

Recommendations for Preparing a Region IV Casebook/Dramaturg's Protocol

What is a Casebook?

The dramaturg's casebook is your opportunity to record your work on an individual production, project, or devised process. It is a document (one large PDF file) that contains everything that happened during the production process and as well as information of what got left on the edit room floor. Dramaturgs are good editors and have a good eye for story. Be a clear, concise storyteller. Now's the time to reflect on your entire journey learning the process of dramaturgy on your specific production.

What it is not

It is not an opportunity to vent about the process. The nature of the collaborative process can involve messy emotions and human error; let go of your personal ego and demonstrate your professional objectivity.

Don't just scanning all those essays from the library that you diligently highlighted. Be editorial; share the concepts that made it concretely into production.

The Ideal

Imagine, in ten years from now, you were hired to dramaturg the exact same play. What documents do you want to save about this process that can be helpful for the next one?

Imagine you are a museum curator. What artifacts from the production do you want to put on display that demonstrates the concept your production team was going for?

What should I include?

This list is a *suggestion*. This is your document of the creative process. What sections you include may or may not be relevant to your production experience, include what you think is best for the KCACTF responders to discuss with you during the week. You don't have to go back and recreate anything you didn't do, but consider some of these questions and the spirit behind why we ask them.

- Cover sheet with basic production information.
- Table of Contents. Organize the Narrative, it doesn't have to be linear, although feel free to keep it simple.

- Two Dramaturgy Statements. Define Dramaturgy. Define your role in the process. One delineating the project and its challenges. The other detailing the process from start to finish.
- Documentation of the three major areas of the production process: 1. Pre-Production Research & Textual Analysis, 2. Production Research, director-driven or dramaturgy-driven, 3. Audience Engagement.
- Letters of Support

Things to Consider

TOPIC 1A. Pre-Production Research

Note: Every dramaturg's production journey is different. Sometimes, when working on a new play, you are the first collaborator to read the play and respond before it even gets a director or actors in a workshop process. Some company dramaturgs, working on season planning with an artistic director, have the chance to do research before the season is selected. In other circumstances, you might be late to the game and be hired after the first rehearsal, which is not ideal, but it happens to the best of us. Don't apologize, just reflect on how you began the journey.

- Were you involved in selecting the play? Were you involved in conversations with the director of "why this play now?" If it is a translation of a classic, did you help select it? If not, do you understand why the director had a particular preference and how does that illuminate the rest of the decisions made?
- If this was a devised project, what role did you take when the concept was formed? How did others help define your role?
- Include your glossary, if you were asked to make one.
- Describe your first meeting with the director --- what did he/she want you to research? Did you come prepared to present any research to him/her? What did you take-away from the first directorial conversation?
- If you researched production history of an established play, what points did you find useful?

- Are you working with a playwright before a director/production team is involved?

TOPIC 1B. Textual Analysis

First, don't panic. If this is your first time dramaturging a play, perhaps you don't have someone guiding you on the process. Perhaps the person guiding you is the director of your production and they have their own process for textual analysis. Perhaps, during a rehearsal process, something you drew in the margins enlightened you about the action of the play. Tell us what you know and don't worry about what you don't know.

- Describe your first response to the play.
- What do you already know about textual analysis? What's your process? Do you use Stanislavski definitions to analyze the play? David Ball's *Backwards & Forwards*? Anne Bogart's *Viewpoints*? One of your teacher's literary methods? Your own method? How did it inform decisions you made later in rehearsals?
- After reading the play, what notes did you take on where to focus your energy? What did your first trip to the library look like? Did your research involve interviewing members of the community or engaging resources on campus?
- Is the action of the play clear? Is this a "problem play?"

TOPIC 2. Production Research

We do want to see documentation of what you researched for the production and how it applied to the final performance. Perhaps this can be a section that provides examples from topics you addressed in your dramaturgy statements. Again, be editorial and reader-friendly. Include what you did, don't feel compelled to go back and recreate. Production research, at some point, is limited by the time you had to prepare for rehearsals. Also, some of these questions can be addressed in your two Dramaturgy Statements.

- Document requests made at production meetings and what you unearthed.
- What was your role at the first rehearsal? Did you give a presentation? Were you encouraged to speak in rehearsal early on?

- Include Actor Packet or presentation. Was there a visual component presented? Multi-media?
- Did you keep a Production Journal? How is the director working with the actors? Did some actors find your resources useful, but not others? How did you interpret research to be useful in the actors' process? Did any cast members have "eureka moments" from something you brought into the room?
- Did you leave the room for a few days and respond to a run through? What did you learn from taking a step back and rejoining the rehearsal team?
- The play and its socio-political context is a vast area of research limited by time and your production needs. Describe what you found and choices made.
- With permission (and with sensitivity to the rehearsal room), did you take pictures of a unique rehearsal? Were you asked to blog about the show?
- Were you asked to track script changes, make cuts, or revisions? Did you establish a working system for script changes with the stage manager? What decisions led to the changes/cuts/revisions?
- Appendix: Cite all your sources and organize them into major categories.

Topic 3: Audience Engagement

Who is your ideal audience for this play? Who is your audience for the play? What assumptions are you making about your audience? Is anyone potentially disenfranchised by the way you are telling the story?

Include your program note, if you were asked to write one.

Did you take photos of your lobby display? Were there any challenges in designing a lobby display?

Did you have any "secrets or surprises" that your director asked you to keep out of your audience material?

What is your relationship to marketing/front of house? Did you help create a social medial promotion?

Does the play invite an opportunity to draw a new audience to the theatre? Were you involved in connecting with a large community group? Did you speak or deliver a presentation outside the theatre (such as a public library or community group?)

Did you have to respond to any reviews, criticism, or media feedback?

Did you lead a pre-show or post-show talkback? What were the results of the conversation, what did they want to know? How could you improve your future performance?

A Final Word

This is your opportunity to archive your work. You may or may not include everything listed here. Feel free to interpret and build off this list. Have fun. Perhaps this list raises questions and we want you to bring your questions to Region IV. You'll be sharing your book with the Region IV dramaturgy responder, but also with your peers. If you have any questions, you can always ask prior to the Region 6 festival deadline. What's most important is not including an itemized list of elements, but sharing the story of your dramaturgy process and providing relevant examples. Don't hesitate if this is your first experience as a dramaturg, we're here to help you learn about what to do next time. If you have dramaturged plays before, what was new for you this time?

Technical Guidelines: Everything in your casebook should be in **one, large PDF file**. Do not send supplementary materials.