

ST GERALD'S COLLEGE DRAMA PROGRAMME:

Aims

The aims set out below describe the educational purposes of following a course in **Drama and Theatre Arts** for the St. Gerald's College TY Programme. Some of these aims are reflected in assessment objectives; others are not because they cannot readily be translated into measurable assessment objectives. The aims are not stated in any order of priority.

The aims of the St. Gerald's College TY **Drama and Theatre Arts** course are to enable TY students to develop:

- an enjoyment and appreciation of live theatre;
- an involvement in the exploration and enactment of human experience through drama and theatre;
- practical abilities in related skills;
- the research skills necessary to acquire relevant information;
- an appreciation of the technical and historical aspects of drama and theatre;
- an understanding of the place and function of Drama and Theatre Arts in modern society;
- a capacity for self-evaluation;
- the ability to appreciate and evaluate the work of others;
- the ability to work together as a group displaying awareness of and sensitivity to others;
- related social skills such as self-confidence, concentration, self-discipline and communication;
- the ability to carry out further study of theatre.

Assessment objectives

The programme will assess the candidates' ability to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of practical skills and techniques relevant to Drama and Theatre Arts;
- respond imaginatively and relevantly to a given stimulus in a dramatic context;
- demonstrate practical skills and techniques associated with Drama and Theatre Arts;
- evaluate work carried out in studies relating to Drama and Theatre Arts.

Drama diary evaluation

Use this text as a model for your students' work. You can copy and paste it into any text or word processed document.

Topic Date (Enter date dd/mm/yy)

My performance was called --(give details)--

It was about --(give details)--

The best moment of my performance was --(give details)--

This was because --(give details)--

The part I would change was --(give details)--

I would change it because (give details)

To improve my performance I would --(give details)--

Starting drama

Aims

- To introduce the following techniques:
 - Freeze frame/bringing the freeze frame to life,
 - Rôle-play,
 - Thought tracking.
- To establish a good working model (including lots of praise), and to get the group to identify what rules are necessary for Drama to work.
- To develop confidence in using drama
- To learn techniques and self expression.
- To introduce reflection and evaluation, (Drama Diary)

Synopsis or outline for introductory sessions

The students imagine scenes from a photograph album, re-creating them as still Freeze frames and bringing them to life using thought tracking and rôle play. They interview one another in rôle as visitors to a tourist town using rôle play. They are encouraged to reflect on what they have learned during the session and to keep an ongoing diary which records their own learning through Drama.

Resources

- Paper and pens
- Drama diaries

Room layout

- The tables pushed back and the chairs in a circle.

Making a start

In pairs in the circle:

- Talk to the person on your left about your holidays for a few minutes. Are there any volunteers to tell the group briefly about what your partner did over the holidays? Don't worry if no-one feels ready to respond yet. Accept any ideas offered and then carry on.

Brainstorm

What pictures might you find in a family photograph album?

- Go round the circle. Expect each student to suggest an idea but pass on quickly if someone says that they cannot think of anything. You may need to make a few suggestions to start with, for example, holiday snaps. List their ideas on the board.

Introducing freeze-frame

Move away from your chairs and find a space.

The teacher says (adapt this as necessary):

“In a minute I want you to get into the group size which I call out and form a snapshot from our imaginary album. (Use the list you have made on the flip chart paper and adapt it e.g. in fours - a holiday snap; in sixes - a party; whole class - a football match, a community celebration. I will count from ten to one and then say, 'Hold it and freeze'. Hold the picture you have made still, until I say, 'Relax'.”

Go through about ten freeze frames quickly making comments on any good ones you see. If there are any which particularly impress you by their clear depictions, body language, facial expressions and so on, then ask the rest of the class to relax and look at them and discuss the strengths of the freeze frames.

Freeze-frame

Tableaux: to create simple improvisations from freeze-frames.

- Begin by asking the class to form simple freeze-frames in small groups e.g. typical photo album snaps.
- Ask the whole class to produce 2 large scale freeze-frames e.g. first day at school and end of term (facial expressions are important).
- Split the class into 2 large groups - A and B.
- Ask each group to create a photo freeze-frame from the members of the other group.
- Give each group until the count of 10 to mould the opposite group into the picture and give the finished product a title.
- From the enforced picture each group must produce two minutes' worth of improvisation, either before or after the freeze.
- Perform.

You may repeat the sequence with smaller groups.

Introducing thought tracking

Go back into the last whole class Freeze frame. Introduce the activity with these words or a variation to suit your own situation:

“I am going to tap some people on the shoulder and when I do you must say what is in your head as the character that you are rôle playing (e.g. at a football match one spectator might say 'What a goal!' another might say 'I wish me dad were 'ere.')”

Some will do this really well. If so, then praise them! You are looking for concentration and imaginative belief in the situation.

Introducing rôle play

Introduce the activity with these words or a variation to suit your own situation:

“Go back to your chairs. In groups of four talk about a memorable event that happened during the holidays. If nothing interesting happened to you, invent something! Decide on a Freeze frame to start the drama. You are going to bring it to life for 30 seconds and use words this time. You have three minutes to practise it. The events can be quite commonplace (like going shopping with friends), or extraordinary (like witnessing an accident).”

After two minutes stop the class and tell them that they have one minute left to work on their best moment in the drama. During this time you must move about the class helping, questioning and encouraging the students. Your job is to motivate at this early stage. Keeping the student under the pressure of time helps to clarify and focus the rôle play, otherwise it can ramble.

Now you are ready to bring the freeze frames to life. Get the students to relax and ask for volunteers to show their freeze frame and rôle play to the class. Ask each group to hold their freeze frame, count down: “3, 2, 1, GO!”. After about 30 seconds say: “And freeze!”.

Respect for their peers is essential here. Take a bit of time with this. Try and find something good in each group, but do not tolerate showing-off. It will spoil the drama in the long run if the students do not take their work seriously. Do not tolerate chatting while others are showing their work. They are practising their audience as well as performance skills.

Extending the rôle play

Introduce the activity with these words or a variation to suit your own situation:

“Get into groups of four. One of you works for a local paper or TV company, in a seaside town that is very short of news at the moment. Your job is to go onto the beach and interview tourists. The rest of the group are tourists. All of you need to spend one or two minutes deciding what makes a newsworthy item. Practise this for five minutes. Choose the best moment. Start with a Freeze frame and be ready to bring it to life for 30 seconds. Set this up as before (with preparation time of two minutes).”

See all the groups. Praise everything you can, but point out things that are obviously wrong and see if the group can identify what would improve it. As their confidence grows, gradually introduce more detailed and constructive criticism.

You are looking for examples of realism, controversy, humour and inventive treatment of the situation.

Reflection and evaluation

Introduce the evaluation with these words or a variation to suit your own situation:

“Go back into the circle. What have you learnt from the session? What rules do you feel are necessary for drama to work?”

List the rules on the board. Students can brainstorm their own ideas for rules in conjunction with rules you may have given them already (such as the Ground Rules above). The students can copy them into their Drama Diaries.

Pandora's Box

This section contains guidance on teaching drama, using the classical myth of Pandora's Box.

Session length

- Two one-hour sessions

Aims

- To reinforce freeze frame, rôle play, thought tracking, reflection and evaluation.
- To introduce mime/gesture/realism and story.
- To introduce polished improvisation.
- To continue the drama diary.

Synopsis or outline for these sessions

The students practise mime skills. Then they use these skills in their improvisation work which is based on finding a box which they are not allowed to open. A moral dilemma is introduced, whether or not to open the box. The story of Pandora's Box is told and the class have to make up a modern day version of the story.

Resources

- Copies of the story of Pandora's Box.

Room layout

- The tables pushed back and the chairs in a circle.

Pandora's Box - session 1

Whole class discussion in a circle. The teacher introduces this with some such statement as:

“Remind me what you did in Drama last week. What did you learn?”

The teacher now introduces the mime:

“I would like each of you to mime an object; it must be small and you must be able to pass the mimed object on to the person on your left. That person has to guess what it is, copy the mime and then change it into something else. If your neighbour cannot guess what is being mimed the rest of the class can try to guess. I will start the mime.”

If no one guesses the mime just ask what it is. Try to avoid making a big issue of it. This is supposed to be a confidence builder not destroyer! Again praise the good mimes i.e. those that are clearly defined and easily recognized.

Extending the mime skills

The teacher continues:

“I am going into the centre of the circle and I will pace out a large treasure box. I want you all to try and remember as much of my mime as possible. For instance what size is the box? Is the lid heavy? What size key did I use to open the box? If you can guess what I have taken out of the box, put your hand up, don't call out, and I will choose someone to answer. If the person is right I will give them the key.”

In mime you pace out the box - say two paces by three - take a key out of your pocket, unlock the box and lift a large heavy lid which you allow to thump to the floor. You root around in the box and take out a crown which you put on your head. You take it off and put it back in the box. Then you ask a person who has guessed the mime correctly to come into the centre of the circle and give this person the key. The student has to repeat the mime of opening the box, keeping the same shape and size, and take something new out of the box. The person in the middle invites someone from the circle to tell him/her what the mime was. Repeat this three or four times.

Rôle play with the emphasis on good mime and gesture

Bring students back in the circle. Now introduce the next stage:

“I would like you to work in groups of three. Imagine you find a box. You have to show clearly by mime, how big/how heavy it is/what it's like. You have three minutes to practise. Remember to start your rôle play with a Freeze frame. I want to see the 30 seconds before the moment that you find the box. Take a few minutes to discuss who you are, where you are and where exactly the box is. You have to give clues in your rôle play that there is something very special/strange about this box. There is an instruction on it saying: DO NOT OPEN.”

Go round the room checking that everyone understands the task and is getting on with it. If in doubt ask the group you are worried about to show you their freeze frame and thirty-second improvisation. If necessary give them advice on how to present their work better. When you have given them enough time to prepare their rôle play, choose a couple of groups to show their work.

Remember to get the freeze frame absolutely still before counting down, “3, 2, 1, GO!” You are reinforcing the control necessary for good drama.

Reflection and evaluation/preparation for the next session

Get the class back into a circle. Ask:

“What have you learned in this session? What makes a successful mime? Is a rôle play effective for the same reasons? Remember to find as much as possible to praise.”

Read the story of **Pandora's Box** ready for the next session. Think how you can make a modern day version of the Greek myth. What does the box represent? What might be released from the box today?

Pandora's Box - session 2

Recap on last week's session:

“What do you remember from last week? This week we are going to take some time to develop a modern version of Pandora's Box, using some of the ideas we discussed at the end of the last Drama session. What might be let out of the box today?”

List suggestions on the flip chart. Allow students to discuss them.

Planning the drama

Introduce this, as appropriate:

“In groups of four, plan your drama for this week. Take your time. I shall be looking for examples of good improvisation and an imaginative story line. You will need to discuss the improvisation in detail. Start your drama from the point at which you are deciding whether or not to open the box. There should be a great deal of tension at that moment, and then plan and practise what happens next. Each improvisation should last about a minute.”

Go round and question the groups to make sure that they are focusing on the drama. If you are in doubt about a group, make them Freeze frame, and then Thought track them. This helps to keep them on their toes.

Performance of polished Improvisation:

Get each group to perform their polished improvisations. Make sure every piece begins and ends in a freeze frame. Count all the groups in with, “3, 2, 1, GO!”

Discussion and evaluation

Get the class back into a circle and discuss the moral issues raised within the stories the children explored in their drama. Ask if there were any other stories/ideas that the groups discussed but chose not to use. Discuss why they were not chosen. Start to get the students to understand what the basic requirements for a good piece of drama. For example, some stories work well in writing but not as drama, why? This might be because drama needs tension, conflict and contrast to work well.

Give out the Drama Diary sheet.

The Story of Pandora's Box

Zeus, the father of the gods, was angry that humans had been given the gift of fire by Prometheus, making them far more powerful than he wished. To take the humans down a peg or two he sent his daughter, Pandora, to earth to cause trouble.

There she married Epimetheus, half brother of Prometheus. Epimetheus was given a box by Zeus. Unknown to Pandora, it contained all the diseases which could bring suffering to humans. Pandora's curiosity overcame her desire to obey her husband and to keep the box locked. She opened it and out flew all the diseases and sorrows which trouble humans. However, at the bottom of the box was Hope, who would help humans to overcome their suffering.

Ideas for improvisation

Mime - the goblin's castle

Pupils have been captured by the Goblin King and are confined to his dungeons. They have to escape!

You talk them through the escape procedure which they must mime.

- Describe the confined cell (size of a small square) and how they must break out of it, by scrabbling and so on
- Next they creep and crawl through a hole in the wall- very small, very slimy, on their stomachs.
- They walk/crawl through various tunnels filled with all kinds of revolting substances: cold water, rats, slime, hot coals, broken glass, gravel, bones and dead bodies, glue, low ceilings, boiling oil, nails, ice and snow.
- Vary levels and heights when appropriate.
- Freedom- they have to run as the drawbridge is being pulled-up, they must run and jump...will they make it?

Mime - walking with beasts

In this mime, pupils become creatures in an alien or prehistoric environment. They can do this individually, or several can join to form one large animal. Ask them to contort themselves and make their faces ugly, scary or unusual. You will talk them through a series of activities:

- It is night - they must stay still, so predators cannot see them, but may make occasional strange noises, as they sleep and dream.
- Gradually, light begins to grow as the day breaks - creatures stir and wake.
- Now fully awake animals may move around, mark territory, look for food
- Animals may attack or prey on one another
- It begins to rain - creatures find a place to shelter
- Creatures explore environment, find a mate and so on.

Silly voices

Give students simple texts to read aloud, say, advertisements, passages from novels, magazine articles or poems. The catch is that they must use someone else's voice. Better still, you can combine two or more voices. Read the text:

- As the Queen
- As a Teletubby
- As someone who is out of breath
- As someone who has inhaled helium
- As someone who is drunk
- As someone who speaks with the accent of a city or region of the UK
- As a French, German or other foreign person
- As a French Teletubby who has inhaled helium and thinks he or she is the Queen

As an extension you can ask students to do things like the Queen's Christmas message, using the Queen's accent but in the style of Ali G.

Tableaux and movement

Do this in groups of four or five. Each group has three titles:

- The Feather is Falling.
- Moving the Piano.
- Stretch that Jumper.

Encourage the pupils to think laterally and produce frozen moments which are original - avoid the obvious. They should link each picture with movement, counting the steps. Everyone should be in time and synchronized. Think about arms as well as legs and facial movements.

Titles for spontaneous improvisations

Use titles from this list to inspire or challenge students:

- Quick Change
- Excuses
- Wanted: trainee
- No Smoking
- Pardon me, but could you...?
- Change in status
- Waiting
- Engaged
- Help!
- Room
- Stuck
- Keep off the grass

In groups of two or three pupils devise three short scenes based on a title, each scene should look at the title in a different way. One scene should be mime. Pupils should try to synchronize transitions (movements) between scenes.

Scenarios for improvisation

These are ideas for scenarios with two performers - so students should work in pairs (or trios, with one directing). The situations work best if the pupils get straight into them and avoid long discussions.

- Director instructing rather useless, awkward, overpaid actor.
- Fortune teller and client.
- Hairdresser and customer (after hair disaster).
- Photographer and awkward supermodel.
- Traffic warden and driver about to get a ticket.
- Married couple watching TV - channel arguments.
- Casualty - nurse informing family of bad news.
- Two tramps arguing over box/newspaper/bench.

- Two strangers on a train - one lights up in a no-smoking compartment.
- Suspect being interviewed by the police.
- Boss giving employee the sack.
- Door-to-door salesman and lonely pensioner.
- Pregnant woman and claustrophobic stuck in a lift.
- Job interview.
- Parent and teenager - teenager three hours late, parent waiting up.
- Two cars meet coming from opposite directions down a narrow country lane. One belongs to farmer, other a wealthy businessman - who moves?
- Boyfriend proposing to girlfriend - she's trying to dump him.
- Pupil sent to head for bad behaviour.
- Doctor and patient, patient is hypochondriac.
- Mime - two wrestlers warming up, or two men on the moon.

Prop boxes

Students prepare spontaneous (no time for prior discussion or preparation) or polished improvisations in groups of two, three or more using objects in prop boxes as stimulus (can be made up of any object eg hat/book/ball).

Titles from teacher

- The Letter
- Good News
- Get Your Hair Cut
- The Doctor and the Patient
- Frou Frou, the Wonder Dog, or The Dog that can do Amazing Tricks
- Crime
- The Eavesdropper
- The Baby
- The Girl with Green Hair
- Kidnapped
- Gangsters
- Marooned on a Desert Island
- The Green Paper Bag
- In the Middle of the Night
- A Fairy Tale
- Family Matters
- The Secret Formula
- The Box of Chemicals
- The Key
- The Door Marked 'Private'

- Fire
- The Hijacker
- In the Aeroplane
- The Time Machine
- The Secret
- Grandad
- Beauty and the Beast
- The Dream
- The Man from the Council
- Mother and Son
- Father and Son
- The Boy (or Girl) Who Wouldn't Speak
- Old Uncle Bayram
- The Thieves
- Danger at the Zoo
- The American Girl
- Robbery with Violence
- The Stranger at the Door
- The Doctor
- The Forbidden Planet
- The Bomb That Wasn't
- The Birthday Surprise
- The Conflict
- Robots
- Bad News
- The Bully at the Bus Stop
- Shock
- Gunman City
- The Visitor who came to Tea
- Rat Poison
- In the Year 2100
- Planet X
- Accident
- The Black Box
- The Special Dress
- Incident at the Bus Stop
- The Nagging Mother
- The Monster
- Ebenezer Scrooge

- The Hat
- Dial M for Murder
- Two Workmen
- The Haunted House
- Whodunnit?
- World War II
- The Gipsy Fortune-Teller
- The Nightmare
- Grandma
- Spoilt Children
- The Truants
- Teacher's Pet
- Mother and Daughter
- Father and Daughter
- I Can Read Your Thoughts
- Pauline and the Pop Star
- Divorce
- The Invisible Man
- Baby-Snatcher
- Poison Gas
- The Man-Eating Plant
- Grandad's Will
- Please Don't Tease
- Round the Flats
- The Telephone

First or last lines from teacher

- "Money, money, money"
- "It's just not fair!"
- "Why don't you ever listen to me?"
- "My dog's just died "
- "What's the big idea, then?"
- "Go on! Amaze me ... "
- "You've been talking about me behind my back, haven't you?"
- "I saw you hit my little brother."
- "Don't go on and on and on about it."
- "Please don't tell her I told you."
- "What ever possessed you to do it?"

- “You jealous or something?”
- “He’s/she’s packed me in.”
- “Why do you tell so many lies?”
- “That’s an excellent piece of work, but there’s just one thing ...”
- “You’ve been chosen for a mission from which you are very unlikely to return ...”
- “I don’t want to go to school today.”
- “How can I tell him/her that it’s over?”
- “Do you know something? You really get up my nose. Why are you always in such a bad temper? Why did you tell Mum on me?”
- “Dad’s mad with you.”
- “Don’t be such a greedy-guts.”
- “Stop pretending to be something you are not!”
- “Don’t be a dog in the manger!”
- “Why can’t you ever see it from my point of view?”
- “Why did you hurt Mum’s feelings like that?”
- “You’ve got things out of all proportion.”
- “Mum said, ‘Never accept lifts from strangers.’ ”
- “ What a waste of money!”
- “How dare you treat your pet like that?”
- “I told you before, you must not bunk off school.”
- “You’re all mouth and no trousers. ”
- “It’s easy to be an armchair critic - don’t just sit there, do something.”
- “Why do you give up so easily?”
- “ Why can’t you take any criticism?”
- “Haven’t you got any manners?”
- “Get up out of that bed immediately!”
- “If you don’t mind my saying so, you need to go on a diet.”
- “I hate to say this, but I think you’ve got anorexia nervosa. ”
- “Look, I’m only giving you a warning.”
- “Haven’t you got any ambition in life?”
- “Let them talk - who cares?”
- “Shouting about it won’t help.”
- “This is absolutely the last straw. ”
- “You are so gullible.”
- “I’m going to give you a piece of my mind.”
- “You’re getting a bit above yourself.”
- “You haven’t been very discreet, have you?”
- “What do you mean by that sexist rubbish?”
- “You’re always making excuses! What is it this time?”

- “Mum, I want to go abroad this year.”
- “You really are very, very selfish.”
- Scream! followed by “You frightened the living daylights out of me.”
- “I’ve had it up to here with you.”
- “Grow up, will you? Act your age!”
- “You’re not old enough.”
- “You are under my authority until you are eighteen.”
- “You don’t own me.”
- “I’m sick to death of your prejudiced remarks.”
- “Thanks for ruining my reputation.”
- “You’ve let the cat out of the bag - that was supposed to be top secret.”
- “Don’t be a Scrooge.”
- “Why are you always so nasty? Why can’t you ever be nice?”
- “Sarcasm is the lowest form of wit, didn’t you know?”
- “Look, Miss, you’ve got a grudge against me, haven’t you?”
- “What am I going to do? I’m heavily in debt.”
- “Mum/Dad, can I have some more pocket money?” (Second line: “More?”)
- “You’re going to ruin your health.”
- “I am not going to Nan’s eightieth birthday.”
- “Mum, I’m not coming home for Christmas this year.”
- “You don’t appreciate a thing I do.”
- “No foul language in this house!”
- “Sorry’s just a word.”
- “Don’t be so pessimistic - look on the bright side.”
- “Good grief! How petty can you be?”
- “But, please, Mum ... ”(persuasion against will)
- “How can you be so deceitful?”
- “Promise you won’t tell anyone. ”
- “Right! I’ve caught you now.”
- “I’ve got an apology to make.”
- “Please don’t do that to me.”
- “I’ve got a dreadful pain in my stomach.”
- “Excuse me, I hope you don’t think I’m being nose-y.”
- “I don’t expect you had much chance to meet girls when you were at boarding school ...”
- “Trust you to spoil everything!”
- “Is it the measles?”
- “Look, snap out of it!”
- “I don’t believe it.”
- “I beg your pardon.”

- “It’s disgusting!”
- “Will you lend me .. ”
- “Don’t you dare bring my mother into this!”
- “Guess what happened to Mandy.”
- “Chicken!”
- “I’ll give you three guesses what happened.”
- “I’ve just lost Mum’s purse.”
- “What has your mum got against me?”
- “I’ve told you before - the answer is no.”
- “Stop that at once!”
- “Johnny’s been fired - did you know?”
- “Can you keep a secret?”
- “Don’t you ever bring up that subject again!”
- “Would you mind repeating that remark?”
- “What on earth is the matter with you today?”
- “Why can’t you be punctual just for once?”
- “Don’t bite the hand that feeds you.”
- “Why are you always picking on me?”

Eventually students should be in a position to use skills acquired and their own imaginations to create group improvisation lasting between three and five minutes. If you wish to impose a more rigid structure consider:

- Three-scene performances for all improvisations.
- Freeze frames at beginning and end of performance, and possibly of each scene too.
- A check-list of techniques, for example, one scene must be mime or involve talking to the audience.

Starters and fill-ups

Use starters for warming up before a session. Fill-ups are useful activities to fill in extra time.

Sometimes warm-up games are useful for starting a session. They can raise the energy level of a group, calm down a boisterous group and improve concentration and focus. They can also be used at the end of a session as a way to bring a class back together, or simply when you have a spare ten minutes because it is not worth starting new work at the end of a session.

You may wish to use some of the games and exercises to help students improve their skills in improvisation, observation, listening or inventiveness for example. If so, make the aim of the exercise clear to the class, as an overdose of seemingly pointless game playing is demotivating for students in the long run. Try to keep a balance between fun and serious activities.

This section is divided into two parts:

- Games for the whole class (warm-ups and calm downs).
- Starting points for small group work.

Games for the whole class

Invisible objects

The class are seated in a circle.

One person is chosen to mime holding a cardboard box, placing it on the floor in front of them and opening the lid to take out an imaginary object. The person then handles or uses the object for a moment before placing it back in the box.

The rest of the group are then invited to put their hands up if they think they can guess what the object is. The person who guesses correctly can then open the next box and the game begins again.

As a variation on this, or if the imaginary object is hard to guess, it may be passed around the circle. The leader may give clues as to its identity by making comments such as "Be careful, it can bite" or "Mind, it's slippery/cold/wet/sticky" etc.

This game is very useful for getting to know a new class.

Name that person

This activity becomes tedious with a group larger than twenty, but it is a surprisingly effective way for a teacher to learn new names. This game is useful for a group getting to know one another.

The class stand in a circle and everyone says their name in turn. One person is chosen to start. This pupil must look at someone in the circle and call that person's name. Once it has been called, the caller walks across to the other person's place.

Meanwhile the person whose name has been called must look at a third person, call that person's name and walk towards her/him. No one must leave his or her place before calling the name of the person whose place they intend to take. Make sure that everyone moves at least once during the game.

Change places

The class sit on chairs in a circle. Before the game begins, make sure that the circle of chairs is big enough for people to run across from side to side without colliding. Be ready to adapt the game to allow for students with restricted mobility or wheelchair users.

One person (who has no chair), stands in the centre of the circle. That person's aim is to get the rest of the class to change places and to find an empty chair to sit on while they are out of their seats.

The person in the centre might say, for example, "All those who had toast for breakfast, change places" or "All those from (name of village or street), change places". You can vary this in as many ways as you like:

- All those with a brother/sister...
- All those who like (name a soccer team or pop group)...
- All those who have a cat/dog/rabbit and so on

It is a rule that no one may return to the chair he or she has just left in a changeover.

What are you doing?

This game is good for energizing a group and freeing the imagination. It also requires concentration and develops skills in mime.

The group stand in a circle. One person begins to mime an activity, for example, mowing the lawn or posting a letter.

The person next to him or her asks, "What are you doing?" and the first person is obliged to say something different from what he/she is actually doing (for example, "I'm frying an egg"). The second

person must then mime the first person's answer until the third person asks "What are you doing?" at which point he/she must make up another lie for the third person to act out.

This game can go round the circle twice before you stop it - unless the students are particularly inventive.

Status game

This game can open up useful areas for discussion on how people see and display social status.

The teacher shuffles a pack of ordinary playing cards and deals one to each student. Everyone must memorize their card and return it to the pack unseen by anyone else. Kings have the highest status, aces the lowest.

Everyone then takes on a character whose social status is equivalent to their card. In order to get used to the feel and behaviour of this character the class should spend a few moments moving around the room greeting one another. They may need reminding to be aware of eye contact (low status characters often avoid this where possible) and body posture. Do they walk upright looking forward, or with heads bowed looking at the floor? What tone of voice is used?

The class are then asked to sit down. While they are sitting down they are observers, out of rôle.

A group of five people is chosen and the teacher asks them to improvise in character for a minute or two in a given situation. Suitable situations might be: feeding the ducks in the park, waiting for a bus, or in a dentist's waiting room for example.

The rest of the class are invited to guess the value of the playing card originally held by each person in the improvisation and to comment on their interactions.

Guessing the exact value of the card is less important than discussing the ways in which the students improvising show high or low status attitudes and behaviour.

Authority

This exercise is for groups of four. Two of the group members are characters in authority (such as teachers, customs officers, police). The other two have made a mistake which has just been discovered so that they appear to be in the wrong. The aim of the exercise is to show how the four characters handle the resulting conflict. This can lead to useful discussion on confrontations and resolving disputes.

The lost key

This exercise, done in pairs, shows the difference between what Stanislavski calls acting "in general" (artificial acting) and acting from the particular details of a situation. Each pair can let their improvisation run for one minute, first in as "real" and lifelike a way as possible, then in a melodramatic way, allowing the emotional drama of the moment to dominate the scene.

The situation is simply that A and B are friends. A discovers that she/he has lost an important key. B tries to help. Show some contrasting improvisations and discuss which style was more satisfying for the performers and for the audience.

There will probably be differing opinions here. Melodrama is not necessarily bad, any more than "living the part". It serves a different function according to time, place and expectations.

Lines and proverbs

Groups of three to six students can be given the following lines or proverbs as the theme for a short improvisation. The lines need not actually be spoken. The improvisation can simply reflect the subject matter.

Lines

- I knew it would end like this.
- It's not my fault.
- Why don't you get a job like the others?
- I'm sorry. I didn't mean it.
- No-one here understands me. I may as well leave.
- Have you heard the latest?
- This is nothing to do with me. I'm staying out of it.

Proverbs

- A rolling stone gathers no moss.
- A friend in need is a friend indeed.
- Too many cooks spoil the broth.
- Handsome is as handsome does.
- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
- A stitch in time saves nine.
- Absence makes the heart grow fonder.

Group shapes

This is a simple game but it needs co-operation. Ask students to walk around the room, using all the space and trying not to bump into each other. Once this is established call out a shape, which the whole class must form. Start with a circle as this is easy. Other useful shapes include:

- a triangle,
- a square,
- a diamond,
- any capital letter,
- a star (5 points),
- an umbrella.

The whole class must make one shape between them, as though it were to be viewed from the air. Between making shapes ask them to walk steadily as before using all the space in the room.

Games and activities for small groups

Group statues

This exercise is ideal for groups of five or six students. They can work collaboratively, or if preferred one can act as sculptor and direct the rest. With some classes, it may be best to do this in single-sex groups.

Give the group a theme or image and allow them up to five minutes to depict the theme in the form of a statue or sculpture. It can be as naturalistic or as abstract as the groups wish and may be made of any material from gold to polystyrene. The important thing is that the groups know why they have made their sculpture in that particular way. Their basic raw material is their own bodies, but chairs, clothing and other props may be used if desired.

Suitable themes can include: the mother, victory, the lesson, refugees, the hero. The exercise can be used as an introduction to a lesson and could take the theme of the lesson (e.g. the family, friendship) as a starting point.

Groups can show their statues to the whole class, who may ask questions about them ("Is Julie wearing a cloak to show that she is a vampire?"). It is important that the questions are specific rather than vague. This is a useful way for the groups to evaluate their own work.

Mirror stories

This is an exercise for pairs. If the class size is uneven it would be possible for one group to work in a three.

The aim of the exercise is to create a story collaboratively. Ideas should flow freely and the pairs who are most responsive to one another's ideas will work best as a team. Those who block one another or pursue highly individualistic lines of thought will have most difficulty.

One partner begins to narrate a sequence of events, miming the appropriate actions (for example, "The alarm clock rang and I hit it with my pillow. Then I remembered this was the first day of the holidays and got out of bed".) The other person mirrors the actions as far as possible. When the teacher calls "Change" the second partner takes over the narration, with the first person mirroring.

Two minutes is probably a good time to let the exercise run, at which point tell the class they have one more turn each, after which the story must come to a natural end. Invite pairs who have worked well together to show their story to the class and discuss the need for responsiveness to others when performing.

Colours

This exercise uses sounds but no dialogue. It is for groups of five or six students.

The teacher tells each group, secretly, a colour (use strong colours like red, blue, green, yellow, black, white, purple). The group then has five minutes to prepare a short, simple piece depicting that colour. Humming or chanting may be used, but not dialogue.

Blue could be the ocean waves or a sad mood. Purple tends to stand for empire in western culture, but there are other interpretations. Green could stand for envy or for the environment.

Each group's piece can be discussed and different interpretations considered.

Planning and scripting a play or episode

This activity could spread over several weeks and lead to a staged performance of some or all of the pieces created. Ideally students should have access to computer software to draft and revise their scripts, but in the early stages of brainstorming ideas and initial drafts, pen and paper is fine.

Timing

In terms of length, five to ten-minute pieces are ideal. Inexperienced writers tend to get carried away with dialogue rather than concentrating on plot structure. This can lead to tedious dialogues which actually say very little. The key to good drama is the amount of information conveyed to the audience in any exchange (sometimes this can be done without words). This provides the dramatic tension which makes the audience watch attentively.

The following steps can be followed by students in pairs to create a short play script.

Initial ideas

The basic theme or idea for a script may develop from ongoing work, perhaps in history, on a class reader in English or from a lesson in citizenship.

Here are some ideas for short plays:

- X has left her/his P.E. kit at home - again.

- X is late for school.
- X saw someone commit a crime.
- X wants to have a party for friends, with no adults to interfere.
- X has been threatened by an older student, and ordered to bring in some money tomorrow or “there will be trouble”.
- X has been caught with a packet of cigarettes in her/his pocket.
- X has lost something “borrowed” without permission.

In pairs, students can decide on an idea they would like to use to create a five to ten minute play. Initially the play should be for 2 characters but they may bring in one or two more if this is necessary to the plot.

Developing the plot

When the students have decided on a basic idea for a script they need to answer the following questions to develop the plot:

- When does the play take place? - now or in the future?
- How many scenes will there be? Over what period of time?
- Does one scene take place later than another? By a day, a month, a year?
- Do scenes occur in a non-chronological sequence? Perhaps one scene is a flashback.
- Where is the play set? How can you show this?
- How do the audience know where each scene takes place?
- Who are the main characters? Perhaps you might have one main character with other characters played by one other person.
- Will any other characters be necessary/useful to the plot?
- What kind of audience am I writing this play for? How will the play hold their interest?

Developing the characters

Students should write a brief description of the characters in their play. In a short play, they will not be very developed - use of stereotypes might be more appropriate.

Here are two examples:

- MUM Sarah Elliot, aged 35, works as a manager at a large department store. She has one daughter, Jane, and wants her to do well at school. She is worried about Jane's new friend Sally.
- JANE is 12. She was happy at primary school but finds secondary school rather large and unfriendly. Her best friend from primary school has moved away. She has just found a new friend, Sally, who is fun to be with but skips lessons and is often in trouble. Jane used to get on well with her Mum, but recently there have been lots of arguments.

Chilling tales - ideas for improvised and scripted drama

Spooky poetry

small groups /pairs prepare dramatic readings of two or three poems which may lead to:

- tableaux/mimes/improvisations of poems
- pupils' writing of their own poetry to be read aloud/improvised

Drama and media - advertising campaign

Preparation work

Display: pupils produce advertisement collages where they examine different advertising styles/techniques (such as, before and after, celebrity endorsement, comparison, humour, pseudo-science, narratives and so on)

Warm-ups

- Verbal :any quick-fire word games, such as Word Tennis
- Physical : Mirror imaging, hand hypnosis
- Improvisation: give each pair a prop and allow them 30 seconds. to prepare an advertisement. Perform to the group, swap props and repeat.
- *Variation: create another use for the prop (for example, a hairbrush becomes a mobile phone) and act it out.

The advertising agency

In groups of three or four create an advertising agency complete with:

- Logo
- Catchy Company name
- Catchy slogan

Each member of the group should have a job/identity, such as M.D, graphic designer, account executive, copywriter. Give each group approximately 15 minutes To prepare their presentation for the class - their aim is to bid for business.

In the same groups but this time as manufacturers, they must create a brand new product- remind them to stick to facts /basics because they are producing it not advertising it. Include:

- A basic diagram with labels.
- A written description with detailed information on ingredients, properties, features.
- Again, the group should present their ideas to the rest of the class.
- *Groups may choose to advertise their own product or take on another group's product, in their rôle as advertising agency.

The advertising campaign

Groups prepare an advertising campaign for the new product.

Include:

- Diagrams/written details about packaging.
- At least one magazine advertisement - possibly a series.
- A detailed script for a TV/radio ad. This should include stage directions, set diagrams, info. about props, costumes, make-up, music, casting, lighting, sound and other FX.

Allow pupils time to write and then rehearse the ad. before recording a rehearsal on audio or videotape. Let pupils watch their first performance, make notes about positives and negatives and then make alterations. Video the final performance for the class to watch later. Pupils should write an evaluation of their final performance which they will include in their Advertising Campaign package.

Games and warm-ups

These can be used at the start of any session but try to include a mixture of physical warm-ups and games that improve concentration and thinking.

NSEW

The sides of the room become the points of the compass. When you shout out a point, pupils must run to it .

Variations:

- around the world - run clockwise around the room;
- end of the world - play dead.

Port and starboard

The sides of room become parts of a ship. You call - pupils run.

Variations:

- man over-board - run to the sides;
- man the rigging - pretend to climb;
- scrub the deck - pretend to scrub;
- hit the deck - play dead

Shake hands or introductions

Pupils have one minute to shake hands with everyone in the room and ask for four bits of information:

- favourite colour
- favourite food
- home town or village
- birthday

After one minute, get everyone seated and see what they can remember about individuals.

Name circles

Sit in a circle and introduce yourself then ask the child on your right to introduce himself or herself, plus you. The next child on the right then has to introduce himself or herself, plus the previous child, plus you and so until it comes back to you. The last child will have to introduce everyone in the group! This can be done as a group activity - everyone saying the list as it grows.

Jumping name circle

Stand in a circle and get everyone to do a star jump whilst shouting their own name. Then choose a starting point in the circle. Everyone must count to three then jump, at the same time the student who has been chosen to start shouts his or her name. On the second jump everyone else repeats that student's name. Keep up the rhythm as you work around the rest of the group jumping and repeating names.

Cooperation circle

Form a circle, then sit down with feet and legs straight. Take hold of the hands (or wrists) of the people on either side of you. The object is to stand up without bending your knees or letting go of your partners. The winners are the ones who realise that you must help others before you can help yourself!

Sitting circle

Begin standing but quite close together then all turn to the right and on the word, "Go!" try to sit on the knees of the person behind you! If it works everyone is supporting someone else so the weight is evenly distributed.

Gesture circle/follow my leader

All sit in a circle and choose one to lead (the teacher could start, to give an example). Whatever the leader does (movement or gesture) the rest must follow. Now choose someone to be the "detective". This pupil must leave the room/keep eyes closed whilst you choose the leader. They must enter the circle and try to determine who's in charge of the movements. Remind them that if everyone stares at the leader, it will be obvious - they must devise another way around it.

Wink murder

The "detective" leaves the room whilst you choose a murderer (either in front of other students or ask them to close their eyes and tap the murderer on the back). The "detective" enters the circle and the murderer can begin winking at his or her victims, who must try to die convincingly. The "detective" has 3 chances to identify the murderer - if he fails, the murderer must then reveal himself or herself. Being the murderer yourself makes an interesting variation!

Fruit salad

everyone sits on chairs and the teacher gives each student the name of a fruit (apple, banana, orange, pear). When their fruit is called they must change seats. The rules are:

- students cannot return to original seat.
- students cannot sit in seats to immediate right and left of own seat.

Variations:

- describe the making of a fruit salad rather than just calling out names or make it into a story/shopping list. Students still use naming of the fruit as cue for movement.
- change places if you have brown hair/blue eyes/live in a certain village and so on.

The L-shaped walk

Everyone finds a space and stands still. The only way to move around the room is in an L shape - 2 steps, a right-angled turn, then 3 steps or 3 steps, a right-angled turn and then 2 steps (like a knight's move in chess). Explain that they must not touch anyone else and must pause if they are going to bump into others. Pupils move on teacher's command.

Variations

- alter pace (fast or slow), direction, mood, eyes shut.
- move to spot - choose a spot in the room, fix your eyes upon it , now move towards it without touching anyone on the way.(Vary pace, back/ forward , eyes shut and so on.)

Funny walks

devise different ways of moving around the room, such as hopping , skipping, crawling , running , slow motion , in reverse, carrying something heavy/prickly/hot/cold/delicate/living and wriggly, on one leg, on one leg and one arm, only using knees and so on.

Variations:

- Incorporate the funny walk idea into a story which you tell whilst they mime, for example, escape from the Goblin King's castle where you are held prisoner. Concentrate specifically on the five senses and their reactions to changes in the environment (smells , things they must walk or wade through, extremes of temperature etc).
- You could also incorporate a new gesture into the walk or a new form of greeting.

Eye-contact circle

Begin with all looking at the floor, then on your command - "Look up!" - everyone must look at someone else in the circle. If they make eye-contact they're out! After a few seconds give the command -"Look down!" - and continue until only two remain .

Squeezing circle

All must hold hands in a circle (or wrists if they really can't bear it) Choose one to begin sending a "squeeze" message around the circle, by squeezing others' hands or wrists (you can vary number of squeezes and speed/rhythm). Now choose one to be the "detective" - this student must enter the circle (after you have, secretly, chosen the student to begin the message) and try to identify who has the squeeze. To make it more difficult, choose more than one to begin the message.

Groupings

Ask students to form different groups depending upon the information you call out, such as groups of people with the same hair colour, eye colour, birthday, village, number of siblings and so on.

Stuck in the mud

This is a form of tig. Choose one person (or more) to be "it". When victims are caught, they stand with an arm against the wall or legs apart and wait to be rescued by someone crawling under their legs/arm).

Doctor, doctor

Pupils form a standing circle, all holding hands. Teacher splits the group in the middle and one end begins to weave through the arms and legs of the rest of the group. Shout, "Freeze!" and the two must connect up again and try to untangle without letting go.

Chain statues

One pupil forms a statue in the centre. The teacher chooses another to "sculpt" him/her. At a appropriate point shout "Freeze!" and the two should be attached, with another student as sculptor. Repeat until all group are part of the same statue. Choose one from the group to stand back and name the statue.

Variations:

- This can form part of pair work- A and B become the sculptor and the statue. A must mould B, give the statue a title and then show the group. A and B swap places and repeat.
- One or more students can take photographs of the statues - they need to find one they like, then attempt to copy it for the group.

Pruey or snake in the dark

Students find a space and close their eyes. Now try walking around the room with eyes shut. Choose one student to be the snake or the pruey monster -they must enter the room and try to catch people, who have their eyes shut. If they are the snake they must hiss so that their prey can listen and try to avoid them. If they are the pruey they make no sound at all but the others must whisper "Pruey" whenever they bump into anything. If there is no reply then they have been caught by the pruey monster and must make their way to the end of the creature (hold onto waist of the last person) and become part of the stomach. If the monster is the snake, victims must join the back when they have been hissed at!

The keeper of the keys

All sit in a circle, one in the centre with keys (or something similar) in front of him or her. This is the keeper. Now blindfold him or her. One by one students try to grab the keys from the keeper. He or she must listen for the thieves and try to stop them, by using arms, hands or rolled paper.

Name check

The group is seated in a circle. One person stands in the centre. His or her task is to say the name of anybody in the circle three times before the owner of that name can say it once. If he or she manages it, then the person named takes over standing in the centre.

Anyone who...

This is a variation on Name check. This time the central player wants to sit down. However there are no spare chairs - the only way he or she can get a seat is by calling out distinguishing characteristics, such as "Anyone who is wearing black socks!" or "Anyone from (name of village)." At which point any of the group members with those characteristics have to swap places - giving an opportunity for the central player to sit down. Whoever is left without a seat becomes the next player. (You need one chair fewer than the number of players.)

Permanent handshakes

All students walk around the space introducing themselves by shaking hands with others, but always making sure to keep hold of the person's hand they are shaking until this person finds another. This could lead into impossible knots

Keep up or keepie-uppie

The group has to keep a ball or balloon up in the air for as many touches as possible. Each player is only allowed to touch it once in succession. If it touches the floor, or if any player takes more than one touch, the game must start again from number one. Depending on the type of balloon (easy) or ball (much harder), and the available space, you can add further rules - such as using only feet and heads, left hand only, and so on.

Group count

The players have to count to ten. They must only speak one at a time, and are not allowed to preplan the sequence. If two people say the same number, or if there is a gap (as judged by the teacher) the game starts again.

Milling

The group walks around the teaching space. The leader shouts out a number and the individuals make groups of that number. A development of the game is to request people to create physical

objects with their bodies, for example, in groups of five make a camera that can take a picture. Another extension is to request the group to be physically contacting each other, for example the leader shouts "ear to ear" or "head to finger".

Trust cars

In pairs A manoeuvres B around the room. B has eyes closed or is blindfolded and must trust A to take him or her on a safe journey. They are not allowed to speak, and each pair should develop their own series of physical commands for directing them around, for example tapping on the left shoulder to turn left.

Impossible knots

In a circle the group holds hands and doesn't let go. Someone is nominated as a lead person and begins to weave in and out of the others, going under and stepping over other peoples hands, When sufficiently knotted the group has to unravel itself back into the original circle without speaking.

Hypnosis

Do this in pairs. A holds up a hand. B must align his or her face with the palm of A's hand at a distance of about eight inches and follow its every movement.

Variation - hypnotism with two hands. Same exercise, but this time the actor is guiding two fellow actors, one with each hand, and can do any movement he or she likes; the hypnotist mustn't stop moving either of his or her hands. The two hypnotized actors cannot touch; each body must find its own equilibrium without leaning on the other. The hypnotist mustn't do any movements which are too violent. Swap the rôles, so that all three actors have the experience of being the hypnotist.

Variation - hypnotism with the hands and feet. Like the preceding versions, but with four actors, one for each of the hypnotist's hands and feet. The person leading can do any kind of movement, even dancing, crossing his or her arms, rolling on the ground, jumping, and so on.

Hanx

Each player has a tissue tucked in the top of the back of his or her trousers or skirt. The object of the game is for each player to collect as many of the other players' tissues without having his or her own tissue taken.

Chain mime

Five people are chosen to leave the room - the group decides on a mime sequence for them to do, such as making a complicated sandwich, or changing a baby's nappy.

- The first person is called in and told what to do.
- The second is then called in and watches while the first mimes changing the baby or whatever.
- The third is called in, and watches the second repeat what he or she saw the first do, and so on.
- The last person does the mime for the audience. The mime often changes with each repetition. Now ask each of the mime artists what he or she was trying to show.

The word wizard

The instructions below are given slowly, and one at a time with pauses between. Pupils have pencil and paper. The leader says:

I am a wizard, I am taking away all your words. But as I am generous, you may have four of them back. Write down the four words you want to keep out of all the words in the world.
(Pause)

Find a partner, communicate using only your four words, plus gestures.
(Pause)

Now you may share words with your partner, write down his or her words.
(Pause)

Now you have up to eight words. Change partners and communicate with these words on your list only. Share words.

The teacher repeats this step several more times, until the students have a fairly substantial list. Finally, the teacher should ask the pupils to write a poem, description or short narrative, using only the words on the list.

Blindfold

Darken the room, and ask everyone to stand, (furniture pushed out of the way) and close eyes. They should begin gently moving around, walking slowly, no talking. When they meet people they should greet them non-verbally, gently, and move on. Leader gives series of instructions, gives plenty of time to experience each of these:

- Find someone with hair the same length as yours. When you find him (or her) take his hand and stand still. Someone else may join you if his hair is also the same. After plenty of time, open your eyes and check out your choice - is it really the same?
- Find someone with feet as big as yours.
- Find someone with arms the same length as yours.
- Find someone with a nose like yours.

Invent more things to find (clothes, mouths, hands)

Blind explore

Darken the room if possible and ask pupils to close eyes. They should move slowly, gently around the room. (No talking; emphasize it is non-verbal). As they meet people, they gently greet them non-verbally and move on. They must stop in front of someone and explore his or her face. Allow a long time for this. They say goodbye non-verbally, and move on. They can continue with the same directions and others - for example, explore hands, play garters with hands, be angry and fight with hands - now make up, explore backs, hair, and so on.

Human noughts and crosses

You'll need nine chairs and space to run.

At one end of the room are three rows of three chairs each, four feet apart. One team is "Noughts", while the other is "Crosses". They line up in corners of the room facing the chairs. When the leader calls "noughts", the first nought runs to a chair and sits with arms circled above head. The runner must sit before Leader counts to five slowly. The leader calls, "crosses" and the first cross runs and sits with arms crossed on chest. Leader continues to call them alternately until one team wins (same rules as paper Noughts and Crosses). Start over, call losing team first. Keep score (optional).

There is a possible problem with this game - if the pupils know it well, they can ensure that their team never loses. So you could end up with lots of drawn games!

Mill and grab

Pupils mill around. The leader calls a number, say "five". Players run to make circles of five, holding hands up together. Those left over go to one spot, perhaps can form another group. Leader waits until all the groups are ready, then calls another number, "two", "fifteen" and so on. (If the leader wants

groups of a particular size for the next game, he stops with this number, tells groups to keep together and sit down). Emphasize that groups must be mixed, boys and girls, teachers and pupils, and so on.

Variation - play the game with eyes closed. Do it in silence. Do it in slow motion. Do it as noisily as possible. Do according to an adverb, for example childishly, and so on.

Tangle

Whole group links hands into a human chain. First person leads chain through itself, over and under arms, between legs, and so on. Extra care must be taken not to break the chain, to move slowly and to be gentle. Tangle ends when group is too tightly packed to move. One person then untangles the group, giving them directions without touching them.

Pass the object

Sit in a circle. Leader holds imaginary object (say, an egg beater) and mimes using it for its purpose. He then passes it on to the next person, who "uses" it. and then by making a rubbing motion with his hands, erases it and substitutes a new imaginary object, for example, an ice-cream cone. Continue around the circle.

Variation - leader "uses" object, second person uses that one plus another, adding all the way around the circle - this would make it a memory game.

Cat and mouse

A variation of a well-known game. Everyone has a partner, with whom to hold hands and move around the space - except two people who are on their own, one being the cat, one being the mouse. The cat chases the mouse, as usual. But if the mouse wishes to avoid getting caught, it can join up at one end of a pair and hold hands, which means that the person at the other end of that pair becomes the mouse and has to run away; there can only ever be two people holding hands together. You can decide that if the cat catches the mouse, they exchange rôles.

Good morning

Each actor has to say "Good morning" to all the other actors, at the same time shaking hands with them. But he or she must always have one hand shaking hands with someone - so only when both hands are occupied in handshaking can she disengage one to find someone else.

AEIOU

All the actors cluster in a group, and one person comes and stands in front of them. The group must make sounds, using the letters "A, E, I O, U", changing the volume according to how near to or how far away from them the single actor is. When the "volume-control" actor is far away, the group gets louder, and when he or she is close, they get quieter. The actor can move anywhere he or she likes around the room. The individual actors who make up the group should be trying to communicate a thought or emotion to the actor, not just making noise

Variations:

- In pairs, each actor directs a vocal sound at a partner actor who is half a metre away (use length of arm from elbow to fingers - the old cubit - as a rough measure). The second actor moves back one metre, then two, three, five, ten metres. The first actor tries to adjust his or her voice to the distance. This exercise can also be done with singing. Thus, in the same way as the eye "aims" naturally at the object it wants to see, the voice also "aims" naturally at the person it wishes to address.
- All the actors, standing facing the wall. Standing side by side, the actors "make holes" in the wall with their voices, all at the same time and in unison.

- Two groups of actors, facing each other - each group gives vent to a different sound, and tries to force the other group into submission.
- With their bodies in maximum possible contact with the floor, the actors exercise their voices.

Goalkeeper

A trust game. Six actors stand side by side, not too far apart, form the safety net. Another actor, a few steps in front of them, is the goalkeeper. Facing this group, say six metres away, are the other actors. One by one, the other actors look at the goalkeeper, close their eyes and start to run towards him, as fast as they dare. The goalkeeper must catch the runner around the waist. When an actor strays off course, one of the six members of the safety net can catch him.

The most important thing is to try not to slow down when approaching the goalkeeper - this is a test of trust. The idea is not to slow down or stop or end up far from the goalkeeper.

The Vampire of Strasbourg (variation of Pruey)

Pupils walk around the room with their eyes closed, their hands covering their elbows without touching each other or colliding. The teacher applies a little squeeze to the neck of one of the participants who then becomes the first Vampire of Strasbourg - his or her arms extend in front of him, he gives a scream of terror, and from this point on he must seek out a neck in order to vampirise someone else. The vampire's scream gives the others a clue as to his whereabouts so that they can try to escape from him. The first vampire finds another neck and gives it a little squeeze. The second victim screams, raises his or her arms and now there are two vampires, then three, four, and so on. Sometimes one vampire will vampirise another vampire; when this happens, the latter lets out a cry of pleasure, which indicates that he or she has been re-humanized, but also that there is still a vampire beside him. The participants must flee the most vampire-infested areas.

The cross and the circle

The participants are asked to describe circles with their right hands, large or small, as they please. It's easy, everybody does it. Stop. Ask them to do a cross with their left hand. Even easier. Everyone gets there. Stop. Ask them to do both at the same time...it's almost impossible. In a group of thirty people, sometimes one person manages it, almost never two.

Variation:

- Ask the participants to describe circles with their right feet. They do it for a minute. They forget about the foot, still continuing to make circles. Then ask them to write their first name in the air with their right hand at the same time...Again, this is almost impossible; the foot has a tendency to follow the hand and write the first name as well. To make the exercise easier, try doing the circle with the left foot and writing with the right hand. This is easier - sometimes people manage it.

The indefinite prop and the imaginary prop

Take a prop - for example a carpet-beater - and place it in the middle of the floor. You want the children to use this as any object other than a carpet-beater. Each in turn uses the indefinite prop in a specific way -- it could be a lollipop, a tennis racket, a frying pan, a mirror, a shovel, a sword and so on. The idea is firstly for them to use their imagination to think up more and more unlikely uses for the indefinite prop, and secondly for them to do a well-presented mime to illustrate what they have thought of. This can be done with any age-group.

The imaginary prop is similar to this except that you don't use a physical prop at all. The teacher can begin by eating an imaginary apple and then passing it to the person next to him or her. It now becomes a ball and is bounced on the floor before being passed along to the next person. Now it is a hamster, which is being stroked - the person after that sees it as a flower...As the imaginary prop is passed on, it is important to pay attention to the detail of the mime in order to make it real for everybody.

Lists

This can be competitive or otherwise. Each contestant has just one minute to name all the items he or she can think of from a given category, such as Fruit, Vegetables, Cities, Countries, Meals, Girls' Names, Boys' Names, Clothes, Parts of the Body, Cars. So, if the category were Meals, he or she would start off: "Sausages and Mash, Fish and Chips, Steak Pie, Baked Beans on Toast..." and continue until running out of ideas or the minute is up.

Word tennis

A development of lists is word tennis. Two people face each other and both have to name in turn items from the given category. They go on until one of them cannot think of a new word within three seconds; this person is out and someone else can then challenge the winner. A harder version of word tennis is to take words from a given category - Countries, for example - and specify that the last letter of one word must be the first letter of the next, e.g. "England", "Denmark", "Kenya", "Australia". This form of word tennis is not so fast moving, so you need a longer time limit.

Gibberish

The leader splits the group into pairs and suggests the point of a forthcoming conversation. It is then explained that no recognizable words will be spoken. The pair will talk as if in a foreign language, making up words and sounds. The point of the exercise is to develop in intensity of expression excluding real words. Instead of sounds, or new words, players can use numbers.

Ideas for conversation

- Lend me some money.
- Where were you last night?
- Go home, your house has been burgled.
- It was the funniest game I've seen.
- Did you see that TV programme last night?
- You've been brought here to talk and you'll tell us all we want to know.

Storytelling games

The admiral's cat (ABC)

Sit in a circle

Teacher begins story, "The admiral's cat is an **angry** cat."

Student to left of teacher continues using next letter of alphabet as initial letter of adjective and so on until someone reaches Z.

Variation: "I went shopping and I bought an **apple**."

As above until Z but students must repeat the previous items before adding one that starts with their own letter.

Fortunately/unfortunately

Sit in a circle.

Teacher begins story.

Each member of the circle must add one line to the story but it must begin alternately "Fortunately" or "Unfortunately".

Students can add any new event but must not repeat or contradict established storyline.

Prop stories

Put class into groups of four or five.

Place up to three props in their circle, for example: hat, soft toy, pen.

Give group three minutes to devise a story, using the props, in which everyone must utter at least one line.

It must be a story (not an improvisation).

Share with the class

The above may be used as preparation for freeze-frames, tableaux or improvisation.

Drama techniques - A to Z

Alter ego

The actor remains silent whilst one or more people speak her/his thoughts

Character profile

A written description of a character's details (such as age, interests, likes/dislikes) which helps an actor to play that rôle.

Dramatic moment

A crucial point in the drama where the tension has built towards a climax which leads to a choice or the possibility of change.

Evaluation

Making judgements and assessing dramatic activities. At this stage the formulation and understanding of ideas is more important than the "quality" of the dramatic performance. This can be achieved through discussions, through individual or group writing in the form of diary extracts, reports, letters, by drawing, or by characters thinking aloud.

Forum theatre

Students perform an improvisation which is stopped and the audience intervenes to change the direction/emphasis of the drama. This may then involve members of the audience taking an active rôle in the continuation of the improvisation.

Freeze frame

Stopping the action in order to get a still visual image.

Hot-seating

A person in rôle sits away from the rest of the group and answers questions in rôle.

Improvisation

Taking on an unscripted rôle and acting as if you are in a make-believe situation.

Mime

Portraying a character, or telling a story by body movement (usually without words).

Reflection

Assessing and thinking about dramatic activities. This is essential if the students are going to get the maximum benefit from these sessions.

Rôle play

Taking on the "persona" (imagined personality) of another character.

Rôle on the wall

A technique used to build up a character profile for a chosen person from a group. "Brainstorm", recording all the ideas on flipchart paper.

Rolling drama

A method of presenting work in which groups perform quickly in sequence, to show detailed scenes within a larger frame.

Scenario

The details of a dramatic situation, setting the scene.

Shared brain

Similar to Hot-seating, but using two or more actors to answer the questions.

Sociogram

The actors place themselves physically as near or as far from a given character in the drama as they feel emotionally.

Stimulus

An event, piece of art or activity that leads to drama. It can be in the form of a poem, story, an artefact, a letter, a diary extract, a picture, a newspaper report and so on.

Teacher in rôle

The teacher takes on a rôle within the drama and leads the session as if she or he were that person.

Thought tracking

Tapping the students on the shoulder in order to prompt them into vocalizing their thoughts whilst remaining in character.

Thought tunnel

A way of helping students experience emotions. Position the students in two lines down the centre of the room to form a tunnel. A volunteer walks down the tunnel in rôle while people from either side speak "thoughts" to him or her. The aim is to force the student walking down the centre to experience a variety of opinions or emotions. The student is then asked to communicate how the different emotions made him or her feel.