



Artwork by
@missappledesigns



Lift and Shift

Can Drama Education be the Culture Shift the World Needs?

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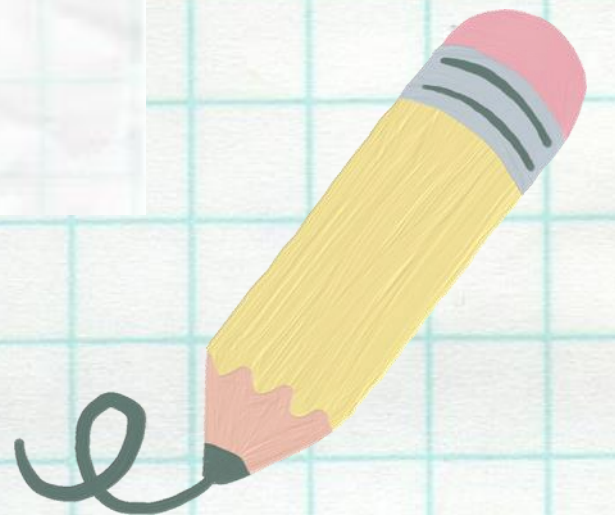


Let's get to know each other!

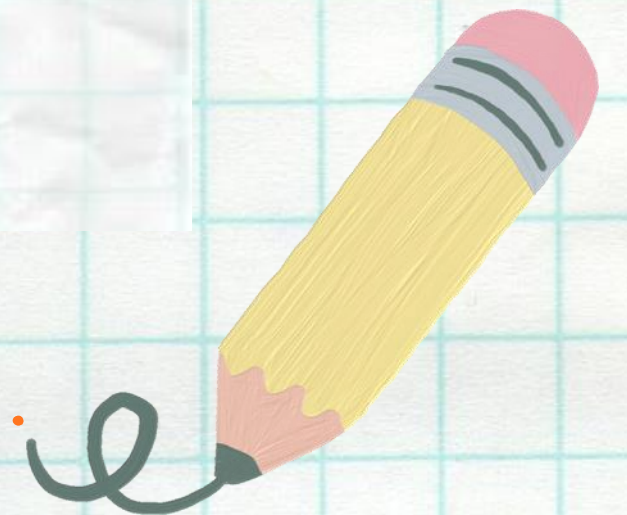
1. What were my interests and hobbies as a teen?
2. Did I have 'stuff' going on in my world which impacted my ability to focus?
3. If I could describe my teenage persona in 5 words or less, what would it be?
4. Who was I closest to in my world?
(family, friends, teachers, other external people)
5. If I could speak to 'teen me' what would I tell him/her?



Reflective flashback to 'teen you'...



1. Are you an approachable teacher? Are you firm, yet fair?
2. What balance of teacher and self are you bringing into the classroom?
3. Do students feel a sense of safety and enjoyment in coming to your classes?
4. Are you adaptable and teachable?
5. Do you reflect upon your practice at the end of each term?
6. How do you contribute to school culture overall?
7. Do you take any responsibility and accountability for outcomes, or does it all completely fall on the school and students?



Reflective thoughts about you as the teacher...

Gosh I am hungry!

Stuff going on at home.

Does my hair look ok? Do I

(running on that can of Monster)

My parents are going to be so mad I failed that assignment!

Participating in multiple different disciplines throughout the

Pubert

Something happened at lunch time.

Brain development (thanks puberty!)

If I fail that exam I can't get a QCE!

Figuring out their identity and overall who they are as a person.

Wondering if that boy or girl likes them.

Trying to figure out where they belong

Thinking about their first outing with a new friend.

Trying to decide what they want to do with their lives. Uncomfortable school uniform.

Did I say yes to the shift?

Thinking about their new job and some independence.

I swear Jonno's always away when

Adolescent inner brain chaos...

we have to rehearse!

“... a student’s perception of being accepted,
valued and included in their school setting by
their peers and others in the school.”

NSW Department of Education (2025)

“... intentionally building positive, trusting relationships, fostering an inclusive environment, and valuing the unique backgrounds of all students. When students feel seen, supported, and included, they are more engaged and academically successful.”

University of Sunshine Coast, Teach ED
and Inclusion Queensland

If you are spiritual in any way,
invest in growing in your faith.

Engage in reflective practices

Have daily practices
(support overall health and wellbeing)

Have great people and
support networks!

Get to know your body
(what feels good and ticks you off.)

Look after yourself

Be realistic about what
you can deliver.

Have hobbies and interests
(not teacher related.)

Engage with growth mindset resources
(books, podcasts, seminars, readings.)

Podcasts

Books/ Audio Books

Let's share some ideas...

Social Media/ Youtube

General Articles



Creating Classroom Culture

Know your school's policies and overall culture:

It supports the blueprint for your classroom expectations and how you enforce consequences as required. Once you know this essential information, you can add your flavour to the classroom. It's important to ultimately remember that students thrive with routine and consistency.

Drama Room Expectations

Safe

- I am not leaving items lying around on the floor.
- I am participating in activities safely and considering others in the room.
- I am actively listening to instructions to ensure I am safe.
- I am using my rehearsal time wisely and safely ensuring I am not harming myself and others.

Respectful

- I will put my hand up to speak.
- I will respect others, including staff in the room.
- I will actively choose to participate in class activities.
- I will ensure I am punctual to every class.
- I am speaking respectfully to and about others.

Learner

- I am prepared for learning every lesson.
- I am not disrupting the learning of others.
- I am meeting deadlines and using allocated work time well.
- I am considering teacher feedback as an opportunity to learn and grow.

Drama Room Expectations

- ★ Be kind and respectful to everyone in the room.
- ★ Be punctual and prepared for lessons.
- ★ Keep the Drama Room tidy.
- ★ Participate in activities safely and respectfully.
- ★ Stay committed to learning through not distracting others and using rehearsal time well.

Our college key behaviour code is being a 'safe, respectful learner.' Outside of having the school code sign in the classroom, I have a class expectations poster which shows what our code looks like in the Drama Room.

Set the Culture: Consistency is KEY

This is particularly important around lesson routines and management of the space. What you choose to ignore you choose to accept. Sort out the behaviour that's countercultural first. This can come from positive acknowledgement of acceptable culture and redirection of counterculture so that it aligns with school policy. Establishing rituals, particularly within performance-based activities, such as unique handshakes or greetings builds rapport, enhances inclusivity, and signals the start of rehearsal. Routines aid in creating predictability and comfort.

Understand Adolescent Psychology

Take the time to learn about adolescent psychology. We are NOT psychologists, but if we can understand the brain more in some capacity, we can learn to understand the behaviour more. With this, we are not making excuses or accepting poor behaviour, rather we are supporting different approaches to learning.

Connection Before Learning

Students need to feel safe to be themselves without judgement. So with that, take the time to learn about your learners. If a student can trust you and feel safe, if they know you actually care about who they are, they will do their best work. They will engage with content within their own capacity. They will find a way to get it done. Excellence in arts education is important but secondary to the emotional and social impact on students. Students remember how they felt and moments where they were truly heard and cared for rather than purely academic success.

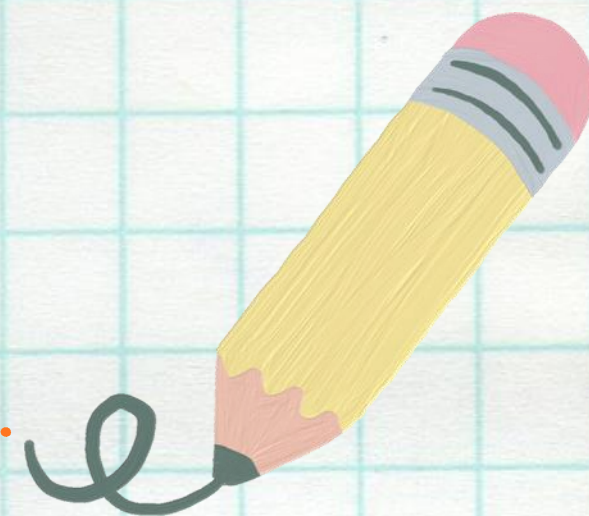
1. Select one Drama class, preferably your biggest class OR even the one which you find the most challenging.

2. Write down the first and last name of every student in the class.

3. Next to each name, write one thing you know about them that's not related to their skills in Drama. How well do you truly know your class?



Reflective thoughts about the students you teach...



Realistic Expectations, Purposeful challenging, and Adaptability

Realistic expectations and accepting that being adaptable is a part of the gig is essential. Being a perfectionist and having unrealistic expectations makes success seem impossible to the student and from that can create disengaged behaviours.

Once safety and rapport are established however, teachers should engage in realistic challenging that promotes growth and builds trust. Challenges should be purposeful, relevant to the classroom context and balanced with support. If a student feels like success is at least somehow within reach, they will welcome challenge within their capacity.

Be a tiny bit vulnerable/ Set the Example

Remember that the Drama classroom is a space where students have to work outside themselves, and at times be challenged to work outside of their comfort zones. Some Drama activities require some level of vulnerability. We cannot expect a student to work within that space if we aren't modelling it in some way. A part of this is modelling participation through actively participating in classroom and school activities to model engagement and pushing out of your comfort zone. If you're not willing to try activities and get involved, then how do you expect students to feel the security and trust to try it too?

Curriculum Integration

Drama units, such as "social comment" and "impactful moments," offer opportunities for students to explore identity and societal roles, deepening their self-awareness and connection to the material. It's also worth including activities where students can see aspects of themselves in others through viewing performance/ devised material.

Finding Drama Resources

Drama Notebook

<https://www.dramanotebook.com>

There are lots of resources including scripts, games and other supportive activities. There are free activities for those having a look for ideas, but you can purchase a subscription for a reasonably good price.

Drama Menu

<http://dramamenu.com>

I discovered Glyn Trefor-Jones' work at a Drama Conference back in 2015 and it's become a 'go to resource' for me in the classroom. There are video resources, but it's also worth getting the books as well for your lessons. Especially great for beginner teachers or those after some fresh ideas!

Theatre*ish

<https://theaterish.com/blogs/news/top-10-virtual-theatre-games>

A place for some free resources if you are starting out or on a limited department budget.

Drama Resource.com

<https://dramaresource.com/drama-games/>

A place for some drama game suggestion, especially if you are a beginner teacher or after some new ideas.

Book Nook

<https://booknook.com.au>

This business is local and been an ongoing supporter of Drama conference. Worth checking out to not only find lots of helpful book resources and drama scripts BUT also a great way to support a locally owned business!

QCAA

<https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au>

A spot to find relevant assessment and unit-based exemplars and templates to write assessment. This is an fluid resource which adds and removes resources over time.



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So what does
this have to
do with
building your
program???

Creative and Critical Thinking

Adaptability

Teamwork

Engaging with brain/ body connection.

Learning to be more present.

Culture keeping

Coming up with concepts

Interpreting existing ideas to
present (in some cases)
innovative ideas

Analytical and Evaluative Skills

Confidence

Emotional Intelligence

Improved Problem-
solving skills

A drop in the pond of the
cool things Drama can be
for students...



Thank you!