

## Exemplary Planning Commentary: Performing Arts

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### 1a. Central focus of the segment

I began my planning for this lesson sequence by using a variety of pre-assessments and previews. First, I collected evidence about students' knowledge of acting techniques from written pre-assessments and performance pre-assessments; next, I taught preview lessons to help my students understand how acting techniques can teach skills to help actors overcome their perceived strengths and weaknesses. Through the means of a whole-class goal setting session and individual conferences, I assessed that students had several perceived strengths and weaknesses (and subsequent goals) in common. Kelly cited "becoming less aware of the audience, trying not to be so focused on 'performance' or entertaining the audience." Nate W's goal was "confidence;" Linda's goals included "simplicity, honesty, motivation, and playing opposites (reality)." Across the class, students cited similar goals: staying in the moment, increasing focus and concentration, being more present, making spontaneous choices onstage, "getting out of [my] head," honesty, impulsivity, believability." 10 out of 12 students cited flexibility, motivation, or impulsivity; 6 out of 12 cited connecting to scene partners. The work of Sanford Meisner— and specifically the practice of Meisner's Repetition Exercise, which offers "an organized approach to the creation of real and truthful behavior within the imaginary circumstances of the theater" (Pollack, 1987)—seemed to me to answer best to students' goals: Meisner Repetition exercise "strengthens your concentration, ...working off [your scene partner],...[and] trusting your instincts" (Longwell, 1987); ultimately, the Meisner practitioner is "somebody who is learning to funnel his instincts, not give performances" (Meisner, 1987). My next step was to create a central focus aligned with curricular standards for my lesson sequence that summarized the intersection between students' artistic goals and the goals of Meisner technique (improvisatory talking and listening).

I consulted NCCAS (the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, currently under review) and Washington State Standards to align the central focus of my lesson sequence with curricular standards. In practice, I have found that using curricular standards as building blocks for instruction has made my planning and my practice more precise because I can confidently articulate desired outcomes; according to Popham (2011), "there is no difference between a content standard and an instructional objective." Using standards helped me to create a central focus for my lesson sequence that expressed how the practice of Meisner Repetition answers to students' personal goals and guides them in organizing their technique skills: "Students will examine how Repetition develops acting skills by cultivating improvisatory talking and listening in a dramatic work.

### 1b. Linking skills, knowledge, and context

Given my advanced drama students' levels of experience and their readiness, indicated in preview and pre-assessment, to develop and organize previous knowledge about acting approaches into a coherent artistic process, I consulted Anchor Standard TH: Cr2-III: Organize and Develop Artistic Ideas and Work (HS Advanced Level) to plan my lesson sequence. The Anchor Standard is classified under the Artistic process "Creating;" however, in my learning sequence, the central focus (Students will examine how Repetition develops acting skills by cultivating improvisatory talking and listening in rehearsal and performance) also guides students to question and grow by examining prior knowledge in light of this new information. Learning targets (i.e. learning objective) are designed as a scaffolded process to help students use self-expression and exploration to gain knowledge and technical proficiency. In Lesson 1, (1) Students create a personal and group definition for Repetition; (2) they infer how Repetition will help them achieve their individual technique goals, and (3) students test their definitions and inferences by practicing the mechanics of Repetition. Lesson

2 Learning Targets (i.e. learning objective): (1) Students will deepen understanding and practice of Level One Repetition exercise in order to (2) create a foundation for advancing to the Second Level of Meisner Repetition. (3) Students apply their understandings of Repetition thus far to a rehearsal process by sharing 1 minute of Level 2 Repetition in a performance setting. In Lesson 3, students will reinforce their understanding of Levels 1 and 2 Repetition by exploring objectivity in Repetition. In addition, students will cultivate concentration skills (technical proficiency) by practicing Repetition without stopping for longer intervals of time than they sustained in Lessons 1 and 2. In Lesson 4, students will layer observing behavioral changes and adding a physical technique into their practice to increase technical proficiencies and explore artistic processes. In Lesson 5, students will apply learning from Lessons 1-4 to rehearsal of a scripted scene to gain “next steps” (Fritter, 2014) contextual understandings of how Repetition can be used in rehearsal and performance processes.

### **1c. Explaining how lessons build and link to other skills**

Based on information gathered from consulting NCCAS, I used backward design to create a lesson sequence that engages students in cycles of inquiry, strategizing, and experimenting. Each cycle is 10-15 minutes in length, to comply with Medina’s (2007) “ten minute rule” for maintaining optimal attention and engagement. Each of my lessons begins with inquiry and contains at least three opportunities for formative assessment including a closure assessment.

Lesson 1 begins with a video prompt: What is Repetition? How do you do repetition? How do actors use Repetition in rehearsal and performance? After describing how to do Repetition, students create a personal and group definition for Repetition and infer its purposes. Next, students practice the Exercise. In their exit tickets, students compare their inferences to their experience of practicing Repetition: did practicing the mechanics of Meisner technique help them as actors in any way? I anticipated that students would identify that Meisner Repetition is designed to help actors break habits. In order to expand this understanding, I provided a support activity for homework that was designed to reinforce for students that habits are difficult to break. Lesson 2 uses the homework and questions from Lesson 1 exit tickets to move students into Lesson 2 Learning Targets. In Lesson 2, students deepen their understanding of the practice of Repetition by exploring and comparing two different levels of Repetition (Level 1: Repetition without changes in pronoun; Level 2: Repetition with changes in pronoun.) In addition, students will practice Repetition in a performance setting. According to Stanislavsky (1938), the audience is a crucial co-creator of an actor’s performance; subsequently, practicing Repetition in front of an audience is a key step in the process of breaking habits and discovering impulsivity: “Don’t act, don’t fake, don’t pretend—work!” (Meisner, 1987).

In Lesson 3, students refine and deepen their understandings of Level 1 and Level 2 Repetition by recognizing and exploring objectivity. Objectivity is important in Meisner work because objectivity allows actors to “eliminates doubt” (Meisner, 1987) and achieve “emotional flexibility” (Meisner, 1987). In addition, in Lesson 3, students work on sustaining Repetition over increased periods of time to “train [their] concentration” (Meisner, 1987). Finally, students apply this next layer of Repetition (maintaining objectivity, focus, and concentration in a performance setting) to rehearsal and performance by practicing Repetition using objectivity in front of an audience.

In Lesson 4, students increase their technical proficiencies by applying a physical technique (e.g. breathing) to their practice of Meisner repetition. Physical techniques (e.g. breathing) are key components of developing acting technique and process: as Stanislavsky acknowledged, “human behavior is a psychophysical process” (Moore, 1965); moreover, “if the actor is free of tension—centered, breathing freely and deeply...[the actor] will find himself calm, confident, able to concentrate, and connected” (EDTA, 2013). Next, students will apply their understanding of objectivity by applying it to noticing behavior changes in their scene partner. Noticing behavior changes “gets you out of your head” (Meisner, 1987) and allows actors to “funnel their impulses” (Meisner, 1987). Again, actors will apply their learning in a performance setting.

### **1d. Opportunities to express learning targets (Washington State only).**

At the beginning of each lesson, students will write and restate learning targets in their journals in their own words and work with a partner to (1) review the previous day’s learning goals and learning activities and (2) to analyze how what they learned reinforces their progress toward achieving stated acting technique goals and (3) predict how today’s

learning targets will enhance their understanding. “Students who conduct internalized self-talk, thinking aloud, or talking with a partner while they execute the steps of a strategy, show an improved ability to manage academic tasks” (Haidar & Al Naqabi, 2008; Leon-Guerrero, 2008). Next, students will set goals for the day in which they describe how they will achieve the day’s learning targets. Engaging students in different cooperative learning constructs in which they “work together to accomplish shared goals” (Knight, 2013) provides students with opportunities to self-assess their understanding of learning targets. Because each discrete skill in my lesson sequence is a foundation for the next skill in my lesson sequence, and because each cycle in the lesson includes formative assessment and feedback, students will be able to reflectively connect acting technique goals to a learning target every 10 to 15 minutes.

I will use my understanding of students’ acting technique goals as a resource for planned questioning to help them to understand how the learning target answers to their technique goals. Kelly has expressed a desire for critical feedback; Nate will require reinforcement; Linda’s prior experience makes her an excellent peer tutor, so modeling tutoring is essential here. Across the class, students expressed a desire for feedback, so my I plan to reinforce learning targets in my feedback.

In some lessons (Lesson 1), I will preview learning targets with video. Seeing examples and hearing commentary from older, professional actors can help to clarify and validate learning targets. When homework support activities are designed to become the next day’s entrance ticket, they forecast the day’s learning targets (Lesson 2). Clarifying learning targets is a type of formative assessment because expressing learning targets forces students to demonstrate their understandings of content specific academic and other academic language. I use this formative assessment during the first part of each lesson in the sequence. I designed the lesson target so they can restate learning targets throughout the lesson. Restating learning goals is important because “summarizing, along with note-taking which is a form of summary, has shown a positive effect on student achievement” (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001).

## **2a. Summary of students’ prior knowledge**

Because making connections to prior understanding gives purpose, context, and meaning to building new skills and acquiring more knowledge (Knight, 2013), I deployed several different forms of pre-assessment prior to identifying a central focus for this learning sequence. In previous lessons on the history and traditions of actor training in America, students had identified that acting is a craft that can be taught. To prepare for this lesson sequence, my students participated in acting technique exercises designed to help them self-assess their acting technique strengths and weaknesses. Next, students participated in a group goal setting session to identify and summarize prior knowledge, prior experiences of actor training, acting technique strengths, acting technique weaknesses, and acting technique goals of the whole group. In individual conferences, I worked with students to help each to articulate “appropriately challenging” goals (Pressley & McCormick, 2007) and create an individual plan personal growth. Equipped with this information, I chose a central focus that answered to targeted areas for growth students had in common (Students will examine how Repetition develops acting skills by cultivating improvisatory talking and listening in a dramatic work) and created a lesson sequence to (1) teach students skills specific to their articulated goals of being more “in the moment, spontaneous, and connected. (Sanford Meisner’s Repetition Exercise) and (2) guide them in assessing prior understanding and (3) help them to begin to refine a skill-based process for rehearsal and performance. Finally, students took a written a pre-assessment that forecasted and assessed their understanding of the principles underlying Meisner’s approach to acting and taped pre-instruction rehearsals of neutral scenes. With this evidence, I was able to scaffold the lesson sequence to tackle misconceptions and weaknesses identified in preassessment activities. Students will be able to view evidence from pre-assessment videos with me during feedback sessions to connect pre-instruction skills with post-instruction skills and, thereby, identify growth.

## **2b. Summary of student assets**

My students are all high school seniors, rich in both internal and external assets (Benson, Leffert, Scales & Blyth, 1998). External assets include strong parent and professional support. Five seniors are pursuing admission to elite college theatre programs. All have worked with professional actors from Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle Children’s Theatre, and Book-It Repertory Theatre through residency programs at our school.

My students' commitments and interests extend beyond the department. Linda, a state Thespian officer, is head of the cheer leading squad. Liam is a classically trained tenor. Nate W plans to study law; he is a cross-country athlete. Kelly is a talented stage director. Lorenzo writes and produces his own songs and videos. These implications extend across the class. Each of the twelve students is involved in another activity that each considers as important as drama. Activities include football, cheerleading, cross-country, choir, songwriting, dance, youth ministry, social justice work, language study, and community service. Most of my students are from economically stable homes. All of my students are headed to, or planning to attend, four-year colleges; 9 out of 12 are pursuing theatre degrees.

### **3a. Selecting learning activities based on prior knowledge and other assets**

According to Marzano (2007), "one way to enhance student involvement in an instructional unit's subject matter is to ask students to identify something that interests them beyond the teacher identified learning goals;" so, by using conferencing, self-evaluation, and goal setting, to design my learning sequence, I aimed to engage my students in learning they considered "relevant, interesting and important" (Knight, 2013). The material in the learning sequence was "central, not peripheral to the curriculum [and] focused on questions or problems that [drove] students to encounter (and struggle with) the central concepts and principles of their discipline" (Knight, 2013). In addition, the lesson sequence is designed "to engage students in exploration and inquiry" and crafted to teach learners to "employ scaffolding techniques" (Mims, 2003) like peer tutoring. Since so many of my advanced drama students are professionally oriented, creating a lesson sequence that approximated an authentic learning construct honored their expertise. Similarly, honoring their previous experience and knowledge by helping them to organize that knowledge through the lens of Meisner Repetition honored students' expressed desire to grow.

Benson, Leffert, Scales, and Blyth (1998) identify two types of developmental assets: external (support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time) and internal (commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, positive identity). Students who reported having access to external assets "feel cared for and cared about" (Rose 2006); students who reported internal assets "feel good about who they are and what they can do" (Rose, 2006). Although my students report a wealth of external assets, 2 students indicated in conferences that they feel unrecognized or undervalued in an extremely competitive drama program. Six out of twelve students expressed in conferences uncertainty about the value of their aesthetic choices and a reluctance to be perceived as "wrong," so I am eager to help them nurture internal assets by scaffolding my lessons and instruction. Scaffolding ensures that students "attribute[s] success [their] own efforts, and, hence, presumably increases [their] long-term motivation" (Ring & Reetz, as cited in Pressley & McCormick, 2007) and creates a platform for learning that "rather than rewarding students for being better than one another...rewards students for doing better than they did previously" (Pressley & McCormick, 2007). Secondly, I chose to honor the students' expertise by transforming misconceptions indicated in preview and performance pre-assessments into learning targets for the lesson sequence.

Although prior teaching in Advanced Drama indicates that all of my students are familiar with Acting technique vocabulary, none—except Liam and Linda—reported prior experience of Acting technique exercises, although 10 out of 12 have participated in some kind of drama enrichment programs. Exposing students to actor training exercises may better prepare them for the rigor of college programs; more importantly, technique will give actors tools for rehearsal and performance. Deploying these tools with success, and having these tools in common, may improve students' perceived self-efficacy and nurture teamwork. During conferences, I learned that Linda has prior knowledge of Meisner Repetition from a summer training institute, so I can call upon her expertise and experience during instruction. Kelly, who has taken summer enrichment classes, expressed an eagerness to learn "everything I can." Nate W has taken our school's drama survey class, but this is his first acting class; he reports that a lack of experience makes him feel uncertain about his work. Linda has had multiple enrichment classes in addition to prior experience with Meisner technique. Across the class, students report feeling confident about the groups' abilities; however, students also report being uncertain as individuals about their grasp of acting techniques.

For me, knowing as much as I can about my students wealth or deficit of assets has been invaluable in creating a "learner friendly culture" (Knight, 2013) in the Advanced Drama classroom. I have used my knowledge of students' assets (professional aspirations, experience, erudition) to select learning prompts (video of professional actors), to create guiding questions, to shape cooperative learning activities and groupings, to pace lessons and units, and to decide

how to effectively set up independent learning activities. Using pre-assessments that include opinion questions and self-efficacy ratings will help me to track internal asset building through feedback on exit tickets and evidence gleaned from discussions and other formative assessments.

### **3b. Selecting learning activities for the whole-class and individuals**

The instructional strategies for this sequence included: (1) assessment of prior learning using pre-assessment, group goal setting, and conferencing (2) a preview of upcoming material (acting techniques and styles) (3) guided inquiry and various direct instruction resources (video, modeling) as critical input experiences to begin each lesson (4) scaffolding (5) cooperative learning activities throughout the sequence (6) review and application of concepts (7) closure assessments of student voice.

Scaffolding learning and instruction was a key component in the design and execution of my lessons and a crucial component of meeting the needs of all learners in the class. In addition to providing scaffolding in instruction through modeling, offering hints, explaining, instructing, providing feedback, or asking questions (van de Pol et al, 2010), my lesson sequence was designed to transfer expertise from me to my students. I have integrated multiple preview and review activities into each lesson in the sequence, created opportunities for students to predict and test their predictions, and make connections between personal goals and what they are learning. I have created opportunities for peer tutoring by modeling feedback, then gradually moving students into the role of advisor or “knowledgeable other” (van de Pol et al, 2010). In addition, my lesson sequence is designed to help each student progress through complex learning in small, manageable steps; each step helps students to accomplish the next task at hand. Learning activities, which are designed to direct learners to identify Repetition as a key component in rehearsal and performance, provide “ongoing evaluation and correction [which are] part of the fabric of a constructive and supportive environment” (Nassir, 2008), and they are key components in rehearsal and performance. Pre-planning cooperative learning partners with varied ability levels is an important part of creating a platform for effective peer tutoring. In my lessons, I function as a coach, and my feedback, which draws on my knowledge of students’ goals, is delivered in hints and suggestions that are usually accompanied by some form of modeling. This honors students’ expertise and perceived self-efficacy (Linda) while it ensures support for learning for Nate W and Joe.

### **3c. Resources for getting help on learning targets (Washington state only)**

Students express the learning targets in their own words, connect the learning targets to their individual technique goals, and create a plan with their acting partner for exploring and mastering the learning summarized in the learning target by the end of the lesson. By discussing the learning that guides their progress, students use prior knowledge, metacognition, and peers as a resource. Students will compare their work with expert modeling by professional actors (resources include video of master classes in which experts model the same work students will do in Lessons 1 and 3) to clarify and justify their strategies and understandings. Students will use video of their own work (pre- and post-assessment video) to self-evaluate their application of technique, progress, and development of process.

Students summarize learning targets and reflect on learning targets throughout the lesson through formative assessment opportunities, on exit tickets, by creating a rubric (Lessons 3, 4, 5) and offering feedback. In pre- and post-assessments, students will articulate resources available to them outside of the lesson sequence (classes, training programs, literature). For example, in Lesson 1, students will connect resources (video evidence) to understanding learning targets and inferring practice and purpose of Repetition. In Lesson 3, a video clip summarizes the importance of objectivity.

### **3d. Anticipating misconceptions**

In professional settings, Meisner Repetition requires years of study: teaching the technique in five lessons is intended to help actors to explore impulsivity in talking and listening onstage. This impulsivity is fodder for making acting choices that are rooted in authentic behavior. Common misunderstandings in Meisner Repetition that need to be addressed in feedback are: (1) repeating by giving line readings (2) manipulating or controlling the action (3) confusing objectivity with lack of affect (4) performing the exercise with physical tension (5) failing to effectively apply understanding of

Repetition to rehearsal and performance. The scaffolding of my lesson sequence is designed to anticipate these issues. Although, “if self-efficacy is high in a subject area, the expectancy of reinforcements for the performance on the subject is also high” (Pressley & McCormick, 2007), some of my students have expressed relatively low self efficacy (“I feel unrecognized.” “I don’t shine.” “I want to be noticed.”) I have woven common misconceptions and misconceptions implied in pre-assessment evidence into the learning sequence as learning targets (Lessons 3 and 4) and points of instruction (modeling in Lessons 1, 2, and 5). These points are addressed by professional actors in technique videos used for prompts, modeling, and analysis in Lessons 1 and 3.

#### **4a. Identifying the language function**

The language function of this lesson sequence was examine. In Bloom’s Taxonomy, examine is a key word for analysis. Examining asks a learner to gather understanding for analysis by examining facts, classifying, surveying, experimenting, categorizing, and exploring.

#### **4b. Learning activities enabling practice with the language function**

Lesson 1, on February 25, 2014 begins with examination for analysis so students can understand practice the language function prior to practicing the Repetition Exercise for the first time. After clarifying academic vocabulary (see 4c below) and previewing a demonstration video, students analyze the modeling and commentary they have viewed to create a definition for Repetition. In a think/pair/share activity, students share definitions of Repetition and any prior experiences of Meisner with their small groups; next, they compare similarities and differences in definitions to create a group definition. Next, students to predict, based on what they have seen in the film and learned so far, how Meisner Repetition might help them to (1) refine targeted areas of strength in their acting and grow in targeted areas of weakness in their acting. For what purpose can they use Repetition? (2) What are they looking forward to in practicing Meisner Repetition? This think/pair/share activity allows me to monitor understanding, ask guiding or clarifying questions, address misconceptions, and offer language support. Next, students analyze and infer how to do repetition. Students will think/pair/share to analyze the “rules” of the exercise, while I circulate to ask or answer clarifying questions. I will be mini-conferencing with Nate W and Joe in their small groups to ensure understanding and provide analysis prompts as needed. Practice of the language function continues as we move into our first learning support activity. One partner group demonstrates their understanding of Repetition. I model feedback in the forms of questions, hints, and suggestions to guide partners to refine their execution of the exercise.

#### **4c. Additional language demands**

Achieving content-specific goals requires that students are fluent in content related vocabulary; even more importantly, I need to ensure that students have frequent opportunities to practice academic discourse. I discovered through conferencing, pre-assessment, and prior observations of my students that they are accustomed to using content specific vocabulary in knowledge construction; however, although most students indicated consistent used of content specific vocabulary in preview lessons, Joe and Nate W are unfamiliar with content specific vocabulary and discourse; Cameron is skilled in discourse, but uncomfortable with journaling.

Otherwise, students bring readiness to academic discourse. Since “academic language must be developed interactively” (O’Neal & Ringler, 2010), I have integrated teaching and reinforcing discourse into the lesson sequence by giving students multiple opportunities to engage in a variety of collaborative discussions: students “present claims and findings” (Calderon, 2011) with partners and in their journals. Subject-specific words that I will integrate into learning targets because these words are building blocks for understanding Repetition are: focus, concentration, improvisation, impulsivity, talking, listening, repetition, changes, objectivity, behavior, observation, rehearsal, process, practice, performance, audience, text, neutral scene.

Most of my advanced students are skilled in content specific discourse—they understand how theatre artists talk about knowledge construction, and they deploy content specific vocabulary (“independent life,” “objective,” “obstacle,” “tactic” as evidenced in their learning goal statements) with skill; by restating learning goals and definitions with a

partner and sharing their results aloud while I monitor for understanding and fluidity, students will practice weaving the working vocabulary of Meisner Repetition into their schema. In each lesson students will “coconstruct knowledge” (Knight, 2013) by writing or speaking during an activity and using content specific vocabulary to clarify understanding and build new constructs. In clarifying learning goals, we will integrate vocabulary as part of learning target and make connections with general vocabulary words that have the same meaning across disciplines (infer), but to talk or write about subject matter, students will speak, write, and reflect for the purpose of engaging in discourse for academic purposes.

#### **4d. Supporting language use**

My lesson sequence is designed to “develop students’ academic vocabulary in systematic ways” (Flynt & Brozo, 2008). In addition to ensuring that students understand academic language by clarifying verbs like infer, analyze, and understand in our learning goals, I will ask students to create personal and group definitions for content vocabulary (Repetition) by asking them to observe, infer, compare, summarize, and predict. Students will experience various types of modeling (video, teacher, peer) then analyze, create, and reflect to demonstrate their understanding of content vocabulary. As a result, they will have opportunities in each lesson in the sequence to understand, analyze, and integrate the language function. I will use frequent think/pair/share and small group share so students will have multiple opportunities to “manipulate words through group activities requiring categorization, word association, or semantic analysis” (Flynt & Brozo, 2008); at the same time, I can assess and monitor understanding during these activities. I will check ensure that Nate and Joe engage with partners in think/pair/share activities that use academic language. I will strategize to create alternatives and supports as needed if Nate, Joe, or other students fail to engage with academic language. I will check with Linda to ensure that my academic content vocabulary matches the vocabulary she learned in her prior experience of learning this content. I will work confer with all students (and have them confer with each other) about how academic vocabulary in this learning sequence relates to prior knowledge, challenges their working acting technique vocabulary, or parallels content vocabulary in other content areas like Science (infer, examine) to help all students make connections across the curriculum.

#### **5a. Assessing student learning**

Each of my lessons begins with inquiry and contains at least two opportunities for formative assessment and a closure assessment. I modeled my lesson design on Hattie & Timperley’s (2007) model for the three question model for effective feedback: (1) What is my goal? (2) What progress toward my goal have I made thus far? (3) What should I do next to make even more effective progress toward my goal? This feedback model helps students self-regulate because students can better monitor and direct their efforts toward strategizing for success. I plan to use a variety of agents—including peers, the learner, video, written feedback in journals, and an immediate response on my part to exit tickets—in my lesson sequence. Since feedback impacts learners best when it addresses misconceptions about a task and provides clear information about how to more effectively accomplish the task (Hattie and Timperley, 2007), I plan on setting up cooperative learning constructs so that I can monitor student learning and give feedback as needed in the form of hints and questions. As a result, I can use knowledge of students’ goals, exit ticket questions, and questions asked in the course of instruction to deepen student understanding by breaking instruction into smaller chunks (or adding chunks) as needed. Written formative assessments (journal writing, exit tickets) provide evidence for teacher reflection between lessons.

All of the assessments in the lesson sequence are designed to help students with knowledge construction. Pre-assessments are designed to help learners evaluate their current level of achievement by offering both selected and constructed response questions; students decide what their goals are and infer how they can use the learning in the lesson sequence move them toward their goals. They participate in assessing their progress in journal writing, in reflection (exit tickets) and in partner work to aid in knowledge construction. By creating a rubric for proficiency, students evaluate their understanding of what proficiency in the learning looks like; by creating a Venn diagram, students evaluate in what ways their learning in the lesson sequence has helped them to progress toward their goals. Written and performance post-assessments, similarly, are designed to help students evaluate their own progress. (Students will self-evaluate their performance post-assessment using the rubric they have created over the course of the

lesson sequence. What is assessed, then, is “the learner's ability to organize, structure, and use information in context to solve complex problems” (Edutopia, 2014).

### **5b. Adapting lessons**

Because my assessment strategy provides frequent opportunities for formative assessment, I can provide all of the learners in my classroom with feedback that specifically identifies “what students need to work on...and some suggestions about how to carry out that work” (Popham, 2007) so that all learners have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning by responding to task specific feedback on a daily basis. Performance pre- and post-assessments include performances of scripted scenes so students can analyze the impact Meisner Repetition, which is improvisational, has had on their rehearsal of text-based performance. In feedback sessions, students will analyze evidence gathered from comparing their pre- and post-instruction videos and reflect on (1) in what ways evidence gathered from comparing performance pre- and post-instruction video indicates to students how they met goals they set for themselves in conferences and (2) to what degree their understanding of Meisner technique (and by extension, actor training) has impacted the ongoing development of rehearsal and performance practices. Written pre- and post-assessments include qualitative, quantitative, and self-efficacy questions, and pre- and post-assessments are equivalent so the students and I can track growth by comparing results from pre- and post- assessments as part of our feedback sessions.

### **5c. Student reflection (Washington state only)**

To a very large degree, student learning in theatre hinges on effective questioning. Acting skills are introduced by introducing a guiding question, following that guiding question with a targeted learning activity, then immediately engaging in feedback, reflection, and (when appropriate) discussion. Exercise builds on exercise, and students collaborate in learning by engaging in an ongoing conversation with themselves and with each other. Questions in my learning sequence are designed to “shift students’ understanding of questions...from an opportunity to be right or wrong to an opportunity to [explore and expand] their thinking” (Goldsmith, 2013). In theatre, I am largely a facilitator; however, my ability to ask the right question at the right time is crucial to helping students build understanding. Since reflection allows students to think about their progress as well as the strategies they employed to reach their goals (Boody, 2008), student voice is built into the lesson sequence in the following ways: students restate lesson targets and academic vocabulary, discuss strategies for achieving targets, infer purpose of learning targets and analyze points with partners and in groups, create their own technique goals as a standard by which they evaluate their own progress, create rubrics for performance with a partner, express questions and concerns on exit tickets, and function as peer tutors.

### **5d. Strategies to promote student self-assessment (Washington state only)**

At the beginning of each lesson, students will review learning to connect to and refine personal learning goals. They will restate learning targets to assess their own understanding of the targets and the academic vocabulary that expresses each learning target. They will infer the value of the target by (1) inferring how achieving the target will advance them in the pursuit of acting technique goals and (2) based on what they know up to this point, they will create a map or plan with their partner for achieving that target. Students will think/pair/share and use small group discussion to check their understanding. Students will provide feedback to one another as another check for understanding. Students will create a rubric that demonstrates their understanding of what proficiency in Meisner Repetition looks like. Students will use the Rubric to monitor their participation, understanding, and progress. As students’ understandings deepen, the rubric will change and grow. Finally, students will create a Venn diagram to evaluate any overlap between the goals of Meisner Repetition and their personal technique goals. Support activities will include journaling, homework, exit tickets, and a verbal Reflection.