Cambridge TECHNICALS

Accredited

# OCR LEVEL 3 CAMBRIDGE TECHNICAL

## CERTIFICATE/DIPLOMA IN

# PERFORMING ARTS



## THE PRACTICE OF DIRECTING FOR THEATRE

**J/502/5100**

**LEVEL 3 UNIT 14**

**GUIDED LEARNING HOURS: 60**

**UNIT CREDIT VALUE: 10**

OCR

# THE PRACTICE OF DIRECTING FOR THEATRE

## J/502/5100

## LEVEL 3 UNIT 14

## AIM OF UNIT

The aim of this unit is to enable the learner to find and apply their own creative vision and methodology as a theatre director and to understand how theatre-making is a collaborative process that develops and evolves by working on scripts with the actors and production team. Directing involves acknowledging and integrating feedback into the working practice – a two-way process that underpins this unit. Learners will begin to understand: how actors and performers work; the demands of texts created by playwrights; and the logistics and creative possibilities of staging. They will also learn to address how casting appropriately and productive teamwork can facilitate productions. Learners will be given the opportunity to apply this knowledge and understanding in applied directing situations where they will have responsibility for producing the show in time and on budget.

## ASSESSMENT AND GRADING CRITERIA

| Learning Outcome (LO)<br>The learner will: | | Pass<br>The assessment criteria are the pass requirements for this unit.<br>The learner can: | | Merit<br>To achieve a merit the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to: | | Distinction<br>To achieve a distinction the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to: | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Be able to prepare a script for production | P1 | prepare a script for production competently with some support and guidance | M1 | present a script to a production company in order to realise a production | D1 | prepare a script for production fully integrating feedback while maintaining artistic integrity |
| 2 | Be able to plan the necessary processes for a production | P2 | plan the necessary processes for a production competently | | | | |
| 3 | Be able to conduct a rehearsal process | P3 | conduct a rehearsal process with the production team competently | M2 | adapt and develop the rehearsal process to best utilise abilities of the actors and the production team | D2 | conduct final rehearsals with the full confidence of actors and production team |

## TEACHING CONTENT

The unit content describes what has to be taught to ensure that learners are able to access the highest grade.

Anything which follows an i.e. details what must be taught as part of that area of content.

Anything which follows an e.g. is illustrative. It should be noted that where e.g. is used, learners must know and be able to apply relevant examples to their work although these do not need to be the same ones specified in the unit content.

### Be able to prepare a script for production

- Reading and preparing a script for production: 'Close' reading and breaking down of text, e.g. identifying rehearsal units, throughlines, ruling idea, structure, and turning points.
- Looking at systems of annotation and personal organisation, keeping a log, setting out prompt copies,
- Evolving an artistic vision, re-drafting and/or cutting the text
- Consulting with a production team
- Researching content, characters, cultural and historical background, physical and vocal approaches to text and other ways of conveying meaning through the stage picture
- Consideration of constraints and possibilities of venue/ performance space, technical resources and technical rehearsals, budget, playing time.

### Be able to plan the necessary processes for a production

- The roles in a creative team, design and technical briefs, working with producers, funders and venues. The role of a dramaturge.
- Rehearsal and production scheduling, management of resources. Casting. Development of production timing and realistic deadlines.

### Be able to conduct a rehearsal process

- Understand how groups operate in rehearsal; games, exercises, warm
- Rehearsal approaches and techniques for lifting the text from the page, e.g. Brecht's description technique, Berry's voice approaches.
- How to sustain a supportive working environment and encourage ownership and commitment from performers, preparing performers for physical and research work on the text.
- Looking at documented approaches and models that have been developed for creating theatre using a collaborative working, e.g. Max Stafford Clarke and work with Joint Stock Company (with writers such as Carol Churchill), Peter Brook's repertory ensemble.
- The difference of a repertory company and hiring for one production, creating with an ensemble.
- Communication of artistic or dramatic vision for the production to the ensemble: clarity and consistency in the application of research and preparation. Flexibility and adaption to changing circumstances and feedback. Crafting the final performance; pace, tempo-rhythm and stage pictures.
- Choreographic and blocking considerations.
- Keeping notes and tracking the process: use of critical vocabulary; analysis in process and performance; audience response; acting on feedback, strategies for future; identification of skills and techniques for development.

# DELIVERY GUIDANCE

### Be able to prepare a script for production

If learners are to develop a directorial method and competence they need to practice. In the directing of a production they may draw on a very wide range of influences or they may work hard to avoid being influenced by any one practitioner or style. The important thing is to encourage a synthesis that begins to articulate a unique approach and craft. This means that as well as initial practical explorations with actors and texts, learners could have a programme of taught sessions and workshops on the development of theatre directing. This could mean, for example, replicating and then comparing and contrasting the directorial methods of Grotowski and Brecht, as well as the ways texts are structured, including examples of the ways these structures and rules have been broken by the decisions of directors. To do this, learners will need to have a clear idea of the playwright's original intentions, insofar as this can be determined, and the context which the text was written. Directing the text as the playwright intended does not mean that there shouldn't be some interpretation of design or setting but learners should be encouraged to start at the beginning of the process.

The relationship between playwrights and directors could be analysed to explore the constraints directors may or may not work under; looking at the demands of Beckett or Berkoff illustrates how directors are often not trusted by playwrights in the realisation of an artistic vision, but in the theatre directors do regularly work to the specifics laid down by playwrights. Starting with a play such as John Arden's Island of the Mighty which has introductory notes will give learners a solid baseline.

Learners could then be given clear examples of the ways in which directors prepare scripts before rehearsals begin. Some directors (Peter Hall, for instance) annotate and make very detailed decisions before they meet actors; others will come armed with an overall idea and let the rehearsals 'shape' the final piece (Robert LePage does this to a certain extent). They could be taught the need for very careful and repetitious reading in order for ideas to take some hold in their mind as well as the need for logging and annotating the initial and developing process.

### Be able to plan the necessary processes for a production

The opportunity for learners to shadow productions and act as an assistant director will be crucial in their development process. This approach should form the basis of a teaching strategy for this outcome. They should assist in the planning of a production and be given the tools to make their own notes and suggestions so that different methods can be encouraged. The keeping of logs could be encouraged at an early stage and presentations in which learners evaluate and critique the work of others. They should then be given the opportunity to plan a production in a dry-run situation where there are little of the constraints that may be in place for the real thing. In this way, they can develop briefs for the creative team: set, lighting and costume designers, stage managers and producers. The teaching and learning process for a realisation of an actual production should involve other skills – editing and selection of scenes, how to use a limited budget and technical resource and how to have the maximum impact on an audience within these constraints. In this way, delivery can and should involve both artistic and logistical considerations.

### Be able to conduct a rehearsal process

Learners could be given opportunities early on in the course to work with groups. They could have the responsibility once a week or more to run the warm up sessions for a range of groups who have different skills, techniques and levels of ability. Again, observing more experienced workshop leaders could help initially but learners on this programme must be allowed to make their own mistakes in controlled and safe environments. They will be given many examples of the ways directors have worked, their different methods and contexts, they may be beginning to develop an artistic style and perspective but crucially they should also understand the need for rapport and effective group dynamics. They must learn early on that directing is much more than 'blocking' so working with the physical and choreographic possibilities of text should also be encouraged.

Learners should then be given a brief in which they choose and prepare a short extract from a published play. This should be a maximum of 15 minutes long. The staging should be simple and the process should concentrate on realising the meaning and content of the text and maximising the involvement and commitment of the actors or actor.

## SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT SCENARIOS AND GUIDANCE ON ASSESSMENT

### Assessment and Grading Criteria P1, M1, D1

Evidence for this criterion could be in the form of the written annotation of scripts and through observation of presentations. Part of this presentation could be preparing materials on how the performance will impact on audiences, e.g. the annotated script, ideas on set, lighting and costume design and the use of music, that 'sell' their vision of the production to a theatre company or a producer. This could be tutors and/or other learners acting in this role.

To achieve **P1** learners will prepare a script with accompanying annotation, commentary and notes that sets out how it would be produced as a performance. Learners would have answered the more obvious problems posed by a particular play with some competence and credibility (how to stage a battle scene for instance). They will be able to articulate most of the playwright's intentions and the specific issues for actors.

**M1** should be awarded if the learner can present their preparations and answer questions and challenges with some competence and informed responses.

**D1** requires learners to re-present scripts, with amendments and adaptations in response to questions and challenges raised during feedback. The resulting script will be fit for purpose and ready for production to commence.

### Assessment and Grading Criterion P2

This will be supported by documentary evidence that charts the processes in planning for a production. They could present a critique and deconstruction in the form of a presentation that charts the overall process and gives some insights into their own development as a director.

### Assessment and Grading Criteria P3, M2, D2

Assessment should be based on how the rehearsal process and the work with actors assimilates the preparation and negotiations outlined in LO1 and LO2. Evidence could consist of teacher observations, DVD recordings of rehearsals, directorial logs and blogs. Other evidence could involve interim debriefings with actors and production team and evidence of contingency. The successful realisation of the production and of the artistic vision could also form part of assessment evidence although the scale of this is defined. Learners could also produce evidence of the way feedback had been integrated into production plans.

To achieve **P3** learners must direct a rehearsal period for a short extract (up to 15 minutes) and present an annotated script and working notebook. There will be some understanding of the playwright's intentions and the piece has some coherence and audience engagement. Actors mostly understood the directorial interpretation.

**M2** can be awarded if the rehearsal process, notebook and the observations show evidence of dealing with challenges, flexible approach and people management skills.

**D2** requires learners to successfully manage the team throughout the final rehearsal process with accomplished artistic interpretation and a full understanding of the playwright's intentions.

## RESOURCES

Studio space with lighting, sound and opportunities for set construction

Internet access

Some relevant books e.g The Empty Space by Peter Brook, Shakespeare the Director's Cut by Michael Bogdanov, An introduction To Theatre Design by Stephen Di Benedetto, The Art of Theatre Workshop by Murray Melvin

Actors to work with

## LINKS TO NOS

**CCSSM 8** Establish and maintain the prompt script

**CCSSM 14** Run a performance



## CONTACT US

Staff at the OCR Customer Contact Centre are available to take your call between 8am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.
We're always delighted to answer questions and give advice.

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