

Drama Games

March 2024 Write-Up by Molly Danko for Fine Arts Council Email Newsletter

A few weeks ago, I got to venture down to Calgary to present at the Calgary City Teachers' Convention! I had the absolute joy of playing with a group of 25 Drama teachers from around the city. It warmed my heart and inspired me to see what incredible teachers their students get to learn from, and to hear everyone sharing ideas and activities that work in their classes. My session was 'Ensemble Building in the Drama Classroom'- a crucial part of any Drama class. So, whether you have just begun a new term, or you are in need of some ensemble exercises, here are some of my favorites from the session.

Chair Zombie

- All players sit on a chair, scattered throughout the room. There is one empty chair.
- Player A gets appointed as the zombie and stands at the opposite end of the room from the empty chair. Player A's goal is to sit on a chair. However, Player A may only walk slowly.
- The group wants to prevent Player A from sitting on the empty chair. Contrary to Player A, they are allowed to run.
- Whenever Player A walks towards the empty chair, they quickly switch chairs, leaving a new empty chair somewhere else in the room.

Space Junk

- Scatter objects around your space- I usually tell my students they have 2 minutes to put as many things on the stage as they can- chairs, boxes, knapsacks, etc.
- Students may choose a partner or depending on the group you may assign partners
- Partners will label themselves A and B. As will close their eyes and Bs will guide them through the obstacles. If they run into an obstacle, they must restart. The first round they can guide however they feel comfortable, the next levels are as follows:
 - Guide your partner through the obstacles only by physically guiding them- make sure that your students have a quick check in about if they are okay with guiding by the hand, shoulders, back, etc.
 - You can only guide your partner through only using vocal directions (be specific!)
 - Create a set of physical cues to guide your partner
 - A tap on the left shoulder = turn left, tap on right shoulder = turn right, double tap on back = stop- let each group create their own cues
 - Create a set of Sound effects
 - Moo to turn left, oink to turn right, bark to stop, again, let each group create their own cues.

Counting in the Dark

- Have your students sit in a circle and count off how many are there.
- As an ensemble, your goal is to count from 1 to however many people you have (if it is 22, you will count 1-22) with everyone only saying one number
- You will do this with your eyes closed and can only say a number once in the sequence. If 2 people say a number at the same time, the group restarts at 1.

Group Juggle:

- Start in a circle
- Have the class pass a ball around the circle- say the name of who you are passing to. Remember who you throw the ball to- make sure everyone gets the ball once.
- Continue passing the ball around the circle
- Encourage underhand throws, quick, but controlled, if it falls, help it get to the person!
- You can eventually lead to not using names to add a challenge
- Add more balls!
 - Reverse the order
 - Add a new pattern
 - Add line of text, verb or objective
 - Add a character element

Stop Go Jump Clap

- Call out the following commands and have students respond accordingly to each: Stop, Go, Jump, Clap
- Once the class has settled with these directions, you can reverse them- stop means go, go means stop, jump means clap, clap means jump.
- Find your way into a circle and have the class lead each other through the commands first vocally, then silently.

Lily pads:

- The goal: to get from one side of the room to the other by only stepping on the foam pads that are given.
- You may start as whole class and could build to a competition if that works for your class
- Give the class or groups 2 or 3 squares (I use foam squares, but you could use cardboard, paper, fabric, whatever!) which they will use to cross the space
- All members of the team must make it across to the other side.

Silent Lines

- Silently, the class must create a:
 - Perfect circle, square, triangle, etc.
- Order Themselves:
 - Tallest to shortest
 - Birthday and/or age
 - Homerooms, etc.