**DRAMA UNIT OF LESSONS**

***Theme: Saving Our Forests***

**Target Students: Stage 2/3**

**by Jenny Cottle**

**CONTEXT**

The following lessons have been designed using my daughter's Year 5 class at Penshurst West Public School as a model for focus. Students at Penshurst West come from mainly middle class backgrounds with 'traditional' conservative values. The school is quite small (approximately 300 students) and has only a small minority of non-English speaking background students.

Based on my own observations of my daughter and her peers, and consultation with her Year 5 teacher, it appears these students have had some experience with some elements of drama. In an effort to build upon past experience and develop skills to enable participation in later activities, some of the activities in this unit are Level 2 activities and others are Level 3 (as per the Creative and Practical Arts Drama Strand Draft Syllabus).

**RATIONALE**

Most of the lessons in the unit are comprised of several activities in order to allow students to recap past knowledge, be at ease with the activities, practice existing skills and develop new skills.

Students in the model class vary greatly in academic ability and personality. Due to this it is proposed that some activities, for example the Academy Awards of Reading, would be done in streamed groups to allow students to perform at a level suited to their ability. Other activities may also be performed in groups to allow greater opportunity for participation with limited time availability. However, it is desirous that most of the activities would be performed as a whole class to encourage unity and interaction of the group as a whole.

In this document, only those lessons which directly relate to the development of Drama skills and practice of those skills have been included. However, it should be noted that some of these lessons also have benefit in teaching other KLA skills. For example, the Academy Awards of Reading can develop confidence and improved ability in Oral Reading; the Word Association Circle can stimulate logical thinking which may help in subsequent Mathematics lessons.

Rather than taking place during a specific time and day during the week, the first three games in this unit (Academy Awards of Reading, Word Association Circle and Sentence Association Circle) would be used as 'transitional' activities between other lessons. For example, the Word Association Circle, could be used between an Maths and English lesson. It is therefore envisaged that these games would (particularly if students enjoy them) that these games would be played more than once a week.

Other lessons, nominated as Drama lessons, would take place during nominated weekly Drama time. Lessons would be of 45-50 minutes duration.

**THEME**

Ideally, the theme of the Saving Our Forests could be used as the theme for all KLA lessons during the time of teaching this unit. In this way, the Drama lessons could also be used a facilitator for learning in any KLA where deemed appropriate.

The theme of Saving Our Forests lends itself to covering prerequisite environmental content of both the HSIE, Science and Technology, and PDHPE syllabi, but also offers much scope in all curricula. An example of this could be composing and sending a class letter to the timber industry to find out 'their side of the story'. This then offers many opportunities to teach across curricula.

**UNIT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The major aim of this unit is to sequentially develop drama skills and understandings in such a way that learning occurs through enjoyable participation rather than preoccupation with attempts at creating idealised forms. To this end, most lessons would be presented to the students in a 'game' format with minimum emphasis on theory and structure.

The prime objective of this unit is for the students to dramatise a short story. In order to achieve this objective, and appraise it, the students will participate in a variety of activities. These include improvisation, role play and characterisation; introduction theatrical elements of Drama; and observing, reflecting and contextualising performance.

**EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT**

Evaluation would be on an ongoing basis during the unit. Primary concerns for evaluation are that students gain skills to enable subsequent development and that the students enjoy the lessons.

Additional to this is the obvious concern that lessons meet lesson objectives.

Student assessment during the unit is primarily concerned with participation and attitude, although individual developments over the progress of the unit would be noted - particularly those requiring remediation or extension.

Additionally, acquisition of skills could also be recorded.

It is recognised that not all activities (particularly improvisations) will evolve as I might envisage them and that this should be taken into account during any assessment.

Those activities identified as Games would not be assessed except in the area of major difficulty with the activity, where it would lead to further examination of a student to ascertain suitable remediation.

GAME: The Academy Awards of Reading

**Objective:** To develop expressive Oral Language and initial Characterisation skill.

**Duration:** 5-10 minutes

**Cross-Curric. Links** This lesson may be used as part of an Oral Reading English lesson or a transitional lesson

**Materials:** Any written text; all students must be able to read

- for example one copy each of same text

**Class:** Reading Groups (groups based on reading ability - if used as part of Oral Reading lesson), Random Groups or Whole Class

**Activity:** \* Students are offered a selection of characters (see below) or make an offer of the character they want to perform.

\* Students read aloud using the voice of their nominated character.

Character Suggestions:

Arnold Schwartzeneger

Old man/ old lady

Baby

An American

A French person

An English person

Robot

Mr Bean

An Aussie from the bush

A Queen/ King

A drunk person

A sick person

\*\* **VARIATION**

This activity could use emotions/ personality traits rather than characters. For example:

Shy Angry Tired Chatterbox Ecstatic Friendly Depressed Efficient Disorganised

**ASSESSMENT:** This activity would not be assessed except in relation to improvements in Oral Reading ability.

\**NOTE: I developed this game whilst assisting at the school with Oral Reading on a group basis. Concerned at the lack of expression in the students' voices with a Year 3 class, I made up this game to try to encourage more expressive reading. I have subsequently and successfully used this game with students from Year 1 to Year 6.*

**GAME: Word Association Circle**

**Objectives:** To encourage sequential thinking on a particular theme.

To develop skills in responding quickly

Duration: 5-10 minutes

**Cross-Curric.Links** This lesson may be used as a transitional lesson and/or an introduction to thinking on a particular topic relating to a curricular area about to be studied

**Class:** Whole class

**Activity:** \* Students sit at desks or in a circle

\* Teacher picks a word (1st time theme words should NOT be used) egs.: red wet play

\* Moving around the 'circle' each student says a word relating to the word

\* Once each student has had a turn and students have general idea of game, repeat with each student relating their word to the previous student's word

\*\* If students can not think of a word, they may 'skip' a turn

**GAME: Sentence Association Circle**

**Objectives:** To develop preliminary skills for participating in performance with other students.

To develop skills in responding quickly.

Duration: 10-15 minutes

**Cross-Curric.Links \*** This lesson may be used as a transitional lesson and/or an introduction to thinking on a particular topic relating to a curricular area about to be studied

**Materials:** Series of sentences or phrases

**Class:** Whole class

**Activity:** \* **Extension of Word Association Circle**

\* Teacher says a sentence (see examples below)

\* Moving around the 'circle' each student says a sentence relating to the sentence

\* Once each student has had a turn, game is repeated with each student saying a sentence relating to the previous student's sentence

\*\* If students can not think of a sentence they may 'skip' a turn

Example Opening Sentences:

It was raining when I woke up. Got you!

I'm sorry. I'm lost.

Stop! OOps!

What's that you're eating? You're leaving?

Today's my birthday. He's in gaol.

I hate you. Answer the door.

Doctor? Hurry!

What's in the box? Who was that?

Boo! Have you seen it?

Ow! That hurt! Close your eyes.

Help me. Help me.

Oh, Mum.... A shark!

DRAMA LESSON 1.

**Lesson Overview:**

1. Game: Wild Walk

2. Game: Statues

3. Improvisation: Doing Something You Know

**Rationale:**

This lesson has been sequenced to introduce the students to Drama as a central focus for learning. It is intended to allow students to learn and develop basic drama skills (which will be necessary for later Playbuilding) in a relaxed and enjoyable way so as to reduce inhibition and hopefully increase participation.

**Objectives:**

Objectives for lesson components are listed in the more detailed lesson plans which follow.

**Assessment:**

Students would be assessed on participation and attitude to participation during the activities. This would be measured against information already known about individual students; for example successful participation in the Improvisation would be measured according to individual effort rather than perceived technical skill at the activity.

It should be noted that (as with all lessons in this unit) if there is a class predominance for reluctance to participate, major re-evaluation of the unit would be necessary and student assessment would be minimalised or negated.

**GAME: Wild Walk**

**Objectives:** To develop body movement skills

To develop spatial awareness

**Duration:** 5-10 minutes

**Class:** Whole class

Sufficient space to allow students to move around freely

**Activity:** \* Students to walk about in free space not colliding with other students

\* Students to imagine they are being filmed - now they are the film and the projector starts to muck up - it's going too fast.... now it's going slow.... now it's going backwards..... and it stops frozen in place.

**GAME: Statues**

**Objectives:** To develop trust and confidence in interacting with others.

To explore dramatic meaning through body position.

**Duration:** 5-10 minutes

**Class:** Whole class

Students to remain frozen in place from "Wild Walk"

**Activity:** \* Teacher to nominate half of the class to become artists and give them a 'statue' to work on (the other half of the class)

\* Students to 'mould' their statue to represent a direction given by the teacher,

eg. anger fear an opera singer a politician

\* Students to then swap and process is repeated.

\* Particularly expressive artist/statues could be re-created to show the whole class

**IMPROVISATION: Doing Something You Know**

**Objectives:** To develop pantomime skills

To introduce students to/ develop improvisation skills

**Duration:** 20-25 minutes

**Class:** Whole class

Sufficient space to allow students to move around freely

**Activity:** \* Students told to find their own space

\* Explain to students that they are to perform some actions and that they should be as real as possible - just as if they were really doing them (eg. if you use a toothbrush to brush your teeth imagine you have it)

\* Sequence of actions (see Sample dialogue for detail) - Wake up

Breakfast

Wash up

Get dressed for gardening

Weeding

Mow lawn (incl. get mower out & put away)

Plant seeds (incl. readying soil)

Become the seed

\* Students to shake and relax and sit in circle

\* Brief discussion on how they felt as the improvisations progressed (Did they get easier?)

\* Brief discussion on importance of native plants in our garden.

**Sample dialogue to students:**

Pretend they have just woken up (Do you stretch? Are you happy or grumpy?) Now get your breakfast - this morning you're having orange juice and cereal (Have you got your bowl and spoon? Are they kept in the same spot?) Eat your breakfast and drink your juice

Wash up your breakfast things (put the plug in the sink, some detergent in - not too much, wash up - use a sponge, drain the dishes, dry the dishes and put them away)

It's a lovely day so you're going to do some gardening - what clothes do you put on? Some shorts and a shirt and some socks and shoes. Don't forget your hat, and put on some blockout - it's very hot.

First we'll do some weeding so we'll need a gardening fork and some gloves - put them on. Find a spot you want to weed and sit or kneel beside it and start weeding - dig around and under the weed, then pull it out.

Now let's mow the lawn. Get the mower out of the shed, check that it's got enough petrol. Check the height setting - we don't want to cut the grass too short (it looses too much water). Turn the fuel switch and pull the starter cord - it's almost started, pull again - nearly, again - now it's going. Push your mower around and mow the lawn. Turn the mower off and put it away.

We want to attract some native birds to our garden so we're going to plant some native seeds. First we need to get the soil ready - so we get a bucket of compost from the bottom of our compost heap and bring it back to the garden. Now we use the gardening fork and dig up the soil in the garden a bit. Then we mix the compost up with the dug up soil.

Now for the seeds. Where did we put them? Are they in the shed (don't walk through doors!) - No? Oh, the packet is in your pocket. Open the packet carefully. Now sprinkle the seeds over the prepared soil and lightly mix them into the soil with your gardening fork. Get a watering can of water and water your soil.

Now you are a seed in the soil - it's dark and you're all curled up. You feel the water reaching you and the warmth of the sun - it feels good. It's making you grow. Slowly you push a little bit of you way up through the soil to reach the sun. Now you're through the soil, and you're still growing - the sun and the water are making you grow bigger and taller. Growing and growing until you become a Wattle shrub, bushy and healthy and bursting with flowers to attract the birds.

DRAMA LESSON 2.

**Lesson Overview:**

1. Game: Follow Your Nose

2. Improvisation: Shadow Improvisation

3. Improvisation: Teacher In Role - The Rainforest

4. Role Play: A Rainforest or Jobs?

**Rationale:**

This lesson has been sequenced to build upon skills learnt in the previous lesson and develop new skills to guide students toward the goal of Playbuilding.

**Objectives:**

Objectives for lesson components are listed in the more detailed lesson plans which follow.

**Assessment:**

Students would be assessed on participation and attitude to participation during the activities. This would be measured against information already known about individual students; for example successful participation in the Improvisation would be measured according to individual effort rather than perceived technical skill at the activity.

Additionally, students would be assessed in terms of contributing comments and responses during discussion which show attentiveness to the activities.

It should be noted that (as with all lessons in this unit) if there is a class predominance for reluctance to participate, major re-evaluation of the unit would be necessary and student assessment would be minimalised or negated.

**GAME: Follow Your Nose**

**Objectives:** To encourage imagination and interaction with others

To develop spatial awareness skills

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Class:** Whole class

Sufficient space to allow students to move around freely

**Activity:** \* **Step 1.** - students to move around in free space trying to keep a distance of at least 2 metres between themselves and other students at all times (students must keep moving; pace may be increased)

\* After 1 minute students told to freeze in place

\* **Step 2.** - each student to select (without telling)

the body part of another student to follow eg. knee

\* On "go" signal students to move about in free space trying to keep a maximum distance of 1 metre between themselves and their nominated student's body part

\* **Step 3.** - students to form groups of 4-6 and repeat Step 2 using 'follow the leader' format

EXTENSION: Activity may be repeated increasing group size until whole class is 'following' 1 leader

**IMPROVISATION: Shadow Improvisations**

**Objective:** To develop improvisation skills

To develop observation and interaction skills

**Duration:** 5-10 minutes

**Materials:** Action Cards (sufficient for whole class)

**Class:** Whole class - in Pairs

Sufficient space to allow students to work in small groups and present to whole class

**Activity:** \* Students to divide pairs

\* Each student pair to receive 2 actions cards

\* 1 student from each pair is to mime the action from one of the cards (really try to imagine you are doing it)

\* Other student is to follow the mimed action of their partner as if they were a shadow

\* Repeat using other action card and roles reversed

\* Some pairs could be selected to repeat their action to whole class

**Examples for Action Cards:**

Counting money Feeding a dog or cat

Wrapping a present Painting a picture

Washing the dishes Peeling an orange

Watering plants Doing exercises

Trying on clothes Wading in water

Typing a letter Playing the piano

Scrubbing the floor Digging a hole

**IMPROVISATION: Teacher In Role** - The Rainforest

**Objective:** To develop improvisation skills

**Duration:** 15-20 minutes

**Cross-Curric. Links** This improvisation could be used as part of a HSIE or Science & Technology unit on forests or rainforests

**Materials:** Stimulus pictures (including sheets showing pictures of plants & animals found in rainforests - see Appendix 1 for examples)

Facts about the dangers to rainforests

Music ("Rainforest Magic") - played softly during improvisation

**Class:** Whole class

Sufficient space for students to move around freely

**Activity:** \* Brief discussion about rainforests - ask for student input & show stimulus pictures

\* Tell students you are going to take them to a rainforest and take on role of a guide (guide will take students by bus from the city to a rainforest and on a short tour of it and discuss some of its features) - see sample dialogue below

\* Summary discussion - recap impressions about a rainforest after 'visiting' it and discussion about importance of rainforests including

**Sample Dialogue to Students:**

(Get students to sit on floor as if sitting on a bus)

As members involved in discussion about the proposed development in the Mira Binja Rainforest, we welcome you aboard for your rainforest tour.

The Mira Binja rainforest is the last stand of rainforest left in New South Wales and is thought to be the last remaining home of several animal and plant species.

As we leave the city, please take note of the outline of the city as you might like to compare a man made city with one of nature's cities - the rainforest.

See over there the buildings of different shapes and sizes and the bridge and the people - lots of different people - a lot of people could live in that block of flats.

Now the city's behind us - Can you see that even 'though there are so many different things in the city that from the distance it's outline makes it look like one huge thing?

We will be arriving at the rainforest very shortly. Can you see the outline of the treetops over there?

Good, we're here. Now if you wouldn't mind waiting beside the bus when you get off so that I can lead you in.

Although for most of our walk through the rainforest today we will be walking on raised platforms some of the plants which grow in the rainforest - particularly the vines - are fast growing - so please watch your step.

Many of the plants found to be useful in treating cancer have been found in rainforests. Also, rainforests are thought to play a major part in the world's water cycle - absorbing salt and 'less pure' waters and releasing it into the atmosphere as fresh water vapour. Trees also absorb carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen and so help combat pollution. Can't you smell that fresh air?

The forest is home to many many different types of plants and animals. That plant there is a tree fern, that's a palm, that's a flame tree (because of its red flowers) and see that growing on the side of that tree - that's actually another plant, hitching a ride and growing there - it's an orchid, notice it's beautiful flowers.

On the ground as you look around, you will notice there are lots of dried and rotting leaves along with fungi and many insects. Insects, along with worms who live in the soil help recycle the dead leaves and any dead animals into rich rainforest soil which allows so many different plants to grow here.

Now if we stand very still and quietly we might see some of the other residents of the rainforest city. Look - over there - can you see that bird? The one that looks a bit like crow. Do you know what it is? ..... That's right it's a Satin Bowerbird. And there curled up on the log - who knows what that is? Can anyone see anything else.

Listen. Can you hear that sound like a cat? It's a green catbird. Many of the birds in the rainforest are hard to see as they live in the upper story 'apartments' of the rainforest but we might hear them call. They are also home to many mammals, these animals are mainly active at night but we might be lucky and find one. Over there - hanging from that branch. Who knows what that one is?

Can you see that tall 'lacy looking' tree over there - that's a strangler fig - it grew over the top of another tree and ended up killing it - when the other tree died it rotted away and left hollows which many animals use for homes.

You will have noticed on our tour of the rainforest that it contains many different types of animals and plants - or great diversity. In fact rainforests contain more diversity of animals and plants than any other place on earth.

Apart from all of this, as you have seen today, rainforests are beautiful places - we hope you have enjoyed your tour.

We'll go back to the bus now. (Direct to board bus)

**Summary Discussion Facts:**

\* The world is losing an area the size of a football field of rainforest every minute.

\* A large part of Australia's east coast was once covered by rainforests.

\* Clearing rainforests is linked to ozone crisis and the greenhouse effect

\* Rainforests are home to some 40-50 of all living things

\* Rainforests are being squandered - in Papua New Guinea rainforest timber is being used to make disposable chopsticks

\* In South America rainforests are being cleared for cattle grazing

\* 70% of all plants identified as useful by the US Cancer Council came from rainforests

**ROLE PLAY: A Rainforest or Jobs?**

**Objective:** To explore ideas "in someone else's shoes"

**Duration:** 20-25 minutes

**Materials:** Introduction information - setting the scene

List of key characters (to mention if similar not included by students)

**Class:** Whole class - in Groups of 6 students

Sufficient space for student groups not to be disturbed by other groups

**Activity:** \* Outline the activity with the students - they are going to take part in a brief role play discussion (give background - see below).

\* Class to Brainstorm possible characters **(5 minutes)**

\* Students split into groups and discuss issues and possible approach to role play **(5 minutes maximum)**

\* Student groups to each perform the role play

\* Students to regroup and Appraise the Activity

**Background to the Role Play:**

In a small town on the NSW north coast there is a town meeting they have come together to discuss a proposed tourism development in the nearby Mira Binja rainforest.

The Mira Binja rainforest is the last stand of rainforest in NSW and thought to be the last home of several animal and plant species, including the Golden Bell frog otherwise thought to be extinct.

Previously the town relied on logging in the rainforest, now the logging has stopped and nearly 1 in 3 people is unemployed. High unemployment has meant that people have no money to spend, and shops and other businesses are closing.

The tourist development would provide jobs for up to 50 people, as well as bring many other people to the town who could spend money in the town's shops.

This meeting is to put forward all arguments for and against the development and decide if it should go ahead.

**Sample Stimulus Questions for Character Selection**

Who would be most knowledgeable about the rainforest?

Who might benefit from the development?

Who would make the final decision?

What about the developer?

**Sample questions Appraising the Activity:**

- Who played a role with an opinion other that their own? Did playing the role have an affect on your opinion?

- X's group was very convincing - why was that?

- What could be some of the things that would improve this role play?

DRAMA LESSON 3.

**Lesson Overview:**

1. Game: Sticky Paper

2. Game: Mirrors

3. Structure: Punctuating Language

4. Improvisation: Starting With Dialogue

5. Homework: Punctuation Exercise

**Rationale:**

This lesson has been sequenced to build upon skills learnt in the previous lesson and develop new skills to guide students toward the goal of Playbuilding. In particular, this lesson aims to introduce students to a more formal aspects of playbuilding, dialogue, both in it's written and spoken forms.

**Objectives:**

Objectives for lesson components are listed in the more detailed lesson plans which follow.

**Assessment:**

Students would be assessed on participation and attitude to participation during the activities. This would be measured against information already known about individual students; for example successful participation in the Improvisation would be measured according to individual effort rather than perceived technical skill at the activity.

Additionally, students would be assessed in terms of contributing comments and responses during discussion which show attentiveness to the activities.

Both the Punctuating Language activity and the Homework would also be assessed in terms of English language ability, with student needs and abilities noted accordingly.

It should be noted that (as with all lessons in this unit) if there is a class predominance for reluctance to participate, major re-evaluation of the unit would be necessary and student assessment would be minimalised or negated.

**GAME: Sticky Paper**

**Objectives:** To encourage imagination and interaction with others

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Class:** Whole class

Sufficient space to allow students to move around freely

**Activity:** \* Students are to imagine they have a piece of paper stuck to the fingers of one hand

\* They peel it off and it sticks to the other hand

\* Anywhere they touch the paper it sticks

\* Students to try to give their sticky paper to the someone else

\* To conclude activity, tell students that you have sprayed them with 'de-stickying' solution (mime action) and that they can put their pieces of paper in the bin.

**GAME: Mirrors**

**Objectives:** To develop students' awareness of movement in themselves and others

**Duration:** 5-10 minutes

**Class:** Whole class - in Pairs

**Activity:** \* Pairs to sit facing each other

\* One student to make simple slow actions

\* Other student to copy, as if a mirror reflection

\* Students swap roles

**STUCTURE: Punctuating Language**

**Objectives:** To introduce students to written forms of spoken dramatic language

**Duration:** 5-10 minutes

**Cross-Curric.Links \*** This lesson has obvious English language links and as such could be used as part of such a lesson

**Materials:** Series of sentences or phrases (maximum 20)

**Class:** Whole class

**Activity:** \* Teacher to make a statement, then write on board showing punctuation (to demonstrate)

\* Teacher to dictate sentences to students who write down using exaggerated expression to show punctuation (and dramatic meaning)

\* Students selected to each sentence on the board using punctuation as demonstrated by teacher

\* Discuss briefly written conventions, eg *italics* for spoken emphasis

Example Sentences & Phrases:

A flower! You can't make me!

I'm sorry. No?

We have to stop them. Stop!

Why do you have to do this? Oh yuk!

Not *this* tree! This *is* great.

I hate you. This is *great*!

Oh wow! Hurry!

That's... beautiful. This is .....

I *won't* do it. Have you seen it?

Help me. Help me!

**IMPROVISATIONS: Starting with Dialogue**

**Objective:** To develop skills in using language to convey dramatic meaning

**Duration:** 20-25 minutes

**Class:** Groups of 4

**Activity:** \* Using one of the sentences (left on the board from the previous exercise) as beginning line, student groups to devise a SHORT improvisation about a going to a rainforest

\* Groups to find area to discuss and rehearse improvisations (10 minutes)

\* Teacher to move from group to group to observe & get groups 'on task' if necessary

\* Groups to perform their improvisation to class (groups perform 'in the round' to minimise formality; encourage student to volunteer to perform)

\* Appraising the Activity

**Sample questions Appraising the Activity:**

- Group X, in your improvisation you did ... What was that meant to convey?

- Y's group was very convincing - why was that?

- What could be some of the things that would improve an improvisation?

**HOMEWORK:** \* A handout listing 10-20 short sentences or phrases with space beside each for students to rewrite

\* Show overhead or hold up handout and read instruction from top of handout to students - "Rewrite each of the following sentences using italics or different punctuation to change the meaning"

\* Write an example sentence on the board, ask students if could rewrite to change its meaning, select 2-3 students to demonstrate

\* Distribute handout

NOTE: Finished work could be discussed (students read their work) in 5 minute sessions over several of the following mornings or, used as an introduction to the following English language lesson.

**Homework Sentences and Phrases:**

You are. Hurry.

This... is for you. There's someone there.

I saw two frogs. You need a shave.

That man. There's a bug on you.

Answer the door. He's in gaol.

Here's a dollar. Tomorrow.

It's empty. My stomach hurts.

Well .... Shhh.

Hold my hand. There, there.

**DRAMA LESSON 4.**

**Lesson Overview:**

1. Game: Machines 1

2. Game: Train Drivers

3. Making Plays from Stories: The Storytelling

4. Making Plays from Stories: The Approach

5. Making Plays from Stories: First Attempt

6. Homework: Scene ideas and attempting a script

**Rationale:**

This lesson introduces the story from which a play is to be 'built', guides students in approaching the playbuilding and allows an initial attempt at dramatising a scene from the story.

**Objectives:**

Objectives for lesson components are listed in the more detailed lesson plans which follow.

**Assessment:**

Students would be assessed on participation and attitude to participation during the activities. This would be measured against information already known about individual students; for example successful participation in the First Attempt would be measured according to individual effort rather than perceived technical skill at the activity.

Additionally, students would be assessed in terms of contributing comments and responses during discussion which show attentiveness to the activities.

Homework would also be assessed in terms of effort made in the attempt, however, it does offer opportunity to identify written language needs and skills.

It should be noted that (as with all lessons in this unit) if there is a class predominance for reluctance to participate, major re-evaluation of the unit would be necessary and student assessment would be minimalised or negated.

**GAME: Machines 1**

**Objectives:** To encourage imagination in body movement and interaction with others

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Class:** Groups of 4-6 students

Sufficient space to allow students to move freely

**Activity:** \* A member of each group starts making a repetitive machine-like action

\* One by one the other members of the group 'hook on' to the machine adding new and different actions to the 'machine'

\* Groups continue working until teacher calls "Freeze"

\* Groups stay frozen until rusted until teacher calls "Action"

\*\* Final "Freeze", teacher advises groups to shake and relax

**GAME: Train Drivers**

**Objectives:** To encourage trust in interaction with others

To practise sensory awareness

**Duration:** 5-10 minutes

**Class:** Whole class

Sufficient space to allow students to move around freely

**Activity:** \* Students to form pairs

\* One of each pair to stand behind the other with their hands on the person in front's shoulders

\* Person in front to close their eyes whilst person behind drives them (using their hands to turn and stop) about ensuring they don't crash into other pairs

\* NO TALKING - person with eyes closed to take note of what they notice with other senses (listen & feel)

\* After a couple of minutes, students swap positions

\* Discuss with students what they noticed with their eyes closed

\*\* VARIATION

Instead of moving about randomly, students may move along a set path (possibly in file following the teacher)

**MAKING PLAYS FROM STORIES: The Storytelling**

**Duration:** 5-10 minutes

**Class:** Whole class

The following story is a story I made up, loosely based on the book "Maxine's Tree" by Diane Léger-Haskell. It is to be told, rather than read to the students to allow observation of student reaction and answering of any student questions if necessary.

This is a story about a group of people and what they did to save a forest.

Not so long ago, there was a group of friends, Max, James, Kate and Anna; who with their families loved to go bushwalking. They liked being outside in the fresh air, they liked visiting beautiful places and they liked camping.

They especially liked bushwalking in forests where they'ld see many different birds, animals and trees.

For many years they would go bushwalking every weekend they could. But over time they found there were less and less places to go bushwalking - the forests were disappearing.

One weekend, when they walking through a particularly beautiful forest, with many really huge old trees, they reached the top of a hill and looked out over the next valley.

The hillside across the valley was bare. Its trees had been cut and taken away. Nothing green was left, only ragged burnt stumps.

Kate said it was a clearcut, where everything is destroyed to get the trees out.

Max tried to console her telling her that they'ld replant the trees, but Kate replied that wouldn't be a forest, only a tree farm.

She said it takes hundreds, even thousands of years to grow a forest - it's not just the trees, it's the fungi, the other plants and animals that all work together to make a forest.

They all agreed they had to do something to stop the logging and save the forest. But none of them was sure what to do.

That evening, back at their campsite, they talked about what could be done to save the forest.

Max suggested that they get all their friends and blockade the road to stop the trucks from getting to the forest.

Anna suggested that they chain themselves to the trees.

After tossing these and a few other ideas around, they decided that these were only temporary solutions.

They also knew that the people who cut down the trees were only doing their job, trying to make a living.

Suddenly Kate exclaimed that she had an idea that just might work but it would involve approaching the timber company.

Kate then explained her idea to her friends.

A week or so later, Kate, Max, James and Anne arrived at the timber company to discuss Kate's idea.

The company representatives explained to the group that as the company employed 100 people, the town relied on it, and without the company the town would die.

The friends explained Kate's idea to save the forest and the not loose the townspeople's jobs.

The idea was this: get people to sponsor the trees, they could even have small signs to identify their trees. Then encourage people to visit the forest - that would bring people who would spend money in the town. Other jobs would be made by creating and managing campsites and trails through the forest - so as not to damage the forest.

The people from the company agreed it was a good idea, but weren't sure if it would work, so the friends said they would get the ball rolling and find sponsors. It was then agreed to try and make the idea work.

The group of friends contacted all their friends, who contacted their friends, and soon they had 100 sponsors for the forest.

From there, the timber people used the money to pay people to make trails and campsites for the all the new visitors to the forest, the shops in the town actually had more business than ever and the townspeople too were able to adopt trees from the forest - and not one person lost their job.

**MAKING PLAYS FROM STORIES: The Approach**

**Objective:** To introduce students to the dramatic convention of scenes and orientate their thinking in relation to the story

**Duration:** 10-15 minutes

**Class:** Whole class

Activity: \* Students to recap story and discuss it's meaning - what did the story mean to you?

\* Scenes - in a play what is a scene? What would be the scenes in this story?

\* Character selection - students to nominate major characters in the story

\* What are these characters like?

\* How are they introduced?

\* Are all the characters serious all of the time?

\* Where does the first scene take place?

\* How could we use this space to do the first scene?

\* Is there anything else that would help perform it?

**ASSESSMENT:** Student participation including responses and comments during Discussion

**MAKING PLAYS FROM STORIES: First Attempt**

**Objective:** To allow students to experiment with improvised short scenes.

**Duration:** 15-20 minutes

**Class:** Whole class

**Activity:** \* Advise students are going to improvise the 1st scene using student information about characters etc.

\* Ask for volunteers to be the cast (introduce term to students if not done earlier)

\* Other students to recap events from 1st scene

\* Volunteer cast to perform 1st scene

\* Discuss the scene (see sample questions below)

\* Ask for new cast members (again volunteers)

\* New cast to perform 1st scene

\* Explain homework (see below)

**Sample Discussion Questions:**

- Did the players tell the story?

- What did you like about the scene?

- Did the people show that their feelings about the clearcut?

- Was there anything important left out?

- When we play it again, can you think of anything that would improve it?

**Homework:**

**Student information about characters and scenes made into handout and given to students later in day. Handout also to include extract of a script demonstrating conventions of writing.**

1. Write down some ideas for performing the other scenes, discuss it with your friends.

2. Write out one of your ideas for a scene like a script (see example)

**Sample Script**

*Class and teacher enter classroom. Teacher sits on chair in front of blackboard. Class sits on floor in front of teacher.*

TEACHER: Good morning class.

CLASS: Good morning teacher.

TEACHER: This morning we are going learn our 12 times tables.

*Class groans.*

TEACHER: Arash would you please bring me the chart. It's in the blue cupboard.

*Arash goes to the cupboard, get the chart and brings it to the teacher.*

TEACHER: Thank you Arash.

*Principal rushes in.*

PRINCIPAL: I'm sorry to interrupt you but there's an emergency

and everyone has to leave the building. Bring your class to the quadrangle.

*Principal leaves.*

TEACHER: All right class, quickly line up at the door.

*Class lines up.*

TEACHER: OK. Follow me.

*Class follows teacher. Arash is last in line.*

ARASH: Yes!! No maths!!

DRAMA LESSON 5.

**Lesson Overview:**

1. Game: What Are You Doing?

2. Game: Machines 2

3. Making Plays from Stories: Further Development

**Rationale:**

This lesson is designed to allow the students to further develop scenes from the story into dramatic action.

**Objectives:**

Objectives for lesson components are listed in the more detailed lesson plans which follow.

**Assessment:**

Students would be assessed on participation and attitude to participation during the activities. This would be measured against information already known about individual students; for example successful participation in group work would be measured according to individual effort rather than perceived technical skill at the activity, as well as willingness to work as a group.

Additionally, students would be assessed in terms of contributing comments and responses during discussion which show attentiveness to the activities.

It should be noted that (as with all lessons in this unit) if there is a class predominance for reluctance to participate, major re-evaluation of the unit would be necessary and student assessment would be minimalised or negated.

**GAME:**  What Are You Doing?

**Objectives:** To develop quick thinking and responses

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Class:** Whole class - in Pairs

**Sufficient space for students to move around freely**

**Activity:** \* One member (A) of each pair begins miming an activity, eg. cleaning teeth

\* Other member (B) asks "What are you doing?"

\* (A) answers with something completely different to what they are going, eg. rollerblading

\* (B) begins miming that action

\* (A) now asks "What are you doing?

\* (B) responds with something different which (A) them performs, and so on

EXTENSION: (if students 'catch on' very quickly) questioning student attempts to shadow the mime and asks "What are we doing?"

**GAME: Machines 2**

**Objectives:** To encourage imagination in body movement and interaction with others

**Duration:** 5-10 minutes

**Class:** Groups of 4-6 students

Sufficient space to allow students to move freely

**Activity:** \* Class to suggest specific machines that might be pantomimed by a small group of actors

\* Each group to select a machine then going to 'own' space to devise a pantomime that uses everyone in the group as a functioning part of the machine (2 minutes)

\* Teacher to move from group to group, assisting where necessary (eg. ask group what parts are in their machine)

\* Each group to 'perform' their machine

**Possible Machines** (ideas to get students started)

toaster washing machine

cuckoo clock pinball machine

carwash lawn mower

coffee pot blender

vacuum cleaner printing press

electric train typewriter

mousetrap car engine

**MAKING PLAYS FROM STORIES: Further Development**

**Objective:** To allow students to further experiment with improvised short scenes.

**Duration:** 30-35 minutes

**Materials:** Overhead or chart of Characters and Scenes as devised

by the students in previous lesson.

**Students' completed homework**

**Class:** Whole class

**Activity:** \* Put up overhead

\* Students to briefly recap story

\* Homework discussion - volunteers to share their ideas with class

\* Using student consensus (if possible) add this information to overhead or chart

\* Select a scene to be performed (if most students have done their homework on a particular scene do that one)

\* Ask students if any other information relating to that scene should be added to the chart.

\* Ask for volunteers (who have not previously acted) to be the cast

\* Discuss the scene (see sample questions below)

\* Ask for new cast members (again volunteers)

\* New cast to perform scene

\* Repeat process (cast, perform, discuss) for other scenes, ensuring all class members given opportunity to participate.

**Sample Discussion Questions:**

- Did the players tell the story?

- What did you like about the scene?

- Did the people show that their feelings about the clearcut?

- Was there anything important left out?

- When we play it again, can you think of anything that would improve it?

DRAMA LESSON 6.

**Lesson Overview:**

1. Game: Pass the Clap

2. Improvisation: Animal Characters

3. Game: Pass the Clap (reprise)

4. Making Plays from Stories: Bringing It All Together

**Rationale:**

This lesson is designed to allow the students to further develop scenes from the story and then bring them together to create a complete story, thus achieving the aim of the unit.

**Objectives:**

Objectives for lesson components are listed in the more detailed lesson plans which follow.

**Assessment:**

Students would be assessed on participation and attitude to participation during the activities. This would be measured against information already known about individual students; for example successful participation in the Improvisation would be measured according to individual effort rather than perceived technical skill at the activity. Group participation skills would also be monitored.

Additionally, students would be assessed in terms of contributing comments and responses during discussion which show attentiveness to the activities.

It should be noted that (as with all lessons in this unit) if there is a class predominance for reluctance to participate, major re-evaluation of the unit would be necessary and student assessment would be minimalised or negated.

**GAME: Pass the Clap**

**Objectives:** To encourage group interaction and quick thinking

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Class:** Whole class

Sufficient space for students to sit in a circle

**Activity:** \* Students and teacher to sit in a circle

\* Teacher to turn slightly to face a student next to them and clap hands

\* This student to turn to student next to them and clap hands and so on continuing around the circle

\* When 'clap' reaches teacher, teacher to vary loudness of clap; which continues in this way around the circle

\* Teacher calls 'freeze' and says when claps resume they are to go as quickly as possible; claps resume

\* Teacher calls 'freeze' and says claps may be now passed in either direction; claps resume

**IMPROVISATION: Animal Characters**

**Objectives:** To develop character exploration skills

**Duration:** 5-10 minutes

**Class:** Whole class

Sufficient space for students to move about freely

**Activity:** \* Students to find their own space and lie down with eyes closed.

\* Students to thinks about a particular animal; picturing it in their minds - how it moves, sounds, what it eats, it's nature etc.

\* Students to become the animal - moving and making its sounds in their space (2-3 minutes)

\* Students to now move around room 'mingling' with other animals - reacting to the other animals' noises and movements as if in nature - predator, prey, family etc. (3-5 minutes)

\* Shake and relax

**GAME: Pass the Clap** (reprise)

**Objective:** After a break, doing another activity, students often find themselves improved at this game

**Duration:** 2-3 minutes

**Activity:** \* Students to pass clap (in either direction and at varying volumes) as quickly as possible

**MAKING PLAYS FROM STORIES: Bringing it All Together**

**Objective:** To consolidate previous playbuilding experience into a complete work

**Duration:** 30-35 minutes

**Materials:** Sheets for each scene with information relating to

characters etc. as given by students in previous

lessons (from overhead/chart and board)

Paper and pens for script writing

**Class:** Whole class

**Activity:** \* Outline activity to students - they are to split into groups and write a script for each scene by workshopping and discussion

\* Students to split into groups and given a scene - group size according to number of players in that scene

\* Suggest to students it may help to try out some ideas first, then note down the general ideas before writing final script

\* Remind students of groups rules - there's no such thing as a dumb idea; everybody's ideas help etc.

\* Groups to find own workspace and begin work (15 minutes)

\* Teacher to move from group to group observing groups and helping get on task if necessary (using focus questions)

\* Class to reassemble as a whole group

\* Groups to present their scenes in story sequence (NOTE. scripts not followed verbatim at this stage)

\* Summary discussion, moving scene by scene. Scribe from each group notes class agreed changes for their scene. (see sample questions below)

**Sample Discussion Questions:**

- Did the players tell the story?

- What did you like about the scene?

- Did the people show that their feelings about the scene?

- Was there anything important left out?

- Can you think of anything that would improve the scene?

- Is there anything that could be included or changes that would better link this scene to the last one?

**SUMMARISING THE UNIT**

At the end of the final lesson groups would submit their scene scripts. These scripts would be collated and typed (or written out) and each student would be given a complete copy of the script for *their* Class Play.

If students are keen, they could present the play to another class. By students wearing Character Name Signs (as well as other props such as masks) all students could participate in the play's performance - each student would play a character in one of the play's scenes. However, this activity is optional and not necessary for assessing successfully participation in the unit.

**REFERENCES**

The following books and articles were used as a basis for the games and activities in this unit:

Ommaney, K.A. (1982) *The Stage and The School.* New York: McGraw Hill.

Papua New Guinea Department of Education (1989) *Drama Games.*

Pierse, L. (1993) *Theatresports Down Under - A Guide for Coaches and Players.* Sydney: Improcorp.

Phillips, R.D. (Ed.). (1982) *Drama Games and Exercises.* Oatley: St. George College of Advanced Education.

Porterfield, G. (1987) *The Yippee Book.* Iowa, USA: Perfection Form.

Additional games were based on those from lectures and handouts from UNSW Bachelor of Teaching (Primary), CPA 2 Drama lectures 1996; Lecturer: Mr Guy Sherborne.

**Other References:**

Board of Studies. (1996). *Creative & Practical Arts: K-6 Drama Strand Draft Syllabus.* North Sydney: Board of Studies.

Errington, E. (1992). *Towards a Socially Critical Drama Education.* Geelong, VIC: Deakin University.

Johnson, L. & O'Neill, C. (1989).  *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected Writings on Education and Drama*. Milsons Point, NSW: Century Hutchinson.

Léger-Haskell, D. (1990). *Maxine's Tree.* Victoria, CANADA: Orca Book.

Linnell, R. (1982). *Approaching Classroom Drama - (Teaching Matters).* Caulfield East, VIC: Edward Arnold.

Mackness, B. (1989) *Mastering Rainforests.* Surry Hills, VIC: Dellasta.

McCaslin, N. (1987) *Creative Drama - In the Primary Grades.* US: Longman.