

Stage Production Training for Preservice Teachers in Oklahoma: A Case for Authentic Arts-Based Pedagogy

OkMEA January Conference–2022

Scenes and Musical Numbers

Act 1

Introduction

- American musical theatre is a relatively new art form, evolved from ancient theatre, liturgical drama, opera, ballet, minstrelsy, commedia dell'arte, British music hall, operetta, vaudeville, revues, among others.
- “Musicals...dramatized, mirrored, or challenged our deeply-held cultural attitudes and beliefs” (Jones, 2003).
- Musical theatre integrates many art forms and performance mediums.

Purpose/Need for the Study

- Empirical research and pedagogical resources in musical theatre are limited.
- Current emphasis on social justice and interdisciplinary collaboration, MT is “poised to be a fertile ground for teacher education and research” (Marshall, 2019).
- Important part of the job field—80% of music educators in Arizona and 83% in Ohio serve as directors/music directors for HS MT (Davey, 2010; Williams, 2003).
- The purpose of this study was to investigate how MUED programs in Oklahoma institutions train preservice teachers to be successful in the area of musical theatre.

Related Literature

- Research reveals a lack of preparation for what teachers need to survive their first few productions (Davey, 2010).
- Engaging in authentic learning truly fuses theory to practice for preservice teachers (Ogden, DeLuca, & Searle, 2010).
- Marshall (2019) provides a broad overview of music educator preparation in MT coaching and conducting.

Methodology

- Investigate NASM-accredited institutions in Oklahoma MUED program requirements
- Interviews with practicing OK teachers who have MT experience

Act 2

Findings–Interviews

- Semi-structured interviews with 5 practicing teachers
- 5–20 years of teaching experience/undergraduate training in OK
- None of the 5 interviewed had any formal musical theatre training
- MT Skills:
 - Experiences in HS, extracurricular during college, guidance by colleagues, had seen musicals
- Interview Themes
 - Lack of Education/Training
“I was f*cking lost.”
 - Importance of Colleagues/Mentoring
“If I didn't have a co-teacher and a drama teacher, I think I would have been a world of hurt.”
 - A Call for Training
“These are the observation [hours]...and some needs to be in a high school musical production.”
“Maybe some kinds of production class... soundboard, lightboard, put a production together, stage/production, finance, show rights.”

Findings–OK MUED Programs

- OK has 14 NASM-accredited institutions that offer programs leading to teacher certification.
- 13 institutions offer opera, opera workshop/scenes, or musical theatre productions. Some “count” for the degree, and some do not.
- 6 institutions have a musical theatre degree.
- Only 1 institution requires a course specifically designed to teach nonmusical elements of stage production.

Discussion

- In service teachers report a lack of formal training during undergrad.
- Musical theatre training is needed.
 - Blocking, staging props set design, finance, choreography, lighting, sound, rights, publicity, etc.
- This material can be taught in two ways:
 - Dedicated techniques course
 - Extension of current offerings (secondary methods, field experience, etc.)
- Collaborations between musical theatre and music education departments

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