



DRAMA & LITERACY

Story and Process Drama in the Primary Classroom

PRIMARY TEACHER PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT SERIES

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PRIMARY TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

STORY AND PROCESS DRAMA IN THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM

with **Adrienne Jones**

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RATIONALE

Drama is an experiential, embodied way of learning in the classroom that promotes deep learning. Story dramas and process dramas are two key structures and approaches. In this resource is a model of both, the story drama is based on Sarah's Heavy Heart and the process drama explores an earthquake in China and a young student's response.

Teachers may use these examples as a framework for developing drama experiences in the primary classroom or mix and match drama activities to suit their own classroom practices, investigations and themes.

Outcomes of using Story and Process Drama to develop literacy:

- Enhanced comprehension
- Vocabulary expansion
- Critical thinking
- Empathy and Perspective-taking
- Sequencing and story structure
- Fluency and expression
- Imagination and creativity
- Contextual understanding
- Collaboration and communication
- Confidence building.

The English curriculum and The Arts share a focus on communicating ideas and perspectives in spoken, written and visual modes with an awareness of purpose and audience. Both learning areas help students develop speaking, listening, visual literacy and writing skills as they work individually, and collaborate with others, to create texts, presentations, and performances.

CURRICULUM LINKS

THE ARTS: DRAMA P-6

- Exploring and Responding
- Developing Practices and Skills
- Creating and Making
- Presenting and performing.

ENGLISH P-6

- Language, Literature, Literacy (more on page

GENERAL CAPABILITIES: Literacy (speaking and listening, reading and viewing)

GENERAL CAPABILITIES: Intercultural understanding

GENERAL CAPABILITIES: Personal and Social capability. (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, social management)

See more on page 18-19

WARM UP TO PROMOTE GROUP WORK

Connections Game

In groups of four, students work out how to have only 4 points of connection with the floor. Children can use any body parts but must ensure they have the correct number.

Teacher then calls out a variety of numbers 10, 20, 5.

Children work together to decide what body parts they will use to connect with the floor to match the number. (e.g. if it is twenty they could use ten fingers, five feet and five hands).

Students are encouraged to think creatively to solve the problem.

NOTE:

This is a fantastic starter for our Story Drama but can also be used as a maths game or transition game in the classroom.



SESSION 1 – STORY DRAMA: Sarah's Heavy Heart

STORY DRAMA

The purpose of this drama is to:

- Explore emotional / social issues with students.
- Promote language development through oracy.
- Provide embodied learning.

RESOURCES

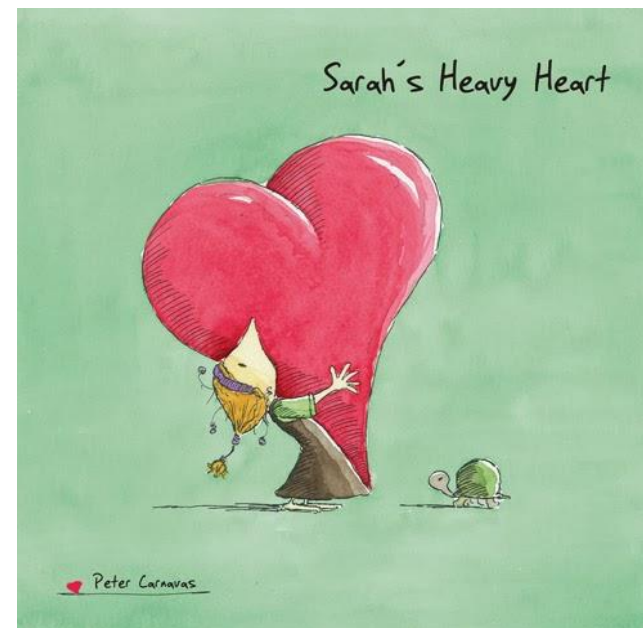
Open classroom or clear space with furniture moved to the sides to allow for movement.

Text: Sarah's Heavy Heart by Peter Carnavas (New Frontier Publishing)

Visual resources included throughout the resource.

KEY WORDS FROM THE TEXT

heart *sad* *heavy*
still *moving* *conflict*
love *care* *generous* *disappointed*



1. INTRODUCTION

Invite students to sit in circle.

Explain to the students that you will be creating a drama together using the book *Sarah's Heavy Heart* by Peter Carnavas and that they will be working in groups and sometimes on their own.

2. FREEZE FRAME

Ask students to work in small groups and create an image/picture of the following:

- A love heart
- A balloon on a string
- A turtle
- An umbrella

In pairs children create a still image of people with big hearts or hearts of gold being kind and helpful.

Children then think of a time when they felt their heart was broken and create individual images of someone with a broken heart.

3. TEACHER NARRATION

Teacher reads the story pp 1- 10, until 'she just wished it wasn't so heavy.'

4. GOSSIP MILL

Teacher asks the group *why is Sarah so sad? Can we think about this?*

Students invited to move into the space and to think about this problem. Explain we will do gossip mill, they will walk around, and, on the signal/instruction of **freeze**, they turn and discuss their understanding of why Sarah is so sad. They exchange whispers with each other.

(Gossip mill allows ideas to be generated and for all to have a chance to talk.)

Repeat a few times and then ask students to sit.

Gently probe the group, *what did you learn about Sarah?*

5. OBJECT PLAY

Teacher asks the students: *What does it feel like to move around all day with a heavy heart? How would it affect your movements?*

After listening to responses ask students, *shall we see what it is really like?*

Teacher reveals the heart and asks students if *they would like to carry the heart and see what this feels like?* Students are instructed they can carry the heart, but they can't put it down or rest it at all, or drop or drag. Call for volunteers and then ask them to try out the heart whilst doing the following:

- Getting up in the morning and getting dressed
- Cleaning your teeth and brushing your hair
- Eating breakfast
- Walking out the door and waiting for the bus
- Sitting in class and doing maths (have this set up – some paper with questions)

Talk to the volunteers and ask them **how** *did it make them feel and affect them.*

What did they learn? Put the heart back to its place.

6. TEACHER NARRATION

Read further and stop on the next page.

7. MANTLE OF THE EXPERT

Mantle of the expert is a drama technique in which children assume the roles of experts in a particular field. A problem or task is established, and the teacher and children use imagination and role-play to explore the issue. The children may be involved in mimed activities, improvisation, research, or discussion.

The teacher's role is to guide the drama, stepping in and out of role as necessary, providing encouragement and motivation to the experts.

Open the heart and reveal some questions. Show the students the white coat and explain that they will be heart doctors and help provide Sarah with some suggestions.

Also ask if someone would like to pretend to be Sarah and sit in the doctor's office.

Ask students who would like to give some advice? As student comes up, help them into the white coat (imaginary or real)

Teacher: Thank you doctor (student's name) can you give Sarah some advice?

Questions:

- *I worry about my friends when they are sad.*
- *I often think about things that make me sad.*
- *I get scared that bad things will happen.*
- *I can't forget about mean things people say.*
- *Some days I can't stop thinking bad thoughts.*

Work through the questions with different students.

When finished ask Sarah *what has she learnt? What is the most important thing?*

...back to the book.

8. TEACHER NARRATION

Read until, “he could not keep still”.

9. MOVEMENT

Ask students to move around as if they are holding a balloon and can't keep still.

10. GOSSIP MILL

Students move around and then freeze, what could they say to their partner to help them keep still?

11. TEACHER NARRATION

Finish the book.

12. STORY CONCLUSION

Ask the students:

- What has happened?
- How are Sarah and the boy feeling now?
- How did Sarah help the boy?
- How did the boy help Sarah?

13. TOUCH AND TALK

In pairs, students create the image of Sarah and the Boy 'watching and wondering'.

Think about what thoughts might be going through their heads? Teacher reminds the students of the problem solving in Mantle of the Expert, and the words on each of the hearts.

- Are Sarah and the boy thinking how to solve the problem?
- Is the boy's mind wandering to thoughts of wonderful things?
- Is Sarah sad?
- Does the boy care?

The teacher then gives students a moment to be calm and think before walking into the space and hearing their thoughts.

14. CONCIENCE ALLY

Line up students in two lines facing to create a walkway. A student in the character of Sarah walks slowly through. Each student in the line whispers her words of advice. This is an uplifting way to finish a lesson.

15. OPTIONAL POST ACTIVITIES

As a group, students think of someone with a heavy heart to who they should give their light heart (helium balloon).

16. JOURNAL

In journals children draw and decorate a broken heart, a big heart, and a heart of gold.

They are then given a list of words*

Kind, generous, happy, love, care, grateful, sad, sorrow, thankful, disappointed, crushed.

They match the words with the hearts, either writing or pasting them onto the hearts.

*Differentiate the complexity of words to suit your class.

See sample resource on page 10

RESOURCE

kind

generous

happy

love

care

grateful

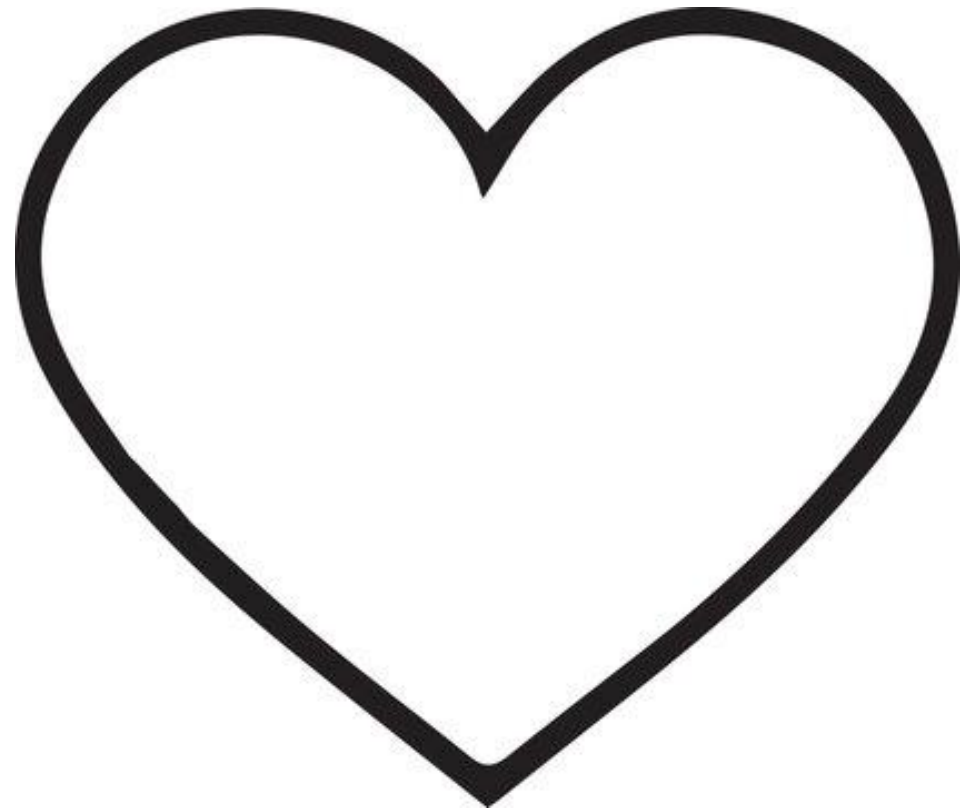
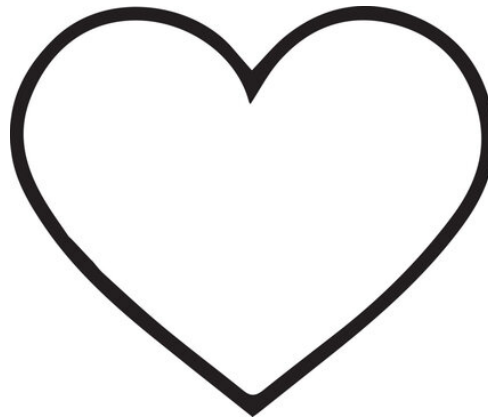
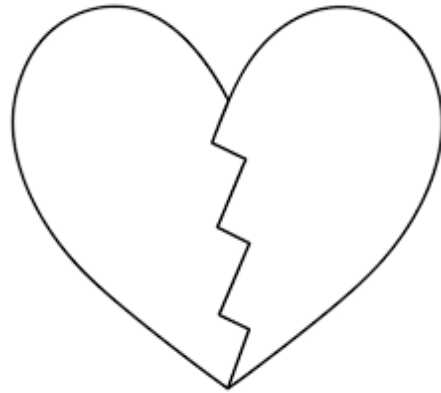
sad

sorrow

thankful

disappointed

crushed



NOTES: Story Drama

References:

- John Saunders
- Sydney University CREATE centre.

Other Texts for Story Drama (starting points)

- How to catch a star Oliver Jeffers
- There's a sea in my bedroom.
- Aimee and Louis
- Shaun Tann (upper primary)
- The Journey (Aaron Becker)
- The Tomorrow Book (environment theme)

SESSION 2- PROCESS DRAMA: The Earthquake Drama

Learning sequence

RESOURCES

Flat cardboard boxes of medium-large size.

Lin Hao Story (see Resources page 13)

Stories of Brave Children: The Stories of Bravery and Valor of the Younger Generation.

.Age-appropriate images of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake.

Red, blue, green coloured sticky dots, or name tags.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

In addition to developing literacy skills, this Process Drama can be aligned with other curriculum areas:

HASS: world geography, continents, populations, urban, people places and cultures, using sources, designing questions

Science: earthquakes, tectonic plates, science inquiry

Design Technologies: structures and structural design.

1.WARM UP: SHELTER

SCRAMBLE

Children are divided into groups of three, with one additional person to be the caller.

- Two children from each group form a shelter by facing each other, raising their arms and palm to palm forming a roof.
- The third student takes shelter under the roof.

The caller stands amidst the groups and calls either “people” or “shelters”. If the caller yells “people”, all the children must run to a new shelter including the caller.

The person left without a shelter then becomes the caller.

If the caller yells “shelters” then all of the shelters must change partners.

If the caller yells “people” and “shelters” then everyone needs to change spots.

At this point the shelters can become people and vice versa, until everyone finds a spot, with one person extra who becomes the caller.

*differentiate this game to suit the level of your learners.

2. TAKING ON A ROLE

Students are told that today we’ll be taking on the role of people in a school. They brainstorm who these people are as the teacher writes the roles on sticky tags and places them on each child e.g. *teacher, principal, janitor, students* etc.

They decide what their role is good at, who are their friends, if anyone is new.

They are told to remember these things as they will need to know them for the rest of the drama.

3. DEFINING THE SPACE

Following on from 4. *Taking on a Role*, students set up the space to represent a classroom.

They arrange boxes in formation with the teacher working as provocateur to encourage detail:

- Where is the blackboard?
- Where is the door?

Students take their position in the space.

- Who are you sitting next to?

When the space is created students run a short role play of the class being taught. After the role play has gone for a short time, the teacher in role as the principal arrives to talk about sports day.

4. IMAGE STIMULUS

Out of role, children are shown age-appropriate images of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake (see sample in Resources) and speculate on what might have happened.

Teacher leads a discussion: What do you think happened?

students brainstorm possible causes and effects and write these to the left and right of the image.

Teacher points out the cement slabs from fallen buildings in the images.

5. PRETEXT

Teacher reads out the [Lin Hao story](#) (see Resources p. 13)

*Teachers can include any other contextual research, videos, or images they feel their class needs.

6. SOUNDSCAPE

A small group of students, pretending to be the class in the earthquake, are asked to huddle together under the flattened boxes which represent the cement slabs and a sheet.

The remainder of the class think of a sound the students might have heard during the earthquake.

While the group close their eyes and are covered, the rest of the class circles around them and creates an earthquake through sound.

Rotate groups.

7. GROUP ROLE PLAY

Students are asked to lie on the ground and imagine that they have just experienced the earthquake which is now over. The teacher places cardboard over some of the students. If they have cardboard on them, it represents a slab of cement that cannot be moved by fewer than two people.

They are told that they have injuries indicated by a colour on their role tags: *

- Red – You are sore and bruised, you cannot move at all;
- Blue – You are unconscious;
- Yellow – You have a broken arm; Orange – You can't move your legs;
- Green – You have a broken ankle;
- Pink – You are okay.

Situation: Students must move to a safe space outside the classroom before the rest of the building collapses.

Still lying on the ground, in role, students consider what to do.

Teacher leads students to think about their skills and abilities and what they might do. *Were you the gardener?* So you are strong and can dig! *Were you the principal?* So you are a leader! Teacher avoids leading the action but encourages students where necessary. *How are you Sam? Can you move? Can you see the door? Is it blocked? Do you have a broken leg? Does it hurt?*

As students emerge from the wreckage the teacher announces that in 30 seconds the building will collapse and commences a countdown. Some children run for their lives, others forget they have injuries, some work hard to help the wounded. **All of this is discussed after the event** (next page)

*Differentiate the complexity of these instructions to suit your age group.

Note: If any students become distressed, remind them this is role play only. If you anticipate this activity may distress some students, in the introduction to the task you may wish to state that role play is simply play in character and remind students that they are always safe in our classroom.

8. TEACHER IN ROLE

When the countdown is over, children are brought back into the classroom. The teacher takes on the role of a reporter and begins interviewing the children in a central space so all students can see the interviews. A working or prop microphone can be a useful tool in this activity.

- *How did you survive the earthquake?*
- *Were you injured?*
- *Did anyone help you?*
- *Were you a hero?*

9. REFLECTION

Students discuss what happened during the drama, what they did and what they perhaps could have done?

Teacher reads ***Stories of Brave Children: The Stories of Bravery and Valor of the Younger Generation*** and discusses how these children found the strength to do what they did.

- How did Lin know that singing would help?
- How did the boy know how to drive?
- Why didn't the girl panic?
- What skills did they have that helped them?

Reflection activities

Students draw pictures of themselves doing things that make them feel confident.
(Being a leader, getting good grades, singing, playing with good friends)

AND /OR

Students draw 3 images: orientation, complication, resolution.

They recreate the drama in these 3 images: before the earthquake, during the earthquake and the rescue.

Students revisit the

drawings, giving them greater detail each time.

Finally, students write a narrative to accompany their images.

RESOURCES

Lin Hao Story.

Lin Hao, was 9 years old when a huge earthquake struck his home town in China last year (2008).

Lin was at School at the time in a class of 32 students. He not only survived, but after getting out of his classroom, went back into the rubble to pull two classmates out to safety.

During his rescue, he was hit by falling rubble and suffered injuries on his head and arms. It's also been reported that while his classmates were waiting for help, he encouraged them to sing songs to keep their spirits up. When he was asked why he risked his life, he said: "I was the hall monitor; it was my job to look after my classmates." Only ten of the 32 students survived and two of them were saved by Lin Hao.

IMAGES

The following photos are of Lin Hao at the 2008 Olympics and the rubble at the earthquake.



REFERENCE NOTES: Process Drama

The yonda project (youtube)

Assessment suggestion: skills checklist, and student response

'The charged moment of writing in role' (Julie Dunn)

'Pretending to Learn'

ENGLISH Achievement Standards P-6 *Addressed in this resource.*

Australian Curriculum Version 9.0

Subject	Prep	1	2	3	4	5	6
Listening, speaking and creating	By the end of Prep, students listen to texts, interact with others and create short spoken texts, including retelling stories. They share thoughts and preferences, to an audience. They use language features including words and phrases from learning and texts. They listen for and identify rhymes, letter patterns and sounds (phonemes) in words. They orally blend and segment phonemes in single-syllable words.	By the end of Year 1, students interact with others, and listen to and create short spoken texts including recounts of stories. They share ideas and retell or adapt familiar stories, recount or report on events or experiences, and express opinions using a small number of details from learnt topics, topics of interest or texts. They sequence ideas and use language features including topic-specific vocabulary and features of voice.	By the end of Year 2, students interact with others, and listen to and create spoken texts including stories. They share ideas, topic knowledge and appreciation of texts when they recount, inform or express an opinion, including details from learnt topics, topics of interest or texts. They organise and link ideas, and use language features including topic-specific vocabulary and features of voice.	By the end of Year 3, students interact with others, and listen to and create spoken and/or multimodal texts including stories. They relate ideas; express opinion, preferences and appreciation of texts; and include relevant details from learnt topics, topics of interest or texts. They group, logically sequence and link ideas. They use language features including topic-specific vocabulary, and/or visual features and features of voice.	By the end of Year 4, students interact with others, and listen to and create spoken and/or multimodal texts including stories. They share and extend ideas, opinions and information with audiences, using relevant details from learnt topics, topics of interest or texts. They use text structures to organise and link ideas. They use language features including subjective and objective language, topic-specific vocabulary and literary devices, and/or visual features and features of voice.	By the end of Year 5, students interact with others, and listen to and create spoken and/or multimodal texts including literary texts. For particular purposes and audiences, they share, develop and expand on ideas and opinions, using supporting details from topics or texts. They use different text structures to organise, develop and link ideas. They use language features including topic-specific vocabulary and literary devices, and/or multimodal features and features of voice.	By the end of Year 6, students interact with others, and listen to and create spoken and/or multimodal texts including literary texts. For particular purposes and audiences, they share, develop, explain and elaborate on ideas from topics or texts. They use and vary text structures to organise, develop and link ideas. They use and vary language features including topic-specific vocabulary and literary devices, and/or multimodal features and features of voice.
Reading and Viewing	They read, view and comprehend texts, making connections between characters, settings and events, and to personal experiences. They identify the language features of texts including connections between print and images.	They read, view and comprehend texts, monitoring meaning and making connections between the depiction of characters, settings and events, and to personal experiences. They identify the text structures of familiar narrative and informative texts, and their language features and visual features	They read, view and comprehend texts, identifying literal and inferred meaning, and how ideas are presented through characters and events. They describe how similar topics and information are presented through the structure of narrative and informative texts, and identify their language features and visual features. T	They read, view and comprehend texts, recognising their purpose and audience. They identify literal meaning and explain inferred meaning. They describe how stories are developed through characters and/or events. They describe how texts are structured and presented.	They read, view and comprehend texts created to inform, influence and/or engage audiences. They describe how ideas are developed including through characters and events, and how texts reflect contexts. They describe the characteristic features of different text structures. They describe how language features including literary devices, and visual features shape meaning.	They read, view and comprehend texts created to inform, influence and/or engage audiences. They explain how ideas are developed including through characters, settings and/or events, and how texts reflect contexts.	They read, view and comprehend different texts created to inform, influence and/or engage audiences. They identify similarities and differences in how ideas are presented and developed including through characters, settings and/or events, and how texts reflect contexts.

For more information on the sequence of content descriptions for English see:

https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/aciqv9/english/curriculum/ac9_english_p-6_cd_sequence.pdf

THE ARTS: DRAMA Sequence of content descriptors P-6

Australian Curriculum Version 9.0

Subject	Prep	Years 1-2 Band	Years 3-4 Band	Years 5-6 Band
Exploring and responding	explore how and why the arts are important for people and communities AC9ADRFE01	explore where, why and how people across cultures, communities and/or other contexts experience drama AC9ADR2E01	explore where, why and how drama is created and/or performed across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts AC9ADR4E01	explore ways that the elements of drama are combined to communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning in drama across, cultures, times, places and/or other contexts AC9ADR6E01
		explore examples of drama created and/or performed by First Nations Australians AC9ADR2E02	explore how First Nations Australians use drama to communicate their connection to, and responsibility for, Country/Place AC9ADR4E02	explore the ways that First Nations Australians use drama to continue and revitalise cultures AC9ADR6E02
Developing Practices and Skills	use play, imagination, arts knowledge, processes and/or skills to discover possibilities and develop ideas AC9ADRFD01	use the elements of drama and imagination in dramatic play and/or process drama AC9ADR2D01	use the elements of drama to explore and develop ideas for dramatic action in improvisations and/or devised drama AC9ADR4D01	explore ways to combine the elements of drama to communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning in improvisations, devised drama and/or scripted drama AC9ADR6D01
Creating and making	create arts works that communicate ideas AC9ADRFC01	create and co-create fictional situations based on imagination and/or experience AC9ADR2C01	improvise and/or devise and shape drama using the elements of drama to communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning AC9ADR4C01	develop characters and situations, and shape and sustain dramatic action to communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning in improvised, devised and/or scripted forms AC9ADR6C01
Performing and presenting	share their arts works with audiences AC9ADRFP01	share their drama in informal settings AC9ADR2P01	perform improvised and/or devised drama in informal settings AC9ADR4P01	rehearse and perform improvised, devised and/or scripted drama in informal and/or formal settings AC9ADR6P01

This resource was written and prepared by Adrienne Jones, with support from the HOTA Education team.

HOTA proudly acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are situated, the Kombumerri families of the Yugambah Language Region. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and recognise their continuing connections to the lands, waters and their extended communities throughout South East Queensland.

