

# Dramatic exercises for teachers.

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## Purposes

The purpose of the following exercises in the teaching of drama for learning is to enable teachers to practice the teacher in role strategy as well as have some contexts 'up their sleeves' that can be used as situations warrant. Each invented context assumes the teacher has the skills to 'sign' in the 3 modes:

**Expressive**- in that the teacher uses herself, her behaviours, her own 'body language' and so on-as the main signing system to create the context. There are times when other adults can be so framed as well-as in 'full role' projections.

**Iconic**-whereby the teacher uses drawn (previous to the learning episode or created in situ with the class), diagrammatic or physical shapes with scripting objects and various sources of surfaces -to imply and create signs appropriate to the investigation under scrutiny. For example-drawing around a person in chalk produces a useful sign for learners to work with as does making shapes of significance in the sand tray -lost dog's paw prints-or a drawing of wolf paw marks on the board.)

**Symbolic**-where the teacher uses language texts in spoken form or 'written' text forms- using formal codes of alphabetical syntax.

## Guidelines

Teachers using these models might like to consider the following:

- Each model has the potential for dramatic enquiry as each context is at a moment in time taken from a long term event-either in a story-or a mythic structure. (Each is labelled.) However the introduction of 'tension' needs careful thinking through using aspects of the 3 sign systems above-and although each context will work for deep learning-users need to plan the first steps in detail. For example-the teacher projecting the role of 'journalist' in the context of *Stig of the Dump* might use a diagram representing a photograph of the sighting of the creature when meeting up with fellow journalists.
- The inductive mode of teaching is paramount here-and should not be confused with instructional teaching methods such as 'we are going to be such and such.....' or 'what I want you to be is'...etc. Drama for learning systems are designed for open enquiry and learner led methodology-hence new skills might be needed to ensure induction is the main mode of practice,
- Each model has the potential through careful planning-to invest the class with a 'mantle of the expert' point of view that can be built into a long term curriculum enquiry as opposed to a sequence of dramatic episodes. For teachers interested in this

system-materials can be viewed and learnt on the website:

[www.mantleoftheexpert.com](http://www.mantleoftheexpert.com)

- In the context of Macbeth's castle (Shakespeare) the context may need to be clarified first of all perhaps by:
  - a) The class are given a sample of text from the play that hints at Macbeth's ruthlessness-in groups of 4. The task is to work out what mood he might be in.....
  - b) The class then see the teacher taking an apron and hinting that she might talk as someone in the text they have read and analysed.
  - c) The teacher talks *as if the class cannot hear her* i.e. as though she were giving voice to her thoughts.....'oh dear-he's coming back-the queen has given me an order for such a huge banquet-and all we have in is vegetables!'
- Each has the capacity to run for a short time-for example if the teacher is trialling out the strategy or fitting into an existing curriculum enquiry or a longer one for narrative explorations perhaps or MoE frames.
- Before using-teachers need to be clear about the purposes of the events to be constructed with the class and the learning they are going for in answer to the question: 'What do I want them to learn?' (By using any of the contexts-each has its own curriculum domain and dilemmas are varied.)

Context 1 (Stig of the Dump-author ) .....a journalist (teacher in role) having discovered evidence that a young humanoid creature from ancient times has turned up in a rubbish dump, talks to his/her fellow journalists about 'getting to the truth' and the possibility of a village cover up...(The class are framed as 'journalists giving advice'.....)

Context 2 (Jurassic Park).....a scientist (teacher in role) has a secret box from a government research establishment that has come into their possession in which there are suspected dinosaur eggs. The scientist (not an expert in the field of amphibian creatures) discusses the find with experts in the field. The class are framed as such experts.

Context 3 (Macbeth-William Shakespeare) .....the castle servant to Lady Macbeth, speaks urgently to other servants, of equal rank to her, about preparations for the banquet to be held in honour of Macbeth's coming to the throne of Scotland that have to be ready TONIGHT! The class are framed as castle workers who keep the castle functioning in all matters of food, comforts and entertainments.

Context 5 (The Time Machine-HG Wells).....an inventor (teacher in role) has at last managed to get a huge source of funding for a team of specialists who will build a ‘time travelling machine’. The learners are to be framed as helpers in the enterprise.....

Context 4 (Pied Piper of Hamblin).....the mayor (ess) teacher in role-has to find a way to tell her (his) counsellors that the vaults are empty of money and there is no way anyone can pay the piper or the work completed.....the class are the counsellors .....

Context 6 (Mythic).....the King’s senior messenger, who has just found out that the Queen has had a girl and NOT a boy-speaks to the priests for advice on what to say.....and insists that the priests will accompany the messenger to the palace.....the class are the priests(esses).

Context 7.....(Drama Structures-Cecily O’Neil) an estate agent-(teacher in role) who needs to sell an old house for a client-discusses with the client’s family how to avoid ANY references to speculations that the house is haunted.....

Context 8 .....a heart surgeon (TIR) has just discovered that he/she has to perform an operation on a patient who is known to be a Mafia boss.....the surgeon gathers together the operation team to break the news to them and share his/her worries.....