USING DRAMA

AS A

TEACHING TOOL

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2008
Drama

- To Do - To Act

- Origins:
  1. Religious Dances
  2. Ritual & Mythology
  3. Tribal Customs

  - African, Aboriginal, Pacific Islands

- The Greeks:
  - Would further define drama

  1. Designated theatre houses or *Theatrons*
  2. Incorporate costumes, masks, make-up
  3. Lights
  4. Properties
  5. Scenery
  6. Music/Sound

  - *Aristotle* would define the elements of drama
    (plot, action, time, location, etc.)

  - Ultimately drama must: inspire the audience
to live better lives.
• Using drama in the classroom (inclusive of the ideas set forth in the Leadership Conference):

1. Drama is exploring the human experience of many cultures and points of view.

2. It is collaborative: engage in purposeful conversation, depend on each other’s thinking to enrich and construct meaning.

3. It is visual, aural, tactile, and kinesthetic.

4. Clear communication is without doubt a key element: actor to actor – audience.

5. It is spontaneous inside a structure, which requires critical thinking and making choices.

6. Integrity: dependability, discipline, time management, safety, exposure element. Learning to evolve – mistakes are part of the process.
• **Outcome Assessments through the Arts:**

  - *Experiential:* What they say/do > use of video, audio-tapes.

  - *Practical:* Writing assignments/Research papers

    1. Directorial/Character/Playwright analysis

    2. Historical

    3. Social & Psychological

    4. Anthropological

    5. Philosophical

  - Exams: Pre-tests & Post-tests
Using Drama as Teaching Tools – Exercises

♦ Describe an Object

Describe an object – this can be as easily recognizable as a spoon, a cup, a candle, a necktie. Or it can be specific to something within your specific field: a femur, a cell, a numerical digit. The speaker must describe the item without naming the object directly. Be specific, don’t use meaningless words such as ‘it’s thingy ma-bob’, ‘sorta like’, ‘you know.’ The exercise is to focus on an accurate description with words that will clearly communicate. Things to observe will be if the audience is able to follow, does their attention stray, use of vocabulary and ability to articulate the thought.

♦ Monologues/Narratives

A Narrative or Monologue is a one-person oral revelation. The narrative can be written based on any topic. Some topics to think about are “what if” stories of biographical characters of history. If Harriet Tubman were alive today, what might she say about...” Again, this is field specific. The monologues can be developed from writing assignments or through spontaneous streams of thought to create a monologue. Encourage students to use their bodies through body language, and to use interesting speech patterns that may mimic the true language patterns of their subject.

- Alternative: same exercise using inanimate objects or animals.
- Alternative: repeat the story, add a conflict or obstacle that they must either address and (may possibly) overcome.

♦ Monologue Version #2 – “Point of View”

From an established situation students must write a poem that is based on the point of view of another. This exercise is most interesting when the point of view is in direct conflict with their personal point of view.

- Sources of trigger can be others’ poetry, paintings, photographs, speeches, philosophies, news statements, etc.
♦ Task Relay

1. Divide the class into groups of six (more or less).
2. Place the groups in lines.
3. If there are six in each group then you will need to devise five tasks which each must perform with the other members of their group in turn.
4. The student at the front of the line must move back down the line and perform a set task with each respective member.
5. First team to complete all members of the line through every task is the winner.

Example:

Student 1 moves to the next student (Student 2) in the line where they must perform a task. Once completed, Student 1 moves to Student 3 and must perform a new task together, etc. until down the line and then assumes position at the end of the line. Student 2 then proceeds.

The tasks assigned can be field specific.

♦ Humanimals

Students will create a human character with animal characteristics. Engage the student to think of the physical behavior and characteristics of the animal/insect, etc. and allow the behavior to evolve into a person.

- Alternative: This could also be done as an Inanimate Object. Place students in a pairs and have them create a scene that will highlight a conversation between the two objects/animals.

♦ Nursery Narratives

1. Divide the class into groups of at least 3 no more than 5.
2. Assign each group a nursery rhyme/myth/foolkale.
3. Each will present a dramatized version of their tale. It is ok if additional text must be added.
4. Have them become familiar with the narrative they have created.
5. Add a new element: include in the scene the previous events that led to the situation in the nursery rhyme. Or include what happens after the nursery rhyme ends.

♦ Slide Show

1. Divide the students into groups of four
2. One member of the group will be the “Lecturer”
3. The other members of the group will represent the images in the slide show.
4. The lecturer will be given an area of expertise.
5. Once established, the Lecturer will introduce himself/herself and narrate and describe the slides as the rest of the group members position themselves as the images.

♦ No Yes, No No

One student stands at the head of the performance space facing the rest of the students. All other students may ask as many questions as they like to the designated student who must answer questions without saying “yes” or “no” - or to nod or shake the head for a response. The student must be specific with the word choice and clear with the thoughts. If the student breaks the rule, another student must take his place.

- Topics should be field specific
Resources

Arts Integration – Websites

www.pbs.org/wnet/dancin/resources/links.html
www.nasaa-arts.org/publications/critical-evidence.html
www.aep-arts.org
www.charlierose.com
www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/fractals/
www.indiana.edu/~intell/gardner.shmtl (Howard Gardner)

Museums – Permanent Collections and Visiting Exhibits

*Jacob Lawrence and the Migration Series* – The Phillips Collection Education Department

PBS

• Bill Moyers
• American Experience
• Frontline
• Independent Lens
• NOVA
• PBS Teachers

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts – *Artists as Educators*

Books


*The Drama Recipe Book.* Education Resources Group, Inc.


