Unit 08: American Theatre Timeline, Melodrama Through The Great American Play

Content Area: **Performing Arts**
Course(s): **Performing Arts**
Time Period: **Week 21**
Length: **9 weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

In this unit, students will explore important moments in American theatre history. They will engage in discussion and demonstration of Melodrama, Vaudeville, the importance of Burlesque and the Classic American Play.

Standards

VPA.1.2.8.A.1	Map historical innovations in dance, music, theatre, and visual art that were caused by the creation of new technologies.
VPA.1.2.8.A.2	Differentiate past and contemporary works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art that represent important ideas, issues, and events that are chronicled in the histories of diverse cultures.
VPA.1.2.8.A.3	Analyze the social, historical, and political impact of artists on culture and the impact of culture on the arts.
VPA.1.2.8.A.CS2	Tracing the histories of dance, music, theatre, and visual art in world cultures provides insight into the lives of people and their values.

Essential Questions

- How did American theatre develop?
- Does art define culture?
- Does theatre reflect society?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- burlesque was dance put to music with characters acting out scenes which led to development of musical theatre
- stock characters include; damsel in distress, villain, doo gooder
- the classic american play format and structure has been adopted by many authors in and out of this country
- the Federal Theatre Project was a New Deal program to fund theatre and other live artistic performances and entertainment programs in the United States during the Great Depression

- The format of melodrama is; recognizable character, emphasized situations, no chance of evil over good, formulaic narrative structure
- vaudeville were excerpts of musical pieces which were then turned into short plays which influenced future musical theatre

Application of Skills: Students will be able to...

- identify and portray stock characters
- identify proper format of a melodrama
- identify types of vaudeville and burlesque plays
- research and discuss the federal theatre project and its impact on history

Assessments

- Performance of Melodrama Skit
- Performance of excerpt of Classic American Play
- Theatre Project on vaudeville/burlesque- (performance, report, slideshow etc)
- Oral news report about Federal theatre Project and time
- Information from this unit will be included on a locally developed, end of course benchmark assessment that may take the form of a test, performance based project, or other summative assessment.

Suggested Activities

- Rehearsal of melodramatic scenes
- Creating individual stock characters
- Rehearsal of Classic American Play
- Viewing of old vaudeville skits
- Handouts on Federal Theatre Project

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

Differentiation for special education:

- General modifications may include:
    - Modifications & accommodations as listed in the student's IEP
    - Assign a peer to help keep student on task
    - Modified or reduced assignments
    - Reduce length of assignment for different mode of delivery
    - Increase one-to-one time
    - Working contract between you and student at risk
    - Prioritize tasks

    - Think in concrete terms and provide hands-on-tasks
    - Position student near helping peer or have quick access to teacher
    - Anticipate where needs will be
    - Break tests down in smaller increments
- Content specific modifications may include:
    - Work with Theatre buddy on Theatre Project
    - Reduce performance pieces

Differentiation for ELL's:

- General modifications may include:
    - Strategy groups
    - Teacher conferences
    - Graphic organizers
    - Modification plan
    - Collaboration with ELL Teacher
- Content specific vocabulary important for ELL students to understand include: damsel, villain, vaudeville, burlesque, federal

Differentiation to extend learning for gifted students may include:

- Performance of Federal Theatre Project piece

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

Performing Arts can work with Music to create instrumentals for melodrama scenes

Resources

The Curtain Rises Volume II: A History of European Theatre from the Eighteenth Century to the Present, by Paula Gaj Sitarz

Wait till the Sun Shines Nellie, by Craig Sodaro

Teacher generated handouts/worksheets

21st Century Skills

CRP.K-12.CRP6.1	Career-ready individuals regularly think of ideas that solve problems in new and different ways, and they contribute those ideas in a useful and productive manner to improve their organization. They can consider unconventional ideas and suggestions as solutions to issues, tasks or problems, and they discern which ideas and suggestions will add greatest value. They seek new methods, practices, and ideas from a variety of sources and seek to apply those ideas to their own workplace. They take action on their ideas and understand how to bring innovation to an organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP7.1	Career-ready individuals are discerning in accepting and using new information to make decisions, change practices or inform strategies. They use reliable research process to search for new information. They evaluate the validity of sources when considering the use and adoption of external information or practices in their workplace situation.