

Drama 1:

Intro to Drama

Welcome to the ARTSQUAD Project drama resources. These resources have been developed to demonstrate how drama can be used as an educational medium to build key competences and provide students with practical experience of performing drama through fun and creative activities.



Playback Theatre (PT) was founded in 1975 by American performers, activists and writers Jonathan Fox and Jo Salas who created this improvisational form of drama to encourage communication and dialogue on many issues and develop more meaningful connections between people.



Playback methods are all about building your skills in listening, creativity, imagination, self-confidence, communication and co-operation. To help build these skills and prepare yourself for a playback performance, try out the following activities with your group, class or friends.



Fantasy

Ask each person to choose an item or feature of interest in the room, and invent a fantasy about it. It could be a window, door handle, lampshade or whatever stimulates your imagination.

Once you have had some time to create a story, share your fantasies with the group and get them to do the same. It is important that everyone gets a turn and is respectfully listened to.



Frozen Sculptures

Creating human sculptures is another fun Playback method to use. You need to co-operate with each member of the group, being aware and responding to whatever they are doing.

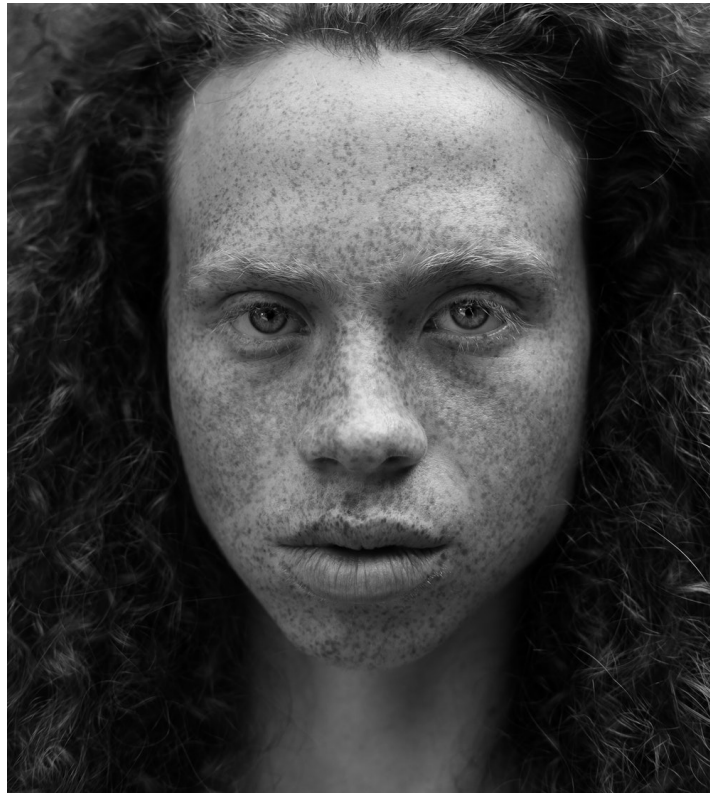


Get your group in a circle and ask one member to step into the middle, strike a pose and freeze. Every second person, one by one, now has to join the sculpture and every other person has to change one thing manually about the growing sculpture.

Each person within the sculpture is then asked to make a statement about what they thought they were doing before the sculpture dissolves.



The sculpture is then asked to move for a second and then freeze again. The group outside the sculpture now has to walk around it and begin to create a story about what is happening in the sculpture.



A big part of the Playback production is the use of sound. Sound can be produced through homemade shakers, bells, drums and other instruments or the human voice. Try out this next activity to see how you can create an atmosphere through using sounds.



Instrumental

Place instruments on a mat in the centre of the space. *(These can be homemade shakers, wood blocks, tambourines, bells, whistles etc.)*

Get everyone to choose an instrument and to sit in a circle around the mat.

Experiment with your instruments to find out what sounds it makes and what you can do with it. Ask everyone, in turn, to make a sound with their instrument.



While being aware of what other people are doing, everyone can now play their instrument, softly or strongly, to try and complement each other. After a while you will find everyone naturally begins to synchronise.



Introduce a story, scene or theme, e.g., a walk in a forest, waiting for someone in a cafe, a nightmare etc. Try to communicate, both the atmosphere and what is happening, by the sound of your instruments in co-operation with each other. Be sensitive to when you think the piece should come to an end.



By now you should be feeling more comfortable expressing yourself and having fun creating stories with actions and sounds. You are ready for the Playback Theatre performance!



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