

Every Body Loves a Story

Margot Henderson for Hi Arts. January 2004

Telling stories is something we all do, a lot of the time...at the bus stop, in the shop, when we're out with our pals, even when we're on our own
(We all talk to ourselves lets face it)

So the Good News is We All Know How to Do It

More Good News! Children LOVE to be told stories and what's more, Children NEED to be told stories. It's how they learn, about life, language, the world, everything.

So how do you do it?

Easy peasy pudding and pie
Read these notes and I'll tell you why.

Choosing a Story

Pick a story that fits your theme or topic (the body, the seasons, Chinese New Year or whatever)

Pick one you like, it helps.

Pick one you think the children will relate to, Has it got dragons or wee creepie crawlies in it ? You know best what they like.

If you can't find one to suit you could always try making one up.

Read the story over till you get the gist of it. You might want to change it or simplify it for your children.

Jot down the bare bones. Then you can let go of the book and tell it in your own way . It makes it more fun for you and the children.

Bringing the Story to Life

Have fun with it.

Play with character, voice, gesture.

Use the 3r's - rhythm, rhyme and repetition (they help both you and the children remember the story)

Have a go at using songs, instruments, actions, props, puppets, cloths, masks, anything you can think of that helps the children to engage with the story.

Some Ideas for the Session

*Start and end the session with an activity a song or a rhythm game, maybe one that will appear later in the story.

*Plan a few points in the story where the children can join in; an action song, a repeating call and response, making sounds or music, doing a wee dance.

*It helps to have some 'conducting signal' so they know when to start and stop

*Find ways you feel comfortable using your voice, or acting out gestures to help bring the story or characters to life

*Plan in some other arts activities related to the story:

Before - making props, puppets, masks, instruments or sets.

After - use drawing painting or clay work to make scenes or characters

*Have a story circle where the children will tell the story back to you.

For this you need a story stone or a talking stick or a puppet to pass round and a musical instrument to cue the changes. (It also depends on the age of the children)

*An alternative is just to talk with them and ask them what they liked best and why. This helps them to develop their thinking and language and to digest the story.

*You might want to simply tell the story first and have the drama participation afterwards.

Have fun and Happy Endings.

Dr Dog Worksheet for Schools

The intention of this worksheet is to give you some practical ideas for using Drama to explore curriculum topics .

In this example I am working with the theme of Health and The Body, but many of the ideas can be easily adapted for other subjects.

The underlying principle is the same - that working through the medium of the body's expression is a profound and powerful means of learning.

Why?

It is a kinaesthetic and multisensory approach so there are ways in to suit all learners
Information is reinforced and retained on many levels.

It encourages the development of language, thinking and imagination ... and ...it makes learning (and teaching) a lot more fun .

So ...the workshop...

Aims

*To make the link between playing and learning

*To make the links between the playing that children do and the playing actors do
*To give children an insight into the process of creating through movement, voice, rhythms and text

*To use these to explore feelings and how using our bodies creatively helps us to feel good

How? Using movement, voice, rhythm and text

Warm Ups

Start in a circle with an action song linked to your theme:

Them Bones Them Bones, Head Shoulders Knees and Toes
How Do You Do song...

Voice and Movement

Body Parts - warm up through the body parts with circles and stretches from head to toes (Depending on the size of the circle you can have people repeat one by one or all together)

Echoing - each person makes a shape and all the others repeat round the circle.

Body Rhythms - each person makes a rhythm by tapping on the body or stepping or clicking and everyone repeats . See how inventive you can be. You can build this exercise by doing cross rhythms where small groups keep a different rhythm going.

Sounds around - the same idea with vocals. Given the theme you can also play with sniffs and sneezes and other natural sounds.

Feet First / Head First - moving one body part at a time to explore the range .Then moving through the space leading with different body parts.

Mirror / Mirror - working with a partner, taking turns to lead and follow each other.

Musical Statues - making sure the movement focuses on both body parts and feeling qualities: dance sad shoulders, tired feet etc. so the statues and the movement have more definition.

Text and Language

How Do You Do song

How do you do and how are you?

How are you?

How are you?

How do you do and how are you?

How are you today?

I'm feeling (sad, happy, tired, stressed...) today

I'm sad today

I'm sad today

I'm feeling sad today

I'm feeling sad today

This is done with actions and is a good way to introduce feelings.

Making Feeling Poems

Feeling imagery is the essence of poetry .This exercise is a lovely way to help children think and feel poetically

Pick a feeling .Pick an image to express it. Use what's around, inside and outside . Encourage the children to look and be inventive. Pose some questions to help draw out the image.

I am ...scared ...(as?) ...a leaf (when ?) falling off a tree
(why?) Who will catch me?

I am ... sad...(as?).. a book... (where?)... left on a shelf.(why?)Nobody wants to read me.

Character Poems

Using one word for a feeling or quality and one word for a body part make up some character names: Happy Head .Bad Belly, Tired Toes ...then begin to flesh out the character. What do they do? What are they like? Put these ideas into a rhyme.

Happy Head got out of bed
Early in the morning
'I'm happy'
Was all that Happy said.
And then she went all red.

Bad Belly was rumbling and grumbling
He was as grumpy as can be
He got angrier and hungrier.
'Somebody FEED me.'

Then you can play with acting out the poems.