

ART FORM

Drama

LEARNING AREA

The Arts

SUBJECT

English

TARGET GROUP

Key Stage 2

MATERIALS

Pupils will need loose, comfortable clothing, and trainers for footwear. (Track suit bottoms for girls, so they can move without inhibition.)

For developed work, you will need paper, pens and markers, large sheets of paper flip-chart size, a digital camera to record action moments.

SPACE

A space large enough to move freely in - warm, ventilated and well lit.

DURATION

From 40 mins upwards.

ARTIST'S INTRODUCTION

These are written notes from what were actually an enormously diverse set of sessions run by me through Young at Art with school students from a wide range of backgrounds and with greatly differing skills. Much of the work is performance based, built up through games and exercises that you may or may not know, but **HAVE A GO!** The work is not only for drama teachers; it is cross-arts and designed to be as accessible as possible to adult and child; disabled and able-bodied; 'artistic' and merely **CREATIVE!**

I call what follows 'Recipes' and they are best leaned by doing, adapting to the time, materials and human ingredients you have. They are listed in order of complexity, but you can digress and transgress as much as you dare or need to. **THERE IS NO WRONG/RIGHT WAY TO DO THIS**; go for the things that give you the goose-bumps and ticking the KS2 boxes will take care of itself.

Easy for me to say, I know, but do please let me and Young at Art know what happens and how you want to change this very basic structure through practice.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Communication skills – working with a focus, talking and listening to instructions
- Problem solving and decision making – making simple predictions, seeing possibilities and asking different types of questions
- Giving opinions with ideas
- Expressing and justifying thoughts, feelings and ideas.
- Creative skills – exploring and responding to different stimuli

INSTRUCTIONS

Circle of places (20 mins)

Ask the group to make a circle. Starting with yourself, go around the circle saying your name and then one word which tells of a place you find special in some way. (Allow 5 minutes for average class size)

Still on or near the chair go round again and this time say your name, tell the place (bed, beach etc.) and now **SHOW** the place with a still image or a brief movement. (Allow 5 minutes for average class size)

Last time round do all the above, but the whole group copies back, exactly as they can, each person/place/ image in turn. (Allow 5 minutes for average class size.)

What did you see?
How do we feel about these places, going on what we have said and shown?
Are there any the same?

Alphabet letters (20-30 mins)

In threes or fours, choose in secret a letter from the alphabet. Make a body sculpture of this letter with all of you in it. (Allow 2 - 3 minutes.)

At a count down from 3-2-1, freeze into this letter/ image and remember it with your whole body. Now invite the other groups to look at the image. What could it be? Enjoy guessing.

Each group takes a turn to show their letter sculpture. (Allow 1 minute per group)
Now go round again, supposing this group (in say a letter Y shape) weren't doing a letter, forget about the letter, what might this shape be?

CLUE: IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH PLACE. For example: the 'Y' shape might be the Olympic arch at Athens, or Wembley stadium, or the door of a church or my favourite tree. (Allow 1-2 minutes per group)

Go round each group and invite the others, who are looking at the shape, to tell the people inside the alphabet letter where they might be. Animate the places with movement and sound. The group must choose a suggestion they like and go with it. (Allow 2-3 minutes per group)

Spirit of place

So far you have been trained in making a body image freezing it, remembering it, bringing it to life using the audience's ideas. You didn't have to think; just make a letter. Look how much has been made!

Now again working in threes or fours, choose a real place, somewhere all of you have in common (the park, etc.). Make one image each, practising, remembering and negotiating each one.

A group of four will have four images, which they can move through as a sequence, each of which has one 'author' from the group. Spend time on these. (Allow 10-15 minutes)
Here are some techniques to develop these images further:

The audience chooses one that they like and tries to guess where it is and what is happening. Enjoy your 'mistakes' – "That isn't a pigeon in the park, it's supposed to be a policeman helping an old lady..."

Make a stroboscopic image of these by getting the audience to close their eyes between each one. The facilitator calls out "Open/ close your eyes" for each image, and the audience see only a series of 'freezes' with no faffing about in between. This gives the images more weight and mystery.

Turn one of the 'freezes' into a song just by scribing all the suggestions and guesses called out by the audience, e.g. "They're in a den/ they like it there/ somewhere high up maybe/ no it isn't it's on another planet/ who cares if you're having fun tra-la-la".

Draw, sculpt and write from the images. Take digital photographs of these images and blow them up big for the next time. Add speech bubbles to them to make stories.

WE ARE ALL, ALWAYS, PERFORMING. WE ARE WRITING ALL DAY LONG WITH OUR BODIES. A PLACE IS MADE OUT OF US NOT A MAP.

Forum Theatre

What happens if someone tries to invade this space, or tell you that you are not allowed to play there any more? You can make a performance from this - indeed you are halfway there!

Take an image, animate it, and then give another small group the brief of being the spoilsports or invaders. (Allow 5-10 minutes)

Show the place as it was, with the original people in it, doing what they do and feeling what they feel.

Then show, in a couple of frames and a few words only, an invasion or some kind of intrusion. (Allow 5-10 minutes)

This little scene, unfinished as it is, is what we call a 'model' for Forum theatre. For example, three people might have a favourite corner of the playground, but bullies take it over unless you don't mind handing over lunch money...FREEZE! This moment is the stopping point: the question mark hanging over the people in the scene. What can they do? What would you do in their shoes? Don't just tell them, show them.

Run the scene up to the stopping point, and then bring people out from the audience to try to substitute themselves for the original protagonists, to act out things they might try to change the situation. It's a human brainstorm. (Allow 1-2 minutes per new idea from audience.)

LINKS TO OTHER LEARNING AREAS

- Personal Development – developing self esteem through performances and working with others; discussing a range of social problems and finding resolutions
- Language and Literacy – listening and responding to others' points of view, make judgements and draw conclusions using appropriate vocabulary
- Information Technology – using a digital camera to record images and discuss and select specific freeze frames
- Physical Education – using movement; representing letters using body form

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Which interventions have worked?

Which might you try in real life?

Write and draw these. They are valuable when we look at the spaces we inhabit and who controls them.

Example: One person comes out and argues with the bullies, and gets slapped. A second tries to talk but chickens out and runs away. A third calls a teacher, etc. If someone turns into a dragon, and burns the bullies don't worry. This can be a useful way of showing and releasing anger through performance. Your imagination can help you work out a safe way to take the dragon into the so-called real situation.

Record these experiences and discuss them afterwards. Build short films or performances to show others.

Legislative Theatre

This method is now being used all over the world including Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where my friend and teacher Augusto Boal (who developed Forum theatre) and his group have seen more than 30 pieces of legislation drafted by this method of performance, worked through with community groups, and then put to the ruling council of the city.

Closer to home I have used it to enable young people to work out, through performance (not just

discussion!), a policy for key services affecting their lives on the Isle of Wight; Primary Schools in Sussex to create an anti- bullying policy and many health initiatives around drugs and AIDS.

Create a model as before, and run the Forum.
Example: A youth club dominated by boys on the pool table and girls hogging all the nice chairs. Translate the actions people try out into legislation. One person might try reasoning in a calm manner and generate a principle that goes:

“ALWAYS RESPECT THE OTHER PERSON’S POINT OF VIEW.”

Another might try getting to the club early and tying themselves to the pool table or chairs, singing, or wearing a clown outfit and handing out sweets. This generates a principle that goes: “NON-VIOLENT DIRECT ACTION.”

My work on the Isle of Wight yielded a day long event where only the above exercises, used over a week, generated maps, performances, a full-size model of how we wish the Island might be for young people, a game-plan of how to get there, a video diary, an installation in a corridor showing individual places and how we feel about them in graphics on acetate, a song and a play by the youngest children about future dreams. It all adds up!

See the Sea of Dreams workshop developed for the Isle of Wight project as an example of how to take it further.

Don't forget to send feedback to toolbox@youngart.co.uk

www.youngart.co.uk/toolbox