

Process Drama Assignment

For your class final, you will be working with a group of people to create a process drama for the rest of the class to experience. These process dramas will be shared in class on **5/6** and **5/8**, with all paperwork due by the start of class on **4/29**.

Explanation:

Process dramas are an educational theatre tool created by Dorothy Heathcote, Brian Way, and Gavin Bolton in which participants engage in experiential learning. Process dramas often require both facilitators and participants to slip in and out of role throughout.

For our purposes, this assignment fulfills multiple course goals. Upon completing it, you will have demonstrated:

- an ability to research, plan, and facilitate a theatrical exercise.
- a facility for group management and the ability to react to shifting circumstances.
- an ability to effectively collaborate as a member of an ensemble.
- an ability to shift in and out of role as necessary.
- an ability to generate imaginary circumstances and curate a collective experience.

These skills of researching/planning/facilitating an event and being confident enough with your own public speaking and leadership skills to retain authority over a group even in somewhat uncertain circumstances are skills we've been learning in class, and they're skills that are highly valuable both in theatre and other fields.

Instructions:

The class will be divided into four groups. Each group will facilitate a process drama approximately 30 – 40 minutes in length during their assigned class period; feedback will be given immediately afterwards. (Only people who are not presenting their process drama that day will participate, so you'll only be responsible for half the class at once.)

Your process drama should have a **clear learning objective** – something you want your participants to walk away knowing or being able to do. It can be something more general or theatre-specific (like effective group collaboration) or can focus on an external content area (like math or “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” trivia.) It should not require extensive prior knowledge of the topic for people to be able to participate.

Your process drama should begin with a **clear inciting incident** that establishes the premise of the activity, clarifies to the participants how/whether they are operating in role, and sets expectations for how the activity will end. (You can have us function as ourselves within these imaginary circumstances or “cast” us in a different way – as people who signed up to spend the night in a haunted house, for example.)

It should proceed to 2 – 4 **distinct activities** in which participants are expected to participate, facilitated by group members either operating in role as someone other than themselves or as a “plant” within the group. There should be a coherent plan for transitioning the group between activities and you should have a clear sense of how long each activity is likely to take. (That will probably mean testing it on yourselves or someone else.) Each activity should have 1 – 2

principal facilitators who should feel comfortable giving the group assistance or further instruction as needed. This *can* take a scavenger hunt-style structure, but certainly doesn't have to – it could also follow a more conventional plot progression.

Activities might all be theatre games, but other kinds of activities – logic puzzles, more intricate role-playing, etc. – are also permitted.

The process drama should come to a **logical, controlled conclusion**.

Additional Requirements:

Process dramas should be clearly planned, as per the paperwork provided. In addition to the elements discussed above, each should include at least one instance of each of the following elements:

- A facilitator in-role. (One of you playing someone else.)
- A facilitator operating as an “unknowing” group member. (One of you helping the group along while pretending you don't know any more than they do.)
- Participants helping to create the environment.
- Environmental elements generated by the facilitators. (Scenic elements, planning to have materials in place in advance for what you'll need, etc.)

The classroom and outdoor space are fair game; any transitions between the two should be handled quickly and efficiently. Any elements placed in either space must not prevent use of the space by others (a “laser beam” field out of rope would be SUPER COOL, but unfortunately would prevent people who aren't us from getting in and out of the building if it was in the hallway in front of the exterior doors), must be secured in a way that they won't accidentally fall or fly off and turn into an inconvenience, and must be cleaned up at the end of the activity.

Groups going first will have the first 5 minutes of class to set up the room – if they think they'll need longer they should arrive earlier – and **later groups will have the class break to set up the room**.

Participants are expected to participate enthusiastically and to the best of their ability; choosing to be disruptive or willfully difficult in someone else's process drama will result in a deduction from your own grade.

Groups will need to work together to plan process dramas, but the principal facilitators assigned to each “station” are responsible for that station.

Resources:

If you don't know games or activities that help facilitate what your group wants to convey, you're responsible for finding some! The internet is full of various websites crowd-sourcing activities. Theatre games are a great resource, but camp activities and resources for teachers and managers trying to facilitate group activities can also be really helpful.

As always, reaching out to Lusie is an option!

Paperwork and Grading

The paperwork for this activity is turned in as a group, but there are distinct elements each person is responsible for completing. That means that if someone doesn't do their part, you **should not do it for them**. Their lack of preparation will not affect your grade. Likewise, while the process drama itself is a group effort, each individual participant will be graded on their own contributions.

Process Drama Title

This section should be co-written by the group. The exception is if you assign one person as the general "guide" for the process drama who does not facilitate a specific activity, in which case they should write the inciting incident section and all transition descriptions.

Learning Objective: [A declarative sentence about what participants will know or be able to do once they've gone through the process drama.]

Premise: [An explanation of the given circumstances of the game – what's the theme/plot?]

Setting: [Are we still in our classroom and school but something wonky is happening? Are we on Mars?]

Facilitator Roles: [Who is acting as themselves? Who is in role? As what?]

Participant Roles: [Are we us in this new situation? Are we someone or something else?]

Space Preparations: [List what needs to happen for the space to be ready for your game. Think about what needs to happen before class as well as when you get there to set up that day.]

Inciting Incident: [Describe how the activity begins. You should include a script for anticipated dialogue, though it will likely be partly improvised in the moment.]

Transition to Activity 1: [Describe the plan for the transition and who is responsible for executing it.]

Activity 1 Title

This section should be written by the Activity 1 facilitator(s).

Facilitators: [Who is responsible for this? Specify whether they are in role ("in role as Helga Hufflepuff"), acting as themselves in-group, playing a secret conspirator, etc.]

Learning Objective: [Specific goal for this activity.]

Length: [A clear and realistic estimate of how long the activity will take.]

Description: [A narrative description of the way the section should progress, including a sample script of any anticipated dialogue, again with the knowledge that it will be largely improvised in the moment.]

Instructions: [A specific description of the activity itself – this should be clear enough that anyone else in the class could pick it up and run the activity if they needed to. Even if you find the activity elsewhere, this description should be in your own language.]

Special Considerations and Contingencies: [What might go wrong? What would you do to address that? Is there anything about this specific group that you know you're going to need to plan for?]

Materials: [Anything you'll need during the activity.]

Sources: [Did you get this activity from somewhere else? List that here.]

Transition to Activity 2: [*This part is everyone again.*]

Each subsequent activity should have its own lesson plan, as above, until:

Transition to Conclusion:

Conclusion: [A plan for the conclusion, including a sample script for any dialogue.]

I will ask for one copy of this paperwork to be turned in **in class** on 4/29 so I can make suggestions during group work time on 5/1. Because there's such a quick turnaround, **no late submissions are allowed for this assignment.**

Rubrics will be uploaded to Blackboard at a later date.

SAMPLE PAPERWORK

Conjuring Collaboration

Learning Objective: Participants will strengthen their group collaboration skills.

Premise: A magical being feels that the class' collaboration skills aren't strong enough to handle the process drama assignment and has, as a result, stolen the assignment sheets. The class must work together to get the assignment sheets back.

Setting: Mostly still in Murphy, a brief trip out to Magical Murphy.

Facilitator Roles: Kaia/Elissa (11/3) is in-role as a magical being. Lusie is switching roles throughout – first as a secret collaborator, then as an in-group facilitator, then in-role.

Participant Roles: Participants are themselves.

Space Preparations: Activity prompts/The Secret Key needs to be created and placed in advance: one in the floor on the costume side of 209, one at the Murphy exit going out, one in the courtyard, and one at the entrance to the greenroom. Eggs need to be filled and placed in courtyard. Box of instructions needs to be placed under a jacket near the entrance to the classroom from the stairwell side. Backpack needs to be placed near costume door upon entry. Lusie is responsible for all preparations.

Inciting Incident: Lusie will be looking for assignment sheets in her backpack near the costume-side door. When Kaia/Elissa hears Lusie complaining that she can't find them, she will sweep in in-role as the Magical Being.

She will explain that "I am a teller of fortunes, and have seen the future in which you cannot complete this assignment because you cannot adequately work together. To aid you, I have taken the instructions from you."

As the instructor, Lusie will attempt to intervene "Look, this isn't appropriate, they need this for their grade – we've been working on ensemble building all semester, I promise you they've got it. Is there some way we can show you that we deserve to have the instructions back?"

Transition to Activity 1: Kaia/Elissa will agree and throw us out our first riddle!

On teamwork this task depends
teamwork I've seen you lack
so work together – trick me, friends
to get your instructions back.

Activity 1: Second Sight

Facilitators: Kaia/Elissa as Magical Being, Lusie as secret collaborator.

Learning Objective: Participants will engage in creative problem solving to address a common enemy.

Length: 10 – 15 minutes.

Description: Lusie will continue to protest – “That’s ridiculous, we don’t even know that you have magical powers!” and finally ask for instructions “Fine, how do we trick you?” Kaia/Elissa will gather everyone into a circle around some stuff in the floor (Lusie will facilitate the presence of stuff) and explain that “My second sight helps me see many things. For example, even if I leave the room and you have someone move the items in the middle of the circle, I will be able to tell who moved them when I returned using my powers.” We will agree, Kaia/Elissa will leave, we’ll choose someone to rearrange the items and they will, then we will call Kaia/Elissa back to test her powers. She’ll know who did it. This will repeat until students get the idea to have multiple people move things, which will be too much for her powers. Upon an instance of two people moving things, Kaia/Elissa will fly into a rage/burst into tears/something else suitably dramatic and leave.

Instructions: The visible facilitator asks participants to sit in a circle around a collection of items, then explains that after they leave the room the group will select a member to move said items. They will leave. The group will select a member to move the items around and then sit back in their original spot. The group will call back the visible facilitator. The visible facilitator will look at the items in the middle and verbally narrate the ways in which the items are “telling” them who moved them, with dialogue like “I can tell by the angle of that ruler that the person who moved this has dark hair” or “I’m having visions of someone wearing a cool color.” As this is happening, the secret collaborator is mirroring the body language of the person who moved the items; the visible facilitator is looking for the participant whose body language matches that of the secret collaborator. Once the visible facilitator has been sufficiently spooky, she correctly identifies the participant who moved the items.

Special Considerations and Contingencies: If the class suspects that Lusie is involved in some way and asks her to leave/close her eyes/do something that will prevent her from seeing who is chosen or mirroring their body language, she will need to come up with an excuse not to do what she’s asked – maintaining class safety, perhaps. If the class doesn’t reach the conclusion of having multiple people move things in a timely fashion, Lusie will need to subtly help them along.

Materials: Stuff in the middle of the room.

Sources: Lexington Children’s Theatre, 2011 summer Education Intern appointment

Transition to Activity 2: Lusie will rush to follow Kaia/Elissa and find the next clue on the floor.