### Sense Memory/90 Minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Rationale/Overview:</th>
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<tr>
<td>The lesson will engage students in emotional recall and sense memory recall.</td>
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</table>

**TEKS:**

§117.64. Theatre, Level I.

(c) Knowledge and skills.

(1) Perception. The student develops concepts about self, human relationships, and the environment, using elements of drama and conventions of theatre. The student is expected to:

- (A) improvise, using emotional and sensory recall;
- (B) develop and practice theatre preparation and warm-up techniques;
- (C) employ stage movement and pantomime consistently to express thoughts, feelings, and actions;
- (D) develop and practice effective voice and diction to express thoughts and feelings.

**Objectives (SWBAT):**

Students will be able to identify techniques for conveying believable stage action, including sense memory.

**Teacher Content Background:**

Affective memory, is an element of Stanislavski’s ‘system’ and of Method acting, two related approaches to acting. Affective memory requires actors to call on the memory of details from a situation similar (or more recently a situation with similar emotional import) to those of their characters. Stanislavski believed actors needed to take emotion and personality to the stage and call upon it when playing their character. He also explored the use of objectives, actioning, and empathizing with the character.

“Emotional recall” is the basis for Lee Strasberg’s Method Acting. “Sense memory” is used to refer to the recall of physical sensations surrounding emotional events (instead of the emotions themselves). The use of affective memory remains a controversial topic in
WHAT IS “SENSE MEMORY”?  

If Relaxation is the foundation upon which rests the “house of method”, then Sense Memory is the structure of the house. Without it, the house is a transparent frame sitting on a solid foundation.

Simply stated, “sense memory” is the remembering by the five senses of the sensory impressions experienced by the individual organism in everyday life. These impressions are stored in the subconscious.

The actor can learn to recall these sensory impressions from the subconscious by concentrating on the stimuli associated with them.

If you have ever been hungry enough, and thought about your favorite food, chances are your mouth “watered”. This is an example of your senses remembering the taste of the food, and responding accordingly by activating your salivary glands.

Ever reach into a dark closet and pick out the clothing you want to wear just by touching it? Your senses “remember” the touch of the specific material of that particular article of clothing.

Find the Keys improv.

During Stanislavsky’s drama classes, students were asked to act out different scenarios. Stanislavsky would watch them acting out mundane tasks such as losing a set of keys or looking for a handbag. He would watch them run aimlessly around the stage, pretending to tear out their hair or feigning worry. He asked one of his students to imagine that the keys were somewhere in the room. The actress then began to actually search for the keys rather than to act searching for the keys. It is only when the imagination believes that the situation is real that the true feelings of the actress are conveyed to the audience.
Have volunteer/s search for missing item (phone/keys/money)

Tell them to imagine that keys are somewhere in the room.

Have them find the keys.

**Materials:**

*Teacher:* lesson plans, projector, prezi (http://prezi.com/etrmcbsn77dy/sense-memory/), whiteboard and markers to write:

- (A piece of ice
- A very hot dish
- A piece of sticky candy
- A live snake
- A dog that has been struck by a car
- A live fish
- A crown on a cushion
- A bloody knife
- A lighted candle
- A bucket full of water
- A cross
- Three heavy suitcases
- Two overfilled bags of groceries
- A person who has fainted
- A radio with the volume stuck on “high”
- A dirty diaper
- A bowling ball
- A bag full of stolen money
- A box full of books
- A snotty tissue
- An engagement ring
- A hot potato
- Three Baseball bats
- A skateboard
- A basket full of dirty laundry
- A handful of roses with very pointy thorns
- A favorite stuffed animal
- A stack of pizza boxes
- A lunch tray
- A very expensive camera
- )

*Student:*
Daily Agenda:

(What I will write on the board so that the students’ know what is going to happen during this lesson plan).

Today we will:

- Sense memory activity (5 min)
- Talk more about sense memory (15)
- Sensory recall game (15-20)
- Group recall game (25 min)
- Group recall evaluation (10)
- Goodbyes (15)

Activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>What is the teacher saying / doing</th>
<th>What are the students saying / doing</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Hook     | 5-10 min | Sense memory activity: Find the Keys improv.  
Teacher will ask 1-3 students to volunteer to “find the keys”  
During Stanislavsky’s drama classes, students were asked to act out different scenarios. Stanislavsky would watch them acting out mundane tasks such as losing a set of keys or looking for a handbag. He would watch them run aimlessly around the stage, pretending to tear out their hair or feigning worry. He asked one of his students to imagine that the keys were somewhere in the room. The actress then began to actually search for the keys rather than to act searching for the keys. It is only when the imagination believes that the situation is real that the true feelings of the actress are conveyed to | Students will volunteer to find the keys.  
Students will demonstrate their knowledge of sense memory by how realistically they “find the keys” |
the audience.

Have volunteer/s search for missing item (phone/keys/money)

Tell them to imagine that keys are somewhere in the room.

Have them find the keys.

**Transition**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 -2 min</td>
<td>Talk about how the believability changed from having a general idea “find the keys” to having a specific idea “find your keys in this room or you can’t leave school”</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 min</td>
<td>Sense Memory: in depth class discussion</td>
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[http://prezi.com/etrmcbsn77dy/sense-memory/](http://prezi.com/etrmcbsn77dy/sense-memory/)

Describe how a well-preserved memory of the real thing enables believability. This memory is enhanced by remembering smells, tastes, sounds, and textures. It will look cliché if a sensory experience is only partially indicated without taking into account multiple senses. Sometimes it is helpful to break a sensory experience down into its different sensory elements in order to replicate it. Actors are required also to convey experiences they have not had. In these circumstances we can do several things. We can imagine how we would respond if we were in that circumstance, we can

**Activity 1**

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Students will analyze the differences between their peers performances.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Students will listen to lecture and offer oral feedback on teacher questions and prompts. Students will listen to lecture and identify experiences that could be used in a sense memory exercise.
make close observations of others having that experience, and we can substitute a personal experience that produced similar actions or emotions. For example, you have never been suffocated to death but you have been short of breath after running intensely; you’ve never killed someone but you have known how it feels to want to. Ask students to give ideas of experiences that might help them with a scene where they discover a cave filled with jewels, or a scene where they are dodging bullets in a battlefield.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>3 min</th>
<th>Introduce students to Sensory recall Game.</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>This exercise consists of picking up an object, carrying it, and disposing of it.</td>
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<td>Remind students that their whole body should be involved, not just hands and arms.</td>
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<td>Have them plan the action so there is a beginning where they make the situation clear, a middle to develop conflict with an obstacle, and an ending with some sort of resolution.</td>
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<td>Have them reference scenarios written on whiteboard.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. A piece of ice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students will listen to instructions carefully.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students will listen to instructions for the sensory recall game.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students will practice Sensory Recall by pretending to pick up, carry and dispose of various objects, and making the audience believe and clearly able to identify the physical and sense aspects of the object.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2. A very hot dish  
3. A piece of sticky candy  
4. A live snake  
5. A dog that has been struck by a car  
6. A live fish  
7. A crown on a cushion  
8. A bloody knife  
9. A lighted candle  
10. A bucket full of water  
11. A cross  
12. Three heavy suitcases  
13. Two overfilled bags of groceries  
14. A person who has fainted  
15. A radio with the volume stuck on “high”  
16. A dirty diaper  
17. A bowling ball  
18. A bag full of stolen money  
19. A box full of books  
20. A snotty tissue  
21. An engagement ring  
22. A hot potato  
23. Three Baseball bats  
24. A skateboard  
25. A basket full of dirty laundry  
26. A handful of roses with very pointy thorns  
27. A favorite stuffed animal  
28. A stack of pizza boxes  
29. A lunch tray  
30. A very expensive camera

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity 2</th>
<th>15 - 20 min</th>
<th>Play sensory Recall Game (everyone should participate)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Students will listen to instructions and volunteer to play.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Students will participate in the Sensory Recall Game by following instructions set forth by teacher.</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>1-2 min.</th>
<th>Students return to seats and discuss what made the realistic performances so realistic.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students review activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students will identify believable performances.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- Who acted in the most believable way?
- What made them believable?

Teacher randomly assigns groups for Mill and Sieve Game.

**Activity 3**

30 min. Mill and Sieve game or Group Sensory recall:

- Get into groups of five or six. Say we are going to do a group sense memory exercise.
- Have groups improvise their performance one at a time while the rest sit down and observe.
- Each actor must be a character that would be found in the given circumstances.
- The action may make use of dialogue, movement and conflict, but the primary purpose is to convey sensory elements as convincingly as possible. Once that goal has been achieved I will yell “Cut!”
- Give the groups one of the following settings and ask them not to share setting until end of performance:
  - A group of strangers waiting in line for more than twelve hours to buy tickets to a rock concert or baseball game.
  - A group seated outside an apartment building on a sizzling night in July
  - A group standing on a subway

Students will improvise performance based on prompt or observe performances. Students will analyze what made the performance believable.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</table>
| 0-5 min | Platform, waiting impatiently for the arrival of the train | - A group of commuters standing in an elevator during rush hour when the power suddenly fails  
- A group of hikers lost in the densest part of the woods  
- A family seated at the dinner table when a full power blackout suddenly occurs |
| 10 min | Transition | Group evaluations and discussion. |
| 10-15 min | Evaluation | Evaluate the exercise as a class.  
- Did the actors recreate the sensory elements believably?  
- Which details of the performances were most effective?  
- Which were least effective?  
- Did the sensory elements blend appropriately or were they disconnected or seem rehearsed? |
| 10-15 min | Closure | Wrapping up Student Teaching:  
Thank them for time and experience.  
Open up class for questions and group discussion evaluation of our time together.  
Students will share their answers with the teacher and with the class.  
Students will share their analysis of the group performances with the class.  
Students volunteer to summarize what they learned and provide constructive feedback. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What was your favorite part?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was your least favorite?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honestly what could I have done to improve experience?</td>
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</table>

**Differentiation** *(How will I address the needs of other learners)*:

For those who have difficulty with stage fright, I will give time to act in a group and as a class.

**Assessment**:

*Formative:* Questioning and Improv Game

*Summative:* Sensory Recall Exercise evaluation