that the elements of physical movement include space, time, and energy as defined in the learning plan below.

Skills
- Students will be able to manipulate space (e.g. curling their body up into a small ball), time (e.g. speeding up when a character is late), and energy (e.g. swinging a baseball bat full force) in order to portray a character’s objectives, physical character traits, and inner character traits.

ASSESSMENT
Performance Tasks
- Students perform scenes based on the scenarios attached which are formatively assessed by the instructor using the attached rubric to demonstrate their ability to portray a character’s objectives, physical character traits, and inner character traits.

Other Assessments
- Students complete the attached “movement identification worksheet” to identify specific instances from the video clips in the learning plan below in which actors manipulate space, time, and energy to demonstrate their knowledge of these terms.

MATERIALS NEEDED
Teacher Materials
- Video Clips (see links in Learning Plan)
- Projector/DVD Player
- Rubric (see attached)
Student Materials
- Notebook
- Pen/Pencil
- Movement Identification Worksheet

LEARNING PLAN
Framing / Hook
1. Milling Activity
   a. Ask students to clear the room for drama.
   b. Have students mill around the room.
   c. As students are milling ask them to do the following:
      i. Take up as much space as possible.
      ii. Take up as little space as possible.
      iii. Move very quickly.
      iv. Move very slowly.
      v. Move using a lot of energy.
      vi. Move using very little energy.
      vii. Move as if you are an old woman trying to cross the street.
      viii. Move as if you are someone who has just robbed a bank.
      ix. Move as if you are a five-year old child on a playground.
      x. Move as if you are the CEO of company on your way to an important meeting.
   d. Ask students to stop milling and gather in a circle.
   e. Have the following discussion:
      i. How did you move to make yourself appear as these various characters?
      ii. How did you see others moving to appear as these various characters?
      iii. Do you think movement helped you portray the characters effectively? Why or why not?
      iv. What elements do you think are involved in physical movement?

Process
2. Elements of Physical Movement
   a. Explain to students that movement is very important in theatre and helps us to portray characters’ objectives, physical character traits, and inner character traits.
      i. Ask students what they think is the difference between physical character traits and inner character traits. Ask for examples of each.
         1. NOTE: If students don’t make the distinction, explain that physical character traits are the traits you can see, based on physical appearance. (e.g. tall) Inner character traits are traits that you cannot see, that are mental or emotional. (e.g. funny)
   b. Drawing on the previous discussion, explain to students that space, time, and energy are the elements of physical movement.
   c. Write the elements and their definitions on the board and have students record them in their notebooks.
i. space: area that a person’s body takes up and the area within their reach
   1. Ask the students for examples of how actors can manipulate space.

ii. time: how quickly or slowly a movement is performed
   1. Ask the students for examples of how actors can manipulate time.

iii. energy: force of an action
   1. Ask the students for examples of how actors can manipulate energy.

3. Video Clip Examples
   a. Have students gather where they can see a projector and show them the following video clips.
      i. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0OdICcOGG9I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0OdICcOGG9I) (The Lion King)
         i. NOTE: After this clip ask the students what they were able to observe about the characters. Discuss how this particular clip has a higher focus on physical character traits than it does on inner character traits.
      ii. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYmjDSpGmtE&spfreload=10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYmjDSpGmtE&spfreload=10) (Thoroughly Modern Millie)
      iii. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhxOaCjMmF4&index=6&list=PL4C1BC288D81BA64F](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhxOaCjMmF4&index=6&list=PL4C1BC288D81BA64F) (Jekyll and Hyde)
   b. Pass out the attached “movement identification worksheet” and have them fill out as they watch.
   c. After each video clip ask some of the students to share their responses.

4. Create small scenes
   a. Have each student get a partner and give them one of the attached scenarios.
   b. Tell each group to create a brief scene where they speak only in gibberish and use movement to portray their character’s objectives, physical character traits, and inner character traits.
   c. Give the groups about 5 minutes to prepare and then have each group share their scene with the class.
   d. After each group, discuss the following:
      i. Who do you think their characters were?
      ii. How did they use the elements of physical movement to help portray their characters?
      iii. What worked well?
      iv. What could they do to improve?

Reflection
5. Ask students to pick an animal and to find and watch a short clip that shows the animal moving. Ask them to pay particular attention to the animal’s physical traits and the way that the animal moves because they will use that information in the next days’ activities.
UNIT PLAN

**Day 2: Rehearsal Warm-up and Exploring Further** Students will participate in a rehearsal warm-up. The class will discuss why it is important to warm-up before doing movement. The students are then given five minutes with their groups from Day 1 to practice their scene and then share them with the class. Students participate in the discussion as listed in the lesson plan for Day 1. The students then participate in an activity where music is played and they use the music to influence their movement. They start by just moving their face, then their upper body, then their lower body, and finally their full body. The class discusses how time, space, and energy are used in all aspects of movement. Students recall the animal they researched for day one’s homework and move like that animal around the space. We then talk about how the use of space also involves the shape of your body and using contrasting levels. Students then create tableaux focused on shape and levels and then dynamize them using movement. The instructor assesses the students’ ability to demonstrate contrasting levels during this activity.

**Day 3: Movement vs. Stillness** Students participate in a warm-up where they lay on the ground and release tension from various parts of their bodies until they are entirely relaxed. Students then have a discussion about the importance of being natural and relaxed while moving so your body doesn’t appear tense and stiff. Students then do a series of exercises where they are in different formations onstage. With each exercise we discuss where the focus is. We discuss that in theatre the focus needs to be on different characters or groups at various times. As a part of this activity, we discuss how you need to use exaggerated movement onstage. We discuss how we can use space, time, and energy to do so and often stillness is just as effective as movement on stage.

**Day 4: Given Circumstances and Objective** Students are split into groups and each group is given a list of given circumstances. They then make a list of how these given circumstances would affect how the character would move. They then each take a turn acting as that character incorporating these movements. The rest of their group gives feedback on what worked well and what didn’t. We then remind the class what objective is (or tell them if they have not yet learned it) and ask them to come up with an objective for that character. They should then decide how that objective would affect the character’s movement and tie that in as they act as the character again. Then one person from each group will come together to make a new group so that every group in the room has one person from each of the previous groups. They then create a short scene using all of their characters, given circumstances and objectives. Students then reflect about how it is important to justify your movement and how given circumstances and objective are ways of doing so.

**Day 5: Tying it all Together** Students participate in an energy warm-up where they place an energy ball in different parts of their body and let it affect them. We then have a discussion about how we can use energy in movement. We remind them of the activity we did on the very first day where they milled about the room and moved based on various given scenes. We then have a discussion about how the current scene affects characters’ movement. We then give students a recorded monologue or narration and have them use movement to juxtapose the recorded text. During this activity, the instructor summatively assesses students’ ability to demonstrate comfortable movement when acting. The students take a brief quiz in which they explain the elements of physical movement, discuss how given circumstances and objective affect movement, and give examples of how they can use movement to portray physical character traits and inner character traits.
Name:___________________________

**Movement Identification**

As you watch the video clips in class, please fill out the following table. For each clip, list 1-3 examples of how they used each of the following elements to help portray a character. For clips with more than one character, please specify the character you are referring to. If you were absent for this activity, the links appear at the bottom of the page so you can complete the activity at home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The Lion King</th>
<th>Thoroughly Modern Millie</th>
<th>Jekyll and Hyde</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Energy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

i. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhxOaCjMmF4&index=6&list=PL4C1BC288D81BA64E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhxOaCjMmF4&index=6&list=PL4C1BC288D81BA64E)
ii. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OdlcCQG9I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OdlcCQG9I)
iii. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYmjDSPmFtG&sfpreload=10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYmjDSPmFtG&sfpreload=10)
Scene Scenarios

You are a parent and a child. The child really wants to go to a party but the parent won’t let them. The child throws a tantrum and the parent sends the child to their room.

You are a junior boy and a senior girl. The boy really wants to ask the girl to prom. The girl is trying to avoid the question because she likes his older brother.

You are siblings. The older sibling is trying to focus on their homework. The younger sibling is trying to convince them to come play with them.
Rubric
Foundations 1
Movement Unit

Student __________________________

Student demonstrated comfortable movement while acting.
NOTES:

Students’ ability to portray character’s objective.
NOTES:

Students’ ability to portray physical character traits.
NOTES:

Students’ ability to portray inner character traits.
NOTES: