

TAKE 2

Teacher Notes

The Importance Of Drama In The Curriculum

- Drama is a dynamic and accessible means of exploring the world, emotions and human interaction.
- Drama develops imagination, thinking skills and problem solving.
- Drama develops confidence and communication skills.
- Drama provides a means of self-exploration and self-expression.
- Drama provides an opportunity for the student to collaborate and to present.

THE CONCEPT OF TAKE 2

- **TAKE 2** is a series of study pieces.
- Each script contains 1 scene.
- Each script is roughly 2 minutes duration.
- Each script requires 2 actors.
- Each scene is a conversation between 2 people.

How To Use Take 2

- There are 2 main ways to use **TAKE 2**:

Students, in pairs.
Each pair prepares a different scene.

or

2 or more pairs prepare the same scene – for contrast and discussion.

What was different about the different performances/presentations of this scene?

- The scripts can be used either as film scripts or as stage scripts (in the classroom or at assemblies/concerts).
- Their short length (approximately 2 minutes reading time) means they can be read within a lesson.
- They can also be used as examples, so some students may wish to write their own scenes.

Video Method

CAMERA

- These scenes can easily be shot on a typical home video camera with a built-in microphone. However, more professional results will be obtained by the use of better equipment, with an external microphone on a boom (or sitting on a table).
- Most of the scenes on the DVD were shot on a quality camera with external microphone, but the scenes, *Space Travel*, *Losing Penelope* and *Codgers* were shot on a home video camera with in-built microphone and using only natural daylight.
- Choose a location with good acoustics and encourage students to speak up.

TRIPOD

- This is essential for steadiness of filming.

SOUND

- As already mentioned, an external microphone provides the best quality sound. If using a camera with an in-built microphone, make sure you have the camera as close as possible to the actors.

LIGHTING

- A workman's light is adequate to enhance the brilliance of a scene. This is not necessary if shooting outside.

LOG

- Several 'takes' of each scene will probably be necessary, so it is a good idea to log the scenes. Allocate this task to a reliable student who will write the name of each scene in a log book and the number of 'takes'. When the teacher/director is satisfied with a 'take', make sure this is logged (noted) in the book, so that when it comes to editing you can quickly find the best take.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

- In some of the scenes, you will notice some 'magic'. Eg the Witch's nose, the disappearing boy. This is very easy to achieve. Film the scene up to the point of the 'magical event', ensure the actors hold their positions before stopping the camera. Stop filming. Add the nose or remove the boy. Turn the camera on again and resume filming.

SET DRESSING

- You might like to nominate a student as 'Art Director'. Very little should be needed in terms of set, but if you have the time and the inclination, you might decorate the background to suit the scene. Eg some stick-on stars for magical scenes, colourful drapes for *The Princesses*. Remember that all scenes are close-up shots of the two actors, so not much is seen in the background.
- If you are using the scenes as 'live' performances, you might like to be more creative.

COSTUME

- For most scenes, the actors are visible from the waist up. Hats easily define character and full costumes are not necessary.
- Students should be encouraged to provide their own costumes by borrowing from friends or searching Op Shops. Most children love dressing up, so if you have a school Dress-up box, go through it and offer suggestions or examples for each character.

DIRECTION

- Simplicity is the key if the scenes are to be filmed as 'talking heads'. Action should be kept to a minimum, special effects discouraged. There should be no changes in location within a scene. Each scene is a conversation between two people.

The Process

- Once the scenes are cast, students need to be given a 'deadline' for learning their scenes. Poorly learnt scenes will waste a lot of filming time and result in sloppy performances.
- Not all scenes are gender or age specific. You will see that on the DVD. There are two examples of *Who's Got Talent*, which demonstrates that it works equally well with different age groups. The scene *School Play* would work with boys instead of girls and other scenes could be done with a boy and girl actor.
- Props and costume need to be discussed (suggestions above) and there should be little or no expenditure on these easily-found items.
- It is a good idea to create a 'professional' ambience and to insist on absolute quiet during filming if this is to be done with the whole class present.

NON-ACTING ROLES

Crewing roles may be allocated for each scene so that those awaiting their turn to film are involved. Eg:

- **Assistant Director** - who calls 'Quiet on the set'.
- **2nd assistant Director** - who checks props before commencing.
- **Lighting Operator** - to switch extra lighting on and off.
- **Wardrobe master/mistress** - to check costume.
- **Make-up supervisor** - to check any character make-up.
- **Sound effects operator** – to operate CD player or perform (or direct performance of) any instruments or sound-producers.

STUDENT-WRITTEN SCRIPTS

Some points for those students intending to write their own scenes.

- A 'theme' or genre' is a good place to start, eg Friendship, Horror, Fantasy.
- 2 pages should be the maximum length, and make the story a conversation between two people.
- Set the scene in one place (location).
- Avoid special effects or props that are difficult to find or to manage.
- Make the dialogue 'natural'.
- Give your story a good finish or punch line.
- Be imaginative. Give your actors a challenge!

EDITING

- If your intention is to screen the films to parents and friends in your own 'Short Film Festival', it is worth taking the filmed material to someone with editing experience ... perhaps your local high school or one of the many Film Schools in your city.
- Or perhaps you have the software to insert titles and to delete unwanted 'takes' yourself.
- However, all the unedited material should be shown to students. Much can be learned from the experience of watching and selecting the best 'takes'.