

Glossary of drama terms and conventions.

Anthropomorphism

Students take on the role of inanimate objects which can retell the story or give evidence from an observer's viewpoint without the need for emotional involvement

Brainstorming

The group list all the possible suggestions or responses to a specific task or situation. It is necessary to collect all suggestions, even those which may not be used later.

Conscience alley

Useful when a character has to make a decision. The group form two inward-facing lines between which the character passes listening to advice/criticism being bombarded at them with the intention of focusing their thoughts.

Corporate brain

Useful for presenting an argument or debate between several characters which involves a larger number of students. The class divides into two groups behind the "mouth pieces", the groups then respond to remarks from the others (as in a conversation) feeding their ideas through the "mouth pieces". The only students who can speak loudly enough to be heard are the mouthpieces.

Drawing

This can be individual or collaborative as in the creation of a map or poster. It is useful for developing awareness of visual imagery and supports imaginative work.

Empty chair

Similar to hot-seating, as a means of exploring plot and character. A chair is placed in the centre of the group as a focus and symbol of the character. Any member of the group can then ask questions and any member of the group can respond.

Forum theatre

Small groups of students improvising in front of the rest of the group. A scene or scenes are developed by the students following suggestions from the audience.

Freeze-frame or Tableau

This is a single image (photograph) and captures a single moment in time. The pose adopted, reflects a mood or emotion important to the drama being developed. This is usually created in a small group situation.

Good angel/bad angel

Two students stand behind the character urging their thoughts towards different courses of action through what they say, usually towards different extremes of a moral decision.

Hot-seating

A volunteer (this may be the teacher if the situation calls for it), is seated in the centre of the group in the role of the character in the drama. The group then ask questions appropriate to the situation in order to explore the character and the action. The volunteer responds appropriately.

Interviews

As with hot-seating, this provides a method of ascertaining information in a structured way. One pupils acts as interviewer and can question one or more people in role. This can be done as a formal interview or a more informal situation.

Mantle of the expert

(Often associated with teacher in role) A volunteer or volunteers assume the role of an expert and can manipulate responsibility for the development of the drama by introducing information specific to a certain situation for example, professional knowledge as in that of a social worker or chemical weapons' expert.

Meetings

Public meetings, committee meetings etc. This emphasises negotiation and bargaining skills and provides one way of considering alternatives.

Mime

Encourages emphasis on action and body language, it removes the pressure of the need for dialogue and gives the option of slow motion sequences.

Open door

The character stands in the centre of the circle and approaches other members of the circle and mimes 'opening a door'. The person behind the door then makes a statement appropriate to the situation. Often the 'occupants' behind the door may be characters from already developed drama who use the opportunity to voice their thoughts and feelings.

Over-heard conversations

The class would be divided into groups of differing characters for example, the local business community, the gossips etc., and in role they would discuss an issue. Snatches of this conversation would then be heard by the rest of the group to develop their awareness of differing points of view on an issue.

Reportage or narrative

Generally a documentary technique used to advance the drama. Characters might be interviewed by a journalist or asked to provide a narrative account of events in which they were involved.

Ritual and ceremony

The use of stylised or even, stage-managed sequences of events or the use of symbols or symbolic artefacts. In this way, significance can be conferred on a certain experience to heighten meaning.

Role

Work in role requires a mature understanding of the situation and characters being developed. Care should be taken to discourage stereotypes.

Teacher in role

By working in role, the teacher can challenge ideas and perceptions from within the drama. In this way also, the drama can be developed in a useful way without undermining the work of the students. The role adopted by the teacher may not be a major or central role, just enough to facilitate the work of the students where appropriate.

Telephone or radio conversations

The need for appropriate dialogue can add tension.

Voice-over or thought tracking

Used to explore inner conflict and the internal thoughts of a character. Other students in the group are encouraged to express the thoughts or feelings of a character in certain situations.

Writing

Diaries, journals, news accounts etc. Any form or style of writing can be used to highlight situations and characters and consolidate information created in a drama.