



## **Using Drama Techniques across the curriculum at Westborough High School to add interest and engagement to our lessons and promote creativity:**

### **IMPROVISATION**

Quite simply, this is "making it up as you go along". It works best when there is some kind of simple framework (e.g. pupils are told the "beginning of the story" and take it from there). It may also be appropriate to set a few simple guidelines (e.g. "characters must not fight" may help to curb the natural tendency of exuberant young boys). *Improvisation* has the advantage over *role play* because pupils can "be themselves". *Improvisation* can be used in literacy lessons to develop storylines; in geography lessons to simulate living in different social conditions; or in history lessons to consider "how it might have been" or to generate "alternative endings" to historical scenarios

### **ROLE PLAY**

As in *improvisation*, pupils act out a scene - with the added factor that each is allocated a specific role or character. It is a good idea to allow pupils a few minutes to think about their character (or to discuss it with a friend) before the activity commences. Even so, the emphasis should be on play. *Role play* can be used in literacy or citizenship lessons to explore different points of view; in foreign language lessons to practice use of language; in science lessons to consider implications of using particular scientific inventions.

### **FREEZE FRAME**

This is a device to be used in conjunction with *improvisation* or *role play*. Upon a given signal from the teacher (clap, bell, etc.), children "freeze" in position. This enables exploration of what characters may be thinking, which can inform the continuing action. Pupils could discuss how many frames are needed to tell a story, which could inform a subsequent piece of writing. If children are asked to add a single phrase to the *freeze frame*, this encourages them into being selective about dialogue.

### **THOUGHT TRACKING**

This can be used in conjunction with *freeze frame* and focuses specifically on what the characters in the frame are feeling and thinking.

### **SOUND TRACKING**

Similar to *thought tracking*, except that pupils focus on what sounds the scene may contain (including voices). At a given signal from the teacher, pupils make their noise, which can then be discussed in more detail. This is a useful preparation for creative writing.

### **HOT SEATING**

One pupil takes the role of a character from a story (or an historical figure, or the inhabitant of a foreign country, etc.) and sits in the *hot seat* to face questions from the rest of the group. It may be appropriate to allow the *hot-seater* to prepare in advance - or the teacher may take on that role.

### **CONSCIENCE ALLEY**

Pupils stand facing each other in two lines that form an *alley*. As the character walks between the lines, each pupil that they pass speaks to their *conscience* - providing arguments for and against a

possible course of action. It is not essential for everyone to say something - and some pupils may wish to repeat a previous contribution.

### **ROLE ON THE WALL**

Although not strictly a dramatic technique, this activity can be used as a follow-up from *role play* or *thought tracking*. A large outline drawing of a character is pinned on the wall (if you are "artistically challenged" you could draw around a child). Pupils write words around the outline to show how the character is perceived by others. Pupils also write words inside the outline to show the character's inner feelings. This can lead to useful discussion of real and fictitious characters.

### **PAIRED CONVERSATION**

This is a conversational rather than a dramatic device. Pupils work in pairs, seated and without props, to hold a *conversation*. Pupils can be allocated roles or speak from opposing viewpoints. The activity can be useful in preparing ideas to be used in persuasive writing tasks.

### **GAMES FOR LEARNING**

I know that lots of staff use different games for learning, sometimes using interactive white boards as we saw at a staff INSET recently. I have also observed several colleagues during my research project who use some great games to engage students and imbed learning. I think that this is a great example of creative teaching and learning. Some colleagues recently went on a course based on this and picked up some great ideas. Joel and I would like to use our Cross Curricular Specialism meeting to share some of these games and ideas so if you would like to share some of your successful games with us that would be brilliant.