

PREPARING A 'CLASS IN-ROLE' SESSION

Use these questions to help you prepare a 'class in-role' session. They will help you to construct the session, following the line of the story you will be exploring.

1. What part of the story will I tell (or have the class tell with me) in order to set the stage for the movement into action? (ie: your introduction and the handout material that will be read aloud)
2. Which parts of the story will I read in order to set the context for the scene we are about to play and – if this is the first scene in the drama – for the drama as a whole telling? (ie: what kind of general background is needed for the story as a whole? And what kind of specific background in order to enter into the particular scene I have selected reading?)
3. What is the threshold moment and the threshold question that, when I put it to the group, will take the group into voicing and play? (ie: launch the class into role and formally initiate the action phase).
4. What do I want to make sure I cover in each scene? (ie: kinds of situations to develop inside of a scene, parts of the story I want the group to do in action).
5. Which characters do I want to hear from?
6. What opportunities do I see for tableaux or improvisations?
7. Where will the scene end?
8. If this is not the last scene, then what kinds of transitions can I gracefully make to the next scene I want the group to play?

Preparing for the Last Scene

1. What will be the final scene?
2. What note or mood does the drama end on?
3. If the final mood might be distressful to the group – a death, a loss, a leaving, an injustice – then what do I have to do to provide some sense of hope or positive closure?
4. Who will be the last character I want to hear from? Can that character give the lift I need, or provide us with a thought, wisdom or hope that will bring some sense of harmony at the end?
5. What else do I have in mind to harmonise the mood at the end? The group will appreciate having a closure of some kind for them to try.

TECHNIQUES FOR ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION

Sometimes participants are shy or slow to enter into the action. No matter how well you have introduced the exercise, people may feel a little intimidated at the challenge of calling upon their spontaneity and voicing the characters. Their shyness may come across in their silence, or in the brief responses given to your questions. Sometimes they fall out of role. As facilitator, you can use these techniques to engage participants more fully in the exercise and draw out deeper responses.

1. Wait – after you ask the first direct question to the character. Leave a moment for the group to consider what they are being asked to do, and what their response might be.
2. Repeat the question with the name of the character – “how are you, David, feeling at this moment?” You can even repeat this each time you invite a different participant to respond.
3. Take a variety of responses – this helps us to understand the complexity of a character and the complicated mixed emotions that anyone may feel at a given time.
4. Move into first person – participant says “he feels frightened”. You say “So David feels frightened. You are David. David, tell me again how you feel” so they actually say it again, this time in the first person. You can even start the sentence off for them “I feel...”
5. Say ‘thank you’ - to mark the transition from one participant’s contribution to the next. Try to use a genuinely appreciative tone – as facilitator you are reliant on their willingness to venture into play!
6. Leading – to deepen a response - participant says “I felt frightened”, you echo and then lead a little “I felt frightened because...” and let them finish the sentence.

Questions to use:

Open questions, questions about feelings rather than facts

Questions to avoid:

Leading questions, closed questions, multiple questions/ Interrogation

Do not use “Imagine you were there...” or “what would you have done in her situation?”