

Australian Acting Academy - DRAMA QLD CONFERENCE

ACTING BETWEEN THE LINES



The audience watches us think.

- Audience as meaning-making machines
 - Subtext and inner monologue
 - Processing and reaction over-line delivery
 - Acting through activity
 - Holding moments and pauses
 - Extending short scripts into lived scenes
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Voice Warm Up

ME / YOU

Students stand in a circle.

One student points to themselves:
“ME”

with an emotional intention.

They then point to another student:
“YOU”

with a different emotional intention.

Examples:

- ME (flattered) → YOU (accusatory)
- ME (awkward) → YOU (flirty)
- ME (defensive) → YOU (dismissive)

Coaching Focus:

- Let the emotion affect you first
- Don't perform the word
- Watch the reaction
- Commit to the intention shift

Debrief:

"What was more interesting, the word or the reaction?"

"The delivery is the device. The reaction is the gold."

Movement Activity

Silent Activity Scenes

Pairs receive activity cards.

Examples:

- Folding washing
- Cleaning kitchen
- Wrapping a present
- Fixing printer
- Packing a suitcase
- Sorting paperwork

Task:

Silent scene.

Focus on:

- relationship
- thought
- pauses
- eye contact
- processing

Coaching Focus:

- Don't demonstrate the activity

- Think while doing
- Let the activity ground you
- Let the other person affect you

Reflection:

“What story did you create as an audience member?”

“What behaviour made you assume that?”

Improvisation & Open Script Work

Read, Connect, Speak

How to Learn Lines:

- Read the line silently to yourself
 - No sliding up the page while speaking
 - Lift your eyes and connect with your partner
 - Speak the line only after connection
 - Stay connected while the line is delivered
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Open Script

A: Gary called me last night.

B: Did he?

A: Yeah.

B: So he had something to say

A: He was troubled.

B: That doesn't sound like Gary.

A: Maybe you know him better than I do.

B: Maybe I do.

Round 1:

Play the scene quickly with no activity.

Round 2:

Add activity cards.

Coaching Focus:

- Don't rush responses
 - Process before speaking
 - Let pauses exist
 - Don't play the line
 - The audience watches thought
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Acting Skill Development

Extend the Open Script to 3 Minutes

Students must:

- use pauses
- process information
- return to activity
- allow reactions to land
- build subtext and tension

Focus Areas:

- Acting between the lines
- Inner monologue
- Subtext
- Behaviour over dialogue
- Holding moments
- Letting the audience lean in, not pushing the performance at them

Side Coaching:

- "Stay in the pause."
- "What are you thinking?"
- "You don't need to answer yet."

- “The reaction is more interesting.”
 - “Let us lean in.”
 - “Don’t push it at us.”
 - “Process before you speak.”
 - “Go back to the activity.”
 - “Say less.”
 - “The audience watches thought.”
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Reflection & Discussion

Reflection Questions:

- “What moments felt most truthful?”
- “What made the audience lean in?”
- “What happened when you slowed down?”
- “What was more interesting, the line or the thought around it?”

Final Teaching Point:

“The audience is constantly making meaning.”

“The best acting often happens between the lines.”

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