

Project #2

Technology Use Proposal

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EDTC8029048 – Principles of ET Leadership

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# TECHNOLOGY PROPOSAL

## **Rationale**

Digital technology is transforming the way school musicals, plays, and concert audiences experience a live performance. Advances in digital technologies have affected a variety of areas of live performance which include drama, dance, music, and perhaps most dramatically in the realm of visual effects. Many theatrical shows incorporate technology into every aspect of the production. These aspects range from set design to performance. Technology now has made such an impact in creating animated backdrops, props, and can amplify an actor's voice.

In our blended learning classrooms, drama (theatrical) teachers and directors are left to figure out how they will adapt to the changing requirements of the curriculum and to find efficient ways to incorporate technology use in learning technologies, information technology, and especially the Internet into classroom practice. Technology is dependent on developments in the computer and technology-related areas that are already influencing the future of the performing arts world. In example, theater projection software programs and theatrical projectors can add special effects to any stage production. These projectors and technological devices advance story-telling with visuals. Compared to scenery that is built out of paint, nails, and wood, the Theatre Arts Department can save numerous amounts of time and money. Spinogatti (2017) states projection design as being able to capture “the immediacy of theatre, as well as the density of film; and, you can go so many more places [...] when you allow those two worlds to interact” (p. 23).

The purpose of this proposal is to request the addition of a new course, “Theater Projection Design”, in the North Bergen School District Visual and Performing Arts department. Supplemental tools such as Adobe Creative Cloud, QLab, an Optoma X600 XGA (6,000

## TECHNOLOGY PROPOSAL

Lumens) stage projector, and a rear projector Samsung - The Premiere 4K UHD Single Laser Wireless Smart Ultra Short Throw Projector with High Dynamic Range will be necessary for a productive course. This newly introduced class will educate the North Bergen School District Seniors in designing backdrops and animated scenes in our high school musicals, plays, concerts, and art exhibits. Our school district will also understand and incorporate educational designed theatrics for our school musicals, plays, concerts, and art exhibits.

### **Background Research**

Siler (2022) states, “largely, projection design is a relatively young field that has seen recent massive growth and change. While projection design has been used in concert design since the late 1960s, it has only started to become a prominent part of theatre over the past decade and a half” (p. 3). Technology started to transform the entertainment industry and our schools in the 1980s. Crowds were stunned by the clarity and richness of digital sound when computer-generated effects started to surface. In addition to learning the fundamentals of acting and directing, today's stage designers and theatre students must also learn how to use technology to improve their final presentations and showings. Since the beginning of drama, theater has been investigating the fantastical possibilities made possible by the use science and technology.

### **Policy Consideration**

There are several approaches that the North Bergen School District can help teach and raise money for the usage of new theatrical technology devices. The North Bergen Visual and Performing Arts program can discover grant funding sources from technological companies in the North Bergen area, such as, “WR Grace Foundation”. The possibility of bringing in theater designers that are currently designing shows and teaching workshops can provide supplemental

## TECHNOLOGY PROPOSAL

assistance and beginner learner techniques for the teacher and students who are building this new program. The minimum enrollment for a new class in the North Bergen School District is 15 and capacity would have a limit of 25 students. Advertising the course a few months prior would help recruit potential students who would be interested in developing and designing the special effects of a show. Also, educating the school guidance counselors in the new class would be beneficial to enrollment because the guidance counselors are the staff members who educate and enroll the upcoming Freshman in the North Bergen High School.

### **Current State of Field**

Carroll (1996) once stated that students and teachers are at a preliminary moment in drama education where the old configurations of society and identity are dividing and innovative ones have yet to be created. It is a phase of prospect for drama as new educational symbols and meanings emerge from the imaginative creation of “convergent technologies and social practice” (p. 7). Theater education is consistently changing. As educators, we are less definite than usual about the nature of the shifts that are about to occur in our educational subject field. Various school districts are either lacking in their provision of resources or their drama teachers are unaware of how technology might be used in their productions and drama classes. This may also raise questions about whether managers, leaders of the curriculum, and administrators at institutions and schools have a good knowledge of the changing demands of drama education.

Drama and theater classes in schools mainly run on a budget given for that fiscal year. If not, any funds that have been collected from previous shows will pay for supplies, rights, and stipends for team or staff. While purchasing new technological tools for theater productions, students can also learn how to manipulate utilize these tools.

## TECHNOLOGY PROPOSAL

### **Description**

The North Bergen School District's Visual and Performing Arts committee would like to incorporate a new class called, "Theater Design". This class will integrate the instruction of both non-technological and technological design of theater arts. Examples are wood construction, painting sets, creating, and designing technological scenery scrim, etc. This class will cover the characteristics, applications, technology of projections in modern theater, dance, live music, public speaking events, and art exhibits. Students experience the three theatrical projection modes: lighting, sets, and as overt content by designing and building their own projections using simple computer programs.

### **Assessment Plan**

As a school district, we must continue to negotiate with students to allow them to learn and discover their own capabilities and curiosities through Drama and the Theatre Arts. We have to expand our possibilities (Flintoff, 2002). To successfully implement new technology to the Drama class and stage, we must consider the impact on people and things involved for its critical for success. An implementation of the right projectors, computer software, and curriculum will require adjustments in operations, responsibilities and responsibilities within a school. It will also require teaching the teachers and students to carry out more advance processes and use of technology. New technologies necessarily evoke debate and policy decisions around educational methodology, implementation, evaluation and costs.

Step 1 - The school district's Board of Education and Visual and Performing Arts Department should make a list of the key technology competencies that would be required and implemented for class and stage productions.

## TECHNOLOGY PROPOSAL

Step 2 - When the list is made, one must make sure that these technological devices and software are standard for basic Drama education. With these new enhancements for learning, design, and stage productions, the technology must best be utilized to expand and enhance the scope and efficacy of drama education.

Step 3 - Once the new Theater Design class is approved, requisition lists are made and approved by the Board of Education. Moving forward, one must start brainstorming about the proper training and education of these new technological devices and software. Master teachers, set designers, directors, etc. could come in for professional development. This is crucial for training in new and existing drama teachers and directors in order that they can acquire the requisite competencies.

Step 4 - Once all software, curriculum, professional development workshops are scheduled, we must then consider what mechanisms can be implemented to develop and share exemplars of best practice in engaging technology in Drama education in the North Bergen School District.

### **Conclusion**

One must remember that Drama education is constantly changing. One is less certain than usual about the nature of the shifts that are occurring in the visual and performing arts world. Perhaps, at a time when the technological competence and literacy (in specific contexts) of students accelerates beyond the investigations and practices being approached in Drama, we can give consideration to the position taken by Haseman (2002) that “this question [the question of what] goes to the heart of what it is to teach drama at this point in history” (p. 128). When one teaches technology design, one must be hands-on in the theater design world. When our school

## TECHNOLOGY PROPOSAL

district obtains our Adobe Creative Cloud software for our student laptops, I will bring in theater tech designers from New York's Broadway show, "Aladdin". I have worked with these master technology designers for over six years. Our students will be motivated and eager to learn from this talented Broadway crew who will teach them the creative process of theatre design.

Oleshkevich (2019) states that, "a properly organized technological process of staging a musical in cultural institutions significantly affects the creative development of the youth audience. Increasing the general culture of the individual, creative activity develops the mind, abilities, cognitive interests, aesthetic and moral feelings. A very important role is played by one of the basic principles of leisure pedagogy – the principle of interest. Interest not only satisfies the need, but is also able to generate it." As an educator, research identifies amongst us that technology improves performance when the application directly supports the curriculum standards being assessed. Creating and writing standards/objectives is part of effective technology implementation in the new age of Drama. A review of studies conducted by the CEO Forum (2001) emphasizes that "technology can have the greatest impact when integrated into the curriculum to achieve clear, measurable educational objectives" (para. 7). Collaborative activities in Drama are main components of instructional strategies that accompany effective technology implementation.

In contrast, Abshire (2022) states that using technology in theatre is the cost of implementing new technology. For example, if a theatre wants to start live streaming its productions, it will need to invest in equipment and software. Additionally, if a theater wants to use computer-generated images to improve its special effects it will need to hire personnel with the right qualifications and software. These expenses can quickly add up and may discourage

## TECHNOLOGY PROPOSAL

school boards from utilizing technology to enhance their performances. Technology has expanded the possibilities of theater in countless ways. Technology is costly; however, technology will save the high cost of items bought for every show throughout the year. When you add up paints, wood, and physical supplies for scenic design, this can get very expensive.

As educators, we must constantly change our curriculum to today's times and incorporate as much technology in our resources when we teach. Drama educators must also keep up with the ongoing new elements and trends in the theatrical world. Our students and parents attend these shows. Our students have questions on the presented elements in our shows. Our new designed class, "Theater Design" will teach technological concepts, non-digital designs such as wood working and painting, afterschool maker labs, and enable students to work together on-stage design projects. Once the curtain rises on opening night, this is when the magic happens. This is when our students will see their finished project in the making.



# TECHNOLOGY PROPOSAL

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## TECHNOLOGY PROPOSAL

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