

ECA431: Assignment 1

Process Drama Lesson Planning

GROUP MEMBERS

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PRETEXT: HOW TO MAKE GRAVY BY PAUL KELLY

Hello Dan, it's Joe here, I hope you're keeping well
It's the 21st of December, and now they're ringing the last bells
If I get good behaviour, I'll be out of here by July
Won't you kiss my kids on Christmas Day, please don't let 'em cry for me
I guess the brothers are driving down from Queensland and Stella's flying in from the coast
They say it's gonna be a hundred degrees, even more maybe, but that won't stop the roast
Who's gonna make the gravy now? I bet it won't taste the same
Just add flour, salt, a little red wine & don't forget a dollop of tomato sauce for sweetness & that extra tang
And give my love to Angus and to Frank and Dolly,
Tell 'em all I'm sorry I screwed up this time
And look after Rita, I'll be thinking of her early Christmas morning
When I'm standing in line
I hear Mary's got a new boyfriend, I hope he can hold his own
Do you remember the last one? What was his name again? (Just a little too much cologne)
And Roger, you know I'm even gonna miss Roger
'Cause there's sure as hell no one in here I want to fight
Oh praise the Baby Jesus, have a Merry Christmas,
I'm really gonna miss it, all the treasure and the trash
And later in the evening, I can just imagine,
You'll put on Junior Murvin and push the tables back
And you'll dance with Rita, I know you really like her,
Just don't hold her too close, oh brother please don't stab me in the back
I didn't mean to say that, it's just my mind it plays up,
Multiplies each matter, turns imagination into fact
You know I love her badly, she's the one to save me,
I'm gonna make some gravy, I'm gonna taste the fat
Tell her that I'm sorry, yeah I love her badly, tell 'em all I'm sorry,
And kiss the sleepy children for me
You know one of these days, I'll be making gravy,
I'll be making plenty, I'm gonna pay 'em all back.

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RATIONALE

Process drama fits with a constructivist viewpoint in that learning is heightened because “the participants, together with the teacher, constitute the theatrical ensemble and engage in drama to make the meaning *for themselves*” (Bowell & Heap 2001, p. 7). Participants in process drama can benefit in three main ways from the insights discovered through the dramatic journey: they may learn about drama as an art form, they may enhance their understanding of personal and social issues, and will usually do so in a cross-curricular context (Bowell & Heap 2001, p. 8).

Paul Kelly is a marvellous storyteller who sings with empathy and humour about the trials and tribulations of ordinary Australians. His songs are often mini domestic dramas, with the complexities of human relationships being a major theme. This particular song provides incredibly rich stimuli for process drama as it mentions many different characters, but only alludes to the possible tensions that may exist between them. Kelly describes his own pre-text for the song:

“I was invited to contribute a song to a charity Christmas album in 1996,” Kelly recalls. “So I asked myself, ‘How do you write something new about Christmas?’ I decided the best way is to have someone who’s not there... The recipe comes from my first father-in-law, but all that stuff about being in prison is made up.” (Himes, 2004)

Students should touch upon the issue of crime and how this may affect the family of an offender. They could explore family relationships and any number of themes including love, loss, lies, tradition, memories and betrayal. The theme of ritual (tradition) and its meaning, place and significance in family life can provide a launching point for a number of learning and process drama paths. As Dorothy Heathcote notes, “All too often drama presents children with a story form with the emphasis upon events – whereas in fact drama reveals events through the feelings and attitudes of people” (Heathcote, 1984). This pre-text provides an opportunity for such explorations as well as many possible directions students could take it: Therein lays the potential beauty of process drama.

Planning

Please note that there are props required for Step 2: Private Property. A space with a white board would be most appropriate for Step 3: Iceberg. Pen and paper are required for Step 11: Letters.

We have provided supporting ‘teaching focus’ statements at each step, however, as with any process drama, each activity requires scaffolding to an extent that will depend on the skills of the student group. The ‘Cornerstones of Process Drama’, as presented by Bowell & Heap (2001, p.9), have guided us in our selection of activities: *Play* is present in the Gossip circle; *Learning in Context* and *Symbolic Representation of Experience* is provided through the use of pre-text and familial themes; and opportunities for *Owning the Learning* are provided through repeating activities at Steps 10 and 12.

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Level 5 VELs

The themes and activities presented in this sequence are supported by the VELs Level 5 curriculum. The specific Standards and Progression Points that can be applied, however, may depend on the teaching focus implemented during the process drama activities.

While the sequence itself supports the entire *Drama: Exploring & Responding* Level 5 Standard, the themes of the pre-text and processes involved also support other learning areas. These areas are presented in the table below: Relevant Learning Area statements, Standards statements and Progression points are presented in Appendix A.

Strand	Domain	Dimension
<i>Physical, Personal & Social Learning</i>	Interpersonal Development	Building social relationships
		Working in teams
	Health & Physical Education	Health knowledge & promotion
<i>Discipline-based Learning</i>	The Arts (Drama)	Creating & making
		Exploring & responding
	English	Reading
		Speaking & Listening
<i>Interdisciplinary Learning</i>	Communication	Listening, viewing & responding
		Presenting
	Thinking Processes	Reasoning, processing & inquiry
		Creativity
		Reflection, evaluation & metacognition

REFERENCES

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PROCESS DRAMA SEQUENCE**Step 1:** Play the Song

Step 2: Private Property	
Aims/Objectives:	To stimulate conversations about what type of character Joe may be: Suggestions can be made as to what each item represents, and students can begin to construct a character outline.
Teaching Focus:	The focus will be on understanding Joe's inner-world, as well as his exterior projection.
Process:	A canvas bag containing Joe's personal belongings (which was confiscated upon his arrest) will be unpacked by the class. The items inside include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a lighter • a mobile phone containing contact names & phone numbers • a torn jumper • a wallet with family photo, bank cards and \$10 cash • gloves • a packet of chewing gum
Dramatic Elements:	Contrast - the contrasting sides of Joe's personality may be explored Focus - what type of character is Joe? Mood - a tone may be set for the unfolding drama. Symbol - what does each item represent?

Step 3: Iceberg	
Aims/Objectives:	Break down the literal and implied meaning of the pre-text
Teaching Focus:	What inferences are drawn from the text: what makes people think particular things about the meaning – the phrasing? The common language? The slang?
Process:	A diagram of an iceberg is drawn: above the water line the literal pretext is provided, below the waterline the implied text (subtext) is noted. Subtext suggestions should be supported with direct examples/links to the pre-text.
Dramatic Elements:	Text - text vs. subtext

Step 4: Hot seating – begin with teacher in role	
Aims/Objectives:	To develop students understanding and expression of the characters
Teaching Focus:	To provide starting points for character development and students' comprehension
Process:	“Characters are questioned about the values, motives, relationship and actions by other members of the group.” ¹ The event of questioning can happen at various points in the story, and occur to different characters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – After Joe has been caught – Joe, Rita, Dan, arresting officer – After Joe is sentenced – Joe, Rita, Dan, judge – The First Christmas in jail – Joe, the kids – On Joe's release – etc

¹ Neelands, 1998. p.95

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Dramatic Elements:	Dramatic Tension – opinions of characters Focus – where the concern is focussed Sound/Voice – the tone of voice given to different characters Text – the kind of language used by the characters (setting class, culture, education, etc)
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Step 5: Space Between	
Aims/Objectives:	To establish the relationship Joe has with other characters mentioned in the pretext, and to highlight importance of family and the impact it can have on your life
Teaching Focus:	To encourage students to show emotional distance through physical distance
Process:	The class work together to establish the space and distance between Joe and the rest of the people listed in the song. The physical space between them represents the distance in their relationship. Joe stands at one end of the room, and the other characters face him respective of their distance. This activity takes place before Joe was arrested and sent to Jail. This is later repeated to show the space between characters when Joe is in Jail.
Dramatic Elements:	Conflict - The distance may be caused by conflict Space - The physical distance represents the emotional distance Time - This activity is repeated later to show a shift in distance over time

Step 6 : Gossip Circle	
Aims/Objectives:	To create a supporting storyline around the pre-text To later explore the possible conflict and/or contradictions presented
Teaching Focus:	
Process:	The class stands in a circle and takes turns speaking on behalf of characters either in, or associated with, the story either created by the students or mentioned in the pre-text. They comment on stories they've heard, gossip mongering as they go, and report on what they have witnessed or heard about.
Dramatic Elements:	Conflict – relationships Dramatic Tension – contradictions Mood – tone of setting Text – language being used Time – timeframes referred to and introduced

Step 7: Conflicting Advice	
Aims/Objectives:	To allow students to gain insight into the thought processes of Joe at a major turning point in his life
Teaching Focus:	Getting students to really believe in their character and their role in the story: Students should feel so confident so that they can effectively get their advice across to Joe in hope that he will listen to them.
Process:	Joe stands with his eyes closed in the centre, with all other relevant characters and acquaintances of Joe standing in a circle around him. At any given time the characters step toward him and give their conflicting advice on what he should do (Should he commit the crime?) or (what should he be doing with his life? What lead him down this path?) Joe may remain silent, argue back or respond only physically. Voices may also converse with each other. At some point Joe agrees with a voice and a decision is made! The character in the middle may be switched: perhaps Joe's partner Rita is in the middle and the voices represent an internal dialogue of dilemmas at a point in the story.

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Dramatic Elements:	<p>Climax - Building to the point where a decision is made</p> <p>Conflict - Varied opinions and advice from characters</p> <p>Dramatic Tension - The build up between voices, who will influence the final decision?</p> <p>Focus - Main point of focus is Joe's mind in the middle</p> <p>Voice - Characters use their voice to give advice</p> <p>Space - When characters step towards Joe it represents them stepping into his mind</p>
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Step 8: Video Pause	
Aims/Objectives:	To highlight a particular moment of the text as a way of showing raw emotions from the characters
Teaching Focus:	For students to be able to recognise and highlight the most prominent moment of their text
Process:	Students divide into groups and develop a short piece from the drama that highlights a specific point of conflict that has come alive. This can be either an event in Joe's current life, or one in his family's life. At one point in the action a freeze frame or pause is incorporated into the action, as if someone was pressing pause on the video camera.
Dramatic Elements:	<p>Contrast – Between the naturalistic text and the freeze frame</p> <p>Focus – Taking one section of the text and drawing focus to it</p>

Step 9: Ritual and Ceremony – Naturalistic	
Aims/Objectives:	To re-create Christmas Day (without Joe) in a naturalistic drama, exploring any hidden conflicts between family members.
Teaching Focus:	This activity should develop relationships between the characters mentioned in the song and may highlight any tensions within the family.
Process:	In small groups, students re-create a scene from Christmas Day in a naturalistic style using any or all of the dramatic elements listed below.
Dramatic Elements:	Climax / Conflict / Contrast / Dramatic Tension / Focus / Gesture / Mood / Movement / Rhythm / Sound/Voice / Space / Symbol / Text / Time

Step 10: Ritual and Ceremony – Non Naturalistic	
Aims/Objectives:	To re-create Christmas Day (without Joe) in a non naturalistic drama, highlighting any apparent conflicts
Teaching Focus:	To encourage students to choose the best dramatic element or non-naturalistic style that best emphasises their chosen conflict
Process:	In the same groups, students re-work their scene from Christmas Day in a non-naturalistic style. This encapsulates the core of the conflict by using only one of the dramatic elements below. This piece could either be done in freeze frames, mime, using props etc.
Dramatic Elements:	Dramatic Tension / Focus / Gesture / Movement / Rhythm / Sound/Voice / Space / Symbol / Text / Time

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Step 11: Letters	
Aims/Objectives:	To explore the language and feelings of the characters
Teaching Focus:	To clarify the need to select a time/setting for the letter before students begin writing
Process:	Students write a letter from the point of view of a character in the story. Once this is completed, the class may sit in a circle with their eyes closed and listen to various letters as the teacher selects them at random.
Dramatic Elements:	Text – interpretations and written voices

Step 12: Space Between	
Aims/Objectives:	To establish the relationship Joe has with other characters mentioned in the pretext, and to highlight importance of family and the impact it can have on your life
Teaching Focus:	To encourage students to show emotional distance through physical distance
Process:	The class works together to establish the space and distance between Joe and the rest of the people listed in the song. The physical space between them represents the distance in their relationship. Joe stands at one end of the room, and the other characters face him respective of their distance. This second time, the activity takes place whilst Joe is in Jail. The space between characters has most likely changed over time. Discuss this change, and how Joe's relationships evolved.
Dramatic Elements:	Conflict - The distance may be caused by conflict Space - The physical distance represents the emotional distance Time - This activity is repeated later to show a shift in distance over time

Step 13: Moment of Truth	
Aims/Objectives:	To construct a final scene(s) for the drama.
Teaching Focus:	To resolve the process drama and reflect upon the discoveries made about the characters.
Process:	In smalls groups, students will devise and perform the scene in which Joe returns home after being in jail. Students can choose which of the characters in the pretext are present when Joe arrives. They may choose to focus on any of the dramatic elements listed below.
Dramatic Elements:	Climax / Conflict / Contrast / Dramatic Tension / Focus / Gesture / Mood / Movement / Rhythm / Sound/Voice / Space / Symbol / Text / Time

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APPENDIX A – RELEVANT LEVEL 5 VELS STATEMENTS

Learning Focus:

Health and Physical Education

They describe the influence of the family on shaping personal identity and values. They explain how community attitudes and laws influence the sense of right and wrong.

They explore actions at personal, family and societal levels that help to meet these needs, and identify the influences of individuals and groups. They explore ways of dealing with change, especially the social and emotional aspects of transition from primary to secondary school.

English

...Students begin to respond in more detached and critical ways to a wide range of print, visual, electronic and multimodal texts that explore familiar and more challenging themes and issues... Students read and interpret texts that present some challenging issues... They develop a critical understanding about the ways that writers and producers of texts try to position readers to accept particular views of people, characters, events, ideas and information... Students learn to use formal language to construct spoken and written texts for a range of purposes and audiences... Students work cooperatively in discussion groups, using talk to explore and analyse challenging themes and issues. They develop their skills in identifying main issues in a topic, providing supporting detail and evidence for opinions, asking relevant clarifying questions and building on the ideas of others. They apply their knowledge of spoken texts and oral language to experiment with techniques to influence audiences, including vocabulary, rhythm, intonation, timing, pausing, body language and facial expression. They examine how situational and sociocultural factors affect audience responses and the impact of different text and sentence structures on readers and viewers. They explore ways of using multimodal texts to enhance visual and verbal communication.

Standards

English

Reading

At Level 5, students read and view imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that explore ideas and information related to challenging themes and issues. They identify the themes and issues explored in these texts, and provide supporting evidence to justify their interpretations. They produce personal responses, for example, interpretive pieces and character profiles. They infer meanings and messages in texts, analyse how social values or attitudes are conveyed, compare the presentation of information and ideas in different texts, and identify cause and effect in informative texts.

Speaking and listening

At Level 5, students express creative and analytical responses to texts, themes and issues. They identify main issues in a topic and provide supporting detail and evidence for opinions. They critically evaluate the spoken language of others and select, prepare and present spoken texts for specific audiences and purposes. They use a variety of multimodal texts to support individual presentations in which they inform or persuade an audience.

When listening to others, students ask clarifying questions and build on the ideas of others. They identify key ideas and take notes. They show an awareness of the influence of audience on the construction and presentation of spoken texts, and of how situational and sociocultural factors affect audience responses.

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Health and Physical Education

Health knowledge & promotion:

They describe the effect of family and community expectations on the development of personal identity and values. They identify outcomes of risk-taking behaviours and evaluate harm minimisation strategies.

The Arts (Drama)

Creating and making

At Level 5, students, independently and collaboratively, plan, design, improvise, interpret, evaluate, refine, make and present arts works that represent and communicate ideas and purpose... They generate and develop ideas that explore particular concepts, techniques and issues when making arts works. They combine and manipulate arts elements, principles and/or conventions to represent and communicate ideas and develop imaginative solutions to set tasks...

Exploring and responding

At Level 5, students research, observe and reflect on their explorations to develop, discuss, express and support opinions about their own and others' use of arts elements, principles and/or conventions, skills, techniques, processes, media, materials, equipment and technologies. They compare, analyse, evaluate, and interpret the content, meaning and qualities in arts works created in different social, cultural and historical contexts, offering informed responses and opinions and using appropriate arts language... They use appropriate arts language.

Progression Points

Interpersonal Development

Building social relationships

At Level 5, students demonstrate respect for the individuality of others and empathise with others in local, national and global contexts, acknowledging the diversity of individuals... They recognise and describe peer influence on their behaviour... Students select and use appropriate strategies to effectively manage individual conflict and assist others in resolution processes.

Working in Teams

At Level 5, students accept responsibility as a team member and support other members to share information, explore the ideas of others, and work cooperatively to achieve a shared purpose within a realistic timeframe... They reflect on individual and team outcomes and act to improve their own and the team's performance.

Communication

Listening, viewing & responding

At Level 5, students modify their verbal and non-verbal responses to suit particular audiences... They interpret complex information and evaluate the effectiveness of its presentation... When responding, they use specialised language and symbols as appropriate to the contexts in which they are working... They consider their own and others' points of view, apply prior knowledge to new situations, challenge assumptions and justify their own interpretations.

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Presenting

At Level 5, students use the communication conventions, forms and language appropriate to the subject to convey a clear message across a range of presentation forms to meet the needs of the context, purpose and audience... They provide and use constructive feedback and reflection to develop effective communication skills.

Thinking Processes

Reasoning, processing & inquiry

At Level 5, students use a range of question types, and locate and select relevant information from varied sources when undertaking investigations. When identifying and synthesising relevant information, they use a range of appropriate strategies of reasoning and analysis to evaluate evidence and consider their own and others' points of view. They use a range of discipline-based methodologies. They complete activities focusing on problem solving and decision making which involve an increasing number of variables and solutions.

Creativity

At Level 5, students apply creative thinking strategies to explore possibilities and generate multiple options, problem definitions and solutions. They demonstrate creativity, in the ways they engage with and explore ideas in a range of contexts.

Reflection, evaluation & metacognition

At Level 5, students explain the purpose of a range of thinking tools and use them in appropriate contexts. They use specific language to describe their thinking and reflect on their thinking processes during their investigations. They modify and evaluate their thinking strategies. They describe and explain changes that may occur in their ideas and beliefs over time.