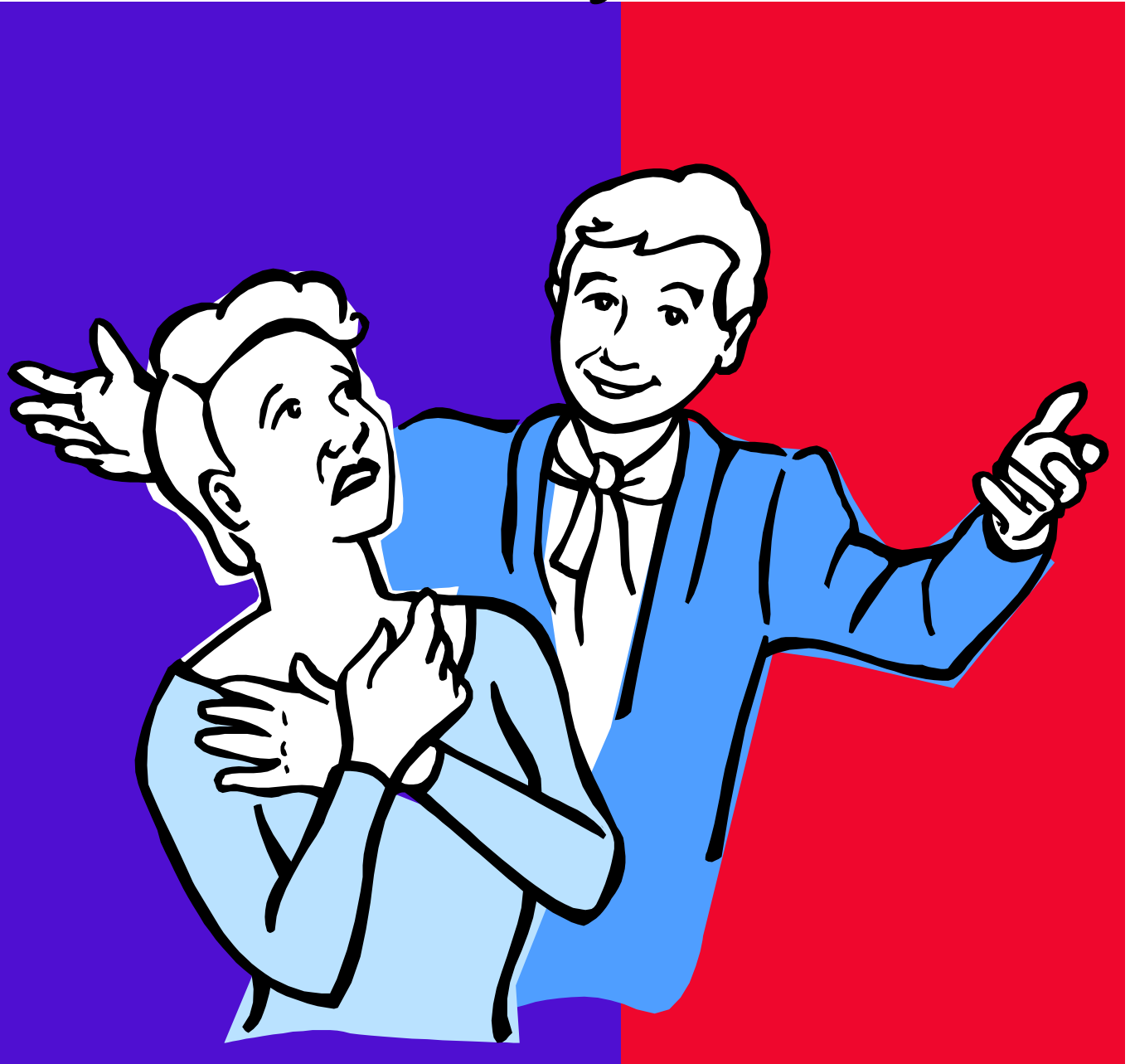


*Designing a Character :
A Drama Unit for Drama 20*



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S111.1

Teaching Materials
from the
Stewart Resources Centre



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Introduction

Developing and Presenting a Character

The focus of this unit will be on character development, either in context of a collective creation, or as a discrete section in a drama course.

Although the Foundational Objectives for Drama 20 are used as the guidelines for this unit, this unit could also be adapted for use in Grade 9 or in Drama 10 or 30.

Key to CELS

COM communication

PSVS personal and social values and skills

CCT creative and critical thinking

IL independent learning

TL technological literacy

NUM numeracy

Foundational Objectives: *page numbers refer to Saskatchewan Education (1993). Drama 10, 20, 30: Curriculum Requirements.*

1. Develop self-confidence, self-discipline and self-motivation. (COM) (p. 29)

- Concentrate during drama experiences. (CCT, COM)*
- Develop a sense of responsibility to other members of the class. (PSVS)*
- Cooperate with others. (PSVS)*

2. Develop an understanding of the processes and elements involved in creating works of dramatic art. (IL, COM) (p. 31)

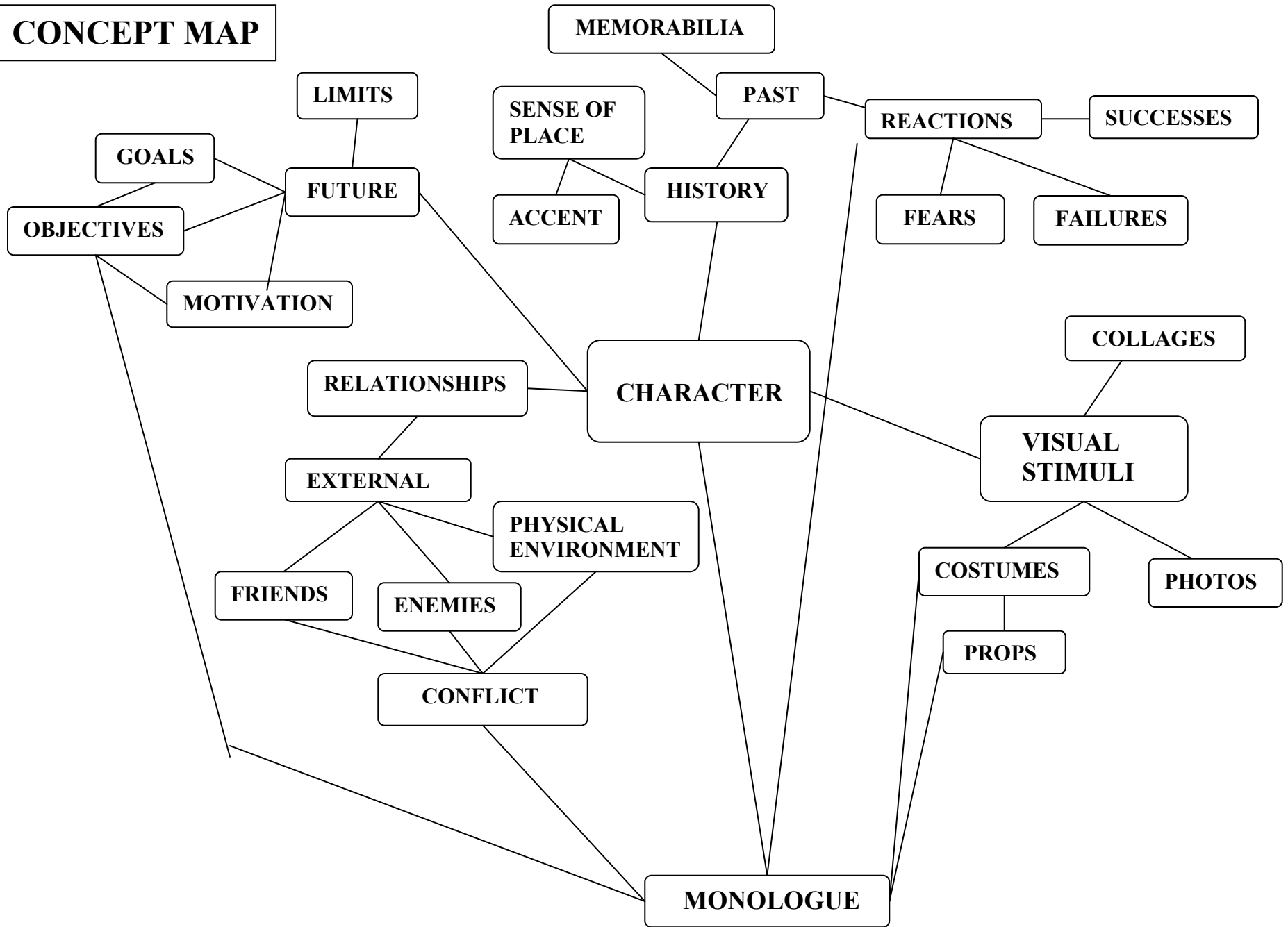
- Understand how improvisations can be used to explore characters. (CCT)*
- Create characters from various stimuli (CCT)*
- Understand what motivates the characters they portray. (PSVS)*
- Maintain focus in improvisations. (CCT)*
- Introduce tension to improvisations (CCT)*
- Use contrast in improvisations (CCT)*

- *Inject the use of symbol into improvisations (CCT, PSVS)*

3. *Develop acting skills. (CCT, COM) (p. 32)*

- *Portray characters in monologues, improvisations and scripted scenes. (CCT, COM)*
- *Express themselves confidently through movement and gesture (COM)*
- *Communicate character through movement and gesture. (COM)*
- *Participate in blocking (adding movement) to improvised or scripted scenes (CCT, IL)*
- *Understand and execute stage movement effectively (CCT, IL)*
- *Understand and execute stage business effectively (CCT, IL)*
- *Develop a poised, controlled posture. (COM)*

CONCEPT MAP



Beginnings:

Please consult page 26 in the Drama 10, 20, 30 document from Saskatchewan Learning for guidelines in setting up your classroom.

Activity One: Imagining Character

- In advance of the class, go through magazines and choose interesting faces of people. You can also use the Art Image kits (especially the one on portraiture) to find some images of people.*
- Mount the photos you have found on construction paper and place them on the walls all over the classroom.*
- When the students arrive for class, have them sit comfortably and brainstorm some characteristics of characters. Using a cartoon character such as Homer Simpson can sometimes help the students focus on the characteristics of a character. Generate a list which contains such words as: gestures, characteristic phrases and tone of voice; movement. The students may generate other terms which can be grouped into these general categories.*
- Have the students volunteer to imitate characters that they know from the media. Have the rest of the students guess the character and help the performing student improve on their depiction of the character.*
- Draw the students' attention to the photographs on the walls of the classroom. Emphasize that without telling anyone which image they have chosen they will improvise one of the characters using the generated list of terms. Emphasize that they will need to develop characteristics from the list.*
- After about five minutes (or so) have the students return to the circle. Ask for volunteers for performance and then have the other students guess which person the student is representing. You or the students may question the choices that the students have made in representing their characters. Emphasize that any suggestions must be made in a positive way.*
- In their drama journals, have the students write down the generated list of words and comment on the success/failure of the activity. Have them comment on the challenges they had when trying to assume an unknown role based on a photograph.*

ASSESSMENT

In your teacher notes, record which students were successful in completing the exercise and which found it challenging. You could also note which of the photographs were the most useful to use in another year.

Checklist for Imagining Character:

Student Name:

Foundational Objective: Develop an understanding of the processes and elements involved in creating works of dramatic art.

Learning Objectives:

1. Create characters from various stimuli. 1 2 3 4 5

2. Understand how improvisation can be used to explore characters. 1 2 3 4 5

Foundational Objective: Develop self-confidence, self-discipline and self-motivation.

Learning Objectives:

1. Follow classroom routines and procedures. 1 2 3 4 5

2. Concentrate during drama experiences. 1 2 3 4 5

3. Volunteer to start or join activities. 1 2 3 4 5

Activity Two: Character collage

Materials:

- *Newspapers, magazines, construction paper, scissors, glue*

Procedure:

- *Recap what was accomplished last day. Review the list of character words. Ask the students how they perceived the exercise.*
- *Explain to the students that today they will be looking through magazines to find their own character. On the chalkboard, write the following list of instructions:*
 - *Your character cannot be an imitation of a movie star, television character or other famous person.*
 - *The photograph you choose doesn't have to look like you.*
 - *The photograph you choose should give you some idea of the type of person who may be represented.*
 - *You will use the construction paper to mount the photograph of the person along with photos of some of the person's favourite things, expressions, places, etc. Make sure you have given yourself a name.*
 - *At the end of the class, you will speak as your character and explain why the symbols, THINGS you have chosen are important to you.*
 - *You will be working with this character for more than one class, so plan carefully!*
- *Give the students about 20 minutes to find the information that they need.*
- *After the collages are completed, have the students form a circle and present the information about their character. Encourage the observing students to ask questions of the character.*

ASSESSMENT

In their drama journals, have the students comment on their character. They could make a brief character sketch similar to those done in English class.

Check for the completeness of each character collage. Comment anecdotally on the quality of the work, the willingness to sustain character, and the commitment of the student to the exercise.

Activity Three: Developing Back story

A back story is the sum total of all the events of a person's life which help to form character. It gives the character motivation, and often gives viewers the explanation for a character's actions.

Some simple examples of back story events could be:

- *a serious illness*
- *the loss of a member of the family*
- *a horrendous camping trip*
- *being frightened by an animal or reptile and becoming phobic*

Back story is what gives the character depth and helps make the character believable.

Materials:

- *Collages from last day's lesson.*
- *Drama journal*
- *Traumatic event worksheet*

Procedure:

- *Recap what was accomplished last day. Discuss the character collages the students have made. Ask one student to volunteer to explain the significance of one of the items on the collage. Ask probing questions. You will need to get past "My character just likes cats" type of questions into deeper meanings.*
- *Explain the concept of back story. If possible, use examples from your own life.*
- *Break the students into pairs. Have them discuss the back stories of one of their favourite TV or movie characters. Give them chart paper to make notes about the back stories of the character. On the chart paper, have them also make notes about how they found out about the character's back story.*
 - *When the students have finished their charts, hand them up in the room and discuss the common themes. Generate a list which contains such terms as:*
 - *flashback – when an event from the past is shown to the viewers*
 - *narration – when a character or another character explains the events of the past*
 - *actions – where the character's actions gives you a clue about the past of the character.*

- *props – where something the character has or uses gives an insight into the past.*
- *reactions – when something another character does causes the character to react in a certain way.*

Have the students examine their character collages. Have the students choose one item which they could use as part of their back story. Give them a few minutes to compose their thoughts and have them speak in character to explain the significance of this item to their back story.

ASSESSMENT

In their drama journals, have the students write out the oral presentation they gave about their character collage object. (See assessment guide below.)

Make sure that the students have the notes on back story.

Check for the completion of the student writing:

Format for Journal Entry: Back Story

Name of Character:

Object from character collage:

Make sure you have answered the following questions in the text of your journal entry:

- *Why did you choose this item?*
- *Where does it fit into your past?*
- *How would you feel if it was lost or stolen?*
- *When you use this item, what physical movements do you do?*
- *What type of emotional reactions does this item give you? Why?*

Activity Four: Character history

A character history is a tool used by actors to examine a part. The use of a history helps fill in the holes of a character's life and often leads to further exploration of the character.

Materials:

- *Character history sheets*
- *Character collages*
- *Drama journal*

Procedure:

- *Have the students review what they have written about their character in their drama journals.*
- *Explain to the students that they will be working in role during this exercise.*
- *Explain the rules of the Dating Game*
 - *One student will be the person who is searching for a date. That person will ask questions to determine which of the characters is most appropriate for a date for him or her.*
 - *Three other students will act as contestants on the dating show. Each contestant will try to secure a date with the person who is looking for a date. Every answer they give to the questions from the contestant must come from some aspect of the character they have designed.*
 - *The observers in the classroom will take notes on the contestants' ability to stay in role during the game. At the end of each round of the game, students will share their comments about what they have observed.*

It is important to keep this game moving. Try to allow no more than three questions for each person. Go through the whole class until everyone has had a chance to participate.

After the game, have the students discuss the commitment to character using the notes that they have taken. What more did they learn about the characters their classmates have devised? Where were there gaps in the character information?

Give the students the notes on character history. Discuss character history in regard to their personal history.

Hand out the character history sheets and have each student complete one for the character he/she has devised.

ASSESSMENT

Have the students complete the character history sheet and put it in their drama journals.

Check for the completion of the sheets.

Name: _____

Character Name: _____

Character Profile



Personal Hobbies:

Least favorite foods:

Favorite beverages:

Least favorite beverages:

Favorite dessert:

Favorite country: Why?

Favorite color:

Favorite restaurant:

Favorite school subject:

Boy/Girlfriend:

Favorite relative: Why?

Best friend:

Favorite movie/play/musical

Music/art/poetry preferences

What do you like to wear?

Worst enemy:

Favorite book:

Height: Weight: Age:

Religion:

Occupation:

Awards received:

Previous employment:

Most embarrassing moment:

Activity Five: Relationships

In drama, as in real life, people have various relationships. These relationships may be close, such as family and close friends, or more distant such as teachers, co-workers, etc. Every type of relationship follows certain rules. What you can or cannot do in a relationship depends on the closeness and trust within the relationship.

In relationships, actors pay attention to movement, voice, and diction. These three aspects of character vary according to whom the character is addressing.

Materials:

Two telephones (or reasonable facsimiles)

Drama journals

Character collages and history sheets

Procedure:

- *Ask the students what kind of phone calls they received last night. Write down the results on the chalk board.*
- *Ask the students to carefully examine the list and see if they could add more types of calls. You should get a list which may contain:*
 - parents*
 - friends*
 - pizza guy*
 - telemarketer*
 - library*
- *Ask the students to brainstorm some more types of calls. Some ideas are:*
 - principal of the school*
 - homeroom teachers*
 - police*
 - parent's boss*
- *Ask for two volunteers. Put one volunteer at each phone. Have one person phone the other and have a telephone conversation. You may have to model this. The person who telephones may be anyone (perhaps one from the list) but the person who answers the phone must be in their character.*
- *Have the observing students look for commitment to role.*
- *When the exercise is completed, give the students the notes on **relationships**. Ask the students to comment on the various ways they handled the relationships on the telephone. Summarize their results under the headings voice, diction and movement (if possible).*

- *Put the students into pairs. Have them, while in their characters, improvise a dialogue between the two characters that would show the relationship between them. They may use the telephones, or they may choose to be in a situation.*

ASSESSMENT

Have the students put the relationship notes into their drama journals, using either the telephone conversation they had or the improvised dialogue, as students discuss the aspects of relationship that they explored with their partner.

Format for Journal Entry Relationships:

- *Type of situation used in improvisation: (telephone, improv situation, etc.)*
- *Brief summary of the conversation:*
 - *Who did you speak to?*
 - *What is your relationship with that person? Think of three adjectives to describe your relationship.*
 - *What type of emotional reaction do you have to that person?*
 - *How did your tone of voice, diction and vocabulary change when you spoke to that person?*
 - *What did you learn about yourself through the conversation you had with that person?*
- *Read the students' drama journals looking for completion of the assignment and ability to answer the questions posed.*

Notes:

*It may be very helpful to review the concept of **blocking** in improvisation before you start the class. Blocking in improv happens when one person refuses to cooperate within the scene. Often times it can be seen as a refusal or as an inability to continue on in the context of the improv. You could also discuss blocking when it happens in the exercise.*

Activity Six: Objectives

Objectives are the purpose for a character within a scene. Objective is the term used to express your goal, purpose, or intention in a dramatic situation. You usually must overcome an obstacle to achieve an objective. Objectives are always expressed in terms of an active verb. Some common objectives are: winning, persuading, helping, humiliating, amusing, etc.

Materials:

- *Character collages and information*
- *Drama journals*
- *List of places for scenes on index cards*
 - *trying to escape from someplace e.g. In a stuck elevator*
 - *selling something e.g. Door to door salesperson*
 - *stealing an object e.g. Robbing a bank*
 - *trying to help someone*
 - *winning an argument*
 - *persuading someone to do something*

Procedure:

- *Discuss the outcomes of the relationship exercise from last day.*
- *Have the students review their materials to get into their roles.*
- *Play the situation game.*
 - *Break the students into pairs.*
 - *Have each pair take a situation card. Their objective for the game is to improvise how their characters would react in such a situation.*

- *Emphasize that the goal of the exercise is to solve the problem presented in the situation.*

- *Give each pair about two – three minutes improv time.*

- *When all the students have had an opportunity to present, discuss how they achieved the goals of their characters.*

- *Give them the notes on objectives. Discuss and brainstorm a list of possible objectives for a character.*

ASSESSMENT

*In their drama journals, have the students write what they feel objectives would be for their characters. Have them create a general list of goals their characters would wish to obtain. (See **Format for Journal Entry.**)*

Remind them that they will share their goals next day.

Format for Journal Entry: Objectives

Type of Objective examined in your situation:

What aspect of your character did you use to achieve that objective? Did you display your stubbornness, your sense of humour, your peacemaking ability, etc.?

List ten goals which your character would like to obtain. Beside each goal, discuss the aspects of your character's personality which would make that goal achievable.

Activity Seven: Characters in conflict

The two principal types of conflict are:

Internal

- *Internal conflict focuses on the basic conflicts within a person. It may be a fight between good and evil, emotion and decision.*

External

- *External conflict focuses on the struggle between the character and some other force such as another person, a natural force, or a political force.*

Characters can be in a state of constant conflict. Conflict is necessary if a character is to appear well-rounded and real to the viewer. Resolution of conflict is one of the most important goals of a character.

Materials:

- *Drama journals and character information.*
- *Video clip of The Simpsons (or another sit-com) which shows a character in conflict. Several clips instead of one can be used to focus on the different types of conflict.*
- *Situations written on index cards.*

Procedure:

- *View the video clip with the students. Ask them what is happening in this circumstance. Discuss other examples of conflict.*
- *Give the students the notes on conflict.*
- *Have the students get into their characters. Explain that they will be playing an improv game which is based on conflict. Put the students into pairs. Try to choose students whose characters would naturally be in conflict with each other. Ask the students to take five minutes with their partners to explore the possibilities for conflict between the two characters.*
- *Give the students the situation cards. For example:*

- *two parents disagreeing about a child*
- *a teacher in conflict with a student or parent*
- *arguing over who is first in line for something*
- *disagreeing over an incident in the past*
- *trying to return or exchange an item*
- *a political disagreement*

*During the exercise, the student must stay in his/her chosen character.
Keep these improv brief.*

ASSESSMENT

Complete checklist for characters in conflict for each student.

Have the students comment on conflict in their drama journals. Ask them to explore potential areas of conflict within their characters. Have them make a list of the top ten sources of conflict for their character and within their character.

Checklist for Characters in Conflict

Student Name:

Foundational Objective: Develop self-confidence, self-discipline and self-motivation.

Learning Objectives:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Concentrate during drama experiences. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. Initiate ideas for drama experiences. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. Follow classroom rules and procedures. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Foundational Objective: Develop an understanding of the processes and elements involved in creating works of dramatic art.

Learning Objectives:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Understand what motivates the character they portray. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. Maintain focus in improvisation. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Foundational Objective: Develop acting skills.

Learning Objectives:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Accept and respond to others in role. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. Express through gesture and movement. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. Sustain a role for an extended period of time. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Activity Eight: Bringing in the Character's Past

Every person has a collection of objects which tells about them in some way. Some people save every concert ticket, photograph, greeting card, etc. that they have ever received. These ordinary objects can quite often tell us much about a character.

Materials:

- *Drama journals*
- *Character collages*
- *Pencil cases and binders*

Procedure:

- *Empty out your desk drawer, purse or pocket into a box and show the contents to the students. Ask them to analyze the person who is represented by the materials in the box. Have them make a list of the characteristics that person might display.*
- *In pairs, have them examine each other's binders and pencil cases. In their drama journals, have them make a list of the characteristics that the person may have based on the evidence found in the binder or pencil case.*
- *In the same pairs, have them think of famous TV or movie characters. Have them use their imaginations to list objects that they feel the character may have kept and that may give insight into the character. Have them write this in their drama journals.*
- *Individually, have the students examine their character collages. If their character had a "memory box", what would be contained in it? What significance would each object in the box have to the character? Have them put their thoughts into their journals.*
- *For the next class, the students will bring some of the objects that their character would have. They need to bring at least three objects. They will talk about these objects in their characters for next class.*

ASSESSMENT

Assess journal entries for completeness of response.

Format for Journal Entry: Character's Past

List at least five objects that you (as your character) would have in your memory box. What significance would each of these objects have? How do these objects represent a moment in your character's life?

Activity Nine: Displaying the Character

A character in drama is more than just one dimensional. To make a character real, the character's emotional, physical and psychological aspects must be explored.

Materials:

- *Character objects from last day's lesson.*
- *Drama journals*

Procedure:

- *Explain to the students that they will be presenting their character objects while in character. Remind them that they have to explain the importance and significance of each object.*
- *Have each student present their objects.*
- *The observing students may choose to ask the character questions at appropriate times.*

ASSESSMENT

When all the presentations are done, have the students write in their drama journals why they chose the objects they did. Have them comment on their experience. Was it helpful to sustain character? How could they incorporate these objects into their characters' lives?

In your anecdotal notes for the class, comment on the effectiveness of the objects for the character and on the choices that the students have made for their characters. Carefully note which students had problems with this exercise and spend some time with them exploring the choices that they have made for their character.

Use the checklist which follows to assess the student's ability to sustain character.

Checklist for Displaying the Character

Student Name:

Foundational Objective:: Develop an understanding of the processes and elements involved in creating works of dramatic art.

Learning Objectives:

1.Create characters from various stimuli.

- *Appropriateness of props* 1 2 3 4 5
- *Use of props as symbols* 1 2 3 4 5
- *Understand what motivates a character.* 1 2 3 4 5
- *Maintain focus in improvisation.* 1 2 3 4 5
- *Use contrast in improvisation.* 1 2 3 4 5

Foundational Objective: Develop acting skills.

Learning Objectives:

- *Sustain roles for an extended period of time.* 1 2 3 4 5
- *Express through movement and gesture.* 1 2 3 4 5
- *Communicate character through speech.* 1 2 3 4 5

Activity Ten: Writing and presenting a Character Monologue

A monologue is a Mini-play. It tells a story -- either of an event that happened or an emotional development - told by one character. The character tells a story about him/herself similar to the way a short story is structured. The story has a point. It is like letting the audience into the character's head to listen to the character's innermost thoughts. Monologues are addressed to the audience and are meant to be heard and seen by the audience. It is important for a monologue to have a Curtain Line. It's the Climax or Curtain Line of the monologue that leaves us wanting to know about the character or the character's situation. Please see Appendix A "Notes on Using Monologues in Collective Creation".

How much does a character have to say for it to be a monologue? A monologue can vary in length from 2 to 3 minutes to a whole play.

Activity:

- *Give the students the introduction to monologues to copy into their drama journals. Explain that they will be writing and performing a character monologue as the last activity in this class. Each monologue should be between 3 and 5 minutes in length.*
- *Distribute the monologue rubric (see next page) and explain how they will be evaluated.*
- *Discuss with the students the physical space where they will do their monologues. Emphasize to the students that the whole space must be used.*
- *Encourage the students to use props and costumes as part of their monologue presentations but emphasize that the ideas and thoughts expressed in the monologue are more important than any physical trappings.*
- *Give students some sample monologues to examine as a format for their writing. (Some examples are included in Appendix A. See the bibliography for further ideas.) Have the students read and act the monologues if time allows. If possible, let the students view monologues done on TV or in movies. Some examples are the monologues from Hamlet, some parts of the TV show Scrubs, stand-up comedians.*
- *As an alternative, have an actor from the community come in and present a monologue to the students. The actor will be able to discuss his/her choices and may give the students insight into how to present a monologue. Community theatre members can be a good resource. For more information on community theatres in your area, visit <http://www.theatresaskatchewan.com/>.*

- *Tell the students that they will have two class periods to prepare and rehearse their monologues. Emphasize that it is very helpful to have a peer critique their performance before their final presentation.*
- *Please make sure that you have some places for the students to rehearse. Be sure to warn your staff that monologue rehearsals will be taking place around the school.*

ASSESSMENT

Monologue rubric attached. Modify as necessary for your class.

EXTENSION

Some of the students may be willing to perform their monologues for an audience or have the monologues videotaped for future classroom use. Ask the students in advance if they would be willing to do either of these projects.

MONOLOGUE RUBRIC

NAME _____

The monologue is complete. It shows evidence of organization and understanding of the character. The monologue has an emotional impact on the audience.	The monologue is complete. It shows some evidence of organization. Understanding of the character is present. The monologue has some impact on the audience.	The monologue is not complete. It is lacking in organization. There is little evidence of understanding of the character.	The monologue lacks impact. The monologue is incomplete. It lacks organization. There is no clear character development in the monologue.
Clear enunciation and good projection help the audience understand the character.	Consideration is given to vocal variety, accent and/or dynamics. Enunciation and projection are generally good.	There may be some inconsistencies in vocal variety, accent and/or dynamics. Some problems with enunciation and projection.	Individual vocal characteristics of the character are not evident. Enunciation is not clear. There is no attempt at projection. The character does not possess unique vocal characteristics.
Physical gestures and movement contribute to the development of the character. There is clear motivation for movement.	Some physical gestures and movements are present but may appear unmotivated.	Minimal movement or gestures are shown. Movement is unmotivated.	No movement or gestures are present.
Props and costumes are appropriate for the character and serve to enhance the performance. The character makes effective use of the props and costumes.	Props and costumes are used and are appropriate for the character. Some effort is made to incorporate the props and/or costumes into the character's monologue.	Props or costumes are present in the presentation of the monologue. Little or no use of props or costumes is made in the monologue.	No props or costumes used.
Fully memorized.	Fairly well memorized, minimal use of prompts or cue cards.	Partially memorized. Use of prompts or cue cards distracts from the presentation.	No memorization evident.

MARKS AVAILABLE 16 – 20

11 – 15

6 – 10

0 – 5

TOTAL MARKS

FINAL ASSESSMENT TALLY

STUDENT NAME: _____

Drama Journal:

All entries dated and complete. Yes/ No

Scores on individual entries:

Character collage	/10
Back story	/5
Relationships	/5
Objectives	/5
Past	/5

TOTAL /30

Checklists:

Imagining character	/25
Characters in conflict	/40
Displaying the character	/40

TOTAL /105

Character History Chart /10

Final monologue presentation /100

GRAND TOTAL /205

EQUALS %

COMMENTS:

Annotated Website Bibliography

These sites were used in the writing of the unit. They may be helpful to teachers who wish more background on the use of monologues in drama, assessment strategies, or improvisation activities.

<http://www.geocities.com/Shafyndria13/assess.htm>

This site gives some good (if rather disorganized) ideas for assessment for drama projects. Included in the site are alternatives to performance as a basis for assessment.

<http://www.cdli.ca/~mcoady/dramless.htm>

This site goes through several facets of drama from drama in the classroom to Shakespeare to drama in performance. Exploring the links within the site will lead you to several other interesting drama sites.

<http://m.d.sep.home.att.net/monotips.html>

This site gives an excellent definition of and helpful hints for writing monologues. It is designed for teacher information.

http://www.saskschools.ca/curr_content/drama30/mainpages/courseoutline3.html

The course outline and lesson plans for Drama 30 are found at this site. There are 5 units available on line: characterization, theatre history, introduction to drama, script and play analysis and collective creation. Each unit is linked to other sites and contains the appropriate CELS.

http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr230.shtml

This site explores some other ways to integrate the use of monologues into your classroom including linkages with language arts.

<http://www.monologuearchive.com>

This site contains several downloadable monologues for various age groups.

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Appendix A

Notes on Using Monologues in Collective Creation

Part of the focus in the Drama 10, 20 and 30 and Arts Education 9 curricula is on collective creation. A collective creation demands strong characters to drive the creation forward. Using some or all of the activities in this unit can easily supplement work within the collective creation.

For example, if your class is preparing a collective creation centering on problems in the workplace, the activities in this unit can be used to define work-related characters. Structured improvisation in pairs or groups can form a part of this process. An understanding of the character through time can be a valuable part of a collective creation.

Sample Monologues

Available from: <http://www.monologuearchive.com/>

THE ROMANTIC YOUNG LADY

A monologue from the play by Gregorio Martinez Sierra

NOTE: This monologue is reprinted from *The Plays of G. Martinez Sierra*. G. Martinez Sierra. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1922.

Doña Barbarita: I was jealous of every woman my first husband looked in the face ... and he was a portrait painter, do you remember? My second husband suffered tortures from his own jealousy ... of your grandfather. That was premature, but prophetic, for your dear grandfather was our neighbor in those days and he used to stand and look at me from his balcony. And then he in his turn tortured himself, poor man, with jealousy of my second husband, who was dead by that time to be sure ... but that only seemed to make it worse. When I think of the times I've walked into my first husband's studio, shaking all over, to see what sort of woman he was painting this time ... and how much of her, and of the times when I'd glance up at your grandfather on his balcony and let my dear second husband imagine ... God forgive me ... that I was smiling at him; and then when your grandfather would catch me looking at my poor second husband's portrait ... my first husband had painted it while they were both alive ... and if I wanted to drive him to fury, I'd only to give one sigh. Well, now they're in Heaven all three and I'm almost sorry I worried them so. [She kisses the three pictures.] But never forget that I was an obedient wife, gentle and loving, an angel of the fireside, an angel in crinoline. No doubt it's far nobler to "live your own life" (isn't that what you call it?) but I fear you'll never find it so amusing.

SIS HOPKINS' AUDITION

A monologue by Walter Ben Hare

NOTE: This monologue is reprinted from Bran' New Monologues. Walter Ben Hare. Boston: Walter H. Baker & Co., 1920.

SIS HOPKINS: [Sticks her head in the door; the head only is visible to the audience.] Say, ain't it my turn next? All right, I'm comin'. [Enters.] Here I be, sassy as a woodchuck and twicet as handsome. You know who I be, don't you? I'm little Sis Hopkins from Skinny-marink Crossroads down in Toadhunter Holler. [Leans over and speaks confidentially to the audience.] You know I'm the only one in this here show who's a real actress. The others is only ham-chewers, but I've had experience with a real show troupe. I led one of the bloodhounds in Uncle Tom's Cabin street pee-rade last time it played down in the Skinny-marink opery house. Them other gals out there is all jellix of me. You know why they're jellix? 'Cause I'm better lookin' than what they is, and I got a beau. [Giggles.] You orter see my beau. His name's Bilious Buttonbuster, and he's a great big fat boy, weighs purt' nigh two hundred and fifty pounds, an' only four foot high. Took me in to see the side-show last summer when the cirkis come to town, an' I snum! ef they didn't try to keep him there to be the fat boy. You'd hardly expect sech a fat feller to be so cute, but he is. And every inch of him is love. [Pause.] The folks that got up this show said that I was to sing you-uns a song. I'm goin' to do it. It's a real pathetic song; folks allers cries, er sump'm, ivery time I sing it. Sometimes they git so wrought up they git up and go out to relieve their emotions. The song I'm going to render fer you is a love song [Giggles.] It's Bilious' favorite. He gits so sentimental when I sing it, and do you know--a fat man when he gits sentimental is sump'm awful--and Bilious is a great big feller. He ain't so big up and down, but I tell you he's a whopper round the middle. I don't reckon any of you-uns iver heerd this song, as it was especially wrote fer me by _____ [Insert local name], and no one else has ever had the nerve to sing it. My execution is sump'm wonderful--you'll all be in favor of it when you hear me. I sing this song real pathetic in parts--and then in other parts I'm jest as playful as a kitten. When I come to the pathetic parts, you'll know it, 'cause I make gestures there. The name of the song is "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean," and sometimes when I git to singin' it real good, I actually git sea-sick, 'cause the way I sing you kin jist see the ocean and bonnie and iverything. Jist imagine the bonnie's name is Bilious and he weighs purt' nigh three hundred pounds. Now the piano will jest gimme a chord in B flat minor and I'll make my bow. [Chord--bows awkwardly.] Ain't that graceful? [Sings nasally and somewhat off key, but not too much.]

My bonnie lies over the ocean, [Gestures with right hand.]

My bonnie lies over the sea, [With left hand.]

My bonnie lies over the ocean, [Both hands.]

Oh, bring back my bonnie to me. [Entreaty.]

[Speaks.] Ain't that sad? I'm expressing the lacerated feelings of a gal whose tender heart has been deserted by her bonnie. You kin read the emotions in my face. [Sings rapidly.]

Bring back, bring back,

Oh, bring back my bonnie to me, to me;

*Bring back, bring back,
Oh-ooo, bring back my bonnie to me!*

[Speaks.] The second spasm is even more emotional than the first. Ain't none of the big emotional singers kin get ahead of me. I kin emosh just as good as ary one of 'em. This second part is the one that Bilious likes the best. Sometime stears come in his eyes when I sing it, and he feels the pathos of it a-throbbin' all through his three hundred and fifty pounds. [Sings.]

*O, blow, ye winds, over the ocean, [Gestures front.]
O, blow, ye winds, over the sea, [Gestures to left.]
O, blow, ye winds, over the ocean, [Upward sweep.]
And bring back my bonnie to me. [Downward sweep.]*

*[Fast.] Bring back, bring back,
Oh, bring back my bonnie to me, to me;
Bring back, bring back,
[Drawl.] Oh-o-o-o, bring back my bonnie to me.*

[Speaks.] Wait till you hear the third verse, and git out your handkerchief if you've got a tear left in your body. [Sings.]

*Last night as I lay on my pillow, [Pantomimes sleep.]
Last night as I lay on my bed, [Gesture.]
Last night as I lay on my pillow, [Weeps.]*

*[Speaks.] Oh, oh! I dunno whether I kin go on er not. I git so emotional. [Sings.]
I dreamed that my bonnie was dead.*

*[Sings chorus rapidly and makes an awkward bow. Pause.] That's where they generally applause me.
[Silence.]*

TOM SAWYER ABROAD

A monologue from the book by Mark Twain

NOTE: This monologue is reprinted from *Tom Sawyer Abroad*. Mark Twain. London: Chatto & Windus, 1897.

HUCK: It was a noble big balloon, and had wings and fans and all sorts of things, and wasn't like any balloon you see in pictures. It was away out toward the edge of town, in a vacant lot, corner of Twelfth street; and there was a big crowd around it, making fun of it, and making fun of the man, -- a lean pale feller with that soft kind of moonlight in his eyes, you know, -- and they kept saying it wouldn't go. It made him hot to hear them, and he would turn on them and shake his fist and say they was animals and blind, but some day they would find they had stood face to face with one of the men that lifts up nations and makes civilizations, and was too dull to know it; and right here on this spot their own children and grandchildren would build a monument to him that would outlast a thousand years, but his name would outlast the monument. And then the crowd would burst out in a laugh again, and yell at him, and ask him what was his name before he was married, and what he would take to not do it, and what was his sister's cat's grandmother's name, and all the things that a crowd says when they've got hold of a feller that they see they can plague. Well, some things they said WAS funny, I ain't denying that, -- but all the same it warn't fair nor brave, all them people pitching on one, and they so glib and sharp, and him without any gift of talk to answer back with. But, good land! what did he want to sass back for? You see, it couldn't do him no good, and it was just nuts for them. They HAD him, you know. But that was his way. I reckon he couldn't help it. The part the professor was in was like a boat, and was big and roomy. We went aboard, and there was twenty people there, snooping around and examining, and old Nat Parsons was there, too. The professor kept fussing around getting ready, and the people went ashore, drifting out one at a time, and old Nat he was the last. Of course it wouldn't do to let him go out behind 'S. We mustn't budge till he was gone, so we could be last ourselves. But he was gone now, so it was time for us to follow. I heard a big shout, and turned around -- the city was dropping from under us like a shot! It made me sick all through, I was so scared. Jim turned gray and couldn't say a word, and Tom didn't say nothing, but looked excited. The city went on dropping down, and down, and down; but we didn't seem to be doing nothing but just hang in the air and stand still. The houses got smaller and smaller, and the city pulled itself together, closer and closer, and the men and wagons got to looking like ants and bugs crawling around, and the streets like threads and cracks; and then it all kind of melted together, and there wasn't any city any more it was only a big scar on the earth, and it seemed to me a body could see up the river and down the river about a thousand miles, though of course it wasn't so much. By and by the earth was a ball -- just a round ball, of a dull color, with shiny stripes wriggling and winding around over it, which was rivers. The Widder Douglas always told me the earth was round like a ball, but I never took any stock in a lot of them superstitions o' hers, and of course I paid no attention to that one, because I could see myself that the world was the shape of a plate, and flat. I used to go up on the hill, and take a look around and prove it for myself, because I reckon the best way to get a sure thing on a fact is to go and examine for yourself, and not take anybody's say-so. But I had to give in now that the widder was right. That is, she was right as to the rest of the world, but she warn't right about the part our village is in; that part is the shape of a plate, and flat, I take my oath!