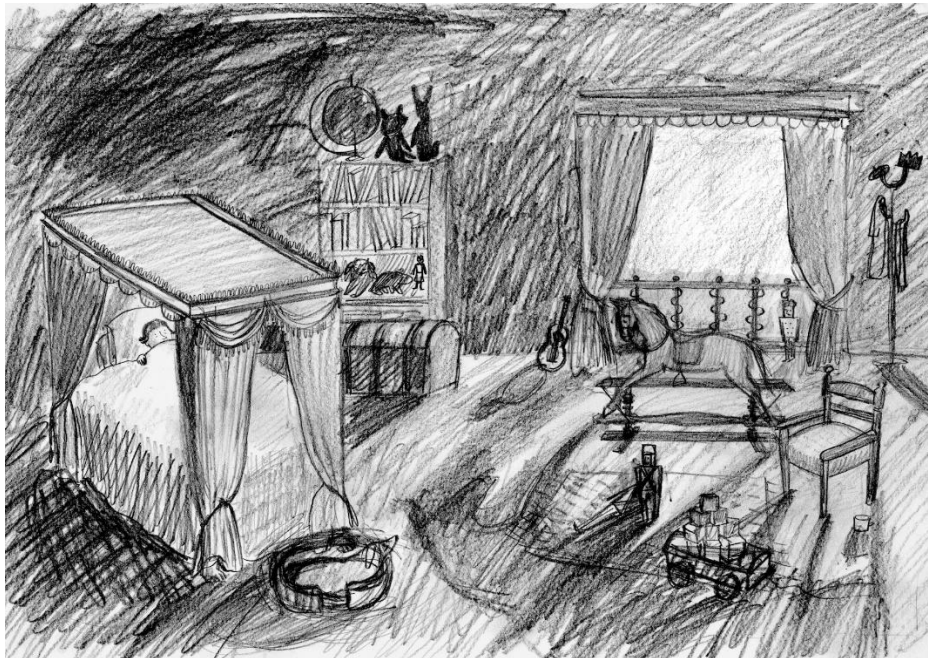




Transforming Literacy through Drama

A **CLPE** Masterclass supported by Creative Learning
and Drama Consultant **Kate Hopewell**



8th July 2025

Illustration © Emily Haworth-Booth – preparation drawing for *The King Who Banned The Dark* (Farshore, 2018)

A New Direction:

Transforming Literacy through Drama

A CLPE Masterclass with Creative Learning and Drama Consultant, Kate Hopewell

*“Ensure secure book knowledge amongst adults so that they are able to draw on core texts that link to interests, **extend play, stimulate talk and inspire writing**. Enable children to respond to texts through **role-play and revisit and re-enact** using small world play, puppets or story props.”*

*“Children at this stage continue to rehearse and refine ideas prior to writing, **through talk, drama and role-play**, to ensure an authentic voice and appropriate language structures.” **The CLPE Writing Scale***

The importance of drama and role play is noted throughout the next steps sections of the CLPE Reading and Writing Scales. Download the [whole document](#) freely from the website.

Why Drama?

*“...the value of this approach is the impact it has on young people’s emotional and social awareness... [as it] forges a connection between the reader’s world and the world of the text, **leading to an enhanced understanding of both.**”*

The Power of a Rich Reading Classroom (CLPE, 2020)

“No other curriculum subject places such a high priority upon developing empathy, upon appreciating the common humanity we share with one another.”

Drama and English at the Heart of the Curriculum, Joe Winston (2004)

“Take, for example, the following list of aims or reasons for teaching drama. How would you rank them? Are there any you would prioritise or remove? To what extent do they overlap?”

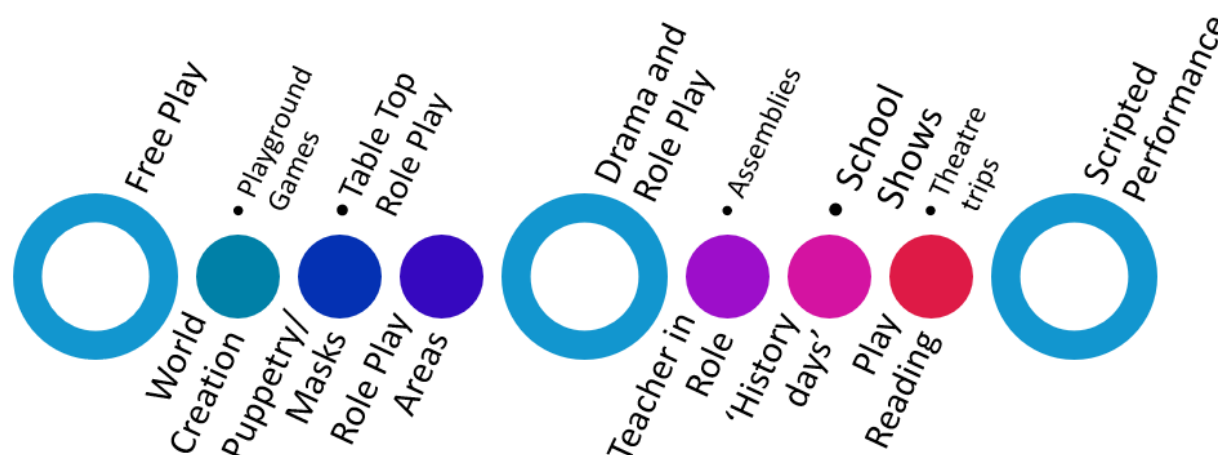
- to provide future artists and audiences;
- to help pupils to think;
- to develop personal qualities;
- to develop imagination and creativity;
- to provide insight into human situations;
- to improve teaching of other subjects;
- to educate the emotions;
- to develop confidence;
- to provide entertainment and relaxation;
- to develop appreciation of the cultural heritage;
- to develop understanding of how drama works as a genre.”

Starting Drama Teaching, Mike Fleming

How does drama support literacy development?

- Develops the imagination
- Creates effective and cognitive engagement
- Generates talk
- Enables a variety of voices to be heard
- Enriches writing opportunities
- Deepens understanding of texts
- Bridges the gap between genres
- Creates alternative perspectives
- Increases opportunities for storytelling

A Drama Continuum



*“On the learning continuum of drama, free play is at one end and scripted performance at the other, **drama in education** is situated centrally.”*

Grainger,T. Goouch,K. Lambirth,A.

(Creativity and Writing: Developing Voice and Verve in the Classroom, 2005)

Engaging in drama and dramatic play has a positive effect on learners’ achievements in reading and writing, giving greater meaning to reading and enabling learners to produce written work with greater depth, power and detail. *(Summary from the CLPE Writing Scale, drawing from the research findings of: Morrow, 1990; Vukelich, 1994; Roskos, 2000; Barrs and Cork, 2001; Crumpler and Schneider, 2002; Paley, 2004; Fleming et al., 2004; Cremin et al., 2006)*

How does Drama support Reading?

Drama provides children for opportunities to:

- Develop language and extend vocabulary;
- Explore plot lines at differing depths;
- Develop understandings of how narratives are built up and link together;
- Make thoughtful predictions and draw deeper conclusions before, during and after reading;
- Develop inferential understanding and explore higher level comprehension skills;
- Apply information they have deduced and interpret ideas suggested in the text;
- Explore language and develop understanding of its impact on the reader;
- Deepen understanding of characters' actions and reactions;
- Support understanding of why events take place and how they are linked;
- Engage in response no matter what their reading level, accessing more difficult texts than when working independently;
- Make personal connections to the texts;
- Explore issues and dilemmas from different points of view;
- Play with text structure and form to consider various outcomes;
- Explore links between different texts.

"The triggering of an affective response can be elusive for many children if the text is only approached in formal ways.... [Drama can provide] a strikingly immediate route into a fictional situation and help teachers and children to explore texts in an active way, enabling children to 'live' through fictions, by involving them in different forms of enactment."

Steele, S. & Collins, F. in The Reader in the Writer, Barrs and Cork (CLPE)

"Reading and interpretation were seen as essentially passive activities performed on texts with static meanings... The influence of literary theory, however, has changed the notion of what reading and response in drama entails: 'meaning' is more fruitfully seen not as residing in the text according to the intention of the author but as a function of the active meaning-bestowing activity of the reader."

Mike Fleming, Starting Drama Teaching

"Drama will not teach children the basic skills of reading... Its value in developing reading lies in the exciting contexts it can provide to stimulate higher order skills of inferring meaning from text, of critically engaging with it and, where appropriate, of expressively articulating it."

Joe Winston, Drama and English at the Heart of the Curriculum

"Children, especially when they are young or if the material is difficult, can better understand concepts when they use movement to physically act out the concepts. Researchers... show that embodied cognition makes abstract concepts more tangible. It "allows the learner to develop a "feel" for the concept being described, a physical sense that is more comprehensible and compelling than a concept that remains an abstract mental entity."

Nina Fiore, The Benefits of Movement in Schools, August 2014

“Theatre is the place where we can dig for the truth, ask the questions that need asking and search for possible answers. When we share our truths with an audience, we invite them into our Seeing Place, giving them the opportunity to see the world through our eyes... Acting in stories and fantasy play offers children a way to try to comprehend things that have no logical understanding.”

Princesses, Dragons and Helicopter Stories, Trisha Lee

Positive Effects of Drama on Writing

- *It motivated more children to want to write;*
- *It provided more children with substantial ideas and experiences so that they had something to write about;*
- *Each child could draw individual responses from the drama. Consequently, despite the structure of a writing frame, individual pieces of writing were different and reflective of the child’s rather than the teacher’s thinking;*
- *Children generally wrote more and in a shorter period of time;*
- *Children’s vocabulary and sentence structure was noticeably richer when their writing emerged from drama work;*
- *More children demonstrated a clearer sense of audience in their writing;*
- *More children demonstrated empathy for those whom they wrote about;*
- *Some children’s writing could be seen to have benefitted from the input that the visual qualities of drama had to offer.*

Joe Winston, Drama and English at the Heart of the Curriculum

“Empathetic writing in role... was seen to emerge with relative ease, in complete contrast to writing in more solitary contexts. The teachers often became so engaged in the imagined experience that the transition to writing appeared to be seamless...”

Writing Voices: Creating Communities of Writers, Teresa Cremin and Debra Myhill (2012)

“...if we ask pupils to take the roles of politicians, kings, teachers or priests, the language demands will change accordingly.”

Starting Drama Teaching, Mike Fleming

Summary of Key Activities from the Day:

Warm-Up Exercises

Position of Drama
Description: Any activity that requires students to stand in a circle, work creatively and freely should start with this and be included throughout. It removes self-consciousness, creates focus and a physical position that is ready for any style of creative and active learning.
Method: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invite students to stand in a circle. 2. Establish appropriate posture and focus by asking students to form a 'position of drama' 3. To the count of 8, ask them to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Separate feet into a 'first position' – with feet connected at the heel but separated to 45 degrees at the toes. b. Separate heels into feet hip-width apart c. Shrug shoulders to ears d. Drop shoulders e. Take a deep breath in f. Deep breath out g. Pull an invisible rope from the top of their heads to the ceiling until they are taller. h. Bring their hand to their side so that both hands hang at the sides, heads up and shoulders back.
Cross-Curricular Opportunities: This activity can and should be used across the curriculum and throughout the school day – it's even great for moments like lining up for assembly.

Shakes
Description: A very quick, really fun physical warm up that gets everyone focused and in a physical position ready for active learning. You can do this at any time of the day to recalibrate a group.
Method: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invite students to stand in a circle. 2. Tell them to hold their right hand and arm in the air and to copy you. 3. Shake your right hand in their air to a count of 5. All students should shake with you. 4. Repeat with the left hand, deliberately lowering your right arm and hand and raising the left arm and hand in the air and shaking it to a count of 5. All students should shake with you. 5. Now lower your left arm and hand and stick out your right leg and foot. Shake your right foot to the count of 5. All students should shake with you. 6. Place your right foot back on the floor and raise your left leg and foot. Shake it to a count of 5. All students should shake with you.

7. Now go back to the beginning and raise your right arm and hand. Shake it to a count of 4. All students should shake with you.
8. Move through left arm and hand, right leg and foot, left leg and foot, shaking all to a count of 4.
9. Repeat the shaking of all limbs through a count of 3, 2 and end on a count of 1.
10. Lastly shake everything all in one go!

Cross-Curricular Opportunities:

Perfect for any moment during the school day when you need the class to refocus and prepare their energy for the next task, to warm them up and to focus their attention. It's also great fun!

Fruits

Description:

This activity promotes inflection, animation – developing vital skills required for speaking and reading aloud and also fantastic for character work later.

Method:

1. Stand in a circle.
2. Stretch your mouth in a big yawn and chew an imaginary, expanding toffee. This time the toffee is taking on the flavours of different fruits...
3. Inform the class that they should copy you as soon as you announce the flavour.
4. Call out a fruit name using a distinct character voice and give your fruit an action. The class should copy your voice and action as they state the fruit name you have chosen.
5. You can explore a medley of different fruit characters, using call and response with an action. How you characterize each fruit doesn't really matter:
 - A Machiavellian blueberry
 - A regal raspberry
 - An enthusiastic banana
 - A cool pumpkin
 - A posh strawberry
 - A short, sharp and cheeky lime.

The important thing is that the characters are distinct and fun, and vowels and consonants emphasized to give your pupils a warmup.

Note: Students LOVE this activity! You'll find they are keen to create their own fruit characters and will be able to lead the activity soon after being introduced to it.

Cross-Curricular Opportunities:

This activity is fantastic for creating character voices from texts and topics you are exploring – ask your students to see if they think any of the fruits remind them of someone in your class text or topic. You can swap out fruit names for words and short phrases characters might say.

Remote Control / Group Speeds / Stop, Go, Jump, Clap

Description:

When working in a creative space, we want students to move safely and to use the whole space. We want them to work collectively and with all peers. We want to adjust the social constructs to ensure students are working with those who best help them to learn rather than in the friendship group they would typically gravitate to. We want them to have confidence in themselves as individuals and to take ownership of their own decisions and behaviour. This activity ensures all of the above!

Method:

1. Begin with students standing in a circle and in a 'position of drama'
2. Inform the class that you have brought in a new and exciting piece of equipment – your invisible remote control. It has the power to control the speed that the whole group moves at.
3. Explain that you should apologise as you have already used the control without telling them: they have all been programmed to a group speed of 0 which, as they will notice, means they are not moving at all.
4. Establish a group speed with 0 being still and 10 being the speed you would use if fast running after a bus.
5. Tell them you will now change the speed on your control and, just as they have expertly found a shared speed of 0, they will all be expected to find another shared group speed – the most skilled actors are able to match their speed to everyone else in the room!
6. Explain students should move on hearing “go” and stop when they hear “stop”
7. A good starting speed to select is 3. Say “go.”
8. Invite students to become aware of the speed of everyone else in the room: if they think they are going too fast, they probably are, if they think they are too slow... they probably are! Ask them to adjust their speed to match the speed of everyone else.
9. If students feel they are just walking round and round, ask them to change direction, to make their journey as interesting as possible, to make sure that no one in the room is able to predict the direction they will move in next.
10. If students are still walking with their friends, invite them to take a new journey to ensure they don't see the same faces again – if they see a face they've just seen, they should change direction.
11. Call “stop” and explain that this action has to be instant and as if they've been frozen in time/paused on a video game – not an eyelash should move! When you say “go” it will be as if you've pressed play.
12. Play out, exploring different speeds and increasing speeds as group skills increase.
13. Now explain that you are going to mix things up! When you say “stop” you mean “go” and when you say “go” you mean “stop”!
14. Play out and enjoy the fun and focus it creates.

Optional extension activity: You can extend this activity by layering with clap/jump and reversing the actions required as with stop/go

Cross-Curricular Opportunities:

This is a perfect behaviour for learning strategy that can be used at any learning moment or time of the day that requires a transition – even from the carpet to tables. You can use the invisible remote control to change groups speeds and even group sound levels– with 0 being no sound at all up to the very loudest your class can be which can prove very useful when moving around the school through to performance moments.

See It, Be It

Description:

This activity physicalizes objects, locations and moments in a narrative. Students will work together, sharing knowledge and experiences to recreate aspects of the text. It's great for establishing key features and elements and for creating 3D images that can be photographed for use in future activities.

Method:

1. Begin by inviting the class to move around the creative space using 'Stop/Go'
2. On 'Stop', ask them to form groups of 5 or 6 (depending on class size) with the people closest to them.
3. Explain that, if you had the budget, you would take them to the world in your story/topic but, instead, you need their help to recreate important locations and objects from the text.
4. Inform them that they will have 20 seconds to work as a group and to create the scenery or objects you give them.
5. Call out the first location or object. This might be:
 - a. A
 - b. A grand bedroom
 - c. A palace at night
 - d. A protest
6. Count down from 20 and call 'Freeze'!
7. Now spotlight some unique recreations, inviting students to comment on the features they recognise and reasons as to why the chosen group has been so successful: clever uses of body, clear signs of team work, interesting shapes, etc.
8. You might invite the groups to add movement or sound effects to the images that they have created.
9. Repeat with other locations or important objects.
10. Take photos for reflection after the activity.

Cross-Curricular Opportunities:

Use this to establish or reinforce the core features of any object, moment of location in any area of your learning: for example: quickly creating working circuits for the study of electricity in Science or the different features of habitats and food chains; in Geography, they might work through significant physical and human features of any location they are studying, or in History, they might recreate architectural landmarks, inventions or important events connected with the period.

Value Continuum

Description:

Use this after a warm-up activity and before dividing your class into groups for 'Freeze Frames', 'Sensory World', 'World of the Story', 'Role on the Wall', to select a class member for 'Hot-Seating' or 'Conscience Alley' – any moment when you need to ensure a mix of abilities or check levels of understanding for specific tasks. It can also be used to display opinions and reactions, with students displaying opposing views creating teams for a debate.

Method:

1. Tell the class that they should now see the room you're in as a giant measuring tool.
2. You are going to say some statements and they are going to show how they feel about them by moving to different parts of the room according to their view.
3. Move to one side of the room and tell students that, if they agree 100% with the statement you are about to say, they should move to that end of the room.
4. Go to the other side and explain that they should move to this side if they strongly disagree with what you're about to say.
5. Now stand in the middle of the room and tell students they should stand there if they neither agree nor disagree/have no real opinion about it.
6. Explain that:
 - a. The space between '100% agree' and the middle of the room is where they should stand if they agree slightly more than they disagree
 - b. The space between 'strongly disagree' and the middle of the room is where they should stand if they disagree slightly more than they agree.
7. Give your first statement. This should be something general/fun/non-text related and one that will evoke opinions i.e. "Breakfast is better than dinner"/"Computer games are better than television"/"Cheese and onion crisps are the best flavour crisps in the world", etc.
8. Allow students to move to the area of the hall that reflects their reaction to the statement.
9. Move across the space interviewing a student in each area to ascertain their thoughts about your statement. Ask them why they are there and to reinforce their statement with an example of why they agree/disagree/don't feel anything.
10. Allow other students to hear the views and to adjust their position in the room if they feel they agree more or less than the person who has spoken.
11. Now that you have established how the measuring tool works, you can use the same activity to establish thoughts, feelings, opinions and confidence of their own knowledge of the text/subject you are studying by asking statements like:
 - a. I know the story of Romeo and Juliet really well.
 - b. The friar is solely responsible for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet

The statements you chose can help you to create learning groups suited for your next activity i.e.: if you want a class debate you could use statements like the second and third statements and create debate teams using the opposing sides of the room, whilst inviting those in the middle of the room to act as a jury receiving evidence or people who need to be persuaded. You could rerun the Value Continuum at the end of the lesson to see if any opinions had been changed through the debate.

If you want to create mixed or same ability groups you can use a statement like 'I know this story/topic really well'. You can then move to the side of the room where those who feel they know the text/story/subject best are standing. You can then select 5 students from this area and give each a number 1-5. Ask each to move to their own area of the room (i.e. Into the corners and centre of the room) and to hold up the number they've been given on their hand. Now move down the room from the most confident to least counting 1-5 as you reach each student. Students should move to the number group you have given them. (NB This is also great for behaviour for learning as you can ensure you give students group numbers that will best support their learning as opposed to group numbers that may lead to them becoming distracted, etc.)

Cross-Curricular Opportunities:

This can be used across the curriculum to establish thoughts, knowledge, opinions and for differentiated learning groups. You might use this to discover the extent to which students feel confident in a particular subject matter (the Earth and space, Ancient Egyptians, rainforest biomes, etc.) before, during and after learning about it. You might also use it to introduce a debate into a cross-curricular topic, using statements such as: ‘The wheel is the greatest human invention’; ‘Bees are the most important animals on Earth’; ‘Hunters were more important than gatherers during the Stone Age’; ‘Climate is the most important consideration when positioning a settlement’; etc.

Role on the Wall (with statues)

Description:

This activity will be familiar to many teachers. It is used time and again. However, whilst the standard method results in a word bank that can be used to achieve great written outcomes, it is not entirely without fault, as some students will understand the breadth of adjectives listed on your character Role of the Wall but most will simply select vocabulary without fully comprehending its meaning. Our approach involves additional sections so may require an entire lesson but will ensure your students have a full grasp of the adjectives listed and are able to confidently use and apply them going forward.

Method:

Part 1 (Role on the Wall)

1. Select a character from the story being explored.
2. Show students a simple gingerbread man shape.
3. Explain that you are going to be thinking about the characteristics of this chosen character – the personality and emotional attributes of the character rather than how they look/the physical attributes.
4. Ask students to think about how they feel when they wake up in the morning before they have seen or spoken to anyone or how they feel as they walk to the school gate before they see friends and teachers. Ask them to think about the thoughts and feelings they might have. Explain those are the inner thoughts, feelings, and emotions.
5. Invite them to think about the character you have chosen. Ask, “how do you think they feel on the inside?”
6. Fill the inside of the gingerbread man with adjectives, asking for explanations as to the offers given i.e. all students should give an adjective followed by “because” and their reason.
7. Be mindful of different language abilities in the class and, if given an advanced level adjective or a simpler adjective, open it up to the class to think of other words that mean the same thing and capture both/all.
8. Now move onto the outside of the gingerbread man and ask students to think about the person they when they meet someone they respect or who they are to their friends and teachers when they arrive at school – this is their outer self.
9. Ask students to think about who the character is to the outside world, how would they be perceived by others?
10. Capture adjectives around the outside of the gingerbread man, again asking for explanations to accompany the offers.

Part 2 (Statues)

1. Ask students to stand in partners and label themselves A and B.
2. Explain that Bs will start and must choose an adjective from the outside of their character. They do not need to tell their partners.
3. Explain that As are now mirrors for Bs. Their job is to do EXACTLY what B does in order to show them whether they have achieved the effect they wanted to i.e. bodily shape and facial expression.
4. Count down from 10 as Bs form their statue and As mirror.
5. Tell Bs to remember their statue and then switch roles.
6. This time As must select an emotion from the inside of the character.
7. Count down again.
8. Ask As to remember their statues and allow them to all to relax out of their statues.
9. Now ask As and Bs to form their own statues.
10. If working in groups, invite other groups to match the adjectives to the character statues or simply divide the class in 2 and invite each side to match adjectives to the statues they see in the standing/performing half of the class.
11. Place your hand on students' shoulders one at a time asking them how they feel and why.
12. Whisper key character lines into the ears of selected character statues and invite them to repeat the line with the emotion they are feeling/have chosen.

Note:

- *You can carry this activity out at different parts of the story exploration and capture adjectives in different colours for each story event, at the end of a text and ask students to tell you the part of the story they are referring to when they name an emotion/feeling/thought or give groups of students individual gingerbread men and allocate each group a part of the story, inviting them to complete one for each of the story events.*
- *You can also use this exercise as a carpet session and to create a model before dividing the class into groups and giving each group other characters from the story.*

If working in groups, students should use the plenary part of the lesson to share their role on the walls and to consider how this affects the understanding of the story, the differences between characters or the emotional journey of one main character through the story.

Cross-Curricular Opportunities:

You can use this to study and discuss any fiction or non-fiction character, in any subject – Role on the Wall posters have been created by different classes for figures from the past – both generic (a child in a Victorian workhouse) and specific (Victorian circus owner, Pablo Fanque), for significant scientists and engineers, for environmental campaigners, for sports figures, etc.

This activity not only supports the development of reading comprehension skills and strategies, it is also an ideal feeder activity for moving into writing in role, perhaps writing a letter or a diary entry, some first person narrative or a poem.

In connecting characteristics with behaviour, Role on the Wall also becomes both an analysis and a model of 'show not tell' writing. Children can use a Role on the Wall poster as a device to support their writing, preparing to consider the external behaviours that imply personality. When drafting and refining their texts, they can explore ways to use those external behaviours to show character in place of an adjective which might simply tell the reader what to think or feel.

Character Point of View

Description:

Most fictional narratives are told from the perspective of one character (even when written in third person) and have a journey that starts at the beginning of the text and concludes at the end. This activity invites students to think about the story from the perspective of all of the other characters in a story. Their starting point might occur before or at a mid-point during the narrative arc, the point at which they appear in the text. And they might leave the story before or after the conclusion of the main character. In the world of non-fiction, historical and factual stories, many real-life characters have differing experiences and stories. This activity allows for the core narrative to be considered from the perspective of all characters – creating a 3D, living and breathing story. This is a fantastic activity for oracy, language development, creative thinking and confidence-building.

Method:

An ideal starting point or basis for this activity is after a 'Role on the Wall' activity and will take place straight after students have formed statues of their groups' character in place of thought tapping, matching to adjectives, or feeding lines.

1. As students stand in their character statue, explain that you are going to ask them to take their character for a walk around the space. Before they move they should consider the following:
 - a. *How old are they?*
 - b. *What is their health like? Are they fit or frail?*
 - c. *What type of personality do they have? Are they friendly, grumpy, energetic?* Invite them to recall some of the adjectives from their Role on the Wall.
2. Now ask them to take the character for a walk.
3. As they walk, fully embodying their character, ask them to think about their role in the story:
 - a. *Where do they live?*
 - b. *When do they appear in the story?*
 - c. *Where were they before the events they were involved in or witness to?*
 - d. *How did they feel about what happened?*
 - e. *Where did they go afterwards?*
 - f. *Did they come back into the story at all?*
 - g. *What happened?*
 - h. *Do they know about any of the other events that happened?*
 - i. *If so, how? Who told them?*
4. Call 'stop' and ask them to partner with the character closest to them.
5. Each student will tell the story from the character's point of view. This will be done in the first person "I" and in the past tense – telling their experience of the story. The story is now theirs so they can add as much of their own imagination and detail as they like.
6. Label partners as A and B and ask Bs to go first (or whichever you prefer!)
7. Explain they will have 2 minutes to tell their story (children will be supported in this activity if they have previously used some of the exploring narrative activities described earlier in this document).
8. Record the outcomes using video and photos for reflection later.
9. Swap partners over after 2 minutes and allow listeners to share their story.

10. Reflect on the stories that have been heard. What was interesting/surprising/shocking? Any story twists? Any characters who have presented themselves as being worthy of their own story being written.

This can be used to support ideation for a more extended written outcome: creating a new story or perhaps an interview piece for a news-based article.

Cross-Curricular Opportunities:

This can be used to explore differing perspectives of any narrative, across the curriculum. For example, exploring the devastating impact of the Blitz through the eyes of numerous inhabitants of the city (a child, a parent, someone in a makeshift shelter, someone who can't leave their home, people working for the British Red Cross, a volunteer fire-watcher, a member of the Home Guard, a politician, etc.).

Hot Seating

Description:

Another frequently used activity, this is often approached with caution – either a class adult or student who performs at a high level of ability will be selected to take on the role of the hot-seated character whilst the rest of the class questions them. It can still prove to be successful, but we feel that, with a few additional elements, the activity can be further scaffolded to elicit greater outcomes. This exercise builds well from both the Role on the Wall, statues, and Character Point of View exercises described above. It might also be used prior to Character Point of View storytelling in order to investigate aspects of that character's experience prior to moving into first person narration.

Method:

1. Refer to a specific event in the story or subject you are exploring.
2. Ask the class to think about the characters involved at this point – these could be main characters linked to the event or bystanders/witnesses.
3. Make a list.
4. Now ask them to select the main character they would like to speak to about this moment and why (you might hold a vote to find the character most would like to speak to).
5. Ask the class members to get into groups of 3 or 4 and to think of as many questions as possible that they would like to ask the character (You might choose to support them in structuring these questions by using the 'Question Starter Sheet' – see additional resources).
6. Once each group have a range of questions drafted, give them time to sequence or number their questions from the one that they think will give them the most exciting or revealing answer, down to the one that they think might only get a single word or 'yes/no' answer. You might use this opportunity to look again at 'question starters' and question structures to support them in evaluating and refining their draft questions. They might also think about tone – if they want the interviewee to respond well to the questioning, they might not want to sound too aggressive or blunt in their tone. You might invite groups to share their favourite questions and add these to the whiteboard or flipchart to create a class bank of questions.
7. Ask the children to move to working in pairs now. Tell them to decide who is A and who is B.

8. Explain that A is going to step into role as the character and B is going to be able to ask them questions for a suggested period of time. When that time has elapsed, they will swap roles with B stepping into character and A becoming the questioner.
9. The person asking questions might benefit from a notepad to jot down the answers that the character provides to share and compare with the class later. Alternatively, they might use tablets or other devices to take an audio recording of the interview to listen back to in a later session.

If the class are very used to stepping into role in this way and familiar enough with the material that you feel it would be beneficial to have the whole class interviewing one volunteer child in the 'hot-seat', then consider how you might support that volunteer in taking on the character and answering the questions. For example:

- a. Explain that they can answer all the questions in their own voice or in the voice of the character.
- b. You are going to be standing by them as they're adviser/lawyer/ally (a role that fits with the narrative/subject you are exploring and places you in an advisory role).
- c. You will be on hand to help them if they are unsure as to what to say, they only need to tell the interviewer that they need to speak to their adviser.
- d. You will also be able to step in if their response needs adapting.

Cross-Curricular Opportunities:

You can of course use this approach to develop and share knowledge around any fiction or non-fiction character, in any subject. Consider when it might be useful to have the character being questioned taken on by the teacher or another adult in the class. For example, sometimes the subject matter around which questions are being asked me require a degree of sensitivity or knowledge of the world beyond that of the children in the group.

Consider what the purpose and intention of the activity might be. For example, when studying a key historical figure or moment in history, the teacher could take on the role being hot-seated in order to effectively impart a large amount of accessible information in a short space of time, in a manner that supports and allows for clarification and follow-up questions. Alternatively, if children have had the opportunity to study and research and discuss the period for a number of sessions/weeks, then this exercise could give them the opportunity to summarise and share some of the key information they have discovered through the eyes of someone that was there – supporting their historical perspective. Looking at the perspective of an historical figure means drawing inferences about how people thought and felt in the past. A variety of historical figures will have had very different experiences of the events in which they are involved.

Building a Masking Tape World and Guided Tours

Description:

This activity allows you and your students to map out any location you are exploring in detail. Using the whole class space (or hall – but not needed at all!), students will be able to consider all specific features of a location and to decide where each is in relation to the others. They will then be able layer their world with descriptive language in order to make it their own.

Method:

Part 1

1. Ask the students to think about the world/location you are exploring from your story or topic.
2. Discuss the different geographical features that they can think of (perhaps mountains, rivers, towns, etc. or the rooms in a building: tower, reception room, dining room, kitchens, dungeon, etc.) and make a list.
3. Tell the students that they are going to map out the world in your classroom – your classroom is now the world of the story/topic!
4. Highlight the first feature and ask the class to decide where in the space this location might be.
5. Using masking tape, mark out where the location is and name it using a clear marker.
6. Move through all locations asking the class to decide where it might be in relation to the other locations.
7. Expand class thinking by questioning where additional features might be (e.g. paths, bridges, corridors, etc.)
8. Use long strips of masking tape to mark out river and road routes etc. and name all clearly.
9. Now give your students labels and ask them to move around the world, spending time in each feature and deciding what they think they might be able to see in each location – they should use an adjective and noun pairing and all write using one agreed colour.
10. Move onto what they might be able to hear and ask that they use a verb and noun (add an adverb for higher level language). Students should use an alternative colour for this part of the activity.
11. Now guide your students through thinking about what they can smell, touch and taste. They should use adjectives and nouns and swap colours for each sense so that you have each sense detailed in a different colour.

Part 2 (Optional Expansion)

1. Ask all students to sit on the outside of the world and select a volunteer.
2. Explain you are going to guide the volunteer around the room.
3. Give the volunteer something to hold onto – a ruler/piece of string/strip of fabric and ask them to close their eyes.
4. Guide the volunteer through part of the world, modelling how to use the vocab on the floor as a script and how to instruct the volunteer to cross: busy roads; rickety bridges, slippery rivers, etc.
5. Use group speeds and stop/go to ensure the class have been rearranged and listening skills have been honed.
6. Ask them to partner with the person closest to them.
7. Now ask them to label themselves A and B and ask As to give you a wave. They will go first!
8. Invite Bs to close their eyes and As to guide their partners. Tell them that, when they've finished, they should swap over and, when both pairs have had a go, they should sit outside of the world, waiting for others to finish also.
9. When completed, students could take a clipboard with pen and paper to the feature they find most interesting and write a detailed description, using all senses/vocabulary they have to hand.

Cross-Curricular Opportunities:

This activity could provide students with the opportunity to create and explore any location being studied from Ancient Egyptian temples to the depths of the rainforests. Children could collaborate on the construction and labelling of the environment as an outcome following research into the subject area, or could use it as a starting point to explore existing knowledge. The environment could then be adapted and added to as they engage in further learning. As with the suggestions above, the 3D environment can then be used as a prompt to instigate ideas and language for multiple oral and written outcomes.

World of the Story

Description:

This could be used in conjunction with – or instead of – the masking tape world activity outlined above.

Use this activity to create a multi-sensory location from any part of a narrative or subject area. Using a variety of descriptive language tools, your students will work together to create detailed worlds that they can discuss, write about, touch, feel, listen to, taste and smell. It can be used to create poetry, non-fiction guides to a location, to embellish diary entries and letters or to form a stunningly descriptive opening passage to their own piece of fiction writing.

Note: This activity has 3 parts and could therefore last for an entire lesson or be placed across multiple lessons, giving students time to collect images, materials, smells, sounds and tastes and to continue to add to their worlds.

Method:

Part 1 (Modelling the process. If you have recently used this exercise, you may feel that you can move to Part 2 more quickly)

1. As a group, list locations so far in the story
2. Select one location as a model for your carpet session.
3. Show a mind map with the name of the location written in the middle and five senses written around the edge: see/hear/smell/touch/taste.
4. Ask students to think about the location and invite them to think about what they might see if they were there.
5. Take offerings but establish an expectation for a noun accompanied by an adjective.
6. Gather ideas, writing things students think they could see in the appropriate part of the mind map. *(NB As this is a model, you may want to limit answers to 4 or 5 to save time)*
7. Move onto 'hear'. Ask students what they think they might be able to hear. Again, set an expectation for descriptive language – an adverb and verb combination, or adjective to accompany the noun. *[Note that the grammatical expectation is a framework of support, a helpful guide rather than an absolute. Modify according to your knowledge of the children you are working with. Some children might suggest ideas and phrases that don't fit the framework. Ensure that these are still acknowledged and included. Guide them in expanding beyond single words if appropriate.]*
8. Continue to gather and collate ideas, writing all things students think they could hear in the appropriate part of the mind map.

9. Repeat for all remaining senses: smell, touch, and taste, using what students saw as the basis for what might be smelt, touched and tasted and then anything they could hear but not see, followed by anything that can neither be seen or heard – like smells in the air, the temperature around them, etc.

Part 2 (Collaborative work in groups)

1. Now send students into groups
2. Each group is given their own mind map and location.
3. Guide them through each section (as described above in Part 1).
4. You might raise expectations of outcomes further by asking for two similes, a metaphor, etc in addition to nouns with adjectives/adverbs as you approach each section... Bonus points for Onomatopoeia and/or personification!

Part 3

1. It is now time to create a multi-sensory mind-map!
2. Either provide a wide variety of images, fabrics/materials for sight and touch, sounds, tastes and smells (*in smell pots created by adding a fragrance like coffee granules or a slice of orange, etc to a yogurt pot, covering it with foil or cling film and piercing holes in the top to allow for smelling without seeing the contents.*)
3. Or invite students to bring in images, fabrics, materials, or instruments that create sounds, making smell pots, etc in order to bring the senses in the worlds to life.
4. Affix the mind maps on the wall of your creative space/classroom and allow students to add to them and interact with them, particularly before or during a writing activity – you'll notice the impact in the outcomes!
5. As children sort, select and add materials to their mind-map, it is likely to inspire additional descriptive phrases linked to all 5 senses. Invite them to continue to add these to their mind-map annotations as they create their interactive display.

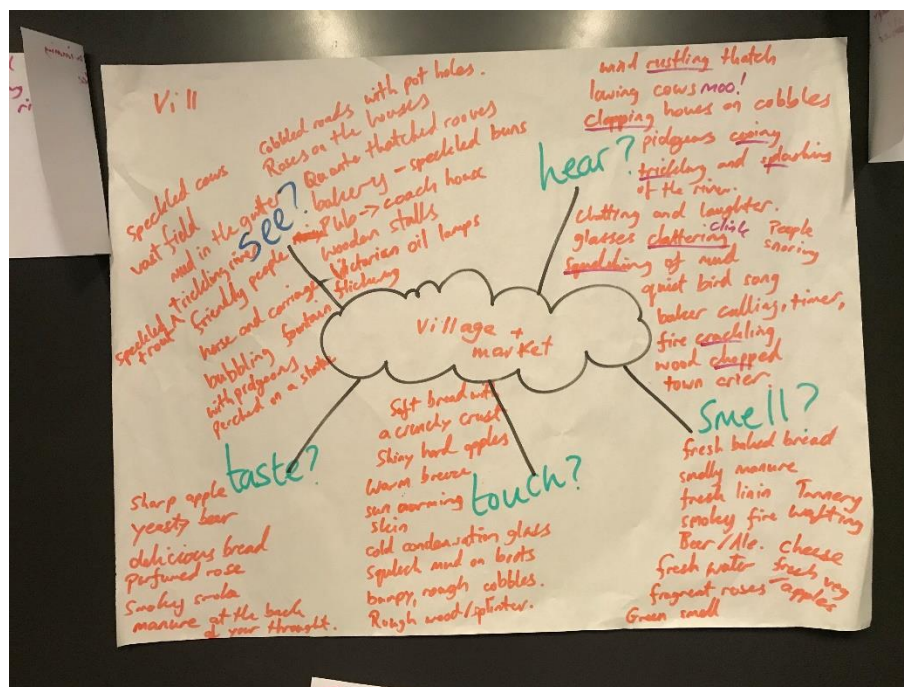
Optional Extension for Part 3:

This activity elicits the same written outcomes but results in an 3D actual world being created – one that students can walk into, interact with and write in.

1. Provide a large number of boxes – very large through to smaller boxes, kitchen roll tubes, food containers (standard junk modelling materials alongside large boxes for things like walls, etc.).
2. Allow students to work together to create their 3D world.
3. Now, provide post-its and invite students to either write adjective/noun or noun/verb/adverb combinations on the post-its and to affix them to parts of the structure they are referring to (i.e. soft, thick carpet; damp, dark walls) or scribe their words for them and allow them to place them in the appropriate place.
4. You can now place flipcharts with paper in that area and allow students to sit in the world and create anything from a simple sentence through to the creation of a diary entry or travel brochure (depending on age, ability and required outcomes).

Cross-Curricular Opportunities:

Any location in your Literacy (story worlds – real and imagined), Geography (local environments, distant cities, forests and deserts), History (a medieval castle, a Tudor street, a Victorian circus), RE (a place of worship), or Science (different habitats) can be developed using this activity.



Giving effective feedback (SCI)

Description:

Use this activity at any moment that involves individual, partner or group work being shared and developed. It is great for developing shows, speeches and debates, for giving constructive feedback to develop a piece of writing or any other piece of learning that is receiving a mid-point developmental reflection.

Note: For the purposes of providing a clear model in this toolkit, we are using an example of developing and responding to a piece of independent or collaborative writing, and the performance of that poem.

Method:

1. Show a slide or flipchart page featuring the 3 feedback comments that response partners will be asked to use:
 - **Support:** “I really liked it when...”
 - **Challenge:** “Could you try...?”
 - **Inspire:** “I wonder what would happen if...?”
2. Explain that the ‘Support’ statement is really important as it will tell the writer/performer what they should keep when they continue to work on their poem. It has to be given on its own and DEFINITELY not followed by a “but...”

3. Moving on to the ‘Challenge’ statement, explain that this is a chance for students to give ‘specific feedback’ – something that speaks directly to the content of the poem and the ideas expressed within it. It might also relate – if relevant – to the performance of that poem.
4. Now, explain the ‘Inspire’ statement: this is designed to add another layer to the scene – something that is not already there... for example: “*I wonder what would happen if you changed the rhyme scheme...*”, “*I wonder what would happen if you changed it to the present tense...*”, “*I wonder what would happen if you started with the last verse...*”
5. Lastly, confirm that:
 - a. All feedback should be given clearly.
 - b. Only one form of feedback can be given by one person at any time.
 - c. They will be asked to rephrase the feedback if it is not clear and/or is more than one type of feedback i.e. a ‘Support’ followed by an ‘Challenge’
6. Refer to the feedback statements and invite the listeners to give feedback – make sure students offer feedback across all areas as often they lean towards the ‘Support’ statement only, without realizing how helpful the others are!
7. Allow for a maximum of 6 feedback statements, capturing them so that the volunteers can refer to them later.
8. Explain to the volunteers that the feedback they have received are suggestions only, they can use all or some of them.
9. Allow the volunteers to take the feedback back to their draft and adapt their text / performance using the feedback comments.

Cross-Curricular Opportunities:

This approach can be used for giving constructive feedback to develop a piece of writing or any other piece of learning that is receiving a mid-point developmental reflection. In any curricular area, groups of students or individuals might work with partners or feedback groups to support them in reflecting on and refining written pieces – letters, narratives, information texts, explanations, etc. – or oral presentations – short scenes, presentations, persuasive speeches, voiceover, poetry performances, etc.

Meet the Boss (Game)

Description:

This is a fun and energetic warm-up game to get your young people thinking about clear storytelling. Use the game to inspire conversation about what makes clear, engaging storytelling.

Method:

1. Stand facing your group and highlight the space they will be using to carry out the activity: “This is our office, come into the office. In the office we do two things – read (*mime reading a book typing and encourage them to copy*) and type (*mime typing and encourage them to copy*).
2. Ask students, “Who wants to be the boss?”
3. Take a volunteer (*preferably a student who would not typically be chosen for a lead role – a quieter child, etc*) and sit them on a chair with their back to the group.

4. Tell the class, “If at any time the boss turns round and sees you not reading or typing, they will fire you. If you are fired you must move to sit over here (*indicate the area they should move to – it should be a location that allows them to watch as the game plays out*)”
5. Now ask, ‘Who will be the person is late for work?’
6. Choose a volunteer.
7. Explain that the person who is late will leave the room and everyone else will make up an excuse for why they’re late, e.g. “My bicycle had a flat tire/the bus was late/my dog was sick”. (Depending on how complicated you would like the game to be, select up to 3 different excuses for the ‘late employee’ to decipher).
8. When the ‘late employee’ arrives, they should stand facing the boss and the other employees behind the boss. The boss must ask, “Why are you late?”, and everyone should mime the excuse until the late employee has correctly stated the reason why they were late by studying the mimes they see. During this time, the suspicious boss should continue to check his employees are on task.
9. Important rules:
 - a. If the boss turns around and catches anyone not ‘working’, they are out and must leave the office (*sit in the designated area - they can come and watch from behind the late employee.*)
 - b. Employees can ONLY mime – mouthing words or making any sounds will result in an immediate loss of their job!

Cross-Curricular Opportunities:

Once your students have understood the game fully, you can change the characters and reasons for being late to fit either a narrative or a topic you are studying, for example:

- A Roman Emperor questioning one of his workers as to why they are late.
- An astronaut who had returned to Earth later than planned due to challenges faced as they travelled through space.
- A character in a fiction text arriving late, with reasons for the delay linking to events in the text

Students can adapt the duties adopted by the ‘employees’ – they could be building, painting, dancing, bees collecting nectar... anything that would appropriate to the text or topic you are studying.

You can also find summaries of key classroom drama approaches that are featured extensively in CLPE’s The Power of Reading programme by using these hyperlinks:

- [Hot-Seating](#)
- [Conscience Alley](#)
- [Freeze Frame and Thought Tracking](#)
- [Readers Theatre](#)
- [Role on the Wall](#)
- [Drama and Role Play](#)

The Intrinsic Value

“The arts give expression to our understanding, our imagination and our creativity. As the world we inhabit becomes smaller, faster and more competitive, these qualities are increasingly important. The arts are an integral part of a complete, successful and high-quality education. Study of the arts enhances young people's intellectual, personal and social development.

A comprehensive arts education provides a rich and engaging curriculum that develops pupils' abilities to think, reason and understand the world and its cultures. It offers pupils opportunities to respond, perform, and create in the arts. The arts instil in our pupils the habits of mind that last a lifetime: analytical skills, the ability to solve problems, perseverance and a drive for excellence. The creative skills children develop through the arts carry them toward new ideas, new experiences and new challenges, as well as offering personal satisfaction. This is the intrinsic value of the arts and it should not be underestimated.”

**Creativity and the Arts in the Primary School
Discussion Document and Proceedings of the Consultative Conference on Education
Irish National Teachers' Organisation (2009)**

You can also read [this blog](#) on the CLPE Website:

The graphic is a light blue rectangular box. At the top center is the CLPE logo. Below it, the title 'Why drama is essential in today's classrooms' is written in a large, bold, blue font. Underneath the title, 'by Darren Matthews' is written in a smaller, black font. In the center of the box is a white rectangular area containing the CLPE logo, the text 'A blog by CLPE's Darren Matthews' in blue, and a photograph of five primary school children in a classroom setting, some with their arms raised. The children are wearing school uniforms.

A New Direction Evaluation

We'd be very grateful if you could spend a few moments completing an evaluation of the Drama Masterclass, if you haven't already done so. Use this QR code to access the document:

