



# Curriculum Support

## for teaching in Creative Arts

# 7-12

### Drama

#### Introducing *Creative movement in drama*

Sonya Mason has developed and collated the following practical exercises in introducing movement as an element of drama in her classes at Orange High School. Her workshop, *Creative movement in drama*, is being offered as part of the Phase 2 support for the implementation of the new 7–10 Drama syllabus. Further materials from Sonya's workshop will be available in Semester 2 at the Curriculum K–12 Directorate web site at [www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au](http://www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au)

#### Classroom workshop 1

##### Exercise 1: Silent negotiation

- From the normal drama circle, ask the students to form a succession of different shapes without using any language or traffic directions. Simply observe how they place themselves in relation to others according to the shape given e.g. an equilateral triangle, a capital *T*, a *c*, a rectangle, an *s*, etc.

##### Exercise 2: Flocking – whole group movement

- Organise students in a diamond pattern (as below), evenly spaced with enough room to move their arms freely, all facing in the one direction.
- Allow several students to stand apart as observers.
- Using slow music, such as meditation or ambient, ask students to follow the student at the leading point. Students should be instructed to keep the movements even, as it is not a race nor is this exercise to trick others.
- The leader changes; for example, 1 bodily turns toward 2, then 2 leads. At the point of change substitute the finished leader with an observer and then move others from inside the diamond to the leadership points. Try to do this with as little disruption as possible to the group movement.



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\*When all students have had a turn at the leading point, finish the exercise and discuss. At this point, begin to identify the language of Laban e.g. *continuous flow*, *direct pathways*, as students answer leading questions such as: *What sort of movements were difficult/easy to follow? When you were observing, what looked least/most effective?*

Acknowledgement: (Thanks to practicum students from CSU Mitchell for this exercise.)

## Classroom workshop 2

### Exercise 1: Location points

- Ask students to place themselves in a clump in the middle of the room, all facing to the front of the room. They need to leave enough space to move their arms freely.
- Select one of the corners of the room and identify it as point *A*; establish the sight line you wish the students to have. Ask the students to point to the corner using their whole arm. Repeat this with all other corners in the room, identifying these as points with a letter. Make point *B* diagonally opposite to *A*.
- Now ask the students to close their eyes and direct them to turn and point at point *A*, then open their eyes and adjust their arm to correctly identify the position of the point. Repeat with other points. Check the positions are correctly identified a second time or until all students are able to correctly identify each corner.
- Begin again from the centre, however, this time ask the students to close their eyes and walk slowly toward the identified point. They must walk very slowly so as to avoid collisions. If you can see a collision is imminent ask the students to stop.
- Ask them to stop and check alignment with the point. Again, ask students to turn and walk toward another point, halt and check, then continue.
- **Extension activity:** add extra points; establish with location exercises; incorporate this activity as a warm up activity.

Acknowledgement: (Thanks to *Sidetrack Theatre Workshops* for this exercise)

### Exercise 2: Positions & pathways

#### Step 1

- Ask students to spread themselves around the room in their own space. All stand facing the front in a neutral position, then to walk around the space in a neutral fashion, covering the ground in as many different patterns with their feet as possible. When they are asked to halt they are to assume a position in which their body comes in contact with the ground at three points; call this *A*. Ask the students to look above them, to the side, and behind them,

to check who is close to them and to remember that place. Ask the students to move on again and then return to the *A* position; they are to check their position and that of others around.



- Move on and create a second position *B*, in a different place, with four contact points with the floor. Establish the location, move, return to position *B*, check location, return to point *A*.
- Continue this process, establishing two more points, using ideas such as making the first letters of your first and last name (*C* and *D*), with the whole of your body.

#### Step 2

- Add a transition between each position that lasts eight counts and uses basic effort actions\*. For example, in a direct or flexible (indirect) pathway, travel from point *A* to point *B* using a direct floating action, which rises and sinks. The students must all arrive at point *B* in the full eight counts. Some may have to go very slowly and others may have to run.
- Establish a transition between each point.
- Add suitable music e.g. house music, 20<sup>th</sup> century classical music.
- Ask groups of four to five students to step out for a time and watch the group performing.
- Video the performance.
- Discuss problems and applications with the full group.

\* Introduce your students to *Laban effort actions* through *Workshop 4: Laban's system* (p. 52)



#### References

- Burton, B. (2004) *Creating drama* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Pearson Longman.  
Clausen, M. (2000) *Centre stage* Heinemann.