

Workshop: Theater in Advanced- and AP-level Courses



Abstract: This workshop provides the advanced- or AP-level instructor with practical approaches to literary text selection and analysis using the theatrical genre and techniques. With learning goals such as solid AP scores, advanced proficiency, and intercultural competence in focus, we will explore a variety of ways in which theatrical texts and techniques can help meet the goals of AP courses and prepare students for different segments of the exam.

I. Warm-up – A teatro!

A. Voce - Scioglilingua - Orrore, orrore, un ramarro verde sul muro marrone!

B. Corpo fisico – 1,2,3 & Mime

C. Improv azioni

D. Improv azioni e parole

II. Terms and Concepts

1. Improvisation
2. Theater games
3. Drama
4. Educational Drama
5. Process Drama
6. Teacher in Role
7. Passing the Mantle

- a. art form that explores human conflict and tension, behaviors and motivations
- b. metaphor for students becoming experts
- c. short, performance based activities with little or no preparation
- d. activities designed to build confidence. collaboration, or detailed abilities
- e. teacher internal to game or improve to model/support
- f. creative instructional method without written script. Students and teacher create and experience and event through problem solving and improvisation, not rehearsal and performance.

III. Role play / Skit / Scenario – What’s the difference?

-Dal dentista

-Dal dentista. Lui vuole estrarre un dente morto alla radice. Lei non se lo può permettere ma si vergogna troppo a dirlo.

IV. Varying theater activities for various learning goals

Short/long – activities can last one minute or an entire lesson.

Verbal/non-verbal – some activities will not use words. These decrease anxiety and sharpen focus on different aspects of and the communicative power of body language

Open/closed – a continuum from closed script-based activities to open communication or wholly unscripted activities. Traditional proscenium theater is at one end. Process drama is at the other.

Process-oriented / product-oriented – is the focus on an audience and what and how is prepared for the audience? Or is the focus on the experience of the participants?

* Which is more motivating?

*Which is more creative?

V. Doing Theater with these Texts

Sample text: “Fratello Bancomat,” *L’ultima lacrima*, Benni, 1994.

Mime

Role play / skit (comical)

Improv

Reader’s theater (dramatic reading)

Script writing

Scenario (simulation, involves a real-life conflict or problem)

Frozen images

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V. Matrices (for textual, intertextual, and performative literacy work)

(Blau, The Literature Workshop, 2003)

(<http://coerll.utexas.edu/methods/modules/reading/02/matrix.php>)

Logical Relationships (Headings)	Type of Text
Contrasts or Comparisons	A text that contrasts two people or the "before" and "after" of an event or problem (differences in their characteristics)
Issues and their Features or Results	A text that critiques a play (what's right or wrong with it and why)
Problems and their Solutions	A text about an historical era (political, economic, social issues and how they were addressed)
Events and their Impact	A news story about a current event (what happened/who was affected and how)

VI. Scenarios (Di Pietro, R. Strategic Interactions, Cambridge UP, 1987, 116-17).

A. How to write scenarios

“Let your imagination run free. Have you ever sat in a restaurant or on a park bench or in the lounge of a busy airport and casually watched the people around you – fellow diners, strollers, travelers, all on a par with you but without names or any history know to you.

Here comes someone... Conjecture a bit: what does he do for a living? how old is he? What is he carrying? How is he walking? What does his face tell you? What do his clothes look like and what do they suggest? Does he seem used to the situation he is in? Does he interact with anyone? Where is he headed?

Pick several of the people you have observed and build a story around them.

Make sure to create dramatic tension. There must be a problem or a conflict of sorts and each player will contribute (for better or worse) to its resolution.

Imagine that the event could involve you and those around you.

Pare down restrictions on each character so that your students can assume the roles without being forced to assume certain attitudes or positions.”



B. Scenario Sample from

Role A

You have fallen in love with a boy from your hometown. Your mother generally approves. You are relatively poor, so there will be no large party to arrange, just the help of your local preacher, the only person who can officiate for you. However, he is not willing to help, so you look for your boyfriend for a solution.

Role B

You are in love with a lovely simple girl from your hometown. You are both of marrying age and her mother, a widower, is happy to have you at home. You only need the help of your local preacher to render your union official. However, he avoids you and won't help you. It is as if he were refusing. So you devise a plan to catch him off guard and make him say just enough words to render the wedding ceremony

Role C

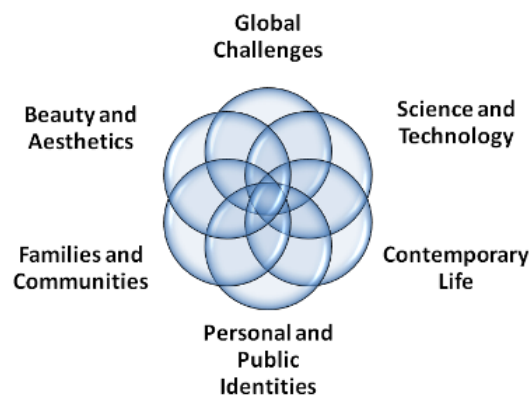
You are a local preacher and the only person in a small town who can officially marry people. You are annoyed by two teens who wish to get married because helping them would go against the wishes of a local boss who would like the young girl for himself. Furthermore, this boss has a group of thugs who regularly threaten you! Rather than state your position to either the young lovers or the boss, you avoid the former and cower from the latter. You want to be left alone.

Role D

You are a wealthy and powerful citizen of the small town where you control the "little people" around you through intimidation. You presume to marry the woman of your choice, in this case a sweet teen who who loves and intends to marry a local boy of her own choosing. You make your intentions clear to the town preacher, who must act on your behalf.

VIII. Text Selection for AP Courses

1. Does the content or theme of the text relate sufficiently to one of these general subject areas?



2. Can the content, language, or theme of the text be related and extended to one or more exam sections?

Section		Number of Questions	Time
Section I: Multiple Choice		70 questions	Approx. 80 minutes
Part A	Interpretive Communication: Audio Texts	30–34 questions	Approx. 25 minutes
Part B	Interpretive Communication: Print Texts	36–40 questions	55 minutes
Section II: Free-Response		4 tasks	Approx. 85 minutes
Part A	Interpersonal Writing: E-mail Reply	1 prompt	15 minutes
	Presentational Writing: Persuasive Essay	1 prompt	Approx. 55 minutes
Part B	Interpersonal Speaking: Conversation	5 prompts	20 seconds for each response
	Presentational Speaking: Cultural Comparison	1 prompt	2 minutes to respond

IV. Workshop Practice and Perform : ACTIVITY DESIGN

A. Creating Literary Scenarios

1. Decide how many roles you need
2. Write role descriptors that do not give away solutions, but make clear the dramatic tension or conflict to be resolved.
3. Practice it a bit.
4. Pick a peer group to pick up your cards and play!



B. Align Theater Activities with AP Exam Sections

1. After working with this studying this piece from a technical, textual, and comprehension perspective, I will engage in more intertextual and performative literacy by having students.....

AP Italian Language and Culture Course Learning Objectives

Spoken Interpersonal Communication	Interaction Strategies Opinions Language structures Vocabulary Register Pronunciation Cultures, connections and comparisons
Audio, Visual and Audiovisual Interpretive Communication	Cultures, connections and comparisons Comprehension of content Critical viewing and listening Vocabulary
Written Presentational Communication	Interaction Strategies Opinions Language structures Writing conventions Vocabulary Register Cultures, connections and comparisons
Written and Print Interpretive Communication	Comprehension of content Critical reading Vocabulary Cultures, connections and comparisons

Samples from 2013 AP Italian Language and Culture Exam

Sample: Conversation

You will participate in a conversation. First, you will have 1 minute to read a preview of the conversation, including an outline of each turn in the conversation. Afterward, the conversation will begin, following the outline. Each time it is your turn to speak, you will have 20 seconds to record your response. You should participate in the conversation as fully and appropriately as possible.

Fai una conversazione con Massimo, un tuo caro amico. Prendi parte alla conversazione perché Massimo non può venire alla festa che hai organizzato a casa tua.

Massimo • Ti fa una domanda.

Tu • Gli rispondi.

Massimo • Ti parla di un problema.

Tu • Gli chiedi perché e commenti.

Massimo • Ti dà una spiegazione.

Tu • Gli suggerisci cosa fare.

Massimo • Ti chiede un consiglio.

Tu • Gli dai un consiglio.

Massimo • Ti ringrazia e esprime interesse per qualcosa da fare insieme.

Tu • Accetti e proponi un programma.

Sample: Persuasive Essay

Scrivi un saggio argomentativo per un concorso di scrittura in italiano. La traccia si basa su tre fonti (materiale scritto e orale) che presentano diversi punti di vista sull'argomento. Per prima cosa, hai 6 minuti per leggere la traccia ed il materiale scritto. Poi ascolterai la fonte orale due volte. Mentre ascolti, puoi prendere appunti. Alla fine dell'ascolto, hai 40 minuti per organizzare e scrivere il tuo saggio.

Nel saggio argomentativo, devi identificare i diversi punti di vista presentati dalle fonti. Sulla base di queste informazioni e delle tue conoscenze devi elaborare accuratamente il tuo punto di vista. Fai riferimento a tutte le fonti, indicandole in modo appropriato, per giustificare la tua argomentazione. Organizza il tuo saggio in modo logico e chiaro.

Tema del corso: Sfide globali

Hai 6 minuti per leggere la traccia, la fonte numero 1 e la fonte numero 2. Traccia:

Come si potrebbe diminuire lo spreco di acqua e altre risorse?

Sample: Email reply

Tema del corso: Bellezza ed estetica Introduzione

Il mittente di questo messaggio email è Gianmaria Veronesi, Assistente Servizi Clienti, Musei Vaticani. Ricevi il messaggio perché avevi scritto ai Musei Vaticani come presidente del club di Storia dell'Arte del tuo liceo per organizzare una visita ai Musei.

Da Gianmaria Veronesi Soggetto Visita ai Musei Vaticani

Gentile studente,

rispondiamo alla sua richiesta di trenta biglietti per il club liceale di cui fa parte. Ci sono diversi tipi di tour e biglietti per i Musei Vaticani, con costi che variano dai 40 ai 130 Euro (parti diverse dei Musei, Cappella Sistina, tour con o senza guida, basiliche diverse, ecc...).

Al fine di proporre il tour più adatto al suo club, ci invii, per favore, le seguenti informazioni:

- Perché avete deciso di visitare i nostri Musei?
- Quali date preferireste e quanto tempo vorreste dedicare alla visita?

Appena riceveremo le suddette informazioni, le manderemo le opzioni con i rispettivi costi. In attesa di un suo gentile riscontro, porgiamo cordiali saluti.

Gianmaria Veronesi
Assistente Servizi Clienti

Sample: Cultural Comparison (Presentational Speaking)

Tema del corso: Scienza e tecnologia

You will make an oral presentation on a specific topic to your class. You will have 4 minutes to read the presentation topic and prepare your presentation. Then you will have 2 minutes to record your presentation.

In your presentation, compare your own community to an area of the Italian-speaking world with which you are familiar. You should demonstrate your understanding of cultural features of the Italian-speaking world. You should also organize your presentation clearly.

Quale ruolo hanno i social network nella realtà in cui vivi? Fai un confronto fra la realtà che hai osservato e in cui hai vissuto fino ad oggi e una realtà italiana che conosci bene. Nella tua relazione, puoi fare riferimento a cose che hai studiato, visto, conosciuto, ecc.

Sample Warm-up & Improv Games

Imaginary Tug of War

Purpose: Energize group, create a sense of unity among students, develop an awareness of movements of others, release tension

Time: 2 minutes

Description: Students are divided into two teams and must pantomime a tug of war, with an imaginary rope.

Switch if...

Purpose: Practice the imperative form, use verbs in various tenses, work with vocabulary words, energize group and improve agility

Time: 5-7 minutes

Description: The director arranges chairs in a circle; one for each student. Standing in the middle of the circle, the director gives the students a command: switch places if...(you have a brother, you have ever been to Rome, you and your family go out to eat often, etc.). Students who meet the given criteria must get up and run to find another seat. The director, as well, runs to find a seat, leaving one student standing. That student chooses the next criterion. Students will often be very creative in singling out one classmate by coming up with a criterion that only one person meets! (Switch if you are wearing a red shirt, a black watch, sandals, and a beaded necklace!)

Affective States

Purpose: Practice giving imperatives, work with adverbs (alternatively, the game could be done with adjectives), practice expressing emotions, create a sense of unity

Time: 10 minutes

Description: One student leaves the room and the director whispers an adverb to him or her. When the person reenters the room, the other students must give orders, using the imperative form. The person performs these orders according to the selected adverb. For example, let us say that Marco has chosen the word "nervously." He reenters the room, and Anna tells him, "Shake Patrizio's hand!" Marco must shake Patrizio's hand in a nervous manner. The class must guess the actor's affective state. Alternatively, the class itself may choose the adverb, and when Marco shakes their hands, the class members are the ones to respond according to the adverb. When Marco shakes Patrizio's hand, for instance, Patrizio is then the one who gives a nervous handshake. In this case, it is Mario who must guess the actor's affective state.

Create a story

Purpose: Practice with past tense (in Italian, with the *passato remoto*), encourage spontaneous communication, sharp listening skills)

Time: 5-10 minutes

Description: The group sits in a circle, and the director starts a fairy tale. Moving around the circle, each member must add to the tale. This can be done on the level

of individual words, sentence fragments, full sentences, or even paragraphs. It can be done with 3-4 actors in the middle of the circle who act out the story as it is told

Alibi

Purpose: Practice with the past tense, work with vocabulary words, encourage students to pay attention to details of the environment in which a work of literature is set, encourage spontaneous communication

Time: 10-15 minutes

Description: Two participants leave the room and must decide upon a story to explain what they were doing from 9-11 pm the previous night. The return to the room (one at a time) cross-examined by the “jury,” composed of the rest of the class. The jury asks specific questions to try and discover discrepancies in their stories. (But what color was the car? What did you order at the restaurant? How many minutes of previews were there before the movie?)

Distractions

Purpose: Teach basic principals of farce, force students to think on their feet

Time: 5 minutes

Description: Two volunteers are selected. They begin a scene. Choose one from our list. Example: one person has a strong desire to impress the other – a first date, perhaps. The other groups’ members interfere in the scene, moving chairs, scattering papers, making strange noises, etc. The actors in the scene cannot “see” physical people causing the distractions, only their effects. The person desirous of creating a good impression must try to smooth-talk his or her way out of the embarrassing situation.

Minefield

Purpose: Energize group, practice giving accurate directions, emphasize the importance of specificity, and provide a starting point for a discussion about the art of theatre in general

Time: at least 15 minutes

Description: Students are divided into two teams and separated by an empty space of perhaps 10-15 feet. All participants take off their shoes and toss them into the central space; each shoe now represents a land mine. One team is made up of soldiers who have been captured by the enemy, the other students are their comrades who are trying to free them. The enemy has performed medical experiments on the soldiers, however, so they are now blind (that is, blindfolded!) One at a time, students must talk a companion across the field, being very specific with their directions. (Now take a very tiny step to the right.) If the student touches a shoe, they are eliminated. The stakes can be raised by imposing a time limit, by having two pairs go at once, or by having other students create distracting noises (barking dogs, shouting prison guards, machine guns).

Simple Scenarios That Can Form the Basis of Many Improv Games

{http://cloudcuckoo.co.uk/jonthrower/improv_scen.htm}

At the dentists	First day in a new job	Taking a pet to the vets
Boarding a bus	Buying a used car	Having a photo taken
Choosing a gift for a partner		Selling your house
Hiring a detective	Getting a quote from a builder	Getting your hair done
Pushing on line	Wine tasting	Firing someone
Visiting someone in the hospital		Job interview
Ordering a wedding cake	On a spying mission	The people on new planet
Visiting in-laws	Hypochondriac at doctors	Slow restaurant service
Police officer pulls you over		Trapped in elevator
At funeral home	Helping friend with amnesia	
On Noah's ark	Two doctors called to an emergency	
Two jockeys in stable before race	Politician canvassing for votes	
Two construction workers find a buried treasure....		
Pushing a baby carriage in the park	You think your partner is having an affair	
First date	Getting up in the morning	Family dinner, each has an announcement

Dramaturghi italiani, una lista per cominciare, ma questi sono solo pochi...

Alfieri	Ginzburg
Aretino	Goldoni
Ariosto	Gozzi
Baliani	Machivelli
Baricco	Malaparte
Bellezza	Maraini
Benelli	Paolini
Giacosa	Pasolini
Benni	Pirandello
Betti	Praga
Bontepelli	Rame
Brancati	Scarpetta
Campanile	Siciliano
Celestini	Svevo
Chiarelli	Trissino
Chiari	
D'Annunzio	
De Filippo	
Deledda	
Di Giacomo	
Fabbri	
Fo	
Gatto	
Gioacometti	

