New Drama Teacher Toolkit
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Congratulations! You are a drama teacher. You’ve taken on a vital and important role that will have a major impact on the lives of your students. We’re not kidding – you are teaching real life skills that every student will need when they go out into the world: communication, creative problem solving, critical thinking, and collaboration.

Unfortunately, not every school environment is set up to encourage and support the drama classroom, let alone the teacher who is new to the drama classroom. There are a lot of potential obstacles that make this job incredibly challenging: You may be the only drama teacher in your school. You may have administrators who think drama is just playing games. You may find yourself with a classroom full of students who didn’t choose to take your class and are not afraid to let you know how much they hate it.

Being a new teacher can be an overwhelming experience. It’s one thing to have been a working actor or technician, or to talk about teaching practices in the abstract, but a new teacher can never fully understand what it takes to be in front of a class, day in and day out, week after week after week, until they do it. And for many new teachers the task is doubly hard because they are doing it all alone. There is no one to turn to for help and advice. There is no mentor.

Until now!

Introducing the New Drama Teacher Toolkit. Think of it as your digital mentor. In this toolkit you’ll find exercises, activities, and information that will help you get you through your first days, build your classroom management skills, and articulate the importance of your program.

You’ll also have access to a New Drama Teacher Website with articles, exercises, and podcasts chosen specifically for you.

Remember: You can do this. You are not alone. You can have a successful first year.

Once again – Congratulations!
CLASSROOM SKILLS REFLECTION

What are your strengths going into the classroom? What are your weaknesses? Reflect and respond to these questions before school begins and then revisit your answers at the end of the year.

The first step in becoming a successful classroom teacher is to identify your strengths and weaknesses. By reflecting on where you are as a teacher right now, and identifying areas where you could use improvement, you will have the opportunity to grow professionally over the course of the year. This Reflection will lay the foundation for growth and stability in your classroom.

1. What makes a good teacher?

2. What makes a successful classroom?

3. What are your strengths?

4. How would you define your approach to classroom teaching?

5. How do you establish expectations? What will you do if those expectations are not met?
6. How are you at giving instructions? How will you be able to tell if your instructions are unclear?

7. How are you at following through with consequences? How do you think your students will react if you don’t follow through with consequences?

8. How do you deal with inappropriate behaviour? What is the best way to communicate that inappropriate behaviour to a student’s parent or guardian?

9. How are your listening skills? Do you think listening is important for a teacher? Why or why not?

10. How is your class relevant to students?
11. How do you provide consistency in the classroom? What do you think will happen if you are not consistent with your students?

12. What is your classroom management strategy?

13. Why do you think that this strategy will be successful in your classroom?

14. What body language habits do you have that you think might be detrimental in the classroom? What body language habits do you think might be beneficial?

15. What do you hope to learn about being a teacher over the coming year?
TOP TEN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR TEACHERS

By Matt Webster

Learning the skills and strategies of being a successful classroom manager is an ongoing and evolving process. But remember: Every great plan for classroom structure starts with a solid foundation. These ten tips will give you a solid foundation to build your particular classroom management style upon.

10: Utilize your space to its maximum potential

Whether you are working in a classroom, a theatre or a gymnasium, you need to prep your space to define workspaces and reduce distractions. Have designated class, work, and performance spaces, and make sure you eliminate places where students can hide. This will help keep your students on task.

9: Be prepared

There is no worse feeling than facing a room full of students when you are unprepared. If this is your first time teaching, take some time NOW to string together your first week or two of lesson plans and put together an emergency list of last-second games or activities just in case you need them (see the end of the article for some emergency activities). If you are a seasoned teacher, take the time now to go over your past unit plans and look for those lessons that didn’t quite go as planned. Once the school year is in full swing it is much harder to plan and prepare!

8: Be honest

Even though you are in charge, you don’t have to be an insensitive dictator. Don’t be afraid to share your hopes, dreams, and expectations with your students. Knowing your vision for the class will go a long way to your students helping you achieve that vision.

7: Clearly communicate expectations

Whether you print them in your syllabus, write them on the board, or post them on a poster, make sure your students are aware of your expectations in the classroom. This goes for performance and academic expectations, as well as discipline.

6: Be aware of school and district rules and boundaries

Make sure you know what can and can’t be done in your classroom. That includes what you can do on stage! If there is any question about an activity or a script, run it by an administrator first. Your knowing the rules will help ensure that your students know the rules.
5: Get student feedback on rules
   Allow your students to provide feedback on classroom rules and expectations. When students have ownership of the rules, they feel empowered to encourage their peers to follow those rules.

4: Have consequences
   If rules are broken, make sure there are appropriate consequences. This lets students know that you are serious about discipline in your classroom.

3: Get student feedback on consequences
   Having students suggest consequences for rule breaking not only makes the consequences more fair (after all, THEY suggested them), but often makes them tougher.

2: Follow through on consequences
   If rules are broken or expectations are not met, those failures must be acknowledged and the consequences must be enforced. The consequences don’t need to be severe, but they do need to be implemented. If you don’t follow through, you tell your students that you don’t mean what you say.

1: Be consistent
   This is the number 1 management tip. Hold ALL students to your standards of work, performance, and integrity. Whether they are the class darling or the class clown, they will respect your class. Consistency is the mark of a successful teacher.

Planning and preparation go a long way towards alleviating most classroom crises, but sometimes situations arise that you just couldn’t see coming. That is why it is always a good idea to have handful of emergency lesson plans at your fingertips.

On the following page you’ll find some Emergency Activities to use in your classroom so that you can always be prepared!
EMERGENCY ACTIVITIES

IMPROVISATION

1. Challenge Games (two-player games)
   a. Questions only: Players create a scene where they can only ask each other questions. The first player not to ask a question gets buzzed out and a new player comes in to challenge the remaining player.
   b. ABC Game: Players create a scene where they must start each sentence with the next consecutive letter of the alphabet. Students can challenge each other by trying to successfully get through the alphabet in the shortest amount of time. Mistakes in the order of the alphabet results in a five-second penalty.
   c. Gibberish: One player is given a secret objective they must make another player achieve. (Say a word, perform a simple task, etc.) The first player may only speak in gibberish. The players play out a scene until the objective is reached.

2. Freeze Tag
   a. Two players onstage move until they make an interesting physical shape. Call “freeze”. They start a scene based on their physical relationship on stage. When they have established “Who, What, and Where” they are, another player can call “freeze”. That player steps in, tags out one of the frozen players, takes their exact position and starts a whole new scene where they again establish “Who, What, and Where”. Repeat!

3. Scenarios
   a. Students create scenes based on a given scenario. Students or teacher can generate the scenarios, or you can use scenarios from a book like Improv Theatre! 400 Improvisational Scenarios & Games for Drama Students by Lisa Frase

THEATRE GAMES

1. Machine: Students are put into small- to medium-sized groups. One student begins a simple repetitive movement. They can also include a sound to go with the movement. The rest of the group members join in by adding a movement/sound that interacts/intersects with the other players in the group. When all the players are included, challenge the group by increasing or decreasing the speed of the machine. As the class gets more comfortable with the game, challenge them to create specific machines (garbage disposal, washing machine, lawn mower, etc.) or to create new machines suggested by peers (homework machine, time machine, automatic dog walker, etc.)

2. Kitty Wants a Corner: This game requires a lot of space! The entire class stands in a large circle. One student is chosen as the “kitty”. That student goes from student to student in the circle and says “Kitty wants a corner”. The person they ask replies “Go ask my neighbor”. While the kitty moves around the circle, players around the circle make eye contact with each other and will attempt to switch positions across the circle. If the kitty sees them moving, the kitty will try
to tag one of them. If the kitty is successful in tagging one of the players before they get back into the circle, the kitty takes their place and the tagged player becomes the new kitty. The game continues. NOTE: Safety is an issue with this game. The bigger the circle, the more space the players have to move, the safer the game. SMALL CIRCLES CAN LEAD TO BIG COLLISIONS! Also encourage players to be aware of what is going on around them, and make sure the playing surface is not slippery or slick.

3. **Blind Robot:** One student is chosen as the “robot”. Isolate that student while the rest of the class chooses a simple action for the robot to complete (sit in a chair, stand on a box, write the letter A on the board, etc.) Place the class in a large circle around the perimeter of the room. Blindfold the robot. Bring the robot into the room. Each student will now, in order, give one (and only one) command to the robot in an attempt to get the robot to complete the assigned task. Commands should be simple actions – “Take three steps forward” “Raise your right hand” “Touch the object in front of you” etc. The robot will interpret the information in the most straightforward way possible, without any attempt to assist the “controllers”. For example, the robot may raise their right hand completely above their head when the controller only wanted it shoulder level. This aspect of the game should demand clarity from the controllers. Each student around the circle gives a single command until the task is completed. If the task is not completed when you reach the end of the circle, return to the first student and continue until the task is successfully completed.

4. **Name Six:** A good game for a small space. Sit your class in a circle. Get an object like a tennis ball or a small stuffed animal. Place a student in the center of the circle and have them close their eyes. Begin passing the object around the circle one student at a time. When the person in the middle says “stop” the person holding the ball is “it”. That person must now name six items on a list given by the teacher – For example: Name Six chocolate candy bars or Name Six professional baseball teams or Name Six plays by Shakespeare. When they start to answer they pass the ball to the person next to them and the ball quickly travels around the circle. If the ball makes it back to the person before they name six things then they switch with the person in the middle of the circle and the game starts again with a new “it” and a new list. If the player succeeds, the person in the middle stays, closes their eyes and picks a new person to play.

5. **Character Affliction Game:** This is another good small space game. Have your class sit in a circle. Pick one student to be inside the circle. That student will continuously walk around the inside of the circle normally. While they are walking, students in the perimeter will call out imaginary afflictions the walking student must incorporate into their walk. For example: “There is a bee buzzing around your head” “Your right foot is made of lead” “Your knees are made of Jell-O” Each new affliction is added on top of the other. Keep the total afflictions to no more than three or four or the walk becomes muddy. Once the walker successfully completes incorporating the afflictions into their walk, they join the circle and a new walker is chosen.
Routine is key to effective classroom management. One way to establish a routine in your classroom is bell work. This takes place during the first five minutes of every class. Students enter, take note of the bell work prompt on the board, and respond. The goal is for students to write for the entire five minutes (no one-word answers). This gives you time to take attendance, transition from the previous lesson, and prepare for this one. As you continue to use bell work, think about how you can connect the bell work prompt to the day’s lesson.

Before students enter, write one of these prompts on the board. When students enter the room there should be a set routine: Students take their seats, take out their journals, and start writing – preferably in silence, but that’s up to your own personal style and expectations. When the allotted writing time has expired, students can either put their journals away and begin class, or participate in a timed discussion of the topic, sharing their thoughts and insights. This routine should take place at the beginning of each class period without fail.
GENERAL PROMPTS

• What do you enjoy more – music or movies? Why?
• Would you rather have a machine to go back into the past or into the future?
• Would you rather be a superhero or a supervillain? Why?
• Have some music playing as students enter. Students respond to the music: What does it make them feel? What images come to mind? What lyrics would they write?
• Pick a random headline from Google News. Have students respond to the headline – what might the article be about?
• My opinion on war is…
• My opinion on climate change is…
• My opinion on gender equality is…
• My opinion on religion is…
• My opinion on the economy is…
• My opinion on the government is…
• My opinion on marriage is…
• My ideal job is…
• What do you think of birthdays?
• Are trophies important? Why or why not?
• Write about three places you would love to visit.
• What are your biggest pet peeves?
• If your life were a television show, what would it look like?
• What is true friendship?
• Why do people gossip?
• Why do people want to be famous?
• Is it more important to be well-read, or to know how to write well?
• What is the perfect vacation?
• What does it mean to be safe?
• What is a hero?
• Is fashion important? Why or why not?
QUOTE PROMPTS

Have students respond to and reflect on quotes. Do they agree or disagree with the statement? Can they connect something in their life to the quote?

“Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.”
-Léo Tolstoï

“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.”
-Thomas A. Edison

“The expert in anything was once a beginner.”
-Helen Hays

“A creative man is motivated by the desire to achieve, not by the desire to beat others.”
-Ayn Rand

-Samuel Beckett

“Friendship is always a sweet responsibility, never an opportunity.”
-Khalil Gibran

“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”
-John F. Kennedy

“I attribute my success to this: I never gave or took any excuse.”
-Florence Nightingale

“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.”
-Chinese Proverb

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.”
-Pablo Picasso

“Whether you think you can or you think you can’t, you’re right.”
-Henry Ford

“We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.”
-Plato

“Fall seven times and stand up eight.”
-Japanese Proverb

“I didn’t fail the test. I just found 100 ways to do it wrong.”
-Benjamin Franklin

“You may be disappointed if you fail, but you are doomed if you don’t try.”
-Beverly Sills
THEATRE-RELATED PROMPTS

- Is theatre important? Why or why not?
- What’s your relationship to theatre?
- Why should I care about the arts?
- How is a culture defined by its art?
- What is the difference between a story and a monologue?
- What is the difference between going to the movies and going to a play?
- Who is your favourite actor? Why?
- What makes a great monologue or a great play?
- What can you do to prepare for a first rehearsal?
- What are the different types of theatre spaces?
- What does it mean when people say “break a leg”?
- What does a stage manager do?
- What does a director do?
- What does it mean to be off book?
- What does it mean to “cheat out” to the audience? Why is it important?
- What does it mean to strike a set?
- What are the responsibilities of an actor?
- What are the responsibilities of the backstage crew?
- Who are all the people involved with a theatre production?
- What does it mean to be an ensemble?
- What are the elements of a play review?
- Do you have trouble learning lines? Why or why not?
- Why is it important to know a character’s backstory?
- Why is it important to create a character physicality?
- Do you ever get stage fright? Why or why not?
- Reflect on this line: “All the world’s a stage, And all the men and women merely players.”
- Reflect on this statement: “Your real acting partner is the audience.”
- Reflect on this line: “There are no small parts, only small actors.”
- What are the elements of a Commedia dell’arte performance?
- What would it be like to see a play at the Globe Theatre?
- What would it be like to see a play in ancient Greece?
- Why is it important to study plays from the past as well as the present?
- Reflect on yesterday’s work: Summarize what we did and pose one question.
SELF-REFLECTION PROMPTS

- I firmly believe that...
- I see myself as...
- I think others see me as...
- I see the world around me as...
- What good news have you received recently?
- In ten years, I will be...
- Would you rather have freedom or money?
- The thing that frustrates me the most is...
- My biggest fear is...
- The best thing that has ever happened to me is...
- I am self-motivated when it comes to...
- I am unmotivated when it comes to...
- I would like to get better at...
- My biggest strength/weakness in life is...
- My biggest strength/weakness in school is...
- I am most proud of...
- I am not so proud of...
- If I could swap places with anyone it would be...
- I feel that bullying is...
- I believe friendship is...
- I wish that my family would...
- I wish that my teachers would...
- The words I want to live by are...
- If my body could talk, it would say...
- I wish that I would say no to....
- I wish that I would say yes to...
- My relationship to time is...
- When I wake up, the first thing I think is...
- When I go to sleep, the last thing I think is...
- My relationship with anxiety is...
- The patterns in my life are...
- Today I learned that...
PLAYWRITING PROMPTS

- **Picture Prompt:** Put a picture on the board and ask students to write about the Who, Where, What, Why, and When?

- **Dictionary Prompt:** Pull a random word out of the dictionary, write it on the board, and ask students to write a monologue based on that word.

- **Observation:**
  - Describe your bedroom using the five senses.
  - Write down something you just saw in the hall.
  - Describe your family.
  - What are you wearing today? Why did you decide to wear it?
  - Look at someone else in the class. Describe what they’re wearing. What do their choices say about them?
  - Describe this room using the five senses.

- **Monologues:**
  - Say goodbye to your imaginary friend.
  - Write a monologue from the perspective of a scar.
  - Write a monologue in which the character is afraid of water.
  - Write a monologue in which the character is holding a stone.
  - Write a monologue from the perspective of a pet.

- **First line of a monologue:**
  - I’m obsessed with the stars.
  - It was only a small nervous breakdown.
  - Donuts are not my friend.
  - This is the best/worst day ever.
  - Sometimes it’s better to lie.
  - I’m going to change my name, that’s the first step.

- **Scenes:**
  - Write the names of three unrelated objects on the board. Students have to write a two-person, one-location scene incorporating those objects.
  - Write a scene in which two people are locked in an elevator.
  - Write a scene in which two people who hate each other must bake a cake.

- **First line in a two character/one location/one page scene:**
  - So, do you often hang out under the bridge?
  - What’s it like to be dead?
  - What do you want me to say?
  - Mister... hey Mister, I’m talking to you.
  - I have something important to tell you.
EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES

Sometimes the hardest thing about teaching is just knowing where to start. The following games and activities are tried-and-true exercises that will set the tone in your classroom and creatively encourage students to participate in drama. These games are low-risk, high-impact types of games that get students on their feet and out of their heads, and starts the process of making a class more like an ensemble.

THREE “GET TO KNOW YOU” GAMES

One of the most common activities that occurs during a first drama class is some form of a Get to Know You game. Starting with games is not just a nice break for students who may have been sitting still and silent in other classes, but it’s a great way for them to learn each other’s names through “play” (yes, the double meaning was totally intended!).

While many games may seem simple or silly, they are a good way to gauge your students’ abilities and willingness to participate. Are they eager to jump up and get involved, or do they hang back? Why? Do they participate in some games but not others? Again, why? These observations can help teachers adjust and tailor lessons to fit students’ personalities and skills, or else challenge students and push them out of their comfort zones.

Here are three simple Get to Know You games to try at the start of a new class. You can also use these as warm-up games.

Game 1: “ABC Name Game”

Introduce yourself in your “loud actor’s voice,” then add something you like that starts with the same letter of your first name. For example: “My name is Kerry, and I like koalas!” Then the person next to you introduces themselves and what they like, and then re-introduces you. “My name is Sarah, and I like soccer… and this is Kerry, and she likes koalas.” You can either continue on, introducing one person at a time, or (for a big challenge) have the students keep repeating every single name and like until the poor person at the end has to repeat everyone’s statement.

A fun alternative to this game that will get your students moving is the “Action Name Game.” Play the name game and add a gesture, pose, or action. Each person must repeat the names and actions, which will create a crazy dance by the end of the line!

Game 2: “Move Yer Butt”

Everyone sits chairs arranged in a circle, except for one person who stands in the middle. Their goal is to get a seat. The student in the middle of the circle will call out “Move Yer Butt if…” and add a situation or characteristic that they have. For example: “Move Yer Butt if you have brown eyes!” Then anyone in the circle who has brown eyes must get up and switch seats with another person, while the person inside the circle tries to steal a chair. Whoever is left without a seat comes up with the next “Move Yer Butt” topic.

Examples of situations and characteristics could include eye/hair colour, items of clothing worn, travels destinations, age/grade level, and likes or dislikes (food, music, movies, etc.).
Game 3: “Mixer”

Students move around the room in various ways, depending on what the teacher calls out. For example: walking, hopping, jumping, sneaking, creeping, skipping, sliding, etc. The possibilities are endless. At various times, the teacher will call out a random number and body part, like “four elbows,” “six toes,” or “three pinkies.” The students must quickly get in groups of whatever number was called and attach the named body part together. If there are people left over, they are “out.” For a more competitive game, those players who are “out” are eliminated. For a more cooperative game, have those who are “out” help the teacher pick the next way of moving or the number of body parts.

Variation

This variation encourages conversation. When students get into their “four elbows” groups, they must share the same number of facts about themselves as the number of people in the group (i.e. three group members, three facts), or find that many things in common with each other (i.e. four group members, four similar traits among students).
THE DAILY WARM-UP

Creating rituals in the drama classroom is a great way to build community and a sense of teamwork – a feeling of “we’re all in this together”. The most easy, basic ritual is starting each class with a group warm-up to get students’ bodies moving and energized after they have been sitting for hours in other classes.

Basic Daily Warm-up

Sometimes a simple warm-up can be the most effective. I always start my classes with a body warm-up and stretch-out, especially if my students have been sitting down for long periods of time before drama class. This can be as basic as putting on an upbeat song and leading students in warming up their bodies by running in place or doing jumping jacks. Follow this with stretching, starting from the top of the head, then the neck, then going down to the legs and feet. You can also include a vocal warm-up and breathing exercises.

If you are short on time, here’s an easy body-and-voice warm-up exercise:

As a group, have students shake their right hand vigorously while counting out loud, backwards from 10. Repeat with the left hand and count back, right foot and count back, left foot and count back. Start all over with the right hand, counting count back from 9 this time. Keep repeating the exercise until you get down to 1-1-1-1 (right hand, left hand, right foot, left foot). If you’re extremely short on time, start at 5 rather than 10. This is guaranteed to get your students warmed up in a jiffy!

Once students are in the habit of doing a daily warm-up, turn the tables on them and try this…

Student-Led Warm-ups

Use a calendar to assign each student a date when he or she will be responsible for leading the class in the warm-up routine, exercise, or game. One week before their date, students must submit a planning handout that describes their warm-up and how it will benefit the class. Students can create an original warm-up exercise or game, or they can adapt a warm-up exercise or game that they’ve done in class. If they use an existing exercise, they need to put their own spin on it. Ideas could include “theming” a warm-up to an upcoming school event or holiday, or basing their warm-up on a topic you’ve been studying in class (Greek playwright tongue-twisters?). Students don’t need to reinvent the wheel here – the point of the exercise is to practice leadership skills and to think creatively. It also gives each student a chance to lead their classmates and take ownership of their portion of the class. And since everyone in the class gets a chance to lead, it encourages students to support each other. It also gives students the chance to get to know each other better by seeing the different spin that each student puts on their warm-up.
THREE FUN PHYSICAL WARM-UPS

1. Shakedown
   • Choose a Caller (could be the teacher or one of the students) and have students spread out around the room. The Caller announces a way of moving around the room (creeping, tiptoeing, dancing, leaping, shuffling, crawling, etc.). Students move around the room in the manner that the Caller specifies.

   • When the Caller yells “SHAKEDOWN!” students quickly get into pairs with whoever is closest to them at that moment.

   • The Caller yell out the name of a body part. The student pairs introduce themselves to each other (“Hi, I’m Amy.” “Hi, I’m Jonathon.”), then shake the body part announced by the caller, as if they were shaking hands, and say “Nice to meet you!”

   • Play multiple rounds. With each round, make sure to have students move around the room in a different way and have the Caller yell out the name of a different body part for the students to shake.

2. Alphabet Body
   • Students draw letters of the alphabet with different parts of the body.

   • Have your group do this all at once and then have volunteers come up to show their letter. Students try to guess the letter.

   • Have students use their whole body to write letters.

   • Get students into groups. Each group has to spell a word using the students’ whole bodies.

3. Numbered Tableaux
   • Assign a Caller who announces a method of moving around the room. All the students move around the room in the manner that the Caller specifies.

   • The Caller calls out a number, and students must assemble themselves into groups of that number with those nearest to them.

   • The Caller then announces a simple tableau scene that the students must create within three seconds. Once each tableau is complete, have the students freeze in that position for at least 10 seconds.

   • The Caller announces a new way of moving around the room and repeats the game with a new number and new tableau scene.

Suggestions for simple tableau scenes:
• Scenes from the show your class is currently studying or producing (students get to play parts they normally don’t play)
• Scenes from fairy tales and nursery rhymes
• Scenes from famous movies
• Scenes from school (taking a test, playing a sport, doing a science experiment that goes wrong)
• Scenes from life (shopping, going to the beach, running a race, playing with a pet)
CIRCLE WARM UPS

Name it!

- Students stand in a circle. A ball is tossed across the circle.
- On your direction the next person who tosses the ball yells out a category. Dinosaurs! Flowers! Pieces of Clothing! TV shows! Songs! Singers! Plays! Musicals!
- The next person who catches the ball has to name three things in that category. (Tulips! Daisies! Roses!) They then toss the ball.
- The ball gets tossed to another person, then to another. That person yells out a category.
- Keep up this pattern: Toss the ball, toss the ball, Category! Name it! (and repeat)
- If someone can’t name three things under pressure, instead of saying “awwwww” or “too bad”, everyone throws their arms up, cheers, and changes places in the circle.

Whoosh, Whoa

- Students stand in a circle.
- Direct them to send a ball of energy around the circle. Hold “a ball.” This is not an actual ball but a mimed one. Establish the size and weight of the ball and toss it to the person beside you. Coach students to keep the size and weight consistent and to keep the energy going. Work as a group to keep the energy constant.
- After the ball has gone around once, include a sound with the pass. “Whoosh.” Everyone has to say “Woosh” as they pass the ball. Coach students to be consistent.
- After one trip around the circle, direct students that the ball of energy is now inside them. They have to wave their bodies and pass the energy out one of their limbs. Encourage students to make the “Woosh” one continuous sound.
- Variation: After students are really good at sending the “Woosh” around the circle, add a “Whoa”. If a person says “Whoa”, the direction of the “Woosh” changes.

Ball Circle

- Students stand in a circle.
- Instruct students: You’re going to make eye contact with someone across the circle and toss a nerf ball to them. That person accepts the ball, makes eye contact across the circle with a different person and tosses the ball to them.
- As soon as that ball is moving smoothly across the circle add a second ball.
- As soon as that ball is moving smoothly across the circle add a third ball.
- Coach students to stay focused, and not to talk. Keep the rhythm of the balls moving. Keep the eye contact. They need to be aware of multiple balls now.
- As soon as that ball is moving smoothly across the circle add a fourth ball.
- If a ball is dropped, have everyone throw their arms in the air and say “Oh Yeah!” or some similar cheer. And then start the process again with one ball.
You

• Students stand in a circle.
• The first person makes eye contact with someone across the circle, points at them, and says “You.”
• The second person makes eye contact with someone across the circle, points at them, and says “You.”
• The pattern continues until the last person makes eye contact with the first person, points at them, and says “You.”
• Repeat the pattern. The goal is to pass the “You” in the exact same order as the first time. This may take a couple of tries to get the pattern down pat.
• Once the “You” pattern is established, a new first person starts a new pattern using food.
• The first person makes eye contact with someone across the circle, points at them, and says “Apple.”
• The second person makes eye contact with someone across the circle, points at them, and says “Carrot.”
• The pattern continues until the last person makes eye contact with the first person, points at them, and calls out a food.
• Repeat the pattern. The goal is to pass the food pattern in the exact same order as the first time.
• Now it gets tricky. Start the “You” pattern. And then right after start the food pattern. People have to focus and remember who they received “You” from and who they’re sending it too. At the same time they have to remember the food before theirs, what their food is, and who they send it to.
• This game takes practice, practice, practice. It’s a wonderful focus and listening warm-up. After you perfect sending two patterns throughout the circle. Add a third: flowers.

Big Tiny Twisted

Use this warm-up as a last warm-up before moving into classwork.

• Ask the players to walk around the room and be aware of the space. Have them fill in the empty spaces as they walk. Make sure it’s a nice brisk walk, but not running.
• The director calls out “Big”, and each player meets up with another player or players, and they create a “big” shape with their bodies.
• Have them walk around the space again.
• Have them create big shapes a few more times (see side coaching notes below).
• Have them walk around the space again.
• The director calls out “Tiny”, and each player meets up with another player or players, and they create a “tiny” shape with their bodies (see side coaching notes below).
• Have them walk around the space again.
• The director calls out “Twisted”. and each player meets up with another player or players and they create a “twisted” shape with their bodies.
NOTES:

For “big” shapes, many players will use their arms to create “big.” Challenge them to use their whole bodies to make big shapes.

For “tiny” shapes, coach them as to the type of “tiny” you want (e.g. “tiny and decorative” or “tiny and sinister”) so that they have a goal and can make adjustments with their bodies.

ARTICULATING THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR PROGRAM

Every drama teacher knows that sooner or later they will have to advocate for their students, classes, or programs, even when they are at a school that appreciates the arts!

What does it mean to advocate? “To speak or act in favour of; to support or recommend."

But how do you advocate for your program? And what if you’re walking into an environment with a lot of turnover, a culture of budgetary competition, or an environment that just doesn’t respect the arts? Don’t worry – it can be done!

Start small, think long term, and find a way to show the value of what you do in language your community will understand. Remember: The sooner you can articulate the value of your program, the better.

Here are the four keys to articulating the importance of your program.

1. Establish the end goal
   What is the end goal for your advocacy? To have a full house at your next show? To have seven drama classes instead of one? To connect with those students who did not choose your class but are there anyway? To gain the respect of your administrators? Once you survey your situation, decide on one goal. You’ve got enough to do in a day, so don’t overcomplicate this process. Decide on one thing you can speak to, speak about, and support.

2. Create a plan of small steps
   Now that you know where you want to end up, what are the steps that will get you there? It’s important here to think small. The smaller the better. First of all, small steps are manageable. Second, remember your environment. What would happen if you walked into your new principal’s office and demanded a trophy case for your program? That may be your end goal, but you need to think about the small steps that will get you there.

   Perhaps you invite your principal to every show. Perhaps you have your students volunteer for community events. Hint! Want your principal to take notice? Have your students volunteer in the community. When the positive words gets back to your principal, they will take notice. Perhaps you start to honour your students’ accomplishments with certificates and small trophies. Use the hardware that sports teams use.

   What if your end goal is a full slate of drama classes? How long do you estimate it will take to reach that goal? If it takes five years, what actions can you take that scaffold upon each other to reach your desired outcome? You’re going to be working with your grade nine students the longest, what exercises can you implement now that will create an ensemble of student leaders over time? What event could you start now so that five years down the line, it’s something the whole school looks forward to? Can you start communicating with your feeder schools and discuss possible collaborations?

   Put your plan together and write it in your calendar. What’s a weekly task you can do? Make it small and you’ll get it done.
3. **Collaborate with your school community**

If you want to enhance the reputation of your program, you have to get out of your classroom. It’s easy to hide away, especially if you’re new or a one-man-band. When you want to advocate for your program, actions speak much louder than words.

Have your students volunteer to bring activities to other departments. For example, they can do dramatic readings of Shakespeare in English classes. Talk to the Science department about what they’re doing and see if you can theatricalize those elements. Do a Hamilton sing-along for the History department. Theatre is, and always has been, cross-curricular. That alone brings value to what you’re doing. Anytime you can connect your work to the curriculum, you’re going to show value.

*Note: This type of collaboration takes TIME. People don’t like change, so don’t expect everyone to accept your proposals with open arms. But gentle persistence goes a long way. Remember Key #2: Repeated small steps will get you closer to your goal faster than trying to accomplish everything your first year.*

4. **Communicate visually**

This is the big one. The best way to advocate for your program is to visualize your program.

Hang posters about the importance of the arts on every possible wall surface. Show arts education statistics visually.

Visualize everything that is happening in your classroom. Visualize the process, the successes, and the skill building. Your community may have a preconceived negative impression of a drama classroom without ever having stepped foot inside one. Demonstrate what the students are learning and why it has value.

If you win a competition, don’t hide it in a drawer. Theatre educator extraordinaire Gai Jones says: “Every time you get a trophy, whether we love or hate that competition element, make an appointment with the school board, take your students, get on the agenda, and you thank them.” Make your wins visual. Equate them to sports wins.

Get out into the community and show your students in action. Volunteer at the library, for seasonal events, for parades. Make your program visible.

Advocacy takes time. But it will happen over time. Your first action, again, is to decide what your goals are. What do you want for your program? For your students? For yourself? Use the provided Advocacy Reflection Sheet on the next page.
ADVOCACY REFLECTION

Answer the following questions:

1. What is the current attitude at your school towards the arts and your program?

2. What is your end goal for your program?

3. Why have you chosen this goal? How will it help your students? Your program? You?

4. What is the first step you can take toward your goal?
POSTER QUOTES

Make the value of the arts visible for your students, your parents, and the rest of your school community. All of these quotes have been made into 8x11 posters that you can hang in your classroom. You can find them on the New Drama Teacher Site:

newdramateacher.com

“Pyramids, cathedrals and rockets exist not because of geometry, theories of structures or thermodynamics, but because they were first a picture – literally a vision – in the minds of those who built them.” –Eugene Ferguson, engineer and historian

“Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution.” –Albert Einstein

“The arts are an essential element of education, just like reading, writing, and arithmetic… music, dance, painting, and theater are all keys that unlock profound human understanding and accomplishment.” –William Bennett, Former US Secretary of Education

“Civilizations are not remembered by their business people, their bankers or lawyers. They’re remembered by the arts.” –Eli Broad, entrepreneur and philanthropist

“Arts education aids students in skills needed in the workplace: flexibility, the ability to solve problems and communicate, the ability to learn new skills, to be creative and innovative, and to strive for excellence.” –Joseph M. Calahan, Xerox Corporation

“The uncreative mind can spot wrong answers, but it takes a very creative mind to spot wrong questions.” –Antony Jay, writer and broadcaster

When you accept that you may fail, you can accomplish anything. Fear can be so debilitating. Every day I’m faced with difficult decisions, but losing the fear helps me make the right choices.” –Linda Kaplan Thaler, ad agency chair

“The things we fear most in organizations – fluctuations, disturbances, imbalances – are the primary sources of creativity.” –Margaret J. Wheatley, writer and management consultant

“Those who have changed the universe have never done it by changing officials, but always by inspiring the people.” –Napoleon
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