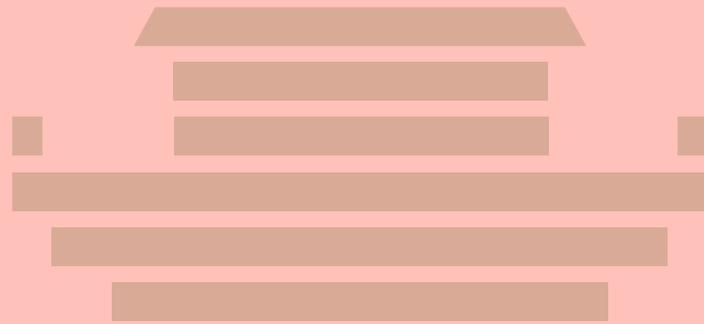


Drama Ark



Australian Drama Education Magazine (13)



A PUBLICATION OF
DRAMA AUSTRALIA

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Introduction

The *Drama Ark* project brought together drama educators, two by two, from around Australia, each of whom bravely agreed to share their practice with other teachers throughout the country. Inspired by the need to provide resources to assist in the interpretation and implementation of the Australian Curriculum in The Arts, these voyagers set out on a journey of discovery that culminated in this publication. In doing this work, our author/teachers build on the rich tradition of those willing to share their everyday practice with others. There was no single map for this journey, though each voyager shared a common starting point; in this case the award-winning picture book, “Mirror” by author/illustrator Jeannie Baker. This pretext offered rich and diverse possibilities, and in the material that follows you will find rich and diverse curriculum plans for a range of schooling contexts.

In 1998, I greeted the publication of “Phoenix texts”, edited by Tiina Moore, with delight because I was excited by the notion that a single text could offer such a range of exciting, aesthetically rich, and complex learning opportunities. When I heard of the proposal to develop another publication in this line, I was similarly excited. We are extraordinarily lucky

to belong to a community of scholarly practitioners who share their practice so generously.

Thanks to Claire Austin, Jo Raphael, and Meg Upton who all steered this ark safely into harbour. Thanks too, to the teachers who have contributed their plans to this publication. You will see that we have not modified the plans to conform to a single framework or model of practice. Instead we have retained the original plans as written. You may find models that are similar to your own ... and some will be very different. So pack your case of stories, ideas, and strategies, get out your safety vests, and set sail on the Drama Ark. We are happy to share the journey with you.

So, cast off

MADONNA
STINSON

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Foreword

Drama Australia's new primary project, *Drama Ark* shares the experiences of teachers from across Australia as they used Jeannie Baker's *Mirror* to plan and implement a series of drama lessons. In the tradition of Alice's 'looking glass' and a certain wardrobe into Narnia, readers can access two parallel worlds through this award winning Australian wordless picture book; one in Sydney, Australia and another in Morocco. These are worlds that are both the same and different. *Mirror* is a rich resource for both generalist teachers and specialists in the arts and the teachers in this collection show some of the ways that this text can meet multiple ACARA outcomes across all domains. The unit plans in this publication, are all designed for Years 3 and 4 and the project follows in the footsteps of the first Drama Australia project (then NADIE) designed to share good drama practice for primary teachers that evolved in the nineties. This was a time when Australian drama practitioners were first introduced to the related concepts of pre-text and story drama.

The notion of pre-text was described by Cecily O'Neill in her pivotal text, *Drama Worlds* (1995). The image of an entry or a 'launch' into a drama world is useful for teachers in that a good pre-text enables the right balance of 'knowns' and 'unknowns' to help students invest in their learning. O'Neill does not define pre-text but offers many metaphors and characteristics in *Drama Worlds*. Pre-texts frame, activate, launch, hint, offer and/or set in motion action in a dramatic present (O'Neill cited in Moore, 1998). In *Story*

Drama, David Booth describes the way he chooses stories to explore, confront and transform texts through drama for meaning. 'Groups can test and clarify the implication of the text collectively, so that each person can see the difference in the various perceptions and interpretations, and can then make decisions about his or her own responses (1994, p. 40).' In O'Neill's terms, *Mirror* thus becomes '... a structuring framework without becoming a narrative straightjacket' (p. 42). In its predecessor, the pre-text *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* (van Allsburg, 1984) operated as a preliminary frame for teachers across Australia. Powerful texts like these allow for deep explorations and rich dramatic encounters and as such are 'phoenix texts' (O'Neill, 1995, p.36) that allow for playful reworking of the original resources; that is, new art works are created from the ashes of the originals. The teachers in this collection of unit plans have understood the ways that their Year 3 and 4 students come to understand the stories of two cultures as well as the drama and arts elements used to create their own scenes, collages, storyboards and diaries.

In *Mirror* we have two young boys, two families and two cultural contexts. Jeannie Baker leaves room for students to manoeuvre in the gaps and spaces of the narratives to predict, speculate and hypothesise about content that may not be initially explicit. The teachers in this volume offer ways to explore a wide variety of drama forms and conventions while at the same time fleshing out student understandings of family, identity and culture. The strategies and approaches

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evident in this 'ark' provide story entry points for novice and seasoned drama practitioners alike. The teachers of *Mirror* formed (two by two) partnerships in schools such that drama practitioners could model practice to meet curriculum outcomes that not only included arts making and responding, but also literacy outcomes (oral and written language), personal and social development and interdisciplinary aims such as creativity, ICT, communication and critical thinking. The unit plans vary from three lessons through to a ten-week term's integrated planning design. Lessons are usually self-contained and offer a variety of approaches and starting points. Drama teachers will recognise activities such as freeze-frames (postcards), mime, mirroring, hot seating interviews and role-on-the-wall which are designed to generate ideas, deepen character and enhance belief in the roles of the Australian and the Moroccan characters. Generalist teachers will recognise the use of storyboards, collages, and thinking tools such as I think, I hear, I wonder to scaffold discussion and writing tasks. In the New South Wales offering, the entry into an alternate world begins with a writing task that starts with the statement: I stepped through the mirror.... Whether written or role-played, the strategies frame and invite the student into an imaginative world. Several teachers include adventures on the magic (Moroccan) carpet to heighten awareness of the senses, to create visual diaries with iconic landmarks, to highlight topography between Australia and Morocco, and to record travel journals. I was reminded of Kieran Egan's imaginative tools for cognitive development whereby he encouraged teachers to humanise knowledge and to create awe and wonder of the world. These conventions introduce students to non-naturalism by playing with time, space and objects in a story frame. Dorothy Heathcote would no doubt have pointed out that the symbols of the mirror and the carpet make explicit what children

don't know that they already know. The Tasmanian teachers' submission includes a particularly powerful script for a voice over for the magic carpet ride. The vibrant images remind us of the importance of teacher language to create the mood and imply dramatic possibilities. I commend the five simple points of the Tasmanian reflections which I have reduced as a reminder for my own future practice. The reflections remind us to consider: simplicity in the use of drama elements and techniques, maintaining a safe environment, leaving time for talk, creating sound and word images and sharing work in progress to inspire and raise quality of all student work.

The two projects *Phoenix Texts: A Window on Drama Practice in Australian Primary Schools* (Moore, ed., 1998) and *Drama Ark: The Drama Australia Primary Project* (Austin, ed., 2014), give life to the ways that drama experiences enhance cross-curricular and arts-based learning. We see the variety of tried and tested approaches. Congratulations to Drama Australia for supporting these primary projects that feature drama as sense-making tools for active and engaged learning. I have enjoyed the windows and reflections of the representations of drama practices across Australia. May the tradition continue.

The Drama Australia Primary Project

This publication has been produced for a range of drama teachers from primary generalist classroom practitioners new to drama through to experienced drama educators. The hope is to provide readers with a diverse range of approaches to drama using a shared pre-text. Included are resources that can be followed as is or used as inspiration for creating their own drama lessons. It is anticipated that readers will adapt the lessons to suit their teaching styles and school environment. As a working document, the lessons outlined within the project may constantly evolve. They may be used as a template to develop further lessons using different pretexts, different contexts and with different year levels. Written reflections on the practice may serve as prompts, ideas and provocations for the reader's own practice.

BACKGROUND

This Drama Australia national curriculum project was designed to showcase different approaches which could be taken from different perspectives to create drama lessons. They are based on the current Australian Curriculum (as at 2014) with The Arts (Drama) as the key pedagogical tool but containing embedded links to other key learning

areas. I was selected as the special project officer to oversee this project due to my extensive experience with teaching drama in primary school settings and my position as primary project officer with Drama Queensland. The *Drama Ark* project was formulated to generate a professional learning and planning framework and implementation network for the integration and sustainability of Drama practices in primary classrooms. My role as the project officer was to co-ordinate with other experienced primary drama educators throughout Australia to devise a publication which would highlight the findings generated by this project.

CLAIRE AUSTIN

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

Drama Ark: two-by-two – together we're better

The motivation behind the project was the joint development of a body of work facilitated by experienced primary drama educators who were willing to share their knowledge and expertise of primary drama with teachers throughout Australia in a collaborative process two by two. The concept of working two by two was a key component in the project as each state representative was united

within a common task. We also hoped that the process would bring teachers from different schools in different sections of Australia together with a common vision and purpose. We aimed to develop a professional learning experience that could be used across all states and territories – a national project for a national curriculum.

The lessons were designed to:

- scaffold drama teaching approaches for inexperienced teachers of drama
- provide opportunities for experienced/ specialist drama teachers to share their professional knowledge
- generate resources and share best-practice in drama
- generate dialogue and ideas amongst drama educators
- prepare a teaching resource which could be shared with others through publication
- be trialed at least once in classrooms with primary school students
- focus on the current Australian Curriculum for Drama (as at 2014).

It was anticipated that the combined knowledge and experience of a number of primary drama educators from around Australia, who are often working in isolation without support, would result in the sharing of a valuable resource as well as the chance to engage in networking prospects for those educators involved in the project.

THE PROJECT OUTLINE

The brief was to devise a drama workshop or series of workshops for primary classroom teachers or drama specialists based on a common pre-text that had rich potential to appeal to a wide diversity of primary teachers, and align authentically with ACARA curriculum requirements and general capabilities of English and The Arts. It was deemed important that the dramatic workshops created within

this project consider learning in drama alongside other cross-curriculum learning areas to help maximise opportunities for drama to occur within the primary curriculum.

The celebrated Australian wordless picture book, *Mirror*, by Jeannie Baker was proposed as the initial common pre-text for this project. It is the winner of many national book awards, but also had potential for an integrated primary unit that could generate both drama and literacy learning opportunities for students, as well as address other curriculum areas. *Mirror* evokes simultaneous storytelling, as two culturally diverse tales are shown in parallel collaged images. As an Australian text, one that structurally mirrored the project, (two stories, told side by side) it made an excellent shared resource appealing to both young Australian students and their teachers.

Two drama educators were then selected by the drama organisations in each participating state to work with classroom teachers to lead workshops based on their created work with students in the classroom. By observing best practice of the implementation of the lessons and collaborating on the process with the visiting practitioners, it was expected that the resident classroom teachers would feel more confident to then teach drama lessons with their students and pass on their knowledge to fellow teachers. The hope was that this collegial approach would encourage teachers to continue to use the strategies experienced after the workshops were completed.

Queensland Contribution



Mirror: Cultural Diversity Through The Looking Glass

CLAIRE AUSTIN

SETTING THE SCENE: INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Drama Queensland was keen to produce a unit of work which could be taught by drama specialists or generalist primary classroom teachers. Sample lessons from the unit would be trialed with different classes to ascertain whether generalist classroom teachers would feel they had the skills and experience to continue teaching drama after the trial was completed and whether there was noticeable increase in drama skills experienced by the students as a result of the trial.

The activities within our Queensland trial unit of work were collaboratively brainstormed by Drama Queensland members with experience in teaching drama within primary schools. The activities selected have all been tried and tested by at least one of the Drama Queensland members with Queensland students. These activities are not all endorsed or used by me personally and may not suit the individual teaching styles of some readers. The original sources for these activities were not provided. Most

have been taken from familiar sources regularly used by drama educators such as Boal (2002), Neelands and Goode (2006) and Heathcote and Bolton (1995). This collection of conventions and activities was then collated and prepared into a unit of work by me, Claire Austin. The unit was designed to be used with Year Three or Four students within a primary school classroom setting but with flexibility to be adapted for lower or higher year levels depending on the experience of the students.

It was felt that the emphasis during the lessons should be on developing drama skills based on the new Arts Curriculum but also incorporating cross-curriculum priorities of English and the other Arts strands.

Sample activities from the unit were then work-shopped at Drama NSW and Drama Qld conferences to gain feedback on the relevance and suitability of the activities for teachers of drama outside of the network who designed them. The unit of work included here is based on the new Australian curriculum (Drama) as the key

pedagogical tool but containing embedded links to other key learning areas as an exemplar way to integrate drama within the existing curriculum.

The unit is based on the pretext, *Mirror*, by Jeannie Baker, which was chosen by Drama Australia as a common text with multi-layers of complexity as, being an award-winning picture book; it was easily assessable throughout Australia for use by the participants in each state. In Queensland we wanted to focus on comparing and contrasting families from different cultures and countries with clear links to English Literacy.

Our belief, based on empirical evidence gathered over decades of combined experience with teaching drama to primary school students, was that introducing students to an arts program could potentially increase academic achievement. (Bamford, 2006; Catterall, Chapleau and Iwanaga, 1999). We chose to focus on combining our lessons with literacy as improvement in literacy levels could be evidenced after only a short amount of exposure to literacy-based drama lessons (Bamford, 2006; Hunter, 2005). We also designed tasks within our lessons which would focus on increasing oral literacy skills through students' verbal responses to their drama experiences as reports had shown a causal link between classroom drama and increased verbal skills (Hetland & Winner, 2001).

In Queensland a series of lessons taken from the unit of work were trialed with students in two different Queensland schools. The first at Runcorn Heights State School was taught by myself, Claire Austin, as an experienced drama educator with assistance from the generalist primary classroom teacher, Sharyn Craig and the Teacher-Librarian, Kaye Rosnick. The Year Three cohort selected for the trial was a typical class of 24 mixed students of culturally diverse

backgrounds in a relatively middle class socio-economic suburban area of Brisbane. These students had no prior experience with drama in the classroom and very little outside experience of drama. The classroom teacher also had very little prior drama experience but was keen to learn. The Teacher-Librarian had sometimes incorporated drama activities within her library lessons.

THE WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

The activities were based on the participating students working towards achieving the following standard.

Year 3-4 achievement standard:

By the end of Year 4, students describe and discuss similarities and differences between drama they make, perform and view. They discuss how they and others organize the elements of drama in their drama.

Students use relationships, tension, time and place and narrative structure when improvising and performing devised and scripted drama. They collaborate to plan, make and perform drama that communicates ideas.

Content descriptions covered in this unit:

- 4.1 Investigate ideas and narrative structures through roles and situations and use empathy in their own improvisations and devised drama
- 4.2. Use voice, body, movement and language to sustain role and relationships and create dramatic action with a sense of time and place
- 4.3 Shape and perform dramatic action using narrative structures and

tension in devised and scripted drama, including exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander drama.

- 4.4 Observe and identify intended purposes and meaning of drama, starting with drama in Australia including drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, using the elements of drama to make comparisons.

through the drama unit. Examine patterns and symbolism in carpet designs and formulate ideas to design own “magic carpet”.

The Arts (Media Arts) Design a storyboard on the computer to accompany collage images for own narrative story and type new narrative onto computer for printing own book. Taking photos to use as stimulus. Using video footage of created scenes, adding music and backgrounds created in Visual Art.

LINKS TO OTHER LEARNING AREAS:

English (Language): Examining the text structure (wordless picture book with some contrasting Arabic and English explanations) and organisation of the layout (2 books with opening left to right for English story and opening right to left for Arabic story).

English (Literature): Discussing the contrast in characters, events and settings between each story. Discussing the use of visual images to tell the story rather than conventional text and the effect of this language device to enhance meaning. Drawing connections between personal experiences and the experiences of the two families in the story.

English (Literacy): Using visual clues and reading comprehension strategies to predict and confirm similarities and differences between the characters, events and settings of each story. Using the structure of the narrative to retell, in role, each of the stories in the book.

The Arts: (Visual Arts) Investigate and experiment with the collage technique used to create the images in *Mirror* and use the knowledge to develop own collage “backdrop” scenes based on the new characters, events and settings devised

General capabilities covered in this unit:

Literacy; Information and communication technology; Critical and creative thinking; Ethical Behaviour; Personal and social capability; Intercultural Understanding.

THE TEACHING AND LEARNING SEQUENCE:

Session 1: Postcards from Morocco

Introduction:

Teacher shows each story in parallel for students to examine and discuss. Teacher directed questioning to develop familiarity and knowledge about characters, relationships and situations within the two stories.

Activity One (Making):

Postcards From ... Freeze Frame activity: Teacher divides class in half.

The first half of the class recreates the Souk market scene by each entering the performance space and assuming a posture for their character. They may perform a ritual repeating of a movement made by their character. When all students are in position they freeze in their completed Tableau.

The other half of the class are the audience. Tap n Talk: Teacher directs each of the audience members to tap on of the performers on the shoulder and ask them questions such as, Who are you? What are you doing here? Who are you with? Where are you? Etc. The performers respond in role. The performing students then become the audience and the other half of the class then enter the performance space and assume a posture for their character from the Hardware Store scene. When the tableau is complete the teacher directs questioning again.

Activity Two (Making):

Postcards From Australia Freeze Frame activity: Teacher forms 6 groups of students. Each group to plan and prepare their own group Postcards From Freeze Frame. They choose an authentic setting where many characters would be congregating, e.g. Southbank, a school dance, a zoo, the beach. Each group presents their Freeze Frame. The rest of the class are the audience. Tap n Talk: Teacher directs each of the audience members to tap on of the performers on the shoulder and ask them questions such as, Who are you? What are you doing here? Who are you with? Where are you? Etc. The performers must respond in role.

(Responding):

The teacher directs questioning of audience about how the elements of situation, time and space were used and whether students could identify group and individual characterisations.

Session 2: Two little boys

Introduction:

Teacher directed questioning about what objects or people the two boys are interacting with, e.g. Sydney boy – bed, parents, food, dinosaur toys, car, hardware, flower, drink, baby, story, computer, drawing; Moroccan boy – computer, cow, sheep, grandparents,

parents, carpet, food, donkey, chickens, sheep, dirt.

Activity One (Making):

Mime: Students form a drama circle. Teacher directs each student to imagine they are one of the boys interacting with one of the listed objects or people. They have to portray that interaction in a mime activity.

(Responding):

The rest of the class observe each mime as audience and are directed by teacher to try to guess from the facial expression, body language, movements, gestures and posture which boy they are portraying and what object or person they are interacting with.

Activity Two (Making):

Role-on-the-Wall activity: Teacher forms 4 groups of students. Two groups are allocated the Sydney boy and two groups are allocated the Moroccan boy to discuss and detail on their chart what they think would be important to that boy. Groups may consult generated list from first activity and re-examine the book. Each group then shares their findings, discusses and compares similarities and difference between each character and compare to themselves and what is important to them.

(Responding):

At end of the sharing time, the teacher questions students about the characters. What information about the roles, characters and relationships have they been able to build up to strengthen their ability to portray these characters in role play situations?

Session 3: Everyday Life

Introduction:

Teacher directed questioning about the two boys, e.g. What can be inferred or implied from the pictures about the personality, age, family life, likes, relationships, status, dreams and

aspirations of each of the boys.

Activity One (Making):

Role-on-the-Wall activity: In same groups as previous lesson, students discuss and add further details to their chart about the character and personality of their boy. They co-operatively decide on a name for their boy (teacher may use internet sources for authentic names).

Activity Two (Making):

Hotseat activity: Students form an audience in the audience space. Six to seven chairs are placed in a horizontal line across the performance space. One group sit in the hot seats in the performance space. Teacher directs those students to go into role as the character of the boy they have been writing about. The audience is directed to ask each of them questions about their character. They are to respond in role. The activity is repeated with each of the other groups in turn.

(Responding):

The teacher directs questioning of audience about how the elements of role and character were portrayed, e.g. Did they seem believable as that character? Did they stay in role? What responses did they give that allowed us to know this?

Activity Three: (Making):

Mime “Rituals of everyday life”: Teacher forms 5 groups of students. Each is to choose one event from the pictures in the Moroccan story; pages 14-15. Each group is to recreate one interaction that is happening on that page in a repeated mime ritual, e.g. feeding the hens, flattening the bread, stirring the pot. They plan, practice then present their ritual mime to the rest of the class as the audience.

(Responding):

At end of the sharing time, the teacher questions students about the characters. What information about the roles, characters and relationships have they

been able to build up to strengthen their ability to portray these characters in role play situations? Are there rituals in their own lives that are often repeated such as laying the table for dinner, feeding the dog?

Session 4: Sights and Sounds

Introduction:

Teacher directs questioning. What sounds would you hear in a Moroccan marketplace or Souk? (Students may need to hear examples sourced by the teacher). Re-examine page 8 Moroccan story;, e.g. donkeys braying, hens clucking, Moroccan music played on instruments, loudspeakers playing the Azan, people shouting, talking, lambs bleating etc. What sounds would you hear in a hardware store? Re-examine page 8 Sydney story, e.g. bells dinging, registers ringing, sliding doors opening and closing, trolley wheels squeaking, announcements over loudspeakers for price checks, music, people talking etc.

Activity One (Making):

Soundscape activity: In drama circle, whole class practice making each sound then teacher allocates sounds to each student. Some students may be chosen to play the Moroccan music, popular shop music and Azan call on a different laptop each. In rounds, half the class makes Moroccan sounds then other half make the hardware sounds.

(Responding):

Discuss the effect created, e.g. how does a soundscape change mood and atmosphere? What senses does it evoke for the listener?

Activity Two (Making):

Melting Freeze Frame: Teacher allocates students to form 6 groups (1A – Sydney page 10-11, 1B – Morocco page 10-11, 2A – Sydney page 14-15, 2B- Morocco page 14-15, 3A- Sydney page 16-17, 3B – Morocco page 16-17). Each group is given a double page from the book to

re-create in a freeze frame. They plan, practice and present. If room, groups 1A and 1 B present their freeze frames in the performance space together. 1A set up and show their scene while 1B crouch down in a roll beside them then 1A crouch down while 1B set up and show their scene. This is followed by responding task and then 2A and 2B then 3A and 3B.

(Responding):

The teacher directs questioning of audience to compare the similarities and differences between each scene.

Activity Three (Making):

Re-enacted Role Play: Students form same 6 groups as previous activity. Each group is given 6 pages of the book. They have to create characters, assign roles, plan, practice and present a dramatic scene which re-enacts their part of the story to the rest of the class as the audience. They must choose believable roles and relationships by focusing on realistic dialogue and show status and power in relationships. Each group is to incorporate background sounds into their scene where appropriate.

(Responding):

At end of each scene, the audience responds to teacher questioning about the characters. Did they stay in role? Who seemed believable and why? Was the relationship and status clear for each character? Did the use of sound change the mood, atmosphere? What sense did it evoke?

Session 5: The Journey of the carpet

Activity One (Making):

Moving Parts Activity: Teacher directs students to lie on the carpet with room to move so that they won't be touching the student next to them. They are to close their eyes and imagine they are a rug lying flat on the floor. When they hear the

instructions to roll up they curl up into a ball. When they hear the instructions to lie flat they flatten out. This can be repeated a few times. They then are formed into groups of four. Each group has to use their bodies to create a weaving loom / machine with moving parts and sounds.

Activity Two (Making):

Journey of the carpet activity: Re-examine the two stories looking for the journey of the carpet from Moroccan first page to Sydney last page. Students to create a storyboard (using a green screen) of the journey of the carpet (using MovieMaker or Sony Vegas or a similar video editing program). They should have 6 frames: (1. mother weaving the carpet, 2. journey on the donkey, 3. sold at the markets to the carpet man, 4. suggestions given by students here 5. bought at the Magic Carpet Shop in Sydney, 6. in Sydney boy's home.). Students discuss what happens in frame 4, e.g. The carpet is probably loaded onto a container ship. Once the frames are complete, teacher forms 6 groups of students. Each group has one storyboard frame to re-enact with non-realistic movements (repeated exaggerated movements). The groups plan, practice and present their scenes in chronological order.

(Responding):

At end of each scene, the audience responds to teacher questioning about the characters. Did they use gestures, sounds, facial expressions, movements effectively to show intent of the scene? Did they repeat the important elements?

Activity Three (Making):

Role Play: Teacher shows the students the carpet with an accompanying note, e.g. "I am a magic carpet. I have been stolen from my rightful owner and must be returned before something terrible happens". Students discuss the tension. Students are formed into 5 groups. Each group is given a planning sheet to use. They create a dramatic scene incorporating the carpet,

the note and the element of tension. They create characters, assign roles, plan, practice and present their dramatic scene to the rest of the class as the audience. They must choose believable roles and relationships by focusing on realistic dialogue and show status and power in relationships.

(Responding):

At end of each scene, the audience responds to teacher questioning? Did the scene seem well planned? Were the characters and situations believable? Did they incorporate the carpet and the note in believable ways? Did they introduce and resolve dramatic tension within their scene? How?

Session 6: Anything but....

Introduction:

Discuss all the objects that appear in the 2 stories. Teacher directed questioning to engage higher order thinking, e.g. What are they? Who uses them? What are they used for? Is it an important object for emotional or necessary reasons?

Activity One (Making):

I see/ I think activity: Teacher or a student to manually project each photo (one object significant to each student which they have taken a photo of and uploaded to a shared drive for the teacher to show to the class) for the class to view. As each photo is projected the audience is to respond with what they see and why they think it might be so important or significant to the owner. Their answers may be given orally or written or typed on individual laptops/ tablets. The owner of the object then claims the object and gives their reasons for choosing this object.

Activity Two (Making):

Anything butgame: Teacher shows the students all the stimulus collage materials. Teacher demonstrates how to play the Anything but... game, i.e. the teacher

selects a rock. "I am, like, so enjoying being at the Sydney Show with my bestie and eating this strawberry sundae" (Teacher pretends to use a spoon and scoop out ice-cream from the rock and into mouth) "Yum. Delicious". Students each choose one or more of the objects. They create an improvised scene either as an individual or in pairs if this is more comfortable for them. The objects are symbols of something else and are not to be used as what they actually are, i.e. a rock is not a rock.

(Responding):

At end of all the improvisations, the audience responds to teacher questioning? Who created believable characters and situations? What element of drama did they use? Did they use dialogue, movements, gestures, postures, status, voice and facial expressions? Did they incorporate the objects in believable ways?

Session 7: Do you remember when....

Introduction:

Discuss different forms of transport used to undertake journeys in other countries or within Australia, e.g. (car, bike, truck, motorbike, horse, camel, donkey, train, tram, plane, walking, bus, horse and cart, horse and carriage, goat and cart etc) Direct focus to Australia and Asian countries if possible.

Activity One (Making):

Improvised Mime: In Drama Circle, groups demonstrate using one form of travel.

(Responding):

At end of all the improvisations, the audience responds to teacher questioning? Who created believable situations? What element of drama did they use? Did they use dialogue, movements, gestures, postures, voice and facial expressions? Was it clear what form of travel was being used and which setting?

Activity Two (Making):

Do you remember when we went on a journey to The Souk activity: Teacher forms students into 5 groups. Each group to plan, prepare and present a dramatic scene where they are Moroccan children travelling to a Souk for a particular reason, i.e. to buy an item or to visit a particular person. They must incorporate into their scene the length of the journey, the mode of transport used, who they are travelling with and their relationship with them and the purchase or visit at the end of the journey.

(Responding):

At end of each presentation the audience responds to teacher questioning? Who created believable characters and situations? What elements of drama did they use? Did they convey all the information about how they travelled, relationships, what they bought, who and what they saw along the way?

Activity Three (Making):

Do you remember when we went on a journey to ... activity: In same 5 groups, students plan, prepare and present a dramatic scene where they are travelling to another part of Australia or an Asian country. They must travel for a particular reason, i.e. to buy an item or to visit a particular person. They must incorporate into their scene the length of the journey, the mode of transport used, who they are travelling with and their relationship with them and the purchase or visit at the end of the journey.

(Responding):

At end of each presentation the audience responds to teacher questioning (as above).

Session 8: The Journey to**Introduction:**

View amalgamation of backdrop scenes created in Media Arts lesson. Discuss how the dramatic action can be rehearsed

and refined to accompany the backdrops. Discuss timing of scenes in rehearsal process.

(Making):

Rehearsed Role Play: In their groups students rehearse and refine their dramatic scenes as created in Session 7. They then present to the audience using a green scene as the background.

(Responding):

At end of each presentation the audience responds to teacher questioning? Were the groups able to refine and improve the scenes after receiving constructive criticism from previous lesson? Will these dramatic action scenes match the created backdrops? Teacher or a student then records each scene using flip camera or video camera. This video footage is then added in Media Arts lesson to the video editing program to make a finished movie of the created drama. Audience then views each completed movie and responds to teacher questioning? Were the groups able to refine and improve the scenes after receiving constructive criticism from previous lesson? Will these dramatic action scenes match the created backdrops?

Session 9: Magic Carpet Ride**Introduction:**

Students should be familiar with some of the children's versions of the Arabian collection of stories known as One thousand and One Nights or Arabian Nights which includes stories about Aladdin and the magic lamp, Ali Baba and the 40 thieves or any story which references a flying or magic carpet. They may also be shown a DVD versions of one of these stories or other stories involving magic flying machines such as Bedknobs and Broomsticks, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and Mary Poppins.

Activity One (Making):

Mirror Game: Students form 2 straight

lines facing each other. Line A are the subjects and line B are the mirror images. B must copy each movement that A does as exactly as possible with expression and no talking. This is then reversed with A copying B's movements. Movements should be slow and exaggerated so that it is not too difficult. After 5 minutes students may swap partners and repeat the activity.

Activity Two (Making):

Magic Carpet Ride: Students view the “magic carpets” they each created in Visual Arts lesson. They then form a drama circle on the carpet. The teacher directs them to close their eyes (ensuring they are all in a safe position where they will not touch other students or furniture). The teacher narrates the scenario: “Imagine you are sitting on one of the magic carpets. It is going to take you on a journey from Australia to Morocco.” Teacher describes all the landscapes that would be seen as they float in the air above the land and ocean. “You arrive in Morocco to find you have been magically switched with the boy who lives there.” Teacher directs students to open their eyes. Teacher questions students as to the problems they would encounter when they arrive, e.g. missing friends and family, different schooling, food, technology, family jobs, activities. Discuss the fact that these problems can be used as moments of tension when creating dramatic action. Students are then formed into 6 groups. Each group is to choose one or more problems from the list to incorporate as tensions into a 5 minute dramatic scene that they create. Teacher to ensure most of the problems are covered. The groups plan, prepare and present their scene to the rest of the class as the audience.

(Responding):

At end of each presentation the audience responds to teacher questioning? Who created believable characters and situations? What elements of drama did

they use? Did they incorporate moments of tension effectively?

Lesson 10: Switched

(Making):

Sculptor and Clay Game: Students are sorted into pairs with room between each pair so that students won't bump into each other. Student A is the “sculptor”, student B is the “clay”. B is sitting on the carpet with their eyes closed. A has to gently manipulate B's body to create an interesting statue ie; moving arms, legs, head. A then has to try to duplicate the same statue with own body so that A and B look identical to observers. This is then repeated with B as the ‘sculptor’ and A as the ‘clay’.

(Making):

Magic Carpet Ride: They then form a drama circle on the carpet. The teacher directs them to close their eyes. The teacher narrates the scenario: “Imagine you are sitting on one of the magic carpets. It is going to take you on a journey from Morocco to Australia.” Teacher describes all the landscapes that would be seen as they float in the air above the land and ocean. “You arrive in Australia to find you have been magically switched with the boy who lives there.” Students open their eyes. Teacher questions students as to the problems they would encounter when they arrive. Are they the same as previous lesson? These problems can be used as moments of tension when creating dramatic action. Students are then formed into 6 groups. Each group is to choose one or more problems from the list to incorporate as tensions into a 5 minute dramatic scene that they create. The groups plan, prepare and present their scene to the rest of the class as the audience.

(Responding):

At end of each presentation the audience responds to teacher questioning? Who

created believable characters and situations? What elements of drama did they use? Did they incorporate moments of tension effectively? Did they learn through the drama that each boy encountered the same cultural problems and feelings? What have they learnt throughout the unit of work about the two cultures? Are there both differences and similarities in every culture? Would both boys have similar feelings, wants, needs etc?

REFLECTION OF THE PRACTICE

Prior to conducting the workshops at Runcorn Heights State School I met with the teachers and students involved in the trial. Preliminary discussions unveiled the following information:

- Interviews with the classroom teacher and the Teacher-Librarian revealed that both were enthusiastic about the project and looking forward to being part of the process.
- The Teacher-Librarian had previously used drama techniques within her teaching style and had some previous training and experience with drama. Her extrovert personality led me to expect that she would be willing and able to not only participate in the joint teaching of the workshops but to feel confidently able to initiate and lead further workshops. Her astuteness and intelligence ensured that she would be able to quickly pick up the skills necessary.
- The classroom teacher was less confident and had no previous experience, knowledge or skills in drama teaching and was not

comfortable to lead the lessons but was willing to be guided by myself and keen to learn through participation.

- I also interviewed a sample selection of students from the class. All had no experience of drama apart from passive participation as audience members when a Queensland Arts Council production had visited the school.
- As the students had no prior experience with drama lessons I conducted an introductory lesson for the teacher and student of basic drama skills, rules and activities.

The trial workshops at Runcorn Heights State School provided some interesting resulting data. The lessons in their original format proved to be too ambitious for students with no prior drama experience as was the case with this school. It seemed that each lesson would require twice the allocated time to implement and would require more scaffolding. There was an obvious need to redesign the lessons accordingly. We realized that the activities needed to be adapted and changed by each teacher to suit the experience, knowledge, skills, abilities and composite of their particular students. Initially, at Runcorn Heights, the Teacher-Librarian became involved in participating in the lessons with the students and was willing to initiate and lead activities. The classroom teacher who was not experienced in teaching drama did willingly join in each activity and encouraged student participation. After just four lessons there was clear evidence already of improvements in drama skills of some of the students. These results were identified during each workshop:

- The first workshop introduced the students to the first activity from Session One and was delivered successfully. Although some students were reluctant to participate at first

- there were more than half the class willing to participate in the first tableau convention. I would have liked to have expanded the time allowed for this activity to explore the characters and draw out information from the performers via the tap n talk. All students except for one were actively participating in the Postcards from... Freeze Frame convention but it clearly would have been difficult to ask them to explain who they were in terms of characterisation. This workshop would have been very effective with students more experienced with drama but worked as an introductory lesson. With students new to drama it may have been better to have split the lesson into two parts to allow more depth of learning about characterization. Both the classroom teacher and the Teacher-Librarian participated along with the students in both activities and capably led their groups in the Postcards from activity.
- Examining the objects used by the two boys to strengthen characterization worked effectively with the students in the second workshop (Session Two). They were all actively engaged in participating in the mime convention with the exception of one student who is currently being assessed for social and intellectual impairment. He found the whole class discussion confronting and had difficulty joining in but with encouragement he chose to rejoin the class for the mime activities. As with the first workshop, it became obvious that the lesson would be better split into two parts to allow more time for students to gain the necessary skills to produce deeper learning from the experience. I was pleased to see the Teacher-Librarian take the initiative to lead the students back into a whole class mime experience to exact a greater understanding of the mime convention. The decision was made to hold over the role-on-the-wall convention to another lesson (Session Two Activity Two).
 - The third workshop involved the students in groups completing the Role-on-the-wall character outlines which established the characters for the students to explore in depth (Session Three Activity One).
 - After reviewing and adding to the Role-on-the-wall character outlines from the previous lesson, the students were arranged into groups of 6 (Session Three) for the Hot Seat convention. Most of the students were offering low level questions and answers for the hot seat convention but were willing to try. One student excelled at staying in role for this activity. It would have worked better to have had established more teacher-led questioning for this activity.
 - By the end of this workshop it was apparent that the amount of content in the lessons was too ambitious for students who are beginners to drama. Each session needed to be adapted to allow for necessary basic introductory drama skills to be taught before tackling the activity.
 - All activities needed to be adapted and changed to suit the experience, knowledge, skills, abilities and composite of each class. I was able to identify individual students who have grown more confident with each lesson.
 - For the next workshop we began with a simple activity where they repeated ritual activities conducted by the two main characters (Session Three, Activity Three). This re-established the characters from the previous lesson. We then created the soundscape of the Souk marketplace and then the Sydney hardware store (Session Four, Activity

One). The students enjoyed being able to be noisy and creative although the overall effect was loud and unclear. Although groups of students chose different sounds to recreate, it was impossible to distinguish each sound when all put together. I would change this to have each group introduce their sound one at a time in a musical round effect instead. This would have been more effective.

- The next activity was a role play where the groups of students had to create a scene where they were travelling to a souk to buy relevant goods (Session Seven, Activity Two). They had to create suitable characters and transportation and suitable goods to purchase. The lead-in to this activity required the students to look at a series of pictures of goods sold in a Moroccan marketplace and also different types of transport that could be used. This worked well to set the scene. I was very pleased with the progress of the students and their enthusiasm to participate in creating their role played scenes.
- As I had found with the previous workshops, the contrasting scene had to be held over to the next workshop due to the inexperience of the students with drama. This workshop was an excellent culminating activity for the workshop trials. The students role played scenes showed the progress most students had made with their drama skills. All students had improved their drama skills since the commencement of the trial workshops. Even student E who had been unable to achieve even a basic standard was able to participate in the group role play in a constructive way. Students A, B, C and D had been improving remarkably each lesson and were able to create genuinely believable characters and role play their scenes well.

QUOTES FROM THE TEACHER AFTER UNDERTAKING THE DRAMA EXPERIENCE

“After the drama activities I observed that the children were more co-operative in group work and less self-conscious when speaking to the class. They were also more ready to volunteer answers to questions.”

“As the teacher I felt more confident to organise further drama activities by myself later in the year. The children found the task I designed (planning, preparing and presenting drama scenes) easy to follow and they prepared quickly with some groups planning several skits they were keen to present to the class.”

Sharyn Craig (Year Three classroom teacher, Runcorn Heights SS)

QUOTES FROM STUDENTS AFTER UNDERTAKING THE DRAMA EXPERIENCE

Student B: “Drama is fun because you are learning but you don’t just have to sit down and write.”

Student A: “I loved doing the roleplay and the freeze frames. I have more confidence than before when I have to present in the classroom.”

Student C: “My favourite drama activity is the roleplay because I can act as someone else. It’s really fun to pretend to be in different countries.”

Student B: “Drama is fun to do. It doesn’t matter if you get everything wrong or you get everything right. I loved the hot seat game.”

Student A: “I’ve done drama in my classroom now as well and it’s really fun. You get to be other characters. I like drama more than schoolwork, even more than

playing on the spider in the playground.”

Student C: “Drama is my favourite activity because we get to move around. When we do maths and stuff we just have to sit there and think.”

Student B: “Now I feel more confident in talking in front of the whole class.”

Student E: “It has made me better than I was before.”

Student D: “I learnt heaps about Morocco – like they don’t have security systems and they use Dirhams to pay for things and they have very different shops to us”.

Student E: “Drama with others is good because you have dialogue between other people and it’s easier to remember your words.”

Student A: “I could imagine I was on a magic carpet and going over the ocean and seeing a whale splashing its fins in the water.”

Student E: “Drama has helped me improve at talking in front of the class and it actually helped me be able to perform a song in front of the class.”

Student F: “Working with other people is easy to do in drama because if you were just alone and performing in front of the whole class you would feel shy but when you are on stage with other people you take turns having a speech.”

CONCLUSION:

The Drama Ark project was intended as an inquiry into the challenges and barriers for drama pedagogy in primary education. The project aimed to demonstrate that working collaboratively and collegially can improve how drama pedagogies are integrated into the teaching and learning

programs of generalist primary classroom teachers.

I would consider that introducing the students to even a few drama lessons certainly acted as a catalyst to increasing their self- confidence, building literacy levels and allowing more self-expression than had been experienced prior to the lessons. My experience with teaching drama consistently has been that these results increase incrementally with students’ exposure to quality drama experiences.

Evidence shows that exposing students to the “high-demand high-risk atmosphere of rehearsal and performance encourages the growth of skills and capacities rooted in their personal recognition of themselves as competent, creative, and productive individuals” (Brice Heath, 1999 p.29). The Runcorn Heights State School students certainly felt a sense of self-worth at being able to perform their scenes for the class.

As a former Dean of Education at the University of Melbourne where teacher training might devote a total of between two and 20 hours to the arts, Professor Caldwell (2011) is quoted as stating that generalist primary teachers need more specialist training or assistance to be able to confidently take on the task of implementing arts curriculum within their classrooms. This certainly correlates with what I have discovered during my practice as a drama educator within primary school settings. This shortfall within universities could be addressed through professional development or in-servicing opportunities for primary teachers being provided by state education facilities or programs which allow opportunities for experienced drama educators to run workshops alongside class teachers.

The trial *Drama Ark* program certainly facilitated the classroom teacher’s confidence and ability to teach drama.

This practical immersion experience with an experienced educator working with the students in conjunction with the classroom teacher seemed to provide both workable and achievable results.

Appropriate permission was obtained to disseminate the photos, video clips and quotes of the drama experience that are included.

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QUEENSLAND - WORKSHOP SERIES 2

The second Queensland trial school was Mooloolaba State School, Sunshine Coast where the workshops were taught with three classes of students by Claire McSwain, an experienced drama educator, in conjunction with the generalist primary classroom teachers, Lisa Pittori, Paula Greenwood and Mandy Frost. The classroom teachers and the students had some drama experience having participated in curriculum -based drama led by Claire McSwain on previous occasions.

Connections Reflected In The 'Mirror'

CLAIRE
MCSWAIN

As an experienced Primary drama-educator and a Drama Queensland member for more than twenty years, I was invited to participate in the Drama Ark Project as the second member of the 'two by two' team from Drama Queensland, the team often known as the 'Claire's' or 'Claire x 2'. My involvement began in early 2013, with the support of both my Principal and the three Year 3 classroom teachers at my school: Lisa Pittori, Paula Greenwood and Mandy Frost.

As Claire Austin, the Drama Ark Project Officer, has already discussed briefly, the ideas for a variety of quality drama experiences based on Jeannie Baker's award-winning picture book, *Mirror*, were the culmination of a Drama Queensland Primary focus group gathering where a dozen drama educators worked collaboratively in two groups to create some possible pathways to learning in and through drama using this picture book as a pretext for a Year 3 or 4 classroom.

Four sessions from the collaborative construction that became a ten week Unit Plan were delivered at Mooloolaba State Primary School on the Sunshine Coast north of Brisbane in Term 1 of 2013.

CONTEXT

Mooloolaba State Primary School, a Prep to Year 7 school, is once again a growing school with a population of 650 students, an increase of 200 over the last four or five years. The population draws from a low socio-economic area with a fairly high percentage of transient families in most years. From the nineties up until about five years ago the school could be called 'arts-rich', but sadly, with the pressure of the new regime of testing and with new curriculum imperatives and the resultant pressure on classroom teachers and administration, it is a challenge to maintain the strong presence of curriculum initiatives that deliver quality drama and arts experiences that support and deepen learning in and out of the classroom. Even so, all year levels still have some experience throughout the year in learning in and through drama, with Units mostly History or Literature-based.

PRE DRAMA SESSIONS

The following questions were asked of the three classroom teachers, all who had limited experience in their own delivery of drama to their students, but who all had some experience of being with teachers

who had, two of them with me and the other when she was on prac at another school.

- Do you feel confident about teaching the upcoming new national curriculum in the Arts: Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts?
- What experience have you personally had in teaching in and through drama?
- Have you ever participated in any PD in the use of drama for learning in the classroom or drama as an art form?
- What are your expectations of your students during this trial?

They responded that they all had difficulty with Drama and Dance terminology, but while not confident of teaching drama on their own, were keen to participate. All three are experienced Visual Arts educators. Their expectations of their students were that they would have a better understanding and awareness of different cultures and the connections between them, and their experiences of being in-role would be good for their imaginations as this was an area that needed development. They were all confident that the students would be engaged in the drama sessions. None had ever participated in any Professional Development in Drama.

The student group of 6 were asked the following questions. The group was a gender mix with several students new to the School. The students who had completed Year 2 at Mooloolaba had experienced performing a Soundscape in Term 2 and also a literature-based process drama in Term 4.

- Who has done drama before, either at school or outside school?
- What did you like the best about the

drama you've done?

- What were the things you didn't like about your drama experiences?
- We are about to do a series of drama lessons based on Mirror (show them). What do you think it's going to be like?
- Are you looking forward to it? Why? Why not?
- As this is a special trial, some of what you do in the lessons will be filmed. Will that change anything for you do you think? Will it change the way you participate or will it not matter at all?

The students weren't really sure what to expect, but were looking forward to it. "I like doing all kinds of drama". One had done some after-school drama classes, but as expected, most of the group mentioned the drama we'd done in Year 2. "I loved doing the soundscape. It was really fun." The prospect of being filmed was not a concern, and they believed they would be able to ignore it.

SESSIONS 1 TO 4:

Claire Austin had already written the detailed ten week Unit plan above, and for the Mooloolaba trial, the first four sessions were delivered as written. Initially we both agreed to deliver them as written in our respective schools, although as a collaboratively constructed series of lessons, I certainly felt a disconnection with my own style and way of working when I both plan and deliver curriculum drama experiences. I accepted that the collection of lessons could all separately be starting points for different purposes and different needs of the generalist primary teacher, and that all teachers would approach it differently depending on experience and availability of resources.

As I work with classroom teachers via my role as a full-time teacher librarian, all the drama sessions took place in the library/resource centre which has a flexible space where furniture can be easily moved to make an open area, which, while not as large as we would like for drama, suffices.

Sessions 1 - 4

Although our students have some experience of drama, there were drama conventions in these first four lessons of which they had no experience. The following are key points relating to the trial experience of the four sessions.

- Most of the students were keen to participate while others new to the school were initially reticent.
- It was immediately apparent that the one hour allocation was not nearly enough time to complete the session, as each session had at least one drama convention that was new to the Year 3 students: tableau, mime, tap'n'talk, ritual, and group hot seats. They were familiar with conventions such as freezes/ postcards, role on the wall, role circles, individual hot seat and being in-role/out-of-role (pretending). Much of the language of drama, particularly in relation to the elements, was quite new to them also as this was only the first Term of Year 3, and they had experienced only limited periods on learning in and through drama up to this point.
- In Session 1, discussions about the roles students would take in the tableaux of the souk and the hardware store were extensive but the students were really engaged with the process, and excitedly discussed the two scenes from the book. The tap'n'talk to follow took a long time and, although many children responded well, others found this difficult and I believe were

a little put-off by the camera. This session should have been cut much earlier as, understandably, energy levels and focus waned considerably.

- Session 2 was quite successful as the students were really engaged with the miming of the Sydney and Moroccan boys as they interacted with objects and people from the picture book. I also believe that students had more idea of how it was going to work and were more comfortable with the camera.
- Session 3, with its strong focus on the character of the two boys was deeply engaging for most of the children, as the students used the Role on the Wall of each boy (two of each) to discuss the following questions about him.
 - How old do you think each boy is?
 - What does each boy like to do in his free time?
 - What kind of boy is your Moroccan /Sydney boy? Is he a boy you would like to be friends with?
 - What would he be like if he was in your class?
 - What do you think your boy dreams about when he thinks about growing up?

Having given their character a name, each group participated in a group hot seat. Given the lack of experience of the students and the limited time that had been available (no classroom time at all) to discuss the boy and maybe meet someone from his family via a Teacher hot seat so they would know and understand a little more about him, I made the decision to lead the questioning in the group hot seat. All children were excited about being in-role in the hot seat, but on reflection, a slightly more structured questioning procedure would have given the students more opportunity to think and respond more deeply.

- Session 4 focussed on the soundscapes from the souk and the hardware store. Having made a soundscape in Year 2, although that one was a narrative telling of a story they had created and then sequenced, students responded really well with brainstorming and then creating the soundscape. The second part of Session 4 was cut as was not achievable in the time we had left. Giving the students time to explore the soundscape fully was the better option.

Questions post-Sessions

Teachers:

- Did your students respond the way you thought they would in the drama sessions?
- Did any of your students surprise you in any way?
- What were the positives for you and your students during the sessions?
- What were the negatives?
- Have you learned any more about drama elements and conventions?
- Would you have the confidence to deliver those 4 sessions yourself with another group or to continue with further sessions as listed in the planning?
- What else would you need to give you more confidence?

The general consensus from the classroom teachers was that they were pleased with the way the children participated but that the content was too advanced for their

level and would better suit a Year 4 level than Year 3. Each session could have been halved and taken more slowly. The teachers commented on individuals who had stood out, some surprising them. They were more aware of the language of drama, but only one felt confident enough to continue the sessions.

Student Group

- Which parts of the drama sessions did you like best? Why?
- Which parts of the drama did you like the least? Why?
- Students were then invited to draw both of these parts and write a sentence about each one beneath the drawing. They were reminded that it's not about the drawing, it's about the ideas.

“I liked the hot seat because we got to make the questions”

“I didn't like miming because we had to stop for a long time and I got tired.”

“I like acting because you can do whatever you want over and over again or you can stay in your position.”

“There was nothing I didn't really like.”

“I liked the hot seat because I was in a group”

“I liked the mime because I got to mime in front of the class.”

REFLECTIONS AND RESPONSE

As I work in a primary school where my role is to co-teach with, and support generalist classroom teachers, my focus in the trial was on how these teachers and others in the many schools where no drama has ever been done, would respond to seeing this Unit as planned and whether they would be excited or overawed by it. Would it be accessible to them? Would they be able to see how it could fit in with various aspects of the curriculum they have to teach? As drama has to be about something, would they be able to see some pathways to learning in and through drama that were appropriate for their students, and have the confidence to do it?

Having trialed only the first four sessions, I believe that the answer is ‘no’, I don’t think they would. When I started drama

I was always told to start small, and as a teacher librarian with a good knowledge of children’s literature, I started there, with giving children drama experiences related to the books we shared. It is still how I begin with the Prep students.

The collaboratively generated ideas that became the Unit as written offer some great possibilities for drama learning, but the ten sessions which could easily become 20 sessions time-wise, offer some challenges to the inexperienced, and I believe that offering the lessons as four sub-strands might offer something more accessible. I acknowledge the contribution made by experienced primary drama educator, Lizette Stevenson, who collaborated with me to offer the following possible alternative pathways to using the DQ Unit.

UNIT TITLE: Mirror

YEAR LEVEL: Years 3/4 (suggest Year 4)

CURRICULUM FOCUS: Drama and English Literature

STRAND 1: FOCUS	The boys
ELEMENTS	role, relationships, situation
LESSONS	2. Two little boys 3. Everyday life
PLANNING IDEAS	<p>Explore boys through getting to know family and friends via hot seating, role circles, writing in-role, still images, travelling freeze frames (including ‘to life’), tap and talk, role on wall (use quarters with PHYSICAL and/or CHARACTER TRAITS, BEHAVIOUR and MOTIVATIONS, ATTITUDE to OTHER PEOPLE, EVENTS and IDEAS.)</p> <p>Introduce Fictional Story-thread: Worldwide Competition run by a global education company – Global Futures: Share Your World –Share Your Place. (Teacher in-role as representative)</p> <p>COMPETITION TASK: Choose the six photographs that best show aspects of your place and your life. These will be uploaded to Global Futures Website. Some aspects could be</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Home Life 2. Family Event

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Responsibilities at home 4. Religion/Values 5. School Life 6. Friends & Neighbours 7. Sports/Hobbies 8. Favourite Places 9. Favourite Music 10. Ideas for Future <p>PRIZE: The latest Smart TV, Smartphone, ipod, ipad, DS and video camera.</p>
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STRAND 2: FOCUS	Moroccan Souk and Sydney's Hardware Planet
ELEMENTS	Roles, relationships, situation + place and movement
LESSONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Postcards from Morocco and Australia 2. Journey of the Carpet
PLANNING IDEAS	<p>Explore journey of carpet from Moroccan home to Australian home. As per unit, explore designs, patterns and colours.</p> <p>Explore the souk and hardware store using the linking device of the colours of the carpet.</p> <p>CARPET DESIGN 1:</p> <p>The whole class carpet becomes a story map and shows images from each episode of the journey. The colour chosen for each episode is a whole class decision. (Story map for Moroccan and Australian journeys)</p> <p>As story progresses, students complete A Senses Graphic Organiser for each episode ie SEE/HEAR, TOUCH/TASTE/SMELL plus FEEL and THINK. From these, descriptive writing to create typed up captions to put around story map.</p> <p>CARPET DESIGN 2</p> <p>My Personal Journey Carpet.</p> <p>Students create their own patterns for their personal carpet (Visual Arts creation)</p> <p>Students in 4 groups – a group decision to select one item of specific colour for each episode in their Moroccan/Australian story – an individual journey map is created from their personal journey experience as each episode unfolds.</p>

STRAND 3: FOCUS	Creative process of building 2 separate Soundscapes around the two narratives of Mirror, including imagined conversations and mini-events.
ELEMENTS	Roles, relationships, situation, place, mood, atmosphere, time
LESSONS	3 . Sights and Sounds
PLANNING IDEAS	<p>Two narratives may/may not evolve from just the souk and the hardware store (depends on maturity and experience of students and generalist classroom teacher).</p> <p>Plan the space: who, what, where. (whiteboard)</p> <p>Map the space: use masking tape to designate outline of space and place items in position to represent who and what is there. Discuss possible pathways within the space as class interacts with completed map. Photograph this for future reference.</p> <p>Decide on 5 different types of sounds found in this place eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People sounds • Eating/drinking sounds • Environmental sounds • Bird/animal sounds • Machine sounds <p>Groups (5) list ideas for sounds on 5 different coloured cards (A4) e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People asking questions • Donkeys braying • Computer pinging • Boy slurping drink • Timber scraping • Spices rustling <p>Teacher puts each sound on card strips (matched colour from 4) for each category. Students as whole class sequence these sounds to create a narrative.</p> <p>Teacher scripts these ideas from sequence.</p> <p>Two narrators auditioned and chosen to read narration and class creates a performance, using body percussion, voice and sound-makers (external sources).</p> <p>Throughout the process, students are exposed to sessions using voice and body percussion. In the classroom they have a SOUND BOX and students bring things from home that make interesting sounds, and then when script completed, specific sounds that are needed for performance are created.</p> <p>Photograph each stage of the creative process for PowerPoint that runs as students present their soundscapes.</p> <p>Rehearse and perform.</p>

STRAND 4: FOCUS	Documentary drama if/with multiple classes working on same unit of work
ELEMENTS	Role, relationships, situation, symbol, place, language
LESSONS	6. Anything but... 7. Do you remember when... 8. The journey to...
PLANNING IDEAS	Using elements of Lessons 6, 7, and 8, but keeping to book for improvised drama in Sydney as well as in Morocco with souk. As in many schools there will be more than one class on a year level, so 2/3 classes could be involved in a 'building school community and school culture' sharing of their learning. Scenes are developed and rehearsed, but staged as for documentary drama, with audience in the middle, perhaps 6 scenes (2 per class) for each part of the mirrored story. Each class would nominally work with 4 groups: 2 Australian and two Moroccan

Claire McSwain, Teacher Librarian/Arts Coordinator, Mooloolaba State Primary School, Queensland

New South Wales Contribution



Go Through or Look Through

An integrated program using drama as the interest / motivating focus

CONTEXT

School:

Woy Woy South PS – a low social economic school on the Central Coast of NSW.

Woy Woy South PS has mostly Australian students with a number of Aboriginal students in each class. The school population averages 520 to 550 students

I am the LAST teacher (Learning and Support Teacher) at the school. I offered to work with a young teacher on Year 4. I would be in the classroom for 1 session per week (about one and a quarter hours). We would team teach this program.

That I would lead the Drama and Writing component and Class Teacher Mrs. Watson would integrate the Talking and Listening, Grammar, Art, Craft, HSIE around the book 'Mirror'.

It was decided that this would be a 5 week program. Starting with known knowledge (our own community) moving to the unknown. Most of the students had no idea what drama was. Most of these students now ask me weekly when will I start a Year 4 lunch/recess drama group.

Writing was selected as our focus that we would team teach with as our NAPLAN results were band 1, 2 and 3 for a number of our students in Year 3 2012 in this class. Many of our students have never left the Central Coast for holidays; day visits or has knowledge of people from other cultures. Previously a number of our students would write no more than 3 or 4 sentences in any writing task.

ROBYN
EVANS

(LAST) Woy Woy
South Primary School

WORKSHOP / ACTIVITIES

Week 1

Drama Rules

- Listen – One person speaks at a time
- Hands and Feet to Self
- Only nice comments
- Have fun

Drama Warm up Activities

Dead Ant / Cockroach / Echidna

Mirror

With a partner – A does an action – B copies it at the same time – reverse roles

- Everyone takes a partner
- Face each other
- Moving only from waist up
- Leader begins making simple gestures

- or movement
- The 'mirror' duplicates the leaders movement exactly
- To make it easier – use smooth, continuous movements
- Look into each others eyes, rather than at their hands
- It is as much the leaders job as the 'mirror job to see that the exercise works. Don't try to trick your partner
- Switch

Eventually this exercise can grow to involve the whole body

Writing

I stepped through the mirror

Description of what I found – alternate place to live

Week 2

Drama Warm up

Listening and Doing activity – Getting into the car / put on my seat belt / starting car / driving / passing (people – shops) / traffic lights etc.

Circle Mirror (Teacher led)

Discuss – If you look into a mirror you see your reflection and anything behind you

- Class stand in a circle, arm length apart
- The leader performs simple arm movement
- Everyone in the circle 'mirrors'
- Left / right – those opposite the leader in the circle will instinctively reverse them like a mirror, but those next to or nearly next to the leader will do the same-side movements
- Those half way in between will be torn
- I tell the students for this activity right and left don't matter

By doing movements with both arms together will over come the problem

Writing

Describe a local shop as if you were looking through a mirror – what shop in your area could you see behind you as you look in the mirror.

Week 3

Drama Warm up activity

Mirror Canon

- Everyone stands in a circle
- Everyone turns to the left so they are looking at the back of the next person
- The chosen leader begins to make simple movements (careful not to bring his/her arms fully in front of themselves)
- The person behind the leader mirrors him/her, but with a delay of about a second
- The third person mirrors the second, again with a second delay
- And so on around the circle

Eventually the leader will see their own -

- movement recreated in the person in front of him but delayed by a second.
- This creates a 'wave' of movement making its way around a circle
- Once mastered it can be done in different formations
- It is better if the teacher doesn't participate in the circle but watches

Activity 2

Students in groups of 3-4

Teacher says a word from the story e.g. carpet / donkey / car

As a group students make this shape with their bodies

Writing

Description of a 'Magic Carpet Ride'

- Where will it take you in our local community

Week 4

Drama Warm up

Fun House Mirrors

Magnifying Mirrors

- Work in pairs
- Leader keeps movements ‘small’ but the ‘mirror’ makes all the movements ‘bigger’
- This is lots of fun and needs imagination because it is not always obvious how to make the movement ‘bigger’

Shrinking Mirrors

Like magnifying mirrors but in reverse

Opposite Mirrors

- The ‘mirror’ does not reverse left and right
- Allows for some interesting effects, because unlike regular mirrors, it allows the partner to enter each other’s space
- In regular mirrors partners can touch, but can go no further because the point of contact becomes the imaginary glass of the mirror
- But in ‘opposite mirrors’ the partner can even move around each other and change places

Activity 1

In groups 3-5

Teacher gives each group a different scenario of what might have happened in the story e.g. car broke down / got lost on the way to Moroccan market / the family could not sell the carpet

Group decides what happens next and then performs it for the rest of the class

Writing

Describe a character from either story

Week 5

Drama Warm up activity

Emotion Mirrors

- In pairs or whole class
- In unison the leader and the ‘mirror’ speak some familiar speech.
- The leader tries to change the emotional affect frequently during the speech
- The ‘mirror’ tries to duplicate the leader’s emotions exactly.
- No actions just emotional speech

Enlarging or Shrinking Emotion Mirrors

- Mirror the emotions of the leader, but make them ‘bigger’ e.g. if leader is mildly put out ‘mirror’ would be furious

Activity from story – Groups of 4

Freeze Frame Photo

Teacher retells the story whenever he/she stops the groups must make a photo (freeze frame) of that part of the story

Writing

Describe and compare the Moroccan family to the Australian family

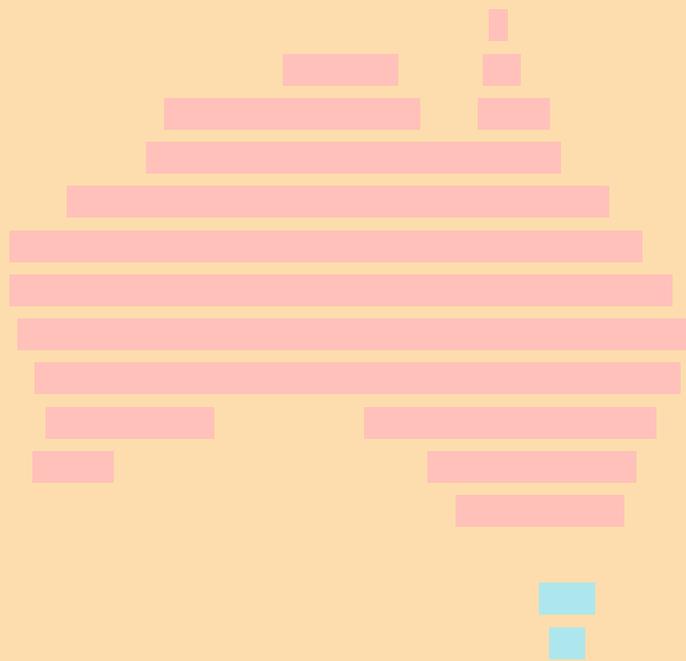
REFLECTIONS

- Students writing improved with the motivation of the drama activities and creating prior knowledge – that we often expect students to write about topics they have no understanding of (but we as teachers assume they have this knowledge)
- Students need movement as part of learning – by primary grades they are often expected to sit at their tables for long periods of time
- Students are often bored with what

we expect them to learn – they need motivation to learn.

- This class was a difficult class with a number of students experiencing behavioural difficulties – there were no behaviour problems during these lessons.

Tasmanian Contribution



Sensing Mirror:

Exploring Mirror, by Jeannie Baker, through the senses.

HELEN
SWEENEY
and
JO WALDON

This project was undertaken at Glenorchy Primary School with a class of twenty six grade 3/ 4 students in term 4, 2013. The school is suburban, in a low socio-economic area. The children have worked with a specialist Drama teacher for the past three years, who has had a specific focus of improving literacy through the stimulus of Drama.

Helen Sweeney (the specialist Drama teacher at Glenorchy primary school) and Jo Waldon (currently Lead Teacher for Literacy and Numeracy for Learning Services South) have collaborated on numerous Drama projects for over ten years- often with the focus of integrating Drama into generalist classroom teaching pedagogy. Both have been classroom teachers for more than twenty years, teaching grades from Kinder to Grade 6. Both have expertise in Drama and Jo has particularly specialised in Dance in education.

This is a busy crowded curriculum era. Finding mechanisms by which we can “kill two birds with one stone” to help a classroom teacher incorporate Drama while improving literacy outcomes (in particular oral language and vocabulary development) is a valuable tool. By using Mirror as a stimulus to investigate the similarities and differences between the two cultures through Drama, teachers can link cultural studies, literacy, philosophy

and social and emotional learning.

We were keen to explore and showcase how simply and effectively this can be achieved through drama. Drama is all about communicating meaning; through word, shape, movement and nuance. We use all our ‘being’ and senses (visual, oral, aural and kinaesthetic) to interpret and understand. Performers communicate to the watching audience and support them in making their own meaning and understanding. Students do not have to have had their own life experiences. Just as with literature, drama can build in ‘prior knowledge’ and give them the understandings of a topic or experience to draw upon in the future.

WORKSHOP AND ACTIVITIES:

We wrote and planned 3 sessions focussing on different drama and literacy techniques and pedagogies. Our aim with the Soundscape task, in our second session, was to encourage the students to notice and think about what a place can be like. To immerse them in the sights, sounds and feel of a place. We hope they will make connections between the familiar and unfamiliar within the settings.

The curriculum connections are as follows:

(Taken from the Australian Curriculum:

Drama)

Knowledge and Skills Band 3-4

voice and movement: varying voice (for example, clarity, pace, volume, projection) and movement and gesture to create belief in character and situation

4.2 Use voice, body, movement and language to sustain role and relationships and create dramatic action with a sense of time and place. Varying the loudness/softness, pace and pitch of their voices to create role and situations, time and place Varying language — choice of words, expressions and tone — to create roles and situations Showing sensory and spatial awareness when creating dramatic action. Exploring and understanding personal and cultural body language and gesture.

4.4 Identify and comment on intended meanings and features of the dramatic action, characters, ideas and viewpoints of their own drama and drama from other contexts.

Talking and writing about their intended meanings in their own drama Talking and writing about the ideas and features of their own drama and the drama of others.

Identifying the use of the elements of drama to make dramatic action, characters and ideas.

GENERAL CAPABILITIES:

Personal and Social capability

Critical and creative thinking capability

Literacy capability

OTHER SUBJECT AREAS:

English- oral language and vocabulary development

Mirror, by Jeanie Baker

SESSION ONE

Helen Sweeney and Jo Waldon

Everyday Happenings

1. Look at the book Mirror by Jeanie Baker. Focus on pages one to three. This is all about everyday morning activities in both places. Ask: “What do you do when you get out of bed? What sort of things do you need to do? Feed the cat? Brush your teeth?”
2. In a circle – number off the students one to five. When their number is called they cross the circle miming the specified everyday morning actions e.g. brushing teeth, putting on a jumper, eating cereal, carrying school bag, drinking ,waking up, brushing hair...
3. Teacher asks: What were we doing? What time of the day would we be doing these actions? What are some actions we do every day?
4. Students find a space in the room and lie down. “Pretend you are in bed fast asleep. It is morning and you wake up. What do you do? How do you get out of bed? Do you jump out, creep out, and stick your foot out first...” Have the students act out the things they do of a morning before heading out of the door to go to school.
5. Students think of four things they do before school each day. Choose one-two movements to show that action (e.g.: toothpaste on brush/brush teeth). They practise the movements so they can do them well. They perform them in the order they would do them of a morning (will everyone have the same order?)

6. With a partner, the students face each other and perform their own movement sequence at the same time as their partner – practise
7. The whole class perform their paired sequences. The audience discuss the similarities and differences between each.
8. Have a few pairs share for the class side by side rather than face to face. Discuss the similarities and differences. Is it usual for everyday actions to be so similar /different to each other? What might make the differences? Weather, size of family, number of bathrooms, different countries? For an extra challenge ask volunteers to try performing it in slow motion to enhance the sense of contrasting movements.

The teacher will “conduct” the class by flitting quickly between groups who studied the two different pictures.

4. Teacher introduces “I hear” for the same pictures. Explain that the students are to consider what sounds they might hear if they were there? What things would make sounds? What would people be saying (Stress all would be in English due to our “Universal Translator”. Unless a child speaks Arabic then encourage them to share in the language.) What animal sounds would there be? What sounds would you hear of things being moved?
5. Each student chooses a different sound-not all animals! Choosing sounds from a variety of the above questions. Teacher introduces signals of volume going up and down (hand palm up being raised and lowered); for continuous sounds (hands palm down moving across body); stop with traffic stop sign and start with a point. Again Teacher or a chosen leader “conducts” the individuals to share their sounds. When signalling to groups using only one particular picture, the technique will endeavour to allow them to experience what it would be like to be at the two “markets”.
6. Demonstrate “I Wonder” one for each scene. E.g.: “I wonder if the telephone will work?” in the Arabic market. “I wonder what they are going to build with the timber?” in the Australian hardware store.
7. Students search their picture for more “I Wonder” questions. They each choose one and are reminded to think carefully about how their voice would change when saying it aloud. Would it go up at the end for a question? Would it sound as though you are really thinking hard? Would it sound

SESSION TWO

Helen Sweeney and Jo Waldon

Same and Different

1. Continue to share the book. Discuss briefly the concept of “I see, I hear, I wonder” for a few different pages to establish the approach. Do not go on to the Market page.
2. In groups of 3-4, the students will study colour copies of either the Arabic market page or the Australian hardware shop. (Half the groups will be given the Arabic version and half the Australian.) At first they will discuss what they can see and point to an item. Each person will choose two or three items, different to anyone else’s in the group.
3. The teacher calls “Stop! Stand up!” When she points to a student they must say one of their choices clearly.

fast and excited?

8. A leader or the teacher “orchestrates” the sharing again varying it depending on which picture the groups have to study.
 9. Each student chooses something to share being careful to have someone select from each of the three topics- “I see”, “I hear”, “I wonder”. With the groups split into those who used the Arabic and the Australian picture, (using half as the audience) the teacher/leader “orchestrates” the sharing from each half separately. At first they share one person at a time. Then using the continuous signal, the sharing builds to be all at once and then gradually stopping one at a time to silence.
 10. After sharing both, discuss the similarities and differences between the two scenes.
 11. Possible extension tasks:
 - *Add ‘instruments’ e.g. percussion instruments, use of body parts, sounds or music sourced from the internet.
 - *include a movement for each sound to be performed in conjunction with the sound.
3. Divide into pairs. Nominate who is right and who is left. One person stands across the room opposite their partner. Right is asked to move across the space and stand behind their partner. Then left is asked to move across the space to where right had been standing. Compare movements to the weaving of a carpet.
 4. Both are asked to walk across the space and when they meet they must turn around each other once then move back to own spot. Repeat. Use the terms warp and (weft?) to increase comparison to weaving.
 5. Students find a space on the floor without touching anyone else. Lay back and imagine: you are laying on a mat- your mat. What does it feel like? What is it made of? Wool? Material? Where is it? Inside? Outside? Which room? Does it warm your feet? Does it clean your feet? What colour is it? How big is it? Is it patterned? Is it old? Is it new? Where did it come from? A shop? Home-made? From far away? Adults in the room could ask some individuals to answer some of these questions... talk as though the mat was really there.

SESSION THREE

Helen Sweeney and Jo Waldon

Weaving Stories

1. Finish reading the book
 2. Begin in a space alone, moving slowly around the room coming close to people without touching, then moving away in a different direction. – weaving in and out. Give example of
6. Sitting up, the class sits in a circle. The teacher demonstrates:
“This is the mat that...” e.g. sat on the floor by my bed when I was a little girl. It is warm and fluffy and I loved to bury my bare feet into it when getting out of bed on a winter’s morning.
 7. Hands up if your mat is – in your bedroom, old, fluffy, patterned, from another country, new, on the beach, colourful.....

8. Tell me about your mat. Give the structure of the sentence: 'This is the mat that...' ask a few students to share their mat's story, and then get them to share their stories with a partner.
9. Show the image of the child's flying carpet drawing from the book. Teacher introduces the idea of a flying carpet. "If your rug was a flying carpet, where would you go and why?" Ask for some suggestions.
10. Students again find their own space on the floor. They have about a beach towel sized area around them for their flying carpet. They are asked "What are the colours/patterns of your carpet and what the magic word (s)/password you use to make it fly?"
11. With suitable flying music playing, teacher narrates their first journey on the carpet. It ends before describing anywhere specific so each child can decide their own destination. (See narration script over.)
12. Explain that groups of people have gone on the same Flying Carpet tour going to the same places. The groups of 3-4 will create "selfies" of their destinations (photographs of themselves that they'd taken -usually with a mobile phone). Everyone must help to make the scene fit the place it is meant to be. E.g.: if they were at the pyramids in Egypt, then some people would use their bodies to become the pyramids, maybe one a camel and one would be the tourist taking the "selfie" photograph. If have access to I Pads/IPods, the teacher could actually get the student to take the photograph for later display.
13. A group member or teacher interviews the traveller as an "On-the-spot" T.V interview about their magical adventures riding on their flying carpet.
14. Students then write their travel journal and either draw their "photos" or use the images from the I pads/IPods.
15. Possible Extension tasks:
 - * For Geography: students create a bird's eye view of the land they'd flown over including landmarks such as natural features, manmade objects and monuments.
 - * Students research what they'd need to know to be a successful tour guide for their Flying Carpet Tours. They must do ticket prices, itinerary, advertising posters, slideshows, perform adverts for radio or T.V.
 - * Using the concept of Universal Writing in dance, students refer to Arabic writing and try to create versions of the letters with their bodies. The directionality of the right to left could be included in the challenge.

NARRATIVE SCRIPT FOR FLYING CARPET RIDE

You are sitting comfortably cross- legged in the middle of your very own flying carpet. You can feel the weave of the rug underneath you. The air is warm around you and you are feeling excited about taking your first flight.

You think carefully of the password that tells the carpet to fly. You whisper it softly so that no one else can hear. You wait patiently to feel a change. Slowly and oh so softly, the carpet shivers and begins to rise. At first you don't even realise you have lifted off!

The carpet tilts you slightly to the left as

it avoids a seagull. Then it picks up speed and you can feel your hair streaming past your face. You look down nervously but you can only see a blur, you are moving so fast. You ask the carpet to slow down to cruising speed and look again. This time you see mountains, blue oceans and the square shapes of houses in a big city.

For the next hour you fly across the world, watching the changing land below form quilts of rainbow colours spreading as far as the eye can see. As you go over a big mountain covered in snow, you feel very cold and start to shiver. The carpet flies on and the winds buffet you from side to side making you worried you will be blown off.

Finally you command the carpet to “Land!” The carpet drops too quickly and you have to hang on tight. Just before crashing, the flying carpet slows and lands like a feather on the ground of a new land. You stand up stretching, ready for an adventure!

REFLECTIONS

What we have learned:

- The Drama element of the tasks/ activities does not need to be very complicated to be effective – often a simple drama technique can have a powerful impact when presented as an integrated part of the experience.
- The creation of a safe environment is essential so that students feel comfortable to take a risk – trial a movement, share a sequence in front of others, contribute to discussions. Without this trusting environment you will not see the same level of involvement and creativity.
- Time for talk is essential – discussion of the book was important to put the drama in context. Talk before, during and after the drama experience

encourages more complex and descriptive language/vocabulary as well as deepening personal understandings and the ability to critique one’s own and others’ work.

- Session 2: the brainstorming was quite inspirational- their use of descriptive phrases were powerful and painted a picture in words of the illustrations which were drawn upon to create the imagery the sound scapes.
- Sharing work in progress is a great way for students to see what others are doing, and can inspire them to greater effort.

What worked really well?

- The layering of the structure of the lesson – beginning with stimulus (the book), working individually, moving onto pairs/groups of three, sharing work in progress during this, moving onto larger group structures as the session progressed
- Using a familiar thinking routine – “I see, I think, I wonder.” but modifying it to suit the situation – changed to “I see, I hear, I wonder.” gave them a structure which they knew how to use which then gave them confidence to work with the changes.
- Conducting the ‘Soundscape’ worked well. There was no need for equipment or even much space. This could be readily adapted to many topics and environments. Once familiar with the process, students would be able to undertake the conductor’s role. Also there are possibilities for refinement for an assembly item or sharing with a familiar audience.
- Having two teachers running the session enabled us to build a rhythm whereby we supported and enhanced each other’s work. While this is not

always possible in an individual classroom situation, we have found it equally beneficial to combine our two classes for Drama lessons. (when space permitted)

What did not work:

- Due to end of year time constraints and changes in teacher roles, we didn't get the time we needed to run all three sessions or repeat them at another school. However, we have included all the planned sessions as we hope others might find them useful.
- We know that the first session is simple and it didn't extend the students as much as we would have preferred. However after reflection we realised that the students have had three years of drama experiences. If the class were new to Drama, the first lesson would be a good starting point as a large space is not needed and little background in Drama is required either from the students or teacher.
- the filming of the session was difficult
 - the sound didn't capture their voices. while teaching, you are involved in the process – a separate person to record, who is not involved in the Drama, would be beneficial.

What was interesting?

- It was exciting to see how powerful just using words and sounds (soundscape) could be in creating a dramatic sense of time and place.
- The oral brainstorming activity using the stimulus of the illustrations inspired eloquent descriptive language.
- It was interesting to consider the many and varied possibilities to build upon this work and effectively share with an audience.
- There are many possibilities for

extending these sessions:

- Refining for presentation
- The creation of poetry
- Sourcing sound effects to be incorporated into the soundscapes
- Filming and recording soundscapes
- Adding movement and /or music to the soundscapes
- Transferring the Drama techniques to other topics i.e soundscapes, mirroring, miming, storytelling

What would you do differently?

- Time constraints did not allow us the opportunity to follow through as fully as we would have wished.

CONCLUSION

Using literature as a stimulus for Drama that can relate to other curriculum areas is a very powerful teaching pedagogy. However, the choice of book is vital. *Mirror* is a visually emotive text but we felt it was difficult to connect with other areas of the Australian curriculum at a Grade Three level. Due to the constraints at year level of the Australian curriculum, we were unable to link it to History as we first thought to do. However, in using the specific images we chose, we found the students were motivated and interested to look more closely.

There are many possibilities for extension; please read examples in the section: "What was interesting?"

In writing these lessons we were mindful of the restraints often experienced in general classrooms. We chose to use simple structures and techniques that could be done in a ny available space. If you just move some desks, very little equipment is needed – whiteboard, paper and pens, photocopies of some of the book's images. We hope that this will help teachers to know that drama can be taught with little extra preparation or space- even for those

who are “dipping their toes in the water” of drama. It is the level of motivation, the involvement of the students and the deepening of understanding of topics (and the children themselves!) that Drama provides in the general classroom. Drama is an end to itself, but it is equally important as a brilliant tool with which to explore, teach and understand the rest of the curriculum. Because the students ‘live it’ they remember it and internalise it. This layering of understanding and experience helps create background context for the students which can then be activated and ‘prior knowledge’ when delving further into a concept or topic.

- Donkeys braying
- Birds singing
- Trolleys clattering
- Wind blowing the water
- Car doors shutting
- Traffic
- Water rippling
- Car tyres squealing

I Wonder:

- If someone might fall off the donkey?
- If a car will crash?
- The hardware store is open?
- Will people be going to church?
- Will people go in the water?

WORK SAMPLE FROM BRAINSTORMING AS A WHOLE CLASS

(Based on the image before the market scenes)

I See:

- People getting out of the car
- A cave
- Crops
- An old granny
- Water
- Trees
- Rocky mountains
- Cars driving
- A bouquet of flowers
- A person
- A church
- Colours
- A sheep
- A city
- Planet Hardware

I Hear:

- Cars driving
- A cold breeze
- A saw cutting wood
- Cars horns beeping
- People chattering

Victorian Contribution



Mirror:

Reflections in the pre-service teachers' Drama and Dance Laboratory in a primary school

CONTEXT AND AIMS OF THE PROJECT

The project began as a challenge to provide a School-based practical teaching experience for pre-service teachers in a core primary arts education unit at Deakin University. The workshop is part of a week-long residency in a primary school in Melbourne during which classes of level 3 or 4 students combined with classes of Deakin University student teachers. The sequence of activities described here was presented in a one-off drama and dance workshop for all classes in year 3 and 4 at the primary school. The project involved almost 200 primary school students and 200 pre-service teachers, eight generalist primary teachers and me, the university drama education lecturer.

I approached a local primary school about the possibility of hosting a Drama and Dance Laboratory. In previous years I have taken small groups of university students to the school to present drama workshops that we planned and taught together. The Drama and Dance Lab was on a scale we had never attempted before. Nevertheless, the school welcomed our involvement because while the school provides a strong music and visual art program, fewer opportunities to engage students in drama and dance are available. I met with the year level teachers about the possibilities for linking learning in drama and dance with their broader curriculum

focus for the term. They were working on the theme: 'Australians all' – a study of cultural identity and diversity. When I suggested Jeannie Baker's book 'Mirror' as a wordless text for exploration of these concepts they readily took up the idea.

The Drama and Dance Laboratory was held over one week during which seven classes of pre-service teachers came into the school each day to work with a different class of primary students. The school saw it as a professional development opportunity for class teachers, a drama and dance experience for the year 3 and 4 students, and chance to engage students in a different way of learning within their topic of curriculum focus.

As teacher educator, an important aim for me was to augment the university students' studies in arts education with an experience of co-teaching drama and dance in an authentic school situation. For the Deakin students this unit is the first of two core units in primary arts education. A focus on the disciplines of drama and dance is only offered over three weeks of the trimester. With such a short amount of time available I believed that experimenting with the possibilities of drama and dance with the primary students in the school would be provide a powerful and memorable learning experience. I also felt it was important that the pre-service teachers were involved in the preparation for teaching, leading the

JO RAPHAEL

workshop activities and post-workshop reflection on practice. To this end a preparation session was held immediately before the workshop in which I ran a condensed version of the workshop to model the practice and a post-workshop reflection session was held immediately after.

With such large numbers of student teachers and such limited time, it was not possible for the pre-service teachers to plan the workshop as a group. Other units with more time for drama and fewer students allow for this. Instead I created a plan that included a range of simple drama and dance activities that could be accessible to the majority of students (both primary and university), who had little or no prior experience of drama and/or dance. From this range a selection could be chosen for the pre-service teachers to teach. These activities provided opportunities for learning about the elements of drama and dance while also complementing the year 3 and 4 studies of cultural identity and diversity. The workshop plan also incorporated strategies for the student teachers to experiment with what might assist them in managing a drama and dance class including the use of the space, ways of organising groups and ensuring safe practices. When the pre-service teachers weren't leading activities they were participating along with the primary students.

Our one-off drama and dance workshop was but a small part of the primary students' term focus on cultural diversity and identity. The primary school teachers had already been working with the themes and had introduced the students to the text 'Mirror'. The teachers also understood that the workshop would require them to follow-up on ideas and issues raised in subsequent classes with the year 3 and 4 students.

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM FOCUS

Drama level 3 and 4

- Students learn about focus, tension, space and time in their own and others' drama.
- They use ideas from Jeannie Baker's wordless book 'Mirror' to shape dramatic action.
- They use voice, body, movement to sustain role and relationships and create still images and dramatic action with a sense of time and place.

Dance level 3 and 4

- Students extend their awareness of the body as they incorporate actions using different body parts, body zones and bases.
- They explore and experiment with directions, time, dynamics and relationships, responding to music and imaginative prompts.
- They extend their fundamental movement skills adding to their personal movement repertoire through copying the actions of others.

Opportunities for raising students' awareness of the elements of dance and drama were considered in the planning. These are listed below as they appear in the Australian Curriculum for the Arts.

Elements of Drama

- Role, Character and Relationships
- Voice and Movement
- Space and Time
- Language, dramatic meaning, mood and atmosphere, and symbol

Elements of Dance

- Space
- Time
- Dynamics
- Relationships

The workshop and lessons conducted before and after by the class teachers also

considered global education perspectives from *Global Perspectives: A Framework for Global Education in Australian Schools* http://www.globaleducation.edu.au/verve/_resources/GPS_web.pdf. In particular two of the five Global Education learning emphases or perspectives were considered:

- Interdependence and globalisation – an understanding of the complex social, economic and political links between people and the impact that changes have on each other
- Identity and cultural diversity – an understanding of self and one’s own culture, and being open to the culture of others

There are resources on the GEP website that support the ideas in ‘Mirror’. In particular: ‘My Place, Your Place’ and ‘Who are the Families of the World?’ www.globaleducation.edu.au/resources-gallery/resource-gallery-teaching-activities.html

THE WORKSHOP

Activities for Warming-up

Movement circle

The whole class stands in a circle. Each person takes a turn to lead a movement while some suitable music plays (we used Bond’s *Quixote* from the *Born* album). Everyone in the circle mirrors that movement before the next person introduces a new movement which hopefully focuses on a different part of the body. [Focus on elements of relationships (the circle), dynamics and space.]

Bubble walk

Participants are asked to imagine an invisible bubble around them that stops them from bumping into others. They are asked to walk around the space in different directions moving quite swiftly

while not colliding with anyone. They are to try to go to every part of the room at some time. If we had a bird’s eye view of the room the people would be evenly spread around – no bunching up and no empty spaces. [Focus on elements of dynamic and space.]

Dynamic moving: Walking in different ways plus the ‘freeze’ instruction

After normal safe walking around the space has been established the teacher calls out ‘freeze’. On this instruction all participants have to stop and hold the position they were in when the call was made. The teacher then gives an instruction that requires a different movement dynamic including weight, force, energy and movement qualities.

Move around as if you are:

- on hot sand with bare feet
- in thick mud
- on slippery ice
- in a busy market place
- where there is no gravity
- up to your neck in water

The instruction to ‘freeze’ is called between each movement. Students are encouraged to be as still as they can possibly be. [Focus on elements of dynamic, space, mood and time.]

Groups and numbers

All participants walk around the space (as in the previous bubble exercise). The teacher calls a number and all participants move quickly into a group of that number. They need to move quickly so as not to be left out. This can be played as an elimination game but we used it as a means of forming random groups for the following exercise.

Ten second constructions

This small group problem solving activity requires improvisation, imagination and co-operation. In quickly formed groups of a nominated size (see previous activity

for forming groups), participants are asked to use all the people in their group to make an object/picture/scene etc. in a limited time. Depending on what they are to construct, there may also be sound and movement elements. [Focus on elements of dynamic, space, movement, voice.]

We used the following as they all appear in 'Mirror'

- Bicycle (group of 3)
- Airplane (group of 5)
- Bridge (group of 4)
- House (group of 6)

Activities for exploring themes and ideas in the text

Mirror Dance

Taking the idea of the mirror from the title and the concept of the book, we create dance-like movement based on the idea of human mirrors. As a text, 'Mirror' demands careful observation and close attention to detail. This exercise demands the same. Ideas of empathy, harmony, similarity and connection emerge from simple mirror exercises and these ideas resonate with the themes of Jeannie Baker's book.

Mirror Pairs (to music)

In pairs, facing each other, one person is the leader and the other is the mirror who reflects their movements. This is done to slow music to add an aesthetic element and encourage slow-paced movement that is able to be copied. After a period of time the students in the pair swap roles. Questions for reflection: When you are watching from the outside can you tell who the leader is and who is the mirror? What can the leader do to make it easier for the mirror to produce an exact reflection? What makes the movement more difficult to follow?

Mirror Dance in Lines (to music)

Twelve students line up an arm's distance from each other along the length of the room. Every second student turns to face

the opposite direction so that six are facing one way and six are facing the other. Two leaders are chosen to stand one in front of each line. The leaders lead the students in their line in synchronised movement to music. Each line will be doing something different but it is interesting to see the contrasting and harmonising dynamics, shapes and relationships that can occur. [Focus on elements of dynamic, space, relationships and time.]

Morning Mirror Dance

Refer to the first pages of the book 'Mirror' that depict the two families going through their morning routines. As with the Mirror Pairs activity above, use the idea of morning routines to inspire slow mimed movements for the 'mirror' to reflect.

The Journey of the Carpet – in ten second scenes

The students are asked to look closely at the book 'Mirror' and follow the journey of the carpet through the story. They are encouraged to wonder about the carpet – where does it first appear, what happens to it, where does it end up? The carpet is sold for money at the market. Where does this money go? This exercise opens up possibilities for exploring concepts of globalisation and the complex social, cultural and economic links between people.

Students form 6 groups and each group is given one moment in the carpet's journey:

- the carpet is being made in Morocco
- the carpet is taken on a journey to the market in Morocco
- the carpet is being sold and bought in the market in Morocco
- The carpet is being bought at the 'Magic Carpets' shop in Australia
- The carpet is in the family home in Australia
- The moment depicted in the Australian boy's drawing of the magic carpet.

The students focus on the page that depicts that moment and involving all the people in their group they create a still image/ freeze frame to show that moment. Group members can be people, animals or objects in the scene. A length of fabric can be used to represent the carpet and this can appear in each scene to create a common focal point.

Deepening thinking about culture, identity and globalisation

Each group shows their still image in sequence of first event to last. When each scene is shown, the teacher can 'tap in' characters for thoughts, to find out what objects are, or bring the scene to life for ten seconds. Asking questions of the characters in the still images or momentarily bringing the scenes to life provides a chance to deepen thinking about some of the actions and transactions in the story of the carpet. For example, we might ask: What is the mother thinking as she makes the carpet? How much is the carpet sold for at the market? Is it a fair price? What does the family do with the money they get for the carpet? Why does the Australian family choose to buy the carpet? How much do they pay for it? What does the carpet mean to them?

Magic Remote Control

The device of 'the magic remote control' can be used to animate these still images. It is an imaginary and invisible device but nevertheless a powerful one that is enthusiastically accepted by students. The magic remote, like a DVD remote control, when pointed at the scene can be used to play or pause the action in the scene. It can also fast forward, rewind or make the scene proceed in slow motion, fast motion or frame at a time. Really advanced remotes even have subtitles and program information (which can be useful for scenes that need a little more explanation).

Reflection on common values shared across cultures

What are some of the things that we need to live? There are many environmental and cultural differences between the two families on two sides of the world. What are some of the things that are the same about the two boys in two very different parts of the world? Students may talk about family relationships, house, work, technology, food and so on.

Pen pals and post cards

The final page in each story suggests that the boys have the potential to connect with each others' worlds. Divide the class into half with one half moving into a part of the room representing the northern hemisphere and the other half in the southern hemisphere. Those in the north imagine they are a boy or girl from Morocco and those in the south imagine they are a boy or girl from Australia. As individuals or in smaller groups students are asked to draw upon what they have learned from the book (and possibly other research) to imagine they are that child and write a letter or email to a boy or girl on the other side of the world. The letters could describe daily activities, hopes and dreams and ask questions.

The letters are sent to the other hemisphere, by paper plane perhaps, to a corresponding student (or group) on the other side of the room. The recipient can draw an illustration that could represent the photo or drawing that accompanied the letter/ email or if working in groups they could create the picture as a still image.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PRACTICE

Drama and dance lab using 'Mirror' as a pretext proved to be a very successful innovation from the perspective of all the stakeholders.

The school and the teachers

Bringing around 200 pre-service teachers

into the school in one week might seem somewhat of an invasion. However, the willingness of the school to accommodate us and have us return to repeat the experience for new groups of primary students with new themes and new pretexts this year is a sign of the way they value the experience for their students and staff. Teachers commented that the experience was not only valuable for their students but ‘very inspiring for the teachers’. They appreciated the way that their students were so engaged and valued the opportunity to ‘see the students in a different light and notice how some students really enjoyed learning in this way.’ Seeing the relatively inexperienced pre-service teachers confidently take on the teaching of drama and dance activities, and joining in enthusiastically with the primary students, prompted some of the experienced teachers to question why they don’t incorporate more drama and dance into their own teaching.

Primary students

At the end of each workshop we asked for feedback from the students. A common comment was that they enjoyed it a lot and asked ‘When can you come back again?’ Some teachers organised for more formal written feedback from the year 3 and 4 students in the form of a PMI—what they thought was a plus, a minus or simply interesting about the drama and dance experience. The most commonly stated negative was that they felt the workshop had not gone for long enough. We found it interesting that most and least favourite activities were so varied amongst the students. For every activity that was one person’s favourite, there was someone for whom it was the least favourite. This alerted us to the need to include a variety of activities in our planning.

“It was interesting to see the ideas from the other groups for the pictures from ‘Mirror’.”

“When we made the pictures from the ‘Mirror’ book it was tiring. We had to do a lot of thinking.”

“I liked meeting new people and I liked doing the reflection because it was relaxing and you got to rest your mind.”

“I loved leading the Deakin University students and they had to follow my actions. I felt like I was a teacher.”

“There were a lot of teachers to help you with stuff.”

“I got to be in a lot of fun activities. I would have liked it to go for longer.”

Pre-service teachers

In their feedback on the unit, the pre-service teachers commented specifically on the primary school workshop as being a most valuable addition to the theoretical components of the arts education unit.

“The workshop at the local primary school was the highlight of the whole subject - it was a great opportunity to see how much students enjoy dance and drama.”

“I really enjoyed attending the primary school to put what we learnt into practice.”

“I enjoyed doing the practice teaching at the school, it gave me confidence, plus it was really fun.”

“I was very impressed by the amount of learning that was facilitated during the practical teaching component.”

The teacher educator

I was impressed with the willingness and competence of student teachers to lead activities after only a brief introduction to the activities themselves. They seemed to gain a great deal of confidence through their successful teaching.

Like the primary students, the university

students' main criticism of the experience was the constraint of time. A one-off workshop was only able to be a brief introduction. Unfortunately the large number of university students involved meant that not all were able to have an experience of teaching. However, they were able to guide and assist during small group work and participate and observe responses from inside the workshop experience. A one-off workshop did not allow for the demonstration of more sophisticated drama techniques and strategies possible with a rich text such as this. The need to consider teaching and learning in disciplines of both drama and dance meant that it was difficult to teach either in any depth. As a teacher educator I asked myself if the one-off school-based teaching experience was worth it despite these limitations; the answer is definitely 'yes'.

'Mirror' as a pretext

Prior to our workshop the primary children had read the book in class. While waiting for all the students to gather for the workshop we had a discussion with some students about what they thought the book was about. One student responded that it was 'about how we have so much and they don't have much' and the other students agreed. This kind of response shows how readily students see difference rather than what unites us. In her response the student was giving us what she thought was the 'right' answer. She was revealing to us that she understood the disparity of wealth and material possessions amongst the people of the world and that she was aware of her relative wealth and privilege. However, through her western hegemonic perspective she was seeing the difference as deficit. For example, the fact that the family in Morocco had a donkey for transport instead of a car was seen by these students as unfortunate. There was no thought that car ownership and travel across the desert terrain might have caused

more problems than it solved. The boy in Morocco does not seem to want for anything. Like the Australian boy, he has a loving extended family, a comfortable home, good home cooked food and wonderful experiences and by the end of the story he has a computer to access the world. Our job in presenting this drama and dance workshop was to move students beyond a deficit perspective of difference to an awareness of what we share in common.

In 'Mirror', rather than show how we are different, Jeannie Baker attempts to show the wonder of cultural differences and that it is the similarities that unite us. Through our workshop we hoped that the students would be encouraged to see the positives in difference cultures so as to develop a sense of valuing and respect for cultural differences. Owing to the constraints described above, the activities in this workshop did not allow for a deep exploration of the themes but they did call for a careful observation of the images in the text, close observation of others, a consideration of the interconnectedness of our world, and some of the things the people of the world value in common. The drama and dance activities also allowed for a small amount of empathic connection that comes from spending some moments in the shoes of another, in becoming a reflection of someone else and moving in unison. An exploration of 'Mirror', through the embodied and aesthetic art forms of drama and dance, allows us to get into the text and live a little in its pages. We can then go beyond the text as we imagine other possibilities for worlds to connect.

Mirror

JEANNIE
BAKER

Workshop
Devised by

ALICE
CLARINGBOLD
and
HELEN
SANDERCOE

INTRODUCTION

This workshop has been devised as a response to Drama Australia's Primary Drama initiative to develop more Primary Drama resources. The first part of this project is to use the picture book by Jeannie Baker, 'Mirror' that explores differences and similarities between two families, one in Sydney and the other in Morocco. This project is designed for primary drama teachers to trial and record their work on this book. This workshop is designed to be a stimulus to kick start the project. Another aspect of the project is to encourage teachers to share their practice. This workshop evolved out of true collaboration (in a café) as Alice teaches in Geelong and Helen in Melbourne.

You are invited by the 'Ministry of Us' to join a think tank to investigate 'differences and similarities' from three perspectives – global perspectives, fostering compassion and empathy and stimulating the imagination. The workshop is structured with these three perspectives in mind. At the conclusion of the workshop, participants will be asked what other ways can you envisage developing drama from this picture book.

WORKSHOP PLAN

The purpose of the workshop is introduced and the theme or objective of exploring 'differences and similarities' is explained.

Global Perspectives

Secret Handshake

Find a partner and make up a secret handshake. This is the first handshake. Then move around the room and find another partner. Make another handshake (different parts of the body suggested for handshake, such as elbows). (2nd handshake) Then do it again a third time with another partner. Then partners have to meet up, as the numbers, 1, 2, 3 are called out and handshakes exchanged.

Global greetings

The group brainstorms different greetings, verbal and non-verbal and they are written up on the board. Then the group greet each other in as many ways as possible.

Short discussion on 'differences and similarities'.

'Mirror' is shown to the group.

Sydney/Morocco Machines

Using the physical way of constructing 'machines', the group is divided into two and each creates a machine that expresses the place of 'Sydney' and 'Morocco' as portrayed in the book. Then shared and with a short discussion of what was presented and what was chosen.

Empathy/Compassion

Family Morning Postcards & Thoughts in the Head

After another look at the book, in groups of 5 approx, develop 3 postcards of the

mornings of the two families and present them. As they are presented, particular characters will be asked to voice their thoughts.

Mothers' Poem

Each person is given a strip of paper and asked to write a line (as though belongs to a poem) expressing the thoughts and/ or feelings of either of the Mothers. Then in groups, the lines are arranged and then rehearsed and performed.

Two Boys

Role on the Wall

Two sheets of paper are placed on the wall, with outlines of the two boys.

The group is divided into two – one group for the Aussie boy and one for the Moroccan boy. On the outside of the outline, everything that is a fact that is known about the boy from the book is noted and any thought or feeling that can be imagined for the boy is put on the inside.

Then the two boys are compared – discussion of 'differences and similarities'.

Computer Conversation (Group chorus)

The group is asked to imagine that the boys are in contact with each other through the computer. The groups each representing a boy face each other. Each group has one person playing the boy on a computer 'chatting' to the other. The whole group contributes to what the boys are writing to each other.

Imagination

Imagining a short carpet ride

Find a place and shut your eyes and imagine for a short time a magic carpet ride. Where would you like to go?
(Appropriate music)

Improvisation based on Tic Tac Toe Suggestions

Choose a person, a place and an object from the list below and create and present a short improvisation that includes these aspects.

A princess or a beggar	Tea pot	A Grand Vizier
Oasis	A market	A Palace
Market Seller	A Magic Carpet	T.V or computer

CONCLUSION

The group reflects on the workshop and it's themes and a short discussion of other ideas and approaches that could be generated from the book.

Drama in Education

The drama in this workshop can be defined as being 'about largely improvised, fictional contexts in which students are guided to explore the kinds of situations faced by people in real life, within a distanced and safe environment. Its (the drama) teaching and learning potential lies in the role-taking and exploration of particular moments within the drama framework and in the guided reflection that occurs outside of the drama itself.'
(Martello, J, Oct., 2001)

Here is a brief summary of two aspects of how drama promotes learning from Julie Martello's article that are applicable to this planned drama exploration.

- It involves the emotions which make situations and ideas memorable and assists in lasting learning. From the early establishment of drama as a teaching/learning method theorists

have claimed that it is because drama is felt that that it is so effective, that it promotes ‘the deepest kind of change that can take place...at the level of subjective meaning.

- It allows exploration and problem solving in safe, supported and motivated situations where children are more likely to take risks and ‘have a go’ without the threat of real-life consequences.

Drama and literacy

One of the reasons for choosing a picture book is to show that drama can enrich the experience of reading words and making deeper meaning from the pictures.

As Jennifer Simons and Robyn Ewing wrote, ‘When an illustrator joins with a author to elicit an affective response, they create a rich resource for dramatic exploration.’ And they also said, ‘To be truly literate, students need to be able to relate the themes, settings, plot and characters in the books they read to the contexts of their own social and literary experiences. Drama techniques are very useful for teachers to use in the development of critical literacy.’

Frameworks

Here are a brief description of some the drama conventions/strategies used in this workshop.

Still Photographs/Freeze Frames/ Frozen Images

Participants create a ‘photograph’ using their own bodies to represent a moment from the drama, combined with Soundtracking, Thought-tracking, Speech Bubbles or Thought Bubbles this convention can be used in a variety of different circumstances. This allows the group to examine a particular moment in more detail.

Thought Tracking

The inner thoughts of a character is revealed either by the person adopting that role or by the others in the group. This is a particular useful way of slowing down and deepening a drama especially if used in conjunction with Still photographs. A further development of this is to have the participants draw the distinction between what a role says; and what it thinks and what it feels.

USEFUL REFERENCES

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Simons, Jennifer & Ewing, Robyn (1998) *Using Drama to Promote Critical Literacy in the Primary Classroom*. *Australian Drama Education Magazine (Adem) No.5*, Drama Australia Publications.

Woolland, Brian 2009. *Pupils as Playwrights; drama literacy and playwriting*, Trentham books, London.

An online space for exploring *Mirror* by Jeannie Baker: <http://ydoeven.wix.com/mirror-arts-sequence>

Mirror Exercises for Drama Classes

Jeannie Baker's wordless books, such as 'Mirror', demand close observation of detail. Mirror exercises also require close observation of another. The ideas of empathy, harmony, similarity and connection emerging from simple mirror exercises in drama resonate with the themes of the book 'Mirror'.

Over the years mirror work in drama has become something of a cliché. Mirror exercises have often been used without any real consideration of their purpose. Like drama games they have been the limit of some teachers' drama teaching repertoire and stand in the way of more interesting and productive drama strategies. However, there are some good reasons why mirror exercises have become a drama class staple. Used thoughtfully they can be very valuable. In this section I provide a compilation of mirror exercises beginning with some reasons for including them in drama work. Many of these activities are drama classics and others are variations on the theme. You can adapt these mirror exercises for all levels and use them as the basis for your own versions.

THE PURPOSE OF MIRROR EXERCISES

Mirror exercises are used in drama to develop focus and concentration. Copying the actions of another requires careful observation skills that enhance awareness. I have also noticed a sense of empathy developing when participants pay close attention to and reflect the movements of another. There is also a degree of satisfaction and when unison is achieved and this can generate a feeling of belonging. Music can add an aesthetic element to encourage flow and make the exercise more like dance. While the main benefits are for the participants, mirror work in drama can also be very enjoyable for an audience to watch. Mirror work can also be very inclusive. Mirroring can provide a supportive structure for those who have difficulty remembering choreography in performance. The physical nature of the exercises can also help extend a person's physical movement repertoire.

Classic Mirror Exercise

For young children it's a good idea to start by bringing to mind how a mirror works – if you have one in the room you can have someone do some movement in front of it

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as a reminder of what mirror image looks like. In pairs, participants face each other about arms distance apart. They decide who is to be A and who is to be B. A is to become the leader in the first iteration of the exercise and B is the reflection. The leader should keep their actions slow and simple (like slow-motion) so that the reflection can follow. It can be a good idea to start with arm movements or gestures only use abstract movements rather than everyday actions like cleaning teeth or brushing hair. The movement should also be done in silence. Gradually movements can become more complex with practice. The aim is for the reflection to be so close to the original that someone observing from the outside would not be able to tell who the leader is and who the mirror reflection is. Slow paced music can be used to help keep the movements slow and easy to follow and to add an aesthetic element.

It's a good idea to stop after a short time and hold a discussion about what factors are important to remember for the exercise to work well. Some might need to be reminded to be the mirror image – if the leader raises their right arm the mirror will raise their left arm.

After a time pairs should swap roles so that they have both experiences. Swap partners regularly as well so that participants have the opportunity to work with lots of different people.

Extensions:

- Try to keep eye contact using peripheral vision to observe the movement.
- Gradually make the movements more complex- for example bring in arm and leg movements simultaneously. Gradually move in the space and play with the distance between the leader and mirror – e.g. the leader steps back and the reflection steps back.
- By subtle and sensitive measures of yielding and taking control the pair can shift the leadership role from one to the other during the exercise. This can add to the challenge of the outside observer trying to work out who is leading and who is mirroring. For mirror pairs who are well focused the movements may flow so well that neither is fully aware of who is leading at any given time.
- Add in moments of freeze. Exercise the imagination by asking what possible explanation there could be for the position that pairs find themselves in.
- Add in facial expressions or suggestions of mood, character and so on.
- Add sound- this will also need to be slow if it is to be copied. Start with something simple like counting or with a rhyme.

Mirror Exercises in Groups

Mirror exercises along the lines of the classic exercise outlined above can be done in any size group but it's a good idea to start small.

In a group of three participants stand facing each other in a triangle arms distance apart. Each takes a turn to lead while the others mirror. Instead of making eye contact they can look into a central space and use their peripheral vision to follow the movements. It can then be tried as a group of 5 and more.

Whole class mirror exercise can be done with a leader facing lines or a cluster of mirrors following the actions.

Have two groups of mirrors on opposite sides of the room each facing their leader and following simultaneously perhaps in different responses to the same music.

Mirror Circle and Detective Game

Participants stand in a circle with arms distance between them. One person is allocated the role of leader. Those in the circle try to mirror the leader exactly. Rather than look directly at the leader they can look straight ahead and use peripheral vision. They try to achieve unison.

Turn this into a game by asking someone to become the 'detective' who closes their eyes or leaves the room while the leader is secretly chosen. The leader starts off the action and the detective takes their place in the centre of the circle. The detective has to observe carefully to try to detect the leader. The detective gets three guesses.

It is a good idea to stop after the first try and elicit some strategies for keeping the leader secret or for working out who is the leader.

For the game it might be best to use rhythmic and repetitive actions that the leader changes from time to time. It is easier to detect the leader when movements have a body percussion sound element such as tapping shoulders or patting knees. Depending on the level you might want to add or remove the possibility of sound.

Delayed Mirrors

In pairs, one is 'A', and the other is 'B'. 'A' completes a short simple movement sequence which is then mirrored as exactly as possible by 'B'. 'B' can then lead a sequence of movements that is then mirrored by 'A'.

An extension of this activity is to move through the space with each movement, first 'A' then 'B'. This can be done in groups of 3 or more with each repeating the movement sequence in turn. These patterns can be developed and performed as a canon using music such as Pachelbel's Canon in D.

Mirror Circle Game

In a circle this mirror exercise is a game like Chinese Whispers only in physical rather than verbal form. The leader leads the group in a small movement sequence. This is repeated by the next person. It is then repeated by each person in turn around the circle who performs the movement exactly as they saw it done by the previous person (not the leader). They must add in any small changes that they perceive (including laughter, hesitations etc.). By the time it reaches the end there is likely to be significant, and often hilarious, differences from the original.

This can also be done in a row with the next mirror in line not turning around until tapped on the shoulder by the previous one. Once a mirror has repeated the action they can sit a watch the rest of the mirror and watch the activity through to its hilarious conclusion. To be fair, repeat the exercise in the reverse order with the person who was last as the first leader.

This activity can also be done with a simple mimed activity. It is a way of drawing attention to the need to focus on detail in mime.

Mirror Exercise with Chairs

Set out a row of chairs down the length of the room with another chair facing the row of chairs. The leader takes the single chair and those on the row of chairs will follow the leader. Play some slow music for the leader to begin slow movements and gestures that are closely mirrored by those in the chairs facing their direction. The remaining people can stand to the side as audience and take a turn at leading or mirroring later.

Double Mirror Exercise with Chairs

Set out a row of chairs down the length of the room with every second chair facing in the opposite direction. Facing each row is another chair for the two people who will be the leaders in this exercise. Play some slow music for the leaders to begin slow movements and gestures that are closely mirrored by those in the chairs facing their direction.

The leaders can do different movements from each other to create a very interesting effect of interwoven movements that often contrast in interesting ways. An extension is to encourage the two leaders to either try to copy each other or to deliberately contrast with the other.

At the conclusion of the activity invite comments about what helps the activity to work and about the visual effect and affect of the lines of bodies moving in unison but in different and often complementary and artistic ways.

Blind Mirror Exercise with Guides

The mirror exercise with chairs can be repeated with a new group of participants. Those in the chairs are invited to close their eyes during the exercise and are asked if they will allow themselves to be guided through the actions by the people who stand behind them. The guides, acting as their eyes, gently talk and/or physically move their partner through the actions.

At the conclusion of the exercise participants are invited to talk to each other about what the experience of guiding or being guided was like for them before bringing some of these points to the whole group. Some of the experiences that may be raised in the discussion include vulnerability, trust, care and supporting others.

Distorted Mirrors

Any of the above mirror exercises can be done with the added layer of distortion such as a mood or an emotion. Mirrors may also be asked to exaggerate, magnify or minimize the action when they repeat it. For group mirrors of each of the mirrors could mirror the action and movement with a different mood or emotion e.g. happy, sad, lazy, weak or powerful.

Mirrors could be like those in a Fun House that reflect back a distorted and often amusing version of the original. An exercise like this can move into an exploration of physical comedy.

Mirror Exercises from Behind the Leader

Any of the above exercises can be done with the mirror behind the leader following their actions. Group versions can be done in a line, a circle, a triangle, a diamond or a clump. Here are some variations:

Follow-the-Leader

Follow-the Leader is an example of this. In a single line each person focuses on mirroring the person directly in front of them. It can be done moving around the room or standing still. If moving, the leader can negotiate obstacles or things to interact with, like props, along the way.

If done standing still, or in a circle where everyone faces in one direction, you can build in a delay of a second or so to create a canon effect. This is something like the Mexican Wave only more interesting movements and possibly done to music to add to the effect.

School of Fish and Flocking

Groups of people can mirror a leader from behind. It is easy to begin this with a group of three. One person leads and the others stand behind as two points on a triangle. They follow the leader's movements and if the leader turns right or left they turn as well. This may result in one of the other points of the triangle being in front. If this is the case they become the new leader.

More people can be added to make a larger triangle or a V like a flock of birds. A larger more clumped group can allow different leaders to emerge. This is like what happens with a school of fish. As the group moves around and changes direction the leader keeps changing. The same principles of closely copying the leader's actions apply.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mirror exercises have been used for decades in drama classes and who is to know where they originated. I would however like to acknowledge Brian Way (1967) whose seminal text 'Development through Drama' was undoubtedly used by many of my drama teachers in the 1970s because the exercises seem so familiar. Way was one of the first to compile a list of a range of mirror exercises amongst other well known drama exercises that we all recognise today. I also acknowledge theatre director Kate Sulan who taught me the Mirror Chairs exercise in an inclusive drama/theatre workshop I did with Rawcus Theatre some years ago.



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