

Teacher Education Institute (TEI)

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Drama

Drama involves children acting out situations, facts, personal experiences, stories and ideas. When children are involved in drama, they think first about the person they are portraying. By discussing the feelings of that person and other background events, children learn to put themselves into the “shoes” of others. Drama causes children to think and become more sensitive to the emotions and resulting behaviour of others.

Dramatic presentations help stories from a variety of sources come alive for children. Such presentations also provide an avenue for learning who are kinaesthetic learners. It, drama, also helps children absorb truths into their own lives as they dramatize ways in which they could act in given situations. Role-playing situations also help children discuss possible consequences and solutions to problems. Here are several different examples of ways to use drama to teach children so that they develop some of the attributes described above.

Monologue - In a monologue, a child “becomes” another person and speaks from that person’s point of view. Monologues help children learn about the life and work of other people and can provide the child with a first-person account. The monologue may be simply read aloud or can be made more elaborate with props and costumes.

Picture Posing - Picture posing is an effective way to introduce drama to children. Very few materials are needed for picture posing - simply a picture and children to pose it. Children pretend to be the characters in a picture and imitate the expressions and stances of those in the picture. When a teacher gives the signal, the children involved hold the pose for a few seconds. Thought and discussion about the picture are encouraged through questioning as children prepare for picture posing.

Pantomime - Pantomime is drama without words. Children are very familiar with this form of drama. Boys and girls act out situations. An adult can serve as a narrator and read the story as the children act it out silently. Costumes are not necessary, although children may decide to include simple props and costumes. Teachers should choose stories to pantomime that involve a lot of movement and action. Other ideas for pantomime could include dramatizing choice-making situations, acting out different occupations or the adventures of a hero or heroine.

Role Playing is a spontaneous drama based on a specific situation, story or problem under discussion. Children take on the roles of the characters and act out the story. No scripts or costumes are necessary as children work in an impromptu manner. Through role play, children learn to understand the feelings of others and to apply, for example, ethical standards in various situations. Role play also can be used to introduce or to review a story, to bring family issues up for discussion, and to show the consequences of different types of behaviour.

Drama as a Therapeutic Aid - Drama can be an enormous help to students who have behavioural or psychological problems. For example, let us assume there is a boy who is continually disruptive in the classroom. The teacher decides to attempt to rectify the situation by writing a short play in which the main character is a boy who continually is disruptive in class. The play indicates the effects of the boy’s behaviour on the rest of the class but also how the boy realizes this and decides that he is going to change the ways he behaves in class. His efforts are rewarded by the ways his teacher and the other children react to the change in his behaviour. By working through his role in the drama the boy realizes the effects of his actions on others. Through role playing he sees the considerable improvements in his relationships. He therefore imagines different behaviour by such role playing. He decides that he would like to have such relationships in his normal life and implements changes that will bring this about. Real change has occurred that has been initiated by his role in the drama. The main points are that changes have occurred initiated by and through his volition and that the boy’s imagination has played a crucial role in this process. Thus drama brings about behavioural changes in a safe and friendly environment and not in a confrontational or punishing manner.