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Using Drama for Better  
Communication and Integration of  
Disadvantaged Groups in Education

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**Tell me and I will forget.**

**Show me and I will remember.**

**Involve me and I will understand.**

*Chinese Proverb*

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# Benefits of Using Drama in Education

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- ❖ Dramatic Arts education is an important means of stimulating **CREATIVITY IN PROBLEM SOLVING**
- ❖ It can **CHALLENGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS** about their world and about themselves.
- ❖ Dramatic exploration can provide students with an **OUTLET FOR EMOTIONS, THOUGHTS, and DREAMS** that they might not otherwise have means to express

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# Benefits of Using Drama in Education

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- ❖ A student can, if only for a few moments, **BECOME ANOTHER**, explore a new role, try out and experiment with various personal choices and solutions to very real problems-problems from their own life, or problems faced by characters in literature or historical figures.

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# Benefits of Using Drama in Education

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- ❖ This can happen in a **SAFE ATMOSPHERE**, where actions and consequences can be examined, discussed, and in a very real sense **EXPERIENCED** without the dangers that such experimentation would obviously lead to in the "real" world.

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# Benefits of Using Drama in Education

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- ❖ At the center of all Drama is **COMMUNICATION**
- ❖ Students who have participated in Dramatic activities are less likely to have difficulty **SPEAKING IN PUBLIC**, will be more **PERSUASIVE** in their communications, both written and oral, will be better able to put themselves into others' shoes and relate to them,
- ❖ and they will have a more **POSITIVE, CONFIDENT SELF IMAGE**

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# Benefits of Using Drama in Education

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- ❖ Participation in Dramatic activity requires **SELF CONTROL** and **DISCIPLINE** that will serve the student well in all aspects of life.
- ❖ Students in Drama will learn to **WORK TOGETHER**, to cooperate, to find the best way for each member of a group to contribute, and to listen to and accept the viewpoints and contributions of others

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# Benefits of Using Drama in Education

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- ❖ **NO ART FORM IS MORE TRULY COLLABORATIVE.**
- ❖ Drama is an important tool for preparing students to live and work in a world that is increasingly **TEAM-ORIENTED** rather than hierarchical.



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# Benefits of Using Drama in Education

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- ❖ Drama also helps students develop **TOLERANCE** and **EMPATHY**. In order to play a role competently, an actor must be able to fully inhabit another's soul

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# Benefits of Using Drama in Education

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- ❖ An actor must be able to really understand how the world looks through another person's eyes. This does not mean he must agree with every character.
- ❖ An actor can play Hitler without becoming a Nazi. But he cannot play Hitler without understanding his point of view, without empathy.
- ❖ In today's increasingly polarised and intolerant culture, the ability to understand others' motives and choices is critical. Drama can help build responsible global citizens.

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# Benefits of Using Drama in Education

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- ❖ In addition to its intrinsic educational value, Drama can **REINFORCE** the rest of the school curriculum
- ❖ Since communication and empathy are central to Drama, a student who has explored like in the Drama classroom will be better able to **UNDERSTAND IDEAS** in History and Current Events.

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# Benefits of Using Drama in Education

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- ❖ He will be able to put himself into the shoes of figures in history and literature, to **UNDERSTAND THE WAY HUMAN BEINGS INTERACT**.
- ❖ More importantly, Drama can be used to promote **ACTIVE LEARNING** in any subject-to give students a **KINESTHETIC** and **EMPATHETIC** understanding as well as an intellectual understanding of a topic.

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# Benefits of Using Drama in Education

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- ❖ As teachers, try to strive to link Drama lessons to topics and themes your students are studying in other subjects, or to important social questions. In this way Drama accomplishes several goals at once- **ENRICHING** students' school experience through Art as well as **REINFORCING** traditional academics.

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# Drama and Integration

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- ❖ Creative Drama is a well known and useful method for social inclusion and refugee integration.
- ❖ Drama technics provides a humanistic and anti-discriminative learning atmosphere.
- ❖ Drama tools can be used to inclusion of the disadvantaged and excluded groups and being open to the differences, different backgrounds, different cultures.

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# Drama and Integration

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- ❖ By using drama tools we can also improve empathy , breaking the barriers and stereotypes, intercultural learning and team building.Drama technics provides a humanistic and anti-discriminative learning atmosphere.
- ❖ Drama tools can be used to inclusion of the disadvantaged and excluded groups and being open to the differences, different backgrounds, different cultures.

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# Drama and Integration

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- ❖ Especially for the refugee groups we can use drama tools to make them integrated in the host community and building friendships and mutual understanding atmosphere.
- ❖ Drama games, role plays, knowing each other activities, trust games and team building activities are very deep activities to brake the barriers between groups
- ❖ Drama tools can be used to inclusion of the disadvantaged and excluded groups and being open to the differences, different backgrounds, different cultures.



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# Classroom Rules

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- ❖ Imposing rules on others obligates the person imposing those rules to make sure they are not abused
- ❖ 1. Always listen carefully to the rules of any game or activity. Drama class is lots of fun, but it is structured fun. Some rules are negotiable, but all must be followed until they are changed.

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# Classroom Rules

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- ❖ 2. Always raise your hand, and wait to be recognized before speaking (except when the game or activity involves spontaneous speech)
- ❖ Use your common sense. Even adults, when they try to work together in a group, have to take turns speaking, or chaos results

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# Classroom Rules

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- ❖ 3. NEVER, EVER intentionally hurt someone else. This means no hitting, pushing, etc., but it also means no name-calling or teasing. Drama class can only work if everyone feels safe.

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# Classroom Rules

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- ❖ 4. Everyone is responsible for his own actions. Just because someone else does something wrong does not give you permission to make things worse by doing the same thing. "He did it, too," is never an excuse.

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# Classroom Rules

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- ❖ 5. Someone else's point of view-whether or not you agree with him-is important and must be respected. When someone else is speaking, whether it is the teacher or another student, listen respectfully.

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# Classroom Rules

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- ❖ 6. ALWAYS TRY TO HAVE FUN.

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# Hand Animals

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- ❖ It serves as an introduction to the structured use of the imagination and to the idea or character. It's also great fun and gives all of the students a chance to "perform" on the first class.
- ❖ **Look at your hands.** We begin by examining our hands

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# Hand Animals

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- ❖ Hold your two hands up and look at them. Use one finger to trace the lines and the shape of your other hand.
- ❖ Wiggle your fingers.
- ❖ Open and close your fists.
- ❖ Except your face, your hands are the most expressive part of your body.
- ❖ Look at all the different things they can do! Try to find as many different ways to move your hands as you can.



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# Hand Animals

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- ❖ Coach the children to invent their own hand animals.
- ❖ By raising their hands, children volunteer to show their new creations to the class.
- ❖ After you have seen and admired each character, the whole class tries to make it. (This reinforces for each child the worth of his or her creation, and gives the whole class practice in observation and mirroring.)

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# Hand Animals

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If the group is sophisticated enough you can coach discussion in some of the following ways:

"Look at this particular bird (or dog For this performer, what do you think is the most important characteristic of a bird?

Is one character "better" than another?" (NO-just different.)

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**No, You Can't Take Me!**

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# No, You Can't Take Me!

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- ❖ This game teaches confidence, pantomime, and critical thinking. It's also a lot of fun.
- ❖ Break the class into small groups-three to five or so. Each group is given a room in the house--the bedroom, the living room, the kitchen, the basement, the garage, etc.
- ❖ If you want to, you can put the names of rooms on cards and have each group choose one.
- ❖ Don't let the students know what rooms the other groups have.

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# No, You Can't Take Me!

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- ❖ Within each group, each student chooses one thing that would be found in the room.
- ❖ For example, if the room is the kitchen, one student might be the refrigerator, one the stove, one the sink, etc.

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# No, You Can't Take Me!

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- ❖ Each student must think of at least one--or with older kids, several--good reasons that their object is important.
- ❖ Side-coach them to ask themselves what would happen if the thing were not there.

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# No, You Can't Take Me!

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Work with one group at a time. The other groups become audience--which is incidentally an opportunity to practice being a good audience.

The teacher goes to the first group and exclaims, "My, look at all this useless stuff! I've got to get rid of some of this junk!" (Or some such.) The teacher selects one student and says, "I think I'll take THIS thing away."

The student replies, "NO, YOU CAN'T TAKE ME!"

"Why not?"

The student answers, **WITHOUT MENTIONING THE NAME OF HER/HIS OBJECT**, in this form: "If you take me away. . ." followed by something that would go wrong without the object. (For example, if the student is pretending to be the bed, she might say, "If you take me away, no one will get any sleep." A student pretending to be a wastebasket might say, "If you took me, there would be trash all over the place.")

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# No, You Can't Take Me!

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Once all the students have had their say, the audience tries to guess what room they are in, and then what object each student is. Then the teacher moves on to the next group.

You can improvise some reason that the student's first answer isn't compelling enough. "Well, I never sleep anyway." "I like trash on the floor. I'm taking you anyway."

In this way you ask the students to think of more than one reason that something is important. If the students are sophisticated enough, you encourage them to think of creative answers. A student pretending to be the bed might say, "What would the kids jump on?"



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# THE MARTHA GAME (Build A Scene)

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This drama activity emphasizes:

- ❖ creative body movement
- ❖ ensemble teamwork
- ❖ setting/scene creation
- ❖ concentration
- ❖ improvisation

The object of the game is to have 8-12 people come to the stage, one player at a time, each player choosing a different object or item to represent in a selected scene or setting.

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# THE MARTHA GAME (Build A Scene)

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Group stands outside a designated performance space.

One person runs into the space, forms her body into a statue and announces what she is as in "I'm a tree."

Instantly the next person runs on and forms something else in the same picture. "I'm a bench under the tree.

The next person further adds to the picture. "I'm a person on the bench."

"I'm a dog peeing on the tree."

"I'm the newspaper the person is sleeping under."

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# THE MARTHA GAME (Build A Scene)

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- ❖ The round can vary by allowing the players to choose a setting that the audience does not know. The audience can guess the setting / scene after all players have taken their place on stage in the same picture.
- ❖ This can be played very fast, as a speed round.

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## The Inclusive Classroom: Drama Class for Students with Special Needs

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- ❖ From an educational point of view children learn to be more curious;
- ❖ their communication skills and levels of co-operation develop,
- ❖ and there's a great sense of fun.
- ❖ Through Drama what you can do is develop good quality modes of practice

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## Boost your creativity and prevent early school leaving: steps for integration and intercultural education

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- ❖ With the inclusion of drama as part of the school curriculum has come a formal acceptance of the value of drama and theatre as an educational resource.
- ❖ By using drama you can encourage potential **early school leavers** to stay in the education system.

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# TEACHING EMPATHY

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- ❖ Empathy is the ability to understand and experience the feelings of others, and to respond in helpful ways.
- ❖ Some children seem to develop empathy more naturally than others, but all children need to be taught this critical skill.

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# TEACHING EMPATHY

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**1. The best way to teach empathy is to model empathy.**

Pick your child up when he falls, label his feelings and let him know that you've felt that way too, and listen to your children.

Instead of walking away from that situation, stay calm and talk your child through it. When children see you respond to difficult situations with empathy, they will internalise those behaviours and learn to do the same.



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# TEACHING EMPATHY

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## 2. Use literature.

Characters and conflicts in books can expose children to a range of social situations that children may or may not have experienced themselves.

By exposing children to these resources, teachers can prompt and guide discussions related to characters' emotions, as well as children's personal feelings about characters or conflicts in the story.

These discussions, as well as strategic questioning on the part of the teacher, will allow students to engage in empathy practices

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# TEACHING EMPATHY

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## **3. Reflective Journals**

Being reflective can be a difficult skill for people of all ages. People do things that they are not proud of, say things they don't mean, and act in ways they normally wouldn't when trying to impress someone. This is where reflective journals come in.

Have students write 2-4 times a week for 10- 20 minutes on a prompt related to empathy. Journal responses can further discussions about how students are treating each other.

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# TEACHING EMPATHY

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## 3. Reflective Journals

Prompts can be as simple as:

- Were you nice to your classmates today? How?
- What can you do to help someone at home?
- How would you feel if someone called you names or picked on you?

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# TEACHING EMPATHY

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## 3. Reflective Journals

Or, journal entries may become more complex as students age and empathy understanding increases:

- How would you feel if you didn't have a home or safe place to live?
- What would you do if you saw your friend harassing someone on social media?
- How would you respond if you found out a classmate came to school every day without eating breakfast?

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# TEACHING EMPATHY

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## **3. Reflective Journals**

Pushing students to become reflective in regards to empathy may help them build on their understanding of others' thoughts and feelings, and improve how they respond to one another in difficult situations.

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# TEACHING EMPATHY

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## **4. Create real life empathy opportunities**

What better way for students to learn empathy than to experience it firsthand?

Creating opportunities for students to experience empathy in a way that is authentic can be the best way for them to apply what they have learned through empathy literature and reflective journals.

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# TEACHING EMPATHY

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## 4. Create real life empathy opportunities

**Get to know your classmates:** As teachers, you regularly focus on helping children get along despite their differences. But what about students' similarities?

Often empathy breaks down because students do not see how much they are alike. Have students get to know each other! This can be done in a low-risk way by:

- Interviewing a classmate that you don't know well
- Eat lunch with someone different
- Partner with someone you don't know for an empathy literature discussion

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# TEACHING EMPATHY

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## **5. Start a Random Acts of Kindness project:**

Once a week (month, or day, depending on what time allows) have students show a random act of kindness for another person.

This may be a classmate, or someone else in the school or outside community.

It may be as simple as writing a letter thanking someone for what they do, helping someone with a project they are working on, or inviting someone new to spend time with you.

Use the reflective journal to have students reflect on how it made them feel to show, and how they feel their kindness impacted others.



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# Games

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1. Toilet paper game
2. Hand Animals - Introduction to Drama
3. No, you can't take me!
4. Martha Game - Build a scene!